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Questing Heroes: A Search for Identity in the Novels of N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko

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Abstract

This study analyzes the problem of identity in the first two modernist Native American novels, House Made of Dawn (1968) by N. Scott Momaday and Ceremony (1977) by Leslie Marmon Silko. These seminal novels depict the healing story of two young Native American men who suffer from spiritual and psychological illness after their return from military service in the World War II. Due to their traumatic experience of a foreign war and their problematic genealogy that stems from orphanage and mixed blood status, these individuals are separated from their community. They are also alienated from the land that gives their communities their identity. In order to gain a coherent sense of identity with the help of oral traditions and ancient ceremonials of their Navajo and Pueblo cultures, they initiate a ritualistic journey which eventually causes them to reintegrate with their people and culture. While examining the problem of identity in the selected novels from a dual perspective which includes both the Native American and western schools of thought such as structuralist semiotics and psychoanalysis, this thesis also traces the underlying social and political conditions that cause the problem of identity among today's Native American peoples. Moreover, within the context of historical and literary surveys, it is also shown how the problem of identity is a crucial theme for the modern Native American writers.

Öz

Bu çalışma, ilk iki modernist Kızılderili romanı olan N. Scott Momaday tarafından yazılmış House Made of Dawn (1968) ve Leslie Marmon Silko trafından yazılmış Ceremony (1977) adlı romanlarda kimlik sorununun nasıl ele alındığını incelemektedir. Bu iki başyapıt İkinci Dünya Savaşındaki hizmetlerinden sonra psikolojik rahatsızlık çeken iki genç Kızılderili adamın iyileşme hikâyesini anlatır. Yabancı bir savaştaki sarsıcı deneyimlerinden ve öksüz ya da melez olmak gibi sorunlu soyağaçlarından dolayı bu iki birey toplumlarından uzaklaşmıştır. Aynı zamanda toplumlarının kimliğini belirleyen topraklardan da yabancılaşmışlardır. Navajo ve Pueblo kültürlerinin sözlü gelenekleri ve seremonileri yardımıyla tutarlı bir kimlik duygusu kazanmak için, sonunda toplumlarıyla bütünleşmelerini sağlayacak ayinsel bir yolculuğa çıkarlar. Bu tez, seçilen romanlardaki kimlik sorununu hem Kızılderili hem de yapısalcı göstergebilim ve psikanaliz gibi batılı fikir akımlarını kapsayan ikili bir bakış açısından incelerken, bugünün Kızılderili toplumlarındaki kimlik sorununun oluşmasına sebep olan sosyal ve siyasal koşulların izini de sürmektedir. Dahası, bu koşulların Kızılderili yazınına yansıması kısa tarihi ve yazınsal incelemelerle ortaya konur.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the reasons of the problem of identity deeply embedded in Native American Literature and its reflection in the first two modernist novels published by Native American writers, *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday and *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko. Both of these novels are quite important as they mark a turning point in Native American canon with their unique styles, modern narration techniques and more significantly their successful and insightful dealing with the dramatic experience of the contemporary Native American people. Although these two novels share the same subject matter depicting the story of an alienated young Indian man who is unable to communicate with his family and community, and who is also unable to establish a coherent sense of self which is necessary to lead a desirable state of living, the two authors' perspective is quite different. While Momaday focuses on the problems of individuals and tries to reconcile conflicting racial, cultural and moral values, Silko goes one step further and incorporates into her novel a crucial cultural aspect of Native Americans which Momaday has overlooked. Silko's view shows that an individual is nothing outside of his community. Moreover, she carefully avoids to present conflicting and differing racial, cultural and moral values, but rather she suggests that the problem between Indian and Euro-American cultures does not arise from the "differences" but it arises from "separating" and evaluating these cultures in their own terms. While Momaday presents racial and cultural binary oppositions which are expected to be reconciled by his characters, Silko suggests that in dealing with such issues there is no binary opposition at all.

Since Indian-white relations are the foremost determinant of the artistic expressions of the Native American peoples, Native American literature cannot be viewed out of its socio-cultural context. The identity problem among Native Americans is directly related to the enactment of specific federal Indian policies, and their profound impact upon Indian communities. Therefore, Native American literature embodies social, economic and political conditions of colonization, and every liter-

ary text expresses the effects of the loss of sovereignty, land, language, and the effects of enforced Christian conversion and enforced education.

For this reason, the first chapter titled "The Historical Experience of the Native Americans and Cultural Context" presents an insight to the historical process which leads to the psychological displacement of today's Native American individuals as well as the background of Native American cultural heritage. The first section, "The Pre-contact Era and the First Nations", draws the picture of the conditions in North America before the arrival of European colonizers; and indigenous nations that occupy ten different geographical regions are observed with their cultural values, languages, religions, and social, economic and domestic structures. This section sketches out the great cultural diversity in North America that was overlooked by the occidental nations.

The second section of this chapter, "Indigenous Traditions", deals with cultural aspects, and gives information about Native American worldview, spirituality and oral traditions which have been the basic source of characteristics and style of the Native American novelists. Native Americans had complex systems of belief that are based upon spirit forces and interrelatedness of every being, animate or inanimate. They have a strong reverence towards animals and nature which has always been romanticized by the Europeans, as well as a strong adherence to land and community. Besides, these peoples do not have a written language. For this reason, the transmission of cultural heritage is based on memory, and the spoken word has been used as a powerful and sacred vehicle through oral narratives. There are three important genres of oral narratives that are frequently used by the modern Native American novelists: Creation Stories, Trickster tales, and songs and ritual poetry. Momaday incorporates all of these traditions into *House Made of Dawn*, while Silko prefers to use certain Native American myths as well as creation stories in *Ceremony*. These traditions are actually a part of the lives of Native American individuals, who have been cut off from them as a result of colonization. They are important for regaining a cultural identity. After Momaday, the authors of the 20th century use these traditions in their works to show how they are crucial to "heal" the psychologically displaced and alienated protagonists.

The third section, "The Colonial Period and Fragmentation of Cultural Identity", details the tragic change in Native American cultural integrity after the European incursion and gives brief information about the general attitude of the colonizing nations Spain, France, England, Holland and Russia. While a systematical destruction of flora and fauna by these nations has created a great damage in ecosystem, assimilationist policies towards the indigenous populations destroy the cultural identity of Native American peoples. Because of factors such as epidemic diseases brought by the Europeans, environmental deterioration, hunger, and warfare indigenous population of North America has been reduced from 4-11 million to 250,000. Also the first reservations – segregated areas for Indians – were founded in this period. The fourth and the last section of this chapter deals with the situation of Native Americans in the period after the American Revolution in 1775. The main issues to be discussed include expansion strategies of the federal government, and important pieces of legislation that are passed with the purpose of "civilizing" Native Americans who are deemed as "inferior savages". These pieces of legislation include the Indian Removal Act, the Dawes Act and the Indian New Deal. This section gives information about federal programs related to Native Americans as well as the pan-Indian activism that flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. All these developments have produced significant results in the lives of today's Native Americans and the Native American writers, poets and scholars accordingly show the consequences of the historical facts in their works.

The second chapter titled "Native American Literature" gives a brief survey of Native American Literature from the 19th century to the present day, and demonstrates how Native American writers and poets have developed strategies of resistance to ongoing colonization by deriving inspiration and style from both the Euro-American literary heritage and the traditional Indian forms of literature, especially oral storytelling. In the literary productions of Native Americans, indigenous oral traditions and techniques are not only used as a form of resistance to imperial world-view but also for a re-assertion and celebration of Native American identity, ideas and values. The key figures to be discussed before Momaday include William Apess, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Alice Callahan, Sarah Winnemucca, D'Arcy McNickle, and Ella Deloria. All of these writers have focused upon cultural conflict and the

problem of identity. However, their works, written in the form of popular European fiction of the time, are far from being satisfactory in terms of aesthetics and reflection of Native American experience because, they have not benefited from the richness of Native American traditions. With the publication of Momaday's 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*, and its awarding Pulitzer Prize for fiction, a bright new period generally termed as Native American Literary Renaissance has started for the Native American Literature. During this period, an intellectual community of Indian scholars have emerged and contributed to Native American studies, drawing the attention of the mainstream American literature authority. They have also become a source of inspiration for later Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko.

The third chapter, "House Made of Dawn: Restoration of Individual Identity and Reconciliation of Binary Oppositions," examines how Scott Momaday deals with the problem of identity in his famous novel. This novel presents an example of identity formation in a way which is very different from the point of view of the Euro-American writers. The protagonist's identity is structured by the use of oral traditions and religious rituals. Moreover, Momaday presents his protagonist, Abel as a kind of modern "questing hero," a common figure who is frequently found in ancient Native American stories. Abel's main struggle is to come over the destructive burden of his World War II service while he is trying to secure a place for himself in the Native American world. However, this will not be easy as Abel has been excluded from his community and lost the necessary contact with his Indian identity. His experience in the non-Indian world also ensures him that he has not a place among the white world. Since Momaday is very much occupied with binary oppositions, the analysis of the novel will be made in the light of the structuralist semiotics formulated by Algirdas Greimas and Gérard Genette.

The last chapter, "Ceremony: Restoration of Individual Identity and Deconstruction of Binary Oppositions," examines how Leslie Silko deals with the problem of identity in her novel. Like Momaday, Silko also gives the account of a young World War II veteran named Tayo, who suffers from a war trauma. This protagonist is also excluded from his native community due to his mixed-blood status, a term given to the people who have both Indian and European ancestry. However, the importance of communal identity is more significantly stressed in this novel. Identity

acquisition of the protagonist, Tayo, is again initiated with oral traditions and religious rituals. In her novel, Silko deliberately avoids setting up any binary opposition, and uses Tayo's mixed blood status as a metaphor for deconstructing the racial and cultural dichotomies. Due to the novel's complex and hybrid nature that derives from multiple traditions including Indian and western, and innovative ideas of its time, *Ceremony* offers a more versatile critical reading including both the structuralist and poststructuralist ideas of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, and Louis Althusser.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates how the two seminal Native American novelists differ in their styles and ideological perspectives while trying to show alternative ways of identity formation in their selected novels. At the same time, the correlation between the historical experience of the Native Americans with their traditions and the problem of identity dealt in Native American literature is brought to the surface as the background information is considered as essential for a better understanding of the two selected novels. For a better understanding of the multicultural nature of these novels, the ideas of Native American critics are elaborated and enriched with the critical views of the European writers.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE NATIVE AMERICANS AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

1.1. The Pre-Contact Era and the First Nations

The indigenous peoples of the Americas are the first inhabitants of the North and South American continents. Today, they and their descendents are referred to as Native Americans, First Nations or by Christopher Columbus' geographical mistake Indians[1]. According to the United States Census Bureau's report released on May 1, 2008 there are currently 4.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States of America. Besides, there are more than 560 federally recognized tribes[2] that have a legal relationship to the U.S. government.

The scholars estimate that in 1492 there were more than 400 spoken languages in North America, and the majority of the tribes were mutually unintelligible. Today, these languages are classified into language families such as Algonquian, Athapascan, Siouan, Iroquoian, and Eskimo-Aleut. Due to the great diversity of languages some tribes developed a common sign language which helped them in trade and other intertribal negotiations. Because of several reasons including intertribal marriages, government policies that prohibited and sometimes punished the speaking of these languages, and/or vanishing of a tribe half of these languages are now extinct. It should be noted that for oral societies that do not have a written language like Native Americans, language loss means lethal consequences since for these societies "the spoken word is the only way to transmit cultural heritage" (Fleming, 2003:10).

[1] A medieval European term used for the people of Asia.
[2] Socially, politically and religiously organized group of indigenous people living together in a definite territory, and who speak a common language or dialect. Tribes are composed of bands which are composed of clans (kinship that only allows outside marriages)

Although we know a great deal about the languages spoken by Native Americans, their ethnic origins are not clear.

Since the 18th century, most scientists have been convinced that the first Americans originated from Northeastern Asia due to the "existence of a morphological resemblance between Native Americans and various Asian groups" (Crawford, 1998:3). According to a prevailing theory the first Native Americans set foot on today's "New World" by passing through a land bridge that linked the Bering Strait between northeastern Siberia and Alaska when the sea levels were lower in the last ice age. The exact time of the migration is not known, but since the oldest human record found is 27,000-year-old (a caribou-bone scraper found in the Yukon), it has been estimated that North America was inhabited at least by then (Fleming, 2003:11).

The first people are believed to have migrated in a series of slow movements from different parts of Asia. The passages are thought to have occurred in three main migration waves. While the date of the first wave is unknown, the second wave was 8,000 years ago, and the migrates were the Na-De (an Athabaskan term meaning "The People") tribes whose descendents are believed to include contemporary tribes of the Haida, the Tlingit of Alaska, the Navajo, and the Apache of the American Southwest. The last wave must have occurred 4 or 6 thousand years ago, and the descendents of this group are the Eskimo (or Inuit, meaning "The People") and the Aleut (Fleming, 2003:14).

The oldest Paleo[3]-Indian cultures such as the Clovis and Folsom people whose names were derived from sites found in New Mexico, were big game hunters who hunted mammoths, mastodons etc., and lived around 11,000 BCE. Although we do not know much about them it is estimated that with the extinction of large animals these hunters were replaced by smaller groups of people who spread out over the continent. The descendant cultures like the Mogollon (means "Mountain People") and the Anasazi ("Ancient Ones") adopted agriculture. These cultures are best known for their *kivas* (semi-subterranean structures that included prayer rooms) and *mimbres* (black-on-white pottery and textiles) as well as for their expert engineering

[3] Gr. ancient

skills which helped them build complex systems of irrigation canals to bring water to their fields of corn, beans, squash, tobacco, and cotton (Boldurian, 1999).

Today, the scholars divide North America into ten geographic regions. These regions are called "culture areas" and each of them is home to several tribes that share similar traits. There are ten culture areas in North America: Arctic, Subarctic, Plateau, Northwest coast, California, Great Basin, Southwest, Plains, Northeast, and Southeast[4].

The Arctic region hosted Eskimo (Inuit) and Aleut people who lived in permanent villages in houses made of sod and wood. The houses were occupied by a nuclear family and other relatives. They would establish partnership with other families for trade and hunting. Sea was the basic source of sustenance providing food and cloth. Unlike Inuits, Aleuts used a caste system in their villages and islands which governed by a wealthy chief who owned slaves captured from nearby villages. They believed in the spirit forces that inhabited humans and animals (Fleming, 2003: 16).

The Subarctic region covers most of Canada and the interior Alaska and hosts different tribes belonging to two major language families. The Algonquian speakers include the Cree and the Anishinabe, while Athabascan speakers include the Kutchin, the Slave, and the Dogrib tribes. These were nomadic tribes who followed caribou and other migratory game. The social structure was based on kinship, and decisions were taken by an elder group leader (Fleming, 2003: 18).

The Plateau region covers the area between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains. Flathead, Kalispel, Nez Perce, Klamath, Yakima tribes are the inhabitants of this region. These tribes were engaged in fishing and trade with the Plains tribes using dugout canoes (Fleming, 2003: 20).

The Northwest coast is a very abundant region with a rich fauna and flora. The people in this region –Tlingit, Chinook, Kwakiutls– had a profuse culture, and settled in nice villages along rivers. They are mostly known for *patlatches* (to give) ceremonies by which they would feast their guests and show off their wealth. The interesting thing is that one's social status was determined by how much s/he gave

[4] The following information about the tribes that occupy the ten culture areas can be found in more detail in Walter C. Fleming's book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Native American History* (2003).

and shared with the others. They believed in the sacredness of salmon, and respected them with rituals to ensure their return (Fleming, 2003:24).

The Great Basin is a tough environment covering the southern Oregon, Nevada and Utah. This large region was home to many tribes including the Washo, Paiute, Shoshone, Bannock, and Ute. Pinion nuts were major source of food that was harvested with the Round Dance ceremony, a celebration of the remaking of the world (Fleming, 2003: 27).

Due to its gentle climate California is a very diverse region with more than 60 tribes including the Shasta, Hupa, Yurok, Pomo and Chumash. These tribes did not need to engage in agriculture since the nature provided enough sustenance; heredity and wealth determined the social rank (Fleming, 2003: 32).

The Southwest includes the Grand Canyon and Rio Grande. This is a harsh terrestrial ecoregion with little rainfall. However, the most viable settlements are thought to have been here. Some of the tribes are the Hopi ("Peaceful Ones"), Navajo, Apache, Pima, Papago, and Pueblos (a collective name including Laguna, Zuni, and Acoma tribes). Unlike the others, Pueblos were farmers who lived in permanent towns; half of them were destroyed by the Spanish colonizers (Fleming, 2003: 36).

Since they showed strong resistance to Euro-American encroachment, people of the Plains region today became "symbolic for the typical American Indian image with their warrior costumes made up of feathered bonnet and buffalo hide, carrying lance and shield" (Fleming, 2003:40). With its short grass this large region was home to many hunting game, especially bison. The Blackfeet, Lakota (Sioux), Cheyenne, and Pawnee are the most popular tribes. These people were generally nomadic and followed the bison herds; they lived in *tipis*[5]. The Sun Dance is the most important ceremony of the Plains Indians. During this ceremony they fast and dance to secure the blessings of the spirits for the next year. They are also notable for "questing" practice through which they go to the wilderness to seek the blessings of supernatural powers (Fleming, 2003:40).

The Northeast region covers today's New England, New York State, Virginia and the Great Lakes, and home to the famous Iroquois Confederacy –The Seneca,

[5] Tipi is a conical-shaped tent made from buffalo hides stretched around a pole frame, and designed to be easily moved. Entrance always faces to the east, to welcome the spirit beings of the east.

Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and later Tuscarora. These people lived in villages near arable fields. Because of their dwellings made up of huge logs, they are sometimes referred to as the People of the Longhouse. Inhabitants of the houses belonged to the same matrilineage[6]. In the Plains tribes women had powerful status as decision makers and owners of property. Their principal ceremony is the Green Corn Ceremony during which they did not eat corn before the beginning of the corn harvest (Fleming, 2003: 43).

The Southeast region is home to the Five Civilized Tribes (Chactaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, Seminole). The "civilized" term was later added as these tribes were assimilated to European norms after they had been removed from the southwest to present-day Oklahoma in 1830s. While women were mainly farmers, men hunted and practiced warfare, but they also assisted women in clearing fields and harvesting crops. Cherokee clans were represented by an "Honored Woman" in tribal council. The Beloved Woman (Ghighua) held the highest status and spoke for the Honored Women (Fleming, 2003: 45).

The indigenous tribes have some common rituals, beliefs and traditions which will be studied in a more detailed way.

1.2. The Indigenous Traditions

As it has been seen North America was a home to hundreds of different cultures, each with their unique language, culture, history, religion and economic system, and they inhabited incredibly various landscapes. Although the tribes were commonly inarticulate to each other, they were interrelated through trade routes, and the diversity of cultures further accumulated with commercial and cultural exchange. This can be understood from the common aspects they share in their lifestyles and traditional worldviews: The interconnectedness of things both living and non-living, and of course a very strong adherence to land, community and language.

The emotional and physical interconnectedness among all beings in the universe is the principle idea that shapes the Native American spirituality and thus reli-

[6] For Native Americans family descent is matrilineal; a person belongs to her/his mother's family.

gious practices. The idea suggests that every being (an animal, a rock in the desert, a human etc.) has its own spirit which is closely knitted to the other spirits, for example an injury made to one means that it is made to all. Similarly, each individual in a society is tied to the others creating a very strong communal net, which can be observed even in the architecture of traditional houses whose round structures allow their inhabitants to see the door of every neighbor. As everything has to be done communally this unity is solidified in every activity like ceremonies and planting.

Just like every individual is tightly woven to the other beings, the link between people and land is also very strong. For Native Americans, the land is the life-giving and nurturing mother in the most literal sense with its own spirit. Therefore, it can neither be one's own property nor sold or bought; it belongs to no one. Adherence to land can be observed in various religious practices including pilgrimage and harvesting rituals. The power of language, on the other hand, is more significantly felt in the oral narratives. Since the spoken word is the only carrying vehicle for Native American arts and cultures, storytelling has a privileged place and it is used to conduct multiple responsibilities at the same time including education and entertainment. Creation stories, trickster tales, songs and ritual poetry are the main forms of oral narratives.

1.2.1. Religious Practices and Spirituality

The indigenous people of North America have complex ceremonial systems that accept spirit forces inhabiting humans and animals. While rites are focused mainly on placating the spirits to ensure success in hunting, healing, harvesting etc., ancestors in the spiritual world are venerated through rituals, and they in turn ensure the prosperity of the living. For the establishment of positive relationships between humans and the spirit world, ceremonies are attuned to the periods of hunting, planting and harvesting. Animals are thought as offering themselves in sacrifice for their human brothers and sisters. Therefore, every part of the animal killed must be used respectfully. It is also common that the hunter may evolve through the guardian spirit of the animals. In his book Joseph Brown explains how religious devotions of the

Plains Indians are directed to the deity *through* the animals: "the animals were created before human beings, so that in their anteriority and divine origin they have a certain proximity to the Great Spirit (*Wakan-Tanka*), which demands respect and veneration. In them the Indian sees actual reflections of the qualities of the Great Spirit" (2007: 28). Some of the most significant religious practices among the Native American cultures are Shamanism, the Sun Dance, Vision Quest, and the sanctification of place and its relation to the understanding of non-linear time.

Shamanism is a common practice among North American natives and it involves a *Shaman*, "a person who is in direct contact with the spirit world, usually through a trance state. A Shaman relies on the assistance of spirit helpers to carry out curing, divining, and bewitching" (Fleming, 2003: 31). As powerful, respected and feared people Shamans are attributed with prophesy, curing (or causing) illness and their ability to control nature. In North America they are most likely referred to as "medicine people." In his book titled, *Sacred Plant Medicine* (1996), Stephen Buhner emphasizes the importance of these people for the Native American community: "It is the ability of the holy people, sometimes called medicine people, to be in contact with the deeper spirit of the plant[7] and to converse with it and treat it with respect that defines the healer as a person of power, a person of sacred plant medicine. Medicine people are expected to use that power for the benefit of the human community, not for personal reasons alone" (Cited, Osterreich, 1998:9).

Sun Dance is the principal ceremony of the Plains Indians. Its name comes from the Lakota phrase for the ceremony, *Wiwanyag Wacipi*, which means "sun-gazing dance" (Spier, 1921: 459). In the beginning of this four-day ceremony the participants construct a circular ceremonial lodge with timbers brought from the mountains to reenact creation of the world and cosmos. This ceremony is explained as:

> The lodge doorway situated in the east, the place whence flows life in light; from the south comes growth in youth, from the west ripeness, and middle age, and from the north completion and old age leading to death, which leads again to new life. At the center of the lodge the most sacred

[7] Medicine people are actually herbalists who use plants to make healing cures.

> cottonwood tree, rooted in the womb of mother earth and stretching up and out to the heavens, is the axis of the world and the male generative principle. Into and out of this central point and axis of the lodge flow the powers of the six directions. (Brown, 2007: 78)

Men are tied to the tree at the center while women make offerings of pieces of flesh cut from their arms. Through this suffering and sacrifice it is believed that the world is renewed and all beings continue to live. Today, the Sun Dance is still practiced in North America without the sacrificing part.

"Vision Quest" is another ritual practiced by the Plains Indians; however, different and less popular forms of it are present in almost every Native American nation. This ritual is practiced before a turning point in life such as puberty or marriage and it involves going away from the tribe–typically to a mountain top–for a period of solitary prayer and fasting, to seek direct contact with, and guidance from the spirit world. "It follows the typical initiatory pattern of separation, a transformative ordeal, and then return to the community with new power and status" (Espin, 2007: 624). One who has had a vision lives subsequently to live his/her life in relation to what was revealed in the vision–for example s/he may be a medicine person. Vision questing is also a widely used metaphorical element for the search for an identity in contemporary Native American literature.

Orientation of time in indigenous traditions is quite different than the non-Indian sense of linear time. It is a cyclic time that revolves again and again like the cycles of the day, the moon and the seasons. This feature produces a contradiction with non-Indian understanding of spirituality, as Lance En Nelson notes, "While the great historical religions typically look forward to the possibility, either for the individual or the world as a whole, of a complete transcendence of the ambiguities of ordinary life, indigenous religions typically do not. Life will always be more or less the same, sometimes better, sometimes worse, but still basically good just as it is" (Krouse, 2007: 624).

The dynamic and cyclical aspect of time also plays a part in pilgrimage and ceremonies. As Dawn Bastian notes "in the remembering of an event, whether by telling or hearing oral narratives, or by participating in or viewing various ceremo-

nies, people were able to transcend the present," (2004:36) and go back in time to the time of that event. The remembering process includes pilgrimage to that holy spot where the event had occurred in the past, and usually "some religious traditions require that one undertake certain pilgrimages during one's lifetime" (Bastian, 2004: 36).

1.2.2. Oral Narratives

Since North American cultures are non-literate, the transmission of cultural heritage (art, customs, philosophy, science etc.) is dependent on the memory of the living elders, men and women who carry all the intellectual material to the next generation through the spoken word. As Dennis W. Krouse puts it, "in non-literate cultures, the spoken word has creative, spiritually potent, even magical dimensions. Storytelling is central to life experience. Stories, songs, even simple names, have spiritual power when intoned." (2007: 619) For this reason, sacred songs and speeches are considered as the primary aspects of tradition with their transformative powers and only performed by professional orators in occasional gatherings such as festivals and all-night ceremonies, and they embrace a huge variety of substance: legends, didactic moral lessons, healing rituals, historical events, social customs and conventions, and spiritual journeys as well as numerous facets of daily life. According to Simon Ortiz oral traditions explain, "the actions, behavior, relationships, practices throughout the whole social, economic, and spiritual life process of people" (Ortiz, 1992: 7).

1.2.2.1. Creation Stories

Apart from the modern anthropologists' Bering Strait theory, Native Americans have their own explanations for their origins and creation. These explanations are voiced in what they termed as Creation Stories. Although each nation has a unique account of the creation of Earth and her inhabitants, creation stories can be

observed under two common captions: *Earth Diver* myths and *Emergence* creation stories.

Earth Diver myths tell how the earth is formed from a small bit of mud brought from the bottom of an ancient sea to the surface by a water bird such as a duck or animal like a beaver or an otter. This "mud or sand is used by a god to form the earth; the earth must be stretched out or spread out; it increases in size over time and as humans or animals explore its circumference" (Bastian, 2004: 90). The Iroquois creation story depicts a woman who falls from the sky world onto the ocean. Since there is no land on earth all of the animals on the ocean gather together and catch the woman. Then they dive into the seas to bring up mud which they spread onto the back of a turtle. Gradually the turtle grows until it becomes North America.

