UNIVERSITY OF AL-QADISIYA

THE CULTURAL CRISIS OF MIXEDBLOOD FIGURES IN INDIAN-AMERICAN FICTION: A STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS BY LESLIE MARMON SILKO, N. SCOTT MOMADAY, AND LOUISE ERDRICH

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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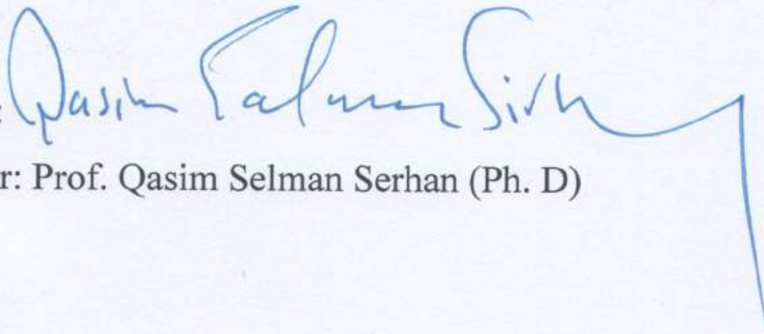

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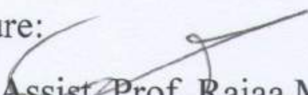

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TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY FATHER AND

TO MY MOTHER FOR HER ENDLESS LOVE,

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

TO MY BELOVED WIFE FOR STANDING BESIDE ME

TO MY CHILDREN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

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ABSTRACT

The mixedblood figure in Indian American novels is generally an individual who comes from European and Native American ancestry. Living in the shadow of two different, sometimes conflicting, cultures, he finds himself drawn away by two opposite poles, one Western and another Native American. This status initiates a cultural crisis that continues to capture the course of his life, throwing him in a sense of isolation whereupon he feels himself a foreigner in both worlds. It is noticed that this particular cultural crisis of the mixedbloods is a major theme in contemporary Indian American novels. Hence, it is a worth-studying topic.

A remarkable portion of Western and Indian American literature discusses the complexities and dynamics of biculturality. Yet, some works, on one hand, characterize mixedbloods negatively and regard them subsidiary, marginal, and undeveloped characters. One the other hand, novels such as N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, and Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* have another story to be told and another destiny to be shown. For this reason, they are chosen to be examined in this study.

This study is an attempt to investigate the cultural crisis of the mixedblood characters in three novels: Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, Silko's *Ceremony*, and Erdrich's *Love Medicine*. It tries to show the originality and innovation that Momaday, Silko, and Erdrich have accomplished in their novels towards the depiction of mixedblood figures.

To achieve these aims, the study is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One is the introduction of the study. It attempts, in its three sections, to provide information about Indian American people, their history, identity, fiction, and the emergent mixedblood. The first section illustrates the main issues that face Indian American identity, especially through the processes of cultural and physical genocide. The second section tackles the rise of the Indian American novel. Subdivided into four subsections, it discusses the difference between Western and Native American narrative, the problem of language Indian American writers faced, the issues of individualism and authorship, and the process of taming orality in novels. As for the third section, it is meant to show the development of mixedblood characters, mainly in novels written by Indian American writers. The most noticeable thing to be addressed is the degree to

which these novels reinforce or resist the stereotype of the mixedblood as a type of sacrificial victim, one who is destined to be only imprisoned in a world of loneliness and loss.

Chapter Two, which falls into three sections, is dedicated to studying Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*. The first section focuses on how Momaday's works help to put Indian American literature on the American cultural map. The second section introduces Momaday's life and career. It also manifests the issue of identity in his works. As for the third section, it analyses *House Made of Dawn*, focusing on Abel's cultural crisis and his quest towards reintegration.

Chapter Three, divided into three sections, is devoted to discussing Silko's *Ceremony*. The first section presents a short explanation about Silko's position in Indian American fiction and the conflict that her protagonist Tayo goes through. The second section discusses Silko's life and her role as a multicultural writer, highlighting the emergence of a new mixedblood figure. The third section analyses *Ceremony*, throwing a heavy emphasis upon the conflict of Tayo who is presented as a mixedblood source of power to be celebrated rather than mourned.

Chapter Four, in its three sections, is allocated to exploring Erdrich's *Love Medicine*. The first section gives a brief account of Erdrich's position in Indian American fiction and the kind of characters she delineates. The second section sheds light on Erdrich's life and career. It also shows the depiction of identity issue in Erdrich's writings. As for the third section, it analyses *Love Medicine*, concentrating on the conflict of some mixedblood characters in the novel who are transformed and empowered.

Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings of the study.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

> "I say that tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted onto to the main trunk. Tribal literatures are the tree, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures. We are the canon. Native people have been on this continent at least thirty thousand years. And the stories tell us we have been here even longer than that, that we were set down by the Creator on this continent, that we originate here. For much of this time we have had literatures:"
>
> **-Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Separatism*.**

Indian Americans have struggled an unending fight to uphold their own identities, to repel the metamorphoses asserted by European invaders and to hold to that conviction of self that is passed on through tribal and oral traditions.[1] It can be noticed that with the influx of European immigrants to America, Native people passed through severe suffering of population losses.[2] It is sufficient to say that the struggle for identity began with a European mistake which, as Louis Owens puts it,

> in the fifteenth century, placed the North American continent, and the several hundred distinct native cultures contained therein, along the banks of the Indus River in European imaginations. Since that initial moment of entanglement in the metanarrative of Western expansionism, the identity of the American Indians – or Native Americans – has been ever subject to the psychic cravings and whims of the European colonizers.[3]

Even contemporary Indian communities faced severe constant threats to the "sovereignty of their remaining land base and to the ecological balance of Indian environments from nuclear testing, nuclear waste disposal, coal strip mining and oil, logging, and uranium extraction."[4] Yet, the first European challenges that many of the Native Americans suffered from were the diseases brought by the colonial incomers. By most accounts, many Native American communities were devastated by European diseases. Estimations of the effect of disease on the Powhatan Confederacy in what is now Virginia, for example, annotate a loss of 78 percent of the people between 1607 to 1669.[5]

There was also the problem of the forced and painful assimilation of a marginalized people into the mainstream of Euro-American culture. The Indian American, especially the mixedblood, is the result of long generations of such disastrous assimilation. For several centuries, these people have had their languages cold-bloodedly stifled "to the extent that punishment for speaking Indian represents a common denominator among Native Americans who have gone to school."[6]

1.1: Indian American Identity:

The United States started to attack the values and culture of the Natives. After the end of the American Civil War (1861-5), the attention was given to assimilating rather than annihilating the residue of surviving Native Americans, especially when President Ulysses S. Grant, responding to the calls of church reformers and liberal politicians, enunciated what was referred to as his ‘Peace Policy’ in 1869. This policy represented a “state of mind, a determination that since the old ways of dealing with the Indians had not worked,” new ways must be tried. [7]

As a result, the war was that of the “chalk and blackboard” rather than “the sword;” that is, the psychological effect of the classroom was the next step after the physical violence.[8] In 1889, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs clarifies the policy:

> The Indians must conform to ‘the white man’s ways’, peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment, and conform their mode of living substantially to our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indian can get. They cannot escape it, and must either conform to it or be crushed by it.[9]

Indeed, as Scott B. Vickers points out, the issues of Native peoples’ identity have been ignored by the Euro-Americans throughout history and since North Indian American values existed without a written text, the language used by the colonial cultures of the white Euroamerica has acted as a destroyer of that identity. Because their history has been recorded by the leading culture, Indian Americans have become “a tragically conflicted people, living between two worlds of their own historical culture and that of Christian America.”[10] Vickers states that the images projected onto Indian Americans from the outside can be divided into two types; one positive, related to that of the “Noble Savage,” and the other negative, concerned with the “Ignoble Savage.” On the one hand, the first image presents the Indian Americans as vanishing human species considered worthy of sustained nostalgia or emulation. Moreover, it pictures them as being harmless, in need of education, self-improvement, civilization, conversion, and several other images that produce characters of various degrees of acceptability to the governing culture. On the other hand, the second image views the Indian American individual as “a hostile other” , “child of the devil”, “murderous”, “primitive”, “naked”, “heathenish”, “less than human”, and “lacking any conscious or moral motivation.”[11]

It seems that, as Vine Deloria Jr. suggests, “Americans have been outside observers looking into Indian society from a self-made pedestal of preconceived ideas coupled with

an innate superior attitude toward those different from themselves."[12] Suzanne Lundquist concludes that

> Whites often engage in bipolar thinking with regard to Native Americans. The first word in any binary is often the privileged one or, in other words reflects the purposes of the creators of those binaries: civilized\uncivilized; Christian\heathen; reason\passion; free\bound; enlightened\ignorant; progressive\regressive; domestic\wild; hardworking\indolent.[13]

Nevertheless, the Indian stereotype is something to be left behind by the natives. This is because the concept of the "Noble Savage" clears the way for spiritual poverty, appropriation, and assimilation. The "Ignoble Savage" encourages colonial expansion and makes possible the conversion and extermination of the indigenous people. As a result, "what makes First Nations intellectuals call for a profound change of attitude in race relations and the arts is the mental colonization and spiritual disempowerment of aboriginal peoples, the cynical exploitation of Native culture."[14]

The formulation of Indian stereotypes in American political history can be observed in the case of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) created in 1824. The BIA was invented to enforce the constraints against whites on Native American lands and to thwart the unlawful sale of such lands. Unfortunately, many of the BIA agents were corrupt and the result was that a lot of Indian lands were illegally sold or even stolen.[15] This was followed by the political slogan of "Manifest Destiny," supported in the 1820's and 1830s by John Marshall. This event further legitimized for many non-Natives expansion into Indian lands. Euro-Americans, together with the selected officials in the U.S. government, thought that fallow land was uninhabited and therefore liberally available for agriculture, mining, forestry, ranching, and other uses. This conviction came from a selection of causes, in particular the legal tradition of the Anglo-American. Such notions as best use and adverse possession confirmed European traditions of land use and the more recent Euro-American tradition of homesteading. Also fortifying this conviction were the Euro-American beliefs in "Manifest Destiny" and the supremacy of their civilization—racism.[16]

With Andrew Jackson as president, Indians were thought of as subjects of the United States and it was an absurdity to negotiate with them. The non-Natives immigration caused harm to many of the Indian American tribes like the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and others.[17] As David E. Stannard states, Jackson himself

> had supervised the mutilation of 800 or so Creek Indian corpses – the bodies of men, women, and children that he and his men had massacred – cutting off their noses to count and preserve a record of the dead, slicing long strips of flesh from their bodies to tan and turn into bridle reins.[18]

In 1830, Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, a law that establishes the compulsory removal of Native American societies living east of the Mississippi River. The Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole, known as the “Five Civilized Tribes,” were obliged to cede their lands to the United States and move west to a designated territory. The people of these tribes “had adapted to certain European ways by taking that which most suited their quality of life while at the same time retaining their sovereign integrity and folkways.”[19] Yet, though some managed to resist removal, a large number of these tribes died of exposure or disease after their arrival.[20] For many of the whites, the devastation of numerous Native American groups by disease was considered as a divine gift since they believed that the lands being settled were meant for European occupation.[21] In addition to such tragic living, Alcoholism was miasmatic as was tuberculosis. Most families were in austere poverty, suffering from starvation. Traditional leadership and kinship relationships were challenged but alternate institutions did not substitute the tribal ones. Several early century readings labelled Sioux as breathing in a state of vulnerability.[22]

Years later, the Secretory of the Interior saw the choices still more starkly and thought that the only thing to do was either to civilize or exterminate the Indian Americans. This long tradition impulse to improve and civilize the Indian had only played a trivial part in official relations with the Natives. The prevailing “motive had always been to open more of the continent to Euro-American settlement and to protect settlers against Indian depredations rather than to raise up the Indian themselves.”[23] In addition, it is noted that extermination represents only the corporal ethnic cleansing; “the implementation of cultural genocide falls on the other side of the coin, that of civilization.”[24]

The process of civilizing the Indian was accompanied by justifications which embraced almost matching terms to rationalize the bloodshed of the “bestial”, ignorant savages who deserve no rights. As David H. Thomas explains, Luke Lea, Commissioner from 1850 to 1853, says that

> When civilization and barbarism are brought in such relation that they cannot coexist together, it is right that the superiority of the former should be asserted and the latter compelled to give way. It is, therefore, no matter of regret or reproach that so large a portion of our territory has been

> wrested from its aboriginal inhabitants and made the happy abode of an enlightened and Christian people.[25]

Even education was an instrument of subjugation and required assimilation in the memory of Indian communities. In schools, children were educated that being Indian was incorrect and that the accumulated insight of their communities was nothing more than barbarism. For much of reservation history, schools were detached from the community and understood, in reality, as wrapped up in the mechanism of the BIA. Indian children were rounded up for school, torn apart from their families and relatives, and sent to boarding schools. Although this explanation could be a bit hyperbolic, it is the picture held by many.[26] Failing entirely to reinforce the cultural values and traditions of the aboriginal people can be observed in a discussion by Roy Harvey Pearce. He mentions that,

> Studying the savage, trying to civilize him, destroying him, in the end they had only studied themselves, strengthened their own civilization, and given those who were coming after them an enlarged certitude of another, even happier destiny – that manifest in the progress of American civilization over all obstacles.[27]

In the years that followed, matters only deteriorated when in 1887 the Dawes Act was passed. This law authorized individual possession of lands that had previously belonged to Indian tribes on a communal source. From the viewpoint of U.S. officials, the process of distributing what was once tribal assets was intended to further assimilate Indians into American culture. Private land ownership was more in keeping with the standards of white society within the United States and would in the long run assist to halt the sense of tribal harmony that so defined life for groups such as the Cherokee. In addition, the act allowed the U.S. government to hold each land allotment in trust for twenty-five years, meaning that it officially did not belong to the Indian property owner in question until that period of time had passed.[28] Under the terms of the Dawes Act, each Cherokee family received 40 to 160 acres of land, which basically left 90,000 Indians of various tribes without property and deprived the Indian groups of 90 million acres of territory by 1934.[29]

The struggle and suffering of the Indian Americans can also be noticed in the Government's ignorance towards the past traditions, customs, and ceremonials of these people. Their beliefs have never been given any sympathetic appreciation and no realization concerning the point that the traditions include persisting portions of culture and moral lessons such as the harmonious and serene adjustment to nature and circumstance. The

conflicting view of assimilation held by the Western strategy is reflected, for example, in dealing with Indian ceremonial dances.[30] This is dated to a sequence of reports made in 1913-16 in which certain ceremonies of the Hopi and other Pueblo Indians of Arizona and New Mexico were denounced. The Snake Dance, one of the ceremonies in the spiritual tradition of the Hopi, is essential for rain and crop fertility. While dancing on the ninth day of the ceremony, members of the society hold live snakes in their mouths. Then, they deposit the reptiles at holy sites outside the village. This ceremony which contains "ritual floggings and frank – though symbolic – representations of copulation and sexual activity, may well have offended the sensibilities of whites."[31] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles Henry Burke recommended to limit the duration of Indian dances, regarding them as degrading and immoral. As he states:

> I do not want to deprive you of decent amusement or occasional feast days, but you should not do evil of foolish things or take so much time for these occasions. No good comes from your "giveaway" custom at dances and it should be stopped. It is not right to torture your bodies or to handle poisonous snakes in your ceremonies. All such extreme things are wrong and should be put aside and forgotten.[32]

Such attitudes towards the Indian American people by the whites reflect a dualistic approach used for a long period since the first encounters with the Native Americans. According to Vickers, it is Columbus who first attached the good Indian\bad Indian characteristic to the Natives, considering, for example, the Caribs as cannibals while the Arawak tribesmen as being "timorous, generous to a fault, and religious."[33]

The ceremonies and other religious traditions are considered as devil-worshipping activities by many of the colonial references to the Native American. Minister Alexander Whitaker, in his 1613 pamphlet *Goode Newes from Virginia,* underscored the dual image of the Native American. He first introduced a picture of the Native American savage:

> Let the miserable condition of these naked slaves of the divell move you to compassion toward them. They acknowledge that there is a great good God, but know him not, having the eyes of their understanding as yet blinded: wherefore they serve the divell for feare, after a most base manner, sacrificing sometimes (as I have heere heard) their own Children to him . . . . Their priests . . . are no other but such as our English witches are. They live naked in bodie, as if their shame of their sinne deserved no covering: Their names are as naked as their bodie: They esteem it a virtue to lie, deceive and steale as their master the divell teacheth to them.[34]

Underscoring the development of such depictions was the emergence of a form of literature, like *Captivity Narratives*, from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that

further portrayed the Native American as "The Other." Contemporary authors, as John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), reconsidered figures like Hannah Dustan, resurrecting the past into a usable present. The explosion of captivity narratives helped to promote and justify Indian Removal under the Jacksonian presidency. Tales of brutal torture and death, similar to Cotton Mather's use of the black legend to distance the Puritan colonial project from its Spanish predecessor, were circulated to testify to the exceptionalism of the United States in its colonial accomplishments to remove Indian Americans and to annex one third of Mexico. The captivity narrative negotiated issues of geography, religion, race, and gender.[35] Therefore, says Owens,

> For American Indians, the problem of identity comprehends centuries of colonial and postcolonial displacement, often brutally enforced peripherality, cultural denigration – including especially a harsh privileging of English over tribal languages – and systematic oppression by the monocentric westering impulse in America.[36]

This was the result of massive bloodshed and subsequent enslavements to Indian American people. Moreover, diseases like measles and smallpox, imported from Europe, further reduced their numbers.[37] On reservations today, more than 90 percent of the children of Native Americans are adopted into non-Indian families, a state that reflects an institutionalized mainstreaming of the children which causes a widespread loss of cultural identity. This condition arises in a feeling by the Indians that their children are being stolen in a systematic way.[38]

Historically, no tribe is to be considered as an independent nation under the oppression policy of the U. S. government in the 1880s and its attempt to civilize the Indian American people, resulting in the problem of cultural conflict. What the white people did was that they ruined the policy by removing the Indian Americans from their own homeland. David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, in their *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*, points out that

> By the 1880s the federal government's efforts to assimilate Indians had become quite coercive. Beginning in this era, a U.S. assimilation policy, as Wilmer shows, developed in several stages. These included replacing the traditional communal economic base with a system of private property; intensified education, primarily through boarding schools; the regulation of every aspect of Indian social life, including marriage, dispute settlement, and religious practice.[39]

However, Indian American people continued to have their distinctive identities and ensure the spiritual and intellectual traditions. When they first encountered the Europeans, the diverse, multicultural tribes spoke as many as three hundred fifty languages. About two million, out of more than ten million Natives, still live in North America and as many as two hundred languages are still spoken by the populations of indigenous people.[40]

Moreover, the strategy of resistance against the appalling conditions that faced Native American people can be said to encapsulate a twin process which is connected to the two phases of decolonization explained in Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*. The first refers to the recovery of “geographical territory,” while the second is concerned with the “changing of cultural territory.”[41] Nevertheless, primarily resistance that encompasses fighting any outside intrusion is accompanied and succeeded by secondary resistance which involves ideological and cultural institution. In this sense, resistance epitomizes a process “in the rediscovery and repatriation of what had been suppressed in the natives' past by the process of imperialism.”[42]

The resistance of Native American people to European colonialism of their land from the 1700s up to this moment constructs an enormous struggle on land by the Native tribes. In contrast to the primitive, congruent and subservient indigenous image pictured by the new settlers, indigenous Americans faced the invaders physically for the preservation of geographical territory, so “The Wounded Knee” and “The Red Stick War” are evidences of resistance and forces of migration and reclaiming of land for liberation. Such form of resistance is reinforced and reconfirmed by the cultural and intellectual resistance of what the Native Americans wrote and are writing back for the imperial canonical, economic, political, and cultural colonial power. Their literature, which is mainly constructed by oral storytelling, and their culture are intimately linked with the land and its centrality in the Indian American life. A major emphasis is given to the importance and sacredness of home as a symbol of cultural identity and belonging.[43]

1.2: Indian American Novel: A Hybrid Genre:

Generally speaking, Native authors did not have the opportunities to publish fiction until the mid-nineteenth century as “the fascination with things Indian developed inversely to how likely Americans were actually to come into face-to-face with tribal peoples.”[44] Despite the fact that other forms of literature made their mark, there is no denying that the novel is the most widely read and most studied genre of Indian American literature. Among

poetry, short stories, and non-fiction, "the novel reigns supreme." It represents a window into the realities, mystery, power, and magic of Indian American culture.[45] This belief is supported by Owens who argues that Indian American novelists "are revising fundamentally the long-cherished, static view of Indian lives and cultures held by people around the world."[46]

John Rollin Ridge (Cherokee, 1827-1867) was regarded the first Native author to publish a novel by writing *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta* (1854). In this novel, Ridge makes use of the exploits of several prominent bandits to echo the experiences of the Cherokees in his description of how greedy settlers drive the ambitious, hard-working Murieta off his land. Murieta, like the Byronic hero, is a good man led to violent actions by injustice.[47]

S. Alice Callahan (1868-1894) is the first Native American woman to publish a novel. Her novel, *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891), reflects the purpose of arousing the readers' anger about the outrage perpetuated against Indians. This is clear from the dedication of the book to the Indian tribes of North America who have been wronged and oppressed by their pale-faced brothers.[48] The plot describes 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 her best student. As Liz Sonneborn puts it, though the novel shows elements of Creek culture, much of it traces the transformation of Wynema into an educated, well-spoken young woman "able to carve out a place for herself in white society." Nevertheless, the novel, using the tradition of the sentimental romance, also touched on political and social disputes such as allegations of the ill use of tribal funds and the U.S. government's campaign to break the Creek lands into individually owned allotments.[49]

In 1927, Mourning Dove (1888-1936) published *Cogewa, The Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range*. Intended as a romantic western, the novel focuses on tribal issues and political sovereignty. It contains various characters who signify different features of political, economic, and mixedblood social issues.[50]

By the early 1930s, print had developed as an important vehicle for Indian oral traditions. Significantly, many Indians were saved from starvation during the Depression due to the policy from 1934 to 1947 which facilitated the process of increasing the land base by nearly four million acres. During this period, John Joseph Mathews (1894-1979) published *Sundown* in 1934, and in 1936 D'Arcy McNickle (1904-1977) published *The*

Surrounded.[51] While other American writers of the 1930s highlighted the economic and social concerns, "Mathews and McNickle stressed the importance of tribalism, community, and the devastating impact on tribes of the federal government's assimilationist policies."[52]

However, what is really considered as a turning point for the Indian American novel, significant enough to be designated as "Renaissance," began in the late 1960s and throughout 1970s. The first sight was the boom of activism by the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1960s and 1970s. The movement was highlighted by the Indian "takeovers" at the BIA in Washington and at Wounded Knee in 1973. In this regard, Indian Americans, inspired by the African American Civil Rights Movement and in protest of the loss of 3.3 million acres of land between 1948 to 1957, started to organize and stage dominations and occupations of federal buildings.[53] One can also identify a few proximate events that changed the landscape of Native American novel. In addition to the countercultural perspective of the youth movement which stimulated readers to explore the proficiencies of minority people and of those downgraded by mainstream, the reissue of John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) in 1961 encouraged an interest in the values and traditions of the Natives. The event suddenly and rapidly found an avid readership and an impressive popularity. Ultimately, Indian American political upsurge and the national interest in Indian American matters at the time proved very beneficial for the unparalleled development of Indian American literary writing and for the establishment of Indian American literary studies in the late 1960s.[54] However,

> The year 1968 proved a watershed year for the American Indian novel. It was in this year that Kenneth Lincoln coined the phrase *Native American Renaissance* to describe the surge in popularity and volume of works produced by contemporary Native writers that began with the Kiowa and Cherokee author N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*.[55]

In addition to *House Made of Dawn,* four other novels by Indian American writers have received an extensive critical attention, James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* (1974), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), Gerald Vizenor's *Darkness in Saint Louis* Bearheart (1978), and Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* (1984).[56] Broadly speaking, as David Murray puts it in his essay "Translation and Mediation," it is not until the appearance of Momaday and what follows that one has "a spate of fiction" showing a real expression of Indian worldviews. What distinguishes Momaday's work from those before him is that the earlier writers can be seen as "struggling with sets of assumptions contained in the language and literary conventions which they are using." With respect to the mixedblood figures in

the novels before 1968, most of them made an effort to resolve the conflicting demands of their tribal heritage and the modern, mainstream culture. Yet, the novels dealt with the inability on the part of the protagonist to find out a true identity.[57]

1.2.1: Western vs. Native American Narratives:

The work produced by Momaday and those after him represents, as Lincoln suggests, "a written renewal of oral traditions translated into Western literary forms. Contemporary Indian literature is not so much new, then, as regenerate: transitional continuities emerging from the old."[58] It was in the 1960s that telling stories derived from the rich indigenous heritage that stretched back to pre-Colombian time found its way in the works of Native American writers. Works published from the 1700s onward were mostly ethnographies, biographies, or histories written mainly by non-natives and so-called "faux Indians" whose true heritage was often questioned or suspect.[59] Most of the works were produced with the intention to preserve evidences about the supposedly vanishing Native Americans, that is, they were not regarded as valid literary materials by the wider reading public and scholars.[60]

However, though it is manifest that Momaday and others largely took into consideration European models in their fiction,[61] certain differences can be noticed between these two modes of narrative. One of the important differences between western narrative and Native American oral storytelling lies in dealing with the concepts of solidarity and power. Catherine Rainwater points out that

> Solidarity occurs between social entities of equal status who share knowledge and who generally understand and consent to the rules of production and perception of messages between them. By contrast, power marks an exchange between social entities in an unequal relationship; the privileged participant either controls knowledge … or has superior knowledge or authority with respect to an audience made up of various unequals.[62]

In general, despite the violation of rules, western narrative emphasizes the superiority of the author who holds privileged relationship to the narrative. This means that modern and postmodern narrative emphasizes power rather than solidarity, where the readers are expected to play the role of the victim in "a hostile and chaotic textual world." Therefore, since the text reveals the power of the writer over the reader, solidarity is limited.[63]

As a result of the understanding of colonization, Native writers did their best to assert themselves by foregrounding the conflict with the dominant discourse which emphasizes power, reflecting the dissimilarities from the assumptions of the colonial centre.[64]

In contrast to western narrative, oral storytelling of the Native Americans establishes an imaginative landscape, making the listener enter a world of a direct relationship with the storyteller. Indeed, as Joseph Daniel Sobol remarks, "a truly oral traditional relationship is based in turn on the idea of community." In this sense, the listeners, unlike the absent and solitary readers in western narrative, are regarded as participants who know each other and the stories. The storyteller's personal identity is thought to be a solid strand in the web of community and is made to play an "I-thou" rapport with the listeners.[65] Indeed, "a great storyteller will always be rooted in the people,"[66] "one who participates in a traditionally sanctioned manner in sustaining the community."[67]

The cooperation between the author and the listeners is achieved through the storyteller's choice of words, the way of expressing those words, and how to augment them with gestures and other facial expressions. In other words, oral storytelling is celebrated for the "linguistic," "paralinguistic," and "kinesic" features which create the "alternate reality of the story-world." The narrator does not credit his own identity, but the significant circulation of community. For example, the reportative phrase meaning "it is said" is often used to begin utterances.[68] Therefore, one can observe that performative art is dynamic and represents "a paradigm of process," unlike western post-Renaissance traditions in which product is valued over process.[69]

The challenge is that until late in the twentieth century, working within the written narrative had been achieved by very few Native American storytellers, which refers to the idea that the Native American "author" is a recent invention. Many writers cultivate tactics to exploit "written narrative with the exotic agenda of nonwestern oral storytelling practices based on solidarity with an audience."[70] To understand the amazing challenge for a storyteller working within oral literature and culture, the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin says that

> Indeed, any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist – or, on the contrary, by the "light" of alien words that have already been spoken

> about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgment and accents. The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words.[71]

Certainly, Indian writing, characterized as a "creation" or "re-creation" of identity, represents a reaction against the "extinction myth" broadcasted about Indians. Besides, it is a challenge to many accounts which seriously overstated the demise of Native American people.[72] For example, D. H. Lawrence stated in 1923 that "within the present generation the surviving red Indians are due to merge in the great white swamp."[73] Commenting upon this outrageous stereotyped evocation, Joel Pfister points out that Lawrence's work, with its picturing of Indians as naked blood beings, reflects two essential views on the part of white culture. The first, which is a capitalist project, sees Indians as deserving nothing other than extermination. This view was given as a validation to take hold of the real estate. The second requires "the rewriting of Indianness to satisfy White therapeutic needs." In other words, white intellectuals "wanted Indians to be their pets." It seems that this view is a grim insistence upon the impossibility of any spiritual reconciliation between the two races.[74] Moreover, Sheila Marie Contreras suggests that

> The quotation advances Lawrence's idea that the influence of Native belief systems will effect some sort of transformation for the "white race." This idea, however, is not to be confused with chronological primitivism; Lawrence in no way advocated a return to Native dominance of any kind. He calls for a "merge," and one that ultimately serves to benefit white civilization.[75]

Arnold Krupat points out that "there simply were no Native American texts until whites decided to collaborate with Indians and make them." Krupat also refers to the deplorable treatment of the Indians by the Americans who defined them as entirely "other." "They insisted, despite abundant evidence to the contrary, that the Natives were hunters, not farmers, and as noncultivators could have no culture – thus nothing worthy of textualization."[76] Owens comments upon Krupat's affirmation and points out that it highlights the complication of the charge confronting Indian novelists writing about Indian concerns.[77] Thus, the principal problem facing Indian American novelists is concerned with confronting, inevitably, the issues of cultural identity. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, authors of *The Empire Writes Back* (2002), talk over literature written within the post-colonial discourse "under imperial license" by 'outcasts' or 'natives' in the nineteenth century. They state that the producers signify by the very fact of writing in the language of the dominant culture that they have temporarily or permanently entered a

specific and privileged class endowed with the language, education, and leisure necessary to produce such works.[78]

Historically, the struggle for maintaining an identity is said to begin with the word "Indian" itself. The name was not given by the indigenous people, but by the European discoverers, which means that even the name represents a kind of otherness. It was viewed as a rather fragile characteristic that lacks the rich and deeply rooted links of communal tribal identity. The tribe "represented the way of life of the people; *Indian* was a way of differentiating aborigine from European."[79]

Moreover, instead of satisfying the basic desires of the group for living and surviving as the least function of a culture, Indians were positioned in "a state of limbo." Instead of providing them with the required options to establish themselves within a changing environment, they were isolated legally, politically, socially, and geographically from the world around them. As Menno Boldt suggests, "this has precipitated a cultural crisis," a condition that resulted from "the massive forces of forced assimilation, loss of traditional means of subsistence, and isolation" which "reduced Indian cultures into patchworks of remnants and voids," a crisis which manifested itself in "the breakdown of social order in Indian communities."[80]

Treating the Native Americans as strange and other in the discourse of Euro-Americans is fundamental to their "self-conception" so that they can delineate and strengthen their own identity by invoking a juxtaposition of binary opposition "between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalized," showing how power is manifested through culture, language, and literature. As Ania Loomba clarifies, "If colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational, if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself."[81] This is why imperial discourse, as Said demonstrates, reflects the regularly circulating notion that native people and their distant territories should be subjugated and that the 'imperium' should be thought of as a prolonged, nearly metaphysical responsibility "to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples."[82]

1.2.2: The Problem of Language:

Indian American writers faced the dilemma of conflicting discourses, emerged as a result of political and cultural reasons. They struggled to explain themselves within the language of the colonizers. For example, when Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* was

awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, a member of the Pulitzer jury "did not perceive Momaday's work as the arrival on the American literary scene, but incorporated Momaday into American literary scene." This means that native American writers, whose worldviews are in a direct conflict with the ideologies of the dominant society, are obliged to mimic the central discourse of the Euramerican culture in order to be acknowledged and accepted in the canon.[83] Consequently, as authors of *The Empire Writes Back* argue,

> One of the most persistent prejudices underlying the production of the texts of the metropolitan canon is that only certain categories of experience are capable of being rendered as 'literature'. This privileging of particular types of experience denies access to the world for the writer subject to a dominating colonial culture. It works in a complicated and reciprocal way, both denying value to the post-colonial experience itself, as 'unworthy' of literature, and preventing postcolonial texts from engaging with that experience. The result is that the post-colonial writer is consigned to a world of mimicry and imitation, since he is forced to write about material which lies at one remove from the significant experiences of the post-colonial world.[84]

As a result, Native American novelists, facing "a double bind," found themselves trapped between two ways of writing; that of the language of the invaders, and the one associated with their traditions. Yet, writing according to the procedures of recognition of the dominant society makes such works as inauthentic and merely an imitation. On the other hand, if native American writers choose to operate within their alternative rules and cultural traditions, they are to be regarded as marginal and outside the canon by the colonial critics.[85] Discussing the option taken by many native American writers which reveals the negative side of confrontation with the outside world, Owens states:

> again and again in this fiction, this conflict, between Indian ways of viewing the world . . . and the dominant ideologemes of Euroamerica, is epitomized through conflicting discourses, through breakdown in communication and understanding, failures in articulation. Confronted with the authoritative, privileged voice of European America, the Indian resorts to subversion or often falls silent.[86]

Ridge, for example, introduced *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta* in which he "wrote behind his Indian name of Yellow Bird to perform two contradictory tasks: to disguise his identity and to declare his Indianness."[87] In *The Surrounded*, McNickle introduces the character Archilde, a mixedblood young man engaged in a struggle to find his identity. As the title of the novel proclaims the outcome, Archilde at the end of the book extends his hands in a total silence.[88] By doing this, Archilde reflects the notion that he is still imprisoned by the image of the Indian portrayed by the American

discourse. In other words, Archilde is hunted because his situation complicates White myths of what Indians are.[89]

Consequently, Native Americans confront one of the most outstanding oppressive characteristics of the dominant privileged discourse, that of making control over language. The imperial power sets the standard of a language for its colonies, making one language as the norm and most other traditional languages and dialects are neglected and suppressed. Therefore, imperial oppression “marginalizes all variants as impurities.” As a result,

> Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established.[90]

Marieke de Mooij points out that “this power is harnessed by the colonizing nation,” which forces its language on others who are regarded as its subjects. The destiny of these subjects is to be left deprived of a voice and on “the disadvantaged side of a drastic power imbalance.”[91] The devastating effect of this condition is that the natives, in this imperialistic enforcement, not only lost their language but they were also humiliated and ashamed of using their own language and ideas.[92]

Commenting upon this problem, Elaine Jahner states that "translating what they sensed into terms that might communicate interculturally was impossible because such translation requires knowledge of two ways of knowing, but beyond that it requires that the issue itself make sense to the people to whom it is being addressed.”[93] In this sense, writers or speakers of non-standard language may face the fate of others demanding to speak for them or of their own accounts of their situation being acknowledged not to be literature. However, Brian Longhurst and et al. argue:

> In the face of the imperializing cultural power of metropolitan language the writers and speakers of local variations of the language are encouraged by their compatriots to treat the language as if it was their own. They are argued to shrug off the metropolitan meanings and associations of the language and to appropriate it for their own use.[94]

As a result, in the process of writing literature, it could be indicated that Indian American writers have to use the same tool of the oppressor in order to make themselves in the first place and reach a White audience. Though the situation is paradoxical, since they make use of a feature of a dominant culture to write about indigenous concerns in opposition to White culture, there is a constructive point in doing so. Using the language becomes a powerful tool of another kind which enabled them to bargain with a new power

that was shaping the world. This is essential for increasing and improving their social status and it creates a literary space despite the fact that it was only a minority who was privileged in this way.[95] Moreover, according to Said, it represents one of the most effective forms in cultural terms because

> the forms of resistance that have been most successful have been those that have identified a wide audience, that have taken hold of the dominant discourse and transformed it in ways that establish cultural difference within the discursive territory of the imperialist. An example of this occurs, for instance, when writers appropriate the colonialist language and literary forms, enter the domain of 'literature' and construct a different cultural reality within it.[96]

As a result, this process of "appropriation" serves to make the language "bear the burden of one's own cultural experience" in order to "convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own."[97]

1.2.3: Individualism and Authorship:

Another great challenge that confronts Native American novelists is the extremely egocentric genre which is the result of social conditions and a long period of colonialism. What can be observed is the fact that these conditions are antithetical to whatever considered traditional Native American oral cultures. Thus, such privileged genre already charged with "value" and "alien" represents the fundamental task that faces Native American fiction writers since it adds complication to the predominant question of cultural identity.[98]

Despite the fact that writers like Momaday, Silko, or Erdrich have all made remarkable hard work to highlight upon the most vital and idiosyncratic aspects of the Native predicament in their novels, certain great impediments must be overcome so that the Native condition becomes manifest to the reader of their society and the mainstream. This means that the major problem is the fact that while they have a desire to make the Western reader gain intellectual and emotional access to their knowledge, they also want to retain enough of a Native worldview in their works.[99] Commenting on this point, Owens suggests that

> the novelist must therefore rely upon story and myth but graft the thematic and structural principles found therein upon the "foreign" (though infinitely flexible) and intensely egocentric genre of written prose narrative, or novel.[100]

Native American writers have struggled to carry individuality and authenticity into a context of Indianness that is based on their tradition and attuned to the forms and processes of the modern world. Before the English language was imposed on them, Indian tribes had had their own history of oral tradition which consists of songs, ceremonies, chants, legends, and myths. Yet, when stories and chants were performed, such as the Navajo Night Chant, they convey a sense of cultural and spiritual tradition that was related to daily life and not a detached art, as was the Western canon. Yet, oral tradition needs participants within the community confirmed by language, without which they were forced to articulate their Indianness via the white man's language.[101]

Therefore, as Elvira Pulitano puts it, the task of Native American novelists today is to step beyond the “Rousseauist ethnostalgia” in the treatment of Indian Americans by the Euramericans. What should be affirmed is

> a syncretic, dynamic, adaptive identity in contemporary America. Traditional stories, songs, and rituals are reimagined by contemporary Native American fiction writers in order to tell stories of who they are today, in order for them to continue to survive as indigenous people and living human beings.[102]

It should be noticed that the notion of the reputation of an individual life history, separate from the tribal community was not an innately Indian one. This tension between the communal experience of the tribe and the unique experience of the individual has its parallel in that between traditionalism and individualism.[103] Consequently, one of the key differences between American and Native American narrative is that oral literature is not credited to an individual but to his or her culture and the tribal community. Therefore, the concept of the single author which recognizes and glorifies the creative individual is regarded as an alien notion for Native American Novelists. Fabienne C. Quennet argues:

> This constitutes a problem for the contemporary Native American writer who tries to incorporate the cyclically ordered, ritually centered, and paradigmatic world of traditional oral literature but can never step back into the collective anonymity of the tribal storyteller. The contemporary writer has to transform the traditional material into an appropriated, foreign genre--like the novel--as Momaday, Silko, and others have done, and by doing so the writer has to transform the original power of the traditional oral storytelling.[104]

This difference is reflected in the kind of the heroes presented in literature. In contrast to the heroes of Western literature who exemplify rugged individualism, the culture heroes in traditional Native American literature act to benefit the larger community by bringing power to the people. Reflecting this communal identity-producing role, stories

developed communally as well. The notion of a story with a single author, therefore, especially one who then has a proprietary right in the act of his or her creation, would have struck pre-Colombian Natives as absurd.[105] Owens suggests:

> The privileging of the individual necessary for the conception of the modern novel . . . is a more radical departure for American Indian cultures than for the Western world as a whole, for Foucault's 'moment of individualization' represents an experience forced harshly, and rather unsuccessfully, upon Native Americans.[106]

1.2.4: Novelization of Orality:

The most successful novelists have adopted the forms, but not necessarily the traditional motifs, of the Western canon, and have often brought to these genres the distinctive storytelling traditions of their own culture.[107] In other words, what the novelists achieve is that they take the chance to fuse elements of the oral tradition with Western ways of narrative. The result is a “syncretic or hybridized form of the Native American novel.” This is considered as an “attempt to recover identity and authenticity by invoking and incorporating the world found within the oral tradition” which contains the reality of myth and ceremony – “an authorless original literature.”[108]

However, the difference in the concept of the divine between Native Americans and Europeans, which fashioned a significant divide between tribal consciousness and the consciousness of industrial or urbanized cultures driven by monotheism, reflects a fundamental consequence on the narrative technique hold by Native American novelists. One system promotes wholeness, while the other is based on division and separation. One system promotes a circular, unified field of interaction, while the other is linear and sequential, as it the case with the established European narrative technique.[109] For the Native American writer of fiction, say Jennifer McClinton-Temple and Alan Velie,

> developments are often dependent on the interaction of spirits and arcane forces rather than the more external European-American elements such as personality and politics. It took time for American fiction to accommodate the Native American tribal narrative, to be open to the possibility of the expression of divinity in something other than biblical Scriptures.[110]

Steven Otfinoski validates this point when he suggests that Native American writers have not only drawn on the rich traditions of their native literature, the myths, legends, and folk tales— but they have also incorporated the varying styles and structures of native storytelling into their own novels and stories. A traditionally chronological narrative is usually abandoned for a circular narrative structure that folds back on itself.