The Emergence creation stories are more frequently found in the Southwest region and they tell the destruction, and recreation of worlds. According to these stories the worlds are destroyed as their inhabitants can not live in accordance with the Creator's plan, and they are recreated for the people who were faithful to the Creator's instructions. The process generally involves a journey from an underworld to the next world and it explains "the existence of various populations in the current world and often account for their diversity in culture and language" (Bastian, 2004: 92).

1.2.2.2. Trickster Tales

One of the most ancient genres in oral narratives is the Trickster Stories which depict a mythic character, generally called as *trickster*. Wayne Franklin explains Trickster as "a wandering, excessive, bawdy, gluttonous, and obscene figure–usually male but able to alter his sex whenever necessary–ready to copulate with his own daughter or daughter-in-law or to send his penis swimming across rivers in search of sexual adventure, (it) is selfish, amoral, foolish, and destructive, a threat to order everywhere" (Franklin, 2003: 120).

A Navajo trickster story called "Coyote, Skunk, and the Prairie Dogs[8]" for example, tells the story of foolish Coyote (Ma'ii) trying to deceive Skunk (Golizhii), only to be deceived by him. In the beginning of the story, Coyote asks for Skunk's help to get revenge from the Prairie Dogs who constantly humiliate him. Together they manage to kill all the Prairie Dogs through a scheme, and while they are preparing the prey for cooking, Coyote, being assured of Skunk's slowness, proposes to have a footrace by which the winner is to be awarded all of the Prairie Dogs. Coyote generously gives his fellow a head start for a compensation of physical inequality. However, Skunk takes advantage of this and hides himself after going a distance, and when Coyote is cleared out of sight, Skunk comes back to the cooking ditch and takes out all of the Prairie Dogs, but leaves four little and unfavorable ones buried in the ditch, and then hides himself again. Meanwhile, Coyote completes the run and victoriously comes to the ditch to dig out his prize one by one. However, in each grab he becomes dissatisfied and throws the Prairie Dogs away until he finds out that no more is left. Eventually, the hungry Coyote is forced to retrieve and eat what he has foolishly disdained. Dissatisfied with these, he further begs for more food from Skunk who responds by throwing the bones of the Prairie Dogs. The story ends with Coyote chewing the bones.

As it can be understood from Barre Toelken's explanatory notes, at certain times the storytelling performance is accompanied by laughter and giggles from the audience as a proof of pleasure. However, trickster stories do not function as mere sources of entertainment. As the Winnebago storyteller Felix White Sr. has phrased it, "The story character does so many unthought of things in there that it causes the listener to start thinking, 'Why does he do that?' It's a process of making somebody exercise his mind to think" (Franklin, 2003: 121). In the above example, "competition for food," "throwing food away" and "begging for food" are behaviors that are strongly disapproved by the Navajo, and in behaving such manners the trickster figure actually forces the audience to dwell upon what is approvable or not approvable in terms of cultural norms, and this way storytelling also functions as a moral instruction.

[8] Performed by Hugh Yellowman; recorded and translated by Barre Toelken.

Besides its foolish and selfish image it is also common that in many stories the trickster acts as a *culture hero* like the ones in creation stories. "A culture hero is a figure responsible for providing or creating distinctive aspects of benefits of a culture and the natural world through discovery or invention [like discovery of fire or agriculture]." In case of trickster stories, the culture hero generally acts like a "deliverer who rids the world of the monsters that make it inhabitable" (Bastian, 2004: 83). For instance, although the Lakota trickster, Iktomi (Spider), is constantly portrayed as a powerful enemy of human welfare, in a story called "Ikto Conquers Iya, the Eater[9]" this formidable figure unusually performs a good deed by saving the whole tribe from being devoured by Iya who is a dangerous and dull witted giant with an insatiable appetite. Again in other stories trickster is the one who "steals fire for the benefit of humankind and introduces death into the world so that human beings may truly know the value of life" (Franklin, 2003: 121).

It is interesting that although they are not necessarily perceived as animals, these characters are called by animal names. For example, the Koasati trickster is Rabbit (*Cokfi*), while Okanogan trickster is Coyote. This naming comes from the traditional understanding that does not see any distinction between animals and humans as it can also be observed from the beginning sentence of Paiute Coyote stories: *Sumu onosu numeka nan quane ynas*, "Once long ago when we were all the same."

1.2.2.3. Songs and Ritual Poetry

Native American cultures have thousands of songs, chants and rituals that are sung for various reasons; they may be sung to praise supernatural beings and ancestors, for recollection of historical events, or to mark turning points in life such as birth and death. Since Native American cultures are strongly communal societies, the producers of songs, chants, stories and poems are always anonymous, and authorship is not important. The following excerpt is taken from a very famous Navajo Night

[9] Ella Cara Deloria, *Dakota Texts* (1932).

Chant. The Navajo Night Chant is a healing ritual that is sung to heal those who are sick:

In Tsegihi,	My body restore for me.
In the house made of the dawn,	My mind restore for me.
In the house made of the evening twilight,	Today take out your spell for me.
In the house made of the pollen,	Far off from it is taken.
…I have made your sacrifice	Happily I recover.
I have prepared a smoke for you.	Happily my interior becomes cool.

(Axelrod, 2003: 151)

The ceremony is conducted by a trained Medicine Man, and it consists of twenty-four sequences and a total 324 songs. The first four days are devoted largely to purification and evocation, the next four to rituals of identification and transformation, and the last, the ninth night, summarizes and releases the patient. (Swann, 2005: 166). The above excerpt is from the "Prayer of the First Dancers" (*Atsálei*) which is spoken at the beginning of the last night by the spiritual practitioner, with the patient repeating it. And, after one to eight nights of chanted prayers, songs and dances, the patient greets the dawn in newfound health and wholeness and with a restored connection to the community.

1.3. The Colonial Period and Fragmentation of Cultural Identity

The year of 1492 marked the discovery of Americas by Christopher Columbus whose scheme of finding a westward route from Iberia to the Indies had found support from Queen Isabella of Spain. After the initial wonder of Columbus' discovery which was followed by a long series of disasters and enchantments, a dynastic war began in the New World as the European colonizing nations started to snatch the indigenous lands. Through colonization Spain, France and England competed to raise their national prestige and material wealth and to spread Christianity by conversion.

With the beginning of the colonial period, Native Americans confronted a completely different society whose ways of living were strongly in contrast with traditional Native American thinking. Plows, fences, and railroad disturbed sacred

American landscape while whiskey corrupted native societies. And the people had been forced to accept a religion which deemed them, as Ohiyesa says, "eternally lost unless, they adopted a tangible symbol and professed a particular form of their hydra-headed faith." (Eastman, 2001: xiii). The overseas invasion of the white man, who has seen Indians as a counter identity to their superior European aspects, has left lasting wounds to the history of Native Americans. But the most serious offense is probably the non-Indians' perception of the indigenous nations as a homogenous body of people regardless of the immense cultural diversity. Joy Porter claims that "Columbus's sense of cultural and religious superiority was such that because the Indians he first encountered did not speak his own language, he deemed them to have no conceptual language at all… He went on to progressively rename and recontextualize the islands he encountered so as to mark non-Indian possession of them, and to rename all the indigenous peoples of the Americas with one single collective descriptor, Indian." (Porter, 2005: 44). This attitude is later satirized in Thomas King's 1993 novel *Green Grass* which depicts the protagonist, the first son of the Christian God, Ahdamn (a parody of Adam) as living with the First Woman (Altse Asdzaa–a figure in Navajo creation story), and also who renames everything he encounters after popular elements of American consumerism like calling Elk and Coyote (characters of trickster stories) as Microwave Oven and Cheeseburger.

Moreover, early colonizers and later the United States have always emposed their "Christian civilization" to legitimate their abuse of Indian land and peoples. And, as Joy Porter puts it, "acts conducted against Indians ostensibly "for their own good" since they were deemed likely to bring Indians closer to a "civilized" ideal." (Porter, 2005: 46). In this way, they have justified their assimilative policies.

Initially, Spain emerged as the dominant power in the New World. No sooner it had been awarded supreme dominion over Americas by Pope Alexander VI than Spain employed a new labor system named *encomienda* to exploit Indian resources by using Indian labor. The system was initiated as a different sort of medieval feudalism through which the *conquistadores* were entitled to tax and freely employ the natives in their plantations, on condition that they teach the Indians Christianity. However, it was quickly transformed into the ways of brutal slavery with the exploi-

tation of the indigenous people, and in 1600, was replaced by *repartimiento* system which additionally applied Indian worker-leaders as well.

France, on the other hand, had commenced fur-trading settlements in St. Lawrence River Valley in 1608. Unlike the Spanish, the French developed significant interaction with the Indian cultures, languages and diversity, but still the Indian populations were victimized by the same annihilation and cruelty as reflected by the devastating consequence of the fur trade. From various aspects, the fur trade has a significant impact upon Indian ways and traditions. The animals have become commercial resources, though they were considered as having their own personality and powers. Thus ironically the tribes have become dependent on the manufactured items obtained through exploitation of nature. Ecological deterioration and extinction of a myriad of species caused by over-hunting devastated social structure. Furthermore, when Native Americans were made to become addicted to alcohol, their lives became more miserable. In their trade with the natives, the French settlers were selling brandy as well as pottery in exchange with fur. This process not only led the Natives to hunt more but also caused a quick spread of alcoholism. The situation would get even worse after the British control over the region as the trade went on during the whole colonial period. Even today, alcoholism is the major problem among Native American communities; it is also the primary issue in Native American literature which often portrays alcoholic characters who are unable to establish a coherent identity due to alcoholism.

After a series of conflicts against the British who was allied with the Iroquois Confederacy along with the Fox, the Natchez and the Chickasaw, the French had to sign the 1763 Treaty of Paris, and surrendered the region to the British whose settlement at Jamestown, Virginia had considerably expanded since 1607. English Puritans set up the first reservations[10] for Indians in 1638 with the purpose of detribalizing and converting them into Christianity. In 1652, the Virginia Grand Assembly passed the first Allotment Act which provided allotted land for Algonquians and

[10] A segregated area of land "reserved" for an Indian band, village, nation, or tribe to live on and use. The name "reservation" is taken from the early practice whereby Indian tribes were coerced, enticed, or otherwise persuaded to relinquish or "cede," the majority of their homelands by treaty to the federal government, while holding back or "reserving" a portion of their original lands for their own use. It was also common for tribes to be removed from ancestral lands and to be placed on reservations entirely outside those lands (Utter, 2001: 206).

other "civilized" individuals. The related Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, presents the striking contradiction between western and Native perspective:

> Unless some system is marked out by which there shall be a separate allotment of land to each individual... you will look in vain for any general casting off of savagism. Common property and civilization cannot coexist... At the foundation of the whole social system lies individuality of property. It is, perhaps, nine times in ten the stimulus that manhood first feels. It has produced the energy, industry, and enterprise that distinguish the civilized world... With it come all the delights that the word home expresses..." (Hammond, 2007:893)

Obviously, such thinking is a contrast to the Native American conception of land that rejects individual land ownership. Still, reservations and land allotment have always been among the basic disintegration policies of the British and later the United States.

The ecological and demographic disruption caused by the colonial exploits of Spain, France, England, Holland and Russia[11] depleted Indian populations. When aboriginal animal and plant species were destroyed by supplanting with "domesticated European creatures, aggressive European weeds and pests such as the 'English flies' (the honey bee)" (Porter, 2005: 48), people feeding on them had also been destroyed. But, the worst was the coming of the "epidemic diseases to which Native peoples had no resistance while the Europeans were immunized" (Porter, 2005: 48). Smallpox, measles, pneumonia, scarlet fever, typhus and cholera quickly spread among Indians, and loss of great pieces of land and sustenance accelerated the obliteration process.

As it can be understood military engagement is not the major factor in reduction of the tribal populations. In fact, Native Americans have controlled most of America until 1783. Not only they played a determinant role by siding with certain imperial powers but also they showed strong resistance during the colonial period. The successful Pueblo Revolt in 1680 against the Spanish, Aleut revolt against brutal

[11] In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russians had a fur trading settlement in Alaska. Due to the reduction in animal population and competition from the British, they ceded the region.

Russian colonizers, and Pontiac's killing more than 2,000 British troops and settlers in 1763 during the war for Indian independence in the Northwest, can be mentioned as some of the examples. Besides, many Indian leaders have conducted pan-tribal movements resisting assimilation and demanded restoration of Indian land. Moreover, as a strategic defense, over thirty tribes moved to the Great Plains, and established a hybrid culture that hindered the colonizers' westward expansion. They have developed a new economic system with novelties borrowed from the Spanish such as horse, and also a common sign language for intertribal communication.

1.4. Native Americans in the United States and Imposition of Individualism

With The American Revolution in 1775, the colonial period came to an end. The deep impact in the solidarity within Indian communities created by the process of colonization continued with numerous legislations as the new republic was also determined to give no chance to the survival of Native American identity. These legislations not only abraded traditional Indian spirituality, politics and economy but also attempted to displace gender roles with the conflicting European standards and impose individualism through education and other strategies to separate individuals from their tribal communities and reservations. The key acts and federal programs of the period include the Indian Removal Act, the Child Welfare Act, the Dawes Act, the Indian New Deal, the Termination Policy, the Indian Gaming Act, and the Indian Boarding Schools. While some of the federal programs and legislations attempted to annihilate Native American identity, the majority of them functioned to abuse Indian territories, an attempt which later led Native American writers to over-emphasize the importance of land in their creative works. Together with these the Gold Rush, the Civil War, the Wounded Knee massacre, and aggressive Indian activism as a response to the broken treaties[12] and social injustice also played important roles in Native American history. As it will be discussed in the second chapter all these devel-

[12] When the War of Independence was over, Indian alliance with the British legitimized the notorious treaties which were used to relocate Indians from their homelands. Although these treaties had recognized Indian sovereignty, they were constantly broken as Americans greedily pushed west for new land.

opments have affected the foundation of contemporary Native American literary thought, and also all these events or their tragic results are frequently alluded in literary works.

The first important development in American and Native American relations take place during the years from 1830 to 1838, and it can be considered as one of the most tragic periods in Native American History. With the passage of the Indian Removal Act, the Indians living in the Southeast known as the Five Civilized Tribes (Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creek and Cherokee), were forced to vacate their own lands and to move west of the Mississippi River where they were given lands in Indian Territory which is now Oklahoma. The pretext of the Andrew Jackson government was that the tribes were "uncivilized" and therefore unworthy of maintaining their hold on land desired by white farmers. The removal was planned to happen in a series of marches, and the first march started with the Choctaw's migration in 1830. The trip was 1,287 km long, and was impelled under armed pressure of US federal troops and militia. When the series of exiles was completed with the Cherokee removal, more than a quarter of the migrants had died from disease, starvation and cold before reaching the destination. Twenty five percent of the tribal population was destroyed. Alicia Duchak notes that this journey "remains as symbol of the US government's poor treatment of Indian peoples" (1999: 310), and it is remembered today as the "Trail of Tears." This event is later memorialized in John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), Louise Erdrich's *The Master Butchers Singing Club* (2003), and Robert J. Conley's *Windsong: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* (1992). One positive outcome of the period may be considered to be the flourishing of a journalistic tradition in Indian Territory. It was initiated by the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a tribally owned newspaper that played a significant role in literary production.

After 1848, Gold Rush created a significant impact upon Californian Indians. With pouring of miners into the region, settlers' westward stream gained impetus, and gradually more Indians were relocated to reservations. The dramatic change in Indian populations during this period can be observed in the western adventure, *The Life of Joa-quin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (1854) written by the first Native American novelist, Cherokee writer John Rollin Ridge.

The Civil War also gave enough reasons for federal powers to take further action for removal and reduction of Indian territories. During the Civil War, the Five Civilized Tribes had signed treaties with the Confederacy which was also supported by the Comanches and Kiowas. Together with these the Dakota War of 1862 against the Sioux, provided the necessary pretext. On November 29, 1864, Colorado Territory militia attacked a village and massacred two hundred Cheyennes, mostly the elderly men, women and children. In the Southwest the buffalo and Indian winter food supplies were systematically destroyed, thus Navajos, Mescalero Apaches and other western tribes were forced into reservations.

On September 4, 1886, the legendary Indian leader Geronimo and his band, which was one of the last major forces of Indian warriors who refused to acknowledge the US Government, surrendered to the United States Army, and this marked the end of Indian military power. If Indians wanted to survive they had to consent to live in reservations. They had been moved to reservations to become "civilized," and learn farming though they were hunters. However, their equipments were inadequate, lands were infertile and wildlife as a source of sustenance was destroyed. These conditions caused a "demoralized dependence on government agents" (Porter, 2005: 52).

In the late 1880s, The Bureau of Indian Affairs administered new federal programs to ultimately annihilate the Indian culture. Child placement and adoption within non-Indian families which continued until the passage of Child Welfare Act in 1978, and Indian Boarding Schools[13] were two of these programs that targeted children. The largest of these schools, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, was founded by Richard Henry Pratt, an army officer whose motto was "We must kill the savage to save the man." The cruel education programs of the Boarding Schools, which included the prohibition of Indian languages, religion and customs, were based on the dominant society's gender norms and ideals. Indian boys and girls were strictly separated in their duties; while the boys were taught "plowing, planting, field irrigation, the care of stock, and the maintenance of fruit orchards," the girls

[13] The Office of Indian Affairs regarded education as the key to assimilate Native peoples into maimstream American society. When local schools refused to accept Indian children, the goverment was forced to open Indian Boarding Schools in 1880s. These were established far away from reservations to keep the children from their parents' influence (Fleming, 2003). Benally character in *House Made of Dawn*, and Rocky in *Ceremony* are two examples of assimilated children raised in these schools.

were taught “sewing, cooking, canning, ironing, child care, and cleaning” (Adams, 1995: 149-150). However, such ideas of domesticity were contrast with the ideals of the native communities, since Native American societies were based on a matrilineal system in which women were held in a highly respected status as leaders, healers, and agricultural farmers. Consequently, Native Americans, except the members of the Five Civilized Tribes, could never be assimilated into the western norms and continued their traditional systems of living.

The Dawes Act, the most important legislation of the assimilation process, passed in February 1887, and it left an unrecoverable lesion on tribal unity and identity. The purpose of the act was to end the communal and tribal life of Indians and to enforce them to accept assimilation into white American society as farmers and business people. It functioned by dissolving tribes through transferring all communally owned lands and reservations to individual tribe members. The “allotments,” or the pieces of property, were divided into certain quantities: 160 acres of land was given to the head of a family; 80 acres of land to single adults, and 40 acres of land to a child. Moreover, “the land was to be held in trust by the secretary of the interior for twenty five years until it became fully the Indian’s property. The remainder of the land would be bought by the federal government, and the money would be used for the benefit of the tribe” (Duchak, 1999: 83). Since the lands were not suitable for farming and were too small, the owners were forced to sell their lands to non-Indians to avoid starvation. Buying/selling of the land was alien and derogatory to Native Americans. Besides, the act left many Indians landless as land holdings reduced from 138 million acres to 48 million acres between the years of 1887 and 1934, and much of the remaining land was desert.

In 1890, another tragic event occurred in the second largest reservation, located in South Dakota. The roots of the event went back to a religious movement called the Ghost Dance started in 1870s under the leadership of an Indian man, Wodziwob. The religion had “combined Indian round dances with Christian evangelical enthusiasm with the purpose of giving Indians spiritual hope for Indian deliverance” (Duchak, 1999: 129). After the prohibition of the Sun Dance religion by BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) in 1883, a Paiute religious leader, Wovoka, or Jack Wilson revived the Ghost Dance movement in 1890 and it quickly spread. The followers

believed that if they performed dances, they would revive the time before the white Europeans' arrival, and they would bring back the buffalo and all the dead Indian people would come to life. Each tribe practiced the rituals differently. Although the BIA was disturbed and prohibited the ritual, the Sioux Indians living on the Pine Ridge Reservation near Wounded Knee Creek, continued to practice it. On December 29, 1890, US Cavalry was sent to the reservation, and they massacred 153 men, women and children including their older leader Sitting Bull. Other 100 or more also died escaping into the snow. "Wounded Knee Massacre" retains great significance within Indian life and literature. It is also dealt within the first novel written by a Native American woman, S. Alice Callahan's *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891).

Although Indian population had dramatically decreased from millions to just 250,000 by the turn of the century, since 1900 the number is reversed as the current population of Native Americans is around 4 million and is gradually increasing. Moreover, the change is not only present in population numbers; since the beginning of the twentieth century, Native Americans have attended American schools and the majority of them have started to live in urban environments. The Native American Church, foundation of Society of American Indians, or Red Progressives in 1911, and The Alaskan Native Brotherhood and Alaskan Native Sisterhood in 1912, also helped Indian regeneration and the formation of cultural integrity.

During the 1930s various federal laws were passed in hopes of making Indians self-sufficient, also financially and politically independent. The major part of these laws, which were collectively called as the Indian New Deal, was the Indian Reorganization Act that encouraged Indian tribal lifestyle in the politics, government and culture on Indian reservations with federal assistance. The coverage of the act included self-determination and official federal status for each tribe and the right to have a constitution. Besides, it promoted Indian arts, traditions, languages and education, and ended the allotment policy. However, many critics have claimed that the law did not give Indians enough independence as it forced Indian tribes to get approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs before proceeding with the tribal decisions. In other words, BIA had final control and veto powers over the tribal governments.

Indian New Deal ended in 1941 when World War II started. Because of the contribution and valor of American Indians in World War I, they had been given

citizenship in 1924. But this had not created any positive change in their present condition. During the World War II, Americans witnessed a much higher contribution and willingness of Indians. 26,000 Indians served in the army, and 215 of them received medals for bravery. Also many of them went to big cities to work in the factories while some veterans used GI Bill for college enrollment. The Indian experience of wars –including Vietnam and Iraq Wars– have different results as they will be studied while analyzing the novels.

The first nationwide pan-Indian organization, National Congress of American Indians, was founded in 1944, and it has still been working to defend Indians' civil rights in the courtroom by filing cases in the legal system. In the following years, Indian Claims Commission was founded as a temporary federal legal court responsible for hearing all cases and disputes concerning claims made by Indians against the federal government, and it operated between the years of 1946 and 1978. This commission has been the first attempt of the US government acknowledging government injustices against Indians.

However, the termination policy led by the US government between 1953 and 1970 greatly damaged tribal identities, histories and traditions. It also terminated the federal assistance, the reservation system, and the treaty obligations of the US government to Indians. If tribe members promised to live independently as individuals or as a single family, the federal government would pay the tribe a single sum of money to settle all outstanding fees and claims against the US. The lands belonging to the tribe were incorporated into the surrounding state and all members were subject to the state laws. Being stripped of federal services and protection, 61 tribes lost health and educational service and many of them were relocated in reservations experiencing poverty and alienation. The problems of this period can be observed in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. Because of poverty, the two characters of the novel, Abel and Benally are forced to partake in the government's relocation program and move to the urban California where they have to live in miserable conditions as factory workers while at the same time facing racial discrimination. While Benally represents one of the individuals who are separated from the tribal life and integrated into the American system with the relocation program, the other character, Abel

gives an unconscious struggle not to completely lose his already distorted Native American identity.

In 1961, American Indian Chicago Conference convened to announce "Declaration of Indian Purpose" as a counter Termination doctrine, and demanded Self-Determination. This was also supported by activist groups such as National Indian Youth Council, American Indian Movement (AIM) and Alaskan Federation of Natives. The call for Self-Determination and also claims to specific homelands gradually strengthened indigenous coalition and nationalism. During 1960s, Indian activism was in its prime becoming the major influence in raising pan-Indian awareness as well as attracting public attention. Many groups, especially "Red Power" organized protests, marches and other political demonstrations. In 1969, a group of young people and students from various tribes started a peaceful seizure and occupation of the former federal penitentiary, Alcatraz. The movement had a humorous tone as the group claimed the ownership of the island by the right of "discovery," and they faithfully promised to create a reservation on uninhabitable land for the Natives, to be administered by a Bureau of Caucasian Affairs.

In 1972, AIM (American Indian Movement) organized "Trail of Broken Treaties" to peacefully promote rights for Indians and Self-Determination. 400 Indians traveled in different vehicles from San Francisco to Washington D.C., with a list of specific rights called "Twenty Points," that Indians were to receive but did not as the treaties were broken by US government. When their demands were rejected they seized and controlled the BIA building for six days. However, it turned into a violent conflict between Indians and US government officials. In the end, the government agreed to discuss the demands and gave the Indians 66,000 dollars in order to pay for transportation costs back to their homes. This event produced an important media coverage that dramatized Indian issues, and created sympathy towards Indian concerns in the American public.

However, the next big demonstration of AIM cost a higher price. Red Power members symbolically occupied the Pine Ridge reservation on February 27, 1973, in response to the help request of the Sioux tribe members, who held the government appointed Chairman and police force responsible for the corruption. 200 AIM members set up their camp post on the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre, and a 90-day

long stand-off started against government officials (Duchak, 1999: 338). Two Indians and one government agent died, and it only ended when the two sides agreed to negotiate a resolution. This event –sometimes referred to as Wounded Knee II– is a symbol of Indian power and desire of Indians to govern themselves.

In the following years four important pieces of legislation passed: 1972 Indian Education Act that provided comprehensive funding for education of Indian Children and adults; 1978 Religious Freedom Act that aimed protecting native religions; and 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act whose passage is related to the aggressive Indian activism as well as the catastrophic consequences of the thirty years old Termination policy, which was eventually supplanted with Self-Determination by this act. Also, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 provided full-scale protection to the remains and burial grounds of Native Americans, as these had become commercial and archeological sources of exploitation.

During 1980s President Reagan's infamous financial policy, which required severe budget cuts in social services, forced tribes to develop relationships with multinational corporations which were interested in extracting resources from reservation lands and in dumping toxic waste. During the same period, Native American gambling enterprises emerged as a new business industry on the reservations. Using the special status of the reservations, Indian tribes disregarded the state gaming laws and opened tribe-operated casinos and bingo parlours that initially provided an extraordinary source of income for small tribes near tourist regions. However, this business has also been controversial due to the increasing rate of compulsive gambling on reservations. Although it was partly taken under control through Indian Gaming Act of 1988, it is still a growing industry today.

In the present day, over 60 percent of Native Americans live in urban environments such as New York City, Los Angeles and Seattle. While the pan-tribal intellectual community is gradually expanding, they cherish their Native American identity through gatherings like *Pow-wow* where they can dance, sing and socialize. Although corruption, alcoholism and AIDS still haunt the Native Americans in reservations and cities, they represent a powerful society who could "survive national policies of removal, starvation, warfare and genocide" (Lincoln, 1982: 84).

In the literary milieu, the historical experience of Native Americans from the colonial period to the republic, resulted in a sense of "loss" that has always been at the center of contemporary Native American poetry, fiction and non-fiction; it is actually what makes Native American literature what it currently is. The catastrophic loses of life, land and culture and the continuing effects of loses manifested in poverty, disease, drugs, alcohol, crime, and suicide (Roemer, 2005: 12) persist in modern works of literature. Through an historical voice Native American writers acknowledge the brutal realities of destruction of people, environment and religion.