Time may be fluid, plots nonlinear, with events occurring out of sequence, forming a pattern of intent that is often only understood at a work's conclusion. The line that divides reality from the fantastical is also often crossed; ghosts, visions, and dreams play a major part in the plots as the living, human characters.[111]

Another characteristic that can be observed about contemporary Native American novels is what William Bevis calls the "homing in" plots. Bevis states that a considerable number of American "classics" introduce characters who leave home to discover their fates farther and farther away. Therefore, heroes and heroines in works such as *Moby Dick*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Sister Carrie*, and *The Great Gatsby* leave home to discover new opportunities and a better way of life in a "newer land." Sometimes at all cost, the individual develops with little or no regard for family, society, place, or past,.[112] St. Jean de Crevecoeur defines the American as a man who, "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds."[113]

In marked contrast, the representative plot of Indian American novels is that of 'homing in'. Bevis states that

> Most Native American novels are not "eccentric," centrifugal, diverging, expanding, but "incentric," centripetal, converging, contracting. The hero comes home. 'Contracting' has negative overtones to us, "expanding" a positive ring. These are the cultural choices we are considering. In Native American novels, coming home, staying put, contracting, even what we call "regressing" to a place, a past where one has been before, is not only the primary story, it is a primary mode of knowledge and a primary good.[114]

As Otfinoski notes, the struggle to reconnect with the rich heritage of the past – its traditions, values, and folkways– is a common subject in the work of many writers who followed in Momaday's wake. The search for identity in a white-dominated world preoccupies and drives these writers, whether they be Kiowa (Momaday), Laguna Pueblo (Silko), or Oglala (Erdrich).[115]

The result is often a highly idiosyncratic blend of English language and forms with Indian sentiments and insights, wherein the power of the written word is used by Indian American writers to deconstruct thematically the same power of the written word, principally as it has been applied to them historically as one of the tools of colonization. Therefore, writing becomes a tool of decolonization and the discourse of political, cultural, and intellectual sovereignty.[116] The result is an indigenous literature that emerges from "the *interaction* of local, internal, traditional, tribal, or Indian literary modes with the dominant

literary modes of the various nation-states in which it may appear." According to Krupat, the work of Momaday, Silko and others "manages successfully to merge forms internal to his cultural formation with forms external to it, but pressing upon, even seeking to delegitimate it."[117]

1.3: Mixedbloodness in the Indian American Novel:

In general, the constructed nature of mixedblood identity was given valuable insight by many scholars. One of the distinguished writers was Everett Stonequist, a sociologist building on the works of his mentor, Robert Park. In Ralina L. Joseph's view, Stonequist presented what became a landmark and classic study of racial hybrids, such as the Indian American mixedbloods.[118] He is often credited with formulating the theory of the "marginal man," defining him as "one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures."[119]

Nevertheless, Stonequist saw little that was positive in the situation of the marginal man. His major contribution was that he presented a study of the phases in the psychological growth of the mixedblood personality. The mixedbloods, through some act of rejection, become aware that they are marginal in the eyes of the white people. Consequently, this situation results in an inherently painful state accompanied by "psychological maladjustment," and a crisis occurs, making the person feel that he belongs to an inferior and despised group.[120] The liminal position of the mixedblood person, who is torn between two courses of action, leads to psychological dysfunction characterized by a "nervous strain," hypersensitivity, self-absorption, "racial disharmony," a "clash of blood," and an "unstable genetic constitution."[121]

Several literary works by Euramerican writers have made some sort of departure towards the depiction of the mixedblood. One of these works is *Ramona* (1884), a novel by Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885). It follows Ramona, a mixedblood orphan, as she tries to recover her Indian heritage and ultimately faces oppression.[122] Popular in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, this novel was effective since it made wide readership to be more aware of "egregious" treatment of Native Americans.[123] However, the novel is one of loss and tragedy, like the indigenous people which the writer is trying to depict; that is , another version of the vanishing Indian American. Moreover, as Scott C. Zeman points out, it is sentimentalized, and nostalgic. Therefore, such presentation cannot be regarded an accurate historical depiction of the Mexican California.[124]

Consequently, the case with this novel resembles that of the negative and positive stereotype. Ramona is ignorant of her Indian nature and since she is forced to choose an identity, she must therefore live the marginalized Other.[125] Though the work reveals an awareness on the part of the author with respect to the problems of assimilation, mixedbloods, and miscegenation, its chief inadequacy, according to Vickers, is that

> It does little to help us understand Indians as they lived within their own culture, and even less to accentuate the historical tragedy that lay, in the missions, at the feet of Christian capitalism and expansionism.[126]

In contrast to the stereotype formulated by the Christian sentimentality, Oliver La Farge (1901-1963) wrote *Laughing Boy* in 1929, a novel that gives a positive presentation of Navajo spirituality. The protagonist here is a boy distinguished by his sensitivity and intelligence, and the transcendental power of ceremonies is a central theme in this novel.[127] Harry J. Brown clarifies that the power of this novel lies in its representation of the personified Indian Others who are grounded in a meaningful cosmology distinguished from that of the Christian culture and, thus, creating a powerful antidote to the alien nature of the Other. Indianness here is filled with its own substantial mythos, enforced by real active gods.[128]

What makes La Farge's work valid is that it provides a picture in which the Indians seek to retain their own identity and an inquiry into the state of their lands. According to him, the Indians reject the process of assimilation and the termination held by the government. Thus, the "desire to continue as Indians does not mean wanting to stay primitive, wear feathers or live in tents. It is based on the idea that men can be different yet progress equally." Indeed, *Laughing Boy* can be regarded as a landmark which ennobles the Indians and a considerable turn towards an archetypal characterization.[129] Upon the death of Slim Girl, Laughing Boy finds out within himself that "Now he was not a Navajo terrified of the dead, not an Indian, not an Individual of any race, but a man who had buried his own heart."[130]

Therefore, new considerations of American history have emerged as interrogations of what history did to the oppressed Native peoples. As Said puts it,

> only recently have westerners become aware that what they have to say about the history and cultures of "subordinate" peoples is challengeable by the people themselves, people who a few years back were simply incorporated, culture, land, history, and all, into the great Western empires, and their disciplinary discourses.[131]

The use of the novel as a form among Indian American writers witnessed an increase in the first decades of the twentieth century. The status and experience of troubled people of mixedblood ancestry received more full treatment as a theme in most of the novels written in this period. Despite the nostalgic and romanticized tone of many stories, most of the novels attempt to describe contemporary Indian life. This in turn represents a consciousness on the part of the authors to view the everyday existence of the Indian people and the major problems resulting from cultural contact.[132] McClinton-Temple and Velie say,

> The understanding of racial blending, among both Indian and white writers, has changed dramatically during the last two centuries. Formerly an object of scorn and suspicion in the American imagination, the mixed-blood has more recently become a central figure in Native American literature, embodying both the conflict and the reconciliation between traditional and modern ways of life.[133]

Actually, the concept of the mixedblood has become an obsession for the Indian American novel and the existence of a character who tries to make a balance while living in two worlds has turned into something like a "generic stereotype." As a result, Indian writers sought to introduce a new and innovative kind of fiction as an answer to assimilation in which the mixedblood is stronger than that of the conventional narrative.[134]

Early Indian American novelists of the twentieth century, like Dove, McNickle, and Mathews, were intensely mindful that Indian identity has been broadly colonized and appropriated, a state that caused many Indian American experience a particular kind of loneliness within the urban modern U.S. empire during the 1920s and 1930s. The mixedblood Indian is usually the one character that is considered a stranger in Native American fiction, unaccepted by both the national discourse and often by the communities of the native tribes.[135] As Vine Deloria points out

> We can safely suggest that the new sense of time introduced into Indian life produced a sense of alienation which made Indians strangers in a land that was becoming increasingly strange—as whites changed it to suit themselves—and that the old ceremonies might have provided an emotional bulwark against this alienation, but their prohibition only increased the feeling of exile among the people of the tribe.[136]

Issues of contextual identity are employed in the works of Dove, McNickle, and Mathews through traditional narratives and lowbrow genres that are dedicated to racial and ethnic matters within a modernist social and philosophical background. To subvert the very

genres that have denied them subjectivity that is authentic and realistic, these writers employ traditional mimetic narratives and reprocess the clichés used by white authors of the mainstream.[137]

The first of the nine novels by Indian Americans which are written in the style of the Western canon before 1968 was *The life and Adventures of Joaquin Murietta* by Ridge,[138] in which he adopted "a dialogic approach, by way of Bakhtin, to account for the relationship between oral and written culture, and between the activities of speaker and listener in the creation of a story."[139] Ironically the novel is not, or at least not directly, about the Indians or the Indian concerns, but it became like a legend during the nineteenth century, told and retold across the country by several groups.[140] Based on the widespread myth of "Joaquin Murieta", a Mexican gangster who became a popular hero in California,[141] it tells the story of an infamous bandit, looming large in the popular imagination.[142] Fired with wholehearted appreciation of the American commercial character, Murieta, who is a mixedblood of Spanish and Indian parentage, travels to California, where he gains success. However, the encroaching white Americans and their injustice turn this nonviolent miner into a daring criminal after Murieta is beaten and bound, his mistress raped, his half-brother hanged, and his land stolen.[143] Reports said that he robbed only whites and Asian, never Mexicans or others of Latin descent. Nevertheless, he was seen as an honest man, entering a life of crime because of facing oppression in order to avenge the wrongs towards him and his family,[144] possessing "the nobility, intelligence, and gentlemanliness expected of a Byronic noble outlaw."[145]

This is made clear by the writer during the course of the novel when, for example, Murieta tells a young Anglo he has captured[146]: "I will spare you. Your countrymen have injured me, they have made me what I am, but I will scorn to take the advantage of so brave a man. I will risk a look and a voice like yours, if it should lead to perdition."[147]

Nicolas S. Witschi notes that the work offers an important dialogical response to Hawthorne, articulating the racial rage of Cherokee Indians who had been removed on the Trail of Tears and Mexican Americans who had been dispossessed of their lands in California.[148]

Ridge's novel is seen by Owens as representing the necessary efforts to reclaim identities and cultures by Native American writers:

> When he turned to face his more privileged audience, however, Ridge was forced to veil his Indianness, to inscribe his identity within a context of sublimation and subterfuge. Following in

> Ridge's wake, American Indian authors would face again and again the dilemma of audience and identity, being forced to discover ways to both mimic and appropriate the language of the center and make it express a different reality, bear a different burden.[149]

Yet *The life and Adventures of Joaquin Murietta* embraces only minimal references to Cherokee traditions or language. Instead, it turns to the contested terrain of Gold Rush California for its tale of heroic resistance and class conflict. In spite of the indictment of Americans as a means of disorder in an imperial rush for gold, the novel's stereotypical image of California Indians is uncomfortably close to Mark Twain's representations of "Injuns."[150] Besides, the character of Ridge himself has certain contradictions. Though he was very aware of the Cherokee identity, he wrote in favor of assimilationist strategies to resolve the Indian question.[151]

Perhaps the most noteworthy manifestation of Indian-white relations, also regarded as another turning point in the history of Indian American literature, was the arrival of the sophisticated novels of the 1920s and 1930s which show the cultural conflict on the part of their protagonists. Dove's *Cogewa, the Half-Blood* (1927), followed by Mathews's *Sundown* in 1934, and McNickle's *The Surrounded* in 1936 take up and develop the mixedblood theme. Each one circles around a mixedblood character in his search for a constructive identity in an aggressive contact environment. "It is here, expressed in the creative language of these early Indian novelists and short-story writers, that the moment of crisis experienced by each of their literary forerunners finally became part of the collective American cultural experience."[152]

Dove's *Cogewea: The Half-Blood* by the Okanagon-Colville woman writer, published in 1927, is about the identity crisis of a mixedblood woman who struggles within her own blood to discover herself and concerned with the search for particular Indian perspectives and personalities.[153] "Despite great hardship, both financial and emotional," Dove "persisted in her goal of producing stories that gave Indians a sympathetic hearing", revealing that it is wrong to say Indians do not have the ability to feel as deeply as whites. On the contrary, they do have the capacity to make themselves appreciated and "then will the true Indian character be revealed."[154]

On the Flathead reservation in Montana, the heroine lives on a farm with a vision of a professional life in the East. Finally, Cogewea escapes a voracious white suitor, and the novel closes with her apt betrothal to her friend Jim. Yet, she remains living within the

corral of local identity and aspiration, shutting down her literary, professional, and geographical ambition.[155]

Writing out of her own oral literary experience, a technique used by most Native American writers, Dove presented a fiction based on the stories of Okanogan, skillfully combining ceremonial with western literary forms in a way that heralds Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Silko's *Ceremony*. Though on the surface it may appear to be little more than a western romance, like that of Jackson's *Ramona*, the novel introduces the struggle for identity that is common to most Native American writings in the twentieth century, reveling a mixedblood identity without ever being reproachful to full-bloods.[156]

The novel includes western tales, Okanogan folklore, and a transformed image of the maligned mixedblood into the westerns romance. The stories which are told directly by the grandmothers proves Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, the breakdown of formulaic genres, the blurring of boundaries, and the power of humour and transformation as literary strategies. In addition, the living embodiment of the strength of the old ways denotes the permanent power of Native beliefs. In contrast to the popular renderings of mixedbloods as despicable and consumed by self-hatred, the novel shows that mixedbloods exist as part of a Native community in contact with whites. Cogewea appears both as an Indian and as a mixedblood, referring to Native Americans as her people and to half-bloods as her kind.[157]

However, the struggle in this novel is that Cogewea is trapped between two worlds, the life on a cattle spread surrounded by the lands of white settlers and by tribal allotments. Though she wins the two riding races in which she participates, she is unable to claim her victory, because of her mixedblood origin.[158] A skilled white rider, Verona Webster, sneers, “Why is this *squaw* permitted to ride? This is a *ladies* race!.”[159] Cogewea rushes to the Kootenai Indian camp, where she puts on tribal costume and varicolored face paints in preparation for the squaw race. Impersonating Verona's insult, a Kootenai girl objects, “You have no right to be here! You are half white! This race is for Indians and not for breeds!”[160]

According to Owens, the predicament of the mixed descent in *Cogewea*, poised between red and white worlds, remains unsettled since it leaves the issue of racial belonging in a dividing line and the narrative in an inertia.[161] In challenging the decision to enter the squaws' race or the ladies' race, Cogewea confronts the major impasse in American fiction of the white captive facing her redemption and the mixedblood facing his

origin, that is , to be white or Indian. "By entering both races, however, she chooses as none had chosen before her: She chooses not to choose and chooses to be both."[162]

Nevertheless, reading the novel from a more cultural and racial penetrating view declares that the unification between Cogewea and Jim, the two mixedblood characters, is an assertion of Cogewea's decision to stay close to her tribal culture. Therefore, despite the verification that Cogewea does not have the opportunity to become a full-blood Okanogan she can still identify with her tribal community.[163] Moreover, Owens suggests that

> With its introduction of Cogewea as "a breed! the socially ostracized of two races," Mourning Dove's novel announced explicitly what was to become the dominant theme in novels by Indian authors: the dilemma of the mixed-blood, the liminal "breed" seemingly trapped between Indian and white worlds.[164]

Other novels also take into account the difficult quests of mixedblood protagonists who struggle to have their places in society, in a world that ensures the survival of tribal heritage. Mathews's early novel *Sundown* (1934) is often considered as "a coming-of-age novel with a conflicted mixedblood hero," dealing with "Osage matters of rights and inheritances."[165] In great quantities on Osage Indian land, oil and gas were discovered around 1896, an event that brought wealth and created the insight that, in 1906, the Osage people were regarded the richest people on earth. This wealth, however, proved to be disastrous to the Osage, since it was faced with great envy and the "Interior Department arranged a blanket lease that encompassed the entire reservation for exploitation of Osage resources."[166] In this sense, as stated by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, the novel is concerned with the concept of place and displacement, comprising a major feature of post-colonial picture of dislocation, cultural denigration, and the erosion of an active and valid sense of self. This is the result of migration and enslavement that resulted in the destruction and oppression of the indigenous personality. Here, "the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place."[167]

Sundown centers on the difficulties of a mixedblood Osage who is away from his ancestral past and, at the same time, unable to adjust to the dominant white culture.[168] The novel begins with the legacy of naming the protagonist, given the name Challenge by John Windzer, his mixedblood father, on the Osage reservation of the 1890s. The challenge associated with Chal's birth is to be an economic and educational one from his father's point of view. Moreover, Mathews pictures John Windzer and other Osage mixedbloods as being

optimistic about the Osage future after the discovery of oil resources, thinking that the U. S. government would behave positively about the Osage people. This optimism will tend to be unhappy and the events prove that the novel "chronicles the self-destructive descent of the mixedblood protagonist into alcoholism, debilitating self-hate, and spiritual despair."[169]

Robert L. Dorman points out that Mathews manifests the costs of modernization and the assimilation of the Osage tribe in the blatant terms of cultural-racial polarity. This process is carried out through the "self-destructive" inner state within Challenge himself.[170] Mathews begins the novel with a description of a world in which "The god of the great Osages was still dominant over the wild prairie and the blackjack hills when Challenge was born."[171]

Several events presented in the novel are concerned with the decline of Chal, among which is the decision made by his father to send him to a new private school rather than the one run by the U. S. government to which other children of the Osages are often sent. In Robert Allen Warrior's view, this decision establishes a crucial moment in Chal's self-hate and self-destruction since it highlights the conflict between traditional and assimilative process of education. Moreover, the deflation of Osage independence and the repression of Osage traditional life of the period cause a conflict inside Chal's mind.[172] The abrogation of the Osage Council by the commissioner of Indian affairs in 1900 represents a moment of political awakening to him because he always thinks that the role of the government is altruistic and defensive. His father, being a member of the Council, becomes abject and disillusioned. Yet he shows his intention to encourage Chal to work in order to become worthy of citizenship and a model of the commercial capitalistic virtues. However, this dream proves to be difficult to obtain.[173]

There is no evidence in the novel that Chal has the possibility to reconnect or give constant direction to the impulses emerging from his Indian self and the standards and models suggested by the Euro-American world. The adult Chal "is prefigured in the child who plays at being a panther, a red-tailed hawk, a coyote, and, interchangeably, an American general of the Revolution, who is in turn frightened and fascinated, overawed and disgusted, by the white people."[174]

Chal begins to be moved with a new impulse that causes him to repress his Indianness as the years in the American schools finally take their toll.[175] In one particularly painful scene that reflects the cultural and environmental denigration that industrialization brought with it, Mathews presents a picture of the oil-polluted pool of water to which Chal

returns several times so as to get reconnection and solace with the natural world. Once a place of escape and daydreaming connected with the memories of boyhood, the pool turns into a spot of unhappiness. Mathews here, instead of "accepting the pollution of the environment as the necessary consequence of and the price for progress," only perceives the loss and the unfairness of the exchange."[176] As the novel declares,

> Chal did not know the reason for this ugliness; this ugliness which white men seemed to produce. ... He felt simply that these things were not beautiful. He would not have dared suggest his thoughts to anyone; it would have been like sacrilege and certainly unpatriotic. One believed in his country and his state, and accepted the heroics of the race for land in and righteousness of their winning of the West, as taught by his history. He almost despised himself for the feeling deep within him which feebly remonstrated. He kept this feeling subdued; kept it from bubbling up into the placid waters of his consciousness, so that nothing would disturb those waters to keep them from reflecting the impressions that ought to be mirrored, if one were to remain in step. He certainly didn't want anyone to know that he was queer.[177]

Chal's wealth gives him the opportunity to enter into a white fraternity at the state university where he tries not to care about the fact that most of his blood is of an uncivilized race. However, in an occasion, dressed in evening clothes, he worries about the darkness of his skin, wishing his face were only white rather than so bronze. With this dilemma, "he is consequently drawn more and more deeply into the empty materialism of the white world."[178] As a mixedblood, Chal must find an identity not only within the values of the mainstream of the Anglo-American but also within a shifting traditional Osage culture.[179]

Chal's estrangement and inner torment increase whenever he determines to be integrated into the white world. At once the tribal dances stir and embarrass him, and he feels both fascinated and ashamed of the old full-bloods. When he is convinced in a significant scene to interact with them in a lodge ceremony, he first seems gratified and relaxed as one of the headmen tells him that the evil thing in his heart cannot stay forever. But later on he begins to see all the partakers as trivial, meaningless, and sentimental.[180] This event turns him into "a state of inebriation" and now he drinks because there is nothing to do, thinking that alcohol feeds his daydreaming. Now he is seen at odds with the natural world and the voices of the animals "strike him as strange, hostile, and jarring."[181] Indeed, he is "the alienated individual of the metropolitan modernism – separated from both the dominant culture he desires to be part of yet is unable to grasp and the tribal community he disparages yet seeks solace in."[182]

Sometimes at the university, Chal may have the temperament to leave the activity of the campus behind and walk to the river to have a sense of ecstasy and contemplation. This attempt is vain and Chal feels himself out of step, unable to measure up to what is expected of him by the white brothers who are typical of the process of civilization. Besides, he struggles a war within himself as he has no capacity to explain things about the white students, such as their egotism and their spirit of competition. What is worse is that he is obliged to hide his uneasiness and stifle his thoughts, unable to be civilized because being civilized, in Chal's view, requires doing something, a process that turns to be impossible to achieve.[183]

Chal's return to the Creek, still searching for something mysterious, is the result of the intense civilized values of the town. He envies the instinctive ability of the coyotes to celebrate the sacral implication of the moon and tries to create a prayer that fuses the language of his Osage heritage with the authoritative discourse of English. Yet his attempt fails as he has no opportunity to achieve a unification of the present with the past and future. His "dissociated sensibility cannot speak in one voice; he is choked into silence by his inability to articulate – to put the pieces of the self together into a coherent utterance."[184]

Though the novel pays attention to town life in a way that avoids the villages, it still includes the ceremonial life of the village. Chal thinks that Sun-on-His-Wings and other friends, by just sitting and talking in the village, do not do anything recognized as ambitious. Things such as ceremony do not signify progress or moving onward power to Chal, as when he sees Sun-on-His-Wings ride out with a group of men to defy a storm with ancient ritual.[185]

Throughout the novel, Chal seems to be trapped between the world of his father and that of his mother. After returning from university and from serving in the war in Europe, he tries in vain to be reintegrated into the Osage culture. What he comes back to is a "bankrupt culture corrupted by white speculation and environmental degradation and pollution."[186] Robert Dale Parker writes:

> In that way, *Sundown* implies a broader critique of the concept of doing and progress that Chal identifies with white people and that he yearns for but cannot commit himself to… . Unlike Sun-on-His-Wings, Chal can never sustain a comfortable sense of his own doing. … He wastes away his life in a lost generation … erases both the actual doing of mixed-bloods and full-bloods and his own presence as a mixed-blood, so that not to do finally becomes, in Chal's imagination, not to be.[187]

Andrew Wiget remarks that the novel ends with a suggestion that Chal is unable to mature and "develop meaning and direction" after coming from war. He is only irresolute "between the hedonism and decadence of the oil-rich Indians and the hardheaded capitalism of the white men."[188] Nevertheless, instead of a tragic victim, one can notice the real dilemma of having a limited ability to make choices concerning the future. Though Chal struggles a war within as a mixedblood, he, by his decision to attend a law school at the close of the novel, has chosen a road through which he can find power over a limited sense of being. He is in some sort of an awakening toward an assertion of tradition through the actions of his mother.[189]

Gerald Vizenor mentions that Mathews's characters are not tragic victims, though the protagonist suffers the dilemma of being both in and out of his tribal culture. In this sense, the novel represents the beginning of a new visualization in native literature due to its rejection of the romantic absence over a dialogic presence. By creating characters like Chal, Mathews challenges the ambiguities of native memories and introduces the belief that the old towns and traditions of native people would come back. Though this hope is more romantic than actual, it represents a new native sense of presence in literature.[190] As Owens writes in *Other Destinies*:

> Mathews leaves open the possibility of another destiny, another plot, for the American Indian, refusing any romantic closure that would deny the immense difficulties confronting the displaced Native American, but simultaneously rejecting the cliché of the Vanishing American as epic, tragic hero.[191]

Another conspicuous figure among the Indian authors of the 1930s and 1940s was McNickle who emphasizes that Indian insight encompasses not only tribal limits but share the world understanding of other native peoples exposed to colonial domination. McNickle, after World War II, observed the beginning of decolonization which inaugurated an understanding to the experiences of Native Americans in international terms.[192] His 1936 novel *The Surrounded* stresses a reconsidering of the notion of history as it influences the telling of the Native American experience. Within *The Surrounded*, a fresh Native American expression does indeed appear, and that a new voice attempts to historicize that experience. McNickle challenges the overriding national historical narrative and argues for the acknowledgment and insertion of historical narratives originating within Native American cultures. What McNickle suggests is that Euro-America depends on formal history to spread knowledge of its past, while Native American cultures rely on stories.[193]

McNickle, like Dove, pictures the state of being corralled, surrounded with no option of escape from the world in which the character lives. Yet, rather than basing his work on the Western romance, he laments the emasculation and bleakness of life in a realist narrative closer to naturalism.[194] *The Surrounded* depicts an estranged young mixedblood, Archilde Leon, who passes through tragic conditions after returning to his Salish reservation in Montana, a visit that he intends to be a final one. He arrives home daunted by his father and, at the same time, disrespectful of his Indian relatives and their retrograde way of life. Throughout the novel, however, Archilde starts to give a sense of appreciation and identification to his tribal heritage in a way that it becomes difficult for him to leave. But Archilde is led to his own downfall when he fails to recommence his path toward assimilation and continue his participation in the Indian world.[195] Under the education of the Indian boarding school, which is part of the system of white oppression, Archilde feels disgusted by his mother Faithful Catherine and her people. This attitude is the result of an attempt to civilize the children who are taken from their reservation by the U. S. government, away from the savage habits and languages of their parents.[196]

It seems that Archilde witnesses certain developments during the entire period of the novel. By looking to the past, he tries to locate himself in the present, a process by which he preserves a sturdy memory of place. This is achieved through the power of the stories told by Modeste, an old Salish chief, and their effects in transforming Archilde to redefine his identity in a radical way, one that is inevitably bound up to the reminiscences he has of his home[197]: "Tomorrow he would go fishing. He would look at the sky some more. He would ride his horse. Then wherever he might go, he would always keep the memory of these things."[198]

In the beginning, Archilde resists his mother's determination to include him in a traditional feast held upon his return, a celebration during which Modeste tells stories that have traditional healing power about the old times. Archilde is even repulsed by his mother's adhering to the past; that is, his and his mother's experience of the world are distanced. The elders of his life and the buffalo have lost significance and relevance for the alienated and assimilated Archilde. They are considered as leftovers of a former way of life which he cannot reintegrate.[199]

Nevertheless, through the power of storytelling Archilde witnesses a new kind of education that alters his attitudes. He hears from Modeste the history of his Indian heritage and how it moved by whites' divide-and-conquer method from a state of power to one of

subjugation. For Archilde, who initially could not endure Indians and feels sick and dislikes their gathering, the story of Modeste was the first one that he understood. It stirred him toward a newborn identification with the tribe.[200] The narrator says:

> For the first time he had really seen it happen. First the great numbers and the power, then the falling away, the battles and starvation in the snow, the new hopes and the slow facing of disappointment, and then no hope at all, just this living in the past. He had heard the story many times, but he had not listened. It had tired him. Now he saw that it had happened and it left him feeling weak. It destroyed his stiffness toward the old people.[201]

However, the reconciliation and identification with the tribal heritage is only "momentary and fleeting," and the novel proves to be a chain of catastrophic events that lock Archilde into an inescapable fate, making him unable to leave the valley or change the conditions of Indians. This is because the trope of the vanishing American was the only manifest destiny for Indians during the early decades of the twentieth century. Archilde was suspected for the disappearance of the Game Warden, and the last hunting trip which he made with his mother turns into an ultimately disastrous adventure. Rita Keresztesi says that "the hunt does not produce any game; instead, two people are killed: the game warden and Louis."[202]

Consequently, Archilde endures the burden of anguish that has recirculated in the tradition of tragic narration of the Western experience, carrying an almost melodramatic aggressiveness, a determination on the devastating climax, and the ferocious resolution. Ken Egan suggests that, by having Archilde arrested, the novel manifests the irreconcilable state between native and white cultures, and the protagonist, in his search for a coherent identity in the distorted Indian world, must come to face his defeat.[203] According to Owens, Archilde Leon

> Finds himself straddling a seam between Indian and white worlds, with seemingly no possibility for the maintenance of a hybridized or heterogeneous reality that span the two. McNickle's novel is set in the same Flathead country of which Mourning Dove wrote, and like Mourning Dove, McNickle presents this place as a richly hybridized zone of cultural contact. However . . . McNickle demonstrates the power of the Euroamerican consciousness to essentialize what it calls "Indians" and to consign people thus designated to a kind of territory that is both marginal and clearly "other."[204]

Therefore, this gives the impression that there is no chance for a feasible and inhabitable transcultural frontier. Archilde is destined to be powerless and voiceless when he tries to choose a space for himself, whether the authorized or the other one. Thus, he is

in a state of silent submission to unavoidable fate, and the world of the novel exists as chaotic and incomprehensible, a world in which communication between whites and Indians is rendered to be impossible. McNickle presents the reader with a sociopolitical struggle, where the fixed authoritative discourse of the Euramerican world repudiates the possibility of the Indian to live within a “fluid, ever-changing reality” and insists upon a stagnant and deadly territory.[205] Archilde is never allowed resistance and remains a figure of assimilation, so that the novel's final words are “Archilde, saying nothing, extended his hands to be shackled.”[206]

With the emergence of novels by Mathews and McNickle, the romantic atmosphere begins to fade from the Indian American novels in the 1930s. Both works reveal the loneliness and struggle of a deracinated mixedblood protagonist living between two worlds. Neither Chal Windzer nor Archilde Leon has a “chance within a civilization bent on turning Indians into European.” But the delicate invocation of revered geography and patterns out of oral tradition set out an indication at endurance and survival.[207]

In *Sundown*, Mathews does not embrace the strategy celebrated by the non-Indian world which presents a romantic attitude toward the Indian American existence. Chal's story is that of a more complex narrative of cultural survival and protest against the Allotment Act that took away tribal sovereignty and offered a liminal sense of identity to the Indian American.[208] In this way, Mathews “presents Chal not as a weak character but as the model for later mixedblood protagonists like Momaday's Abel who would use language as a way to find meaning in their seemingly unshakable sense of displacement.”[209]

Indeed, both Mathews and McNickle express the dilemmas of their fellow Native Americans, with Mathews presenting a mixedblood character who tries to discover a true self but ends disappointed and McNickle depicting a figure who returns to the Flathead Reservation in a crisis of identity that resulted in a struggle with the white authorities.[210] But the most significant element of their works is the new type of protagonist who is a negation of the Euro-American stereotypes. Now he is not the vanishing American and not dumb. He struggles a kind of dissonance as a result of having to live in two different worlds. As Gaetano Prampolini puts it:

> His condition is a double marginality, all the more evident and painful when, as is the case in most novels, he is a half- or mixed-blood, often looked at askance by both Indians and whites. It is a condition that may engender depression, confusion, a sense of inadequacy and ineptitude, verbal inarticulateness, and from which he seeks a way out through the definition of *who he is*. His story

> centers therefore on the possibility of achieving a more secure sense of his own identity (author's emphasis).[211]

Brown suggests that the world of the deracinated and troubled mixedblood figures "presupposes a knowledge of the white world, a hybrid consciousness, that, through contrast, reveals tradition as a source of healing, a consciousness that Momaday and Silko would develop more fully."[212]

The struggle of being presented in two different worlds is marked by a sense of homecoming, an important device of Native American novels. In Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, Silko's *Ceremony*, and Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, the mixedblood protagonists return to the western reservation in a state of helplessness, drunkenness, or confusion. Yet, the idea that the character cannot go home again to have a sense of belongingness becomes, in the light of these novels, "a cliché in the unmaking." In the context of these novels, the character must find a way to be healed by going home and have the concept of responsibility toward his family and the ancestors.[213]

The role achieved by Indian American writers like Momaday, Silko, Erdrich and others is to challenge the picture set by the dominant society and to make Native people imagine and reimagine their true identity as Indians, from the inside rather than from the outside.[214]

Cyrus R. K. Patell remarks that with Momaday, a new sense of tradition is initiated that did not exist before. The 1960s reflects the voice of the indigenous spirit in a creative and inspirational phenomenon. It is a period of decolonization that sheds lights on

> the dynamics of both racial and cultural hybridity. The mixed-blood war veteran Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* experiences his mixed blood as a clash between contradictory frames of reference, a clash that fractures his consciousness, leading him to treat wartime combat as if it were ritual, and ritual as if it were actual combat.[215]

The novel tells the story of Abel's return from World War II as a victim of "posttraumatic stress syndrome" He is inarticulate and cannot find a place in civilian life. Several events contribute to Abel's condition as an outsider, both in the white and Pueblo Indian society.[216] The problem of Abel as a mixedblood results not only from his inability to find himself within the ceremonial life of the village, but, as Cyrus Patell puts it,

> Abel is also isolated and alienated because he is a contemporary Native American in a white-dominated-culture, unable to adjust to the frames of reference offered first by the government boarding school to which he is sent and then the U. S. Army into which he is drafted. Moreover,

> assimilating into white American society, even if it were possible, would mean accepting an ideology based in individualism that runs counter to all of his tribe's traditional beliefs.[217]

Nevertheless, through the power of the healing rituals and traditions of his people, Abel is made able to be reintegrated into the tribal heritage. Though a person caught between two different worlds and cultures that make him hapless and nearly psychotic, he at last finds a road to survive and the novel, unlike the ones before, "ends in understanding."[218]

Unlike *Sundown*, which ends ambiguously, or McNickle's *The Surrounded*, with Archilde Leon who never discovers his self even through assimilation, Abel as a mixedblood is somehow able to redeem himself and return to his Indian self. Thus, the novel declares "for all to see the viability of the survival of Indianness in a world bent on its destruction."[219]

This substantial achievement of Momaday can be noticed in Silko's *Ceremony* which also shows a mixedblood character who returned from the World War II, acting out in delusional schizophrenia. Tayo is "dysfunctional, and desperately in need of healing." The novel records the explorations of Tayo in which he effectively lives out the revelation seen by an influential Navajo shaman called Betonie. At the end of the novel, Tayo is cured by "a commitment to a common cultural past, a shared tradition, and a return to tradition." Like *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony* seems to insist on the possibility of going home again, for the traditional world of the pueblos, despite the threats and obstacles, is still functionally vital and available.[220] Ned Blackhawk states:

> As Abel is unable to see the center of his pain, Tayo can only hear the outlines of the world around him. In both novels, Los Angeles remains a foreign, unfamiliar world where Tayo and Abel remain alienated not only from their communities but also from themselves. Only after Tayo and Abel have left Los Angeles and returned to their traditional communities can they heal themselves. Resolution in both novels, thus, comes through isolation from urban American society and a return to traditional practices.[221]

It is essential for Indian American writers to insist upon the dynamic, living cultures. They seek to be seen as "contemporary cultures, that they are able to adapt to modern life, and to offer their members the basic values they need to survive in the modern world." They are no longer to be regarded as belonging to a static past and an unchanging history, a past in which they are imprisoned and cannot escape. There is no need to think that it is difficult to see a civilized Indian is still an Indian, or to hold the idea that the Indian culture is to remain within the boundaries of the "noble savage."[222]

In contemporary Native American novels, there is a tendency to depict protagonists who have the potentiality to return spiritually and/or physically to the world of their ancestors and to reservation life. This is employed by Erdrich in his novel *Love Medicine*. Here, as Momaday and Silko have successfully developed, the hero finds personal growth and fulfillment in returning home. He discovers truth and value in the cultural past of his own people.[223]

To be sure, these authors had to struggle for their place in the American literary canon. Having only nine novels written by Indians prior to the 1960s reflects the "isolation and estrangement felt by the mixed-bloods." As Owens suggests, though the "romantic atmosphere" began to disappear from the Indian novel in the 1930s, it was only the 1960s that witnessed the rebirth of the mixed-blood in works that embody a "circular journey" toward a "rich self-recognition as Indian."[224]

This development was followed up in the seventies and eighties, when the process of "self-articulation" led to the discovery of the mixedblood as a "rich source of power, and something to be celebrated." Most recently, the mixedblood novelist\protagonist "moves easily within the marginal zones where full-bloods, mixed-bloods and non-Indians meet and merge."[225]

Notes

[1] Louis Owens, *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 21.

[2] Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 4.

[3] Owens, 21.

[4] Joy Porter, "Historical and Cultural Contexts," in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, edited by Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 40.

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[23] James Wilson, *The Earth Shall Weep: A History of Native America* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1998), 289,290.

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[25]David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 22.

[26] Gagnon, 51.

[27] Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (London: University of California Press, 1988), xvii; See also Suzanne J. Crawford and Dennis F. Kelley, *American Indian Religious Traditions: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (California: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 474.