But most significantly, government policies created psychologically displaced individuals who are entrapped between two cultures and rejected by both of them. For this reason, almost every written work deals with characters who are estranged from the experience of their ancestors and thus from their identity and place in this world. While the earlier writers have adopted a mostly European style of writing with less insight into the traumatic experience of the Native Americans, N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko make a radical move, and they fully turn to Native American mythology, philosophy and oral traditions for literary inspiration. While recounting their alienated modern-day protagonists' identity construction, these two writers have incorporated into their novels the ancient Vision Questing ritual, a form of identity construction which has already been practicing for thousands of years in North America. As it will be discussed in the third and the fourth chapters, with their differing perspectives Momaday and Silko consider and give their own "solutions" to the problem of identity in Native American societies.

CHAPTER II

NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

Laguna / Metis scholar Paula Gunn Allen separates Native American fiction into three distinct periods. The period between 1870 and 1970 mainly deals with the loss of land and culture. Characters, themes, and settings in this period are derived from popular European and American works. The writers of the second period between 1974 to 1990 are identified with "a sense of renewal and hope, and they reasserted often deeply angry, Native identity; and incorporation of ritual elements in both structure and content drawn from the ceremonial traditions." In the third period which starts in 1990s the writers' "focus shifts from history and traditional culture unalterably opposed to Anglo-European culture to urbanity and a more comprehensive, global perspective" (Allen, 1996: Introduction).

In order to elaborate Paula Gunn Allen's division, it is possible to further divide the first period into two phases so that the experience of identity can be better evaluated. In the first phase the writers, including Samson Occom, William Apess, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, S. Alice Callahan, Sarah Winnemucca, and Simon Pokagon have tried to prove that Native American identity is being corrupted by the latecomers. In the second phase which starting with the 20th century, a search for identity comes into focus with Mourning Dove and D'Arcy McNickle, and becomes more significant during 1970s with N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Silko. The period after 1970s is also called Native American Literary Renaissance due to the considerable increase in literary production. The writers of this period, including N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Silko, Gerald Vizenor, Louise Erdrich, and James Welch have expressed "a common 'sense of dispossession', a 'mutual sense of historical displacement' and a 'shared struggle for cultural survival and rebirth' (Lincoln, 1983: 3) in the face of enduring Euro-American racism and active attempts to eradicate Native cultures through a wide range of federal Indian policies" (Tillett, 2007: 35).

On the whole, Native American literature is intrinsically political, and from the earlier texts to the modern works of fiction and non-fiction, Native writers and poets keep responding to important political events and issues like,

> The power of institutions (the Christian church, academic disciplines such as anthropology, and the legal and educational systems) over Native peoples; the impact and ramifications of momentous events such as the Wounded Knee Massacre (1890); the prevalence of persistent and damaging forms of racism, both social and institutional (analyzed in Native fiction as early as 1854); and the damaging cultural effects of a range of federal Indian policies that have attempted to redefine the very structure and identity of Native communities and individuals. (Tillett, 2007: 3)

Above all, socio-cultural and individual alienation which is frequently represented by "mixed blood[1]" remains as one of the most central and persistent themes in Native literary tradition. Mourning Dove's *Cogewa the Half-Blood* (1927), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) and Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* (1996) are some of the examples which use mixed blood as a literary strategy.

The majority of Native writers like Silko and Simon Ortiz illustrate the heritage of the oral tradition by re-tellings of sacred stories while other writers such as Gerald Vizenor and Sherman Alexie challenge and subvert the imposed Indian stereotypes and Euro-American assumptions by an ironic implementation of the traditional Trickster discourse. More recent poets and writers such as David Treuer, Aaron Carr, Irvin Morris and Sherwin Bitsui also comments on the harsh realities of contemporary Native life in the US with a broader scope of genres, subject matters and discussions.

[1] The term mixed-blood in the United States is most often employed for individuals of mixed European and Native American ancestry who are not of Hispanic descent. Some of the most prominent in the 19th century were mixed-blood or mixed-race children born of marriages and unions between fur traders and Native Americans along the northern frontier. The fur traders tended to be men of social standing, and they often married or had relationships with daughters of Native American chiefs, consolidating social standing on both sides. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed-Bloods, May 27, 2009)

2.1. Earlier Works

Native American publications in the 18th century were, ironically, limited to evangelical productions. The most famous one is a Christian Indian named Samson Occom, or "the pious Mohegan" as widely known, was the first Native American person to ever publish documents in English. His speech *Sermon at the Execution of Moses Paul* (1772) was given before the execution of an Indian who killed a man while he was drunk. The sermon was about the evils of alcohol and the target audience was the priest's fellow tribesmen. However, the important thing about it is that while the Reverend was criticizing the Indian victims of alcohol, he was making a covert appeal to the white onlookers among the audience, blaming them as the providers of alcohol. Although Occom has sometimes been portrayed over the past century as a product of the English "civilizing" mission due to "his adoption of Euro-American cultural forms such as Christianity and written English," (Joanna, 2006: 4) his place extends far beyond this:

> During his lifetime, Samson Occom (1723-1792) witnessed the colonial infiltration and disruption of traditional tribal sachemships and the erosion of tribal territories. With dedication and vision, in collaboration with members of tribal communities throughout New England and beyond, he worked to reestablished indigenous traditions of collective self-governance and to retrieve spirituality among aggrieved Native communities. Occom believed that English-language literacy and New Light Christianity could potentially serve to bolster Native peoples' political autonomy and spiritual well-being. (Joanna, 2006: 3)

Besides being recognized by literary scholars as "a pioneering Native American writer and a progenitor of Native American literature" Samson Occom "thought of himself first as a Mohegan with profound responsibilities to his own tribal community and to American Indian people in general" (Joanna, 2006: 4). Today, his surviving archive that he completed in a wigwam under "difficult conditions familiar to itinerant preachers" (Joanna, 2006: 5) is the largest body of writing produced by an American Indian author before Santee Sioux intellectual Charles Eastman "compris-

ing about one thousand holograph manuscript pages of diaries, letters, sermons, autobiographies, ethnographies, and hymns" (Joanna, 2006: 5).

Another preacher and a Pequot writer William Apess published the first native-authored book, *A Son of the Forest* in 1829. In his autobiography written in the form of spiritual confession, Apess held whites responsible for alcoholism among Indians by giving the poignant account of the abuse he was confronted by his alcoholic grandparents. Besides, he ironically commented upon white prejudices about conventional Indian identity. With his political works William Apess has a distinctive position in Native American canon. *An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man* (1833), with its canny title, is a harsh criticism of the results of non-Indian policies, and is directed to the whites: "Let me for a few moments turn your attention to the reservations in the different states of New England, and, with but few exceptions, we shall find them as follows: The most mean, abject, miserable race of beings in the world–a complete place of prodigality and prostitution." (Peyer, 2007: 75). The following quotation is taken from the famous brief essay that appeared at the end of his collection of conversion narratives called *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* (1832):

> Now let me ask you, white man, if it is a disgrace for to eat, drink, and sleep with the image of God, or sit, or walk and talk with them. Or have you the folly to think that the white man, being one in fifteen or sixteen, are the only beloved images of God? Assemble all nations together in your imagination, and then let the whites be seated among them… Now suppose these skins were put together, and each skin had its national crimes written upon it – which skin do you think would have the greatest? I will ask one question more. Can you charge the Indians with robbing a nation almost of their whole continent, and murdering their women and children, and then depriving the remainder of their lawful rights, that nature and God require them to have? And to cap the climax, rob another nation to till their grounds and welter out their days under the lash with hunger and fatigue… I should look at all the skins, and I know that when I cast my eye upon that white skin, and if I saw those crimes written upon it, I should enter my protest against it immediately and cleave to that

> which is more honorable. – *William Apess, a Pequot, 1833* (O'Connell, 1992: xiii).

According to Barry O'Connell, Apess' militant consciousness is surprising as he expresses the nature of Euro-American racism in a way similar to those heard in the works of the 1960s or 1970s. About his other prose, *Indian Nullification* (1835) Bernd Peyer explains that,

> [The book] offers detailed documentation of his decisive involvement in a minor but uncommonly successful Indian insurrection of the removal era known as the "Woodland Revolt." Written in the spirit of American revolutionary rhetoric, the book presents the controversy from several points of view (pro and contra) and places it within the relevant context of recent American history. He concludes that white treatment of Indians has been "one continued system of robbery." (Peyer, 2005: 113).

In the late 19th century the boarding school experience began. The first of the writers to attend a boarding school for Indians was Zitkala-Ša meaning Red Bird, or Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. She was born to a full-blood Sioux mother and a white father who disappeared before her birth. At the age of eight Bonnin decided to leave her mother and the reservation to attend a Quaker funded school in Wabash, Indiana. After her studies in Earlham College and the Boston Conservatory of Music, she accepted a teaching position at the Carlisle Indian School which was founded by Richard Henry Pratt, an army officer whose motto was "We must kill the savage to save the man." After working for two years Bonnin resigned and began publishing articles criticizing the Carlisle Indian School and the degradation the students were subjected to. Her works *Why I Am a Pagan* and *The Big Red Apples* causes white readers to reconsider Christian conquests by suggesting that the Indian was corrupted by the dominant culture. Poetic descriptions and humorous anecdotes in her earlier essays "describe an idyllic life that contrasts strongly with the later misery in "School days" and "Indian Teacher" (385). Her other essays and stories are also written in a defiant tone. Lourie Champion tells how her works contribute to contemporary Native American literature:

> In “The Great Spirit” Zitkala-Ša repudiates Christianity and asserts her paganism; in “Blue-Star Woman” and “Indian Problem” she rails against the theft of Native lands, allotments, and legal rights. “A Warrior’s Daughter,” a surprisingly feminist text, proclaims the strength of Dakota womanhood, and in “A Dream” a Native woman reconnects with her dead grandfather and is filled with “new hope for her people” (158). In their themes and rhetoric, these essays and stories prefigure contemporary Native American Literature. (Champion, 2000: 385)

Mostly referred to as an autobiographer and a political activist Zitkala-Ša wrote “short fiction, folklore, drama, and political treatises, pioneering in women’s and Native American publishing in her English proficiency, use of multiple genres, and expression of Native bicultural dilemmas” (Champion, 2000: 385). Noted for her literary and political genius, Bonnin was a member of the Society of American Indians (SAI) and published political works as an activist for Indian self-determination.

S. Alice Callahan is the first native woman writer to publish a novel. *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891) is “written to garner the understanding of a white audience, and, in particular, the woman reader, [by employing] the tactic of using a white, Christian reformer, Genevieve Weir, as a central character to guide her Indian character Wynema to maturity and “civilization” while Genevieve was being educated about Creek culture and Indian issues at the same time.” (Dyke, 2005: 89). According to Andrew Wiget, “that Callahan’s purpose in writing *Wynema* was to arouse her readers’ anger about the outrages perpetuated against Indians is clear from her dedication of the book to the Indian tribes of North America ‘who have felt the wrongs and oppression of their pale-faced brothers’” (Wiget, 1996: 221). Andrew Wiget introduces and summarizes the novel as:

> The plot focuses on the acculturation and romances of two heroines, Genevieve Weir, a non-Indian Methodist teacher from a genteel southern family, and Wynema Harjo, a full-blood Creek child who becomes Genevieve’s best student and dear friend. The first part chronicles Genevieve’s adjustments to life as a Methodist teacher in the Creek Nation. Wynema and Gerald Keithly, a Methodist missionary, help her understand Creek

> culture. A reverse acculturation theme is introduced in Part 2, when Genevieve takes Wynema on a visit to the Weir home. There the heroines must adjust (or readjust) to southern lifestyles. Genevieve accepts Gerald's proposal. In the meantime, Wynema and Robin Weir, Genevieve's sensitive and politically correct brother, fall in love. Both women return to the Creek Nation, where they marry their beloveds. The first two parts of the novel are clearly influenced by the domestic romance plots popular in America from 1820 to 1870. At a time when few women left home before marriage, Callahan makes Genevieve an unusually independent heroine. She also undercuts the stereotypical plot of the plucky white heroine who risks life and limb to bring education and religion to the "savage Heathens" by beginning the novel with a description of the Creek's Edenic life in a virgin landscape and by her characterization of the warm family relationship between Wynema and her doting father, Choe Harjo. (Wiget, 1996: 222)

Although the novel "lacks the complex plots, multidimensional characters, and elevated style of belles letters" (Wiget, 1996: 223) it is important as Callahan not only addresses issues such as the Dawes General Allotment Act and Wounded Knee Massacre, but also comments upon temperance and suffrage for women.

Paiute writer and orator Sarah Winnemucca, or Shell Flower, is the first native woman to publish an autobiography; the book is titled *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883). Widely known as peacemaker Winnemuca, is a popular figure due to her controversial life and her Indian princess costume which she always wore. Since she worked as a translator for the U.S. Army during the Bannock War she was viewed as a collaborator by her fellow Paiutes. *Life Among the Piutes* presents an Indian viewpoint on the impact of whites with polemical arguments like, "Indians do not swear, they have no words for swearing till they learn them of white men." (Winnemucca, 1995: 45). In her book Karen Kilcup explains Winnemucca's attitude to White-Indian relations:

> Like Alice Callahan, Winnemuca delineates a peaceful and civilized tribe deserving whites' generosity and understanding. Willing to risk her livelihood and even her life, she gives outspoken testimony against the wrongs committed by reservation agents, whose corruption, greed, and

> indifference to suffering outraged not only Sarah but many sympathetic observers. She also exposes how governmental representatives and elected officials attempted to prevent her from lecturing and garnering support for her cause. Negotiating between two worlds Winnemucca was often placed in an unstable and uncomfortable position with her own people by the false promises of white officials as well as by her willingness to participate in some of the policies of assimilation. Her gender also caused her difficulties; like many women reformers of her time of any ethnicity, she suffered from the claim that she was promiscuous. In view of the prevalent and unrelenting sexual abuse of Indian women by white men, this charge against her was intensly ironic. At least two of the wars that Sarah describes were sparked by such abuse. (Kilcup, 2000: 129)

In her last years Winnemucca suffered from ill-health as well as emotional stresses due to her relationships, and she died young. Today, she holds an important place in the traditions of Indian women's autobiography and social activism.

The last book of the 19th century was written by Simon Pokagon, who like Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, reflected the distinction between the idyllic Indian life and the cruel white world in *Queen of the Woods (O-gi-mäw-kwe Mit-I-gwä-ki)* (1899). The book tells the story of an Indian couple who after their marriage abandons civilized society to live in the forest, with their two children. However their life turns into a tragedy when their son returns from school as an adolescent drunk, and their daughter is drowned when her canoe is struck by two drunken settlers. According to Brown Ruoff, "a unique aspect of the romance is Pokagon's emphasis on the Potawatomi language. He incorporates Potawatomi words into the narrative, translating them parenthetically, and includes an essay on the Algonquin language." (Wiget, 1996: 278).

The year of 1912 saw the capturing of the last buffalo by the order of the federal government, and Mourning Dove, or Christine Quintasket (Okanogan) was there in Montana to witness the event which would inspire her to write *Cogewa, the Half Blood: A Depiction of the Montana Cattle Range* (1927). The novel tells the story of an ambitious mixed-blood ranch woman named Cogewa who proud of her Carlisle education rejects the friendship of a mixed-blood cowboy, and instead prefers a "crafty easterner." However, by the end of the novel she starts to value the Indian

identity of the cowboy and her grandmother. Because of her efforts to preserve Native American culture and language, Mourning Dove has a much respected place in Native American literature.

Meanwhile, with the rising of ideas about cultural pluralism in 1920s, an interest towards ethnic cultures have spread among intellectuals, who regard the cohesion and communal sense among these cultures strongly in contrast with the atomization present in modern American life. This leads to a minor academic research and public interest which would lead to even more serious intellectual approaches in the 1960s (Porter, 2005: 55). These intellectual developments play an important role in the beginning of modern Native American literature.

1936 marked the publication of the most extraordinary novel in Native American literature before 1968, *The Surrounded* written by Métis writer D'Arcy McNickle. McNickle "was of mixed ancestry and consequently 'passed' as white during his university education" (Tillett, 2007: 28). He attended Oxford University and traveled in Europe. Then he joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs where he played a role in the implementation of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, "which aimed to rectify the culturally devastating mistakes of previous federal Indian policy by emphasizing local tribal self-government" (Tillett, 2007: 28). Published two years after the Indian Reorganization Act, his most important novel, *The Surrounded,* depicts the story of a mixed-blood who tries to find his identity among the Salish tribe whose sovereignty over culture and land is threatened by the Catholic Church and white settlers. The significance of the novel comes from main character's mediating role between Native and Euro-American cultures, and McNickle's consideration of the church as a vehicle of control:

> The protagonist, Archilde Leon, is a mixed-blood product of the Indian education system, and the novel traces his return to the Flathead reservation and his attempts to negotiate between the polarized cultural values represented by his Spanish rancher father and his increasingly traditionalist Indian mother. The complex difficulties of Archilde's negotiations are immediately apparent: within hours of arriving home, 'he was wishing to God that he had stayed away'. Significantly, it is this emphasis upon religion, and upon the power of religion as a form social control, that pro-

> vides the basis for McNickle's discussion of Euro-American cultural imperialism. (Tillett, 2007: 29)

The novel's title signifies the pressures of external demands for cultural assimilation; it is as if "the Indian textual characters [are] 'surrounded' by hostile external forces" (Tillett, 2007: 28). Rebecca Tillett argues about the novel's place in the Native American canon:

> *The Surrounded* analyses the problems facing Indian communities in the 1930s, where Euro-American demands for greater socio-cultural integration and assimilation are pitted against Indian attempts to maintain traditional cultural concepts and values. Significantly, as Birgit Hans argues, McNickle's novel failed to 'fit into either of the two accepted Indian categories' of modern assimilation or romantic history. In this sense, the novel is a 'realistic treatment' not only for contemporary Indian life, but also the cultural alienation experienced by many Indian peoples as a direct result of the history of federal-Indian relations. (Tillett, 2007: 28)

The novel is very important as its emphasis on the preservation of oral traditions for cultural survival and its use of very similar themes foreshadow the first modernist Native American novels, N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer-winner *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*.

It should be noted that the majority of these novels presents mixed-blood protagonists who struggle to reconcile the tribal life and the modern ideas about "progress." Since most of the writers are of mixed heritage this issue is a very central theme in Native American novel. D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* (1936), Mourning Dove's *Cogewa: the HalfBlood* (1927), John Joseph Mathews' *Sundown* (1934) are from the earlier examples. Late novelists like James Welch, Maria Campbell and Gerald Vizenor also continued to use this theme as a metaphor for communal conflicts of identity.

After the publication of *The Surrounded,* an ethnographic novel *Waterlily*, was written by Ella Deloria (Yankton Nakota) in 1940 but not published until 1988. This book is a historical fiction as well as an informative text about kinship and so-

cial relations of the Lakotas, and it is exceptional in two ways; first, it is the most elaborate presentation of "interconnective nature of communal identity" (Roemer, 2005: 13) that can be observed in the narrator's proclamation: "Almost from the beginning [of life] everyone could declare, 'I am not afraid; I have relatives'" (Deloria, 1988: 20), and second, it is a representation of the different point of view of the native writers of historical novels. In contrast to the conventional history based on verifiable facts, Native American writers tend to incorporate story, myth, and symbolism into their historical fiction. Some examples are N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), James Welch's *Fool's Crow* (1986), and Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* (1995).

Finally, in the year of the Alcatraz occupation led by Red Power members, Vine Deloria, Jr. published her famous book *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969), and she became the leading figure of Indian activism in literary milieu. With its sermon-like title, her protest work challenges Indian stereotypes and invites the white audiences to reconsider the history of American expansionism. She criticizes the institutions of dominant society, and as Bernd Peyer notes, it "expresses the firm conviction that Indian ways of life and thought are actually superior in terms of a more humane and ecologically sound choice of existence" (Peyer, 2005: 116).

2.2. Native American Literary Renaissance and Recent Writing

The publication of N. Scott Momaday's novel *The House Made of Dawn* in 1968 and its awarding the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction opened a new era which sometimes referred to as The Native American Literary Renaissance. With its originality that stems from its genius implementation of oral traditions and myths, its subtle characterization and authentic expression of Indian worldview, this novel gave courage and confidence to other Native American writers, and considerable amounts of fiction, poetry, and critical essays succeeded each other until the publication of *Ceremony* in 1977 by Leslie Marmon Silko. The reasons of this steady rise in literary productions of Native Americans actually come from the activist spirit of the 1960s. According to James Rupert, "the counter-cultural perspective of the youth movement

encouraged readers to explore the experiences of minority people and of those marginalized by mainstream American society. Many of these readers sought expressions of community spirit, ecology, and egalitarianism that they could not find in mainstream society. The civil rights movement had turned many people's attention to questions of social justice and naturally Native American claims, having always formed a pole in the development of American self, came to the fore." (Rupper, 2005: 173)

In this regard the reissue of *Black Elk Speaks* in 1961 plays a crucial role in the rise of public interest as this is the first book which gives the white readers an insight to Indian philosophy. *Black Elk Speaks* is a 1932 autobiography of an Oglala Sioux medicine man who gives his life account to a researcher named John Neihardt. The narrative includes some Oglala rituals Black Elk has performed, and the visions he has seen as well. In the following excerpt Black Elk explains how important the spoken word is for him:

> It was the pictures I remembered and the words that went with them; for nothing I have ever seen with my eyes was so clear and bright as what my vision showed me; and no words that I have ever heard with my ears were like the words I heard. I did not have to remember these things; they have remembered themselves all these years." (Neihardt, 2004: 92)

In 1972, the most distinguished Native American playwright of the late twentieth century, Hanay Geiogamah (Kiowa-Delaware) establishes the first successful long-running Native theatre company called Native American Theatre Ensemble (NATE). His two-act play titled *Body Indian* is about the integral disintegration of the Indian community. A drunken Indian, Bobby Lee, who has recently lost a leg in a train accident after passing out on the tracks, drops in on a group of Indian friends to engage in a drinking party. He has just received payment for his government lease and wants to spend the money on drinking. He changes his mind and decides to check into a rehab with the money. However, his so-called friends persuade him to keep on drinking. The scene introduces the image of "drunken Indian" stereotype: unemployed, estranged, purposeless, unwanted, hopeless and unproductive under the

white-controlled economy of poverty. Each time Bobby Lee passes out at the end of a scene, his body is searched by his fellow Indians who want more money to continue their drinking. Finally, Bobby Lee's money is gone and all that is left is his wooden leg which is removed by the Indians to be bartered for liquor. Each scene is closed with the sound of an approaching train whistle, which becomes the symbol of destruction and colonization. "My intention," indicates Geiogamah, "is to depict how Indians abuse and mistreat one another in a dangerously crippling way –not with physical violence, but with actions and gestures that most of them do not see as being insulting, abusive and defeating. It is very gratifying if a non-Indian audience reacts, but Body Indian is primarily for the Indians" (Brown, 1973).

Other important works of the time are James Welch's novel *Winter in the Blood* (1974) which depicts the story of an alienated young man who struggles to rebuild his connections with tradition and family; Peter Blue Cloud's short story collection *Back Then Tomorrow* (1978) in which he incorporates a native trickster into contemporary situations; Louise Erdrich's popular novel *Love Medicine* (1984) in which she mixes oral traditions with a humorous first person narration; and Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan's 1993 novel *Mean Spirit* which reflects the mistreatment of the Osage during 1920s oil boom as well as the destruction of environment. Gerald Vizenor's humorous and witty novel *Bearheart: the Heirship Chronicles* (1978) which is set in a fantastic post-apocalypse America is often considered as the first Indian postmodern novel. It "uses trickster discourse to evoke liberating parody, doubt and wonder so as to escape all kinds of boundaries." (Porter, 2005: 42)

Building upon the successes of writers such as Momaday, Silko, Erdrich and Vizenor, today, Native American writers "continue to engage with Native cultures, histories and politics, and with the literary heritages evident within oral traditions" (Tillett, 136). The highly diverse engagements include gender concerns, thriller genre, "considerations of what it means to be an 'urban Indian', analyses of the ongoing connections between the old world and the new through the many faces of colonialism" (Tillett, 136), and the relationship between culture and land, and its "impact upon the concepts of Indian identity" (Tillett, 136). Working either with independent presses or American university presses, Native writers publish considerable amount of literary works that extend the Native American literary renaissance.

The most prolific of these writers is perhaps Sherman Alexie (Spokane-Coeur d'Alene), "who has produced an astounding ten volumes of poetry, three collections of short stories, two novels and three screenplays since 1991, while also venturing into film direction" (Tillett, 137). Alexie was born in 1966 with hydrocephalus, and was not expected to survive. However, he overcame the impairment that he suffered throughout his childhood. Thanks to his less than active early life, he developed a strong reading habit and did exceptionally well in his education. Being aware of the limits of education at the local reservation school, he was sent to a Euro-American high school in Wellpit and graduated with honours as the only Indian student. He went on to study at Washington State University where he attended poetry workshops. After graduation he won several poetry fellowships. His literary awards include 1996 American Book Award, the 1998 Sundance Film Festival Award (for his screenplay *Smoke Signals*), and the 2005 Pushcart Prize for poetry. Having a mainstream appeal, Alexie was named by *The New Yorker* as one of the top twenty American writers of the twenty-first century.

With his relation to media such as music and film Sherman Alexie is a very popular figure, whose work reaches wider audiences and is characterized as "angry and funny" (Krupat, 2006: 166). Implementing a parody of Indian stereotypes and a 'trickster' status, what Alexie demonstrates is the "highly political presentation of the often bleak realities of contemporary Native American life" which is the result of "the direct legacy of Euro-American settlement, and of subsequent federal-Indian relationship and policies" (Tillett, 137). His textual Indian characters are,

> often culturally alienated and even stereotypical (John Smith in *Indian Killer* is both tragically noble and appropriately savage), yet these characters are also angrily vocal about Euro-American appropriations of Native cultures: as Owens comments, all these characters 'know how to do is to protest the existence of white people.' (Tillett, 137)

Alexie is especially well-known for his combination of satirical humour, and anger as it is suggested in his definition of Native American cultural endurance: "Survival = Anger X Imagination" (Alexie, 1997: 150). His lyrical style, which "is a

skilful blend of poetry and short story that employs the kind of idiosyncratic visual images and concisely mocking comments" (Tillett, 139) can be observed from his consideration of the blood quantum[2] in *The Business of Fancydancing*, which he also adapted and directed as a film in 2003:

> I cut myself to sixteen equal pieces
> keep thirteen and feed the other three
> to the dogs…
> It is done by blood, reservation, mathematics, fractions:
> father (full blood) + mother (5/8) = son (13/16)
> (Alexie, 1992: 6)

Another significant writer who emerges in recent years is David Treuer (Ojibwe). Born in 1971, Treuer was raised on the Leech Lake reservation in northern Minnesota, and is the son of a Holocaust survivor and a tribal judge (Tillett, 153). After getting a degree in anthropology and creative writing from Princeton University, he currently teaches at the University of Minnesota and is active in work to maintain the Ojibwe language (Tillett, 153). His works mainly discuss socio-cultural and political issues. Rebecca Tillett explains how his novels trace the historical and cultural developments:

> His first novel, *Little* (1995), opens in a small reservation community called Poverty where 'the grave we dug for my brother Little remained empty even after we filled it back in'. tracing the mystery of Little's death, Treuer's novel ensures that the re-creation of Little's story is also the re-creation of the history of Poverty and its inhabitants, thus presenting a detailed and tense picture of Indian life across three generations. [His] second novel, The Hiawatha (1999), focuses on an urban setting, commenting on the federal relocation initiatives of the 1960s. Textual

[2] Blood quantum is a racial classification system used by both federal and tribal governments to regulate tribal enrollment. To be legally identified as Indian and given certain rights, a person has to demonstrate his/her *Indianness* through a 'certificate of degree of Indian blood'. According to Rebecca Tillett, "the blood quantum is intrinsically racist in its measurement of the amount of 'Indian blood' an individual has: the current requirements for tribal enrolment vary from tribe to tribe, from as little as one thirty-second to as much as five-eights. As a result, [it is] an issue that deeply divides Native communities, and which Vizenor for one identifies as 'perverse arithmetics'" (Tillett, 139).

> events revolve around a family attempting to come to terms with one son killing another under the influence of alcohol and so, significantly, comment not only on the devastating effects of alcohol within Native communities but the often concomitant familial violence. [His] third novel will explore Native translations of Native texts, and so looks set to provide a timely consideration of the power of language. (Tillett, 154)

The interaction of Indian literature with thriller genre has been with Aaron Carr (Navajo-Laguna Pueblo) who is primarily a film-maker having made several documentaries about contemporary Native life. In his works, he blends,

> European gothic with Native cultural traditions, and [exposes] a range of ongoing oppressions – for example, resource exploitation in the American Southwest – through the deployment of the vampire figure, who makes clear connections between the 'Stench of petroleum waste. And the timorous scent of blood'. (Tillett, 155)

Criticism against corporate industry in the Southwest and ecological discussions are also featured in the works of Irvin Morris and Sherwin Bitsui. These writers "emphasize the damaging and inter-related activities of science, technology and industry" (Tillett, 155). In *From the Glittering World,* Morris presents a comparison of cultural Navajo understanding that sees the land as "a living, sacred entity" (Morris, 1997: 33) and Euro-America's environmental abuse through use of technology. Similarly, Bitsui also presents conflicting Euro-American and Native worldviews in his first volume of poetry *Shapeshift* (2003): "the cab driver asked if I was American Indian. I said, *No, I'm of the Bitter Water People*" (Bitsui, 2003: 3).

Many recent poets describe their concerns about the Native American cultural integrity through their poetry. For example, in *Three Thousand Dollar Death Song*, Hopi / Miwok poet Wendy Rose comments upon the purchase of sacred Indian lands: "At what cost then / our sweet-grass-smelling / having-been? Is it to be paid / in clam shell beads or steatite, / dentalia shells or turquoise, / or blood?" (Wilson, 2005: 154). Similarly Iroquois poet Roberta Hill Whiteman comments on the incursion of business corporations to reservation lands in *Acknowledgement*: "Some of you bluster

and do not believe / we have cut out the heart of the sky. / You give gasoline to the lords / of your death, / spoon out the sugar, / ignoring its tears." (Whiteman, 1996: 23-24). In the following poem Tiffany Midge draws a cynical picture of contemporary times from a native perspective:

> The bones of the dead
> are excavated, scattered, sold.
> Shrines are blasted from sacred
> rock in the name of patriotism.
>
> Lakota religion is stolen by goofy mystics
> peddling crystals and incense.
> Cherokee becomes just another band
> for affordable clothing and 4x4s.
>
> A magnificent past is reduced to hallmark
> cards postmarked galaxies away. (Midge, 1996: 102)

Other writers that should be mentioned are Deborah Miranda, "whose work is marked by her analysis of mixed blood, of lesbian sexuality, and avowed refusal to indulge in racial essentialism" (Tillett, 157), Janet McAdams, who blends "highly personal poetry with deeply political commentary" (Tillett, 158) on imperial aggression, and Karenne Wood (Monacan) who focuses on women's political issues.

With more recent writers and poets such as Kimberley Roppolo, Mia Heavener, Judy R. Smith, Frederick White, M. Castro, Cathy Ruiz, Kim Shuck, and Rebecca Hatcher Travis, Native American canon is gradually extending with political discussions, assertion of Indian presence, and discussions of ethnicity, gender and sexuality.

2.3. Discussions on the Representation of Native American Identity

With the emergence of a pan-tribal intellectual community of Native American writers after the 1970s, Native American languages, cultures and literatures started to be researched and taught in academic environments. However, since Native American Studies is a relatively new field of research, it still involves problematic issues, and it is the playground of new ideas and approaches. The main discussions in Native American studies related to identity focus upon the "representation" of Native American identity in media, literature, and history. These may be examined under four topics: labeling of the Native American literature as a field of research, use of English language, the feminist approach, and literary translation.

Labeling of the Native American literature has been one of the issues that the critics do not compromise. Some critics prefer to use American Indian or Indigenous Literature, while others argue that these names impose the European concept of "primitive" and therefore Native American Literature is more appropriate. In addition, few critics propose to use a word borrowed from a native language, but the idea do not find support as it would mean to reduce radically diversified people and complex net of international background to a single group and its language. Similarly, categorization of the field is controversial; while it is sometimes grouped with postcolonial literatures recent critics find this term deficient for reflecting the Native American experience. On the other hand, some writers like Alan Velie and Gerald Vizenor link oral traditions to postmodernism. In *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999), Craig Womack presents a nationalist perspective and claims that Native American literature should not be accepted within an American canon, rather it should be separate and prior to it (Womack, 1999: 11). For him, this is necessary to delete "depoliticizing and dehistoricizing" attitude of the recent successful popular works of Native American literature. Another Native American critic, Jace Weaver has criticized "denigration of native identity and cultural specificity in favor of a Eurocentric universalism" (Weaver, 1997: 14). Arnold Krupat classifies these differing critical perspectives under such terms as "nationalism, indigenism, and cosmopolitanism" in *Red Matters: Native American Studies* (2002: 1-24).

Another subject of discussion is whether the use of English language a correct means of expression. In *Reinventing the Enemy's Language* (1977) Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird argue that "having to use english does not entail a passive adoption of white values," but it is an "act of cultural and political assertion" (cited in Murray, 2005: 77). As David Murray explains, their attitude is that ""Reinventing" in the colonizers tongue and turning those images around to mirror an image of the colonized to the colonizers as a process of decolonization indicates that something is coming into focus that will politicize as well as transform literary expression" (Murray, 2005: 77). Leslie Silko also claims that pueblo people "are more concerned with story and communication and less concerned with a particular language." (Porter, 2005: 59)

Feminist approach is also a lively and viable issue as a part of the Native American studies. Out of nostalgia for the matrilineal past almost all of the native woman writers, poets, and critics have incorporated a feminine perspective into their works of expression. The premiere poet of Native American Literature Joy Harjo (Muskogee/Cherokee) has often reflected women's relationship to land, their centrality and great endurance in her chant-like rhythms as Louise Erdrich does in her novels. Earlier writers like Ella Cara Deloria and Winnemucca have fought against Native American stereotypes like violent, degraded, and filthy "squaw[3]" image. In contemporary times this perspective has led to an undertaking of the issue in a more intellectual basis. Especially one of the most important scholars of the last decade, Paula Gunn Allen has been quite influential. Coming from a highly mixed descent (Laguna, Sioux, Scottish, and Lebanese-American), Allen grew up in the Laguna Pueblo Reservation in New Mexico. In her only novel *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* (1983) and academic writings such as *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986) she predominantly argues that Native tribes are "gynocratic", that is to say the authority belongs to women as the descent is matrilineal and the primary deities are female. And, the central role of the women is disrupted by phallogocentric European colonizers. A similar theme is also used in Ella Cara Deloria's novel *Waterlily* (1988, written in 1940s) in which she

[3] An Algonquian morpheme meaning woman; it is used pejoratively by English speakers to refer to all Native American women.

reflected the highly respected status of women before the European contact. Allen's claim is that if the centrality of women to most American Indian societies is recognized, the perspective would change from the image of a dying Indian culture to a thriving and continuing culture. These views are highly criticized by some critics like Gerald Vizenor who has claimed that Indian women have an equal status to men rather than a higher status. However, Allen's critical works have been very influential in feminist studies.

Perhaps the most problematic issue in Native American literature has been the translation of oral narratives. Since oral traditions are live performances whose meaning can not be conveyed through mere linguistic expressions and literal translations, authenticity in their translations has always been a problem. Although early travelers and missionaries have sometimes recorded Indian myths and stories in correct and fluent English translation, these texts are far from being satisfactory, because they miss out traditional forms of oral narratives. With the development of anthropological interest, major figures such as Franz Boas and Frances Densmore introduce a new ethnographic approach. With the aim to "give as complete a record of the relevant information as possible rather than shaping it to white literary expectations" (Murray, 2005: 71) this later approach introduces an interlinear, word by word translation which accompanied a looser translation in more correct English. Besides, it gives explanatory notes about context and even sometimes a musical transcription, using western notation. However, this approach still lacks the performance aspect of oral narratives. Today, the popular approach includes expectations, knowledge and responses (laughter, fear etc.) of the audience. But still some scholars regard translation as a literary diminishment, because they think that many aesthetic elements of the oral narratives such as music and intonation cannot be translated. Furthermore, by claiming "universality" of subject matters, some translators have made experimental attempts and developed Haiku-like forms. These loose universalizing translations are strictly opposed by modern scholars like Craig Womack.

Given the paradoxical issues and complex diversity in the canon, Native American literature is obviously a tough field of research that requires the knowledge of multiple discourses which are Native American and western. Behind all these discussions along with the various strategies and techniques used in the works of Native

American literature, in fact, lie the fancy of a new generation that seeks to create a Native American future. It is a generation which shall in Gerald Vizenor's words, "hear the stories of the past, bear the horrors of the moment and write to the future" (Vizenor, 1994, 51). By firm and sonorous steps Native American peoples are trying to extend their several thousand years old traditions to new eras, genres, discourses, and a new language.

CHAPTER III

HOUSE MADE OF DAWN: THE RESTORATION OF INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY AND RECONCILIATION OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Born in Oklahoma in 1934, N. Scott Momaday is Kiowa on his father's side, "and on his mother's side, he is primarily of European ancestry, with a distant infusion of Cherokee blood" (Owens, 92). While his father grew up in his Native culture and speaking his native language, his mother was raised within the dominant culture; however, as a young woman she decided to reclaim her Indian identity. This decision of his mother would create such a great influence upon Scott Momaday that in his memoir, *The Names* (1976) he explains that "his mother's example of reimagining herself as an Indian greatly influenced [his] own sense of self and his conviction that all of us discover our most essential being and identity in acts of the imagination" (Allen 2005: 208). Momaday spent his early years moving between his father's native town, the Kiowa country and the Indian reservations in Arizona and New Mexico. Both of his parents were educated teachers in the Navajo reservation and later at Jemez pueblo; his father Al Momaday was also a well known visual artist and illustrated Scott Momaday's mixed-genre book *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), and his mother Natachee Momaday published short stories and three books. Encouraged by his family, Momaday pursued graduate study in literature. Under the guidance of Yvor Winters he completed a Master's degree in creative writing at Stanford University, and then earned a PhD in 1963. Since mid-1960s Momaday has produced creative works in all genres and has held professorships at several major universities.

When Momaday's debut novel *House Made of Dawn* was published in 1968, it rapidly drew the attention of the critics of the mainstream literary establishment as

the first "serious" and intellectually demanding novel produced by a Native American. With the awarding of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969 Momaday's reputation was secured and the novel was widely acclaimed with its complex imagery and sophisticated narration. *House Made of Dawn* depicts the recovery and reintegration process of Abel, a displaced and alienated war veteran, through oral traditions and his understanding of the power of language.

Abel returns from service in the war to his home in the small rural town of Jemez, New Mexico in 1945 to live with his only relative, his grandfather Francisco. Shortly after his return he meets a young white woman named Angela who has come to Jemez to seek a cure for her physical and spiritual illness, and they eventually have an affair. In the course of the novel the reader is informed about Abel's past through flashbacks: the death of his mother and brother Vidal out of disease, their dubious parentage which puts them in an alienated position among the Pueblo community, and Abel's violation of a communal ceremony by killing an eagle. Upon his return he kills an albino man who humiliates him, and put into prison. After six years he is given a conditional release and sent to Los Angeles as a factory worker under the care of Indian Relocation program. There, Abel meets two persons who will play a role in the recovery of his distraught identity: Benally, a fellow Indian man carried away by the American dream, and Tosamah, an eccentric and cynical Indian priest. After a clash with an ex-cop named Martinez, Abel is got beaten almost to death while he is drunk. Having survived the worst situation, he realizes that he has nothing but one way to go, his hometown.

Abel's account is supported by minor figures who are also displaced and in a way complementary constituting the opposing poles of a balance scale. These characters are displaced because they cannot comprehend the Native American cosmology that insists upon a "universal balance". The Native American concept of "balance" insists that every element in this world, such as "good" and "evil," is equally important and therefore they should be accepted as a reality of existence, not as something to be challenged. For example, a person who is identified with "good" should not challenge something identified with "evil"; instead this person should accept and avoid the presence of evil. Only through this understanding which acknowledges everything in the universe as necessary a person can gain his/her identity

and be integrated into his/her community. In his novel, Momaday presents two main oppositions which are expected to be reconciled by certain characters who are searching for their identity. These oppositions are: Euro-American (white and Christian) versus Indian, and the good versus the evil.

In the course of the novel Abel undergoes three trials in which these oppositions are tested. His first confrontation is with a captured eagle that is a personification of evil. His second confrontation is his meeting with an albino who is a personification of both evil and white. And his last encounter is with Martinez, who is a personification of evil. Abel fails in all of these by trying to destroy the opposite force which is evil; hence his identity is fragmented with each failure. He can recover himself only through a healing ritual. Among the other characters Abel is the only one who can fully recover himself and gain a complete identity. For these points, he can be considered as a questing hero.

Angela's quest of identity is also situated upon white/Indian opposition which stems from the contrast between the white and the Indian understanding of nature. Angela hates her body and the baby she carries, because she sees in her flesh the animalistic aspect of human nature. However, when she discovers the "bear" inside Abel and when she makes love with him, she steps through the boundary of a different and alien epistemology that does not make a distinction between animals and humans. Similarly, the town priest Father Olguin's alienation comes from the strangeness of his Euro-American identity among the Pueblo. He represents the white colonizer forced to live among the Pueblo. Perhaps, Father Olguin, due to his sense of guilt, feels disturbed and challenged by the persistence of the Indians to preserve their cultural identity. So his reconciliation with the Pueblo community needs time and contemplation. Other three characters differ in the way that they are not in quest of identity either because they have completely lost it or they have already established it. Benally represents the typical urbanized Indian who is completely assimilated into American norms of living. On the contrary, Francisco can be considered as an example for his ability to establish a balance of identity. As it will been seen, he could perfectly achieve to reconcile Christian/Indian and good/evil oppositions. With his trickster identity Tosamah has a very special status in the novel. As it is seen in the section titled "Trickster Tales", trickster is a person who instructs peo-

ple without even knowing it. In the example given in that section, Coyote was showing the cultural norms that people were expected to conform while at the same time he was making a fool of himself. Although Tosamah is quite intelligent, he has distinctive trickster qualities; in the first place he is garrulous and a trouble maker but, more significantly he helps Abel's recovery. By taunting and humiliating Abel, he unconsciously accelerates Abel's psychological fragmentation process until Abel totally loses his control, which is a preliminary and urging step for the restoration of his identity.

The development of all the characters is given in the framework of a narrative structure which makes use of oral traditions which are considered as a transformative power reminding the characters of their role and place in this world. The narrative structure mimics the cyclical nature of Native American time by giving the end of the story in the beginning. The oral traditions constitute the structure which Momaday links Abel's quest of identity with the ancient hero stories.

3.1. Racial and Cultural Binary Oppositions in the Novel

Considering the binary oppositions in *House Made of Dawn*, it wouldn't be wrong to say that the novel is about binarism which Sándor Hervey describes as "the passion of those who tend to see everything as divided into two categories" (1982: 24). However, binary oppositions are not always that simple. For this reason, the Lithuanian linguist A. J. Greimas has introduced the semiotic square, having adapted from Aristotle's logical square, as a means of analyzing paired concepts like those found in *House Made of Dawn* (Greimas 1987, xiv, 49). The semiotic square is intended to map the logical conjunctions and disjunctions by referring to key semantic features in a text. The purpose is to show that the possibilities for signification in a semiotic system are richer than the *either/or* of binary logic and the entire mechanism is capable of generating ten different positions out of a rudimentary binary opposition (Greimas, 1987: xiv). Fig.1 shows the mapping method with the four main positions, and Fig.2 is an example of black/white opposition:

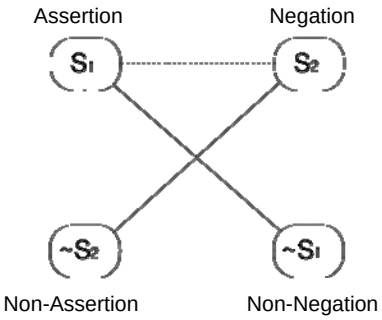


Fig. 1

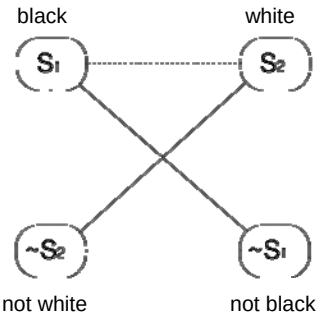


Fig. 2

The symbols S1, S2, Not S1 and Not S2 represent positions within the system which may be occupied by concrete or abstract notions (Chandler, 106). The upper corners of the Greimasian square represent an opposition between S1 and S2 (e.g. black and white) (Chandler, 106). The lower corners represent positions which are not accounted for in simple binary oppositions: Not S2 and Not S1 (e.g. non-white and non-black). Here what creates the difference is the fact that S1 is not the same thing as –S2; in other words, which is not white is not necessarily black and vice versa, a thing which is not black (–S1) is not necessarily white (S2). As a result the real contradiction is not between black and white (S1 and S2); the contradiction is actually between black and not black (S1 and –S1); and similarly between white and not white (S2 and –S2)[1]. The important thing is that the terms at the top (S1, S2) represent "presences", while their companion terms (Not S1 and Not S2) represent "absences" (the "hidden" underlying themes in a text that are waiting to be highlighted[2]) (Chandler, 106). Thus every sign which occupies a position within the framework gains meanings.

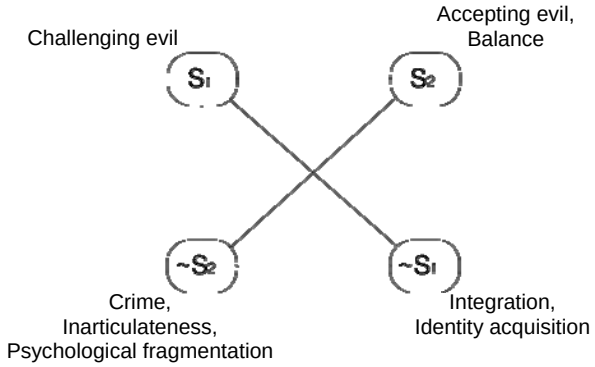
In *House Made of Dawn* "we witness the confrontation of two antagonistic intellectual systems" (Chandler 2008): Abel's futile and obsessive urge to destroy

[1] Greimas refers to the relationship between S1 and S2 as *contrariety*; the horizontal pairs as *complementarity*; and the diagonal pairs as *contradiction*.

[2] Semioticians often focus on what they refer to as "absences". Saussure noted that a characteristic of what he called "associative" relations (paradigmatic relations) was that (in contrast to syntagmatic relations) such relations held "*in absentia*" (in the absence from a specific text of alternative signifiers from the same paradigm) (Saussure, 1983: 122). He also argued that signs take their value within the linguistic system from what they are *not* (Saussure, 1983: 115).

evil, and the Indian understanding of Balance which acquiesces evil. In his book, Fredric Jameson applies the semiotic square to Charles Dickens' novel *Hard Times*; the following passage is Adam Chandler's summary of Jameson's application, here it is adapted to *House Made of Dawn*:

> The novel is primarily the conversion of [Abel] from his monomaniacal system to the opposing one. It is thus a series of lessons administered to [Abel], and we may sort these lessons into two groups and see them as the symbolic answers to two kinds of riddles. It is as though the plot of the novel, seeking now to generate the terms Not S1 and Not S2, were little more than a series of attempts to visualize the solutions to these riddles: What happens if you negate or deny [Balance]? What would happen if, on the contrary, you negated [challenging evil]? Gradually the products of [Abel's] system show us the various forms which the negation of the negation, which the denial of [Balance], may take: [Abel's crimes, his imprisonment, inarticulateness and identity crisis]. Thus the absent fourth term comes to the centre of the stage; the plot is nothing but an attempt to give it balanced being, to work through faulty solutions and unacceptable hypotheses until an adequate embodiment has been realized in terms of the narrative material. With this discovery [(Abel's integration with the Indian world and his identity acquisition)], the semantic rectangle is completed and the novel comes to an end. (Chandler, 2008) (Jameson, 1972: 167-168)



The evil that is challenged is most distinctively personified in the albino during the murder scene where he is described as "large, lithe, and white skinned… The

face was huge and mottled white and pink, and the thick, open lips were blue and violet. The flesh of the jowls was loose, and it rode on the bone of the jaws." This description clearly portrays him like a snake, and it is further reinforced by the albino's repulsive qualities (Owens, 100):

> The white man raised his arms, as if to embrace him, and came forward. But Abel had already taken hold of the knife, and he drew it. He leaned inside the white man's arms and drove the blade up under the bones of the breast and across. The white man's hands lay on Abel's shoulders, and for a moment the white man stood very still… Then he closed his hands upon Abel and drew him close. Abel heard the strange excitement of the white man's breath, and the quick, uneven blowing at his ear, and felt the blue shivering lips upon him, felt even the scales of the lips and the hot slippery point of the tongue, writhing. (HMD, 82)

Thus, the Albino is identified with the snake representing evil in the novel. In addition, it is suggested that he is related to witchcraft. As we understand from Father Nicolas's journal he was born in 1875 which makes him seventy years old, but he is still young and vigorous (Owens, 199). While he is dying his appearance suddenly changes as he "seemed just then to wither and grow old. In the instant before he fell, his great white body grew erect and seemed to cast off its age and weight; it grew supple and sank slowly to the ground, as if the bones were dissolving within it" (HMD, 83) Also Momaday himself tells that "He (the albino) is manifesting the evil of his presence. Witchcraft and the excitement of it is part of that too" (Schubnell, 1990: 65). Louise Owens recites a letter written by Momaday to his editor at Harper & Row, about the albino character: "He is a white man, or rather 'white man' in quotes, in appearance, but in fact he is neither white nor a man in the usual sense of these words. He is an embodiment of evil like Moby Dick, an intelligent malignity" (Cox, 2006: 85) (Owens, 102). Actually, as Owens also suggests *House Made of Dawn* draws parallel with Herman Melville's classic novel, *Moby Dick,* whose narrative structure incorporates the very same semiotic square based upon the opposition between challenging evil and accepting evil.

In Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*, the white whale is "an intelligent malignity" through the perception of Ahab, a bigoted Calvinist whose imagination perceives the world as strictly divided into good and evil allowing no ambiguity and no polysemy (Owens, 102). Obviously, Ahab's mono-maniacal dialectic contradicts the traditional perception of Native American cosmology which equally embraces every element in nature including evil, and insists upon balance. Melville's Ishmael may be said to represent this kind of vision as he is able to accept, the "riddling blankness" of the whale (Owens, 102). Without seeing a mono-maniacal vision of evil, he is the balanced man as he tells us at the beginning: "Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a horror, and could still be social with it–would they let me–since it is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place one lodges in" (Melville, 1994: 26). For this reason Ishmael is the only survivor of the novel; his philosophy perceives both good and evil, a consciousness that ensures balance (Owens, 102). Abel on the other hand, does not act in the manner of Ishmael as his contemplation about his murder is far from being repentant: "He had killed the white man. It was not a complicated thing, after all; it was very simple… A man kills such an enemy if he can" (HMD, 102). This way Abel has acted in the manner of Ahab attempting to destroy evil. "Just as Ahab and the white whale inextricably united at the end of *Moby Dick*, at the moment of his death the albino reaches out to embrace Abel" (Owens, 103). The murder scene is narrated like a kind of "homoerotic self-sacrifice" (Owens, 1994: 103) by the white man, who "raised his arms, as if to embrace him, and came forward."

> Then he closed his hands upon Abel and drew him close. Abel heard the strange excitement of the white man's breath, and the quick, uneven blowing at his ear, and felt the blue shivering lips upon him, felt even the scales of the lips and the hot slippery point of the tongue, writhing. (HMD, 82)

It is apparent that the albino is excited by his triumph, because in attempting to destroy evil Abel has become one with it.

Unlike Abel, Francisco "knows the proper way to deal with evil" (Owens, 104) in the world. We are informed two experiences of confrontation with evil by Abel and Francisco. While playing in the cornfield as a child, Abel is cursed by the witch Nicolas *Teah-Whau* who suddenly appears near the field. Frightened by the witch, Abel runs away and comes near a snake-killer dog, but the dog acts strangely:

> The dog had quivered and laid back its ears. Slowly it backed away and crouched, not looking at him, not looking at anything, but listening. Then he heard it, the thing itself. He knew even then that it was only the wind grew loud, and it filled him with dread" (HMD, 12)

According to Pueblo and Navajo beliefs dogs are able to sense the witches whose presence can also be felt by a ringing in the ears like moaning of the wind Abel hears at the same time (Owens, 1994: 104). Years later, after Abel's return from the war Francisco experiences the presence of evil while hoeing his corn. At first he hears whispers and ringing in his ears:

> But now, at the end of long exertion, his aged body let go of the mind, and he was suddenly conscious of some alien presence close at hand… His ears rang with weariness… He was too old to be afraid. His acknowledgement of the unknown was nothing more than a null, intrinsic sadness, a vague desire to weep, for evil had long since found him out and knew who he was" (HMD, 65)

From the following description we understand that the presence of evil is associated with the albino: "And there the breathing resumed, rapid and uneven with excitement. Above the open mouth, the nearly sightless eyes followed the old man out of the cornfield, and the barren lids fluttered helplessly behind the colored glass" Unlike Abel, Francisco acknowledges the presence of evil and turns away, because he knows that evil cannot be destroyed. "According to Navajo worldview, from the time of creation the universe is a dangerous place precariously balanced between good and evil" (Owens, 104). For this reason, healing ceremonies like the Night Chant focus on harmony and balance in both the individual and nature. That's why

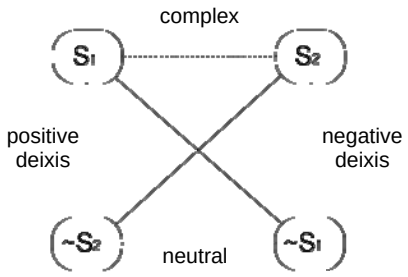
rattlesnake is respected and feared by the Pueblo; it is a dangerous creature whose power should be acknowledged and avoided, but never killed (Owens, 105).