[28]Katie Marsico, *The Trail of Tears: The Tragedy of the American Indians* (New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 68.

[29] Ibid., 70.

[30] Mary Ann Weston, *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 29.

[31] Ibid., 30.

[32] As Qtd. in Weston, 30-31.

[33] Vickers, 35.

[34] As Qtd. in Farmbry, 39.

[35]Andrea Tinnemeyer, *Identity Politics of the Captivity Narrative after 1848* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), xiii. Hannah Duston was a colonial Massachusetts Puritan mother of nine who was taken captive by Abenaki Native Americans during King William's War, with her newborn daughter, during the Raid on Haverhill (1697), in which 27 colonists were killed. While detained on an island in the Merrimack River in present-day Boscawen, New Hampshire, she killed and scalped 10 of the Native American family members holding them hostage, with the assistance of two other captives.

Duston's captivity narrative became famous more than 100 years after she died. Duston is believed to be the first American woman honored with a statue. During the 19th century, she was referred to as "a folk hero" and the "mother of the American tradition of scalp hunting". Some scholars assert Duston's story only became legend in the 19th century because America used her story to define its violence against Native Americans as innocent, defensive, and virtuous. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. “Hannah Duston,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_Duston (accessed july, 12, 2016; See also Jane Bennett, *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics, and the Wild* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 118; Claire Douglas, *Translate this Darkness: The Life of Christiana Morgan, the Veiled Woman in Jung’s Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 23-24.

Anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States can be traced back to Colonial settlement with the appearance of Cotton Mather’s *La Fe del Christiano* in 1699. In this sixteen page Spanish language pamphlet, Mather voiced deep hatred for Spanish religious practices, linking the Pope to the “anit-Christ” and to the violent tyranny associated with the Black Legend. Centuries old, the Black Legend portrays Spaniards as horrifyingly violent, cruel, and greedy in their conquest of the Americas. In other words, it was used to question the legitimacy of the Spanish empire, across Europe and eventually in the United States. Gretchen J. Woertendyke, Hemispheric Regionalism: Romance and the Geography of Genre (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 86-87.

[36] Owens, 4.

[37] Ibid.

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[39] David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 127.

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[41] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 253.

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[43] “The Red Stick War” and “The Wounded Knee” are wars between the Creek Indians against the European invaders led by Little Warrior and president Andrew Jackson in Alabama in the early 1810s. The Indian Americans defended their land as a reaction to the dislocation from great mass of it. The backwards of these wars and the genocide of thousands of natives obliged them to assign an injustice treaty with the colonizers. One of commotion of this treaty resulted in the important “The Removal Act” in the 1830s. Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 119. For more information on “The Red Stick War” and “The Wounded Knee,” see Johansen, and Pritzker, 246-248; Jennifer McClinton-Temple and Alan Velie, *Encyclopedia of Native American Literature* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 404-406.

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[45] Dean Rader, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 74.

[46] Owens, 28.

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[48] Andrew Wiget, ed., *Handbook of Native American Literature* (New York: Garland, 1994), 221-222.

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[51] Porter, "The Rediscovery of the Native American,” 191.

[52] Ruoff, "Pre-1968 fiction,"167-168.

[53] Frederick E. Hoxie, "“Thinking Like an Indian”: Exploring American Indian Views of American History," in *Native American Writers* , edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), 35; Neil Roberts, ed., *A Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 559-569.

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[76] Arnold Krupat, *For Those who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (California: University of California Press, 1985), 5.

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[133] McClinton-Temple and Velie, 232.

[134] Burnham, 205.

[135] Rita Keresztesi, *Strangers at Home: American Ethnic Modernism between the World Wars* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005), 113.

[136] Vine Deloria, *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 247.

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[139] Mark Hawkins-Dady, ed., *Reader's Guide to Literature in English* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1996), 483. Kenneth Lincoln draws our attention to the way in which mediative text is embedded in the context of all other discourses that have occurred in Western and Native traditions, discourses at once artistic, historical, and cultural. As discourse, the text is connected to other discourses through what James Clifford refers to as “the intersubjectivity of all speech” and what Tzvetan Todorov, interpreting Mikhail Bakhtin, calls “intertextuality”. Clifford, Todorov, and Bakhtin each in their own way call attention to how every discourse enters into relation with past discourses and expected future discourses. Contemporary native American writers may evoke a number of discourse fields from Western and Native traditions. Mediation, then, doubles the contexts and spheres of discourse since it moves from one cultural tradition to another as well as connecting the locutor to the listener. James Ruppert, *Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 8-9.

[140] Ibid.

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[146] Chris LaLonde, *Grave Concerns, Trickster Turns: The Novels of Louis Owens* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 90.

[147] John Rollin Ridge, *Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta: Celebrated California Bandit* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 79.

[148]Timothy B. Powell, *Ruthless Democracy: A Multicultural Interpretation of the American Renaissance* (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 2000), 20. Ridge’s novel offers a response to

how canonical American literature perpetuates the illusion of monoculturalism by obscuring the multicultural origins of America. Hawthorne begins *The House of the Seven Gables*, for example, by asserting that Matthew Maule (a white New Englander) was “the original occupant of the soil” – effectively erasing the Naumkeag Indians who lived on the land and gave the town its name before it became “Salem.” Ibid.

[149] Owens, 40.

[150]Kathleen Washburn, "Writing the Indigenous West," in *A companion to the Literature and Culture of the American West*, edited by Nicolas S. Witschi (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 203-204.

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[154] Mourning Dove, *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography*, edited by Jay Miller (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), xi, xxi.

[155] Cathryn Halverson, "Housing the American West: Western Women's Literature, Early Twentieth Century and Beyond", in Witschi, 364.

[156] Weaver, 105-107.

[157] Marthal L. Viehmann, " "My people . . . My Kind": Mourning Dove's *Cogewea, The Half-Blood* as a Narrative of Mixed Descent", in *Early Native American Writing: New Critical Essays*, edited by Helen Jaskoski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 206-216.

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[159] Mourning Dove. *Cogewea, the Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range*, edited by Lucullus Virgil McWhorter (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 63.

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[162] Brown, 203.

[163] Keresztesi, 125-126.

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[165] P. Jane Hafen,"Indigenous Peoples and Place," in *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America,* edited by Charles L. Crow (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 156.

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[167] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 8-9.

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[172] Warrior, 46-47.

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[174] Gaetano Prampolini, "American Indian Novels of the 1930s: John Joseph Mathews's *Sundown* and D'Arcy McNickle's *Surrounded*," in *Transatlantic Voices: Interpretations of Native North American Literatures*, edited by Elvira Pulitano (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 77.

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[186] Keresztesi, 157.
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[216] McClinton-Temple and Velie, 172.
[217] Cyrus Patell, *Emergent U.S. Literatures: From Multiculturalism to Cosmopolitanism in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 138.
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[225] Ibid., 25-27.

CHAPTER TWO:

N. SCOTT MOMADAY'S *HOUSE MADE OF DAWN*

"There was no need for the singers to come; it made no difference, and *he knew what had to be done*:"

-N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*

2.1: Foreword:

Population of the Indian Americans suffered a great deal from the white inhabitants since their first encounter. Such a disastrous effect in their life and culture resulted from the ongoing "dispossession" of lands and the systematic devastation of the Indian American society by the policy of the U.S. government. The struggle to live between two cultures is the major concern of *House Made of Dawn*. Momaday, recognized as the dean of Native American writers, summarized the feelings, experiences, concerns and thoughts of many Native Americans in the following sentence: "I grew up in two worlds and straddle between both worlds even now."[1]

It is essential to say that no one has shed more light on the state of being an Indian American writer than has Momaday. He has introduced his thoughts through dozens of interviews and lectures, discussing his poetry, prose, and fiction since the publication of *House Made of Dawn* in 1968.[2] Indeed, the work produced by Momaday altered the whole direction of Native American literature. Nancy J. Peterson remarks that "the acclaim given to *House Made of Dawn* not only provided Momaday well-deserved recognition, but, just as importantly, it helped to put Native American literature and Native American authors on the American cultural map."[3]

With regard to the question of mixedblood identity, Momaday presents a work that epitomizes the "assertion of a different perspective." The reader is not introduced to an identity that was masked, like the one seen in John Rollin Ridge's *Joaquin Murieta*, but one which clearly and powerfully portrays "the drama of the American Indian." Moreover, as Louis Owens suggests, *House Made of Dawn* introduces a new and different sophistication. "It is a sophistication of otherness, a discourse requiring that readers pass through an alien conceptual horizon and engage a reality unfamiliar to most readers."[4] What has matured with the appearance of Momaday is the ability of the Indian American novel to show a world-view that challenges the discourse of the privileged centre through the melding of the mainstream discourse and the Indian American tradition to produce a hybrid form of

writing.[5] This form, used obviously for Indian purposes, informs the non-Indian reader that he is facing a new privileged discourse and values.[6]

Most of the period prior to *House Made of Dawn* was dominated by non-Indian authors writing about a mixedblood protagonist who lives in a painful world of alienation. Yet, the Indian American was comprehended differently by many writers who introduced a picture far away from the one given by Momaday and those after him. For instance, writers such as Herman Melville, Mark Twain or James Fenimore Cooper portrayed the Native American in a way that "moves from a "stoic savage" to "vanishing Indian" and "pathological breed.""[7]

Therefore, the mixedblood characters presented in the fiction of the first half of the twentieth century felt themselves as outsiders and displaced from the white industrial society. Yet, the tragic effect is that they felt alienated from the tradition of the Native American society as well, as if "the half-blood had no place in society and, by inference, no right to exist." However, the quest on the part of the mixedblood character caught between two modes of existence is no longer to be viewed tragically. With Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, the identity of the protagonist is not lost. Though he struggles throughout the novel from being trapped physically and spiritually, his identity can be discovered by returning to the tradition of his people.[8] As a result, it is with Momaday that the Indian American novel found its recognition into the American mainstream canon. Owens remarks:

> with *House Made of Dawn*, an American Indian writer had produced a novel of a type well-schooled readers could both recognize and sink their teeth into, and the critical feast touched off by a Pulitzer Prize was a result in part of the fact that Momaday's novel is even at first glance recognizably modernist and thus deceptively easy fare for a New Critical approach.[9]

Explaining why the Pulitzer Prize jury decided to choose the novel in 1969, one of the members of the jury announced that the reason is "eloquence and intensity of feeling, its freshness of vision and subject, its immediacy of theme."[10] Consequently, Momaday is to be considered the father of an entirely new stream in the Indian American novel and his contemporaries enjoyed a freedom to improve "the tools to tell their stories in their own distinctive voices and cast against the background of the traditions of their people," as it is the case with Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and others.[11]

2.2: N. Scott Momaday: The Mixedblood Writer and His Issue of Indian American Identity:

As a novelist, professor, visual artist, and poet, Navarre Scott Momaday received a worldwide attention in 1969, after winning the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for his novel *House Made of Dawn.* This appearance was accompanied by the American Indian Activism, motivated by the formation of the American Indian Movement and the publication of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* in 1970.[12]

Momaday was born in 1934 in Lawton, Oklahoma at the Kiowa Indian hospital. He was a mixedblood writer since he was seven eighths Indian. Natachee Scott, his mother and a well educated teacher, strongly identified herself as Indian despite being only one-eight Cherokee. This identification with the Indian background had enabled Momaday to fully develop an awareness of the sense "of his tribal roots."[13] As Linda E. Cullum states, this influence of Momaday's mother resulted from her belief in "self-imagining" as a way of identifying with the lost heritage of the Native American, a practice that Momaday follows in his work.[14] Natachee worked as an educator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a woman very proud of her Indian origin. Momaday's father, Alfred Morris Momaday, was also a famous teacher and painter, and, together with his family short after Momaday's birth, decided to move from Oklahoma to New Mexico. There, they lived in several places of the Navajo reservation and taught for reservation schools. Reflecting upon the period of his childhood, Momaday "recalls how he straddles two worlds growing up" because he was exposed not only to the Kiowa tradition , but also the Apache, Navajo, and Pueblo tribes he was in touch with during his period on reservations in the Southwest. This, in addition to the experience with the culture of the White and Hispanic settlers, shaped in Momaday a very powerful impression of Pan-Indianism and unity among different Native American groups.[15] For the half-Kiowa child, living on the Navajo reservation made Momaday make a step towards understanding racial differences and discrimination between people. This is because he observed that one part of Hobbs was called "nigger-town", and Momaday himself was sometimes referred to as "Jap."[16] It seems that though Momaday replied with patriotism and though he was full of pride with his ethnic origin, one result was that "nearly every day on the playground someone would greet me with, 'Hi 'ya, Jap,' and the fight was on."[17]

However, the period between 1936 and 1943 helped Momaday learn about the language of the Navajo people and their culture. In his autobiography, *The Names*,

Published in 1976, he explains his life with the Navajo: "Just at the time I was learning to talk, I heard the Navajo language spoken all around me. And just as I was coming alive to the wide world, the vast and beautiful landscape of Dine Bikeyah was my world, all of it that I could perceive."[18]

Momaday's family moved to the Pueblo of Jemez in 1946 where he lived the creative period of his youth. After graduating from high school in 1952, he earned a bachelor's degree in 1958 from the University of New Mexico. Then he held a teaching position at Dulce, where he began a long poem that finally evolved into *House Made of Dawn*. Momaday completed his M. A. in creative writing at Stanford University and finally his Ph. D. in English in 1963.[19]

During Momaday's study at Stanford University, he met Yvor Winters (1900-1968), a central figure in his artistic and personal development. In a conversation with Momaday by Matthias Schubnell, the former declared that it was Winters who helped him learn about traditional English poems.[20]

In Jemez, though the Momadays were outsiders and could not participate in the rituals of the people, Momaday had the opportunity to learn about the tribal life and the oral tradition that is infused in his written works. There, he liked learning about the heritage of the Kiowa and listening to old Kiowa songs. In addition, the time he spent with his father at Rainy Mountain became a major source of inspiration that "stirred his imagination." This search for his tribal roots took a long period in Momaday's life and represents a physical and imaginative journey since Kiowa people consider their creation story as a journey, calling themselves as the "coming out people," the *Kwuda*.[21]

In addition to the influence of the Navajo culture, Momaday was attracted to what is called Devil's Tower in Wyoming, a place connected to the Kiowa legend. When he was a child, Momaday was given the name "Tsoai-talee" which means "Rock-tree Boy" by a Kiowa elder, Pohd-Lohk, meaning "Old Wulf". This storyteller asserts that a "man's life proceeds from his name, in the way that a river proceeds from its source." Therefore, through his very identity, Momaday is linked to the Kiowa myth, and fully integrated himself into the mythical, local, and cosmic landscapes. This incorporation of both myth and landscape in Momaday's works, like *House Made of Dawn*, and *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, suggests that "individual time is indivisible from collective time, that personal time is indivisible from historical and mythical times."[22]

As a mixedblood writer, Momaday has addressed the topic of identity in lectures, essays, poetry and fiction. Indeed, "it is out of the search for an identity that Momaday's writing grows."[23] As Tracy Chevalier points out, this issue of identity, personal or literary, is given a cultural urgency because of Momaday's racial heritage. In addition to his experience with Indian American communities during much of his childhood, Momaday was fully aware of the disastrous effect brought up by the U. S. assimilation, violence, and oppression upon the traditional language and religion of the Indian American cultures. Despite protected from the often extreme despair and poverty of reservation life, his parents molded a profound connection to Indian American culture, encouraging Momaday to praise the importance of upholding his Kiowa identity in the face of its extinction. Therefore, Momaday's writing demonstrates "the difficult yet important process of resurrecting elements of a tribal heritage within a modern, individualistic sense of identity."[24]

As an indigenous writer, Momaday investigated the process of awakening into one's own identity and understanding it in relation to a dominant nation. Sean Kicummah Teuton declares:

> contrary to many current conceptions of culture, which assume that identity is largely externally imposed and therefore restrictive, Momaday and others harnessed Indian identity to serve their artistic vision and cultural renewal. . . . Momaday declares his identity to be an inroad to a massive resource of tribal knowledge.[25]

The central point through which Momaday tries to envision the Indian identity is that he defines this identity as an idea that "survives crucial and complete" despite the fragmentation of the verbal tradition in which it was preserved. In his essay "The Man Made of Words," he declares that "an Indian is an idea which a given man has of himself. And it is a moral idea, for it accounts for the way in which he reacts to other men and to the world in general. And that idea, in order to be realized, has to be expressed."[26]

Momadasy's expression of identity is connected with his Indian background. In his autobiography *The Names*, he characterizes his mother as a woman who "began to see herself as an Indian. That dim native heritage became a fascination and a cause for her . . . She imagined who she was."[27] As Jason W. Stevens points out, it is essential for Momaday that the Indian redefines himself to resist the savage stereotype. Native Americans have to reimagine and reinvent the "viable conditions of being Indian," despite the prevalent belief that insists on a changeless Indian consciousness. The story of self-transformation began with Momaday since the publication of *The Journey of Tai-Me* (1967) and *House Made of*

Dawn.[28] To Momaday, such issue of self-identification and self-definition is to be seen as "a central component in American Indian identity" and one of the essential human rights of individuals and of groups.[29]

Momaday encourages Native readers to reimagine themselves as Indians from within rather than as defined by the prevailing society. Accordingly, a central duty on the part of the Indian Americans is to reject the "outside view" portrayed by the Western philosophy and its consequences. Jace Weaver cites Dennis McPherson and Douglas Rabb in discussing the issue of identity:

> However, to apply an outside view predicate to yourself is much more than seeing yourself as others see you, though it is that as well. It is also allowing them to tell you who you are. It is in a sense giving up your freedom, your self determination to others; becoming what they want you to become rather becoming what you have it within yourself to become. To accept an outside view predicate, such as ugly or ashamed . . . , is to fit into the plans and projects of others, to make it easy for them to manipulate you for their own ends, their own purposes. It is, in a very real and frightening sense, to lose yourself, to become alienated, to become a stranger, an alien to yourself.[30]

In *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), a work that addresses issues of cultural relativity, alienation, and cultural identity, Momaday introduces his journey towards an affirmation of his culture, and the importance of the imagination. Moreover, as Donelle N. Dreese suggests, the work stresses the role of oral tradition through the remains of the stories telling the history of the Kiowa and its meaning for Momaday.[31] In the prologue to this work, Momaday states that "the imaginative experience and the historical express equally the tradition of man's reality."[32]

Interestingly, for the purpose of the Indian American identity to be expressed, Momaday spells out the generative role of language and the power of stories. This matter is deeply rooted in the tradition of Native cultures in which there is no line that makes a division between story and reality. What creates and reflects reality is the stories that have the power to change.[33] This recognition of the "coercive power of language to 'bring into being'"[34] represents for Momaday a way of life that creates knowledge and experience for the community. Momaday says,

> It seems to me that in a certain sense we are all made of words; that our most essential being consists in language. It is the element in which we think and dream and act, in which we live our daily lives. There is no way in which we can exist apart from the morality of a verbal dimension.[35]

In addition to his interest in the relationship between language and identity, Momaday stresses man's necessary connection with the land. Lee Schweninger points out that Momaday considers the connection between language and the earth as holy and sacred. Momaday, in one incident, picks up a hitchhiker on his way to the northwest. He discovers that the man, a young Navajo, is familiar with the Navajo names of the places. According to Momaday, this man is actually "at home." In his essay "A First American Views His Land," Momaday shows that, through such reverence for the land, Native Americans have created a moral and spiritual relationship unfamiliar to non-Indian Americans. Even Momaday's grandfather is characterized as one who is deeply fitted to the land, both in will and spirit.[36]

Momaday declares significantly that his attitude towards the land differs from that established by Europe. Instead of regarding it as something to be conquered and divided, bought and sold, he shows the land as an entity with which a spiritual attachment is made. "Movement for European Americans was born of separation; the native American, on the other hand, was a caretaker of the earth."[37] In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday states:

> Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wander about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and all the faintest motions of the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colors of the dawn and dusk.[38]

Momaday's use of words such as "remembered earth," "wonder," or "imagine," displays the loss of a valuable relationship that human beings should struggle to recover, that of the co-existence with the land.[39]

If Momaday emphasizes that the idea of place is a critical factor to the understanding of one's self, it is not surprising that the same theme is of central importance in *House Made of Dawn*. Here, the mixedblood protagonist, in his struggle from living in two different modes of reference, draws health and strength, restoration and harmony from the landscape. Lawrence Evers refers to two important traditions related to the novel: Momaday's special regard for language and the relationship with the land. Momaday and others call this a "sense of place," which, according to Evers, comes from "the perception of a culturally imposed symbolic order on a particular physical topography."[40] Just like Momaday who is without fluency in any native tongue, Abel is inarticulate, a state that

reflects Momaday's "generic deprivation," as Karl Kroeber suggests. As a result, "there can be no imposition of a culture's symbolic order on physical surroundings."[41]

2.3: *House Made of Dawn*: Abel's Cultural Crisis and His Quest Towards Reintegration:

Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* reveals the problems faced by Indian American people when they live away from the sense of community. Moreover, it mirrors the clash between modern and traditional way of life, as represented by Abel who suffers from leaving his own home and faces cultural conflict that makes him lose his identity. As a mixedblood, Abel feels that the sense of relationship is very harmonious and strong among traditional people, a sense that he has to forget when living in the world of the white people which produces the loss of wisdom. He has to forget who he is and all the traditional beliefs and practices.[42] As Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington remark,

> There are many reasons why some traditional beliefs and practices may be maladaptive. Environmental change is one. Others are more complex, having to do with various aspects of human problem solving. There is ample evidence, for example, that in many societies people can provide no rational reason for clinging to certain beliefs or practices, and that some of their most important decisions – where to hunt, when to raid on enemy, when to fish, what to plant – are based on prophecies, dreams, divination, and other supernatural phenomena.[43]

The environmental change of the "white man's morality" and the different values of that world affected the young Indian Americans who were forced into urban areas and could not cope with the loss of their tribal identity. Momaday says that it is only the Indian who "knows so much what it is like to have existence in two worlds and security in neither."[44] Describing *House Made of Dawn*, he states that

> the novel is about an Indian who returns from World War II and finds that he cannot recover his tribal identity; nor can he escape the cultural context in which he grew up. He is torn, as they say, between two worlds, neither of which he can enter and be a whole man. The story is that of his struggle to survive on the horns of a real and tragic dilemma in contemporary society.[45]

Moreover, he explains the birth of his novel to Laura Coltelli by saying that Abel, the central character,

> represents a great many people of his generation, the Indian who returns from the war, the Second World War. He is an important figure in the whole history of the American experience in this country. It represents such a dislocation of the psyche in our time. Almost no Indian of my generation escaped that dislocation, that sense of having to deal immediately, not only with the

> traditional world, but with the other world which was placed over the traditional world so abruptly and with great violence. Abel's generation is a good one to write about, simply because it's a tragic generation. It is not the same, the generation after Abel did not have the same experience, nor the one before. So it is, in some sense, the logical one to deal with in literature.[46]

This sense of isolation felt by the mixedblood figure is also revealed in his second novel, *The Ancient Child* (1989). In this novel, Momaday also pictures a mixedblood artist separated from his Kiowa past and struggles as he searches for his true identity. Yet, through the power of myth and tradition, the protagonist is lured back to Oklahoma and is aided by a young Navajo girl with strong spirit power. Eventually, he is able to merge with the Bear Boy of Kiowa myth to discover his true authentic self.[47]

In writing *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday was influenced by Herman Melville, one of his favourite writers. What Momaday weaves in his novel is the moral struggle between good and evil manifested when Abel kills an albino man who ceremonially defeats and humiliates him. Like Ahab, the attempt of Abel, the biblically named modernist hero, is rooted in the belief that to "destroy a manifestation of evil is to destroy the evil itself." Yet, this concept, to destroy the evil represented by the whiteness of the albino, is in direct opposition to a Pueblo belief in the need for balance between good and evil. Momaday, in James H. Cox's view, understands Ahab's terminal worldview to be specifically triggered by a colonial impulse that operates in a good\evil binary that pictures Europeans as good while Native Americans as evil. In this binary, the Europeans "will inevitably destroy the other." As a result, the trajectory of *Moby Dick* is replotted in *House Made of Dawn*, which does not close with the destruction of the Native American or European, but with a ritual balance within the secular and sacred world, achieving what Ahab could not.[48]

The artistic achievement of the novel lies in Momaday's ability to offer not only a "context for formidable suffering" but to provide "avenues" for healing such kind of suffering which makes Abel experience "an apocalyptic appearance of illness and misfortune as well as the painful consequences of human ignorance and malice." Abel, as a human being, may accept and endure suffering, but cannot accept suffering that has no meaning. Moreover, the mythic structure in *House Made of Dawn* is different from that in *Moby Dick*. In Paula Gunn Allen's view, the mythic structure of Momaday's novel is not the bible, but the Navajo Beautyway and the Night Chant.[49]

However, although Momaday himself associated the white man that Abel kills with the intelligent malignity of Moby Dick, in the description of Abel's stabbing the albino some critics believe that it is purely Faulknerian. When talking about Momaday, the

influence of William Faulkner has been well commented upon. The scene which describes the killing in *House Made of Dawn* is similar to the perceptions of the President and the Secretary of the Chickasaw chief in "Lo!". "Both the albino and the chief are repulsive, objects of revulsion described in terms both human and inhuman. Both are grotesque and fat. Yet, the crucial difference is that the animalistic-yet-intelligent malignancy attributed to the absolute Other in Momaday's novel is ascribed to the albino's whiteness, whereas for Faulkner it is marked by the natives' darkness." However, as Jace Weaver and et al. say,

> Momaday's indebtedness to Faulkner is reflected in some of the technical aspects of his writings, particularly *House Made of Dawn*: the fragmented narrative perspective, the disjointed time scheme, the connection of surface meaning to underlying symbolic patterns, the use of different styles for different characters. Thematically the two writers resemble each other in the way they stress the importance of a functioning tradition for individual human existence. They see the acceptance of responsibility in the historical continuum as a prerequisite for survival.[50]

In a conversation, Momaday himself spells out the influence of Faulkner. Momaday admires *The Sound and the Fury* and As *I Lay Dying*, regarding them as two of the great masterpieces of our time. He also likes "The Bear," and his poem "The Bear" is based on Faulkner's description of Old Ben. Yet, the protagonist in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* carries something exceptional. One may argue that Abel is not the only character who is seen running, since there are many characters in American literature who are on the run, like Mark Twain's Huck Finn, Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, Faulkner's Joe Christmas, and John Updike's Rabbit Angstrom. Nevertheless, rather than accepting only an escape motif that is extensively prevalent, what "makes Abel special is that his running is not only, as with the other figures, a symbol of alienation, of wanting to run away from something without a viable alternative, but that Abel has something to run to, namely his native culture."[51]

Among Indian American writers, Momaday was the first to meaningfully renovate a narrative structure capable of breeding healing energy through mythic patterns that represent the fictional matrix and lifeblood of his novel. One of them is the Navajo story pattern incorporated into *House Made of Dawn*. It tells of heroes or heroines who are severely separated from family and home to enter into a dangerous world in which they venture out into near-death experiences. Aided by the Holy People who grant detailed ceremonial awareness, these heroes are virtually restored to a state of physical and spiritual health, to a world of harmony, order, and beauty. This pattern is well suited in Momaday's novel, in which Abel passes in a life that parallels the Navajo hero's passage into dangerous

mythic space. Abel, in his cultural struggle, is able to survive only when he has "extensive contact with the transformative powers of Bear."[52]

As a writer striving "to bring the oral into the written, the Native American vision into Western thinking, spirit into modern identity, community into society, and myth into modern imagination," Momaday does not limit himself to one cultural framework. As James Ruppert points out, he is free to use the expectations and tools of both Western and Native cultural codes to accomplish the aims of the other as well as to fulfill the epistemological expectations of both audiences.[53] Therefore, it is possible to argue that Momaday mediates a non-Western world-view and sense of cyclical time with the modernist elements of fragmentation, monologue and stream of consciousness. Here, the non-native reader, faced with a sense of confusion and uncertainty, can decide to pay attention to the new discourse context and find a new meaning for running, chanting, and return. On the other hand, native readers are guided to discover the mythic pattern beneath the flux of modern existence. The new perspective is that both readers, following the story of Abel who moves into mythic time and then back into a centred existence, can share in the novel's healing effect.[54]

As Cyrus R. K. Patell remarks, *House Made of Dawn* is framed with the traditional Walotowa formula words that indicate "opening" (Dypaloh) and "closing" (Qtsedaba). The prologue with which the novel begins offers an image of "the annual footrace of the runners after evil," a kind of a Walotowa ceremony that brings the novel directly into the mythic oral tradition.[55]

> *Dypalob*. There was a house made of dawn. It was made of pollen and of 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 wilderness on the mountains beyond. The land was still and strong. It was beautiful all around. (*HMOD*, 1)[56]

In this respect, A. Robert Lee perceives that Abel's disequilibrium, and his slow-won advance into recovery, is given in terms at once circular, spatial and Native-ceremonial." It is also in this respect that the 'house of dawn' mythology itself holds the signatures of a Native centering of the world. *House Made of Dawn*, thereby, "transforms into the very thing of its own plotline, a fiction about, and yet at the same time itself the enactment of, Abel's healing."[57]

Starting with the most basic and essential element, the word, Momaday indeed privileges Native American discourse. In this sense, he believes that the written tradition and the oral one are equivalent in value, force, and function. Such position created by Momaday is not common in Western literary thought. Once the distinctions between oral and written literature are banished, "new fields of discourse increase the possibilities of mediation, of new insight, and of experiencing new world views."[58]

Michael L. LaBlanc and Ira Mark Milne point out that, by placing *House Made of Dawn* in a design which is thematically and structurally cyclic, as is the case with many oral narratives, Momaday makes his protagonist move from discord to harmony. The winter race Abel runs at the prologue and at the end of the novel is the first race in the Jemez ceremonial season. It represents for Abel a re-emergence journey to his true identity.[59] As Momaday himself suggests:

> I see it 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. The book itself is a race. It focuses upon the race, that's the thing that does hold it all together. But it's constantly a repetition of things, too. At the beginning, you have Abel in his relationship with Angela, and that is picked up again in the relationship with Milly. I see it as a kind of circle, which finally closes upon itself. Abel, at the end of the book for example, goes back and becomes in effect a kind of reflection of Francisco. Counterparts of that kind run all the way through it.[60]

Only with a single word, the novel reflects the importance of the oral tradition in which stories have serious responsibilities. They have the power to help a person to discover who he is and where he comes from, to make him whole, and create a world that is inhabitable, to "compel order and reality." Therefore, the voice introduced in the prologue is that of the oral tradition in which time and place are mythic. Moreover, through the image of Abel running, the prologue shifts Abel into the nonlinear, cyclical time of the pueblo. "The cold rain slanted upon him and left his skin mottled and streaked," and "he seemed almost to be standing still" (*HMOD*, 2). Owens suggests that Abel must learn to return to the stories and to connection to the cosmos. Consequently, the prologue "underscores the stable, coherent cultural and psychic centre from which Abel is alienated and which may be recovered." Yet, introducing Abel running suggests that his journey will be complete and successful though it will not be without danger and difficulties.[61]

Though "the plot loosely follows a conflict-crisis-resolution pattern,"[62] and specific dates stand at the head of the chapters, the events Momaday portrays are forced into an apparently plotted order by those dates. "In actuality, they explode out of their

chronological patterns." Many events have happened at some period before the date on which they are presented. Moreover, the reader is sometimes not clear about the specific time of some events. For example, it is not sure how old Abel is when he captures the eagle as he participates in the Eagle Watchers Society (*HMOD*, 18-25). There is also a mystery about "old enough" when Francisco take Abel and his brother, Vidal, to elucidate the movements of the sun along the "silhouetted" rim of Black Mesa (*HMOD*, 177-178). *House Made of Dawn*, then, is "a pool, circular in structure, not a rising-action-climax-falling-action-all-from-the-same-point-of-view piece of fiction."[63]

To make Abel the principal character in the novel without delving deeply into his thoughts, Momaday often does not use a consistent point of view, shifting through multiple storytelling voices. Therefore, it is not always clear whose thoughts are being told in the novel. Abel is seen at the beginning to be the focus of the novel, but soon Momaday shifts the point of view to Francisco. Moreover, little consistency is noticed in point of view. While it rarely changes from the perspective of one person to another within one scene, it does not track a pattern of staying with any one point of view for a whole chapter, or even a section.[64] The entirety of the third section of the novel, "The Night Chanter", is told from Benally's perspective rather than through the point of view of Abel. Here, Benally, used as a conventional first person narrator, tells the story of Abel's departure from the city. But the other three parts are not so conventional. For example, part two, "The Priest of the Sun," employs an essentially omniscient point of view, but one remarkably modified by stream-of-consciousness.[65]

However, an integral thing to Momaday's novel is the setting. Holly E. Martin believes that, as the story is about a man torn between two worlds, the two places are rendered differently and used as symbolic of cultural conflict and are regarded as "means to create a hybrid perspective." This is apparent in the contrast between the reservation of the southwestern desert and the city of Los Angeles. The way in which both places are depicted graphically portrays the cultural conflict within the main character of the novel, that of Abel's struggle.[66]

House Made of Dawn comprises four sections and a prologue that constructs the mood for the story. It is set in a canyon at sunrise and tells the story of a young Jemez Pueblo man, Abel, the protagonist, who is introduced in the prologue. Abel leaves his home to fight in World War II and returns from his service to the Pueblo in the mid-1940s, back to his grandfather's place. In the prologue, Abel is running. Yet, he feels that returning to

the reservation only strengthens his sense of estrangement from his tribal heritage. He is profoundly estranged from his culture and does not have the ability to connect to his people. Living the devastating period of the war, Abel becomes conscious that his return to the reservation has been unsuccessful. Soon after his coming back, he is provoked into killing an albino man with a knife. Abel identifies the albino man as a witchsnake rather than as a human being, and whereupon he is found guilty and relocated to prison in Los Angeles after an affair with a pregnant white visitor to Jemez, Angela St. John. After being released from prison, Abel's situation in Los Angeles has not improved because of his drunkenness and some evil company around him. There, his new friends Ben Benally and Milly try to help him out of his situation. Yet, Abel suffers physically and spiritually. He is harassed by the Kiowa preacher Tosamah, and is beaten terribly, almost to death, by the corrupted and wicked cop Martines. While recovering at the hospital, Abel is visited by Ben and Angela who revive his spirit. Soon after his recovering, Abel returns to the reservation in New Mexico where he finds his grandfather dying. The novel concludes with Abel's performing the whole burial ritual to his grandfather and he is seen taking up the Dawn Run, a tribal race against evil. As he runs, he sings for himself and his grandfather, reaffirming his ties to his people and the land.

Kenneth M. Roemer states that, as a result of his horrible experience in the white world and of being away from his traditional heritage, Abel feels himself as an outsider, a patient man who requires a re-emergence journey that takes him back to order and harmony.[67] Abel as a mixedblood person confronts the problem of identity facing men and women who are fully aware of "clashes of cultures." This clash occurred when the Europeans brought with them the concept of private ownership of land and held to values that cause identity crisis to people like Abel who is surrounded by a white culture of which he is also a part. Entering the white world makes Abel just as "emotionally troubled, violent, and isolated as he had been among his own people."[68]

Therefore, Abel is left with the disastrous effect of his inability to give meaning to his life. As Momaday suggests: "One of the most tragic things about Abel, as I think of him, is his inability to express himself. He is in some ways without a voice."[69]

A major theme that Momaday explores in the novel is the negative function of alcohol which makes Abel physically and spiritually dislocated. The impact of alcohol is deeply alienating on Abel. As O. N. Warner puts it , "its use has developed into an emblem of the Indian's own destruction in the face of white civilization."[70] In the first section called

"The Longhair," set in Walatowa, Canon San Diego in 1954, Francisco goes in his wagon to meet Abel after returning from military service in World War II. The reader is introduced to Abel's situation as his grandfather is on his way to meet Abel:

> He heard the sharp wheeze of the brakes as the big bus rolled to a stop in front of the gas pump, and only then did he give attention to it, as if it had taken him by surprise. The door swung open and he fell against his grandfather and did not know him. His wet lips hung loose and his eyes were half closed and rolling. Francisco's crippled leg nearly gave way. His good straw hat fell off and he braced himself against the weight of his grandson. Tears came to his eyes, and he knew only that he must laugh and turn away from the faces in the windows of the bus. (*HMOD*, 8)

It seems that Abel experiences only a sense of alienation, and now he is in a state of spiritual, cultural, and emotional distance. Therefore, as Dave Gonzales suggests, it is not surprising that he does not recognize his grandfather as he stumbles drunk. This stumbling is a symbol of his "cultural imbalance." This is why Francisco cries, for he feels that Abel is away from a philosophy of life different from the one he has faced at war. "He cries not because Abel is intoxicated, but because of the evil in the world and its effect on the land and the people."[71] As Owens suggests, "in a world in which identity is derived from community, to not know one's grandfather is dangerous."[72] In this incident, Abel is different from his grandfather who, on his way to meet Abel, sings both in his native language and in Spanish. He is introduced as a character who "has reconciled cultures and created a functional space within them. He is literally and figuratively at home."[73]

Nevertheless, Abel's state of loss and estrangement is valid early in his life even before going to war. His memories of his childhood with his mother and his brother Vidal are mentioned in the first part of the novel. He remembers riding a horse with his brother and other people from the village. "It was a warm spring morning." As brothers, they used to see their grandfather working and listen to him singing songs. Yet, his mother died in October, and "for a long time afterward he would not go near her grave" (*HMOD*, 10-11).