Francisco is the only balanced man who can fuse two different worlds and their epistemological views. For this reason the old priest Nicolas condemns him in a letter written to J.M.: "He is one of them & goes often in the kiva & puts on their horns & hides & does worship that Serpent which even is the One our most ancient enemy. Yet he is unashamed to make one of my sacristans" (HMD, 51). This way he also represents the enduring strength of the Pueblo determined to preserve their traditional ways of living. Momaday explains this in the novel:

> Their invaders were a long time conquering them; and now, after four centuries of Christianity, they still pray in Tanoan to the old deities of the earth and sky… They have assumed the names and gestures of their enemies, but have held on to their own, secret souls; and in this there is a resistance and an overcoming, a long outwaiting. (HMD, 58)

Francisco is able to bring the Indian and Christian worlds together and hence establish a heterogynous unity, because he is aware that wholeness is essential to avoid division and fragmentation that brings illness. Like the Pueblo cultures, he subverts the language of the church by appropriating the dominant discourse of the conqueror. As a result, in a semiotic square based upon the white/Indian opposition Francisco cannot have a place among the four terms (S1, S2, -S1, and -S2). However, as it has been mentioned, the semiotic square is capable of producing ten positions: four terms and six metaterms which are:

S1 + S2 : complex term
-S2 + -S1 : neutral term
S1 + -S2 : positive deixis
S2 + -S1 : negative deixis
S1 + -S1 : unnamed
S2 + -S1 : unnamed



While the albino man occupies the neutral position (neither white nor Indian), Francisco synthesizes the elements of the opposition, and occupies the complex position (both white and Indian) standing for what Abel should be in the end of his long and difficult journey. The same kind of cultural synthesis is a lesson to be learned by Angela as well as Abel. But this time, the lesson focuses upon the opposition between the physical and the spiritual.

Angela Grace Martin St. John, the distraught white woman, comes to Jemez from Los Angeles to live in the Benevides ("good health") house to find cure in the healing waters of Los Ojos. As Owens notes "Angela's physical and spiritual selves are alienated from one another" (Owens, 105); she hates her body, and the baby she carries.

At first, her long and strongly Christian name reminds the dualistic struggle between good and evil, a counter religious perception to that of Native American which insists on balance and wholeness. As an outcome of her otherness in Jemez, she lacks the ability to "see" what the Indians can perceive:

> A few days before she had seen the corn dance at Cochiti. It was beautiful and strange… It was simply that they (the dancers) were grave, distant, intent upon something that she could not see. Their eyes were held upon some vision out of range, something away in the end of distance, some reality that she did not know, or even suspect. (HMD, 36)

Angela suspects a different epistemology from which she is excluded, "some vision out of range" indicates that she cannot see what the Natives see. This stems from the "de-privileged non-Indian reality" (Owens, 105). Momaday further extends

this non-Indian strangeness by claiming that some creatures "have tenure in the land" while the late comers do not:

> The other, latecoming things–the beasts of burden and of trade, the horse and the sheep, the dog and the cat–these have an alien and inferior aspect, a poverty of vision and instinct, by which they are estranged from the wild land, and made tentative" (HMD, 57)

However, from the very beginning Angela watches to comprehend Abel's world while he offers a lesson in the unity of things in nature for a brief moment. A lesson which is first suggested while she is watching Abel chopping wood:

> Once she had seen an animal slap at the water, a badger or a bear… She would have liked to cup her hand to the wet black snout, to hold for a moment that hot blowing of the bear's life. She went out of the house and sat down on the stone steps of the porch. He was there rearing above the wood (HMD, 32)

Growing beyond the "poverty of vision" the white woman starts learning to "see" as she discovers the bear power in Abel which has passed him from his grand-father. Francisco had earned this power when the bear gave itself to him in the bear hunt ritual during his youth. For Jemez people badger and bear are considered as younger and elder brother, and they are powerful healers (Parsons, 2003: 62). When making love with Abel, Angela thinks "the badger at the water, and the great bear, blue-black and blowing" (HMD, 63). As she learns to see the interconnectedness of things Angela moves towards integration and health. This new vision is "emphasized one night when she returns and sees Benevides house in a new way" (Owens, 107): "There was no longer a high white house of stucco and stone… but a black organic mass the night had heaved up, even as long ago the canyon itself had been wrenched out of time" (HMD, 54). The following paragraph reflects Angela's new sight:

> She would see into the windows and the doors… She would see whether the hollyhocks were bent with bees… She would regard the house in the light of day… And the Benevides house, which she had seen from the

> river and the road, to which she had made claim by virtue of her regard, this house would be the rings and the stage of a reckoning (HMD, 54)

The story Angela talks about during her visit to the hospital after her former lover is beaten, also indicates her spiritual transformation. There she tells Abel a story that she likes to tell her son Peter. The story is about a young Indian who "was born of a bear and a maiden" and who "had many adventures, and… became a great leader and saved his people." Angela tells Abel that "she always thought of him, Abel, when she told him [her son]" (HMD, 187). Ben who has been sitting in the hospital room and has heard Angela's story, thinks, "Ei Yei! A bear! A bear and a maiden. And she was a white woman and she thought it up, you know, made it up out of her own mind, and it was like that old grandfather talking to me, telling me about *Esdzá shash nadle*, or *Dzil quigi*, yes, just like that" (HMD, 188) Then, Ben recounts the origin myth of the Mountain Chant, a story of the people fleeing from the frightening Changing Bear Maiden, and also the story of Bear Maiden whose son by Bear becomes a culture hero. Thus, Abel is once more identified with Bear making Peter, or the mythical young Indian of Angela's story, Bear's son and by implication the symbolic son of her union with Abel.

Overall, Angela's story reveals a change in her vision; she has learnt to "see" beyond; by her experience in Los Ojos and Walatowa it is clear that she has achieved a mythic consciousness which generates oral tradition. Angela has eluded the authority of her (de)privileged culture and has broken through the border of another to realize a different cosmology.

Angela's spiritual transformation is also experienced by Father Olguin whose psychological displacement is at first "illuminated in a scene in which he inadvertently drives his car into the jammed Pueblo traffic during fiesta where he comes face to face with an infant in a cradleboard" (Owens, 107). The baby is described like a "threatening sign of the priest's "otherness"" (Owens, 107) in the Pueblo world.

> The hair lay in tight wet rings above the eyes, and all the shapeless flesh of the face dripped with sweat and shone copper in the sunlight. Flies crawled upon the face and lay thick about the eyes and mouth. The mus-

> cles twitched under the fat and the head turned slowly from side to side in the agony of sad and helpless laughter" (HMD, 73)

Father Olguin feels "abruptly alien in a pagan colonial outpost" and is "challenged by the Indians' cultural persistence and their determinacy for survival in remoteness" (Owens, 107). However, in the end he accepts his presence among the Pueblo as it is shown in the following paragraph:

> In the only way possible, perhaps, he had come to terms with the town… To be sure, there was the matter of some old and final cleavage, of certain exclusion, the whole and subtle politics of estrangement, but that was easily put aside…" (HMD, 194)

This change is also hinted in the final paragraphs when he repeatedly shouts after Abel who comes to ask for the preparation of his grandfather's burial: "I understand! Oh, God! I understand–I understand!" although this seems like an answer to Abel's wish, it is clear that he has moved closer to the Pueblo, and gained an insight into the Pueblo world.

Consequently, the novel presents Francisco's complex position as the ideal stage for Abel, who is first expected to transform himself from assertion to negation. Like his grandfather Francisco, Abel should accomplish a state of balance towards the realities of life in order to attain a feeling of identity. This only happens through the reconciliation of white/Indian binary opposition which Abel confronts during his quest. Though it is not as heroic as Abel's subject formation, Angela and Father Olguin also experience a similar but less complete form of psychic transformation. By gaining an insight into the Indian worldview they partially heal their wounded personalities.

3.2. The Two Narrative Levels in the Cyclical Structure

House Made of Dawn contains two different narrative levels in its structure. In the first level the novel is narrated like a mythic story and an extension of a thousand years old Native American folktale tradition, and in the second level it depicts the mundane story of survival of a young Indian who suffers a psychic disorientation amid the harsh and relentless post-colonial Euro-American environment. The two narrative levels function as nutshells to two different belief systems and philosophies. The first one involves the Euro-American perception of binary oppositions, which has already been put forward in the previous section. The second one involves the Native American sense of spiritual balance. With the help of oral tradition the protagonist journeys between the narrative levels transferring himself from one world to another. The mythic level (diegesis) involves the prologue and the last section while the second level (meta-diegesis) involves the inner body of the novel[3]. Since the novel starts and ends with the diegetic level it also mimics the cyclical nature of Native American time order.

The novel opens with the traditional Jemez storytelling invocation, "*Dypaloh*" a remark that announces the beginning of a story, and Momaday also ends the novel with the word "*Qtsedaba*." Thus the novel is placed within Native American oral tradition. As Linda Hogan tells, the book "uses the traditional Native American oral concept of language where words function as a poetic process of creation, transformation, and restoration" (1980: 103). Oral traditions tell people who they are, and in this respect they play the major role in the restoration of Abel's identity. Following the invocation, the prologue starts with a passage from the Navajo Night Chant followed by a vivid description of Walatowa[4].

> There was a house made of dawn. It was made of pollen and rain, and the land was very old and everlasting. There were many colors on the hills, and the plain was bright with different-colored clays and sands. Red and blue and spotted horses grazed in the plain, and there was a dark wilder-

[3] These levels are sorted out according to Gerard Genette's narratology.
[4] Local native name for Jemez.

> ness on the mountains beyond. The land was still and strong. It was beautiful all around.

The lyrical description ends with a sentence which is very similar to the termination of the Night Chant which will also be seen later in the novel: "It is finished in beauty." With this passage the author carries the reader from the actual landscape of Jemez to a mythic dimension which will be referred to as, in Gérard Genette's terms, *diegesis*. By *diegesis* Genette means the spatial-temporal universe to which the story belongs. As it will be clarified, the first story (the prologue) belongs to the cyclical time and based on Indian understanding of space/land. This is at the same time the *narrative level* to which Abel should belong but, as the story will reveal he is cut adrift onto another plane. Where there are two diegeses, Genette reserves the term for the first one encountered (whether or not it is the more important of the two), and names the other one, a *meta-diegesis*[5] (Knight, 16). Here, the meta-diegesis is the non-Indian world with its linear time; this is the second *narrative level* where Abel's quest of identity takes place, and it starts immediately after the prologue.

Following the picturesque description of Walatowa, Abel is introduced "alone and running, hard at first, heavily, but then easily and well," and it is dawn. Thus the allusion to the Navajo Night Chant gradually becomes clear. As it has been stated earlier, the Night Chant is a healing chant which is sung before the tenth and last dawn of the healing ceremony when the patient welcomes the new day with a refreshed spirit. So we understand that Abel has been sick and he is in the process of healing.

In traditional Jemez storytelling the end of the story is given in the beginning as a means of drawing the attention of the audience on the performance itself rather than the story. So we understand from the first two paragraphs that this story will be "a journey toward reintegration and healing" (Owens, 95). However, this journey

[5] Genette uses this concept to identify different positions of narrators. e.g. A is an unknown narrator; B is a character in A's narration; and C is a character in the story told by B. Here A is diegetic, B is meta-diegetic, and C is meta-meta-diegetic. The reason behind choosing this concept is that it will not only help to show Benally's voice as the second narrator (meta-diegetic) but also will show how Benally is outside the Indian world (again meta-diegetic).

will be a difficult one in which Abel will experience "a period of darkness, an eclipse or loss of vision" (Owens, 95) as it can be inferred from the *proleptic*[6] final paragraph:

> For a time the sun was whole beneath the cloud; then it rose into eclipse, and a dark and certain shadow came upon the land. And Abel was running… Against the winter sky and the long, light landscape of the valley at dawn, he seemed almost to be standing still.

The paragraph also removes Abel from the meta-diegetic linear time in which he was trapped, to the endless realm of cyclical time (diegesis) in which "he seemed almost to be standing still." He also establishes a profound integration with the "place"; like the earth itself he is also nourished by the life giving rain: "The cold rain slanted down upon him and left his skin mottled and streaked." Since the description given so far explains the final stage of healing ceremony it is clear that Abel's quest will be successfully completed however, his integration with the timeless landscape will occur only after "a dark and certain shadow" that will be cast on the land and Abel. As Louis Owens describes it, "this prologue underscores the stable, coherent, cultural and psychic center from which Abel is alienated and which may be recovered" (Owens, 1994: 95).

Apart from the healing ceremony, running ceremonies are also very common among Native American cultures; at Abel's hometown, Walatowa, they are held in each season for good hunting (Owens, 1994: 95). As we will see his grandfather Francisco had the same racing experience when he was young, and in the end of the novel Abel takes his grandfather's place in the race of the dawn runners. This way the book establishes the cyclical nature of Indian traditions. Momaday describes this situation: "I see the novel as a circle. It ends where it begins and it's informed with a kind of thread that runs through it and holds everything together" (Schubnell, 1997: 31).

[6] According to Genette *Prolepsis* means events referred to or anticipated before their proper moment (Knight, 18). In this sense openings of all Native American stories are proleptic.

3.3. The Novel's Structure as a Folktale and Abel's Disintegration

House Made of Dawn follows the typical pattern of traditional culture hero stories adapted to reflect the contemporary experience. The novel's structure as a traditional folktale and its combination of the contemporary theme of identity search with a traditional structure can be observed through A. J. Greimas' actantial analysis.

In his *Sémantique Structurale* (1966), Greimas aims to arrive at the universal "grammar" of folktale narrative by applying to it a semantic analysis of sentence structure. In order to do this he proposes three pairs of binary oppositions which include the six possible roles (*actants*) of a figure (Selden, 111):

Subject/Object
Sender/Receiver
Helper/Opponent

The pairs describe three basic patterns which perhaps recur in all narrative (Selden, 111):

1. Desire, search, or aim (subject/object).
2. Communication (sender/receiver).
3. Auxiliary support or hindrance (helper/opponent).

If we apply these to *House Made of Dawn*, we get a penetrating analysis of the novel's underlying system:

1. Abel searches for his identity. Since he searches for himself he is both subject and object[7].
2. Abel cannot communicate with his community. As a result of his traumatic experience he is inarticulate.
3. Tosamah and Benally unwittingly assist him in his search for identity. Abel himself obstructs his identity acquisition by challenging the eagle, the albino and Martinez.

[7] The situation in which a single element contains several actants from different classes (e.g. Subject and Object simultaneously) is called Actantial Syncretism.

In order to account for possible narrative sequences, Greimas proposes twenty functions, and groups them into three structures (syntagms): "contractual," "performative," and "disjunctive." The first is concerned with the establishing or breaking of contracts or rules. Narratives may employ either of the following structures (Selden 112):

Contract (or prohibition) > violation > punishment
Lack of contract (disorder) > establishment of contract (order)

However, the two different narrative levels of *House Made of Dawn* allow it to employ both of the above structures rather than only one of them. The meta-diegesis has the first structure: Abel violates the prohibition against the spiritual balance by killing the eagle, committing a homicide, and confronting Martinez. And he is punished by exclusion, going to prison, and self-annihilation[8]. On the other hand, diegesis (prologue and epilogue) has the second structure: during Abel's running ritual we witness an establishment of order (reintegration with Indian time and space).

In meta-diegesis, the stage of Contract (order) is at first hinted in the third paragraph of the novel which introduces the old man Francisco, Abel's grandfather, on his way to meet his war veteran grandson coming by bus. It is noticeable that he takes the "old road" to San Ysidro instead of the highway on which the trucks of the town makes an endless parade as if to stay with the "old ways" as long as possible (Ownes, 97). When he catches the sight of the bus coming Francisco glances "at the wagon and the mares to be sure that everything [is] in order" (HMD, 9). However, Francisco's delicate arrangement for greeting his grandson is ruined with disappointment as Abel steps out of the bus: "He was drunk, and he fell against his grandfather and did not know him" (HMD, 9). Surely, in a strongly communal society where identity is established through the family, not to know one's grandfather is a signal of alienation (Owens, 97). Abel's strangeness in the town is further underscored as he gets out with the first light of the dawn and sets out to the hills to see the

[8] Note that the war experience and Abel's exclusion due to his dubious parentage cannot have a place in this structure since Abel is not the one who violates.

place, and to be reunited with the landscape; as he walks through the dark streets of the town "all the dogs began to bark." (Owens, 97).

Abel's Violation of the Contract which causes his estrangement in the town occurs in three stages. It starts with his killing of the captured eagle and is deepened with two more instances of Violation, his murder of the albino and his confrontation with Martinez. The first act of violation that fostered Abel's displacement, his killing of the captured eagle, is analeptic[9] and given as the most significant memory of him before the war:

> This–everything in advance of his going–he could remember whole and in detail. It was the recent past, the intervention of days and years without meaning, of awful calm and collision, time, time always immediate and confused, that he could not put together in his mind. (HMD, 23)

This sin of Abel causes him to be thrown out of the eternal time of the pueblo life and the cyclical Indian time vanishes in "collision", an instance that marks Abel's "fall" from diegesis. When he loses temporal unification of the past, the present and the future, he also loses his ability to communicate. This effect is further deepened during the war and when he returns he becomes totally inarticulate:

> His return to the town had been a failure… He had tried in the days that followed to speak to his grandfather, but he could not say the things he wanted; he had tried to pray, to sing, to enter into the old rhythm of the tongue, but he was no longer attuned to it. And yet it was there still, like memory, in the reach of his hearing, as if Francisco or his mother or Vidal had spoken out of the past and the words had taken hold of the moment and made it eternal. Had he been able to say it, anything of his own language–even the commonplace formula of greeting "Where are you going,"–which had no being beyond sound, no visible substance, would once again have shown him whole to himself; but he was dumb. Not dumb–but inarticulate. (HMD, 58)

[9] Narrated as a flashback. Analepsis is an element of "Order," another one of Genette's five central categories of narrative analysis.

The second act of violation in the contractual syntagm occurs shortly after Abel's return from war when he participates in a traditional chicken pull game, getting dressed in his old clothes "making poor showing, full of caution and gesture" (HMD, 42). His strangeness also shows here, since he has been away from the ceremonial Pueblo life; he acts "awkward and uncomfortable" (Owens, 100), and gets beaten by the albino. Several days later Abel and the albino talk in a bar and they go outside where Abel stabs and kills him. By killing the albino, Abel makes his second mistake which fosters the fragmentation of his identity. And his last sin becomes his confrontation with Martinez, the corrupt cop who hangs out in the Indian bar where Abel and Benally regularly go in Los Angeles. Called "culebra" (snake) by the Indians whom he persecutes, Martinez extends the evil presence of the albino. Abel again makes the mistake of confronting rather than acknowledging and avoiding evil, and is beaten almost to death by Martinez. So his psychic disintegration is paralleled by a physical disintegration.

Except the three acts of violation, two sources of alienation are missing in Greimas' contractual syntagm: Abel's dubious parentage and the war experience. Because Abel is not the one who actively violates a contract in these two cases, they cannot have a place in the syntagm. Moreover, the violation and punishment stages successively repeat more than once; that is to say, Abel violates and is punished, but then the cycle repeats two more times. At this point the contractual syntagm proves to be inadequate but, a later structuralist Tzvetan Todorov suggests a more comprehensive method of analysis for similar structures[10].

Todorov describes two higher levels of organization: the *sequence* and the *text*. A group of propositions forms a sequence. The basic sequence is made up of five propositions which describe a certain state which is disturbed and then re-established albeit in altered form. The five propositions may be designated thus (Selden 113):

[10] The work of Tzvetan Todorov is a summation of Vladimir Propp, Greimas and others. All the syntactic rules of language are restated in their narrative guise (Selden 112).

Equilibrium$_1$ (e.g. Peace)
Force$_1$ (Enemy invades)
Disequilibrium (War)
Force$_2$ (Enemy is defeated)
Equilibrium$_2$ (Peace on new terms)

When applied to *House Made of Dawn,* it can be argued that Equilibrium$_1$ is the prologue; Force$_1$ is Abel's exclusion for his dubious parentage, his three crimes and his traumatic war experience; Disequilibrium is Abel's identity crisis; Force$_2$ is the oral tradition; and Equilibrium$_2$ is the epilogue and identity acquisition.

It is striking that in the novel Abel's war experience (Force$_1$), is reflected very shortly as he has eradicated this experience from his memory, leaving only "one sharp fragment of recall." He remembers his recovering from an unconscious state after a military clash: "He awoke on the side of a wooded hill. It was afternoon and there were bright, slanting shafts on all sides; the ground was covered with damp, matted leaves" (HMD, 24). This peaceful image of landscape dramatically turns to a horrible scene with the entrance of a German tank: "It moved into the wide wake of silence, taking hold of the silence and swelling huge inside of it, coming… The machine concentrated calm, strange and terrific, and it was coming" (HMD, 24). The tank is referred to as "machine," and is described like a destructive and senseless idol: "It rose up behind the hill, black and massive, looming there in front of the sun. He saw it swell, deepen, and take shape on the skyline, as if it were some upheaval of the earth, the eruption of stone and eclipse" (HMD, 24). Here the word "eclipse" is significant as it connects the war trauma to the eclipse in the prologue (Owens, 199); like the "dark and certain shadow" in the prologue the tank comes between Abel and the sun, preventing "light and vision" (Owens, 100). The first source of alienation (Force$_1$) however, occurs long time before the war. Since their childhood Abel and his brother have suffered estrangement in their village:

> He did not know who his father was. His father was a Navajo, they said, or a Sia, or an Isleta, an outsider anyway, which made him and his mother and Vidal [his brother] somehow foreign and strange. (HMD, 11)

The dubious parentage of Abel and his bother Vidal puts them in an excluded position in their community. In this respect, Susan Scarberry-Garcia has discussed parallels between Abel and his brother Vidal, and the Stricken Twins of the Night Chant, the powerful symbols of Navajo mythology. As, Scarberry-Garcia notes:

> Navajo story patterns reveal a hero or heroes (or occasionally heroines as in Mountainway and Beautyway), often "outsiders" from birth, forced by circumstances to leave home and combat numerous terrifying obstacles that confront them for reasons unknown. After undergoing a symbolic death experience and being reborn through the aid of the holy people or spirit helpers, the heroes return home to their people to teach the healing ceremonial that remade them. (1990: 13)

Thus, Abel's genealogy actually is the first thing that binds him to the traditional heroes of the oral narratives. He is an outsider from birth, and he is forced to leave home to set off a dangerous journey. His symbolic death experience occurs when he is beaten by Martinez. And, he is reborn through the aid of oral traditions[11].

As a traditional hero, Abel's position as an outsider in his community is at first hinted by his striking name. In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday incorporates a complex net of metaphorical allusions through naming. "I believe that a man is his name," Momaday explains "Somewhere in the Indian mentality there is that idea that when someone is given a name–and, by the way, it transcends Indian cultures certainly–when a man is given a name, existence is given him, too. And what could be worse than not having a name" (Schubnell, 1997: 85). Abel's name, with its "strong biblical resonance from a mythic tradition other than that of Native American culture, brings the novel's character out of the pueblo culture" (Owens, 98); Thus Abel becomes the unwanted and slaughtered brother of the Indian[12]. This way Momaday

[11] However, when he comes home he doesn't teach his people the healing ceremonial that remade them. On the other hand, Silko's protagonist Tayo does.

[12] According to Genesis 4:1-16, Cain and Abel were the first and second sons of Adam and Eve. Cain, a farmer, commits the first murder by killing his brother Abel, a shepherd, after God rejects Cain's sacrifice but accepts Abel's. Abel and Cain persist as an archetype of fratricide in numerous references through medieval art up to modern works of literature.

implies the source of alienation and de-centering as an internal conflict within the Native American community.

Finally, according to Todorov's formation of the narrative elements, a succession of *sequences* forms a *text*. The sequences may be organized in a variety of ways, by embedding (story within a story, digression etc.), by linking (a string of sequences), or by alternation (interlacing of sequences), or by a mixture of these (Selden, 113). Here, Abel's sequence is linked to Angela's and Father Olguin's (they are also in quest of identity), but the difference is that while Abel's sequence occupies the whole text (diegesis and meta-diegesis), other characters' sequences are within meta-diegesis (the inner chapters enclosed by prologue and epilogue). The reason comes from the fact that, as it has been discussed, Angela's and Father Olguin's integration with the Indian world is deemed to remain partial; therefore, they do not have a place in diegesis.

3.4. Tosamah's and Benally's Mythic Roles in Abel's Identity Formation

Initially, Abel cannot have a place in the two narrative levels (or the two worlds) of *House Made of Dawn*; he is unable to conform to diegesis (the first narrative level), and he is inarticulate in meta-diegesis (the second level). For this reason, he is in an ambiguous level which Genette would call a *pseudo-meta-diegesis*. At this point oral tradition is the key for Abel to enter diegesis, the first narrative level, which is the world described in the prologue and the epilogue with its unique spatial-temporal laws. However, it is important to note that there is always a center (diegesis) for Abel which is waiting to be recovered, a chance for him to achieve temporal unification of the past, the present, and the future. On the other hand, some characters in the novel lack this feature. In pseudo-meta-diegesis, Abel shares his position with Tosamah whose displacement comes from his entrapment between "two linguistic consciousness" (Owens, 110), and Benally who "retains the world of his Navajo people intact only with his memory and imagination" (Owens, 110). In the chapter which introduces Tosamah the narrative tone changes and the focalization[13]

[13] The matter of whose point-of-view controls or orients the narrative at any particular textual point.

shifts to Tosamah's point of view. Benally, on the other hand, emerges as the second narrator in *House Made of Dawn* and his narration is given in italic fonts separate from the rest of the story. Since he is neither the object of anyone else's narration nor, as narrator, temporally and spatially on the same plane as the story he tells he is *extra-diegetic*. However, since he acts at the diegetic level as one of the characters in the story, he is *homo-diegetic*. Besides, he has the duty of filling-in of previously ellipsed events at a later moment of the narrative *(completing analepses*).

John Big Bluff Tosamah, the Priest of the Sun and the Reverend of the "Holiness Pan-Indian Rescue Mission" in Los Angeles, plays a hidden transformative role in the novel. Abel can go home again but Tosamah cannot help himself; as Owens notes:

> …like the peripatetic trickster, the creator of Native American mythologies, he has nothing except imagination and language out of which to fashion his world. When he goes into the streets of urban Los Angeles with his eagle-bone whistle, we feel the ambiguity of his position: "In the four directions did the Priest of the Sun, standing painted in the street, serve notice that something holy was going on in the universe" (HMD, 106). Perhaps, his hostility and humiliating manners towards Abel stem from his envy. Deeply sensitive to be mixed blood spiritual leader in Los Angeles, and aware of his offenses against the conception of word as medicine, Tosamah reflects his sense of loss and self-doubt on Abel, for Abel has the thing that Tosamah can never have. (Owens, 110)

For this reason Momaday tells that "He's a kind of riddle and he's extremely skeptical but has the kind of intelligence that makes the most of it. But I think of him as being in some ways pathetic, too. He's very displaced" (Schubnell, 1997: 186). Unlike Tosamah, "Abel has a center to which he can return, a cultural heritage intact and deeply imprinted upon him even in the most desperate circumstances" (Owens, 112).

Tosamah's cryptic personality is presented in Chapter 2 which begins with a description of the silverside fish spawning on the California beaches. This description is interesting because it is written in the tone of Edward Lear's famous piece of

nonsense[14], *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1876) which ends with the lines: "They danced by the light of the moon, the moon, the moon." And the following is the first paragraph of Chapter 2: "They hurl themselves upon the land and writhe in the light of the moon, the moon, the moon; they writhe in the light of the moon… They are among the helpless creatures on the face of the earth" (HMD, 89). Just after the first paragraph we are introduced to Tosamah in the basement of the peyote[15] church. When he starts his sermon, the reader can immediately recognize the trickster discourse through which he ridicules and challenges every static definition while appropriating the biblical discourse to a new Indian spirituality. This juxtaposition with the first paragraph serves as a clue about Tosamah's identity, because "Tosamah's speech at times turns into jingles which involve a kind of cynical superficiality" (Owens, 108). For example, while counting the items in his paraphernalia satchel before the peyote ceremony he makes a ludicrous alliteration: "fine fan of fancy pheasant feathers[16]" (HMD, 110).

His playing with language also shows itself in his quotations from the bible. By "quoting… from a prior discourse in western culture, Tosamah subverts the authority of the text… by placing it [within] the Native American context" and "like the traditional trickster he embodies contradictions, challenges authority, manipulates language, and mocks and tricks us into self knowledge" (Owens, 110-112). In his sermon on "the word" Tosamah actually expresses Momaday's thoughts he reveals in "The Man Made of Words":

> It seems to me that in a certain sense we are all made of words; that our essential being consists in language… Man has consumate being in language, and there only. Only when he is embodied in an idea, and the idea is realized in language, can man take possession of himself. (Lundquist, 2004: 204)

[14] Literary nonsense refers to a genre of literature that plays with conventions of language and logic through a meaningless (but grammatical) arrangement of meaningful words. e.g. Noam Chomsky's coinage "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously."

[15] A small, spineless cactus well known as a recreational drug and a supplement to various transcendence practices associated with a Native American religion in the Southwest; it was also popular among the Beat Generation.

[16] Bruce Dadey suggests that this may be a paradoy of Weston La Barre's unintentional alliteration when describing the same item in *The Peyote Cult*: "fringed pheasant feather fan" (47).

In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday uses this argument to make a comparison between the "white man's perception of the "word" and that of the Indian through the mouth of Tosamah. In short, Tosamah claims that Saint John could not be satisfied with the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word" (HMD, 93) but he went on to talk about Jews and Jerusalem, Moses and Philip, Andrew and Peter etc. because, "he couldn't let the Truth alone" and he "tried to make it bigger and better than it was, but instead he only demeaned and encumbered it… He imposed his idea of God upon the everlasting truth" (HMD, 93). And similarly the white man "adds and divides and multiplies the Word… He is sated and insensitive; his regard for language-for the word itself-as an instrument of creation has diminished nearly to the point of no return" (HMD, 95).

Tosamah proposes another binary opposition between the written and the oral, and implies the superiority of oral tradition[17] by saying, "you see, for her [grandmother] words were medicine; they were magic and invisible" while "the white man takes such things as words and literatures for granted" (HMD, 95). His ambiguous parting words are also striking: "'Good Night,' he said, at last, 'and get yours.'" (HMD, 98). What he means by "get yours" is the "word"; in his unique way he tries to tell his audience that they should find their own discourse through imagination, and manipulate the language as he himself does.

In dealing with the dominant discourse, Abel significantly differs from Tosamah. While Tosamah manipulates the colonizer's language, Abel totally rejects it. During his murder trial Abel realizes that "word by word these men were disposing of him in language, their language" (HMD, 102). By remaining silent Abel refuses to acknowledge the power of the court's language, that "medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established" (Ashcroft, 1989: 7). Bernard Hirsch suggests that:

> Seeing Abel through Indian eyes, Tosamah cannot help but admire him as a kind of modern-day warrior who refuses to give in meekly to the tor-

[17] This binary opposition has been deconstructed by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida.

> ment and tribulations of urban Indian life. But if Tosamah as an Indian is vicariously elevated by Abel's integrity, he is at the same time humbled by the lack of his own. Viewed from either perspective, then, white or Indian, Abel engenders in Tosamah self-contempt so strong that is beyond enduring. (Hirsch, 1983: 314)

This hostility however, constitutes the most significant aspect of Tosamah, that is, his subversive role as a trickster. As his name Big Bluff suggests, Tosamah is a fraud and a trickster; by "mocking and taunting Abel" (Owens, 111) he actually forces him into self-knowledge and helps him prepare for his return to the pueblo. Benally, the displaced Navajo, cannot understand the trickster discourse in the Priest's words and cannot comprehend Tosamah's transformative role. Thus he says, "He's always going on like that, Tosamah, talking crazy and showing off, but he doesn't understand" (HMD, 150). Ben recalls another speech of Tosamah in which he despises Abel. The speech has an underlying trickster tone:

> You take that poor cat," he said. "They gave him every advantage. They gave him a pair of shoes and told him to go to school. They deloused him and gave him a lot of free haircuts and let him fight on their side. But was he grateful? Hell, no, man. He was too damn dumb to be civilized… He turned out to be a real primitive sonuvabitch… They put that cat away, man. They had to. It's part of the Jesus scheme… They put all of us renegades, us diehards away sooner or later… Listen, here, Benally, one of these nights there's going to be a full red moon, a hunter's moon, and we're going to find us a wagon train full of women and children. Now you don't believe this, but I drink to that now and then. (HMD, 150)

The paragraph hints Tosamah's true feelings; "his desire to be identified with Abel is evident in his reference "all us renegades, us diehards."" (Owens, 112) Benally's remark, "He's a clown, he'll make a fool out of you if you let him" (HMD, 181) underscores Tosamah's trickster aspect, and his paradoxical healing effect on his victim. While, Benally tries to help Abel integrate into the new urban reality, Tosamah furthers Abel's disintegration as necessary step toward recovery.

Benally, on the other hand, is like an embodiment of the Indians of the fifties who were, as an outcome of the federal relocation policy, "dazzled by the city lights" (Owens, 113) and the American dream. His general attitude can be observed from his contemplation about Abel: "He was a longhair, like Tosamah said. You know, you have to change. That's the only way you can live in a place like this. You have to forget about the way it was, how you grew up and all" (HMD, 148). However, it is significant that Benally never forgets his childhood memories. For example, he remembers herding sheep for his grandfather: "And you were little and right here in the center of everything, the sacred mountains, the snow-covered mountains and the hills, the gullies and the flats, the sundown and the night, everything–where you were little, where you were and had to be" (HMD, 157). His return to his grandfather's place from the boarding school never diminishes in his memory:

> And at first light you went out and knew where you were. And it was the same, the way you remembered it, the way you knew it had to be; and nothing had changed… It would always be the same out there. That was the way it was, that's all. It was that way on the day you were born, and it would be that way on the day you died. (HMD, 167)

It is apparent that in the Navajo world Benally has a certain sense of self-definition. However, as Owens tells, "Ben has lost his way, and his idea about going home is fixed" (Owens, 113): "there would be nothing there, just the empty land and a lot of old people, dying off" (HMD, 159). As a result, he prefers the city: "It's a good place to live… You wonder how you ever got along out there where you came from. There's nothing there, you know, just the land, and the land is empty and dead" (HMD, 181). Yet, he "retains enough knowledge of his Navajo identity to serve as a healer to Abel" (Owens, 113) as he sings and teaches the Night Chant to Abel. Moreover, their friendship develops into a reciprocal relationship towards finding their identity. This can be observed in the final paragraph of the Chapter 3 where Ben recounts about their plans: "I prayed. He was going home, and I wanted to pray. Look out for me, I said; look out each day and listen for me. And we were going together on horses to the hills… we were going to see how it was, and always was,

how the sun came up with a little wind and the light ran out upon the land" (HMD, 189).

3.5. The Final Stage of Abel's Identity Formation

Abel's identity acquisition starts as he gains access to oral tradition (Force 2) with the help of Benally. Oral tradition functions like a device which links Abel to the collective unconscious of his community. But before this access Abel has to complete the disequilibrium stage to regain a sense of self by undertaking a journey like an archetypal questing hero. Thus he travels from "home to the war, then to the prison, to Los Angeles and eventually home again, and he suffers deeply to the point of annihilation" (Owens, 99) until he understands his place in the world.

After being beaten by Martinez, Abel "has his first vision that leads to his restoration" (Owens, 113) as he lies on the beach, close to death. He hallucinates dawn runners, "the old men running after evil… full of tranquility, certitude" (HMD, 103). The following paragraph shows Abel's renewed insight:

> The runners after evil ran as water runs, deep in the channel, in the way of least resistance, no resistance… Suddenly he saw the crucial sense in their going, of old men in white leggings running after evil in the night. They were whole and indispensable in what they did; everything in creation referred to them. Because of them, perspective, proportion, design in the universe… They ran with great dignity and calm, not in the hope of anything, but hopelessly; neither in fear nor hatred nor despair of evil, but simply in recognition and with respect. Evil was. Evil was abroad in the night; they must venture out to the confrontation; they must reckon dues and divide the world. Now, here, the world was open at his back. He had lost his place. He had been long ago at the center, had known where he was, had lost his way. (HMD, 103).

With this new vision and a renewed insight, Abel is finally ready to his hometown where he will find a center for himself. One night before his return Abel participates in a ceremonial dance on a hill overlooking Los Angeles and is prepared by

Ben who prays and sings from the Night Chant, "the prayer for restoration of wholeness and balance, invoking the power of language to compel order and harmony" (Owens, 114) in the world as it is presented in the following rite:

> May it be beautiful behind me,
> May it be beautiful below me,
> May it be beautiful above me,
> May it be beautiful all around me.
> In beauty it is finished. (HMD, 147)

Abel passes to the Equilibrium stage "with four iterations, the sacred number of the four cardinal directions" (Owens, 114), and he "is symbolically centered and everything in the universe is in balance and harmony" (Owens, 114). Abel whose body was broken by beating, and whose identity was badly fragmented, is now able to return home, whole and on path toward healing. In the fourth and final section of the novel, we see Abel having returned and completed his journey of initiation, carrying his illuminating vision of dawn runners. He sits beside Francisco as old man dies. During the last seven mornings, Francisco talks to Abel, "The old man had spoken six times in the dawn, and the voice of his memory was whole and clear and growing like the dawn" (HMD, 197). During this time Francisco tells important experiences of his life; the ceremonial race he engaged when he was young, the bear hunt which filled him with the animal's power, his affair with the witch's daughter Porcingula and his teaching about the world to his grandsons Abel and Vidal:

> They must learn the whole contour of the black mesa. They must know it as they knew the shape of their hands. Always and by heart… and they must live according to the sun appearing, for only then could they reckon where they were, where all things were, in time" (HMD, 197)

Actually, Francisco has attempted "to place Abel and his brother very securely within the timeless space that defines their tribal identity" (Owens, 117). Before the seventh dawn Abel's grandfather dies. He "prepares the old man ceremonially for burial, doing everthing correctly, and then he goes to summon Father Ol-

guin" (Owens, 117), the priest of the church. The juxtaposition of these two actions hints Francisco's ability to merge both religions and worlds. Then Abel rubs himself with cinders and goes out into the dawn to join "runners standing away in the distance." It is the time of the annual ceremonial race which Francisco was remembering in the beginning of the novel. Runners see "the clear pool of eternity," and the novel ends where it begins, as Abel running after them: "All of his being was concentrated in the sheer motion of running on, and he was past caring about the pain." In motion Abel is no longer displaced, as Momaday explains: "The man running is fitting himself into the basic motion of the universe… That is simply a symbolism which prevails in the Southwestern Indian world" (Schubnell, 1997: 62). Eventually, Abel recovers his place in the Indian world. He breaks through the previous disorder, and finally, gains a pure vision:

> Pure exhaustion laid hold of his mind, and he could see at last without having to think. He could see the canyon and the mountains and the sky. He could see the rain and the river and the fields beyond. He could see the dark hills at dawn. (HMD, 212)

While Abel sings the prayer of restoration and healing which he has learnt from Ben, he looks at the land around him and achieves to gain a sense of space. Thus Momaday implies an achievement of self-definition through integration with Indian time and space.

Finally, *House Made of Down* imitates the typical hero stories which are frequently found in Native American oral narratives. Abel, the novel's questing hero, successfully overcomes the challenges that he has to deal with during his difficult journey. As it is seen, the main challenge for him is the reconciliation of White/Indian and evil/White binary oppositions. While trying to achieve a sense of identity, Abel travels between the two main narrative levels of the novel. He leaves behind the western form of epistemology, and with the help of healing rituals he steps into the Indian form of living from which he has been cut off.

CHAPTER IV

CEREMONY:
RESTORATION OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY
AND DECONSTRUCTION OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Leslie Silko was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico on 5 March 1948. Her mother, Virginia Leslie, was originally from Montana; her father, Lee Howard Marmon, was at the time just retired from the Army, beginning his career as a professional photographer. Along with her two young sisters Leslie was raised in one of the houses on the southeast edge of Old Laguna village. Silko's great grandfather was a white trader named Robert Marmon, and her grandmother Marie Anaya Marmon was a full-blood Laguna, who in her youth left Laguna for some years to attend the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, and who passed time with young Leslie and her sisters telling them stories from Laguna oral tradition and reading them the Bible. Her husband Robert had also a great interest in Laguna oral tradition and became a helpful source for the studies of Frank Boas. Leslie Marmon Silko grew up in a house full of Laguna stories and Euro-American books, a situation which profoundly influenced her own storytelling style and her distinct position as a cultural mediator.

During her college years in the University of New Mexico, Silko's interest in writing blossomed. After her first work *The Man to Send Rain Clouds* (1969), her writing career established with a poetry chapbook *Laguna Woman* and an anthology which included seven of her short stories. After she was awarded NEA writing fellowship with the publication of her short story "Lullaby," she moved to Alaska where she lived for two years with her husband and their two sons. There, she started writing the novel *Ceremony* (1977). Silko's most prominent and critically acclaimed novel *Ceremony*, tells the story of Tayo, a war veteran who returns home in the La-

guna Pueblo reservation from the World War II. Still carrying the traumatic effect of war, Tayo finds himself in a Veterans Hospital because of mental disorder. Tayo's hallucination of his Uncle Josiah's face among a crowd of Japanese soldiers he was ordered to shoot, and then watching his cousin Rocky die during the war, never leaves his mind. While depicting Tayo's quest to cure himself and the land that suffers from six years drought, the novel combines poetry and prose juxtaposing the individual story of Tayo and the collective story of his people. Tayo's search for identity is paralleled by the story of two mythical figures taken from the Pueblo oral narratives, Humminbird and Fly. Like Tayo, who starts a ritualistic journey, these two figures undertake a difficult task to bring the rain back to humans who suffer from a long lasting drought. Tayo's journey narrated in the prose section progresses simultaneously with the journey of Humminbird and Fly, which is narrated in a different genre that is poetry.

With Tayo, Silko's protagonist, *Ceremony* features another displaced mixed-blood character that is frequently found in Native American fiction. Like Abel in *House Made of Dawn,* Tayo is an alienated young Indian whose psychology is displaced and fragmented due to his service in the World War II. However, again like Abel, Tayo's alienation first starts in his own community during his childhood. Tayo's mother was Indian who has abandoned him when he was little, and the identity of his white father is unknown. This situation puts Tayo in an excluded position in his community. The creation of this character has actually a relation to Silko's own Laguna heritage, as she has once said:

> The white man who came to the Laguna Pueblo Reservation and married Laguna women were the beginning of the half-breed Laguna people like my family, the Marmon family. I suppose at the core of my writing is the attempt to identify what it is to be a half-breed or mixed blooded person; what it is to grow up neither white nor fully traditional Indian. (cited in Owens, 1994: 291)

In her novel, Silko metaphorically uses the mixed-blood identity of Tayo to show a way for the survival of cultural –and then individual– identity; Tayo is a mixture of cultures and races; with his mixed-blood identity he exemplifies change, ad-

aptation and hybridization. In this character Silko tries to evoke the ability of adaptation inherent in Native American cultures through which individuals can find an identity and ability to survive, and also they can evade the destructiveness of stability. So, as a preliminary step Silko emphasizes the acceptance of "change" and cultural evolution, and this is most effectively stressed through Betonie, an unusual medicine man who invents new ceremonies with the purpose of adaptation to the new times.

Just like Tayo is a fusion of two opposing poles, Indian and Euro-American, the narrative structure is the fusion of Indian mythology and Euro-American narration. In her novel Silko makes no distinction between mythology and reality; as Louise Owens describes in his essay, "mythology in Ceremony insists upon its actual simultaneity with and interpenetration into the events of the everyday, mundane world. Holy persons are not metaphors… [but] they are very simply part of the reality into which Tayo is subsumed" (Owens, 1994: 168). What Owens means by "Holy Persons" are the mythic characters that frequently recur and complete Tayo's story in the novel. Owens continues his argument:

> Throughout the novel, Silko works carefully to ensure that such binary oppositions are impossible to construct and that readers seeking to find distinct "realities," "planes," "dimensions," or "times" operating within her text will find that the text refuses to divulge such divisions. Rather than interweaving "planes" definable as "human," "myth/ritual," and "socio/cultural"—or working in several "dimensions" we might label "myth," "history," "realism," and "romance"—Silko spins an elaborate web that makes distinguishing between such concepts impossible. For example, Tayo's actions and experiences have "socio/cultural" significance only within the context of his mythic role, while history is shown to be the product of mythic consciousness and have no meaning outside of this consciousness. In the end, when the elders in the kiva recognize the mythic narrative that has determined Tayo's experience, they comprehend the timeless significance of Tayo's story for everyone. The romantic impulse that conventionally subsumes the "not me" into the transcendent "me"—that evolves into the heroic quester in all his individual glory—is inverted in the culture-hero paradigm operative in Tayo's story as the

> "me" is subsumed into the "not me" and Tayo discovers that the two are one. (Owens, 1994: 168)

In other words, Tayo's individual identity is not important, because in this world individuality does not matter. For this reason, Tayo's individual identity disappears as he journeys toward the communal identity which is finally pronounced by the pueblo elders within the kiva, which is the center of their world. And, his identity acquisition occurs only after he brings rain to his community.

To emphasize the insignificance of the individual identity Silko takes a further step and attempts to evoke an important feature of the traditional narratives, anonymity. In order to achieve this she gives the authority of telling to a mythic figure, and she adapts traditional stories to present Tayo's experience. Silko's message is that she is not the one who has written this text, but it was already there.

4.1. *Ceremony* and Intertextuality

In her novel Silko applies to the oral tradition by remaking and molding the old stories to fit new situations and times. Thereby, she also highlights the "intertextual[1]" nature of the oral tradition. She represses her own identity as an author by treating herself as "the orchestrator of what Roland Barthes refers to as the 'already-written' rather than as its originator" (Chandler, 196) (Barthes 1974, 21). Tayo's story, and the ancient stories that regularly accompany and interrupt it, become "part

[1] With *S/Z* (1970), Roland Barthes's astonishing study of Balzac's story *Sarrasine*, the scope of literary criticism dramatically changed in 1970s (In *S/Z* Barthes attempted to "de-originate the text [*Sarrasine*] - to demonstrate that it reflects many voices, not just that of Balzac" (Chandler, 196)). The literary work has no longer been treated as a stable structure approached with scientific objectivity. The critic has emerged with a more creative role producing subjective discourses and arbitrary plays of meaning upon the work of literature which according to Barthes cannot be got to possess a determinate and stable meaning (To define meaning in terms of authorial intention is the so-called "intentional fallacy" identified by W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley of the "New Critical" tendency in literary criticism" (Chandler, 196) (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1954)). Literature has become an open field of sport which is devoid of "settled signifieds," but it is "an inexhaustible tissue or galaxy of signifiers through which the critic may cut his own errant path" (Eagleton, 138). Literary texts are now seen as woven out of other literary texts and every word is radically regarded as a reworking of other writings which precede the literary work. Modern criticism abolished literary "originality" as well as appeal to the author substituting them with "intertextuality," which is most confidently marked in Barthes's proclamation "the death of the author" (Heath, 1977). Such a perception is compatible with the oral tradition, in which "stories are never original," and always anonymous, because they "always have the responsibility of providing immortality [by preventing] the death of a culture" (Owens, 1994:170).

of a larger body that cycles infinitely" (Owens, 1994:170), as Old Grandma indicates at the novel's end when she says, "It seems like I already heard these stories before… only thing is, the names sound different" (C, 260). In his essay John Purdy explains the reasons of Silko's reference to the old stories:

> Like Laguna oral literature, Ceremony is concerned with entertainment and enduring cultural values, and when Silko writes of a man trying to come to grips with a chaotic world seemingly bent on self-destruction, she does what past Laguna storytellers have done: clarify the changes in their world and dramatize how old ways may be adapted to accommodate those changes… As Tayo moves through his narrative, his awareness of the relationship between his experiences and those told of in the stories of his people grows, and he in turn moves from an isolated, ill individual to a powerful, competent representative of his people. In a word, he becomes a hero. (Purdy, 63).

As a result, the oral stories function as a way of healing for Tayo by binding him to the Native world from which he is cut. To do this, Silko parallels the oral stories with Tayo's experiences by juxtaposing poetry and prose in a way that reminds Julia Kristeva's horizontal and vertical axis'[2]. However, the two axis' in *Ceremony* are implemented in a unique way. The horizontal axis, which depicts a war veteran's practical experience, is a seemingly western form of narrative while the vertical axis, which links Tayo's story to the oral tradition, is quite Native in its form and content. In his essay, James Ruppert clarifies this difference:

> The lines in the text that look like poetry indicate a self-reflexive and consciously Western form, yet they serve to carry across the traditional communal and mythic discourse of Laguna… In contrast to the poetic sections of the text, the familiar Western sociological and psychological account of a shattered war veteran is presented in prose, disjointed and disrupted from its expected discourse context. The prose presents a real-

[2] Intertextuality was first introduced by Julia Kristeva, who "referred to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts" (Chandler, 195) (Kristeva 1980, 69). She declared that "every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it" (cited in Culler 1981, 105).

> ity, but a contorted reality. Initially, the oral, mythic text is the most coherent, though its context is unfamiliar to non-Native readers, while the fragmented psychological narrative has context but no coherence… Tayo, who does not appear in the poetry at the beginning of the book, feels in the prose sections as if he has no name, a verbal sign that could tie him equally to either the Native or the non-Native discourse spheres. (Ruppert, 180)

However, Tayo gradually heals "as the reality-based stories are raised to myth" to show "how myths grow, complement, and structure reality— how mythic discourse and practical discourse are built out of the same components" (Ruppert, 180). In doing this, "Silko contends that she is 'trying to affect the old, old, old way of looking at the world' (Silko, cited in Ruppert, 180). The underlying perception behind the "old way of looking at the world" is the belief of how stories bring order to the world which would otherwise be chaotic. In a way, like Hummingbird and Fly who endeavor "to set the world right and bring the rains back, [Silko] establishes the ways that individuals may act for the people and work transformations through correctly ordered actions and perseverance" (Purdy, 64).

Intertextuality in the novel is at first laid with Silko's prefatory poems that start with Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-Woman, or "the spider," thinking and creating the story we will read: "Ts'its'tsi'nako. Thought-Woman, / is sitting in her room / and whatever she thinks about appears. /… I'm telling you the story / she is thinking." (C, 1) By writing "I'm telling you the story / she is thinking" Silko applies to the story-making authority of Thought-Woman and places her novel within the context of the oral tradition. Thus "the egocentric position of the modern author" (Owens, 1994:169) is rejected and the novel becomes an "authorless text" (Owens, 169).

However, another important fact that shouldn't be overlooked is Silko's association of creation with storytelling by using Thought-Woman, who is regarded by the Keres (Pueblo) people as a supreme creator who has existed from the beginning (Owens, 1994:170). Here, like in *House Made of Dawn,* storytelling is presented as a primal, pre-existing and life-giving force which invokes the power of language, reminding what Saussure emphasized: language is a system which pre-exists the individual speaker (Chandler, 195). What lies beneath this presentation is the Indian per-

ception that stories are vehicles which defy chaos and give the world its order, which can be traced in the second poem of the novel entitled "Ceremony," where Silko introduces a second voice that explains, "I will tell you something about stories, [he said] /… They aren't just entertainment. / Don't be fooled. / They are all we have, you see, / all we have to fight off / illness and death" (C, 2).

Actually, storytelling functions like, as in *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*, vehicles which give identity to individuals; as Louis Althusser remarked we are "always already" positioned by semiotic systems – and most clearly by language (Chandler, 195). Silko also states that "That's how you know, that's how you belong, that's how you know you belong, if the stories incorporate you into them… In a sense, you are told who you are, or you know who you are by the stories that are told about you" (Cited, Lincoln, 52)

This perception – prioritization of language over human subject – is at the basis of intertextuality that contested authorship as a form of romantic individualism[3]. Barthes declared that "it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is... to reach the point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'" (Heath 1977, 143).

Apparently, Tayo must be positioned by a semiotic system that is built out of both mythic discourse and practical discourse, a system that takes its power from the language itself and has nothing to do with individualism. Such a system is conveyed through the oral tradition that Silko uses as a narrative method for her novel. As Robert Bell points out:

> Silko's "implicit faith in the method of ceremony's story makes storytelling a curative art form which can bring about restoration and renewal, as it always has been in Native American oral traditions. (Let us not forget, Aristotle, too, made catharsis, the purgation of pity and fear, the object of all literature.) (Bell, 24)

[3] E. P. Goldschmidt notes that "Authorship was a historical invention. Concepts such as 'authorship' and 'plagiarism' did not exist in the Middle Ages. Before 1500 or thereabouts people did not attach the same importance to ascertaining the precise identity of the author of a book they were reading or quoting as we do now" (Goldschmidt 1943, 88).