Moreover, as Alan R. Velie remarks, what complicates Abel's situation is his own genealogy that contributes to the nature of his illness. Though at home, the problem of illegitimacy, which antedates his relocation from the reservation to the city, alienates him from the Jemez. Therefore, he feels ill and out of balance.[74] Abel, like many contemporary Native American protagonists, is a mixedblood. His mother is a native of Jemez Pueblo, but 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 somehow foreign and strange" (*HMOD*, 11). Consequently, Abel's cultural distance is not only rooted in his

being divided between two worlds, but also in his conflicted Indian identity. Matthias Schubnell argues that "Abel is struggling to find an identity within his own tribe long before he comes into direct contact with the culture of modern America."[75]

In addition to his sense of isolation as a result of his father's lineage, Abel is confused and finds many differences in his own community. Though he played comfortably on the land with his brother Vidal, one can see Abel shrink from his rapport to the land, a state that threatens his destruction and begins an unhealthy relationship to his self.[76] One day, he encountered an old medicine woman called Nicolas tea-whau. As he herded the sheep, she screamed at him a terrible curse and he ran away hard. He tried to have the snake-killer dog come with him because he was afraid. Then he felt a strong sense of fear as he heard the wind: "The moan of the wind grew loud, and it filled him with dread. For the rest of his life it would be for him the particular sound of anguish" (*HMOD*, 11-12). Peter Charles Hoffer in his book *Sensory Worlds in Early America* regards this incident in Abel's life as an excellent example of the "overlapping of every day sensation and perception of the spirit world in the native mind." What Abel heard is the "moaning" of the spirits at war with the land. The house made of dawn is echoed in his mind, the house that is made of all spiritual things.[77] Abel, in his cultural conflict, is haunted by the "dread" and "anguish" of the inscrutable force of the land. In this situation, Momaday anticipates Abel's later experience of his conflicted identity, confusion, and disorientation at war.[78]

John Lloyd Purdy notices that Momaday uncovers Abel's illness in the initial "collage" of seemingly incoherent flashbacks. On another occasion in the novel, Momaday tells Abel's memories as a member of The Eagle Watchers Society, whose story of survival parallels Abel's own. This group was the basic ceremonial organization of the Bahkyush people who survived against the illness of the diseases arrived with European colonizers. The remaining members of Pecos Pueblo migrated and were adopted by the people of Walatowa," Momaday's fictionalization of Jemez Pueblo. As Momaday notes, the Bahkyush "had endured every kind of persecution until one day they could stand no more and their spirit broke. They gave themselves up to despair and were then at the mercy of the first alien wind" (*HMOD*, 14). In their "journey along the edge of oblivion" (*HMOD*, 16), the survival of these people from the devastating effect of the "alien wind" rests upon carrying the ceremonial core of their culture. Abel struggles in his own community, its tradition, ceremony, and culture. In his attempt to reintegrate himself into the life of the pueblo, he pulls in the opposite direction toward alienation. He also gives into despair and

needs to make a journey just like the Bakhyush people. In this way, Abel's story is his search for appropriate behaviour, but he must hold the fact that acting independently from the behavioural practices of his community will result in pain and a more sense of loneliness.[79]

As an adolescent, Abel reports that he has seen two eagles catch snake in their talons in midair, "an awful, holy sight, full of magic and meaning" (*HMOD*, 14). He is then invited to accompany the eagle watchers of the Bahkyush in the Valle Grande. Abel participates in the hunt which is successful and celebrated properly. That day, two eagles are caught and Abel's bird is a female, big and beautiful (*HMOD*, 15-19). At first, the experience singles out Abel to be integrated in the tradition of his people as he follows the correct protocol. However,

> He felt the great weight of the bird which he held in the sack. The dusk was fading quickly into night, and the others could not see that his eyes were filled with tears. That night, while others ate by the fire, he stole away to look at the great bird. He drew the sack open; the bird shivered, he thought, and drew itself up. Bound and helpless, his eagle seemed drab and shapeless in the moonlight, too large and ungainly for flight. The sight of it filled him with shame and disgust. He took hold of its throat in the darkness and cut off its breath. (*HMOD*, 20)

Carol Miller suggests that Abel's action is symbolic for the confused perception of how to make a proper meaning of traditional beliefs, affirming that there is something wrong with Abel as a mixedblood character,[80] one who has made a "rebellion against tribal sensibilities" with "his violation of a serious taboo, the mercy killing of an eagle caught for ritualistic purposes."[81] This is because eagles have a strong spiritual function to the Indian American people, since, as high-flying creatures, these birds are revered for their ability to transcend to the sky and see the world "from the vantage point of the Creator." Killing the eagle alone, away from the fire and the assistance of the other members of the group suggests that Abel has broken the communal participation of this "time-honored practice", for he commits the grave crime of breaching the harmony and consensus of the society.[82] This act dismisses him from further involvement in the Eagle Watchers Society, and is further symptom of the tensions that come to occur between him and other members of the Pueblo. The wildness of his own being is reflected in the intense longing he experiences for its independence, power and beauty in motion. Though he kills the eagle because he reverences its wildness and cannot accept seeing its loss of independence, "it is hardly coincidental that the eagle's confinement in the sack is echoed by Abel's incarceration in a prison."[83]

Abel's experience in the Eagle Watchers Society reflects the contrast between him and Francisco's bear hunt in his boyhood. Francisco, when he comes to the place called Seytokwa, remembers "the race for good hunting and harvests" (*HMOD*, 7). He recognizes that his being a Kiowa is based on understanding the oral traditions that Abel only partially understands. Unlike his grandfather who passes with steadfastness and grace in his bear hunt, Abel, instead of feeling proud of his accomplishment, is "filled with longing," (*HMOD*,20) a reflection that echoes his own mental state.[84] Two issues can be deduced from this incident. First, it shows Momaday's emphasis on the importance of rituals that have been passed down from generation to generation. Second, it shows Abel in his struggle as a mixedblood who now represents a threat to the existence of the sacred Eagle Watchers.[85]

Yet, the events that severe Abel's connection to the world of physical and spiritual wholeness are manifested in his going to war. According to Carlos Gallego, Abel as a mixedblood figure contends with internal struggles brought upon him by his attempt to integrate into the contemporary American modernization.[86] After establishing the shakiness of Abel's prewar relation to his home, Momaday abruptly sends him off to the world of fighting with the white man. Here, the novel's careful narrative of his lonely leave-taking as the motor vehicle takes him out of the valley mimics the radical estrangement that Abel lives in. For Abel, "the bus is not only the literal vehicle of his leaving home; it is a metaphorically powerful machine as well, evoking all other "machinery" of Western civilization."[87]

> There was no one to wish him well or to tell him how it would be. . . . And suddenly he had the sense of being all alone, as if he were already miles and months away. . . . There was a lot of speed and sound then, and he tried desperately to take it into account, to know what it meant. Only when it was too late did he remember to look back in the direction of the fields. (*HMOD*, 21)

The idea of Abel's going to fight for the United States in the white man's war was not admired by Francisco. Abel is in a state of conflict, for since he had left the reservation there was nothing to comfort him. It is loneliness and confusion that wait for him in the strange world.[88]

Abel is confronted with a "crisis of culture" as a result of his inability to adopt the traditions and customs of his tribe. This tragic condition in which Abel lives makes him turn his back on the Indian world and enter modern America. Yet, entering that world proves to be even more disastrous, a world that has aggravated the problems faced by Abel.

With the immersion in the white culture, another dimension to Abel's conflicted identity has been added. Among white soldiers, Abel is deprived of a personal identity and considered rather reckless by his comrades, who call him "chief" and make fun of him. In other words, he is misunderstood and stereotyped by the other white soldiers. Such behaviour not only shuts him out from their culture but also rejects him as a Jemez man. The experience in the white world has only unsettled the young Abel.[89]

Consequently, serving in World War II represents for Abel the first time to come across with secularized, technological modern American society whose notions of time and social space contrast enormously with notions of time and space and the communicative infrastructure of the Pueblo's everyday life. According to W. Lawrence Hogue, entering the white world and the armed services appear to be only devastating and disorienting. Such experiences tear his sense of selfhood and take him away "from everything he knew and had always known."[90]

It seems that Abel faces the same world of the educational program which brought negative impact on the Indian Americans. In their educational environment, the students witnessed the immense differences between the material and ideological world of non-Indian America and the world epitomized microcosmically by the reservation. In the cultural conflict that Abel struggles, "both worlds can become, to a disconcerting extent, other worlds."[91] As Gillian Russell suggests in his essay "The Eighteenth Century and the Romantics on War," Abel is obviously bewildered and lost between the white and the native American world which is clear in the description of Abel as he returns to his grandfather's place.[92] For Momaday, Abel's military service becomes "another source of deception, another source of failed or empty promises, another reason to resist the blandishments of the rhetoric of assimilation." From his military experience in the white world, Abel is aware of the fact that he is valued as a soldier but no as a citizen; without his uniforms, he becomes nearly invisible in the American cultural landscape. This near-invisibility of the Indian American soldiers, as Lucy Maddox clarifies,

> is one sign of how little their Indianness figures in the ideological and rhetorical constructions of the America that welcomed their bodies into its military service. At the same time, their absence from home and their transportation to alien geographical and psychological spaces has estranged them from home.[93]

Up to this point, the reader can argue that despite his mixedblood heritage, Abel's sense of a social identity is more distinct as ingrained in the ways of his social group. It is

even possible to conjecture that it is the contact with the oppressive culture that contributes to Abel's sense of estrangement. Nevertheless, till now Abel demonstrates his inability to live in either world "partly because his personal background and partly because of his war experiences.[94] In this regard, Joseph L. Coulombe suggests that Abel offers a case study of what it is to be an alienated modern man, and "racist stereotypes only complicate the general social malaise in which he exists." Having been corrupted by a materialistic and divisive world dominated by whites, he is not whole; the war, for the most part, has fractured him.[95] A more straightforward elucidation for his alienation from both the Indian and white worlds can be seen in his chaotic psychological state and lost memory concerning the years after his departure which is contrasting to that of his childhood and adolescence.[96] Returning drunk to the reservation after he is released from the army, the narrator points out that "This – everything in advance of his going – he could remember whole and in detail. It was the recent past, the intervention days and years without meaning, of awful calm and collision, time always immediate and confused, that he could not put together in his mind" (*HMOD*, 21).

Nevertheless, the only thing that Abel remembers is a fragment of some event in his memory from the battlefield that leaves serious marks in his consciousness. It is a recurrent image of dead bodies and of a massive German tank about to kill him. The scene introduces disoriented experiences that have disrupted and severed Abel's inner conflict.[97] These events have driven him at least "temporarily insane," as suggested by Chris LaLonde. The state of madness with regard to the tank and what it represents is repeated later in the novel when recounted from the perspective of Bowker, one of the two other U.S. soldiers to survive the battle. He and Corporal Rate are both eyewitness to Abel's action.[98] Abel "just all of a sudden got up and started jumping around and *yelling*" at the tank. "He was giving it the finger and whooping it up and doing a goddam *war dance*" (*HMOD*, 103).

> He didn't know where he was, and he was alone. No, there were men about him, the bodies of men; he could barely see them strewn among the pits, their limbs sprawling away into the litter of leaves. … He didn't know where he was, could not remember having been there and gone to sleep. For hours, days perhaps, the whir and explosion of fire had been the only mooring of his mind to sleep. … The machine concentrated calm, strange and terrific, and it was coming. … The sound of the machine brimmed at the ridge, held, and ran over, not intricate now, but whole and deafening. His mouth fell upon the cold, wet leaves, and he began to shake violently. … He was shaking violently, and the machine bore down upon him, came close, and passed him by. (*HMOD*, 21-23)

By introducing “this farcical image of Abel taunting the tank,” Momaday shows the contrast between “images of the primitive Indian and pastoralism and the destructive capacity of modern technology.”[99] Associated with Abel’s disorientation are mechanical sounds that frighten him as he recalls those experiences during his army service. The low and incessant sound of the machine encroaching upon him reaches back to the “slow Whine of tires” Francisco hears on the highway. These sounds, which Abel tries desperately to take into account, remind him that the valley, the hills, and the town no longer have the power to centre him. Abel now is “centred upon himself in the onset of loneliness and fear” (*HMOD*, 21).[100]

On his return to Walatowa, Abel’s experiences at war have severed his attempt to communicate with the Pueblo culture. Here, he is not able to become the person that can participate fully within the tradition of his people. In other words, a gap develops between his knowledge of pueblo life and his ability to act in appropriate ways. The experiences have also traumatized his relationship with his grandfather, to the point that “no word, no sign of recognition” had yet passed between them (*HMOD*, 27). Abel tries in the days that follow to reestablish contact with the culture of his tribe and with the land by searching, in his environment, for a sign that makes him come back to the centre which has been lost to him. “he stood for a long time, the land still yielding to the light. He stood without thinking, nor did he move; only his eyes roved after something . . . something” (*HMOD*, 23). Though “The breeze was very faint, and bore a scent of earth and grain; and for a moment everything was all right with him,” (*HMOD*, 27) Abel soon recognizes his failure to participate fully in the ceremonial life of the Pueblo culture.[101]

> His return to the town had been a failure, for all his looking forward. 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 Vida 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 – silence was the older and better part custom still but *inarticulate*. (*HMOD*, 53)

Despite Abel’s inarticulateness and alienation from ‘the old rhythm of the tongue’, a deep-set understanding of the importance of singing and praying is still there ‘like memory, in the reach of his hearing’.[102] But the passage above indicates Abel’s struggle to connect to his culture and identity through recovery of his native tongue. Martha J. Cutter

believes that it is this language that would give him the capacity to pray and show him whole again. For the majority of the novel, the young protagonist "fails to translate his English thoughts back into his native tongue. The language *is* there, but he cannot reach it."[103] Therefore, in being unable to express himself, Abel is indeed not only cut off from other people but also from recreating himself. In this way, Abel does not have an identity, being only present in this void state of existence. Schubnell points out as well that this is the source of Abel's struggle. He states:

> Momaday believes that the Indian relation to the world is based on the power of the word. The word links the Indian to his religious and mythological heritage. Indian culture is based on an oral tradition and maintained through the creative power of the word. If the word is lost, culture and identity are forfeited, as wholeness can only be established by the word.[104]

In this way, Abel suffers from what is called "post-traumatic stress syndrome" as a result of his experiences in the white world during World War II. He has faced, in his divided self, the difference between white Americans who valorize time, and the philosophy of the Indian Americans which gives priority to space. Moreover, Abel is away from a philosophy that stresses belonging to, rather than owing, the land. Therefore, he realizes that his recovery is tied to regaining a sense of his place in his world, intuiting that a song may be the key to reforging his link to his identity.[105] William T. Pilkington in his *Critical Essays on the Western American Novel* suggests that the reader is aware of the cultural conflict and imbalance that Abel faces. While recalling that on July 21, seven days before, "for a moment everything was all right with him," (*HMOD*, 27) Abel now, though physically at home, feels bitter about his inability to partake in creation.[106] The novel, describing Abel's walking into the hills, declares that

> He was alone, and he wanted to make a song out of the colored canyon, the way the women of Torreon made songs upon their looms of colored yarn, but he had not got the right words together. It would have been a creation song; he would have sung slowly of the first world, of fire and flood, and of the emergence of dawn from the hills. (*HMOD*, 53)

Five days after his return to the reservation, Abel participates in the game of the Chicken Pull. It is a part of the larger celebration of the Feast of Santiago, told primarily from the point of view of Father Olguin. However, when his time comes to ride his horse, lean over in his saddle, and try to pull the rooster that is buried in a hole to its neck, "he made a poor showing, full of caution and gesture." (*HMOD*, 38) Unlike Abel, the albino, a white man, is victorious since he participates fully and is rewarded when he plucks the

chicken from the earth. According to the rules of the game, he corners Abel and starts beating him with the rooster. The scene shows that Abel is not able to cope with the situation. "Abel was not used to the game, and the white man was too strong and quick for him." (*HMOD*, 39) His experiences in the war have estranged him from the rituals of his Pueblo culture. Again, as in the eagle hunt, he "has not performed well, and this means that he has not fully given himself to his role, his place in his community and culture,"[107] reflecting his powerlessness to reenter the ceremonial life of the village. Richard F. Fleck suggests that just as sacrificing the rooster by Santiago produced domesticated animals and cultivated plants for the Pueblo people, in the context of the novel the rooster pull represents Abel's first opportunity to be a person integrated in the traditions of his people. Unfortunately, Abel's poor behaviour results in a violent action that takes a deadly result.[108]

After finishing the ritual, Abel and the albino spend the night drinking in a local bar, speaking "low to each other, carefully, as if the meaning of what they said was strange and infallible" (*HMOD*, 72). After going outside, Abel, convinced that the albino man is an evil spirit, kills the albino in a brutal stabbing. The murder scene reinforces the disturbing qualities of the "white man":

> 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. (*HMOD*, 73)

It is the negative influences of the Euro-American culture that makes Abel unable even to live as a member of his native group. The ritualistic murder of the albino, the literal quintessence of the white man, even though the albino is by birth an Indian, represents a manifestation of Abel's negative personal and social identity. The act of killing can be seen as an indication of his "disturbed, or even lacking, sense of belonging." While on one hand, he does the act so as to defend himself and his group against white colonization and infiltration, it is recognized that, on the other hand, he kills a member of his own social group. The point here is that

> Abel appears to kill the albino then as a frustrated response to the White Man and Christianity, but he does so more in accordance with Anglo tradition than Indian tradition. He has been trained in the Army to be a killer. . . . The albino is the White Man in the Indian; perhaps even the White

> Man in Abel himself. When Abel kills the albino, in a real sense he kills a part of himself and his culture which he can no longer recognize and control.[109]

Here, an allusion can be made to the white whale of *Moby Dick*: "As the whiteness of the whale does to Ishmael, it suggests an emptiness, a total void of meaning" that makes Abel transgress the moral code of his culture.[110] Abel makes a serious mistake by murdering Fragua, the albino, who is regarded by Momaday as "an embodiment of evil like Moby Dick, an intelligent malignity." Francisco, Abel's grandfather, knows from his superior appreciative thought of Pueblo worldview that evil is to be acknowledged and avoided, the appropriate way to neutralize its power. Pueblo people view the World as a risky place where good and evil, both of which are necessary, are existent in a precarious balance. This means that Abel again, like his killing of the eagle, commits a crime of individuality, acting without the consent of community. Thus, according to Momaday's universalistic approach, evil is to be dealt with as a "community and not by individual violence." It is this view that Abel finally embraces in his struggle to discover his identity. Yet, the cultural hybridity posited by Momaday and most other Native American writers does not automatically mean harmony but continues to contain conflicting symbolic codes and perhaps even conflicting value systems.[111] Louis Owens observes that "In this vein, the rattlesnake is respected and feared by the Pueblo peoples and is considered a powerful, dangerous presence, but it is to be acknowledged and avoided, never killed."[112]

Abel's sickness and self-hatred are made plain in his drinking and, more ambiguously, in his attitude that reflects violence. The reader is told: "His body, like his mind, had turned on him; it was his enemy" (*HMOD*, 89). Therefore, his body as well as his mind must be healed, but he must find a remedy that extends himself beyond his physical battle. To show violence against external enemies alone is not effective because "a more profound danger exists within."[113] Nevertheless, the scene of murdering the albino is interpreted by many critics as a symbolic of Abel's "confrontation with the larger cultural conflict about color between traditional native and Western culture." Still others concentrate on the albino as a "symbol of white oppression" that threatens the village.[114] Therefore, Abel's struggle with the albino represents the struggle of the Indian and the white cultures. According to James Richard Giles,

> Not only is the physical space of the reservation contested by white and Native American power, but Abel's consciousness is a battleground as well, torn between allegiance to and rejection of his tribal culture on one level and resistance of and surrender to the dominant white culture on another.

> Significantly, he both wins and loses his struggle with the albino, conquering and even killing his enemy, but suffering imprisonment and exile as a result.[115]

Lawrence E. Sullivan remarks that, after killing the albino, Abel comes in contact with Euro-American justice. According to an incomprehensible language and to procedures different from Native customs, Abel is tried and imprisoned.[116] He experiences "a similar confusion because of the white man's language."[117] This occurs in the second section of the novel, entitled 'The Priest of the Sun.' This section, set in Los Angeles in 1952, introduces a number of Indian characters who have been moved from their former homes on reservations to the city due to the federal government's policy of relocation. The title of the section refers to the reverend John Big Bluff Tosamah, a self-proclaimed leader of Holiness Pan-Indian Rescue Mission. Tosamah preaches sermons in the basement of some Los Angeles company (*HMOD*, 79-80). In Los Angeles, another Native American character who becomes Abel's friend is Ben Benally, a Navajo who has been relocated to Los Angeles. Abel, who has also relocated to Los Angeles after his release from prison, goes with Benally to the Native American Church to listen to Tosamah's sermon.[118]

After some events, Momaday moves back to the courtroom in which Abel is tried. Here, Abel's role is a manifestation of how the Indian tradition resists Western law. Momaday makes a point of noting that Abel's action "cannot be contained within the terms of Western law." "Homicide," says Father Olguin, the Catholic priest of Jemez during Abel's trial, "is a legal term, but the law is not my context; and certainly it isn't his" (*HMOD*, 90). Abel's reaction in the scene shows the radically different contexts between Jemez culture and Western law, under which Abel is being tried. This is because linguistic difference implicitly reveals national differences, as suggested by Eric Cheyfitz.[119] As the narrator comments,

> When he had told his story once, Abel refused to speak. He sat like a rock in his chair, and after a while no one expected or even wanted him to speak. That was good, for he should not have known what more to say. Word by word by word these men were disposing of him in language, *their* language, and they were making a bad job of it. They were strangely uneasy, full of hesitation, reluctance. He wanted to help them. He could understand, however imperfectly, what they were doing to him, but he could not understand what they were doing to each other. (*HMOD*, 90)

Therefore, in his own struggle, one problem lies in the way Abel structures his translation dilemma while searching to recover a pure language that has no traces of other languages, one that, interestingly, transcends the words themselves. This language Abel describes in a flashback from his childhood: "He remembered the prayer, and he knew what

it meant – not the words, which he had never really heard, but the low sound itself, rising and falling far away in his mind, unmistakable and unbroken" (*HMOD*, 12). However, such a strategy of acquiring a pure language of authenticity and whole selfhood is not viable. And so "Abel becomes stranded between languages and cultures." He sees English as "a foreign and fallen tongue." What Abel fails to understand is that languages are never pure in the contemporary world.[120]

Moreover, it is precisely words that Abel lacks in his struggle to find a voice for himself. On the one hand, he lacks the necessary ceremonial words to make a Creation song that properly expresses his connection to community. On the other, he is plagued by "a surfeit of words from white men." At this point, he is vaguely sensible of what he needs to be cured.[121] Yet, his nostalgia offers no possibility for his restoration because insisting on an idealized version of the past stands in absolute contrast to his present estrangement and loneliness. As John J. Su points out,

> He never considers the possibility of re-learning these songs or seeking aid from the tribal elders because to do so would force him to recognize that he never knew them in the first place. . . . Abel's insistence that he retains cultural experiences and traditions of which he was never a part leads to frustration and a metaphorical aphasia. . . . Abel's aphasia means that he loses the ability to refigure his identity.[122]

Linda Palmer points out that the passage above indicates Abel's consciousness that white people are separated from language. Too often used as a weapon, white man words are destructive to the people, as they are destructive to Abel.[123] Likewise, Tosamah, in his first sermon, puts into vociferous conflict the attitude of the white man and the Indian with respect to language, a conflict that takes the reader to the core of Abel's problem.[124] Patell suggests that this dramatized difference results from the Indian's participation in traditions of oral literature. Through an original exposition of the opening line of the Gospel of St. John, Tosamah asserts that the apostle knew the sacredness of the Word, but as a white man he obscures reality and the sermon quickly becomes an "indictment" of how the white man thinks of language. "In the Beginning was the Word," Momaday repeats this several times (*HMOD*, 82,83,86).[125] The white man, as Tosamah tells, speaks about the Word, "talks through it and around it. He builds upon it with syllables, with prefixes and suffixes and hyphens and accents. He adds and divides and multiplies the Word. And in all of this he subtracts the Truth" (*HMOD*, 83). Later on, Tosamah adds, "The white man takes such things as words and literatures for granted. . . . He has diluted and multiplied the Word, and

words have begun to close upon him. . . . 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. It may be that he will perish by the word" (*HMOD*, 84-85). In this regard, Tosamah shows how "discourse has destroyed story, meaning, and those who become lost in discursive black holes."[126] Opposed to this view, Tosamah introduces his grandmother, a storyteller, who did not know how to read and write, but who had learnt "her way around words . . . that in words and in language, and there only, she could have whole and consummate being. She told me stories, and she taught me how to listen" (*HMOD*, 83). Tosamah's purpose is to contrast the destructive excess of words with the description given by his grandmother. For the native Americans, language is not something to be used, but a living being that should be taken care of, because it modifies the environment, gives it life and, at the same time, it is needed for the survival of the people. Tosamah, showing the performative and transformative power of the word, narrates that "words were medicine; they were magic and invisible. They came from nothing into sound and meaning. They were beyond price; they could neither be bought nor sold" (*HMOD*, 85).[127]

Consequently, for Momaday, as for Cooper and Thoreau, the language of the Native Americans represents a rebuke to the language of foreigners to the land, as suggested by Thomas Gustafson.[128] This is why Abel's presence in the courtroom is a manifestation of his tendency to perpetuate his own victimage through retreating from life or acting out. He revenges his humiliation by killing the albino, knowing what he, the White man, signified. "And he would kill him if he could. A man kills such an enemy if he can" (*HMOD*, 91). Yet, as a result of his own aggression and its consequence, Abel is suddenly "overcome with a desperate loneliness, and he wanted to cry out" (*HMOD*, 93). He is now left with no real insight into his own situation.[129]

Nevertheless, while Scarberry-Garcia has identified Abel's silence in the courtroom as indicative of "the clash of cultural values and identity problems that Abel experiences,"[130] another critic has provided an additional interpretation with regard to the role of silence as a strategy of outwaiting, resistance, and caution. Guillermo Bartelt in his "American Indian Silence in *House Made of Dawn*" suggests that killing the albino was for Abel a "simple" and "the most natural thing in the world" (*HMOD*, 90). Yet, the "futility of explaining the imperative of lethally confronting one's enemies to men who lack such a cultural context in their language moves Abel to simply outwait them in silence." To stand

aside is a natural strategy that actually gives Abel the power to detach himself from the court proceedings and watch them as they clumsily try to illuminate the Native psychology of witchcraft.[131]

Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez validates Abel's powerful moments of silence in the courtroom, when words would mean only destroying the tenuous personhood that Abel desperately holds on to. Here, he is seen as a person, though conflicted and wounded, but a person nonetheless. It is because he chooses not to engage with the attorneys and lawyers who want only to objectify him. It is ironic that Abel's freedom and personhood are compromised only when he fights back against those who desire to empower him. Yet, he is presented in the courtroom as a man in control of his own sense of self; full of strength, assurance, and focus.[132]

Moreover, the courtroom scene, in addition to others, reflects one of the characteristics of the modern novel as a "mode of discourse most impacted by heteroglossia." This arises in the novel from the clash of antagonistic ideaologies – Native and Anglo-American – and is indicated by "sudden defamiliarizing shifts in register." The clash is heightened by Momaday's use of flashbacks designed to introduce a picture of only fragmentary impressions of Abel's psychosis that result from spiritual and cultural fragmentation. As Abel recalls the event about the murder scene, the voice of the narrator is "abruptly interrupted by a shift in register" designed to strip him of his individuality:[133]

> 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, had wandered to the end of the earth, was even now reeling on the edge of the void. The sea reached and leaned, licked after him and withdrew, falling of forever in the abyss. And the fishes . . .
>
> Age and date of birth:
> Sex:
> Height:
> Weight:
> Color hair:
> Color eyes:
> Married:
> Children (ages):
> Religious affiliation (optional):
> Education (circle appropriate completed years of schooling): (*HMOD*, 92)

After the sermons introduced by Tosamah, Abel is seen lying broken, spiritually and physically, on the beach in Los Angeles after being beaten by the police. The scene counterpoints Tosamah's sermon and Abel's fragmented memories, showing Abel as being out of place, like the helpless silversided fish that hurl themselves on the beaches by

hundreds (*HMOD*, 79). Abel is unable to see and cannot understand why he is identified with such creatures. “Why should Abel think of the fishes? He could not understand the sea; it was not of his world” (*HMOD*, 87). While Tosamah’s experience of loss enables him to imagine a new attachment, Abel allows himself to be identified by a pernicious metaphor that manifests, by extension, his inability either to return to place or to survive in his displaced environment.[134] Just like the fish, he is on the fringe of his native culture and at the same time he may be trapped by the white world. However,

> The fact that Abel constantly thinks about the fish shows that he recognizes himself in them. In their fragility and helplessness he sees both the tale of his own life, detached as it is from the Native world, and the tale of organic time represented by the fish. Abel is not yet aware of the language of the natural world; he is on its fringe, on its edge, and yet he thinks of the fish, which shows that unconsciously, he gradually progresses towards his world, towards the organic time represented by the moon.[135]

Moreover, Abel’s capacity to be filled with “sad, unnamable longing and wonder” about the helpless grunion and to think of the fish in terms of such ritual and mythic impressions as “Beautyway” and “Path of Pollen” (*HMOD*, 87) suggests some clarity of vision that he has reached in his path towards healing and discovery of his own identity. As pointed out by Susan R. Bowers, Abel emerges “from his solipsism enough to have compassion for other beings and is on the verge of understanding his own helplessness through his empathy.”[136] Therefore, it is at the mid-point of the novel that Abel begins to gain the required insight to start his own re-emergence. He finally realizes that “he had lost his place” (*HMOD*, 92). It is by the sea that he asks himself “where the trouble had begun, what the trouble was” (*HMOD*, 93). Out of his delirium, his mind, as if in a dream, comes into an epiphanic understanding of the significance of the ritual as a cultural activity:[137]

> The runners after evil ran as water runs, deep in the channel, in the way of least resistance. His skin crawled with excitement; he was overcome with longing and loneliness, for 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. Meaning because of them. They ran with great dignity and calm, not in 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. (*HMOD*, 91)

This epiphany, related directly to his situation, proves a turning point for Abel. For the first time since his return from the war, Abel, as he sees the old men running after evil, starts to question his state of existence. What is perceived in the act of running hopelessly

leads him to recognize that there is something wrong with him, a problem that he admits to himself. Though the hesitant quality of his thoughts suggests that he has far to go before being healed mentally, there is at least a beginning to move away from his alienated perspective "whereby both his mind and body have become his enemy."[138] In Eurocentric tradition the fact that the old men in Abel's vision run "hopelessly," like his final run for "no reason," suggests failure and futility. Yet the same words from a ritualistic, tribal point of view point to success. "Coming to terms with what *is* – without resistance, manipulation, or resentment – is the ultimate accomplishment." Abel is now aware that the place he has lost is his tribal identity, and that what has unvoiced him is his sojourn in the white man's world.[139]

The beach scene, then, represents a hybrid area, existing at the margin of sea and land. This place refers to the two worlds between which he hangs suspended, a place where he must decide where he belongs. He comes to realize that, through reliving the key moments in his past, he cannot make his true identity in Los Angeles. Therefore, he gathers his strength and goes back to the apartment where Benally helps him get to a hospital.[140] "He had to get up. He would die of exposure unless he got up. His legs were all right; at least his legs were not broken. He brought one of his knees forward, then the other, and he managed to get to the fence" (*HMOD*, 110).

Being in a deplorable situation, Abel "wanted a drink; he wanted to be drunk" (*HMOD*, 93). Then, Milly, a white social worker, comes along. Milly tries to acculturate Abel to life in Los Angeles after being released from prison and relocated to the city. Yet, Abel fights to stay out of suffering and survive in a white world.[141] Milly occasionally provides some questionnaires to Abel:

> "No test is completely valid," she said. "Some are more valid than others."
> But Milly believed in tests, questions and answers, words on paper. She was a lot like Ben. She believed in Honor, Industry, the Second Chance, the Brotherhood of Man, the American Dream, and him-Abel; she believed in him. After a while he began to suspect as much, and. . . (*HMOD*, 94)

That Momaday capitalizes the terms Milly believes in indicates the fatuousness of individuals who have faith in them. Milly is devoted to Abel. She is kind and gives him money to drink. Yet Abel rewards this by being "brutal with her," (*HMOD*, 96) indicating Momaday's ambivalence about race relations.[142] Kathleen M. Donovan believes that Milly seems to be dangerous to Abel's healing. Like Angela, she is sexually attracted to Abel and

makes an affair with him. Yet "Abel sees through her schemes on him and her easy laughter. . . . Easy laughter was wrong in a woman, dangerous and wrong" (*HMOD*, 95). In the numerous mentions to the whiteness of her body, Milly is connected to the whiteness of the albino and Angela. Because Abel's healing can only be achieved in his own landscape, her efforts to tie him through sexuality and acculturation makes her as manipulative and dangerous as Angela.[143] The "questionnaire on education, health and leisure time activities and interests that Milly" introduces to Abel makes her "represents not only the Euro-American society in general, but more specifically an oppressive institution, the government, which has caused Abel's disorientation through relocation." Abel, given the chance, unconsciously avenges this by "saying things about her" and making fun of her. In this way, he conquers, violates, and abuses her as he feels he has been by the oppressed society.[144]

However, in the story of Milly, Momaday presents a fundamental difference between the two cultures, the Native Indian and the non-Indian. Milly, who is from Oklahoma, tells Abel the story of her family and how her father fights and struggles with the land, "but at last Daddy began to hate the land, began to think of it as some kind of enemy" (*HMOD*, 108). Milly is in a way also "taciturn" till she comes in contact with Abel. Before that, she "had been in Los Angeles four years, and in all that time she had not talked to anyone" (*HMOD*, 107). This suggests that the city is a dark and alienating place for her. She is literally landless as she does not even reveal where her home had been. What Ben Benally knows about Milly is that she "was raised on a farm somewhere" (*HMOD*, 144). Abel and Ben, in contrast, are both related to specific places, the Jemez Valley and the Navajo Country in Arizona.[145]

However, according to Alan Velie, Milly is nonetheless integral to Abel's quest for identity. In her relationship with Abel, she participates in making him open up to others and share his stories to reveal the backgrounds of his condition despite her inability to "save the hero from himself."[146] As Marilyn Nelson Waniek suggests, Milly's story about her life "enables Abel for the first time to share his memories of his own life. Though she does not understand the power of the word, their relationship thus starts Abel on the way toward realizing that he can talk, and toward regaining the power of the word."[147]

Abel's relationship with Tosamah is also a complex one. Tosamah is a mixedblood urban Indian, a trickster figure who seems to combine aspects of both minority and majority groups within his personality. According to Christina M. Hebebrand , "he belongs

to both groups but also to neither; he is advocate for and adversary to both native and Euro-American societies."[148] Ruppert states:

> While Tosamah voices what appears to be a progressive, proacculturation position, he has attacked the dominant society. He is a kind of Christian, but he takes peyote and encourages a native sense of community. He lives in Los Angeles, but he is a descendent of a lordly and dangerous society of fighters and thieves, hunters and priests of the sun, who believe in the sacredness of the world. He is a walking bag of contradictions, alien enough to hold the non-Native reader off from identifying him.[149]

Tosamah tries to convince himself and his congregation that he is able to integrate the two worlds of Indian and white America. Yet his personality reveals many conflicting ideas with regard to his identity and approach to life. On the one hand, he criticizes how the white man conceives and manipulates language. On the other hand, he wants to be perceived as a fellow Indian and as a spiritual leader to help the urban Indian in their straddling of worlds. Yet, with all of his words, Tosamah "never finds the depth of meaning that is at the heart of Abel's life."[150] His conflict is obvious in his conviction that it is essential for the modern urban Indian to adjust to the different parameters of the society he lives in. Despite his awareness of the values of his native culture, he ridicules Abel, who is unable to assimilate the standards of the white culture, calls him a "longhair" and criticizes Abel's way of living that makes him a social outcast. "He was too damn dumb to be civilized . . . He turned out to be a real primitive sonuvabitch, and the first time he got hold of a knife he killed a man" (*HMOD*, 131). Moreover, he endorses the treatment Abel got after killing the albino, accepting the dominant culture's values and standards.[151] As the narrator puts it,

> They put that cat away, man. They *had* to. … *They,* man. They put all of us renegades, us diehards, away sooner or later. They've got the right idea. They put us away before we're born. They're an almighty wise and cautious bunch, those cats, full of discretion. You've got to admire them, man; they know the score. (*HMOD*, 132)

Tosamah batters Abel's spirit as Martinez batters his body. It seems that he himself is tormented by his Indianness. Therefore, he is not a viable option for Abel, who is seen as "the incarnation of that Indianness, and as such he fills Tosamah with shame and guilt and reverence." This is because of his being conditioned by himself and by the white world to see with two pairs of eyes, but the result is a composite of contradictory impressions and impulses. Ben, for example, remembers Tosamah warning him about Abel: "He was going

to get us all in trouble" (*HMOD*, 131).[152] Ben and Abel refuse to get up caught in the discursive power struggles that pervade white America and Tosamah's church. They see the world "conversively as a storied place that gives meaning to one's life." Tosamah's pretentiousness is undercut by Ben as he tells that "He's always going on like that, Tosamah, talking crazy and showing off, but he doesn't understand. . . . He's educated. . . .But he doesn't come from the reservation" (*HMOD*, 132).[153]

Consequently, Tosamah's reaction towards Abel stems from the idea that Abel engenders in him self-contempt that is beyond enduring. Therefore, whether conscious or not, he tries to tear Abel down. One night, he taunts Abel during a poker game at his place, and Abel is too drunk to retaliate. Yet, "It was like everything just exploded inside of him, and he jumped up from the table and started for Tosamah" (*HMOD*, 141). Abel's response indicates that, though perhaps not conscious of it, he confronted Tosamah not simply to "avenge a personal insult but to avenge all the Indians at the table and back home, to avenge the honor of his people." Tosamah has violated the very essence of his Indianness. In LaBlanc's and Milne's view, "By shaming his people, he has done the white man's work."[154]

Throughout much of the novel, Abel can be easily characterized as a person who belongs to a lost generation. Right at the beginning of chapter 2, the narrator mentions a "two-story red-brick building," a "cold and dreary" place where Tosamah lives. For him, Los Angeles is a place where he has to walk through "dark alleys and streets" and where he has to hide from cars in the shadow (*HMOD*, 110). This image is strikingly contrasted with the spiritual description given by Momaday to the Pueblo in Walatowa, where life is greatly influenced by the surrounding of nature. In this environment, people "do not hanker after progress and have never changed their essential way of life" (*HMOD*, 52).[155]

Abel appears to get even less opportunity of attaining some functional integration of self and place when he is out of prison in Los Angeles. He is still in a situation that represents the dead-end of hopeless subsistence rather than the chance to have a better way of life. Momaday uses "The Night Chanter" section, narrated by Ben Benally, to introduce Abel's cycle of deadening work, minimal pay, and drinking to numbness. Conditions of work prove oppressive, and Abel feels totally confused to live in the white society.[156] Benally narrates what has happened to Abel in Los Angeles after putting him on a train back to the reservation. For the next two days, Abel remains drunk and misses work. After he returns to his job, the boss teases him and Abel quits. A downward spiral begins and

Abel is seen drunk every day. He continues borrowing money from Ben and Milly and lazing around the apartment. Ben, feeling fed up with Abel's behavior, throws him out of the apartment. Abel then seeks revenge on Martinez, a corrupt policeman who robbed Ben one night and hit Abel across the knuckles with his big stick. Abel finds Martinez and is almost beaten to death. Benally delivers his monologue entirely from his tenement window-still on the day of Abel's leaving for home. In this part, Benally vividly describes the image of Los Angeles which gives the impression that even for him this place is a strange one, different from that of the reservation. It is "dark down there all the time, even at noon, and the lights are always on" with a "big crowd of people" (*HMOD*, 124). This alienating image is validated later as Ben continues to describe the city at night. When he and Abel wanted to walk home from a pub called Henry's place, Ben refers to the city as "dark and empty" (*HMOD*, 152).[157]

In fact, Benally is a product of the federal relocation policy of the fifties who has bought into the American Dream with grim determination. While he seems to have found a compromise between the modern life and his traditional ways, he nonetheless becomes dazzled by the city lights. About Abel, Ben says, "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" (*HMOD*, 131).[158] In spite of this, Benally has his sweet memories of home, as he remembers herding sheep for his grandfather. He remembers being "right there in the center of everything, the sacred mountains, the snow-covered mountains and hills, the gullies and the flats, the sundown and the night, everything – where you were little, where you were and had to be" (*HMOD*, 138). In a critically eloquent passage, Benally speaks for himself and many others as he explains Abel's dysfunctional existence and his struggle to survive in an urban environment in the face of the contradictory processes of assimilation.[159] Benally narrates:

> You have to get *used* to everything, you know; it's like starting someplace where you've never been before, and you don't know where you're going or why or when you have to get there, and everybody's looking at you, waiting for you, wondering why you don't hurry up. . . . And you *want* to do it, because you can see how good it is. It's better than anything you've ever had; it's money and clothes and having plans and going someplace fast. . . . You've got to get used to it first, and it's hard. . . . You've got to take it easy and get drunk once in a while and just forget about who you are. . . . You think about getting out and going home. You want to think that you belong someplace, I guess. . . . (*HMOD*, 139-140)

Consequently, Benally seems to have accepted the dominance of Euro-American culture, or at least to have resigned himself to it. The conflict in Benally's opinions is

obvious in his inconsistent dualistic thinking about life on and off the reservation. Even his narration is full of uncertainty and ambivalence, alternately longing for home and at the same time wanting to become part of life beyond the reservation. For him, returning to the reservation is somehow a pale option to the glitter of Los Angeles: "There would be nothing there, just the empty land and a lot of old people, going no place and dying off" (*HMOD*, 140).[160] Momaday here wants to show the contrast in the kind of thinking among the characters and to subordinate and reject the modern, urban understandings of Ben Benally and the postmodern experiences of Tosamah as viable options for Abel. Despite Benally's claim that the people in the city are "friendly most of the time, and they're always ready to help you out," (*HMOD*, 159) he does not have many friends. In fact, the only real person with whom he can share his native religion is Abel. In addition, both of them work as menial laborers in a packing factory that does not provide them with enough money to buy "nice things," such as cars, radios, clothes and big houses (*HMOD*, 158). Therefore, Momaday, showing Abel's and Benally's disastrous working conditions, undermines the veracity of the American dream by presenting the failure rather than the success of the dream, since freedom means only self-delusion. To survive the city, they must escape the reality of their existence.[161]

However, unlike Ben, Abel "never losses so completely his own conversive sense of where meaning lies in the world and in his own life."[162] As Elizabeth Hanson suggests, though Abel was "unlucky" and has to "change" if he wishes to "live in a place like this, (*HMOD*, 131) he "possesses an awareness of fear, a vision of reality that transcends the limits of Benally's understanding." It is Benally himself who tells him about the bleak world of the white society in which Abel is unable to live: "They have a lot of words, and you know they mean something, but you don't know what, and your own words are no good because they're not the same: they're different, and they're the only words you've got" (*HMOD*, 139).[163]

Nevertheless, Benally retains enough knowledge of his Navajo identity to be the night Chanter and act as a healer to Abel. He has not completely silenced that part of himself and has not forgotten the way it was. He helps Abel after being beaten almost to death by Martinez, the corrupt cop. Again in confronting Martinez, Abel commits the same mistake of not avoiding evil when he goes looking for Martinez, or "*culebra*" (*HMOD*, 160).[164] Benally narrates the story of Abel's struggle, but one that also shows his strength. This happens one night when Abel and Ben are stopped by a local police officer with a tick

in his hand as they are coming home from a friend of theirs. Ben is scared, feeling that something terrible will happen:

> Pretty soon, 'Hello' he said. 'Who is your friend, Benally?' And he stepped in front of him and held the light up to his face. I told him his name and said he was out of work; he was looking for a job and didn't have any money. Martinez told him to hold out his hands, and he did, slowly, like maybe he wasn't going to at first, with the palms up. I could see his hands in the light and they were open and almost steady. 'Turn them over,' Martinez said, and he was looking at them and they were almost steady. Then suddenly the light jumped and he brought the stick down hard and fast. (*HMOD*, 153)

Yet, for Maritnez, Abel appears to be a symbol of contempt and a reminder of his Native self. In "Self-Hatred and Spiritual Corruption in *House Made of Dawn*," Bernard Hirsch argues that the dirty cop Martinez is an example of some Indians who have been spiritually corrupted to varying degrees by the white world. He disgusts himself for betraying his culture and attempting to enter the main stream. Martinez, in the extreme ferocity of beating Abel, "reveals the self-hatred that is the price of the Anglo authority he covets."[165] This event represents the final straw for Abel, as Benally believes. After it, he continues to drink all the time and stops looking for a job. In Abel's conflict, even "the liquor" makes no difference for him. "He was just the same, sitting around and looking down like he hated everything, like he hated himself and hated being drunk and hated Milly and me, and I couldn't talk to him" (*HMOD*, 160).[166]

Abel is absent for three days after going out to look for Martinez. Later on, Benally wakes up as he hears some noises at the door. Then he sees Abel's body "in the dark at the foot of the stairs, like he was dead." Abel is "lying there on his stomach", "broken and torn and covered with blood" (*HMOD*, 161). He lets Benally take him to a hospital. Robert M. Nelson makes a connection between Abel's stay in the hospital with his earlier stay in prison. These two, according to Nelson, represents "institutionalized places" through which Abel moves from Walatowa to Los Angeles or vice-versa. Thus, such transitions serve as portals between his two conflicting landscapes and identities.[167]

Up to this point, Abel resists the city in his cultural conflict as a mixedblood figure. His time there "brings on a crisis that can only be resolved through resistance and will lead either to annihilation or to reintegration with his traditional world." Carol Miller, in "Telling the Indian Urban: Representations in American Indian Fiction," suggests that though lying in a liminal space after being beaten by the sadistic cop,

> Abel feels, hears, and sees something else as well: a restoring vision of the runners after evil who, within the traditional belief system that he has previously found impenetrable, give design and meaning to the universe. This vision will eventually turn him homeward, away from the city. But it does more, suggesting a transcendent cultural and spiritual agency with the power to link landscapes that are tribal and urban, ancient and contemporary.[168]

In the hospital, Abel begins to realize the significance of the runners after evil. His consciousness starts as he requests Benally to sing for him: "House made of dawn. . . . I used to tell him about those old ways, the stories and the songs, Beautyway and Night Chant. I sang some of those things, and I told him what they meant, what I thought they were about" (*HMOD*, 129).[169] Benally here transmigrates his culture to a new context so that Abel can understand it. In addition, he relates the prayers and songs in a way composed of both the original Navajo tongue and English:[170]

> *Tsegihi*.
> House made of dawn,
> House made of evening light,
> House made of dark cloud,
> House made of male rain,
> House made of dark mist,
> House made of female rain,
> . . . .
> Your offering I make.
> I have prepared a smoke for you.
> Restore my feet for me,
> Restore my legs for me,
> Restore my body for me,
> Restore my mind for me,
> Restore my voice for me.
> . . . .
> Happily I go forth.
> . . . .
> Happily may I walk.
> . . . .
> May it be beautiful before me,
> 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. (*HMOD*, 129-130)

The prime feature of this chant is healing, as it is designed to attract good and repel evil. Tsegihi refers to one of the most important divinities in the religious universe of the Navajo, connected with the power of Eagle and Thunderbird. The world of the chant is what precisely Abel needs because its purpose is particularly made to cure patients of mental imbalance and insanity. All the signs in the chant refer to a world of harmony and control in the earth. Dawn is balanced by evening light; dark cloud and male rain are

integrated by dark mist and female rain. As a result, "the ceremonial words are intertwined with a specific point of the Indian land – the space Abel must find."[171] Therefore, it is Abel's restoration that Momaday refers to in Benally's Night Chant. To be restored is to be with oneself and one's cultural world that Abel achieves in the last section, "The Dawn Runner." After the struggle throughout most of the novel, Abel, as a mixedblood person, "was going home, and he was going to be all right again" (*HMOD*, 128).[172]

Another character who visits Abel in the hospital is Angela. She tells him the best story that her son likes. The story is about "a young Indian brave . . . born of a bear and a maiden," who becomes a hero as he makes many adventures and eventually saves his people (*HMOD*, 163).[173] Yet, there is considerable critical disagreement about the role of Angela. Some critics see her as having a negative influence on Abel. Donovan argues that Angela's sexuality has an effect in betraying Abel and "removing him from the healing possibilities of ritual and landscape."[174] It seems that Abel realizes this, for he refuses to respond to Angela. Benally "couldn't tell what he was thinking. He had turned his head away, like maybe the pain was coming back, you know" (*HMOD*, 164). Abel rejects to play Angela's game a second time.[175]

However, though she is initially cunning and deceptive in her relationship with Abel, through her intuitive knowledge of the Navajo mythological figures, she begins to realize that her own former viciousness to Abel is inhumane.[176] She has "shed the monologic authority of her privileged culture and broken through the alien conceptual horizon of another to realize a fertile syncretism."[177]

The fourth and last section of the novel, "The Dawn Runner," takes place seven years after Abel's return from the war. Only a week after his arrival from Los Angeles, he discovers that his grandfather is dying. During the last seven mornings, Francisco's life flashes before his eyes. He talks to Abel in order to pass the story to his grandson. "The old man had spoken six times in the dawn, and the voice of his memories was whole and clear and growing like the dawn" (*HMOD*, 172). Yet, Abel struggles to find a world for him. The voice is not whole and clear: "He listened to the feeble voice that rose out of the darkness, and he waited hopelessly" (*HMOD*, 171).[178] Francisco wishes to teach Abel and his brother about their culture. Within his flashbacks, he presents the fixed values and norms and conventions that comprise Pueblo culture. "They must learn the whole contour of the black mesa. They must know it as they know the shape of their hands, always and by heart. . . . They must know the long journey of the sun on the black mesa, how it rode in the seasons

and the years, and they must live according to the sun appearing, for only then could they reckon where they were, where all things were, in time" (*HMOD*, 172-173). Through the memory of Francisco, Abel is re-taught to order his relation to his culture, to a specific place that he struggles to find.[179]

In another fragment from Francisco's memory, Momaday points toward completeness. Francisco remembers serving as a drummer in a ceremony. In a "perfect act" he "crossed the stick to the heated drum and the heavy heated drum was in his hand and the old man turned – and nothing was lost, nothing; there had been nothing of time lost, no miss in the motion of the mind" (*HMOD*, 181). After Francisco's death, "Abel was suddenly awake, wide awake and listening" (*HMOD*, 183).[180] After Francisco's death, Abel does not wait for the break of the dawn. He performs the traditional Pueblo burial rites. Then, he immediately goes to Father Olguin to tell him. Father Olguin argues that the burial could wait until morning. This reaction is a "sad commentary on the narrow sectarianism of a faith that refuses to tolerate rituals and beliefs that are different from its own." When Abel rushes away, Father Olguin agrees to help. He reveals a sudden recognition of how insignificant time is to Abel and his people: "I understand! Oh God! I understand – I understand!" (*HMOD*, 184). Yet, he does not understand. During his seven-year period at Walatowa, he realizes that he cannot successfully convert the Pueblo to Catholicism.[181]

Abel does not return to the house of Francisco. Instead, he rubs himself with ashes and joins the runners in a ritual race. As he runs, he begins to sing the prayer of restoration and healing he has learned from Benally: "House made of pollen, house made of dawn" (*HMOD*, 185). The mixedblood who has suffered a very modern predicament is "no longer displaced." He has a new insight, "moving outside of the entropic, historical consciousness of Eurocentric America, with its voracious linear temporality and fitting himself into the basic motion of the universe."[182] He runs in this ritual race "after years of estrangement from his native culture and several futile attempts to come to terms with evil on an individual basis, a technique more characteristic of white man than Jemez culture."[183]

Describing the importance of chants, Donald Sandner asserts that the sustaining outcome of the song rests ultimately on its ability to provide the tormented patient with a vocabulary in terms of which to grasp the nature of his distress and relate it to the wider world. More than this, it also has the power to change psyche by converting energy into a form that can heal. In the act of healing, these chants work as symbols that help the patient who is vulnerable, open, and ready to experience them. He is identified with them through

the form of sacred images and the person of the medicine man. "Under such conditions he may be not only persuaded by their suggestion or reconciled to his fate, but cured."[184]

Through the intercession of Francisco and Benally, Abel is restored to health. He proves his reconnection to his community through contribution in the traditions, the ceremonies and symbols of his people. Therefore, it is impossible to cast Abel as a doomed victim, estranged from Indian culture because of the total dominance of the non-Indian society. Though "torn between two cultures," Abel does not pathetically imitate participation in ceremony, "ultimately running away from the drastically altered and vanishing culture of his people and toward a life of despair." It is a misinformed interpretation that depicts the original inhabitants of the continent as helpless creatures unable to deal with individual and community problems. It merely perpetuates the stereotype of these people as members of a dying race who cannot live through any means other than escape.[185] Abel is not "running away from anything. Instead his act recognizes, defies, and transcends evil in a materialistic, divisive world."[186] Evidence of Abel's success appears in his proper care for Francisco, now deceased:

> There was no need for the singers to come; it made no difference, and *he knew what had to be done* [emphasis added]. He drew the old man's head erect and laid water to the hair. He fashioned the long white hair in a queue and wound it around with yarn. He dressed the body in bright ceremonial colors: the old man's wine velveteen shirt, white trousers, and low moccasins, soft and white with kaolin. From the rafters he took down the pouches of pollen and of meal, the sacred feathers and the ledger book. These, together with ears of colored corn, he placed at his grandfather's side after he had sprinkled meal in the four directions. He wrapped the body in a blanket. (*HMOD*, 183)

Most critics believe that through re-immersion into the ceremonial life of his people, Abel overcomes his mental and physical illness. This appears when Momaday uses the ceremonial running and dawn imagery. Abel is both chasing away evil and running toward re-creation, "toward the start of a new phase in his life."[187] Susan Scarberry-Garcia asserts that "healing is the process of achieving wholeness or a state of physical and spiritual balance, both within a person and between the person and his or her social and natural environment. In *House Made of Dawn*, healing occurs when the characters internalize images of the land by means of the symbolic acts of singing and story-telling."[188] Validating Abel's recovery, Evers asserts that

> All signs then point to a new beginning for Abel as he rises February 28, the last day of the novel. His own memory healed by Francisco's, for the first time in the novel he correctly performs a

> ceremonial function as he prepares Francisco for burial and delivers him to Father Olguin. He then joins the ashmarked runners in the dawn.[189]

Thus, the novel demonstrates the elusive meaning of community. Abel returns twice to his home in the Southwest. The first is his return from war in 1945, when his "tense sojourn" climaxes in loneliness and estrangement from his grandfather, a momentary love affair with a white woman, and a fight that results in Abel's killing the albino. After his imprisonment and painful years in Los Angeles, Abel makes his second return in which he also suffers. Now, in Howard Brick's opinion, Abel is different from within. Attending the last days with his grandfather and running in the fields as the sun rises is an evidence of his reenacting the ritual races experienced as a boy. Now, he is seen in a state of "transcendence" in the "house made of dawn."[190]

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CHAPTER THREE:
LESLIE MARMON SILKO'S *CEREMONY*

"I'm a half-breed. I'll be the first to say it. I'll speak for both sides"

- Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*

3.1: Foreword:

Native American people were encouraged by the U. S. government to leave the reservations during the 1950s and 1960s, as if the constant violation of treaty rights, compulsory attendance at boarding schools, and the near extinction of these people were not enough. Such historical, social, and cultural contexts influenced the themes and forms of works by Indian American writers who encouraged individuals to reject any sense of disgrace of their culture. In addition, their actions coincided with a return of the people to their traditions after the mental illness, disappointment, and loss of meaning of life that resulted from the impact of mainstream American society. Among these writers, Leslie Marmon Silko (1948), a Laguna woman, became its most celebrated author.[1]

Raymond Pierotti points out that the trail blazed by Momaday was followed by Silko in her writing as she shares the same interest in presenting characters who are trapped between Native traditions and white mainstream expectations. Like Momaday, Silko employed themes that are connected directly to the stories of her people and created a tradition that allowed the next generation of writers like Erdrich and Owens to have self-assurance in writing confidently from an indigenous perspective.[2]

As a mixedblood writer, Silko is aware that the entanglement of European and tribal values has led to many kinds of separation. As she expresses in *Ceremony*, "all of creation suddenly had two names: an Indian name and a white name" (*Ce*, 62).[3] Silko specifies that with the arrival of Anglo-Americans, the world of the traditional Native American has in fact been altered. Yet, resistance to such kind of linguistic violence does not reside in any form of mastering the master's language. In North America, there are no masters, no slaves in Indian-white conflict. According to Eric Cheyfitz, "there are only cultures in conflict." Therefore, the two cultures have opposite values, such as the relationship to the land, differences in understanding the importance of individuality, and others. As a result, Silko reflects how the Indians struggle so as to maintain the integrity of cultural bases that articulate them and resist the power that threatens to overwhelm the native tongue.[4]

As Momaday presents Abel as a mixedblood who struggles to have a voice, Silko introduces the same agonizing inner conflict revealed so intensely in her work *Ceremony.* In this novel, Tayo, the main character, undergoes a cultural breakdown because of his disappointment to resolve his cultural crisis. As John Beck concludes, Tayo and Abel both solve their struggles by turning to the Native American tradition to restore the mind, the only power to heal and effect a complete mental recovery even while the Indian lives in a world that belongs fundamentally to the whites.[5]

Abel in Momaday's novel gains an acceptance of his being a mixedblood person bespeaking a decidedly Indian worldview. His "divergent selves do not represent a pathological condition, but instead, simply his own mixedblood self."[6] Yet, the effect of his suffering is there. Abel is seen running, but "There was no sound, and he had no voice; he had only the words of a song."[7]. Tayo in Silko's novel also appears initially as a mixedblood protagonist whose "words are formed with an invisible tongue" (*Ce,* 14). Yet Momaday's text is revised by Silko. Although Tayo is not fluent in his native tongue, he retains some knowledge of it. Moreover, he does not search for a pure language but rather the capacity to move between languages, to weave and mingle them. In other words, Tayo does not reject the interlingual burdens of translation. As he declares in the novel, "I'm a half-breed. I'll be the first to say it. I'll speak for both sides" (*Ce,* 39). Later, he comes to realize that there is power in a plurality of tongues.[8]

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Tayo has an unproblematic cultural condition. He faces double-consciousness throughout the novel, since he, and the other Native American characters, has to move between two different societies. Therefore, he suffers from the sense of loss, conflicts with others and himself, and alienation. In this way, he finds that he must negotiate between two cultural worlds, Native and Euro-American frames of reference. Catherine Rainwater remarks that in *Ceremony* Silko introduces a work that "amounts to a cross-cultural bridge between Native and Euro-American worlds. It also outlines an alternative, transcultural set of values." The spiritual, humane, and aesthetic principles of the novel prevails the material standards inscribed in the Euro-American world.[9]

3.2: Leslie Marmon Silko: The Multicultural Writer and the New Mixedblood Figure:

Silko is one of the main novelists to emerge from the Native American literary renaissance of the 1970s. She was born in 1948 in Albuquerque, New Mexico and matured on the nearby Laguna Pueblo Reservation, where she was raised within a family of mixed Indian, Mexican, and white descent.[10]

Siilko's father was a mixedblood Laguan Pueblo and her mother was mixedblood Cherokee. This mixed ancestry has influenced her style of writing in myriad ways. She acknowledges that storytelling, especially that of her family, has a great impact of on her vision and method. Much of her most famous novel *Ceremony* stems from the experiences of being a mixedblood Laguna Indian. Indeed, a great deal of the mythic dimension of the novel has its root in the ancient clan creation narratives, like the way Momaday does. In addition to mythology, other contexts of landscape, ritual, language, storytelling, and ancestry are also formed by similar backgrounds – Pueblo, Navajo, Chicano, and Southwestern histories. Like Momady, Silko creates a novel that deals with evil in a modern context to heal the mental disorder of her protagonist.[11] Owens says of *Ceremony*, "Within her story of Tayo's journey toward wholeness and health, Silko – as did Momaday in *House Made of Dawn* – conducts a healing ceremony for all of us, for the world at large."[12]

As for education, Silko joined an Indian school and later attended Catholic schools in Albuquerque. Later on, she attended the University of New Mexico and received her BA in 1969. In that same year, she married Richard C. Chapman. Yet, this marriage, which lasted three years, ended in divorce. Two years later, her second marriage to John Silko also ended the same way as the first one.[13]

Silko attended three semesters at the law school at the University of New Mexico but turned out to be disappointed by the legal system and so focused her attention on writing instead. During her career she has been associated with the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque where she taught at the Navajo Community College in Tsaile, Arizona. Among the best-known Native writers, Silko received many awards. Among the most prominent is the MacArthur Foundation "Genious" Fellowship in 1981.[14]

Despite her mixedblood ancestry, Silko shows a strong sense of affiliation with her native land and culture. Growing up at Laguna Pueblo shaped her view of the world, her art, and her "self." She focuses on growing up as an Indian and a mixed-breed, on young people who must come to understand the "I" in relation to their cultural practices. In *The*

Man to Send Rain Clouds (1974), she explains: “I grew at Laguna Pueblo. I am of mixed-breed ancestry, but what I know is Laguna. This place I am from is everything I am as a writer and human being.”[15] In her fiction, Silko employs the use of story and ritual from the Navajo as a continuation of Laguna Pueblo tradition. She even includes materials from different tribes in her writing, showing the process of change, adaptation, and continuity of the Navajo people. However, she does not condone the practice of integration of story and ritual by just anyone. On the contrary, appropriation of Indian American materials in the work of European-American writers is something she abhors. According to Patrice E. M. Hollrah remarks, Silko criticizes “the imperialist assumption of Euro-American cultural superiority that allows writers to master the essence of Native American worldviews so expeditiously that they can write from an Indian point of view.”[16] While teaching Oliver La Farge's novel *Laughing Boy* at Navajo Community College, Silko notes that her Navajo students “concluded that *Laughing Boy* was entertaining; but as an expression of anything Navajo, especially with relation to Navajo emotions and behavior, the novel was a failure.”[17]

Silko disagrees with the point that La Farge was concerned deeply for the Navajos as well as for other Indian people. Though La Farge had sincere objectives, but as a writer he was a victim when he thought that he had the ability to write a novel dealing with the consciousness of a Navajo who had grown up with almost no interaction with white people. In addition, what he did was only passing off the feelings and consciousness of Laughing Boy as those of Navajo sensibility.[18] In other words, what the whites produce is hardly the real thing, a view which is also held by James Welch , who has said : “I have seen works written about Indians by whites ... but only an Indian knows who he is.”[19]

In addition, there are other canonical authors like Wallace Stegner, Zane Grey, and Louis L'Amour who remain within the long tradition of describing Native people into absence. Imagining the inevitable doom of native people, such as the drowning of a harpooner named Tashtego in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and the vanishing into the sunset of a tongueless World War One veteran named Shoie in Grey's *The Vanishing American*, represents a powerful narration of European American superiority. Such images reflect “the inability or unwillingness of European American authors to narrate destinies other than absence for native people and their communities.”[20] As an answer to this, Silko, like Momaday and other Native writers, holds a task of “reimaging a more enriched Indian

past for a more enabling Indian future." Speaking from an indigenous viewpoint and experience, Silko places himself in a tribal realist intellectual tradition.[21]

Leslie Marmon Silko's mixed ancestry has improved her consciousness of Indian resources. Faithfulness to tradition in the connection to the ancient voices as a response against the intrusion of the white man into Native culture finds its way in her short story, "Storyteller". This work was first published in the journal *Puerto del Sol* in 1975, and in 1981 it was collected in a mixed-genre book of the same name. "Storyteller" is a rebuke of "Western civilization which, in the name of progress and false myths, has destroyed the innocence of the primitive world and the equilibrium of the natural environment."[22]

By writing "Storyteller", Silko depicts a clash of cultures in Bethel, Alaska, as well as the coming of age of a new storyteller in the local Eskimo community. The indigenous Eskimo community must contend with the "Gussucks" who, from the point of view of the main character, come not to live but to exploit the territory and its peoples.[23] The central character of the story is a young girl whose identity is attached to the context of culture clash and resistance. Her parents' painful death at the hands of a "Gussuck" storekeeper signifies her community's struggle against scornful cultural interlopers in general. For Elizabeth McHenry, when exposed to white methods of education, religion, and sexual relations, the girl shows resistance to U.S. culture which is evident when she refuses to speak English. As a result, she is whipped for this rebellion and not knowing the ways of white world. What is understood from this detail is that the woman resists being inducted into a language and culture other than her native one.[24] The young Eskimo woman in this short story is among many central characters of Silko who are driven by resentment against "the brutality and exploitation visited on native peoples and land by greedy outsiders, in this case the "Gussucks" or white men." Moreover, the girl sees that the occupation of native territory was encouraged first by the hunt for fur and fish and then by the search for oil. She even suffered sexual abuse at the hand of an old man living with her grandmother and from crude and perverted Gussuck workers. Her need for revenge for the alcohol killing her parents is conveyed in the well-planned luring of a white oil driller onto the unstable river ice, a hostility that reflects also a ridicule of the pathetic efforts of the whites to fend off the arctic winter with "insulation-stuffed metal buildings" and to extract oil from the ground with big yellow machines. Neil Nakadate points out that here, as elsewhere in Silko, native people accepts the natural world on its own terms, not as something to be fought and conquered, as it is with the outsiders who thought only in terms of conflict.[25]

The conflict between Indian culture and white culture is evident in court. The attorney who represents white justice is unable to understand the Indian girl's sense of guilt. He asks the girl to say that it is only an accident. "That's all you have to say to the judge: it was an accident." Yet the girl shook her head. "I will not change the story, not even to escape this place and go home. I intended that he die. The story must be told as it is."[26] Storytelling here represents a form of protest and the authorities find it hard to believe that for this woman "truthtelling is more important than freedom."[27]

Silko's "Storyteller" also shows the conflict in the type of characters. With regard to the Native society, Silko's characters are nameless, provided with only minimal, fragmented backstories, and characterized according to qualities and symbolic roles. This suggests that what they signify is more important than who they are. They have a strong affinity to the land and tradition. Standing in stark contrast to this harmony, the Gussucks reveal their disregard for the indigenous community. The storeman, for instance, symbolizes the white man's cynical outrages against Indian culture. He and his Anglo counterparts move to the tundra to strip land from the Eskimo, and to strip the girl of her clothes and dignity.[28] "He hated the people because they had something of value, the old man said, something the Gussucks could never have. They thought they could take it, suck it out of the earth or cut it from the mountains; but they were fools."[29]

Silko also addresses the conflict between native and Euro-American cultures in her short story "Lullaby", first appeared in *Storyteller* (1981), a book in which she interweaves poetry, autobiographical memories, photographs of her family, short stories, and traditional songs. In addition to the role of oral tradition and the transformative power of storytelling in Native American culture, the story depicts the catastrophic decline of native culture as a consequence of white cultural hegemony.[30] Focusing on the emotional costs of the conflict between the two cultures, "Lullaby" tells the story of an elderly Navajo woman who embodies devotion to traditional ways of life. She grieves for the loss of her children who are long gone from her. One of them dies in war, two dead in infancy. However, even more tragic and devastating is her memory of how her two children are taken by white doctors and police whom she does not recognize their language, purpose, and explanations. As she does not know English, and cannot read, she signs a paper that gives them authorization to take the children away. Her husband Chato is blamed for the loss of the children because he has taught her how to sign her name in English. Chato is discarded like broken machinery from the white-owned ranch where he has worked a lifetime. Realizing that her husband is

dying, Ayah begins to sing a lullaby she has learned from her grandmother: “And she sang the only song she knew how to sing for babies. She could not remember if she had ever sung it to her children, but she knew that her grandmother had sung it and her mother had sung it.”[31] The story suggests that traditions serve an important purpose in modern life, as it is the case with such an intense event as the loss of a loved one. Silko, then, does not end the story on a hopeless note. The sing expresses a timeless harmony that sweeps the story to a conclusion of transcendent beauty, suggesting not only the spiritual survival of Ayah, but also the survival of the ancient strengths of her people. In “Lullaby”, the web of harmony is shattered and crushed by loss, illness, and confusion. It is the world of Silko’s healing story that helps Ayah see the unspoiled harmony that exists naturally in the world. The same thing happens with Tayo in *Ceremony*, where the old medicine man Ku'oosh describes the fragility of this web to Tayo, whose responsibility is to regain its balance.[32]

The interference of white authorities precipitated all of the main tragedies of Ayah. The oppression of Native Americans and their culture in common is specified through the personal losses of Ayah at the hands of white culture. Ayah and Chato are told of this loss by a white man, denoting the larger racial problem of Native American people fading in service to a nation that has oppressed them. The fact that Ayah is intimidated into signing away her children also signifies deeper insinuations in the history of Native Americans. The near-genocide of these people was in part characterized by the act of tricking them into signing treaties that worked to their detriment.[33] Moreover, another symbol of oppressive white authority is manifested by the rancher who employs Chato. After Chato falls off a horse and breaks his leg, the White rancher refuses to pay him until he can work again. Despite being a loyal worker, Chato is easily forgotten when the rancher determines that he is no longer able to work. These actions reflect class oppression in addition to the conditions of racial oppression from which Ayah and her family suffer.[34] Ayah’s life has become memories dominated by the loss of her children. Like Momaday, who says the greatest tragedy is to go unimagined, Silko also reflects in her work that “to go unremembered is to go unimagined,” and in this sense her work is tinged with tragedy.[35]

The tragedy of the encounter between two modes of existence occurs in many of Silko’s works. “Tony's Story,” first published in *Thunderbird* in 1969, also reveals Silko’s rejection to the structure of the oppressor which favors whites over Indians that leads to the tensions and struggles on the part of the characters.[36] In this story, Tony, who meets his childhood friend Leon, is physically attacked by a white policeman for no apparent reason.

The policeman remains silent when asked to provide an explanation for his unexpected assault, an act that demonstrates his contempt for the Indian people. The extreme violence is matched with the way he uses language. In his speech, he abuses, offends, and demonstrates his absolute power. He likes beating Indian people whom he describes as bastards.[37]

Keely Byars-Nichols points out that, as a critic, Silko refuses to align with the U.S. version of multiculturalism. Her work demonstrates a new version of multiculturalism that gives sovereignty and voice to Native beliefs, while still making a space for all other voices. The goal of multiculturalism in the 1970's seeks to "dismantle white-majority control" and "the use of white backgrounds and values as the sole yardstick of excellence." In her novel *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), Silko demonstrates to her readers that she seeks a multicultural worldview deeply-rooted in a sense of indigenous ideologies, one that can be used a source of survival for Native American people in a world threatened by Anglo-American senseless actions.[38] Leading Native American scholars countered the framework that marginalizes Native American people and challenged its exclusionist assumptions. This is because it "favors treating American Indians as ethnic/minorities rather than as descendants of indigenous peoples and members of tribal nations, whether the latter have federal recognition or not."[39] Therefore, the work demonstrates a kind of revolution anticipating the long-awaited homecoming of the indigenous people. Jennifer McClinton-Temple and Alan Velie state:

> At the core of Silko's novel is an ancient almanac full of prophesies encoded in an archaic script that foretell the arrival of the Europeans in the Americas and their eventual disappearance. The novel holds out the promise that all lands in the Americas will in time revert to the indigenous peoples through an uprising, up from the south, that will occur both spontaneously and inevitably. Simultaneously European society in the Americas will fall from the weight of its own corruption, making way for the return of the original inhabitants.[40]

In her construction of *Almanac of the Dead*, as well as *Ceremony*, Silko attempts to "break down oppositions between the world of literature and the very real struggles of American Indian communities," revealing an extrinsic and intrinsic relationship between the two. In this sense, she achieves exactly what Craig S. Womack terms "Red Stick" literary Criticism, since, according to him, she

> emphasizes Native resistance movements against colonialism, confronts racism, discusses sovereignty, and Native nationalism, seeks connections between literature and liberation struggles, and finally roots literature in land and culture.[41]

The world in which Silko lives is a region of cultural contact and conflict. An elucidation of her life provides a context for understanding her novel *Ceremony*. As a child, she was cared for by her grandmother Marie, known as Grandma A'Mooh. Aunt Susie, her father's aunt, also represents an important influence on Silko's life. Both of them were sources of stories that she would ultimately weave into her writing.[42] During the period of her formal education at Laguna school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, she witnessed that children were supposed to speak English rather than their native tongue. After moving to Ketchikan, Alaska, during the 1970's, she spent a particularly difficult time. Her family and emotional struggles there have direct bearing on *Ceremony*. As she told an interviewer in 1998, she wrote the novel to map out a road to recovery: "I did it because I was homesick and alienated, and of course my then-husband, his family weren't very nice to me . . . When I started *Ceremony*, I was as sick as Tayo was."[43]

Throughout her career, she has created a map of her culture, a direct result of the influence of her grandmother, whose stories of the myths of yellow woman and Ka'tsina (Kachina) are found in a majority of Silko's works. However, Silko, having a mixed heritage, considered herself as an outsider in the Pueblo. As a result, not fully accepted by the Laguna people or the whites, she lived in a painful and constant transition between two cultures.[44] As she describes in a short biographical sketch published with her collection of poems *Laguna Woman* in 1974,

> The white men 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.[45]

Particularly, Silko is interested in describing the figure of the mixedblood, who lives on the margin of two modes of existence but belongs to none. The kind of consciousness inscribed in *Ceremony* is designed to liberate the understanding of contemporary mixedblood identities with its aim to disrupt, heal, and transform. The novel is regarded as a form of decolonization and reappropriation, creating a polyvocal and open-ended zone of narrative that disrupts colonially motivated expectations of identity. The ultimate agency is given to the generative power of storytelling and tribal stories. Silko

provides a novel that challenges the ways in which mixedblood peoples have been "invented and marginalized in colonial and neocolonial consciousness." As Arturo J. Aldama declares, it is a tremendous disaster that mixedblood persons are constructed as "tragic," "impure," and are made invisible.[46]

However, like Momaday, Silko also finds herself situated between two worlds, facing a difficult task in writing her novel. Her writing must somehow appeal to non-Indian tastes, a fact that has been established, but cultural integrity must be retained at the same time. As Patricia Riley suggests in "The Mixed Blood Writer as Interpreter and Mythmaker," this is needed for the novel to hold up under the scrutiny of Native American readers. In the face of this perplexity, Silko created a novel that is partly tribal and partly Western.[47] Allen writes:

> American Indian novelists who write more or less chronological narratives centered on Indian themes and adapt ritual narrative structures to the western convention of conflict resolution based on the unities of location, time, and action are very daring indeed. Those who follow western theme and plot conventions find themselves restricted to stories that center on loss of identity, loss of cultural self-determination, genocide or decide, and culture clash. Perhaps as a result of following western literary imperatives, most writers of Indian novels create mixed-blood or half-breed protagonists, treating the theme of cultural conflict by incorporating it into the psychological and social being of the characters.[48]

Nevertheless, Silko's novel is in itself a ceremony, a ritual of healing that enables the protagonist to "come home" by returning to the Native American cultural geography. The protagonist regains an intimacy with the landscape and restoration to spirituality and ritual tradition. In his conflict, this journey towards home represents in essence "far more than some idea of accommodating Western publishing tastes for the exotic Indian."[49]

By creating a work that is linked to a tribal past and place, Silko fashioned a hero who is in opposition to the competitive individualism of the white world. In addition, the hero's journey is not to be understood as the Western version of self-fulfillment, as it is the case with such classic journeys as the *Iliad*. John C. Hawley refers to an important distinction between Western expectations and the way this journey is viewed in *Ceremony*:

> Euroamerican culture demands for individuality in the extreme dictates that the protagonist must leave home in order to experience full self-realization. Tayo, Silko's tribal protagonist, must do the opposite. Haunted by his experiences and alienated by his half-breed status in tribal society that places a great deal on the value on pure blood lines, the road to healing lies in Tayo's ability to find his way back to his community and his traditions.[50]

By selecting Tayo rather than a full-blood to express the road to healing, Silko shows her comments on the complications of "using blood quantum as the sole measurement of identity." Therefore, through her narrative choices, Silko, a mixedblood herself, provides a critique of "internalized, government-defined identity-and-membership practices."[51] Validating Silko's opinion, Terry P. Wilson suggests that

> Indian Identity, with its mixed-blood, full-blood connotations, stems from attitudes and ideas fostered by the majority of White culture and government. Before the White man's coming there was intermarriage and breeding across group lines, and no one marked the offspring as mixed blood or kept an accounting of blood quantum to determine tribal membership or degree of culture or acculturation.[52]

It is therefore not unexpected that when Silko finished *Ceremony*, she was worried to get it out in time for the Bicentennial. As she said . "I just want to make sure that . . . Americans can be reminded that there are different ways to look at the past 200 years."[53]

3.3: Silko's *Ceremony*: Tayo's Hybridity and Recovery:

After introducing a brief poem which defines the ritual power of ceremonies, the novel begins illuminating the troubled psyche of Tayo through a sequence of fragmented, chaotic passages. The novel introduces Tayo's experiences during World War II. Particularly, it describes his severe disruption when ordered to execute a Japanese soldier but rejects to do it since he identifies the soldier with his Uncle Josiah. Tayo does not accept the factual reasoning of Rocky when he explains that the soldier cannot be Josiah. He thinks that there are spiritual connections that intimately link all beings. This makes him feel in charge of bringing about a drought because he cursed the rains in the jungle during the war. He also feels himself responsible for the death of Rocky who is killed in the war.

Even after returning home, Tayo continues to re-experience these psychological distresses, and his problems are complicated by his friends, Leroy and Harley, who suggest using alcohol as a way to escape from life. Nevertheless, Tayo has a profound spiritual side. Getting drunk, bragging about his war heroics, and picking up women do not make him feel totally comfortable. Instead, he longs to rejoin with the Native American traditions that provide a more harmonious existence for his people.

Tayo erupts into violence when Emo, another Native American veteran, shows his pride about enjoying killing people during the war. Tayo attacks Emo, but his friends stop

him. Tayo is arrested and sent away to be treated in an army psychiatric hospital in Los Angeles.

Eventually, Tayo is allowed to go home by a sympathetic doctor. There, his grandmother and aunt do their effort to heal him. However, when Tayo's problem continues, his grandmother suggests that he should see Ku'oosh. This medicine man attempts to treat him with traditional healing rituals, but the ceremonial rituals prove to be only partially operative. Tayo needs a stronger magic to recover in his cultural struggle.

The novel also reveals Tayo's problems before his war experiences. His mother, Laura, was a wildly irresponsible mother. Out of wedlock to a white man, she got pregnant and is left alone to raise the child. She spent her nights with a number of men either for fun or money. As a result, Tayo is neglected during much of his early childhood. Later on, he is left to be raised by his grandmother and aunt. This move, though appears to be more stable, creates other psychological difficulties because he is frequently shamed for his past by his new caretakers.