Silko's use of traditional stories as basis for her fiction, and juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal axes require that mythic characters in the vertical axis should have contemporary counterparts in the horizontal axis. In this sense, Sun Man's confrontation with the Evil Gambler, Kaup'a'ta, provides the source of the plot of Tayo's narrative. Sun Man climbs a mountain to rescue the rain clouds from Kaup'a'ta in which he succeeds; and with the help of Spider Woman who previously informs Sun Man about Gambler's tricks, Sun Man "can anticipate events and react accordingly, thus turning the Gambler's evil back on himself" (Purdy, 64). Similarly, Tayo is a "hero who climbs the mountain and who with the aid of the mysterious beings – Ts'eh and the hunter – is able to bring the rains and turn evil into its own defeat" (Purdy, 64). At the same time, Gambler's counterpart is Emo, who is described as "playing with the teeth of a dead Japanese officer, he rolls them like dice; he is quite literally gambling for Tayo's life, and he nearly wins" (Purdy, 64). Ts'eh, on the other hand, is equivalent of Yellow Woman, Keres goddess of game who "is sometimes seen as Moon Mother of the War Twins, *Masewi* and *Oyoyewi*, who search for the sun, their lost father" (Lincoln, 54). According to Lincoln there is a tie between Ts'eh and Tsi'ty'icots or Salt Woman, the pan-Pueblo spirit of pure water.

Tayo's genealogy has also a strong relation to mythology. In one of the scenes Auntie tells Tayo how she once saw his mother completely naked at the river bank, to prove her promiscuity and to remove the child from his mother's memory. According to Purdy the place where Auntie saw Laura – "on that sandrock, above the big curve in the river" (73) – and the time of the scene – "right before sunrise" (73) – ties the earliest events in Tayo's life to water and thus to the Katsina, a deity of Laguna, "traditionally connected with water, either rainfall or the river" (cited, Purdy, 64). And "like Yellow Woman, Laura has gone to the river where meetings between humans and Katsina have been known to take place" (Purdy, 64). This is also the place where the Laguna people wait at dawn for the arrival of the Katsina during a ceremony. The implication is that like most heroes in the Laguna tradition Tayo will be aided by Katsina. In addition, Tayo's journey that begins with a search for the spotted cattle takes place on Mount Taylor, again a place associated with Katsina. Also this place is where Tayo meets Ts'eh following the Gambler's story. "Like the

meetings between Katsina and Yellow Woman, theirs happens near a river" (Purdy, 66).

However, the most important instance in the novel is perhaps the hoop ceremony which is arranged by Betonie with the aim of curing Tayo. Robert Bell notes that "the hoop transformation ceremony in *Ceremony* recapitulates, in astonishing detail, the procedures set forth in the Coyote Transformation rite" (Bell, 24) which is an ancient Laguna healing ritual. In his article Robert Bell explains the importance of the hoop ritual:

> Through repetition and recapitulation, the novel itself describes a circular design going into and out of the hoop ceremony at the center of the book. Linear time – beginning, middle, end – dissolves into a cycle of recapitulation and repetition... This figural design breaks down the very notion of past, present, and future, and we have what Eliot refereed to in a review of Ulysses as a "mythical" rather than a strictly linear "narrative" structure. (Bell, 25)

The ritual scene becomes the ultimate point which the two axes intersect. The Coyote Transformation rite is part of an old Laguna tradition called Red Antway. According to the belief, "if a person disturbs, digs up, burns, spit on, urinates on, sleeps on, or merely walks over their house, even though the act may be inadvertent or accidental" (Bell, 24), Ant people will be offended and they will angrily be "responsible for certain categories of disease and disturbance, including "evil dreams" and "the influence of ghosts or animals or of other beings that travel in darkness ('witchery of the whirling darkness')" (Bell, 24). Considering that the Coyote Transformation story immediately follows Tayo's curse for the never-ending rains in the jungle, Tayo's mistake may be an offense against Ant people. The result of this "misbehavior and inattentiveness to the mythic/communal well-being" (Ruppert, 186) is the drought. For this reason, the hoop ceremony closely parallels "the prototype myth and ritual set forth in the Red Antway" (Bell, 25). The ceremony is also important as it symbolically gives Tayo, Betonie and his assistant Shush mythic identities. Robert Bell further examines this point:

> Certain rituals associated with the Native American curing ceremonies require that the patient re-enact mythological events as a necessary means of identification. When the patient re-enacts the hero's adventure, identification is complete: time is stilled, this world yields to that of myth and legend, the natural and the supernatural mend; and the present moment, which joins past and future, becomes a centering process, a locus of consciousness and being forever becoming" (Bell, 26)

When the ceremonial paraphernalia is set Tayo, Betonie and Shush become supernatural heroes of mythology. Shush becomes the child-bear: "the helper stepped out from the shadows; he was granting like a bear. He raised his head as if it were heavy for him, and he sniffed the air" (142-143). "Tayo's role is symbolized by the young hunter in the Coyote Transformation Myth, and old Betonie becomes one of the 'elders who belong to Bear people'" (Bell, 31). As he walks Tayo through the hoops, Betonie sings a prayer:

> At the Dark Mountain
> Born from the mountain
> Walked along the mountain
> I will bring you through my hoop,
> I will bring you back. (143)

While Betonie sings, Tayo becomes "the younger hunter who has 'lost his mind,' who is 'not himself' since Coyote slapped his mangy skin over him and breathed on him" (Bell, 31). But as Tayo is led through the hoops he "renews his mind and spirit, [and] the words sung become reality" (Bell, 31). Bell explains the life giving force of Betonie's prayers:

> The ritualistic phrases from Red Antway Silko imitates belong to a special ceremonial language based upon the idea that the word – that is, the formulation of sounds (sacred because associated with breath itself) into organized speech – has a "compulsive power" which brings about a 'close identification of person, mind, word, and power and its extension to objects and means.' Because the words retell a traditional story, they function to create and reflect the efficacy of order, of repetition, and recapitu-

> lation; a circle of identification is completed in the enduring sanctity of the words of the ceremony. (Bell, 31)

Accordingly, following Tayo's return to home, one of the closing pages of the novel depicts the completion of the Coyote rite:

> They unraveled
> the dead skin
> Coyote threw
> on him
>
> They cut it up
> bundle by bundle.
>
> Every evil
> which entangled him
> was cut
> to pieces. (258)

While Tayo's healing parallel the Coyote transformation rite, the purification of the town by Hummingbird and Fly, the myth given in the poetic section, turns to reality with the return of the "clouds with round heavy bellies" (255) at the end of the novel. Like the story of Sun who defeats the Gambler and releases the rain clouds (170), Tayo becomes a hero who has brought the rain back to his community.

As a result, "as Tayo heals and the fragmentation of his life and of the text retreat, he emerges fully into the world of myth and ceremony, seeing the web of stories" (Ruppert, 178). As the Laguna stories "lend a sense of order to the fragmented prose" (Ruppert, 181), Silko shows how myth also lends a sense of order to reality. Thus, the merging of vertical and horizontal axes towards the end of the novel indicates Tayo's full incorporation into the world of Laguna.

4.2. Mixed-Blood Identity

Tayo's identity crisis at first focuses upon his mixed-blood status. Tayo feels displaced: "I always wished I had dark eyes like other people," he tells Night Swan. Due to their partly European heritage, mixed-blood people are generally excluded from their society, and as in Tayo's case also from their family. Such exclusion is actually based upon an Indian-White binary opposition. In her novel, Silko uses Tayo's mixed blood identity as a means of deconstructing this culturally fixed and unquestioned binary opposition in an attempt to erase the discriminating boundaries between races[4]. In contrast to binary oppositions, Silko establishes the theme of "oneness" in Tayo's character, and she extends it from racial boundaries to other dichotomies such as human/animal, myth/reality and individual/community, all of which are concentrated in Tayo whose predicament in fact comes from his separation from that "oneness" essential to Native American cosmology. By referring to Paula Gunn Allen, James Ruppert discusses this situation:

> In discussing what originally caused Tayo's illness, Allen argues that Tayo's illness stems from his acceptance of the witchery's mistaken perception that humans and other creatures are not part of a larger oneness: "The cure for that misunderstanging, for Tayo, was a reorientation of perception so that he could know directly that the true nature of being is magical and that the proper duty of the creatures, the land, and human beings is to live in harmony with what is" (*Sacred* 125). Betonie informs Tayo that his sickness is part of larger than himself and his cure would be found "in something great and inclusive of everything" (125). Tayo's ultimate realization is that he has never been crazy, that he was simply al-

[4] For the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, this kind of oppositions is present at "the foundation of an unassailable system of thought" (Eagleton, 133) that is deeply embedded in man's history. Mankind thinks and behaves in terms of binary oppositions. The binary habit of thought produces ideologies which "draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not, between self and non-self, truth and falsity, sense and nonsense, reason and madness, central and marginal" etc. (Eagleton, 133). Derrida believes that these oppositions can be unraveled to show "how one term of an antithesis secretly inheres within the other" (Eagleton 133). And, he invents a critical operation named "Deconstruction" "by which such oppositions can be partly undermined, or by which they can be shown partly undermine each other" (Eagleton 132). "Structuralism was generally satisfied if it could carve up a text into binary oppositions and expose the logic of their working. Deconstruction tries to show how such oppositions, in order to hold themselves in place, are sometimes betrayed into inverting or collapsing themselves" (Eagleton 133).

> ways perceiving the timeless way things truly are, without the artificial boundaries imposed by Western thought. (Ruppert, 179)

So, the real conflict is actually between the Western thought that sets boundaries and oppositions and the Native thought that favors balance and oneness. And, Tayo's responsibility is to pass from one system to another to heal himself by reintegrating with the Native world. He will do this with the power of stories, ceremonies and rituals which "are attempts to confer 'totality' or structure on experience: objects and events that would not otherwise be related to one another are given definite connection" (Bell, 34).

Actually even binary oppositions have a connection. In a binary opposition the being of each part is "parasitically dependent upon the [other], and upon the act of excluding and subordinating the other" (Eagleton 133). Considering the White/Indian hierarchy Betonie's response to Tayo regarding his hallucination of his uncle among the Japanese soldiers he was ordered to shoot is remarkable:

> "The Japanese." The medicine man went on as though he were trying to remember something. "It isn't surprising you saw him [Josiah] with them. You saw who they were. Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers. You saw what the evil had done: you saw the witchery ranging as wide as this world. (C, 124)

It is possible to infer from Betonie's words that such a hierarchy is necessary because the other "may not be quite so other after all… Perhaps what is outside is also somehow inside, what is alien also intimate – so that [one] needs to police the absolute frontier between the two realms because it may always be transgressed, and is much less absolute than it appears" (Eagleton 133). As James Ruppert also indicates, Betonie has a special place in the novel:

> Betonie serves as a model [who] is able to translate Western and Native discourse spheres into new ceremonies and ceremonial visions. His phone books, newspapers, bear stories, and medicine pouches objectify mediation and cross-cultural discourse. Situated as he is physicallt between Native and non-Native, toen and mountain, Betonie is, of course, the ideal

> person to affect the cure of Tayo and to help him mediate the discourses. (Ruppert, 182)

In the mythic frame of the novel, the use of binary oppositions and hierarchies, creating dichotomies by separating things from each other is called, in Betonie's words, "witchery." In the novel, "the evil curse set in motion by witchery – "Whirling / whirling / whirling / whirling" (138, 260-261) – begins with "white skin people" who bring disease, destruction and death, "swarming like larva / out of a crushed ant hill" (136)" (Bell, 25). Betoine tells Tayo that a hundred years ago, "the Indian holy men saw that 'the balance of the world had been disturbed,' when whites came buying land, logging, mining, killing bears and mountain lions for sport, not need. There would be "droughts and harder days to come" (186)" (Lincoln, 56). The witchery is first shown in "the white doctors' attitudes toward Tayo's communal orientation. They want him to think only of himself and to stop using words like "we" and "us" (125).

Whites, at first, may seem the ones to blame for dividing and creating binary oppositions. However, Silko is a writer who is, in a Derridean way, aware of the fact that "people [always] desire a centre because it guarantees *being as presence*," and "any attempt to undo a particular concept is to become caught up in the terms which the concept depends on," therefore "all we can do is to refuse to allow either pole in a system (White/Indian, good/evil etc.) to become the centre and guarantor of presence[5]" (Selden 144). Accordingly, Silko's way of deconstruction is far from valuing one term over the other, instead she uses Tayo's mixed-blood status, a term that is equally distant from either pole (White/Indian). When, Tayo cuts open the barbed wire fence to retrieve his stolen cattle on Mount Taylor, Silko intrudes:

> If the white people never looked beyond the lie, to see that their was a nation built on stolen land, then they would never be able to understand how they had been used by the witchery; they would never know that they were still being manipulated by those who know how to stir the ingredients together: while thievery and injustice boiling up the anger and hatred

[5] In Derrida's classic work, *Of Grammatology*, the desire for a centre is called "logocentrism." " Logos (Greek for 'word') is a term which in the New Testament carries the greatest possible concentration of presence: 'In the beginning was the word.' " (Selden, 145).

> that would finally destroy the world: the starving against the fat, the colored against the white. (191)

Therefore, the witchery is working against whites as well as Indians; while "Indians abnegate responsibility for their own lives maligning whites," (Lincoln, 58) the whites believe that "only brown-skinned people were thieves" (191). This view can also be seen in Betonie's remark: "you don't write off all the white people, just like you don't trust all Indians" (128). To hate whites on the other hand will destroy Indians as it happens with the veterans:

> Tormented veterans drink cheap wine by night tumbleweed fires near the first uranium mine, blame and forget and wound their own brothers. Self-tortures stun them into destroying others, martyring the half-breed Harley over barbed wire fencing, cutting the whorls from his toes. The Indians's hatred for themselves and their oppressor's fuels "witchery." This is a way of voicing a realistic state of fear, not just paranoia or superstition. It generates from an ominous sense of *un*reality and cultural dissociation that divides oppressed peoples among themselves" (Lincoln, 58)

Harley and Leroy end up dead in the wrecked pick-up, and killing Pinkie, Emo is ostracized to California; "these names serve less as character in the story, more as signs of the destructive self-hatred in young Indians encased in shells, veterans sucked empty over a century of foreign and civil wars" (Lincoln, 59). However, unlike the other veterans, Tayo gradually comes to see "the reconciliation of opposites," "the belief, integral to Native American philosophy" "through the subtle processes of the ceremony" (Bell, 27).

When Tayo kneels and looks closely at a piece of ore in the mouth of the uranium mine he feels enchanted at what he sees: "The gray stone was streaked with powdery yellow uranium, bright and alive as pollen; veins of sooty black formed lines with the yellow, making mountain ranges and rivers across the stone" (C, 246). But he cannot understand how such a beautiful thing could be the basic substance of the most destructive weapon man has ever produced until he realizes that the evil actually resides in separating the rock from the earth: "But they had taken these

beautiful rocks from deep within earth and they had laid them in a monstrous design" (C, 246).

Accordingly, Auntie's and Emo's attempt to exclude Tayo for his mixed-blood status is also a form of witchery. In her shame at his sister's corruption and her nephew's mixed-blood status, Auntie ostracizes Tayo from family and community. She tells Grandmother: "You know what people will say, they'll say, 'Don't do it. He's not a full-blood anyway'" (C, 33). Emo's attitude is not very different than Auntie. The bar scene is narrated like a ritualistic witchcraft; while Emo rattles his bag of human teeth, and all the veterans tell stories of war and sex, "the bar stories imitate the oral materials interspersed throughout the novel" (Owens, 136), and Silko writes: "They repeated the Stories about good times in Oakland and San Diego, they repeated them like long medicine chants, the beer bottles pounding on the counter tops like drums" (C,43). During the scene, when Emo says "us Indians deserve something better than this goddamn dried-up country… They've got everything. And we don't get shit, do we?" (C, 55) he not only damns the mother earth by setting a white/Indian hierarchy but also seeks to separate Tayo from the community: "He thinks he's something all right. Because he's part white. Don't you, half-breed?" (C, 57). Tayo commits a mistake by attempting to kill Emo and creates an evil/good opposition; like Abel in *House Made of Dawn*, while he is trying to destroy the counter term (evil), he becomes it. Tayo's healing process starts only after he "begins to understand what Josiah had said. Nothing was all good or all bad either; it all depended" (C, 11).

The theme of mixed-blood identity is developed with Ts'eh and the spotted cattle. According to Kenneth Lincoln "Ts'eh Montano, or 'Water Mountain,' seems a coded and composite reference to the spirit-woman who returns vitality to the arid desert for Indians, Mexicans, and whites alike, all embodied in Tayo, all sharing in the sickness and health of one another, many as one with the land" (Lincoln, 56). The spotted desert cattle, crossed first with a Hereford and later with the yellow bull Josiah has acquired from rodeo stock, are, like Tayo, mixed-bloods. As Lincoln puts it, all these things stand as symbols against witchery:

> The ceremonies of the stars and mountains and woman and rain, even rounding up the speckled white cattle, account for everything without dehumanizing or denaturalizing any one part. They unify all people, bloods, breeds, bastards, whites, darks, animals, plants, spirits, and stones in patterns of cycling continuity. The witchery starts opposedly, displacing one's own pain on others, "me" against "them," castigating, warring, killing, dividing the people. (Lincoln, 53)

The cattle are branded with a mark that "looked like a big butterfly with its wings outstretched, or two loops of rope tied together in the center" (C, 81). Louis Owens notes that this Mexican brand is "the symbol for infinity, the continuum[6]" (183). Through this special breed cattle, which are resistant to drought and hunger, Silko actually lays her perspective about the necessity for "cultural evolution" and "change." Mixed-blood identity is presented as an indispensable example of evolution, which is essential for physical and cultural survival. This is reinforced by Night Swan's reply to Tayo: "Indians or Mexicans or whites, most people are afraid of change. They think that if their children have the same color of skin, the same color of eyes, that nothing is changing… They are fools. They blame us, the ones who look different. That way they don't have to think about what has happened inside themselves" (C, 98-99).

When Ts'eh leaves going "uphill to the northeast[7]" (234), "Tayo witnesses a convergence of his mixed lifelines at the autumnal equinox, the celestial fusion of light and dark, analogous to this mixed blood, when summer and winter solstices balance zenith and nadir" (Lincoln, 56):

> The cloudy yellow sandstone of Enchanted Mesa was still smoky blue before dawn, and only a faint hint of yellow light touched the highest point of the mesa. All things seemed to converge there: roads and wagon trails, canyons with springs, cliff paintings and shrines, the memory of Josiah with his cattle… Yet, at that moment in the sunrise, it was all so beautiful,

[6] To this Mexican brand Josiah and Tayo add Auntie's brand, a rafter 4. In Pueblo and other Native American traditions 4 and 7 are powerful and sacred numbers comprehending the four cardinal directions plus center, zenith and nadir. Note that *House Made of Dawn* was also divided into 4 sections and the story took 7 years span.

[7] Here, there is correlation between Ts'eh and the Kurena deity, whose songs are sung from the corn harvest at the end of summer until winter solstice. (Lincoln, 56).

> everything, from all directions, evenly, perfectly, balancing day with night, summer months with winter. The valley was enclosing this totality, like the mind holding all thoughts together in a single moment. (237)

The equinox becomes Tayo's "ceremonial confluence" (Lincoln, 58). He finally sees "the pattern, the way all stories fit together – the old stories, the war stories, their stories" (246), and he understands that "He was not crazy; he had never been crazy. He had only seen and heard the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time" (246).

In conclusion, Tayo's mixed-blood identity not only "fuses peoples divided over time" (Lincoln, 58), but also it becomes a melting pot in which discursive and racial boundaries fall. By using Tayo's mixed-blood identity, Silko encourages the readers to "acknowledge growth of new myths and the renewal and evolution of the ceremonies" (Ruppert, 185). She suggests the readers "to examine their attitudes toward different people, positions and types of discourse" (Ruppert, 185).

4.3. Tayo's Subject Formation

In his article "Circular Design in Ceremony" Robert Bell states that Tayo's "alienation from himself and from his people" and his inability "to create an identity for himself" are all "symbolic features of an ordeal prefigured in legend"; retracing the traditional "hero's separation and gradual return, Tayo has to get back to where he started from, and in his hand is his beginning (renewal)" (Bell, 30).

Considering this, in the beginning of the novel, Tayo can be compared to an infant in his early years experiencing the 'imaginary' state. He "is not a unified subject confronting and desiring a stable object, but a complex, shifting field of force in which [he] is caught up and dispersed, [and he] has as yet no centre of identity… the boundaries between [himself] and the external world are indeterminate" (Eagleton, 154): "he'd almost been convinced he was brittle red clay, slipping away with the wind, a little more each day" (27). Like the other war veterans, Tayo is "anarchic, aggressive, self-involved and remorselessly pleasure-seeking, under the sway of what Freud calls *the pleasure principle*" (Eagleton, 154). Accordingly, he is also inarticu-

late (in Latin *infant* means "speechless"). He lacks any defined centre of self, but yet, he is capable of acquiring one "by defining 'the Self' in relation to 'the Other[8]'" (Chandler, 105). The other here, is an object of desire which the subject has to identify with in order to attain a feeling of identity.

Louis Althusser, who reconsiders the concept of ideology in terms of Lacan's 'imaginary', asserted that the relation of an individual subject to society as a whole is "like the relation of the small child to his or her mirror *image*[9] in Lacan's imaginary. In both cases, the human subject is supplied with a satisfyingly unified image of identity by identifying with an object which reflects this image back to it in a closed, narcissistic circle" (Eagleton, 172). Enthralled by the received image, a person subjects itself to the society, "and it is through this 'subjection' that one becomes a subject" (Eagleton, 173). Social practices given by ideology bind a person to the social structure and lend him or her a sense of coherent purpose and identity. Accordingly, the object of desire, which will reflect his image back to Tayo reminding him his place and identity in the world, will be his community from which he was banned.

However, the child Tayo must first be distracted in its imaginary state and forced to "begin to recognize… that a wider familial and a social network exists of which it is only part" (Eagleton, 165). The role the child must play in this social network is already predetermined by the practices of society into which it is born; this social network is what Freud calls the semiotic order, and it includes language.

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[8] Lacanian criticism implies that the "subject" is less than an "autonomous or unified identity" (Selden, 129) and "far from being a mere blank which awaits its social or sexual role, the subject is *'in process' and is capable of being other than it is"* (Selden, 137). For the neo-Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who in *The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious* (1957) wrote that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan 1977, 159), subject is "split between the conscious life of the 'ego' and the unconscious life of 'desire' (Selden, 130) (like sign split between signifier and signified), and like the signification process in language the mind is in a dynamic flux of experience. However, it is also capable of acquiring some degree of constancy "by defining 'the Self' in relation to 'the Other'" (Chandler, 105). (In language every sign gains its meaning by means of other signs.)

[9] In the mirror stage that occurs during the imaginary, although the sense of unity with the external world persists, a different process begins. The child's reflection in the mirror tells the child what it is, in other words, this fake *image* gives a kind of false identity to the child, and the child identifies with it. For Lacan this identification process continues in subject's whole life. In order to gain an identity we constantly make identifications with objects which in turn reflect back our *image* telling us who we are only to lead us to misperceive and misrecognize ourselves. These identifications build up the ego which is just a "narcissistic process whereby we bolster up a fictive sense of unitary selfhood by finding something in the world with which we can identify" (Eagleton, 165).

Tayo's entrapment in the imaginary could be discussed in terms of his lack of a mother and thus his depravity of a normal course of psychological development from Oedipus complex to the semiotic order[10]. However, Louise Owens notes that,

> Tayo's mother, Laura, has been lost to the world of white men, alcohol, and promiscuity and, finally, to death. The disappearance and death of his mother is an enormous loss for the half-white Tayo, for in a matrilineal culture such as that of the Pueblo, clan identity and a secure knowledge of one's identity within the community is conveyed most firmly through the mother. Without that essential connection, and rejected by his mother's sister, Tayo seems cut adrift at the borders of his culture." (Owens, 179)

Therefore, what is absent for Tayo is actually not the mother but the community as for the matrilineal Native society the mother is a link which binds the subject to community. James Ruppert also states that Tayo's identity problem may seem as if it is related to "his mother, his upbringing, and the death of his brother… however, he comes to realize that his identity is bound up with Laguna's identity, with something larger than his own psyche. It is this insight that leads him to the revelation of who he is" (Ruppert, 179).

In order to enter the semiotic order Tayo must first gain access to language as a prerequisite for socialization[11]. However, the 'empty' world of the language is not like the 'fullness' that was found in the imaginary. Language "is just an endless process of difference and absence: instead of being able to possess anything in its full-

[10] In the imaginary state, there is not any clear distinction between the subject and the object (external world). The subject lacks any defined centre of self. All sense of selfhood (if there is any) passes into objects as if the external world is an extension of the subject's body. This perception first stems from the 'symbiotic' relation between the child and its mother's body; there is not a boundary between the two. The child's life is dependent on the mother's body and the child also conceives its mother as dependent on itself. During the occurrence of the Oedipus complex, the 'dyadic' relationship between the mother and the child turns to a 'triadic' one with the entrance of the father. According to Lacan the father signifies the Law, the social taboo on incest. Thus, "the child is disturbed in its libidinal relation with the mother, and must begin to recognize in the figure of the father that a wider familial and a social network exists of which it is only part" (Eagleton, 165).

[11] At this stage the child must normally "resign itself to the fact that it can never have any *direct* access to reality, in particular to the now prohibited body of the mother" (Eagleton 167). It is forced to enter the semiotic order, and its access to language as a prerequisite for socialization occurs at the same time. In the *absence* of the object it needs, the child has to indicate that it is cold, hungry etc. and has to use language. The signs which make up the language are there only because of the *absence* of the objects they signify.

ness, Tayo will now simply move from one signifier to another, along a linguistic chain which is potentially infinite" (Eagleton, 167). Language in a sense will work against him by dividing and *articulating* the fullness of the imaginary (in Latin *articulare* means to divide into joints).

However, Tayo resists to be "divided" and enter the semiotic order; because, he resists to speak "the language of that privileged discourse" (Owens, 175) which is "indissolubly fused with its authority – with political power" (Bakhtin, 533). He becomes inarticulate: "He can't talk to you," he tells an Anglo doctor about himself, "He is invisible. His words are formed with an invisible tongue, they have no sound." Silko adds: "He reached into his mouth and felt his own tongue; it was dry and dead, the carcass of a tiny rodent" (C, 15). Louise Owens notes that "Tayo's belief that his invisible self's words are formed 'with an invisible tongue' and are 'without sound' suggests his unconscious sensitivity to the enormous pressures brought upon Native American speech by the forces of colonization." According to Owens, "dry and dead" tongues are an "easily anticipated result of the systematic and institutionalized attempts to eradicate Native American languages" (Owens, 1994: 170).