Ku'oosh begins to recognize Tayo's complex psychological state. He asks Tayo to visit Betonie. Betonie, another mixedblood medicine man in Gallop, is specialized in treating war veterans. When Tayo is taken by his uncle to visit Betonie, he is at first nervous and suspicious when he sees Betonie's modes of operation. Living in a bad section of the town, Betonie's house is filled with all types of clutter. It contains old calendars, bags of herbs, medicine bags, empty coke bottles, and numerous telephone books. All of them are used by Betonie to form new rituals.

Though at first hesitated, Tayo allows Betonie to make his magic. After acting out a healing ceremony, Betonie tells Tayo that it is his responsibility to complete his own recovery because modern conditions are too complex. He exposes to him some signs that are part of his healing process: a woman, some spotted cattle, a constellation of stars, and a mountain.

After returning home this time, Tayo is more resolute to escape the self-destructive behavior of his old friends. He is fed up with going out with them to bars, so he chooses to go to the mountains to look for the lost cattle of his uncle Josiah and a new way of life. There, he meets a woman named Ts'eh Montano and has sex with her. Ts'eh revitalizes his spirit as she teaches him about the traditions he has lost. She also helps him find the constellation of stars that Betonie drew for him at the end of his healing ceremony and leads him toward Josiah's lost cattle.

However, the cattle are stolen by Floyd Lee, a rancher responsible for guarding them behind a wolf-proof fence. Tayo cuts through the fence and finally finds the cattle but he is caught by two of Floyd's cowboys. They decide to take him back to town to arrest him. Yet, they become uninterested in this plan when they have a chance to hunt a mountain lion. With the help of Ts'eh and her husband, Tayo frees the cattle from Floyd Lee's land and brings them back to the reservation. He learns more from Ts'eh about cattle raising and other cultural traditions and then mysteriously leaves again.

When Tayo is just about reestablishing himself in the traditional way of life of his people and reconnecting himself to their culture, Emo starts spreading fabricated rumors that Tayo has gone crazy again. Emo makes a manhunt with several of Tayo's friends and the local authorities to arrest Tayo and send him back to the army psychiatric hospital. After two close calls, Tayo manages to escape Emo's vigilante posse and comes back home. His pursuers meet many devastating conclusions instead. Leroy and Harley end up dying in a terrible auto accident, and Pinkie, another one of his vigilantes, is killed by Emo. The novel's final ritual poem that concludes the novel pronounces the victory of good over evil. Yet, it suggests that one must remain vigilant in order to avoid the constant temptations of evil because such victories are always tentative.

Tayo's journey toward his cultural recovery turns out to be long and difficult, however, for the reason that traditional healing ceremonies must be modified to treat the new modern sicknesses that makes him suffer. Moreover, to characterize the psychological struggles of Tayo, Silko uses a fragmented, complex, non-linear plot. Though this may initially appear to be somewhat confusing, the story becomes possible to understand when the reader identifies how Tayo's psychological journey organizes the novel's complex progress. The novel often moves between prose and poetry and jumps across historical time and space, but its general path follows Tayo's complex road toward recovery.[54]

Silko once explained her narrative theory which precisely defines the structure of *Ceremony*:

> For those of you accustomed to a structure that moves from point A to point B to point C, this presentation may be somewhat difficult to follow because the structure of Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider's web—with many little threads radiating from a center, crisscrossing each other. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made, and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made.[55]

Silko introduces a kind of ceremonial novel that contains myths, stories, and poems. Her purpose is to create harmony and restore the psychic unity of people. Silko's traditional forms differ from "Western prose by their outward form, as they always stand out by being centered on the page." The novel begins with an untitled poem about an Indian creation myth. The story is told by Thought-Woman. Berenice Walther mentions that "individual authorship closely related to the Western concept of copyright and intellectual property is denied as the first poem defines this piece of writing not as a novel but as a traditional, tribal source."[56] There are three sections. In the first, Thought-Woman is introduced. "Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-Woman, / is sitting in her room / and whatever she thinks about appears" (*Ce,* 1). Silko's storyteller is male with Thought-Woman: "I'm telling you the story / she is thinking" (*Ce,* 1). In the second framing poem, entitled "Ceremony", Silko introduces the significance of stories. "You don't have anything / if you don't have the stories" (*Ce,* 2). Then, Thought-Woman returns in the third section to state that "the only cure . . . / is a good ceremony" (*Ce,* 3).[57] As Louis Owens has noted, this turns *Ceremony* into a fine example of postmodernism: "*Ceremony,* more than any other novel I know of, approaches the category of authorless text."[58]

In his cultural conflict, Tayo must learn how to exist as an individual in conversation with spiritual traditions. The episodes of Laguna narrative that Silko inserts are also to be found in Franz Boas's 1928 *Keresan Texts*. Unlike Boas, who did not contextualize the stories, Silko weaves them into the narrative creation of Thought-Woman. The stories of Thought-Woman and other stories, like those of Fly and Hummingbird and Corn Woman, are to be taken as true stories rather than fiction.[59] Consequently, right from the beginning, the novel is obvious about the storytelling situation. Its structure confirms the "power of the storyteller's voice by locating it separately from the prose of the novel's body." Lois Parkinson Zamora suggests that, by giving the words of the storyteller the form of poetry, Silko "revivifies the Renaissance hierarchy of forms that gives to poetry the greater potential for truth," and as such blurs the boundaries between prose and poetry. Only on page five does the retrospective prose account of Tayo occur.[60] What Silko does is that she tries to break new grounds in presenting rituals and stories as "antidotes for the ailments of modern society." Throughout the story, events are given cosmic significance as Tayo experiences a healing process to find his way through many troubles. However, Amanda Porterfield states that Silko takes the beliefs of Native Americans very seriously, but at the same time she treats all Native stories and ceremonies as works of imagination.

Therefore, to persist through time, Silko believes, sacred stories need to be constantly reimagined, relived and characterized in new ways.[61] The storyteller is not merely repeating memorized words, but may include a critique of or commentary on the stories themselves.[62] For Silko, though the story is the important thing, little changes are to be part of the story, and there are also "stories about the different versions of stories." According to Sharon D. Welch, this means that specific stories and ceremonies are not to be casually copied or repeated.[63]

In *Ceremony*, the phrase "it is not easy" or "it has not been very easy" is said by several spirits and persons as a comment on the entire story or the stories included within it. Auntie, for example, responds with the same words used by Hummingbird and Fly after the told stories about the deaths of the veterans: (*Ce,* 115, 235, , 237, 241). In addition, Betonie's ceremony proves to be successful to Tayo in his conflict of living between two worlds where white medicine and the church are incapable of healing him.[64] Silko once shed light on her early departure from law school with the affirmation that "injustice is built into the Anglo-American legal system." She says that "the only way to seek justice" is "through the power of stories."[65] This is because "the oral tradition is more than a record of a people's culture. It is the creative source of their collective and individual selves."[66]

Contrary to the Western notion of time, Silko rejects the notion that time is linear. Her view is that of the indigenous people who consider time as recurrent and cyclical like seasons of the year. In a conversation with Silko, she refers to post-Einsteinian physics as a sort of laughter because of its beginning, middle and end. In her narrative, she intends to

> destroy any kind of sense of linearity. It's done in a way that narrative can have a narrative within a narrative, and where past/present/future can be really experienced . . . The Western European rules about the form of the novel don't apply. Hell, the nice thing about the novel is that it's wide open. I decided to go ahead and raise hell with linear time.[67]

The Native American conception specifies a certain degree of repetition. At the end of *Ceremony*, Tayo's old Grandma displays this when she shows her comments after listening to the story of Pinkie's death at Emo's hands. "It seems like I already heard these stories before . . . only thing is, the names sound different" (*Ce,* 242). Her statement emphasizes the continuity of Silko's novel with stories. There are no beginnings and no endings. She sighs, almost with boredom, revealing that she is not that excited about the goings-on of stories that are immemorial.[68] Renee L. Bergland mentions that the novel's

structure is related "intimately to the life of the modern Indian American community as the oral forms have related to the continuing life of the community." Moreover,

> The novel precisely reverses the discourses of spectralization. It marginalizes European Americans just as they have marginalized Native Americans. It demonizes whites, and then it gradually teaches its hero to transcend his hatred of them – not for their sake, but for the sake of his spiritual well-being.[69]

Within the central narrative about Tayo, other narratives come about that present different stories in a similar way to a storytelling session. Kathleen B. Manley refers to a number of procedures typical of oral performance such as the use of repetition, narratives within narratives, circular design, and formulaic opening and closing, which decrease the distance between storyteller and an audience that is not physically present.[70] Repetition is more obvious in the poetry fragments, which function as kinds of chants (e. g. After four days/ you will be alive/ After four days/ you will be alive/.... *Ce*, 66). Such repetition remains constant in many chants or ceremonies.[71] A sense of collective perspective is achieved by many narrators, such as the Indian war veterans who recall their memories in the American army when they enjoyed a different social status. In their bar meetings, the veterans follow a number of rituals: from cursing the barren dry land the white man has left them, to showing off about their affairs with white women, to finally boasting about the killing of Japanese soldiers. A striking example of orality is the way in which the veterans' first-person stories are inserted in the form of poems, thus becoming the formal equivalents of the mythic stories and ritual chants:[72]

> We went into this bar on 4h Ave., see,
> Me and O'Shay, this crazy Irishman.
> We had a few drinks, then I saw
> These two white women
> Sitting all alone. (*Ce,* 53)

Immediately following the words of Thought-Woman, a single word, "Sunrise", appears alone as a prayer, an invocation, to open the ceremony. The novel's final page also concludes with only these three lines: "Sunrise, / accept this offering, / Sunrise" (*Ce,* 244). The novel then is given a perfect circular design like that of the oral tradition.[73] Even more importantly, Silko organizes the novel itself as a sacred ceremony or ritual. As the novel progresses, she recurrently switches back and forth between the main plot and a series of interrelated poems based on various legends from Native American tradition.[74] The

structure is very inclusive, allowing the ancient legends and songs to inform of and warn against forthcoming events that happen in the story and invoke the past events that are related to the healing of Tayo. The structure itself is a hybrid of old stories and post-war expression. It mainly uses a type of free indirect style, with Tayo, the protagonist, as focalizer. The stories that Silko includes in her novel are anything but static and impoverishing. As she says,

> Something in writing *Ceremony* that I had to discover for myself was indeed that old stories still have in their deepest level a content that can give the individual a possibility to understand.[75]

Unlike *Almanac of the Dead*, which is much darker in tone and which demands for revolutionary act against white people, *Ceremony* is a much more optimistic novel which calls for the mediation between two cultures. Lidia Yuknavitch points out that *Almanac of the Dead* is "ugly" because it is "angry." With *Ceremony*, on the other hand, non-Native readers have to "trouble their reading and desire to win an argument or form a conclusion."[76]

In the first section of the novel, Tayo, the main character, is placed between the antagonistic worlds of Pueblo traditionalism and modernity. Although eventually these worlds are synthesized by the protagonist, at the opening of the novel Tayo is "cast more in the literary tradition of the tragic mulatto." Peter Kerry Powers suggests that, as a mixedblood Indian, Tayo faces the state of the self-evident and overwhelming dominance of Anglo modernity manifested in the school, the economic system, and the technology of war. Tayo's witness of Rocky's death at the hands of a Japanese soldier and the brutality of the war leave him incapable of believing in the American dream. In addition, he is upset to see the secluded world of the reservation with all its stories and rituals disconnected from the larger world. His condition suggests that he is torn between two cultural worlds without a coherent relationship to any specific world.[77] This is evident in his waking and sleeping hours and in the nightmare that opens the main narrative:

> Tayo didn't sleep well that night. He tossed in the old iron bed, and the coiled springs kept squeaking even after he lay still again, calling up humid dreams of black night and loud voices rolling him over and over again like debris caught in a flood. . . . [The] fever voices would drift and whirl and emerge again – Japanese soldiers shouting orders to him, suffocating damp voices that drifted out in the jungle steam, and he heard the women's voices then; they faded in and out until he was frantic because he thought the Laguna words were his mother's, but when he was about to make out the meaning of the words, the voice suddenly broke into a language he could not understand. (*Ce,* 5)

Tayo's experience during the war rings with the DSM-III definition of trauma as a "response to an overwhelming event or events which takes the form of repeated, intensive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event."[78] In *Ceremony*, Tayo's traumatic experience continues after his return from World War II. Yet, as Jeff Karem sees it, he must fight not only the war disease, but also a host of cultural conflicts resulted from his being a mulatto Laguna living in late-twentieth-century America. He faces traditional and non-traditional influences and ways of life, and his quest "demands a sorting out of all these cultural entanglement, a negotiation of binary oppositions in order to recapture a fruitful connection to the world."[79] However, at the opening of the novel Tayo is not equal to this mission. His mind reflects a cacophony of differing effects: white voices, Japanese voices, Laguna voices, and fever voices.

Karen E. Beardslee states that Tayo's mental conflict is obvious in his belief that the normal organization of time and space has become confused. His going back is marred by feelings of isolation and helplessness that leave him too weak even to consider his own future. Instead, he tries to seek a refuge in the past. But even there he finds himself in a disastrous pain. His delightful memories of times spent with his Uncle Josiah fuse with his awful memories as a prisoner of war, his cousin Rocky's premature death, and his aunt's carelessly veiled disdain for him. All this makes him sink into horrible despair.[80] Silko uses the imagery of tangled threads to designate the disturbed state of Tayo's mind. "He could get no rest as long as the memories were tangled with the present, tangled up like colored threads from old Grandma's wicker sewing basket. . . . He could feel it inside his skull – the tension of little threads being pulled and how it was with tangled things" (*Ce*, 6). Like Abel in *House Made of Dawn*, Tayo also feels himself as a stranger on his return from World War II. He is psychologically distressed by his experiences of war and by being hurled outside the contained and traditional world of the pueblo.[81]

However, though Tayo is at the mercy of memories that hunt him, his sense of regret and guilt over the loss of loved ones moves him from an individualist to a communal frame of mind. In this way, the novel presents individuality as meaningless alone.[82] Ann Folwell Stanford refers to Tayo's struggle at war as representing a clash between the individualist and the communal sense of self. There, Tayo finds the strength to criticize a system that accords value on the basis of skin colour, even though in war he sees that the skin of his white corporal "was not much different from his own" (*Ce,* 6). This insight into the insanity of racism increases his sense of alienation and self-doubt. As the boundaries of

difference begin to blur, killing turns out to be unbearable for Tayo. For him, even his enemies "looked too familiar . . . when they were alive" (*Ce*, 7). Moreover, because of what he discerns, because of the traces of collectivity he maintains, Tayo cannot agree to take the idea of otherness that licenses indiscriminate killing, and this marks him as a sick man.[83]

For example, Tayo refuses to kill a Japanese soldier when his commanding officer orders to line up Japanese soldiers and fire on them. He freezes because he sees an image of his uncle's face on one of them. For him, "distance is obliterated and time eradicated in that one instant."[84]

> So Tayo stood there stiff with nausea, while they fired at the soldiers, and he watched his uncle fall, and he *knew* it was Josiah; and even after Rocky started shaking him by the shoulders and telling him to stop crying, it was *still* Josiah lying there. They forced medicine into Tayo's mouth, and Rocky pushed him toward the corpses and told him to look. (*Ce,* 7)

Nevertheless, Tayo's conflict is evident even with the thoughts of other Native American characters. When ordered to kill the Japanese soldier, Rocky's response reflects, as Owens suggests, the "authoritative discourse" of Euramerica, which endeavors to limit the very basis of Native American behavior.[85] Rocky says, "Hey, I know you're homesick. But, Tayo, we're *supposed* to be here. This is what we're supposed to do" (*Ce,* 7). In other words, Tayo, though in a state of cultural conflict, sees Rocky as a victim to the language of the privileged discourse he encounters in school and texts.[86] As a result, Rocky's desires are a manifestation of his mother's anxiety of being trapped in the old ways. His wish to be a pilot only turns him into a "foot soldier, fodder for the machinery of war."[87]

According to Ariane Peters, though a mixedblood character who has not known the necessary rituals of his people and wishes "they had taught him more about the clouds and the sky, about the way the priests called the storm clouds to bring rain," (*Ce,* 45) Tayo shows a different attitude towards white culture. While Rocky affiliates himself with white values, Tayo identifies with the Amerindian tradition that "imbues every rock, tree, creature, and wind with a metaphysical as well as physical dimension."[88] Opposing views of the dominant culture and the traditional culture can be noticed in Tayo's memory of a deer hunt prior to World War II. In this scene, he proves to be the very opposite of Rocky. It is Tayo, the offspring of an unknown white man and a Laguna woman, who favours the Native American way of life and its preference of the tribal life over the individual one. Rocky feels ashamed of the custom that stresses the hunter's paying his quarry a final respect by covering the deer's head and sprinkling cornmeal on its nose before gutting the

animal. Theda Wrede suggests that Rocky's response reflects the "colonizing culture's attitude toward nature."[89] Tayo, in contrast, performs the necessary ritual in order to make sure that the animal keeps giving its meat to his people. Rocky, because he believes that the old traditions prevent him from making a big American way of success, does not intend to perform the ritual that Tayo insists on. For Ole Wagner, this scene proves that Tayo, though conflicted, is very close to his tradition before participating in the war.[90]

Silko provides the reader with the historical context of the war that Tayo experiences. The protagonist faces the Western narrative motif of the assimilated "warrior Other." He experiences all of the bigotries of Americans through military enrollment and service. He left Laguna alienated, but his origin as a mixedblood and the war cause the loss of his identity. According to Kathleen Klenister Roberts, it is quickly evident for Tayo that the rest of the white society have the same kind of feeling toward the Indians enlisted in the army. After basic training, he and Rocky go to California in order to be transported to the Pacific. There, Tayo sees the truth beyond the eyes looking at him with admiration.[91]

> The first day in Oakland he and Rocky walked down the street together and a big Chrysler stopped in the street and an old white woman rolled down the window and said: 'God bless you, God bless you," but it was the uniform, not them, she blessed. (*Ce,* 38)

The fact that Tayo's struggle continues after he has been released from the army hospital shows that the remedy offered by the Western thought is a failure. The army doctors attempt to benumb Tayo's thoughts and memories so as to avoid pain without considering the fact that memories represent the essence of Native American culture in the first place. The doctors attempt to treat him according only to the Euro-American thought by injecting him with drugs that makes him forget his experiences and block his view to his native culture. Their medicine only leads him to the idea that that things not seen are perceived as being unreal:[92] "Their medicine drained memory out of his thin arms and replaced it with a twilight cloud behind his eyes" (*Ce,* 14). Tayo describes the time he spent in the hospital after military service in the Pacific in World War II:

> For a long time he had been white smoke. He did not realize that until he left the hospital, because white smoke had no consciousness of itself. It faded into the white world of their bed sheets and walls; it was sucked away by the words of doctors who tried to talk to the invisible scattered smoke. He had seen outlines of gray steel tables, outlines of the food they pushed into his mouth, which was only an outline too, like all the outlines he saw. They saw his outlines but they did not realize it was hollow inside. (*Ce,* 13)

In the hospital, Tayo is surrounded by white things – the walls, sheets, and uniforms, which symbolically reflect "the annihilating, erasing whiteness of the dominant culture." Like the Invisible Man of Ralph Ellison's novel, Tayo's invisibility is a result of white racism and ignorance. Yet this invisibility is used by Silko's hero strategically, since as smoke, Tayo cannot be manipulated, contained, or controlled. The doctors think that Tayo is healed as soon as he starts talking again after many months of silence. Refusing the psychiatrist access, however, he is only able to speak in the distancing form of the third person, rather than the first, by referring to himself as 'he':[93] "He can't talk to you. He is invisible. His words are formed with an invisible tongue, they have no sound" (*Ce,* 14).

The doctors' confidence in Tayo's cure at this time demonstrates that their understanding of trauma, which Silko uses to signify Western ways of understanding, is based upon the separation of self from self and self from other, and so is designed according to the division inherent in binary thought. In contrast to the European-American model of thought, Indian American people regard the self as integrated as one unit, i.e, one has to "understand that the world is a web, that every strand is connected to every other strand."[94] *Ceremony*, as Helen Jaskoski points out, highlights two very different and opposing cultural views:

> Native American thought . . . seeks understanding that is holistic and integrating, and its mode of discourse is prophecy and story. The Western – European or Euroamerican – world view, by contrast, tends toward atomism and the dis-integration of dissection and calculation.[95]

Consequently, *Ceremony* represents a critique of American individualism because white culture "attempts to recruit Native American culture to its individualistic conception of the world."[96] Later on, when Tayo first meets Betonie, he remembers what he has been told in the hospital:

> He wanted to yell at the medicine man, to yell the things the white doctors had yelled at him – that he had to think only of himself, and not about the others, that he would never get well as long as he used words like "we" and "us." But he had known the answer all along, even while the white doctors were telling him he could get well and he was trying to believe them: medicine men didn't work that way, because the world didn't work that way. (*Ce,* 115-116)

The connections that Tayo sees are regarded as illusory by the doctors because they think that his identity must be conceived as an individual whose problems are not to be linked to those of his Native American culture.[97] As a result, as Bonnie C. Winsbro points out, Tayo begins to realize that his illness does not represent "an isolated event; it is both a

consequence and a cause of the continuation and spread of a greater illness that is affecting the family, the tribe, the world." Therefore, his illness is only "part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything" (*Ce,* 116).[98]

Returning home, Tayo refuses to become white smoke which had no consciousness of itself. Shortly after his arrival, the Laguna healer Ku'oosh is summoned by Tayo's grandmother to perform the Scalp Ceremony. Tayo, after hearing the description of a deep lava cave he knows, pushes himself up from the bed frame so as to listen. Rinda West suggests that the memory of the place takes Tayo out of his despair, as the medicine man explains its value and that the stories of his people can foster spiritual strength and align people with the land.[99] Yet, like the whole of his community, Tayo still feels estranged from himself and from his culture. He feels himself in a "state of deadly imprisonment by Anglo culture and the white invaders who have dispossessed the Indians of their land and worked to destroy their world." Then, he tells himself a story about an earlier dry spell when he went to the spring in the canyon to construct a ritual of his own for rain. However, this moment is interrupted by his memories of the dominating figures of the white schoolteachers. The teachers represent some sort of escape for the Indians from the poverty of the reservation, but at the same time they epitomize the "destructive imperialism that has imprisoned and impoverished them in the first place." The stories that Tayo hears from his grandmother and uncle Josiah are derided by the white teachers as nonsense, not even to be accorded respect in the way Christian myths are treated.[100] The divergence between the two modes of thought occurs in Tayo's later recollections of school days:

> He knew what white people thought about the stories. In school the science teacher had explained what superstition was, and then he held the science textbook up for the class to see the true source of explanations. He had studied those books, and he had no reasons to believe the stories any more. The science books explained the causes and effects. (*Ce,* 87)

In contrast to the Western thoughts that emphasize separation rather than connection, Tayo recalls the moments with his uncle Josiah who represents the Native American perception. On his way to Cubero with Harely, Tayo's attention is diverted from the illness of the war that haunts him. He begins to recall Josiah's commentary about the true identity of the people:[101] "This is where we come from, see. This sand, this stone, these trees, the vines, all the wildflowers. This earth keeps us going" (*Ce,* 42). When one day Tayo carelessly kills a fly, Josiah tells him the story of Greenbottle Fly, who brought back the rain, and then gently cautions: "Next time, just remember the story" (*Ce,* 94). This is

also illustrated in the teachings of his old Grandma who always speaks with him about the Native American belief in the connection between all things: “Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened” (*Ce,* 87). It is this spiritual education that makes Tayo challenge the Western scientific thought from school. Moments such as these demonstrate that “despite Tayo’s supposed deterritorialization, he is clearly grounded in his homeland and retains his geoidentity upon his return from the war.”[102] Tayo suffers from the education that prevents him from remembering the roots of his people, which in turn constitute his sense of self. Consequently, he is broken by war and trained in the Indian school to take on the white way of life.[103]

In addition, Tayo’s identity as a mixedblood also makes him confront a horrific historical crime – the conquest and settlement of his native land by the Whites. This conquest did no good to the environment. Its goods were exploited and gradually destroyed by the white people. The Laguna people face the loss of their culture and their land daily and their “mourning of the lost going on forever” (*Ce,* 157) leads to the disastrous effect of adopting the white ways and alcoholism.[104]

> In the twenties and thirties the loggers had come, and they stripped the canyons below the rim and cut great clearings on the plateau slopes. The logging companies hired full-time hunters who fed entire logging camps, taking ten or fifteen deer each week and fifty wild turkeys in one month. The loggers shot the bears and mountain lions for sport. And it was then that the Laguna people understood that the land had been taken, because they couldn’t stop these white people from coming to destroy the animals and the land. (*Ce,* 172)

George Lipsitz says that Tayo’s “cultural clash with Anglo society revolves around questions of citizenship, property, and self-respect, but he experiences the conflict most directly as a battle about which stories are to be believed.”[105] “He had believed in the stories for a long time, until the teachers at the Indian school taught him not to believe” (*Ce,* 18). According to Brian Richardson, teaching Tayo not to trust superstition takes away his faith that his problems can be solved. The reason is that the world of education, as well his experiences of war and the mental hospital only offer him a sense of dividing the past from the present, people from the land, animals from people, and people from one another. Thus, as Richardson suggests, Tayo’s conflict represents “two belief systems [that] struggle against each other for explanatory supremacy.” He is away from his native self and is wracked by the anguish of the white man’s knowledge that brings only destruction, dissolution, and death.[106]

One of the most significant scene that depicts the conflict between the western and the traditional beliefs occurs when Tayo curses the continuous jungle rain as Rocky lies dying. He blames the rain for Rocky's death, and prays for the downpours to stop. The effects of his curses and prayers occur not in the jungle, but on the Laguna reservation in New Mexico. Here, the reader realizes that Tayo "deserves some of the blame" for the consequence of what he has done. The drought brings suffering to the animals and to the people on the reservation. However, showing concern and misery proves that the Native American way of thinking is not totally lost in Tayo:[107] "So he had prayed the rain away, 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" (*Ce,* 13).

Accordingly, Tayo's curse and prayer offer an explanation for what happens if one is away from his people and their culture. Following the Western belief contrasts with the Native American one. Tayo's experience of terror is connected to his failure to discern ritualistic procedures. His mistake results from forgetting Josiah's warning that thunder and floods are part of life too, like the sun and the sky. Therefore, in order to be healed, he must return to the respective tribal communities.[108]

Though this incident might again be considered as superstition by the white doctors, it can be understood as Tayo's loss of the connection to the environment, which reflects an important part of his culture. In the Japanese jungle, he also kills flies even though he knows that it is not right.[109] Peter G. Beidler in his "Animals and Theme in *Ceremony*" suggests that Tayo, as a soldier in the white man's World War II, has come to "grow away from the plants and animals" (*Ce,* 125). He has somehow "lost perspective on the importance of animals" when he cannot even endure the flies there, and his response to them "is a white man's response in that it is both destructive and mechanical."[110] Paula Gunn Allen suggests that Tayo, by being a warrior engaged in the act of war, becomes alienated from Pueblo life. This is because warriors "in a peace-centered culture must experience total separation from the tribe."[111]

Accordingly, through the story of Tayo, Silko provides the reader with the fatal opposition between two realms of thought and feeling. In the opinion of Rachel Stein, such opposition reflects "a struggle between irreconcilable notions of land use and land tenure, a struggle between different cultural orientations toward the natural world."[112]

Immediately following the account of the war and Tayo's curse, the novel introduces the mythic poem/story of the two sisters Corn Woman and Reed Woman.

Because Corn Woman is resentful of Reed Woman's constant bathing instead of working, she becomes angry with the result that "there was no more rain then./ Everything dried up/ . . . / The people and the animals / were thirsty./ They were starving" (*Ce*, 12). Introducing this Laguna Pueblo myth, Silko explains that there is a reason for every thread in the web of the universe.[113] In this way, Tayo's conflict results also from the "imbalance in the crucial relationship between man and land." His quest denotes searching for and returning to his people and traditions. The people must seek assistance from Hummingbird and Fly to restore balance to a devastated land and people during a season of drought. In the same way that the mythical story of Hummingbird's rescue of the starving community, Tayo's story is also part of a wide-ranging web of meaning that is far beyond his own individual life. Without the community, his state of life leads only to alienation and brokenness.[114] Consequently, as Stanford suggests,

> If Tayo is to resist dominant ideas about his personhood and his relationship to community, he must negotiate a relationship of resistance to the dominant community, with its dis-membering function, and rejoin himself to a healthy or health-giving community, one that is a community of remembering.[115]

As Tayo's emotional and physical problems have not been improved by the postwar hospitals and psychiatrists, he is left with confusion and inability to synthesize the things that he observes. He is hampered, as a mixedblood, by his inability to reconcile the European with the tribal view of the universe. After coming back home, he searches without success for a solution to survive his tribulations.[116]

Of course, Tayo's life as a mixedblood turns out to be difficult on the reservation. When he was four years old, his mother Laura left him with his aunt. He is haunted by the memories of his time with his mother when she "kissed him on the forehead with whisky breath, and then pushed him gently into Josiah's arms as she backed out the door" (*Ce,* 60-61).[117] Through the story of his mother, the protagonist realizes how characters like her have been perverted and destroyed by the city spaces of Gallup and Albuquerque. He remembers his time living with her in a tin shelter thrown together in a vagrant camp in Gallup. What Tayo faces is a "bewildered endurance of neglect, alcoholism, promiscuity, and violence."[118]

Tayo's mother is destroyed by both Anglo racism and Anglo misogyny. As an attractive woman, she is obsessed with how she can make herself appear more white. She is "excited to see that despite the fact she was an Indian, the white men smiled at her from

their cars as she walked from the bus stop in Albuquerque back to Indian school" (*Ce,* 63).[119] Yet, she slowly destroys herself as she struggles to maintain her cultural identity because she is ashamed of herself and of her Native American heritage. This shame comes from "what they taught her in school about the deplorable ways of the Indian people" (*Ce,* 63). For her, it reflects a "violent message of racial inferiority, coupled with an exoticization of her sexuality." It represents a continuation of early colonialist attitudes towards Native American women and their sensual, enticing and indulgent nature that piqued the carnal interest of English men.[120] Again with Tayo's loss of his mother, Silko directs her criticism at colonialist teachings at school and the destruction they inflict. Gloria Bird states that the damage upon Tayo's mother might not have happened if the girl had not been ashamed of herself. As a result, Tayo experiences the disappearance of a mother who "hated the people at home when white people talked about their peculiarities; but she always hated herself more because she still thought about them" (*Ce,* 63). For him, the disastrous effect of the educational system is that it teaches native people to deny themselves.[121]

Tayo has only vague memories of his mother. Even when he wants to learn more about her, he is embarrassed to ask, since his aunt starts to tell him about his mother's actions that brought shame to the family. Therefore, the disappearance and death of his mother has an enormous effect on 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."[122] Moreover, Tayo realizes that his mother's loss to white men, who slept with and then beat her, is only part of a much greater loss. Laura does not act in accordance with the tribal beliefs and traditions.[123] Her actions hurt everyone, including the people of Laguna because "what happened to the girl did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them" (*Ce,* 63).

After his mother leaves him, Tayo is raised by her older sister Auntie, who does not accept him as a full member of the family. She consistently treats him differently from Rocky, "consistently reminds him by subtle but unambiguous behavior that he is a half-breed, a child of shame."[124] Regarding Tayo, she seems to be forever the pessimist, looking for any excuse to belittle him. One day, when Tayo announces that he intends to return to the ranch to stay alone, her quick response is that she admonishes him not to welcome any of his friends there. Fairly unfazed by Auntie's eruptions, Tayo becomes concerned with finding a more harmonious environment that does not disturb the peace of mind he tries to

maintain.[125] Yet, he is disturbed by the memories about the time with his mother when he spends nights at bars in town hiding under the tables and waiting for her. In addition to these memories, as Michelle Balaev points out, his aunt continues to excommunicate him when he returns home after the war, probing him for the shame of his origin as having a non-Indian father.[126] The narrator clarifies:

> Since he could remember, he had known Auntie's shame for what his mother had done, and Auntie's shame for him. He remembered how the white men who were building the new highway through Laguna had pointed at him. . . . He understood what it was about white men and Indian women: the disgrace of Indian women who went with them. And during the war Tayo learned about white women and Indian men. (*Ce,* 52-53)

Auntie has little compassion for Tayo despite her Christianity. The fact that Tayo is a mixedblood leads to the tension that he is not to be accepted by her. She makes all the effort to keep him away from her son Rocky and tries to prevent any kind of brotherhood between them. Whenever other people mistakenly call them brothers, she is quick to correct the error, referring to Tayo as Laura's boy. Therefore, she always reinforces a denial of Tayo who is regarded as unwanted child.[127] As the narrator tells, "She wanted him close enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them" (*Ce,* 61-62).

Tayo suffers from being raised differently from Rocky, a full blood Indian. Auntie's uncomfortable state about Tayo's origin is manifested in her rejection to offer a cure for Tayo. When Old Grandma tells her that he needs a medicine man because the white doctors had done nothing for him, she worries about what people will say: "Someone will say it's not right. They'll say, Don't do it. He's not full blood anyway" (*Ce,* 30). Her identification with the white world is evident in recalling what "the Army doctor said, 'No Indian medicine.' Old Ku'oosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust. The doctor won't take it" (*Ce,* 31). Auntie's actions; therefore, demonstrate the Eurocentric way of thinking that rejects Tayo's inclusion into his Native American culture. As a result, the fact that Tayo is a half breed places him on the borders of his community, not apart from it.[128]

Ku'oosh is the first medicine man Tayo sees. Luckily, Old Grandma does not listen to her daughter and sends for Ku'oosh despite Auntie's opposition because she does not trust white doctors. Though Ku'oosh rejects to do a ceremony for Tayo, telling him, "There are some things we can't cure like we used to…not since the white people came," (*Ce,* 35) he is able to start Tayo on the healing process by performing the purification rites of the Pueblo Scalp Ceremony. He spreads the blue cornmeal and gives Tayo Indian tea to drink. The main physical sign of Tayo's trauma is his excessive vomiting and crying. Ku'oosh

helps him along by giving him something to calm his stomach.[129] Jude Todd sees Tayo's vomiting as metaphorically needed to rid his belly of all the lies he has been fed throughout his young life:

> He was fed lies by his Auntie about what a horrible person his mother had been. He was fed lies by schoolteachers who taught him that the traditional Laguna stories are worthless superstitions. He was fed lies as a soldier, told that he could distinguish 'us' from 'them' and that it was all right to kill 'them.' He was fed lies by the white doctors who insisted that he must think only of himself if he was to get well. And he was fed lies by nearly everyone about his inferiority because of his mixed-race heritage.[130]

At first Tayo is embarrassed when the medicine man comes to see him. He struggles to recognize what the old man is talking about, but when Ku'oosh starts to tell Tayo about a cave, "a deep lava cave northeast of Laguna," Tayo gives attention (*Ce,* 32). The description of the cave triggers Tayo's individual and collective memory. Here, the deracinated mixedblood begins to understand a common experience with the place because mentioning it touches off a series of memories related to his childhood play with his brother. This story allows Tayo to remember a time when he felt connected with Laguna culture in a place of healing and restoration.[131]

In contrast to the white doctors who say Tayo suffers from battle fatigue, Ku'oosh explains the fracturing of a soul. He begins a lesson about fragility, making Tayo realize that he is responsible for the imbalance and therefore responsible for its restoration.[132] The medicine man explains:

> "But you know, grandson, this world is fragile." The word he chose to express "fragile" was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process, and with a strength inherent in spider webs woven across paths through sand hills where early in the mourning the sun becomes entangled in each filament of web. It took a long time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word had to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way. That was the responsibility that went with being human, old Ku'oosh said, the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said; and this demanded great patience and love. (*Ce,* 32-33)

Tayo suffers from what is called a "sociosomatic" disorder in which "the individual's sickness mirrors a collective derangement." He must understand his role towards his community: "It is important to all of us. Not only for your sake, but for this fragile world" (*Ce,* 33). However, Tayo, "whose moral journey has barely began, at this stage sees only how one person's action can tear the fragile web."[133]

In his search for healing, Tayo seeks the help of drinking in bars with Emo and other Indian veterans. Unfortunately, he remains mentally adrift and nonfunctional. Talking about the world of killing, drinking, and violence only makes him sicker. Emo, adopting the belief system of the Western world, seeks the ideology of violence. He has a collection of teeth from the Japanese soldiers he has killed. Tayo sees that Emo wants to gain acceptance from the Western world, manifested as Tayo listens to him:[134] "We blew them all to hell. We should've dropped bombs on all the rest and blown them off the face of the earth" (*Ce,* 56).

Emo, despising Tayo's mixedblood heritage, likes to provoke the latter and insults his mother in the attendance of other veterans: "You drink like an Indian, you're crazy like one too – but you aren't shit, white trash. You love Japs the way your mother loved to screw white men" (*Ce,* 58). Like the doctors in the hospital, Emo tries to divide Tayo from the community.[135] Tayo's friend, Harley and Leroy, consider alcohol as a medicine and continue bragging about the respect they get in the uniform of white America. Their relationship to the land is stuck in the past. For Tayo, denying the value of the people's culture is in clash with the perception of the Native Americans who see the land as a living being. In uniform, Tayo's friends think that they belong in the United States, but afterward they discover that the previous respect and appreciation have disappeared, as if nothing has changed.[136] This situation is realized by Tayo when he points it out to the war veterans:

> First time you walked down the street in Gallup or Albuquerque, you knew. Don't lie. You knew right away. The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she's real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change. (*Ce,* 39)

In this sense, Silko unfolds the trauma undergone by Tayo and other veterans. The complicated healing process for the protagonist involves a readjustment to his relation to the land. This view opposes Emo's destructive sense of belonging. The farthest position from Tayo's goal is marked by his antagonist.[137] 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?" (*Ce,* 51).

Despite being acknowledged for their usefulness as soldiers, Tayo and his peers realize that their lesser value as American citizens is clear even during recruitment. The army recruiter proudly declares: "Anyone can fight for America, even you boys. In a time

of need, anyone can fight for her" (*Ce,* 59). Wearing a uniform of the U. S. army gives them only borrowed respect. They are momentarily accepted as being part of the same class, but this suddenly changes as soon as the war was over.[138] However, while these words would seem welcoming and inclusive, they "drip with racism and condescension." Tayo recognizes that his inclusion into the army is a patriotism without substance, existing only as another empty label which serves to divide human beings. He better understands this when he is poised to herd his uncle's cattle back to Laguna land. For him, the white perspective on power consists of well-crafted lies.[139] Because such lies "devoured white hearts, . . . for more than two hundred years white people had worked to fill their emptiness; they tried to glut the hollowness with patriotic wars and with great technology and the wealth it brought" (*Ce,* 178).

In this respect, Tayo witnesses the treatment and classification of Native American people before and during the war, "when the native people were merely (ab)used when needed, and then discarded and returned to their state of second-class citizens when they were no longer of use to the U. S. government."[140] Silko dramatizes Euramerican constructions of Native self-blame resulted from the teachings of the boarding schools that consider Native Americans as savage people. Instead of blaming the white world, Emo and his friends feel guilty of somehow failing a great chance of integration into the white world.[141]

> They blamed themselves just like they blamed themselves for losing the land the white people took. They never thought to blame white people for any of it; they wanted white people for their friends. They never saw that it was the white people who gave them that feeling and it was white people who took it away again when the war was over. (*Ce,* 39)

Things grow worse for Tayo when Emo rattles his bag of human teeth and damns mother earth. He taunts Tayo, calling him a half-breed: "He thinks he's something all right. Because he's part white. Don't you, half-breed?" (*Ce,* 52). In his attempt to kill Emo, Tayo commits the same mistake of Abel in *House Made of Dawn*. Here, Silko produces what comes about when Tayo initially reacts according to the divisive example of white culture. His anger at Emo's cruelty drives him to an act of violence as he tries to stab his enemy with a broken bottle. Temporarily seduced by it, Tayo "got stronger with every jerk that Emo made, and he felt that he would get well if he killed him" (*Ce,* 58). However, he gradually realizes that this act does little to improve his condition and offers no positive resolution: "he wasn't sure any more what to believe or whom he could trust" (*Ce,* 58). At

this moment, he is "compelled to locate a philosophy in contradistinction to the divisive messages that fragment his identity, shatter his world-view, and intensify his isolation."[142] Charles E. Wilson points out,

> Because Tayo has not been protected by any racial space, he is left to his own devices about how to cope in the world. His native American status is worthless in the world outside the reservation; his white blood renders him worthless (to some) on the reservation. Therefore, he must carefully consider what society is trying to do to him when it ostracizes him at every turn. When he is not fully welcomed in any racial space, Tayo is, in fact, freed to create his own functional space.[143]

In his relationship with other veterans, Tayo proves that he still appreciates the stories and traditions of his people more than the other full-blood Indians. Though they have been taught in school that Indian beliefs are nonsense, he shows a correct form of behavior. This is apparent when he closes the door behind him as he leaves a bar and sees a fly paper "speckled with dead flies." Tayo closes the door "quickly so that no flies got in" (*Ce,* 93). In Laguna Pueblo conviction it is not right to hurt an animal. This means that all phenomena are inextricably interrelated. In contrast, the whites who conquered their land do not share these beliefs.

Tayo begins to appreciate his hybrid status when he meets Night Swan, his uncle Josiah's Mexican lover. Tayo's meeting with her is momentary, spending only a few hours with her. Although Tayo comes to her as a messenger sent by Josiah, it is she who gives him a lesson that will support him later to resolve what he perceives as two conflicting racial identities. In Tayo's meeting with Night Swan, Silko, like Momaday and Erdrich, presents hybridity as underlying both the sickness and cure.[144] In her role as a helper, Night Swan tells Tayo she has been watching him because of the color of his eyes, the marker of his mixedblood status. Tayo feels displaced. "I always wished I had dark eyes like other people," he tells her, "When they look at me they remember things that happened. My mother" (*Ce,* 92). What Night Swan has seen are the "tell-tale hazel eyes of the mixed-blood – a hybrid color that results from the melding of blue and yellow, colors associated with rain and pollen."[145] Herself of mixed descent, she encourages Tayo not to be mortified by his hybrid identity; that his eyes and skin are signs of change and that change is inevitable. Moreover, she explains to him why people consider his hybridity so threatening.

> They are afraid, Tayo. They feel something happening, they can see something happening around them, and it scares them. 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. (*Ce,*92)

The ones who look different refer to those people who are 'hybrid', weaving a web from different places to make a new space of action. But these mixedblood persons are never to be regarded as others. Owens states that Silko produces the character Night Swan to "lay out her rationale for the power of the mixed blood to introduce a new vitality into the Indian world" and further that Silko "makes it clear that the evolution of Indian people and culture is a part of this cosmic ceremony designed to ensure both spiritual and physical survival."[146]

The description of Night Swan suggests that the "concern for ethnic purity is a kind of misplaced concreteness, a preoccupation with physical continuity that overlays much deeper fears about changes in the entire world."[147] Therefore, as a mixedblood, she plays a vital role in Tayo's reconciliation of his white and Native American ethnicity. Before Tayo leaves her, she tells him she has been watching him for a long time. When he recalls with bitterness how the other children teased him because of his eyes, she opens his mind to the changes around him and within him:[148] "You don't have to understand what is happening. But remember this day. You will recognize it later. You are part of it now" (*Ce,* 92).

When Ku'oosh recognizes that he cannot heal Tayo, he sends him to another medicine man, Betonie, who is also, as Tayo notices when he looks in his eyes, a mixedblood. "My grandmother was a remarkable Mexican with green eyes," he tells Tayo (*Ce,* 109). Betonie, like Tayo and also Night Swan, is also considered as an outsider. "There are stories about me," he says, "They say I'm crazy. Sometimes they say worse things" (*Ce,* 114). Yet, Tayo must learn that the healing he seeks reaches exactly "towards the authenticity of translation as a mixed-blood that Betonie has achieved."[149]

Betonie, as a mixedblood, insists on a perception that originates from the knowledge about both cultures. This is why his presence is set in Gallup in the borderlands between two cultures. Though he keeps traditional customs and dresses, his hogan is filled with calendars, phone books, and newspapers that assist him in ceremonies. Betonie's assembly of these things suggests that he has reconciled both worlds. Moreover, for Tayo, such details of his mixed ancestry and the way he lives in imply that their identities represent union rather than separation.[150] In addition, Betonie is often bewildered by the response people show to his choice of residence. He tells Tayo, "It strikes me funny, people wandering why I live so close to this filthy town. But see, this hogan was here first. Built

long before the white people ever came" (*Ce,* 109). In this sense, Betonie demonstrates that the Indian presence has supremacy and will not disappear.

Through the conversation between them, Betonie intends to encourage Tayo's awareness of himself and free him from a "self-destructive self-hate." At first, Tayo feels reluctant and tempted to leave. Yet, he tells Betonie about the struggle he faces, about how his mother "went with white men" (*Ce,* 118). In doing so, he seems to be caught in the conflict between what has been told about himself and what he wants to consider as positive in his personality. He needs something that gives him self-acceptance.[151] According to Betonie, "nothing is that simple, . . . you don't write off all the white people, just like you don't trust all the Indians" (*Ce,* 118). What is irretrievably denied here is the construct of the noble/ignoble savage; Indians become simply human. In this way, Betonie "facilitates Tayo's acceptance of the parts of himself both Indian and white."[152] However, Betonie also warns against strictly attributing guilt to skin colour hence marking all whites guilty for stealing the land. This is also his answer to Tayo's question about his mother's affair with a white man, of which Tayo is the painful proof. Betonie rejects to classify people on the same basis that white racism does, and therefore he requires Tayo to abandon his preconceptions about race and humanity.[153]

Early in his life, Tayo recognizes that his sickness is also connected with the damages his home and the whole earth have sustained: "he cried at how the world had come undone, how thousands of miles, high ocean waves and green jungles could not hold people in their place" (*Ce,* 17). This adds another suffering to his cultural predicament.[154] He blames himself for the drought, remembering Josiah's words that "drought happen when people forget, when people misbehave" (*Ce,* 42).As Betonie has explained to Tayo that binary opposition is simplistic, he begins to tell him that even the loss of the land is the work of witchery to keep the Native Americans in a never-ending series of guilt and blame. Betonie maps the response to historical violence.[155] As he tells Tayo:

> It was planned that way. For all the anger and the frustration. And for the guilt too. Indians wake up every morning of their lives to see the land which was stolen, still there, within reach, its theft being flaunted. And the desire is strong to make things right, to take back what was stolen and to stop them from destroying what they have taken. But you see, Tayo, we have done as much fighting as we can with the destroyers and the thieves: as much as we could do and still survive. (*Ce,* 117-118)

Moreover, Betonie stands against Eurocentric values of private property and ownership that construct Indians as "others." Instead of only blaming the whites, Indians

should fight the Western concept of ownership. He reminds Tayo, “They only fool themselves when they think it is theirs. The deeds and papers don’t mean anything. It is the people who belong to the mountain” (*Ce,* 118). According to Betonie, those characters like Harley, Pinkie, and Emo who blame others only participate in self-destruction. Indians can change their position and liberate themselves when they resist to be defined within the colonial binary structure.[156] Thus, Tayo begins to realize the danger of stereotyping whites or stereotyping Indians. However, his guilt continues and he asks Betonie a central question: “I wonder what good Indian ceremonies can do against the sickness which comes from their wars, their bombs, their lies” (*Ce,* 122). Betonie replies, “That is the trickery of the witchcraft. . . . They want us to believe all evil resides with white people. Then we will look no further to see what is really happening. . . . And I tell you, we can deal with white people. . . . We can because we invented white people in the first place” (*Ce,* 122).[157] In this sense, Indians become powerless when they believe that all power resides with the white. The result is that they are only to blame “themselves for losing the land the white people took” (*Ce,* 39).

Accordingly, Tayo is warned against hating all whites, including himself as a mixedblood. He begins to listen to Betonie, recognizing that his “cure resides in the potentially liberating borderland” that he embodies as a mixedblood. He begins also to resist the destructive dichotomies of white or Indian and insists that his healing requires breaking out such narrow and socially constructed markers.[158]

Silko asserts, “It is important that Tayo discovers that the Destroyers and the destructive impulse don’t reside with a single group or a single race, and that to manipulate people into war or other conflicts is a human trait; it is a worldwide thing. It’s not just one group of people, that’s too simple”.[159] Tayo learns from Betonie that whites or Indians are not to be regarded as the real enemy. Rather, it is the force whose purpose is to destroy all kinds of human connection, the force that makes people ashamed of their tradition or view indigenous people as savages. It is the one that causes the conflict of Tayo to continue, to keep him in a circle of an unending shame and self-hatred.

Silko inserted a “witchery poem” which describes how hatred of self and others emerges from the type of separatist ideology of the western empirical thinking (*Ce,* 122-128). Yet she introduces witchery as the primary cause of contemporary destruction, and the main obstacle to individual and communal healing. As Rebecca Tillett clarifies, this healing is required not only for Tayo, the damaged mixedblood war veteran, but also for all

Laguna community affected by the external pressures of assimilation.[160] It is necessary to cure the type of separatist thinking that dominates Auntie, Emo, and all the war veterans who are doubly dislocated. It is this type of hatred and oppression that Tayo fights against. Betonie explains to Tayo:

Then they grow away from the earth
then they grow away from the sun
then they grow away from the plants and animals.
They see no life
When they look
they see only objects.
The world is a dead thing for them
the trees and rivers are not alive.
The deer and bear are objects
They see no life. (*Ce,* 125)

The division of reality into binary opposites is the central lesson that Betonie teaches Tayo. The poem-chant illustrates to Tayo that a people cut off from feeling kinship confront something else. "*They fear / They fear the world. / They destroy what they fear. / They fear themselves*" (*Ce,* 125). Glen A. Mazis states that the tale "relates how both inadvertently and deliberately, a culture that sees the world in detachment, as separate and separated, as not being alive in the same way its people are, becomes a power of death, a people of unparalleled violence, eventually turned against itself too."[161]

Through the witchery poem, Tayo begins to understand the divisions and hostilities that he sees everywhere. The hatred of "white and Indian, of rich and poor, of Japanese and American, the division of the natural world into exclusive tracts of private property, and the growing separation of humans from an increasingly plundered and degraded natural environment" is attributed by Tayo to the witchery rather than to the white skin invaders.[162] In this sense, they are seen as tools of an evil power rather than as evils in themselves. Even Emo and other veterans are perceived as menacing agents of the witchery. As Rachel Stein has concluded, "Polarization itself, rather than any group of people is the core problem" that the characters confront in *Ceremony*.[163]

Betonie continues his ceremony. He tells Tayo about a child who goes to live with bears and becomes so isolated from others that he has to come back into the community step by step in order not to be in-between forever. The storyteller chants, "Following my footprints / Walk home / Following my footprints / Come home, happily / Return belonging to your home" (*Ce,* 133). Betonie asserts to Tayo that going "home" cannot be

achieved if an aspect of one's heritage is repudiated. Tayo's healing rests on his ability to reintegrate himself into community and discover who he is.[164] In addition, Betonie, who, like Night Swan, emphasizes the significance of growth and change, has revealed to Tayo the "privilege of being born between worlds, as well as the precariousness and the obligations that come with it." As he tells Tayo, "It is a matter of transitions, you see; the changing, the becoming, must be cared for closely. You would do as much for the seedlings as they become plants in the field" (*Ce,* 120). In time, Tayo's eyes has become lush green fields, a shared space, where various worlds meet and mix. Green refers to the color of openness, the color of hope.[165]

Before leaving Tayo, Betonie reveals to him some signs that will be part of his healing process: a constellation of stars, some spotted cattle, a mountain, and a woman. And so Tayo sets out on a quest to find his uncle's spotted cattle, lost while he is away during the war. Himself watching the stars in the autumn sky and following it north to Mount Taylor, he meets Ts'eh, a character who has a supernatural aura or dimension. She has a companion, a hunter who appears in both mountain lion and human form. Both play an integral part in helping Tayo to complete his quest.[166] Ts'eh, who conflates various Pueblo mythic entities, represents a personification of the earth. Tayo's lovemaking with her epitomizes an intimate bond to the earth. Their relationship reflects a loss of the boundaries between self and other. In this scene, "the connection between the woman and the land becomes manifest when Tayo makes love to her, an event during which her body takes shape in Tayo's consciousness as a landscape."[167] Ts'eh Montano, or 'Water Mountain,' refers to the spirit 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."[168]

Instead of conforming to the Eurowestern philosophy of dualism, Tayo starts to draw upon a perspective that regards all existence as sacred. He wants "to walk until he recognized himself again" (*Ce,* 143). Away from the destructive experiences of characters such as Harley, Emo, and Auntie, he begins to replace the memories that disturb his spirit with the more powerful feelings of re-immersion in his homeland. Increasingly, the deceit of the white people and their lies become clear.[169] Now, he is enabled to see the world through a communal perception as he perceives the significance of the sunrise: "The instant of the dawn was an event in which a single moment gathered all things together – the last stars, the mountaintops, the clouds, and the winds – celebrating this coming" (*Ce,* 169). Just

like the eagle vision of Abel, "this convergence of time and space, in which all things register with Tayo, haunts the protagonist until he is able to discover a means to interpret his insightful experiences."[170]

An important stage in Tayo's journey is finding Josiah's stolen cattle, a particularly tough, hybrid breed from Mexico. He finds the cattle on the other side of a "high fence of heavy-gauge steel mesh with three strands of barbed wire across the top" (*Ce,* 174). In a practical and symbolic effort, Tayo spends the entire night cutting through the thick wires. Although the white owner says that the fence is to keep animals out, "the people knew what the fence was for: a thousand dollars a mile to keep Indians and Mexicans out" (*Ce,* 188). By cutting through this fence, Tayo destroys the boundaries within himself that have been constructed to isolate him from seeing connections between times and places.[171] As Robert O'Brien Hokanson states, "in cutting through Floyd Lee's fence, Tayo not only opens a way to regain his family's cattle but also aligns himself with the inexorable process of change that works against fixed boundaries and distinctions."[172]

> The lie. He cut into the wire as if cutting away at the lie inside himself. The liars had fooled everyone, white people and Indians alike; as long as people believed the lies, they would never be able to see what had been done to them or what they were doing to each other. He wiped the sweat off his face onto the sleeve of his jacket. He stood back and looked at the gaping cut in the wire. (*Ce,* 177)

What Tayo discovers as deeply embedded within himself as an Indian person is that the "lie" represents a reality he himself stumbles upon. He has recognized the lie immediately as a "self-serving illusion of white superiority" that "damages the health and well-being of both white and Indian peoples." Even so, as George E. Tinker puts it, the truth is that Indians have internalized this illusion just like white Americans have, and as a result they participate in their own oppression.[173] As he frees the cattle from a white man's land, Tayo begins to reject such internalization, acknowledging that "he had learned the lie by heart – the lie which they wanted him to learn: only brown-skinned people were thieves; white people didn't steal" (*Ce,* 177). Since he identifies the source of the lie, he is able to find the liberating gesture by which he frees himself from its hold over him.[174] Silko writes:

> If white people never looked beyond the lie, to see that theirs 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 knew how to stir the ingredients together: white thievery and injustice boiling up the anger and hatred that would finally destroy the world: the starving against the fat, the colored against the white. (*Ce,* 177)

Tayo now understands that the destruction is the work of the power that keeps both peoples divided and turned against each other. The lie of "manifest destiny and Indian savagery now threatens to destroy everyone."[175] He comes to realize that the lesson of the white story of separation is also a Pueblo story. Falling victim to the story of separation only serves to strengthen the shadow discourse of witchery.[176] As Silko narrates:

> The destroyers had tricked the white people as completely as they had fooled the Indians, and now only a few people understood how the filthy deception worked; only a few people knew that the lie was destroying the white people faster than it was destroying Indian people. But the effects were hidden, evident only in the sterility of their art, which continued to feed off the vitality of other cultures. (*Ce,* 189-190)

Tayo himself is momentarily caused to backslide into the Western thought which assigns private property to Westerners who claim the land. At first, he feels guilty before he cuts Floyd Lee's fence, but such feeling is rejected, and in doing so he discovers what is called "the absolute by the light of reason only, and without the assistance of sense."[177] He discovers that the main problem is the human capacity for malevolence which binds people and prevent them from resisting the weakness that they all share. That "white and Indians must learn to coexist peacefully, as human beings inhabiting our planet together rather than as racially distinct and segregated groups," is a theme that reaches its climax near the end of the novel, when Tayo completes his restoration and wholeness:[178]

> . . . He had arrived at the point of convergence where the fate of all living things, and even the earth, had been laid . . . the lines of cultures and worlds were drawn in flat dark lines on fine light sand, converging in the middle of witchery's final ceremonial sand painting. (*Ce,* 228)

After finding the cattle, Tayo decides to return to the ranch, the place he has lived at the beginning of the novel, but now he is different. By breaking the boundaries that haunt his spirit, he experiences a sense of connection to the world around him. While at the beginning of the novel Tayo is a conflicted person, with bad dreams and hallucinations, "the terror of the dreaming he had done on his bed was gone, uprooted from his belly; and the woman had filled the hollow spaces with new dreams" (*Ce,* 204).[179] Even Tayo's skepticism is abated and he has achieved a transcendental moment that provides him with assurance of survivance. He is no longer deracinated by the destructive cycle of despair. One way of measuring that is to gain a sense of the difference in Tayo before and after his calm contemplation a year later.[180] As the narrator tells us:

> Every day they had to look at the land, from horizon to horizon, and every day the loss was with them; it was the dead unburied, and the mourning of the lost going on forever. So they tried to sink the loss in booze, and silence their grief with war stories about their courage, defending the land they had already lost. (*Ce,* 157)

In contrast, by the time of his coming back to the ranch to take care of the cattle, he is sure that in spite of his losses, "nothing was lost; all was retained between the sky and the earth, and within himself, he had lost nothing" (*Ce,* 204). Due to this internal conviction, he can feel the motion of the mountainside from within, recognizing that the world is alive.[181] Like the hybrid cattle of Josiah, bred from the lanky desert breed and the meaty white Herefords, Tayo, as well as Night Swan and Betonie, is fortified to survive the threats of the evil spirits that take the form of both whites and Indians. Through Tayo, who speaks for both sides, Silko refuses to consider hybridity as the "brand of a pariah or a curse of invisibility."[182]

Ts'eh tells Tayo about the difficulty of his quest. As he struggles with choices near the end, Ts'eh warns him, "They have their stories about us – Indian people who are only marking time and waiting for the end" (*Ce,* 215). It is the same "they" that is referred to frequently as Silko writes in the opening poetic sequences: "So they try to destroy the stories / let the stories be confused or forgotten. / They would like that / They would be happy / Because we would be defenseless then" (*Ce,* 2). Kimberly M. Blaeser suggests that, although unnamed, the "they" in the novel clearly suggests a colonial presence that seeks to present the Indians as victims. Therefore, part of Tayo's spiritual pilgrimage is to come to awareness of his people's identity.[183] However, in other contexts, Tayo's cultural mixture really turns out to be instrumental rather than a liability for him. When he tries to complete his quest in the mountains, he avoids capture since the Laguna leaders and veterans' affairs authorities quibble over "who has proper jurisdiction over him." Ts'eh confides, "They haven't been able to agree. . . . they are trying to decide who you are" (*Ce*, 216). This is just like Betonie who endorses hybridity when he warns Tayo about the threats of using racial lines to navigate the world.[184]

Tayo's finally encounters a hybrid landscape at the end of the book when he discovers the Jackpile mine from which the uranium had been taken for the first atomic bomb. While living with Ts'eh, the Pueblo people become disturbed by his absence and odd behavior. His enemy, Emo, has convinced the people that he is crazy and that he should be captured and taken to an institution. Following Ts'eh's advice, Tayo escapes. At

the location of the uranium mine, Tayo contemplates the connection of this holy area and surrounding places with the damage of nuclear weapons.[185] As the novel tells as:

> Trinity site, where they exploded the first atomic bomb, was only three hundred miles to the southeast, at White Sands. And the top-secret laboratories where the bomb had been created were deep in the Jemez Mountains, on the land the government took from Cochiti Pueblo: Los Alamos, only a hundred miles northeast of him now, still surrounded by high electric fences and the ponderosa pine and tawny sandrock of the Jemez mountain canyon where the shrine of the twin mountain lions had always been. There was no end to it; it knew no boundaries; and he had arrived at the point of convergence where the fate of all living things, and even the earth, had been laid. (*Ce,* 228)

Tayo in this place sees two worlds meet that are far apart. The world of both the Indian mythology and western technology falls victim under the catastrophic impact of universal destruction: “From that time on, human beings were one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them, for all living things” (*Ce,* 228). In this sense, the novel shows that Tayo’s individual trauma is part of the trauma of the world at large. Tayo realizes that what he needs is finding a new perspective that will free him from his passive role as a victim whose cultural values have been destroyed by dispossession and extermination and whose identity as a mixedblood has been shattered for a second time by the war and some of those around him.[186]

> He cried the relief he felt at finally seeing the pattern, the way all the stories fit together - the old stories, the war stories, their stories - to become the story that was still being told. 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. (*Ce,* 229)

As Blanca Schorcht suggests, the boundaries that Tayo has experienced have been artificial, white constructs. The protagonist gains a different cultural perspective, recognizing that the old ways of his culture have never disappeared.[187] Tayo has already understood that his recovery rests on the “erasure of the Euro-American’s hermeneutic appropriation of his native environment.” Just like he recognizes the differing concepts with regard to animals and has erased the white story overlaid upon his landscape, he “overlays his own vulnerary story upon the elements of mass destruction the white has torn out of the ground.”[188] As Silko writes, “They had taken these beautiful rocks from deep within earth and they had laid them in a monstrous design” (*Ce,* 229). Tayo’s relationship with the land is sharply contrasted with that of the white world. He sees it as a place that

provides spiritual sustenance, not to imprison it and destroy its native creatures or to use it for destruction.[189]

Tayo sees the constellation of the stars which becomes the visible symbol of a cosmic memory. From this vision, Tayo understands that the Indians were there before the white man came, but the stars were there before the Indians arrived. Though the White invaders destroyed, displaced, and dispossessed the Indians, they will never be able to rob them of the land.[190]

> The stars had always been with them, existing beyond memory, and they were all held together there. Under these same stars the people had come down from White House in the north. They had seen mountains shift and rivers change course and even disappear back into the earth; but always there were these stars. (*Ce,* 235)

The novel culminates in Tayo's act of nonviolence. His final transition occurs when he is confronted with the sight of Emo as he brutally sacrifices Harley to lure Tayo out of hiding. Tayo almost loses his awareness as he tries to kill Emo, but turns away from violence. In this scene, he realizes that it is this act of violence and hatred that causes his conflict. He refuses to be caught in the witchery and its plan to destroy the world:[191] "It had been a close call. The witchery had almost ended the story according to its plan; Tayo had almost jammed the screwdriver into Emo's skull the way the witchery had wanted" (*Ce,* 235). As he resists the pull to kill his enemy, he defeats the power that seeks to destroy people. The lesson that Tayo realizes is that people must be willing to resist this power as they learn from and respect one another, as they practice, in short, "cultural miscegenation."[192] As Dee Alyson Horne suggests,

> Silko avoids replicating binarism in the colonial relationship by forging multiple positions that operate on several co-existing, ever-changing levels of affiliation, or strands of the web. An international identity complements, rather than competes with, local tribal identities. While this paradigm is primarily a liberatory, empowering strategy for Indian peoples to own their processes of cultural self-determination, it also serves as a model of social responsibility from which all human beings can benefit.[193]

Tayo's position as witness in the novel is introduced in Silko's portrayal of the Arrowboy myth of Native America before the scene in which Emo tortures Harley. The hoop dance legend parallels Tayo's going up to the hills to carry out the final part of his transition. In contrast, other drunk men are enacting a ceremony of murder at the uranium mine. Every story of connection has a corresponding one of death and separation. The steps of the hoop dance, designed for transition to wholeness, are distorted by the destroyers to

separate humans from one another. Therefore, Tayo's position as witness allows him to destroy all the boundaries created by the witchery. Without getting himself caught up in the violence itself, Tayo makes the vortex of hatred turn back on itself.[194]

> The witchman stepped through the hoop
> he called out that he would be a wolf.
> His head and upper body became hairy like a wolf
> But his lower body was still human.
> "Something is wrong," he said.
> "Ck'o'yo magic won't work
> if someone is watching us." (*Ce,* 230)

Tayo is seen at the beginning of the novel as an impotent and inchoate figure who incarnates the sickness of his culture. He is just like the protean speaker in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* who envisions a dying society in the aftermath of world war. The crisis, however, is brought to an almost utopian closure. Tayo finally assumes a place of honor within his family. He is no longer despised by his domineering aunt as the half-breed bastard of her sister.[195] The people are satisfied that he is healed and that "we will be blessed again" (*Ce,* 239). The mixedblood characters Tayo, old Betonie, and Night Swan construct what Patricia Riley calls a "contemporary mythic space" through which they manage to achieve "the kind of adaptation that is necessary for survival in the face of contemporary reality."[196]

Upon his return to Laguna, Tayo tells his story to a group of old men in the kiva. The men become interested in Ts'eh's eyes, for she too is of mixed race. The other men respond to Tayo's tory with a blessing. As the novel draws toward its end, the draught is over, a sign refers to Tayo's recovery of his identity.[197] The novel itself concludes with a blessing: "Sunrise / accept this offering, / Sunrise" (*Ce,* 244). Tayo is no longer a bothersome young man, feeling conflicted and isolated. Through his experience, he is initiated into shamanic perception. Though a mixedblood person, he is accepted by the elders and celebrated for the part he has played in this ceremony.[198]

Silko vividly creates in Tayo a person who has the physical features of opposed white and Indian races. He becomes a source of power, celebrated as a "model of hybrid vigor: the best of both white and Indian races and the values assumed to be associated with those racial features."[199]

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CHAPTER FOUR:
LOUISE ERDRICH'S *LOVE MEDICINE*

> "There were lots of people with mixed blood, lots of people who had their own confusions. I realized that this was part of my life – it wasn't something that I was making up – and that it was something I wanted to write about:"
>
> **-Louise Erdrich, *Conversations with Louise Erdrich and Michael* Dorris**

4.1: Foreword:

Fiction by Native North American writers has developed increasingly with both general readers and academics since N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1969. Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gerald Vizenor (1934), and James Welch (1940-2003) are linked with the first wave of writers of the Native American Renaissance.[1] Emphasis on traditional perspectives and ways of life is also reflected in the works of the second wave, which includes Simon Ortiz (1941-), Paula Gunn Allen (1939-2008), Louise Erdrich, and others. Erdrich is a registered member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas whose most notable novel *Love Medicine*, like many works from the Native American Renaissance, fuses the tradition of the Euro-American novel with the folktales, myths, and oral traditions of her Ojibway ancestors. Among the themes depicted in the novel are the clash with modernity, the effects of U.S. government policy on natives, and the clash of cultures that occurs as some characters struggle to maintain their identity. The change and diminution of spiritual life is also charted with tremendous pathos, and Erdrich introduces another special representation of native American way of life in the twentieth century, obviously advancing the tradition that emerges with Momaday and Silko.[2]

Erdrich constructs characters arising from two traditions: the Western traditions of the Catholic missionaries whose purpose was to civilize the tribe and the Chippewas culture of their ancestors. The collision of the worlds explored in the novel leads to a cultural tension on the part of many characters who experience confusion as well as psychological and spiritual crisis. These characters, including mixedblood men and women, face a difficult task as they try to bring together their Native American heritage and the expectations of the dominant white culture in the modern and postmodern United States.[3]

Nevertheless, in contrast to the "myth of the vanishing American" and its ideology intended to justify the genocidal policies toward Native peoples, Erdrich, like Momaday and Silko, presents novels which centre around the empowerment and survival of these

people through their cultures and traditions. Moreover, in John Carlos Rowe's view, writers like Erdrich aim to "write back to reaffirm the different cultures of Pueblo, Ojibway, Lakuta, and other native peoples in the face of their continuing exclusion by the dominant American ideology."[4]

However, while *Ceremony* and *House Made of Dawn* are postsecular in one sense, they reflect less patience with respect to the modern, secular ways of being. Indeed, Momaday and Silko make powerful dramatic arguments for the inclusion of mixedblood individuals in tribal communities. The case for intertribal sharing and the inclusion of mixedbloods are made within the circle of Native American life, a case that suggests less interest in imagining a postsecular attitude that would blend Western secular and Native American sacred habits of being on the terrain of technological and cultural postmodernity.[5]

Erdrich's semisecularized characters who most bear a resemblance to Abel and Tayo keep coming and going between nominally Native American and emphatically Euro-American zones right to the end. However, Erdrich insists that these characters are empowered and improved by their experiments.[6] As Karla Sanders suggests,

> *Love Medicine* presents characters searching for a healthy balance between seemingly diametrically opposed cultures. This search for a healthy balance is evinced in the characters' belief systems, in their relationships with each other, and within their own sense of personal identity. Marie Kashpaw, June Kashpaw, Lulu Lamartine, Nector kashpaw, and Lipsha Morrisey contend with their personal identities and beliefs, others' perceptions and expectations, and their place in their families and community. *Love Medicine* depicts characters whose searches lead them to discard obsolete identities as they journey towards a sense of subjectivity and self-knowledge; this journey becomes a process of healing.[7]

4.2: Louise Erdrich: A Hybrid Writer Who Recasts Identity:

Born in Little Falls, Minnesota in 1954, Erdrich was the eldest of seven children. Although both of her parents taught at Wahpeton Indian Boarding school, only her mother was a French Ojibwe (Chippewa), a Native American woman. Her father was of German-American origin. Raised among the Turtle Mountain Chippewa People, a community rich in storytelling traditions, she became influenced in both her choice of a career and in her sense of narrative. Among the influence was her grandfather, a tribal leader with a special gift for storytelling and a determination to preserve the Native culture.[8]

The multilingual and multinational heritage of Erdrich influenced her life . Her novels, *Love Medicine* (1984), *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988), and *The Bingo Palace* (1994), mirror the ambivalence that marks the lives of people from multicultural

backgrounds. As Katherine Rainwater remarks, Erdrich's novels "feature Native Americans, mixed bloods, and other culturally and socially displaced characters whose marginal status is simultaneously an advantage and disadvantage, a source of power and powerlessness."[9]

Family stories of life during the hard times of the 1930s, told by her grandfather Patrick Gourneau, had a strong impression on Erdrich, and the settings of both *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen* are acknowledged to have a lot of depression. While she was in high school, Erdrich read poetry and continued to write and record her observations and experiences in a series of journals. In 1972, she entered Dartmouth College among the first female students admitted to the college. Moreover, it was during that year that Dartmouth established its Native American Studies department. There, she met anthropologist Michael Dorris, her future husband, who was hired as a chairman to the college's new Native American Studies Program.[10] Work at Dartmouth was the beginning of exploring her Native American heritage. Collaborating with Dorris, she introduced a children's story published in an Indian magazine. Later, she was encouraged to poetry writing and one of her poems won the American Academy of Poets Prize in 1975.[11]

Erdrich's first major publication was a collection of poems entitled *Jacklight* (1984). She had also began writing the stories that later became *Tracks*, one of which she published under the title "Fleur."[12] After graduating from Dartmouth in 1976, , she returned to North Dakota where she conducted poetry workshops and then moved to Boston to edit the Boston Indian Council's newspaper, the *Circle*. She also worked various jobs as a beet weeder, lifeguard, psychiatric aide, construction worker, and others. From these jobs she got new experiences and materials to use in her fiction writing.[13] Through working at these jobs, especially for the Boston Indian Council, Erdrich gained compassion for and an understanding of people of mixedblood. As she says in an interview,

> There were lots of people with mixed blood, lots of people who had their own confusions. I realized that this was part of my life – it wasn't something that I was making up – and that it was something I *wanted* to write about. I wanted to tell it because it was something that should be told. I was forced to write about it.[14]

Motivated to focus on her writing, Erdrich enrolled in a creative writing program at Johns Hopkins University. After finishing her master's degree in 1979, she returned to Dartmouth College, hired as a "writer-in-residence." She and Dorris got married in 1981, beginning a period of collaboration and influencing each other. In 1982, Erdrich was given

a fellowship from the National Endowment for Arts. "The World's Greatest Fisherman," a story collaboratively composed with Dorris, won the Nelson Algren Fiction Competition. This story was developed as the first chapter of Erdrich's best-known novel *Love Medicine*.[15]

In 1985, Erdrich won the O. Henry Prize for *Saint Marie*, a story that appears as the second chapter of *Love Medicine*. Erdrich's novel, which garnered the 1984 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, spans 50 years and illustrates the struggles of a dispossessed people grappling with the modern "white and half-breed" world. It was the first of Erdrich's four-volume saga about several interrelated Indian families living on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota from the early 1900s until the present. Many of the novel's characters reappear, to a greater or lesser degree, in the saga's three other novels: *The Bingo Palace*, *Tracks*, and *The Beet Queen*.[16]

In *Baptism of Desire* (1989), her next collection of poetry, Erdrich examines the intersections of her Chippewa traditions, Roman Catholic religion, and human sexuality. The title of the work is taken from an obscure tenet of the Catholic Church. The collection itself focuses on spirituality and the hybrid form of religion, with Native values and Roman Catholic mingling but also differing, that Erdrich grew up practicing.[17] Two years later, Erdrich and Dorris together wrote *The Crown of Columbus*, the only novel upon which both of their names appear. This work is in part a historical fiction and in part a mystery-adventure and a tale of romance. The plot introduces important questions with regard to the meaning of Columbus's voyage for Native Americans and Europeans today. As Lorena L. Stookey suggests, the work reflects that Columbus's gift to the New World serves as an emblem of the suffering of Native American peoples after contact with the Christians of Europe.[18]

In 1995, Erdrich published a memoir, *The Blue Jay's Dance*, a work that offers readers a glimpse of her life as both mother and writer during the busy years of the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the decade of the 1990s witnessed a tragedy within the Erdrich-Dorris household. Their oldest child, Abel, was struck and killed by a car in 1991. Abel suffered from the physical and mental disabilities that reflect severe instances of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Under the pressure of these conditions, Erdrich and Dorris separated in 1996, and in the following year Dorris committed suicide.[19]

In 1998, after Dorris's death, Erdrich published *The Antelope Wife*, a novel dedicated to her five children. This work contained a prefatory note in which she states that

her novel was written before the death of her husband and that he is now remembered with love by his family. Yet, the suicide and the mentioning of two failing marriages suggest possible autobiographical elements. A new set of characters are introduced in this work. Such characters who are members of the Ojibwa now living in Minneapolis, like the Kashpaws, Nanapushes, and other families from the North Dakota novels, are to be seen also in *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (2001), a work that sheds light on the harsh early years of the reservation.[20]

After 2000, Erdrich continued writing effectively and setting her stories mostly in North Dakota and the Chippewa landscape for which she is most famous. Other novels written by Erdrich include *The Master Butchers Singing Club* (2003), *Four Souls* (2004), and *The Painted Drum* (2005). Her most recent novel, *The Plague of Doves* (2008), portrays a murder mystery set in the rural countryside of North Dakota in 1911 and its effect on future generations. In addition to her fiction, Erdrich has written four children's books: *Grandmother's Pigeon* (1996), *The Birchbark House* (1999), *The Range Eternal* (2002), and *The Game of Silence* (2005). She has also written another nonfiction work, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* (2003).[21]

Like Momaday and Silko, Erdrich feels compelled to tell stories of the Native Americans who attempt to rediscover their heritage, cultural continuity and ethnic identity. The endurance of Chippewa people is reflected in her writing, and the reader can notice how Erdrich interconnects the lives of Chippewa families – Kashpaws, Pillagers, Lazarres, Lamartines, Morrisseys, Tooses, and Nanapushes in her North Dakota cycle of novels introduced since the publication of *Love Medicine*.[22] Thinking of herself as a citizen of two nations, she both experiments with and works from the Euro-American tradition of the novel, but in her literary art she also incorporates elements and features of other genres like the oral storytelling tradition.[23] The use of oral tradition is meant to reveal the sense of survival and to introduce a Native standpoint. This point is validated by James Ruppert who comments on *Love Medicine*, stating that "What we have is a novel, a western structure, whose task is to create something of a Native oral tradition. Erdrich uses a Western field of discourse to arrive at a Native perspective."[24] Therefore, "just as stories in Native American communities will continue to be created and narrated, their homes and identities are fluid, unstable, and in process. Erdrich constructs a Native American home through her writing."[25]

It is important to notice that Erdrich dedicated much of her works to write about preserving the traditional culture of her tribe, the Chippewa or Ojibwe, found in Canada by the French explorers in the seventeenth century. These people who live in small villages around the Upper Great Lakes near Sault Sainte Marie did not have tribal organization, and the village people ruled themselves. However, they prospered and gained more territory. Moreover, they began giving more focus on increasing tribal rituals and customs, establishing what is called the Midewiwin, or Grand Medicine Society. Practicing the old ways of the old medicine is evident in *Love Medicine*, as the character Lipsha Morrissey tries to recreate the love-potion ritual for his grandparents. In the United States, the Ojibwa became recognized as the Chippewa. By the early 19th century, they lived in Ontario, Mantoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada.[26]

Many of the Chippewa people, an Algonquian-speaking tribe, settled in the Turtle Mountain area, where the reservation itself was established later by an executive order dated 21 December 1882. It is in this area that Erdrich places the "original Kashpaw," a member of the first generation of *Love Medicine*. As Julie Maristuen-Rodakowski suggests, just from the names, Erdrich provides the reader with characters who are indeed "native" Americans. Moreover, Erdrich depicts the panic felt by characters who move from the reservation to the city, especially in *The Beet Queen* and *Love Medicine*. Yet, of the two novels, *Love Medicine* provides more information about this cultural transition.[27] In it, for example, Erdrich introduces Albertine Johnson, a mixedblood who runs away from home to make her life in Fargo and finds difficulty in moving from the Indian culture to American culture. During her time in the city, she realizes that she is "emotionally unstable."[28]