Yet, Tayo has to enter the semiotic order because "as long as we remain in an imaginary realm of being we misrecognize our own identities, seeing them as fixed and rounded, and misrecognize reality as something immutable" (Eagleton, 187). We remain, in Althusser's terms, "in the grip of ideology, conforming to social reality as 'natural' rather than critically questioning how it, and ourselves, came to be constructed, and so could possibly be transformed" (Eagleton, 187). Besides, "in Lacanian theory, anyone who is unable to enter the symbolic order at all, to symbolize their experience through language, would become psychotic" (Eagleton, 190).

Therefore, Tayo's entrance into the semiotic order also means for him to lead a cardinal role for his community. Like the traditional questing hero he must articulate his story and transform his community freeing it from the grip of ideology. Being aware of how western discourse divides and separates humanity by setting binary oppositions and

hierarchies, Tayo should develop a counter-discourse resistance[12]. As British cultural materialists say "every history of subjection also contains a history of resistance, and that resistance is not just a symptom of and justification for subjection but is the true mark of an ineradicable 'difference' which always prevents power from closing the door on change" (Selden 165).

Tayo's inarticulateness is regarded as madness by his community. However, madness and silence may be considered as labels given by the society to individuals who show resistance to the dominant discourse. According to Foucault's early study on "madness", "the rules and procedures which determine what is considered normal or rational successfully silence what they exclude… individuals cannot think or speak without obeying the unspoken 'archive' of rules and constraints; otherwise they risk being condemned to madness or silence" (Selden 159). Nevertheless, silence or madness is not the kind of resistance Silko suggests, because as Betonie puts it "Things which don't shift and grow are dead things" (C, 126).

[12] For the structuralists "subjects" are a production of linguistic structures which were "always already" in place. These linguistic structures, which are called *langue*, were their true object of analysis. However, by doing so, they overlooked *parole*, the realm which subject's utterances belong to. Such a "systematic view of communication [excluded] all subjective processes by which individuals interact with others and with society" (Selden 127). Poststructuralists opposed to "viewing language as an impersonal system" and they introduced "the concept of 'speaking subject' or the 'subject in process'" (Selden 127). For them language and subjective processes were unstable, dynamic and in articulation with other systems. This conception is termed "discourse" ("The Bakhtin School were probably the first modern literary theorists to reject the Saussurean notion of language. They insisted that all instances of languages had to be considered in a social context" (Selden 127)). Following the principle of discourse, in his *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1969), Louis Althusser gave a political charge to the discourse theory by arguing that "we are all 'subjects' of ideology which operates by summoning us to take our places in the social structure" (Summoning works through what he calls "state apparatuses" (religious, legal, educational etc.)) (Selden 129). Althusser stated that ideology creates an imaginary consciousness which imposes how individuals should relate to "their real conditions of existence" (Selden 129). However, this fake "image" actually "represses the real relations between individuals and the social structure" (Selden 129). Like Althusser, Michel Foucault reduced political, economic and social control to signifying processes by "mapping the discursive formations which, often in the name of science, have enabled institutions to wield power and domination by defining and excluding the mad, the sick, the criminal, the poor and the deviant" (Selden 129). For him "discourse is the governing and ordering medium of every institution" (Selden 129). This medium works through social constraints of which the most important is "the formative power of the education system, which defines what is rational and scholarly" (Selden 159). As it has been mentioned in Section 1.3, Euro-American "authoritative discourse" most notably works through Indian boarding schools which "strive to determine the very basis of [Indian] behavior" (Bakhtin, 532).

In order to "shift and grow" Tayo must develop a counter-discourse resistance. In this respect, Michel Pêcheux offers three types of subject that take different positions in relation to the dominant discourse[13]:

1. The "good subject", who "freely" accepts the image of self which is projected by the discourse in question in an act of total "identification."
2. The "bad subject", who refuses the identity offered by discourse in an act of "counter-identification."
3. The subject who adopts a "third modality" by transforming the subject position which is offered in an act of "disidentification." (Selden, 166)

As a product of Indian Boarding School "state apparatus," Auntie's favorite, the bright high school champion Rocky is an example of the first type of subject whose position in relation to the dominant discourse can be observed from the change in his behavior towards Indian traditions after his first year at the boarding school in Albuquerque:

> But Rocky was funny about those things. He was an A-student and all-state in football and track. He had to win; he said he was always going to win. So he listened to his teachers, and he listened to the coach. They were proud of him. They told him, "Nothing can stop you now except one thing: don't let the people at home hold you back." Rocky deliberately avoided the old time ways… he called it superstition, and he opened his textbooks to show [grandma]. Auntie wanted him to be a success. She could see what white people wanted in an Indian, and she believed this way was his only chance (C,51).

[13] While Foucault gave little chance to the possibility of resistance to the discursive power of ideologies, British cultural materialists challenged this notion with New Historicism by drawing a more dynamic model of culture. Inspired by the New Historicism, in *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (1975) Michel Pêcheux developed "a more elaborate account of the operation of ideological discourses in relation to subjectivity" (Selden, 130) by combining Althusserian Marxism, modern linguistics and psychoanalysis to make it possible for the theory to "allow for the subject's possible *resistance* to the discursive formations" (Selden, 166). For example, although religious ideology worked "by interpellating individuals as God's subjects" (Selden 166), there were different groups like atheists and new religionists who were refusing offered subject positions and producing new ones. As a result, Pêcheux proposed three types of subject.

Emo, on the other hand, occupies the second type of subject position with his hatred and hostility towards white people.

Ironically, unlike the full-blood veterans, mixed-blood Tayo is the only one who is able to escape what Bakhtin calls "internally persuasive discourse" which is "affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with one's own word" (Bakhtin, 532). This can be observed from his familiarity with traditional stories. As he remembers a story Josiah had told him as a child, Tayo tries to protect the Fly, people's helper, when he goes into a bar and sees flypaper "speckled with dead flies." He leaves and closes the door "quickly so that no flies got in" (C, 101). Purdy also notes that Tayo's "strength comes from his awareness that his story is very similar to those he heard from Josiah as a child" (Purdy 64). However, his most direct exposure to the externally exposed discourse of the western world occurs after his war experience. He realizes that it is the force that sends Tayo to the jungle only to kill his brothers.

> He had believed in the stories for a long time, until the teachers at Indian school taught him not to believe in that kind of nonsense. But they had been wrong. Josiah had been there, in the jungle; he had come. Tayo had watched him die, and he had done nothing to save him (C, 19).

Initially, Tayo is unable to take a subject position. Betonie, an unusual mixed-blood Navajo medicine man with the familiar hazel eyes[14] who lives alone in a hogan[15] cluttered with the paraphernalia of both traditional Navajo healing and modern American culture, becomes Tayo's mentor who will lead him to adopt the third type of subject position. Betonie teaches Tayo the necessity of producing a hybrid discourse:

> The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done… But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the changing began..." (C, 126)

[14] Mixed blood people generally have hazel eyes.
[15] The traditional home of the Navajo people. These are round or cone-shaped structures; like tipis their doors always face the east to welcome the rising sun.

Betonie innovates the old ways of healing and ritual in a way to make them fit new conditions and needs. And, with the help of Betonie, who, like a psychoanalyst treats Tayo as if his analysand (or patient)[16], Tayo finds the essential social practice which will help him enter the semiotic order and bind him to his community; he will bring the rain to his land and community that have suffered from a six-years drought.

As Rocky lies dying in the jungle, Tayo curses the rain: "He damned the rain until the words were a chant… He wanted the words to make a cloudless blue sky, pale with a summer sun pressing across wide and empty horizons" (C, 12). When he returns home to his desiccated reservation, he believes that his damning the rain in a chant, ritualistically, has caused the drought; "So he had prayed the rain away," Silko writes, "and for the sixth year it was dry; the grass turned yellow and it did not grow. Wherever he looked, Tayo could see the consequences of his praying… and he cried for all of them, and for what he had done" (C, 14). Following this passage Silko introduces a poem recounting a disagreement between Reed Woman and Corn Woman. Resentful of Reed Woman's constant bathing, Corn Woman becomes angry and drives Reed Woman away with the result that "there was no more rain then."
Like Reed Woman, Tayo's mother Laura has gone away. In the ancient poem people seek help from Hummingbird and Fly in order to propitiate the Corn Mother and restore the rain and fertility of the earth. Similarly, like Hummingbird and Fly, Tayo begins his quest for bringing the rain and his mother to his community after Betonie's ceremony which is conducted like a psychoanalysis[17] session; the circular

[16] In the beginning, when Tayo wakes up at the veteran's hospital he suffers from psychosis, the condition "in which the ego, unable to repress the unconscious desire, comes under its sway" (Eagleton, 159) The link between Tayo's ego and the external world is ruptured, and the unconscious has begun to build up an alternative, delusional reality (Tayo's "invisible self") leaving him in a state of schizophrenia. "Schizophrenia involves a detachment from reality and a turning in on the self, with an excessive but a loosely systematized production of fantasies: it is as though the 'id', or unconscious desire, has surged up and flooded the conscious mind with its illogicality, riddling associations and affective rather than conceptual links between ideas. Schizophrenic language has in this sense an interesting resemblance to poetry" (Eagleton, 159).

[17] "Aim of psychoanalysis is to uncover the hidden causes of the neurosis in order to releive the patient of his or her conflicts, so dissolving the distressing symptoms" (Eagleton, 158). "Tayo rides deeper into the mountains with old Betonie and the medicine man's helper, Shush. Silko inserts here a story about a man transformed into a coyote and the precise actions necessary to bring the man back into the world of the people. At the end of this poem, Tayo is described sitting "in the center of the white corn sand painting" (C, 141). Like the man stolen by the coyote, Tayo must be carefully brought back into the world of his community" (Owens, 185).

sand painting[18] that Tayo steps into suggests his eventual entrance into the eternal signification of language and the semiotic order[19].

Just like psychoanalysis is a "repetition or ritual re-enactment of the original conflict" (Eagleton 159), "ceremonial ritual enacts mythology and legend as if for the first time" (Bell, 24). Robert Bell notes that "such curing ceremonials consist of a mixture of procedures designed to symbolically recapitulate the events told in myth and legend, including rituals 'intended to appease or to exorcise the etiological factors that are thought to have caused the patient's troubles'" (Bell, 24). Kenneth Lincoln also claims that in Betonie's hogan "Tayo recognizes calendar pictures from 1939 and 1940, predating his war sickness. The scene implies that healing involves the right triggering of the memory, a health within things, natural to body and mind" (Lincoln, 52).

After the ceremony the rain becomes Tayo's 'transcendental' object "which will ground [his] endless yearning" "to recover the pure [however fictive] self-identity and self-completion which [he] knew in the imaginary" (Eagleton 168). Tayo sleeps and dreams of the spotted cattle, and when he awakens he begins his quest with a renewed insight:

> He stood on the edge of the rim rock and looked down below: the canyons and valleys were thick powdery black; their variations of height and depth were marked by a thinner black color. He remembered the black of the sand paintings on the floor of the hogan; the hills and mountains were the mountains and hills they had painted in sand. He took a deep breath of cold mountain air: there were no boundaries; the world below and the sand paintings inside became the same that night. The mountains from all the directions had been gathered there that night. (C, 145)

[18] The art of pouring colored sands onto a surface to make a painting that is used in healing ceremonies.

[19] Before the sand painting, in the opening pages of the novel, Tayo steps inside a barrel hoop buried in the reddish sand as he wanders about the camp. Owens notes that "with the circle of the hoop, Silko suggests the continuum, the Native American concept of time and space and wholeness" (Owens, 176). Circle is the principal geometry in Native American cosmology. As Fran D. Feather explains "the galaxy, the atom, the womb, the compass" are all circular formations. Like the pivots of a compass humans should seek for their "true North," their ultimate goal and identity (Feather, 2002: 32). Owens also adds that in Betonie's hogan, "just as the patterns of a sand painting conform to the shape of a hogan, Tayo notes that 'the boxes and trunks, the bundles and stacks were plainly part of the pattern; they followed the concentric shadows of the room' (C, 120)(Owens, 183).

Tayo's "search for the cattle becomes the mythical hero's quest for wholeness; even though the cattle and the land have been stolen, this does not mean the end; events following the hoop transformation only complete the ceremony begun in the opening pages of the book" (Bell, 26). When tayo goes with Betonie and his assistant into the mountains "time, the strictliy linear progress of history dissolves; the line between the present world and a supernatural world of the past narrows" (Bell, 30). They stop for the night high in the mountains, and Tayo looks down: "This was the highest point on the earth: he could feel it. It had nothing to do with measurements or heights. It was a special place. He was smiling. He felt strong. He had to touch his own hand to remember what year it was" (139).

On the other hand, the rain, his object of desire, functions like a signifier that produces subject positions for the characters in the narrative[20]. These positions are attributed to Tayo, Night Swan and Ts'eh Montaño. While Tayo prepares to go into the mountains to seek for the cattle, "Silko interjects the traditional Pueblo story of Sun Man's journey into the mountains to rescue the stormclouds" (Owens, 186). Thus, he immediately takes the position of a culture hero. As Bell puts it "most american ceremonial myths provide a hero or heroine who gets into a series of predicaments or suffer injuries (usually transformations in mind and body) that require supernatural aid" (Bell, 23). Night Swan and Ts'eh Montaño become Tayo's spiritual helpers because of their relation to the rain, too. Being a Mexican with the distinctive hazel eyes of the mixed-blood, Night Swan explains that she has come to the reservation because she is "drawn" to the sacred mountain Tse-pi'na[21], "the woman veiled in clouds." She wears a "blue silk dress," lives in a room with a bright blue door, and when Tayo goes to her, she is wearing a blue kimono and seats Tayo in a "blue armchair" in a room with "blue flowers" painted on the walls and blue sheets upon the

[20] In an analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter", Lacan tried to show how the story was an allegory of psychoanalysis. The story is about a mysterious letter which intriguingly travels in the hands of different characters. "Lacan points out that the letter's contents are never revealed. The story's development is not shaped by the character of individuals or the contents of the letter but by the *position* of the letter in relation to the trio of persons (Minister, Queen, Dupen)… The letter acts like a signifier by producing subject positions for the characters in the narrative" (Selden, 140). For Lacan the story illustrates how "the symbolic order is 'constitutive for the subject'; the subject receives a 'decisive orientation' from the 'itinerary of a signifier'" (Selden, 141).

[21] The home of the Keres rain deity (Owens). It is The Mount Taylor in New Mexico.

bed. Owens notes that "for the Keres people the color blue is associated with West, the direction of rain" (185). Also Tayo thinks of her as being "like the rain and the wind," and when they make love he feels "her rhythm merging into the sound of the wind shaking the rafters and the sound of the rain in the tree" (C, 99). Similarly, Ts'eh's moccasins are decorated with silver rain birds; there are patterns of storm clouds and black lightning on her blanket . The scenery at Ts'eh's is also dominated by the color of blue, and she "is identified with water so closely that even the love-making between her and Tayo is described in water imagery culminating in a 'down-pour'" (Owens, 187).

Tayo's quest to enter the semiotic order reaches its climax just before his retrieval of the cattle from the cowboys who stole them as he is thrown from the horse lying stunned upon the pebbles and cinders of the mountain: "The magnetism of the center spread over him smoothly like rainwater down his neck and shoulders… It was pulling him back, close to the earth" (C, 201). Tayo is reunited with the mother earth. Moreover, he is absorbed into the cyclical time order at the sacred sight of a lightning-struck tree: "Rocky and I are walking across the ridge in the moonlight; Josiah and Robert are waiting for us. This night is a single night; and there has never been any other" (C, 192).

Gradually, Tayo establishes a center for himself, and this is suggested with the end of the drought. The change is also apparent in his appearace: "his hair had grown below his ears and touched his neck" (C, 229). Towards the end of the novel he comes to terms with the reasons of his neurotic state. As he walks back to the village after the conflict with Emo's gang, Tayo dreams "with his eyes open that he was wrapped in a blanket in the back of Josiah's wagon… Josiah was driving the wagon, old Grandma was holding him, and Rocky whispered 'my brother.' They were taking him home[22]" (C, 254). He feels himself forgiven, and at the same time the author implicitly mentions the figurative reclamation of his mother: "He thought of her then; she had always loved him, she had never left him; she had always been there. He crossed the river at sunrise" (C, 255). Following this, "Silko completes the story

[22] According to Ruppert, Tayo's dreaming with his eyes open is a merging of myth and reality which creates a meditative discourse (the intersection of vertical and horizontal axes).

of Hummingbird and Fly's endeavor to have the town purified and thus bring the Corn Mother (and fertility) home again" (Owens, 191).

Tayo's entrance into the semiotic order (and his community) is most firmly confirmed in the final pages of the novel as he is sitting and articulating his spiritual journey to the elders at the center of the kiva (the heart of community). His contemplation about the steel chair with ST. JOSEPH MISSION stencil on the back, is like an allusion to his psychic transformation from the imaginary to the semiotic: "He sat down, wondering how far the chair had gone from the parish hall before it came to the kiva" (C, 256). Like Abel's journey in *House Made of Dawn*, Tayo's movement from alienation to integration required seven years (a sacred number) which is also equal to the time of drought. Besides the time span, Tayo's journey has also a mythical itinerary as mapped by Kenneth Lincoln:

> He journeys south after the cattle, west to Old Betonie in Gallup, *down* east in a police car to Albuquerque after trying to gut Emo with a broken beer bottle ("east" here also in reference to his Oriental war duty and Rocky's death), *up* north to Ts'eh Montano on Mount Taylor – the ceremonial six direction of Indian myth – and finally back to the middle in the Laguna kiva with the old chair (Lincoln, 54)

Tayo's quest covers the six directions which are also evoked in the ceremonial rites. So, the journey itself is actually a ceremony, a vision questing. As John Purdy suggests, Tayo's "cure has taken the form of a journey – a series of instances in which he perceives his own experience through the knowledge gained from Laguna oral literature" (Purdy 67). The love he feels towards Ts'eh completes the circle:

> To believe in Ts'eh, to remember her healing effect on him, resists the despair that destroys young Indians through alcohol, drugs, car wrecks, suicide, and violence all across America … The curative memory of love calms Tayo's nightmarish voices: his abandonment, dislocation, rejection, and battle fatigue. The orphan can then come home. (Lincoln, 55)

In the final analysis, James Ruppert states that Tayo establishes his identity on two different narrative levels that supports each other, psychological and communal:

> On the level of the psychological narrative, Tayo emerges from invisible, inarticulate white smoke to become a lover… Tayo's social identity centers around his position as a partial outsider, accepted now into the social structure but rejecting the imposed social definition of the drunk, shell-shocked veteran… The communal narrative of identity concludes with Tayo assuming the role of a kiva priest… He now is an elder, a messenger, and a bringer of blessings since he has seen A'moo'ooh, carrier of life. The people will now be blessed, healed, purified. He crosses the river, returning to the village like a katchina (182) or religious initiate. He is now a protector of Laguna, a caretaker of the rain plants. (Ruppert, 187)

Tayo's subject formation occurs both "in terms of unconscious processes and in terms of certain social forces and relations" (Eag1eton, 76). Tayo's mythical journey, which serves as a metaphor for his psychological development from alienation to integrity, mimics the stages of an infant's subject formation from the imaginary to the semiotic. Silko aims to create a modern culture hero who, in the end of his questing practice (or subject formation), becomes able to see beyond the ideology that sets boundaries between races and cultures. His mixed-blood identity metaphorically serves as a way of deconstruction for the unassailable system of binary oppositions. Furthermore, individual transformation (subject-in-process) is extended to cultural evolution (culture-in-process): "individual history" is fused "in the ritualistic detail, to the quest of modern Native Americans for identity of their own that begins where Indian history only apparently ended", and that actually begins, "in the past, in tradition." (Bell, 33). Thus, Silko suggests the necessity of cultural change and adaptability for the survival of Native American identity.

CONCLUSION

The non-standard ways of identity formation in *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* serve as unique examples of how the contemporary Native American novelists deal with the problematic nature of their experience in their works of literature. In this study, first, the great impact of the incursion of European nations upon the cultural integrity of the Native American peoples is presented. The catastrophic loses of life, land and culture and the continuing effects of loses manifested in poverty, disease, alcohol addiction, and crime, have been fully illuminated and comprehended in both historical survey and works of literature. Furthermore, the readers have seen two different ways for the survival of Indian identity suggested by two pioneering authors. Due to the novels' multicultural perspective which drives from both Native American and Euro-American heritage, the thoughts of Indian critics have been merged with the occidental literary criticism. Although both of the novels give the account of a young war veteran who suffers from post war trauma, and who is also excluded from their native communities, the authors differ in terms of their ideas and narrative techniques.

House Made of Dawn incorporates the form of Native American folk tales and applies it to the modern forms of writing, which has been traced with the methods of A. J. Greimas and Tzvetan Todorov who have studied on the fixed patterns of structure of folktales. As an equivalent of traditional heroes Abel violates Native American sense of order and balance by trying to destroy things that he identifies with evil. As a result, he is punished by being forced to set off a dangerous journey which tragically ends in a hospital in California. Then he is reborn like the traditional heroes of Navajo stories, and in the oral tradition he finds the essential power to make a new beginning in his home town. However, what is missing in Momaday's novel is that, unlike Silko's hero, Abel does not take the place of a community leader in the end, this being the most crucial part of the "culture hero" stories. Abel's healing occurs through his reintegration with the Indian land and time, but the communal

aspect is not emphasized. Momaday, more significantly deals with individuals and their relation to the sacred landscape.

Other than the pattern of hero stories, Momaday also makes use of another traditional element of oral storytelling, that is the trickster discourse. In this respect Tosamah acts like the notorious troublemaker of the traditional trickster stories, and by taunting Abel, he provokes him into self-contemplation and makes him aware of his power which he does not have.

The novel draws the pictures of two different worlds; one is the western world with its harsh realities, and the other is the more humanitarian Indian consciousness. These worlds are separate from each other, and with a structuralist classification they are prone to be split into two different narrative levels. During his quest Abel travels across these narrative levels while building an identity for himself. The novel starts and ends with the same narrative level, or the temporal and spatial plane. This way it not only mimics the traditional Native stories whose end is given in the beginning, but also it makes an allusion to the cyclical nature of Native American understanding of time and space.

The source of Abel's alienation and de-centering is based upon two factors. One is the tragic outcome of the colonization process which is reflected in his alcoholism, his alienation from his home town and culture, and his World War II experience. As a way of survival of Indian identity amid the devastating effects of colonization, Momaday suggests keeping in contact with the past and the Native American traditions. Therefore, the identity quest of Abel is accompanied by healing rituals which bind him to the past and his traditions. Moreover, while dealing with the white/Indian conflict Momaday presents binary oppositions and suggests the acknowledgement of opposing forces. For him the white dominance is a reality which cannot interfere with the eternal cycle of Native American time. At the same time, Momaday suggests that the comprehension of universe in dichotomies damages white people, too. This is presented in the characters of Angela and Father Olguin, who are alienated from themselves because they are far from an epistemology that insists upon balance like that of the Native American. The other source of alienation is given as an internal conflict within the Native American community. Due to his dubious parentage Abel is excluded from his community, and Momaday implies an

Indian-centered racism rather than a white-centered one. The very same theme is also emphasized by Silko who, unlike Momaday focuses on the mixed blood identity.

Like Momaday's novel, *Ceremony* is also a modern application of Native American hero stories, and the main character's experience, his transformation from misery to a state of culture hero could be traced by using structuralist methods. However, the novel rejects to be separated into neither narrative levels nor smaller linguistic units. Such an attitude is also confirmed in the stylistic details: Prose and poetry as well as myth and reality cannot be separated from each other. Tayo's story goes hand in hand with the stories of his mythical counterparts like Hummingbird and Fly, and the stories are closely associated and interwoven both in form and content. Tayo's quest is presented as if it is an original story taken from the Native American mythology. This is most significantly emphasized by Silko's presentation of a traditional Pueblo figure called Thought Woman in the beginning of the novel. By doing this Silko tries to create an impression that the story is told by Thought Woman rather than herself. More significantly, in the words of Thought Woman storytelling is presented as a life-giving and healing force. In this sense, the novel is a stronger representation of oral traditions than Momaday's novel.

Just like Silko prevents the form of her text to be divided and structured, she carefully avoids setting up racial binary oppositions in the content of the text. Instead of exposing a White/Indian hierarchy which is waiting to be reconciled by the hero, Silko suggests that the real conflict is actually between the Western thought that sets boundaries and oppositions and the Native thought that favors balance and wholeness. Tayo's predicament actually comes from his inability to understand this wholeness. His healing comes through the power of stories and ceremonies which are in fact attempts to confer totality. After Betonie's healing ceremony, Tayo starts to understand that the Japanese soldier he was ordered to shoot was not separate from his brother Rocky. And his damnation of the never ending monsoon rains in the Japanese jungle was what caused the drought in his home town, Jemez. Gradually, he realizes that everything in the universe is interwoven like a spider's web, and an offense to one element is an offense to all. The same principle of oneness is also true for individuals who cannot be thought as separate from the community. Despite the efforts of Auntie and Emo who try to separate Tayo from the community due to his

mixed blood, everything Tayo does is ritualistically done for his community. He acts like a "culture hero" in the most literal sense. During his quest Tayo becomes the "rain deliverer" and a rescuer of his community. Tayo can gain an identity only as a part of his community. And, his strength comes from his affiliation with childhood memories full of ancient stories told by his uncle.

Silko intentionally avoids creating a binary opposition between whites and Indians, because she implies that creating such an opposition fosters conflict between otherwise interrelated beings. In order to deconstruct the racial dichotomies, Silko uses Tayo's mixed blood identity as well as Betonie's innovative ways of ceremonies which are adapted to new times. While Tayo fuses races in his mixed blood being, Betonie fuses Western and Native discourses into new ceremonies. Through Tayo's mixed-blood identity and Betonie's new ceremonies, Silko suggests cultural adaptation, hybridization, and change for the survival of Indian identity. By avoiding setting up a racial binary opposition Silko, like Momaday, implies that whites are also victims of cultural fragmentation sharing the same destiny with Indians.

In the final analysis, despite the differences between the authors' styles and perspectives, *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* are unique examples of Native American literature. Both novels document the survival, endurance and vitality inherent in Native American cultures through their writers' beautiful implementation of powerful storytelling, memory and imagination. By applying to the oral tradition in their works, both N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko, and the later writers for whom they have been a source of inspiration, acknowledge the necessity of adherence to the past, tradition and culture as a solution for the problem of identity among Native American peoples.

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