Nevertheless, though the traders and the Chippewa made considerable friendly contact, the Indians were often cheated by the voyagers out of valuable furs and taught to use alcohol. As Alexander Henry and David Thompson point out,

> The Indians totally neglect their ancient ceremonies, and to what can this degeneracy be ascribed but to their intercourse with us; particularly as they are so unfortunate as to have a continual succession of opposition parties to teach them roguery and destroy both mind and body with that pernicious article, rum?[29]

Consequently, Erdrich feels the necessity to record the history and tradition of her people. Therefore, talking about the forced removal of her tribe from their homeland, she launched two of her works in 1999 with the historical novel *The Birchbark House* and its sequel *The Game of Silence* in 2004. In these novels, Erdrich sheds light on the conflicts

between the Ojibwe and the outsiders as she introduces the story of Omikayas, a young Ojibwe girl living on an island in Lake Superior. The author presents the struggle of this girl who witnesses the threatened life of her people at the hands of European settlers.[30] John T. Gillespie says that the late 1840s, the time of these novels, witnessed comparative peace between the Ojibwe and the white settlers or other Native American tribes. However, soon later, news was spreading that past agreements was being rescinded by the U.S. government to displace the Ojibwe farther west into the territory of the Bwaanag, or Dakota and Lakota people.[31]

Accordingly, Erdrich is serving her larger purpose of recovering a part of the history of Ojibwa culture. Although she states that the reason behind writing *The Birchbark House* is largely personal, surely another thing she attempts to focus on is to educate the audience. As Don Latham concludes, in so doing she "moves beyond the need merely to address familial injustices" and "calls on us to develop a new historical consciousness."[32]

As a result, writers such as Erdrich seek to make themselves visible to the mainstream culture and historians. Erdrich herself, as a novelist who wishes to provide a reliable representation of her people, considers the history of America as being "exclusionary – a monologic narrative of male Anglo-American progress that constructs others as people without history." Thus, in Seema Kurup's view, "writing history . . . has become one way for marginalized peoples to counter their invisibility."[33] Kurup provides a reasonable justification for Erdrich's emphasis on writing works that offer an alternate, revisionist history that questions the historical representations of her people. She states that

> The constructions of ethnicity, cultural identity, and history are largely determined by the dominant culture and by those in power. Often cultural tags, such as "Native American," "woman," and "black," are meant only to oppress and subjugate rather than disclose a fluidity and fullness of being.[34]

Summarizing the essential issues raised by the author of *Love Medicine*, Catherine Rainwater states that

> Erdrich's recurrent themes concern the ties between people and geographical locations, the importance of community among all living beings, the complexities of individuals and cultural identity, and the exigencies of marginalization, disposition, and cultural survival.[35]

In this way, Erdrich is like Momaday and Silko, in that she insists on presenting her characters "not as Noble Savage victims or as dying representatives of a lost authenticity,

but as tough, compassionate people who use the vital capacity of discourse to shape – and not merely reflect – reality."[36] She recognizes that the identity portrayed by the European narrative was highly falsified. Therefore, she rejects the European perception of Indian American people, asserting that they are no longer to be marginalized to live up to the stereotypical view. Responding to a question in an interview, Erdrich says, "I think more interest is there, because so much of what is being written now is breaking the stereotypes and giving a different view of Indian Americans."[37]

As a result of the tremendous changes among her tribe, which include land losses, Erdrich's works are imbued with a sense of place, as do Momaday and Silko. According to P. Jane Hafen, the series of novels written by Erdrich comprises a complex interweaving of characters in relation to an imaginary reservation but with descriptions and events that reverberate with the woodlands culture of the Ojibwe. In this way, geographical locale does not only reflect the cultural markers in stories, but it frequently represents a trope for identification.[38] In this sense, the ways by which individuals and groups relate to specific landscapes as sacred indicate a distinctive feature of Erdrich's works, one that reflects the contrast between the relative mobility of European culture and the rootedness of various Native American cultures. Erdrich comments:

> In a tribal view of the world, where one place has been inhabited for generations, the landscape becomes enlivened by a sense of group and family history. Unlike most contemporary writers, a traditional storyteller fixes listeners in an unchanging landscape combined of myth and reality. People and place are inseparable.[39]

Louis Owens validates this when he points out that "in Erdrich's fiction, those characters who have lost a close relationship with the earth – and specifically with that particular geography that informs a tribal identity – are the ones who are lost."[40]

Tribal peoples and the earth are mutually self-defining. Forgetting this reciprocal relationship only results in destruction. Besides, Erdrich refutes assimilation and the idea of the Vanishing American. Through connection to the places and the stories, the Ojibwe, despite a long period of suffering, never stop existing as one of the main aboriginal cultures in North America as they struggle to survive.[41] In *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*, Erdrich contrasts two mapping traditions. For her, as David Stirrup suggests, only those people who hold a true relation to the land and have local, indigenous knowledge can correctly map the place.[42] This is evident in the conversation between the characters Nanapush and Father Damien. As Nanapush narrates:

> White people usually name places for men—presidents and generals and entrepreneurs. Ojibwe name places for what grows there or what is found. . . . We Anishinaabeg are the keepers of the names of the earth. And unless the earth is called by the names it gave us humans, won't it cease to love us? And isn't it true that if the earth stops loving us, everyone, not just the Anishinaabeg, will cease to exist?[43]

Nevertheless, Erdrich's works also revealed the unspeakable abject conditions in which the indigenous ethnospace was transformed into a site of dispossession and extinction. In *Love Medicine*, the reservation is described as a ground of terror and alienation from cultural past and tribal knowledge. This disastrous effect is a consequence of "the intrusion of exogenous forces of capitalism and colonialism." For the character Albertine, the reservation turns out as one marked with dislocation and loss.[44] As he tells in the novel, "The policy of allotment was a joke. As I was driving toward the land, looking around, I saw as usual how much of the reservation was sold to whites and lost forever" (*LM*, 12)[45]

It is only in *The Crown of Columbus* that Erdrich presents "the urgent political agenda of reclaiming ancestral land base, by reconstructing the past and official historiography in a radical manner." In *Tracks*, the character Nanapush, through his oral history, also laments the tragic loss of the land and the cultural genocide of his people. The limitless pueblo of the Anishinabe and their cultural memory are on the verge of extinction. He even considers the loss to other entrepreneurial Indians. He shows how some are complicit in their demise, as they work together with the colonialist technologies.[46] Nanapush laments, "I am a man, but for years I had known how it was to lose a child of my blood. Now I also knew the uncertainties of facing the world without land to call home."[47]

The Bingo Palace, though suggesting a more palpable existence for the tribe since the passage of the Dawes Act, is not simply a celebration of the return of tradition. It is a book of hope than of hopes fulfilled. The character Lipsha, trying to reclaim his heritage, utters the admonition that the reservation is not a real estate. The last lines of the novel describes the confiscation of Fleur's land by the Turcot lumber company, showing the ultimate intrusion of capitalism.[48] As the novel declares, "In the dead cold of winter, Fleur Pillager went out. It was said by those who came to call on her, who came to take her house away with signed papers, that to move at all the old woman had to oil her joints with a thin grease she kept by the door."[49]

Another underlying issue raised by Erdrich is concerned with Catholicism and its destructive influence on the Chippewa people. Karen Janet McKinney suggests that in Erdrich's view, when a people's spiritual system of beliefs is threatened and attacked and an alien system is imposed upon them, the result is only an inevitable destruction of their culture. Many problems are the result of two opposing systems. For instance, "the concept of linear time battles the concept of holistic or ceremonial time, and the benign exploitation of the natural world encounters the exploitation at the expense of natural systems."[50] Such clashes occur between two conflicting codes, especially between "codes originating within western European society and those originating within native American culture." At the top of these clashes, however, is the clash between shamanism and Christianity.[51]

Stacey Donohue suggests that all of the characters in *Love Medicine* struggle with the imposition of a culture and spirituality that are in conflict with the native ones. This can be noticed in the relationship between Marie Kashpaw and Sister Leopolda. As the writer remarks, Erdrich, through Sister Leopolda, satirically reveals how the religion of white folks did not make sense of the world for Ojibwes. This is because it "appeals primarily to American Indians who are already distancing themselves from their own community." However, certain aspects of Catholicism are taken by some characters, like Marie Kashpaw, only when these aspects coexist with their traditional tenets, and thus they are not destroyed by it.[52] Also paramount in Erdrich's novel is Lipsha' struggle to discover his way between two conflicting systems. As a mixedblood, Lipsha is torn between two worlds. His expression of grief is obvious as he laments that the pervasive presence of the Chippewa gods vanished when the "Roman Catholics gained ground." In other words, the novel illustrates that Christian missions are also another way of practicing a cultural process of colonialization.[53]

In a similar way in *Tracks*, Erdrich's two narrators likewise struggle with liminality in their efforts to leave behind early lives in favor of others they have chosen. Nanapush grows up Christian in a Jesuit school, but later chooses life in the woods and Chippewa tradition; the other narrator, Pauline, is a mixedblood raised in the Native American tradition, but she wishes to be white and eventually becomes a fanatical nun, constantly at war with the "pagans" who had once been her relatives.[54] Therefore, several critics conclude that the Church as an institution is portrayed in a negative way by Erdrich, though certain individual representatives of the Church, such as Father Damien in *Tracks*, are revealed to show sympathy and assistance to those victims of the institutional Church. The

distorted Catholicism of Pauline/Sister Leopolda in the early novels of Erdrich overshadow such kindness, suggesting that "holding on to orthodox Catholicism is not in the best interests of the Ojibwe community."[55]

Erdrich has focused on the cultural confusion that confronts many people of mixedblood. As a writer with a foot in two worlds, she also writes from a vantage point in-between two cultures. As she comments on her status of mixedblood writer:

> When you live in the mainstream and you know that you´re not quite, not really there, you listen for a voice to direct you. I think, besides that, you also are a member of another nation. It gives you a strange feeling this dual citizenship. . . . It´s kind of incomprehensible that there´s the ability to take in non-Indian culture and be comfortable in both worlds.[56]

Erdrich's works reflect the difficult task that confronts mixedblood characters who struggle hard to achieve their identity. These characters "occupy a marginal position because they are unwanted by both cultures and therefore ultimately led into isolation."[57]

As ethnic intermarriage increases, individuals of mixed heritage have the right to express themselves. They are not to be limited by any ethnic and racial caricatures and stereotypes. It is possible to be at peace with the multiple aspects of who they are, since it is evident that those who attempt to assimilate at the price of forgetting their connections to their heritage are the ones to have more problems than those who accomplish a positive sense of relationship to their heritage. They "should not have to suppress parts of themselves in order to pass for what the dominant group defines as normal."[58] In *The Crown of Columbus*, Erdrich describes the complex cultural self-definition through the character Vivian Twostar:

> There are times when I control who I'll be, and times when other people decide. I'm not all anything, but I'm a little bit of a lot. My roots spread in every direction, and if I water one set of them more often than others, it's because they need it more. . . . "Caught between two worlds," is the way it's often put in clichéd prose, but I'd put it differently. We are the catch.[59]

From what is revealed by Erdrich's character, one can notice that the role of the deplorable deracinated mixedblood is not accepted. Instead, Vivian is able to transform her mixed ancestry into something positive. She is also able to reposition herself like the traditional shape-shifting trickster with humor and creativity. Rather than thinking about its risks, she takes benefit from the opportunities offered by her mixed origins, though aware of the precariousness of her self-conceptualization. In other words, Erdrich's character "refuses the role of the victim, and her defiance explodes the very categories of center and

margin." The process of identifying with representations that portray mixedblood people as "tragic causalities in the process of colonization would, in effect, perpetuate White hegemony."[60] In Caroline Rosenthal's view, Vivian's quotation illustrates

> Erdrich's belief that a position in-between two cultures is enriching, not depriving. Rather than being "caught" between two cultures, the Native character in the novel defines her people as "the catch" in the double sense of the word. The "catch" is the gain, the profit from cultural contact, not the pitfall. As a good catch exceeds the expected and carries hope for new beginnings, catch stands for a chance, an opportunity. Whereas "to be caught" signifies a victim position, to be "the catch" indicates a subject position with agency.[61]

In *Tracks*, Pauline Puyat, another mixedblood, denies her own Indian identity in an attempt to embrace Catholicism. She does this by asking her father to send her to Argus, where she hopes to erase her identity as a mixedblood. She just wants to show her half-white like her mother and be a pure Canadian like her grandmother. Pauline's identity is compromised by disconnecting herself from her people and rejecting her identity as a mixed blood. However, even this rejection turns out to be somewhat vague. She learns that her family moved away from the reservation and thus becomes castaway and frustrated.[62]

Pauline stands as the opposite to the first narrator Nanapush, who grows up as Christian in a Jesuit school but later chooses life of the Chippewa tradition. Trying to suppress and deny the Native part in her body, Pauline is often considered as being invisible. She is despised for her ugliness and hybridism, as she wanders in her confusion between white and Indian worlds. Her mysticism and eventual fanaticism reflect an attempt to escape from such invisibility, from her condition as a mixedblood.[63] However, Rainwater states:

> Despite her scorn for her Native American upbringing, Pauline (later to become sister Leopolda) cannot quite escape her old way of construing experience. . . she recounts the sufferings of St. John of the Cross, St. Catherine, St. Cecelia, and St. Blaise, and says with pride: "Predictable shapes, these martyrdoms. Mine took a different form."[64]

The passage helps illustrate the consequence of what happens when cultural codes conflict. The interpretation of experience offered by Pauline is understood as dual and irreconcilable. "She is not allowed to privilege one religious code or to synthesize the two as a form of resolution. Instead, Pauline is placed in a permanent state of irresolution – she is crazy." Nevertheless, although the situation of Pauline is not as attractive as others that

demonstrate the positive effects of mixedbloods, its effectiveness lies in the detailed presentation "of the tragic aspects of such a mixed-blood figure."[65]

However, Erdrich contends that the duty of Native American writers differs greatly from that of others. In "Where I Ought to Be: A Writer's Sense of Place," she writes: "In the light of enormous loss," they "must tell the stories of contemporary survivors while protecting and celebrating the cores of cultures left in the wake of the catastrophe."[66] Writers such as Erdrich have produced a rich array of knowledge that goes in direct contrast to the inane stereotype of the Indian as soundless. Therefore, Erdrich feels the task to write about the survival of many Native American cultures that were annihilated. Peoples of these cultures work to "recover land, language, knowledge, sovereignty, voice, and indeed, entire peoples and nations."[67]

The notion of the mixedblood in *Love Medicine* represents a departure from most of the works that were written from the sixties to the mid-eighties. What prevails in that period is a "preoccupation with alienation" and "powerlessness," and the works were mostly accompanied by "anxiety, hopelessness, and victimization." The movement away from the perpetual state of victimization surfaces in Erdrich's fiction, one with an indication that "people are fated to survive."[68] Owens grants that

> The seemingly doomed Indian or tortured mixedblood caught between worlds surfaces in Erdrich's fiction, but such characters tend to disappear behind those other, foregrounded characters who hang on in spite of it all, who confront with humor the pain and confusion of identity and, like a storyteller, weave a fabric of meaning and significance out of the remnants.[69]

Using similar arguments, Pauline Woodward writes that Erdrich "offers a new rendering of community to convey the remnants of Chippewa culture and the fragmented lives of contemporary people who endure despite the devastating loss of their tradition and the discontinuity of their existence."[70] In addition, as Jeanne Rosier Smith remarks, several of Erdrich's characters have an important similarity to Chippewa trickster Nanabozho, and the evolving narrative forms of *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, and *The Bingo Palace* delineate the history of a Chippewa community in trickster terms. Far from reinforcing stereotypes of a vanishing tribe, they show vibrancy, variety, and continuance, attesting to the personal and cultural survival of the people.[71]

Lauren S. Cardon suggests that despite characters like Pauline/Leopolda, the mixedblood Indian is viewed in a state of fighting the negative persona. Rather than viewed as "half-civilized" or "half-polluted," the mixedblood tries to "transcend the conflicting

identities he visualizes as warring inside of him." Writers such as Erdrich suggest that the inner conflict can either destroy or strengthen the mixedblood. Having the ability to transcend the dual identities makes him achieve a kind of "double insight."[72] Mixedbloodedness represents, for Erdrich, a quest that is both a curse and a blessing. As she asserts,

> One of the characteristics of being a mixed-blood is searching. You look back and say, 'Who am I from?' You must question. You must make certain choices. You're able to. And it's a blessing and it's a curse. All of our searches involve trying to discover where we are from.[73]

However, in the typical native American plots of the previous novels, the reader finds a protagonist involved in a struggle to discover his identity, and the story line is mainly governed by the process of loss and recovery. While the conflict is essentially manifested between native American and white, *Love Medicine* has no clearly defined conflict. Instead of a principal protagonist or conflict, a variety of characters attempt to survive in a world where the government and God seem to have discarded them, as Louise Flavin suggests.[74] Moreover, what differentiates *Love Medicine* from so much of Native American literature is that it is not polemic. It has "no axe to grind, no major indictment of white society. It is simply a story about Indian life-its politics, humor, emptiness, and occasional triumphs.If Erdrich has a gift, it is the ability to capture the inner life and language of her people."[75]

4.4: *Love Medicine*: The Mixedblood and the Rejection of Sacrifice:

While planning to go back to the abode she left years ago, June Kashpaw, the central character in the novel, lingers, at the Easter weekend of 1981, for a little time with a blue-collar white man she meets in a bar. After they make love, she resumes her plan to go home but a snowstorm kills her *en route*. June appears again in the novel like a disturbing ghost haunting the members of her big family.

June's family, including her sister, Zelda, Zelda's daughter, Albertine Johnson, the narrator of this sequence; her cousin Lipsha; and June's son King and his white wife, Lynette, perform commemoration ceremonies for her. Suddenly, King, feeling estranged from the reservation, which was once his home, pours his anger on his wife attempting to kill her. The violence results in smashing the pies the women had baked for the occasion.

Flashing back forty-seven years, specifically in 1934, the novel tells the story of the family matriarch, Marie Lazarre. Attempting to be a nun during youth, Marie meets Nector Kashpaw; a meeting which fatefully changes both their lives. Nector has gone back to the reservation to marry his first love, Lulu Nanapush, but he could not forget Marie. Although he ultimately marries Marie, Nector is still attracted to Lulu and ends up sharing his life with both women.

As for Lulu, she marries Henry Lamartine who later dies. Then, her dealings with several different men result in eight sons. In an episode set in 1957, Beverly Lamartine, the childless brother of Henry, visits Lulu to take Henry Jr. away to raise as his own. Instead, Lulu manages to seduce him and make him share life with two women as his brother Nector. This same year, Nector leaves Marie for Lulu but will later return to Marie.

The story shifts back to Albertine, who in 1973 forsakes home and settles in Fargo, North Dakota. At a motel there, she accidentally meets Henry Lamartine Jr., who is coming back from military service in the Vietnam War. Due to his troubling war experience, Henry kills himself the next year. His cousin Lyman symbolically sinks his car into river.

Lulu's other troubled son, Gerry Nanapush, has spent much of his adult life in and out of prison. Gerry keeps breaking out of jail to be with his wife, Dot Alore, but when he kills a state trooper, he is sentenced to life in prison, and Dot is left to raise their baby daughter alone.

Returning to 1981, the novel speaks of Gordie, June's former husband, who is tormented by guilt at her demise and gets drunk. Driving home, he hits a deer and loads it into his car, thinking he can sell the meat. But the deer is only stunned and revives in the car. Believing the animal is possessed by June's spirit, Gordie beats the deer to death with a crowbar. Then he drives to the convent and confesses to a bewildered nun that he has murdered his wife. He runs away and later is arrested by the tribal police.

Lipsha Morrissey desires to reconcile his grandfather Nector with his grandmother Marie. He resolves to grand her "love medicine," raw turkey heart, to feed Nector and break the spell that Lulu still holds over him. Ironically, Nector chokes on the turkey heart and dies, his ghost returning to haunt both Lipsha and Marie. Lulu, now old and nearly blind, also beholds Nector's ghost. Marie makes her peace with her longtime enemy and takes care of Lulu after she undergoes an eye operation.

In 1984, Lipsha visits King and Lynette, hoping to learn about Gerry, his father. As they play cards, a report comes on television that Gerry has escaped from prison again.

Suddenly, Gerry enters the house and accuses King of betraying him while in prison. The men play cards for King's car, bought with the insurance money from June's death. Lipsha wins the game. The police break in to recapture Gerry, but he escapes. Later, driving King's car, Lipsha discovers his father hiding in the trunk. Father and son reconnect and exchange stories as they drive. Lipsha takes his father to the Canadian border and freedom and then returns home, feeling free and whole.

Love Medicine consists of sixteen chapters, each narrated in the first person; at other times, the characters speak in the third person. Seven members of the five families – the Nanapushes, Kashpaws, Lamartines, Lazarres, and Morrisseys – tell their stories throughout the novel. Sometimes, characters reflect their views about the same incidents. For example, both Marie and Nector tell about their meeting on the hill below the convent. Such technique enables the reader to know both sides of the story.[76] One of the interesting things about the novel is that the community voice represents the point of view and that gossip is the means of exchanging information. Therefore, there is no single protagonist, no narrator, but rather it is the whole community that deal with the upheavals that arise from the book.[77] Lipsha Morrissey, as he searches for the right ingredients for his love potion, comments, "After a while I started to remember things I'd heard gossiped over" (*LM*, 237). Commenting on this topic, Kathleen M. Sands writes:

> The very nature of gossip is instability, with each teller limited by his or her own experience and circumstances. It is often from all the episodes, told by many individuals in random order, that the whole may be known – probably not to some community member but, ironically, to some outsider who has been patient enough to listen and frame the episodes into a coherent whole. In forming that integrated whole, the collector has many choices but only a single intention, to present a complete story in a stable from.[78]

Erdrich's use of the form of the novel lies in the tradition of William Faulkner, because she also places several narrators within the mythic landscape of a local community. Nevertheless, she transfigured the novel as genre in her hands. She "specializes in a hybrid genre, fiction with the intensity and lyricism of poetry, short story sequences that transcend themselves to become novels."[79] In addition, as Hertha D. Wong points out, Erdrich and Faulkner not only share similarities in the usage of multiple narration, but they are also both interested in the "effects of race, miscegenation, the haunting power of the past, and the ironic intersections of the comic and the tragic." Similarly, like Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, *Love Medicine* opens with an event that introduces the death of a central female character,

one that is essential to initiate the actions and memories of the characters and, to a great degree, unifies the narrative sequence.[80]

Yet, the incorporation of multiple narrators has often been read as going back to Native American storytelling, inserted into the form of the novel. This is because traditional American stories operate dynamically amid clusters of loosely connected circles. The emphasis of action changes from one character to another as the story unfolds. There is no 'point of view' as the term is generally understood, unless the action itself, the story's purpose, can be termed 'point of view'.[81] Explaining the importance of oral tradition, Erdrich states:

> It is the reason so many stories are written in the first person – I hear the story told. At the same time I believe in and deeply cherish books. . . . The town library was my teacher every bit as much as sitting in the kitchen or out under the trees swapping stories or listening to older relatives. So the two are not incompatible to me. I love the voice and I love the texture of writing, the feel of the words on the page, the construction.[82]

Consequently, Erdrich's novel is informed by both Native American and Western literary traditions. Both blend in the use of multiple perspectives. On the one hand, the novel reflects a postmodern approach, since using multiple narratives forces the reader to acknowledge the multiplicity of the realities around them. On the other hand, it suggests native American storytelling because structural remnants of the oral tradition are incorporated into written literature through the use of many different first-person narrators.[83] James Ruppert points out that the use of multiple narrators in Erdrich's novel gives the reader an opportunity to have insight into each character:

> For both Native and non-Native implied readers, the stories Erdrich tells address, clarify, and define the various ways that identity exists in both cultural frameworks. As she layers these identities in the text, they become visible through the merging of epistemological codes that are used to signify psychological, social, communal, and mythic senses of identity. The mediational actions of the author serve to protect and celebrate culture by a continuing recreation of the multiple facets of identity through multiple narratives allowing negotiation to replace simple concepts of identity in either system.[84]

Moreover, Erdrich reduces the distance between the storyteller and audience by having some of the characters directly address their audience in their performance. For example, Lipsha, at the end of *Love Medicine*, suddenly addresses the reader with the 'you', in the same way as traditional storytellers address their audience. As they are on the way to Canada, he asks his father whether or not he had killed the trooper, a crime for which he had

been sent to jail for two consecutive life sentences. Lipsha says, "If I tell you he said no, you will think he was lying," and he then ends his speech with "I'm sorry but I just don't trust to write down what he answered, yes or no" (*LM*, 330-331). Here, the effect that Erdrich creates is one of immediacy and intimacy, making the reader a participant in the process of reading and creation of meaning.[85] The reader has an active role to play. He has to work with the "spiral structure" that Erdrich adopts in the novel. This structure "circles through time to reveal with each swing more information about past events that tie the narrative together." Therefore, the reader must untangle events and straighten out the fishing line of lives in order to discern the patterns.[86]

In addition, using a circular structure to the novel establishes a sense of perfection and completeness. The reader is invited to go back and forth in time, reading, decoding, and participating energetically in the marvelous "disclosure of the characters' lives." The death of June at the beginning of the novel, for example, is to be understood later on as different characters react to her death and tell stories about her love relationship with Gerry Nanapush and about their son Lipsha. The reader also discovers, only after several chapters, that the girl walking up the hill towards the Sacred Heart Convent is the same Grandma Kashpaw that adopts both June first and her son Lipsha later. In addition, she is the same Marie Lazarre whom Nector Kashpaw marries.[87] Besides, the opening of the novel is intimately connected to the ending, a connection that is related to the identity of both characters as mixedblood figures. In fact, the novel begins with June and ends with Lipsha, both of them going back home.[88]

Accordingly, though Erdrich presents a novel intensely marked by the tradition of the American novel, she, as with many contemporary native American writers, has fashioned a hybrid of the traditional story and the novel. Such mix of forms demonstrates that mixedbloodedness, literal or figurative, is to be viewed as a fundamental characteristic of the contemporary native American Novel. In this way, Erdrich writes what might be called "mixed-blood narrative" since her "texts occupy, in terms of subject matter and formal qualities, the margin between purely traditional Native American modes of representation and those modes common in European American culture."[89]

Erdrich's *Love Medicine* also resembles the works produced by Momaday, Silko and others, particularly in its focus on the theme of homecoming. Yet, this theme is refashioned in the novel. For example, whereas writers such as McNickle, Momaday, Silko, and James Welch all depict the return of male characters, in Erdrich's fiction the notion of

discovering identity is shared by male and female characters.[90] Moreover, *Love Medicine* has little of the violence that characterizes the novels written by McNickle, Momaday, and Silko. It simply presents a variety of personal relationships and the conflict of families in their search for identity. Commenting on this point of the novel, Owens states:

> Erdrich does not ignore the racism and brutality of Euramerica's dealings with Indian people, but for the first time in a novel by a Native American author, she makes the universality of Indian lives and tragedies easily accessible to non-Indian readers...These tangled lives are not so radically different from the common catastrophes of mainstream Americans... yet no reader can come away from *Love Medicine* without recognizing the essential Indianess of Erdrich's cast and concerns.[91]

Native American mixedbloods in American fiction, mainly that of the nineteenth century, have often been characterized as an "unfortunate group of people, genetically marked as doomed, defective, and double-crossed by racial and cultural confusion." Apparently torn between two worlds, several mixedblood protagonists move inevitably towards their demises on the altars of "manifest destiny."[92] Mixedbloods have been linked to the idea of pollution, abandoned historically by the colonizing power. The hybrids of the union of Indians and Europeans were not considered a part of the progress of man, but a "faulty stock," a degeneracy that portended the demise of civilization. By mid-nineteenth century, mixedbloods were no longer regarded as the agents of civilization.[93]

Robert Bieder states that the prevailing notion among most Americans by the 1850s was:

> If a person possessed some Indian blood, he was an Indian. Blood not only gave a person his identity but served to shape the public's expectations of his destiny . . . Not only were mixed-bloods considered 'faulty stock,' but they were believed to prefer Indian life and to have cast their lot with the Indian. Like the Indian, the mixed-blood was viewed as headed for extinction.[94]

According to William Scheick in *The Half blood: A Cultural Symbol in 19th-century American Fiction*, the sacrifice of the mixedblood is "the simplest literary strategy for resolving the dilemma his existence poses." This is because his status among frontier perils is precarious, because he is genetically thought to be inferior, because his relationship to the white race remains dubious. In short, the very existence of the mixedblood is "enigmatically ambiguous."[95] Though employed by some contemporary Native American novelists, this strategy, with all its variations of inaction and voicelessness, is a last solution that is firmly rejected in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*. In her novel, Erdrich is against the rigid views of oppositional dualism in which mixedbloods have often been imprisoned within a stereotype of condemnation.[96]

In the novel's opening chapter, entitled "The World's Greatest Fisherman," Erdrich introduces June Kashpaw, a mixedblood woman who, while in a bar in Williston, North Dakota, drunk and hungry, is approached by a mud engineer named Andy. Despite having a bus ticket to return to the reservation, June is lulled by the warmth of the bar and the liquor. Her relationship with Andy eventually leads to an attempt at sex in his truck. However, after he passes out, she appears to have died accidentally in a snowstorm. From the first chapter of the novel, the reader may interpret June as a prostitute who is easily driven to casual sex. Moreover, he may also understand that Erdrich, by beginning the novel with the death of a mixedblood figure, gives a nod to the fate assigned to the mixedbloods in the literary American tradition. In addition, the author risks inscribing in June the image of the drunken Indian.[97]

However, right from the very beginning of the novel, Erdrich presents the untimely death of June on the eve of Easter Sunday:

> The morning before Easter Sunday, June Kashpaw was walking down the clogged main street of oil boomtown Williston, North Dakota, killing time before the noon bus arrived that would take her home. She was a long-legged Chippewa woman, aged hard in every way except how she moved. Probably it was the way she moved, easy as a young girl on slim hard legs, that caught the eye of the man who rapped at her from inside the window of the Rigger Bar. (*LM*, 1)

Therefore, despite June's vulnerability, she is depicted in terms of time associated with death and rebirth. It is the morning before Easter Sunday, and as the novel progresses the symbolic associations with rebirth will play out as well.[98]

By introducing June as one who "kills time," Erdrich associates her with the mythological trickster. Ironically, she attempts to "break the entropic grip of linear, Western time while it is precisely this time that is killing June." Of course, June's search for identity is not without difficulty. When she decides to go with Andy rather than return to the reservation, she thinks, "The bus ticket would stay good, maybe forever. They weren't expecting her up home on the reservation. She didn't even have a man there, except the one she'd divorced. Gordie" (*LM*, 3). In this sense, June is given the role of a permanent traveller, with no family to expect her return.[99]

June's life on the reservation is also difficult. She wanders in the worlds of masculine and feminine ritual inconsistently. When she is a child, she tries to participate in masculine ritual with Eli, wearing a hat just like his. "They went into the woods with their snares and never came home empty-handed" (*LM*, 91). Marie Kashpaw is aware of June's

identification with Eli and traces it back to the incompetence of June's mother, due to her neglecting the child and fostering a mistrust woman. "It was a mother she couldn't trust after what had happened in the woods. But Eli was different" (*LM*, 91). June's marriage is "on-again-off-again," and she lets her second son, Lipsha, to be raised by Marie, watching him only from a distance. In addition, her efforts to have a successful life in the white world as waitress, beautician, clerk, and secretary fail, too.[100]

After the failed liaison with Andy, she begins to understand that being away from home will destroy her, "And then she knew that if she lay there any longer she would crack wide open, not in one place but in many pieces" (*LM*, 5). She recognizes that being away from the reservation only hastens her destruction. Seeking bustling bars and slick city men is not enough to sustain her, and the fact that she is ready to die indicates that she has learned a lot from being away.[101] Moreover, June begins to sense her own fragility as a mixedblood. So, she decides to free herself from the bondage of stereotyping and open the door to freedom. "She thought to pull herself back together. So she hooked an arm over her head and brought her elbow down slowly on the handle, releasing it. The door suddenly sprang wide" (*LM*, 5). Melissa Schoeffel suggests:

> June's unwillingness to let herself "crack open" signals her investment in maintaining a coherent, seamless, and above all individualist sense of self, and reveals her assimilation into the white culture, an assimilation that can only be overcome by death. Seen from this angle, June's encounter with Andy can be rescripted in a way that begins to deconstruct the oppositional thinking that sees June only as the victim of white oppression and Andy only as the white oppressor, and does so in a way that does not devalue or dismiss the fatal influence of dominant white culture on Native American selves. Instead of June's deathblow, her encounter with Andy is her final chance at life, one that she is too worn and scared to take.[102]

June's fear of cracking into "many pieces" can be understood in two different ways. Taken from a Euramerican view, it may underscore her alienation, approaching schizophrenia that indicates her loss of a centered identity. On the other hand, in Native American mythology, fragmentation does not represent a bad sign. According to Owens, "For the traditional culture hero, the necessary annihilation of the self that prefigures healing and wholeness and a return to the tribal community often takes the form of physical fragmentation, bodily as well as psychic deconstruction."[103]

In fact both readings can be accepted. While it is possible to see June's psychic breakdown as real, its significance is to link the individual with the community. In other words, June's utterance, though the novel contains Christian affirmation, needs to be placed in the epistemological framework of indigenous people. Just as the literate modernists had

the right to demand that readers have knowledge about Greek and Roman mythology and the literary history of the Western world, writers such as Erdrich have begun to demand readers hear a new voice, even a new life with respect to the characterization of Indian American people and mixedblood protagonists.[104] Shelley Reid suggests that the self-less appearance of June in the beginning of the novel invites the reader to expect a novel about the "return to the wholeness of a culturally tuned sense of self." It is just like the Native American literary tradition that has chronicled the confusion of Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Tayo in Silko's *Ceremony*. Though death prevents June from telling her own story, she is literally going home to the reservation as she perishes in the blizzard. Her existence is evident in the voice of other characters because her self comprises all the selves of her family and tribe.[105] Validating this point, John Purdy suggests that:

> June's return is subtly veiled, for she does not return "physically." Instead, she comes home as vivid, warm, unshakable memories for all the characters who speak to us after, or more pointedly, she comes home as a character in the stories they tell, the oral literary canon they all share that tells them who they are in relation to others.[106]

Moreover, by making June's death on the eve of Easter Sunday, Erdrich prepares the reader to see how the echoes of resurrection are inevitable. The resolution imbued is one of reconciliation and transcendence. This is obvious in using Easter eggs that symbolizes June's metamorphosis and her progress toward transcendence. She is established as "egg-like" early in the time that she spends with the mud engineer.[107] As the novel declares:

> He peeled an egg for her, a pink one, saying it matched her turtleneck. She told him it was no turtleneck. You call these things shells. He said he would peel that for her, too, if she wanted, then he grinned at the bartender and handed her the naked egg. (*LM*, 2)

Andy's peeling of Easter eggs when they meet foretells the way in which this meeting will threaten to crack June's "shell" as well. Learning that Andy is a "mud engineer" prompts a reverie about "that one she'd heard was killed by a pressurized hose. The hose had shot up into his stomach from underground" (*LM*, 3). June "thought she knew what it might be like" to have been that man in the "one moment of realizing you were totally empty" (*LM*, 3). The horror of this kind of death prompts her assertion to Andy: "You got to be different," (*LM*, 4) thinking that her experiment with this man will be different. Later, after the afternoon wears on, this optimism fades during her barhopping with Andy. June begins to sense her own fragility. "She was afraid to bump against

anything because her skin felt hard and brittle and she knew it was possible, in this condition, to fall apart at the slightest touch" (*LM*, 4).[108]

During their sexual encounter, June begins to feel that she is exploited by Andy. The heater's control is suddenly activated by Andy's hand, as if it is "open at her shoulder like a pair of jaws, blasting heat" (*LM*, 5). At this moment, June experiences "the momentary and voluptuous sensation that she was lying stretched out before a great wide mouth" (*LM*, 5). She lies ritually prone as on a sacrificial altar.[109] Andy clumsily wrestles with her clothing, and then as he is moaning, June ironically says "he wasn't doing anything, just moving his hips on top of her, and at last his head fell heavily" (*LM*, 5). Here, she becomes conscious "how exploited and abused she is."[110]

The sexual abuse and the exploitation of Chippewa women can be traced back to the contact between the fur trades and Native Americans. The traders often married Algonquian-speaking women and their children were labelled as mixedblood or Metis. In addition to bringing the disastrous effect of alcoholism, most of these traders, after their service are no longer needed, returned to eastern Canada, leaving their wives and children behind.[111] In other words, these women were regarded by the white man as only a pile of flesh that is good only for sex. That is , they are to be connected with a temporary lust to be left behind and forgotten. Such argument is supported later on by June's niece, Albertine. As he concludes, "to these types an Indian woman's nothing but an easy night" (*LM*, 9). Therefore, treating these people in this way suggests that "the seeds of the problem" of "ethnocentrism" is the inability of the colonizer to see "what was there" but to see only "what he expected to see." This is what most of Erdrich's characters are "constantly struggling with."[112]

Sensing her own fragility, June begins to change from within, and the events show a further illumination, akin to a vision, that reveals her as strong and pristine as she rests inside a stall in the Ladies' room: "she seemed to drift out of her clothes and skin with no help from anyone. Sitting, she leaned down and rested her forehead on the top of the metal toilet-roll dispenser. She felt that underneath it all her body was pure and naked" (*LM*, 4). At this moment, the doorknob, which June carries for security, rolls out of her purse. The doorknob, an egg that is hard as stone, represents a kind of personal medicine that wards off fragility. "She put it in the deep pocket of her jacket and, holding it, walked back to the booth through the gathering crowd. Her room was locked. And she was ready for him now" (*LM*, 5).[113]

At this point of the novel, it is evident that June begins to step towards metamorphosis and transcendence. That she is a Christ figure is represented, as it is noted earlier, in the morning before Easter Sunday. This time is associated with the day after Christ's death and the day before his resurrection. Therefore, June feels that she is entombed in Williston and decides to break out of her shell to return to the reservation. After the sexual encounter with Andy, June goes through a symbolic rebirth or resurrection in the cab of Andy.[114]

> She felt herself slipping along the smooth plastic seat, slipping away, until she wedged the crown of her head against the driver's door. . . . June had wedged herself so tight against the door that when she sprang the latch she fell out. Into the cold. It was a shock like being born. (*LM*, 5-6)

After releasing the car door, June recovers her jacket, adjusts her clothing and "pulled her shell down." Thus, she begins a new journey towards reclaiming the power lost while she is under the weight of the white man. As Marvin Magalaner suggests, June plows through the drifts toward the reservation undaunted.[115] Immediately; therefore, June decides to go home on foot, slipping out of the car into the snowy cold. While at the beginning she could not securely reconcile her past with her present in life, she begins to walk, imagining that she is going back to her uncle Eli's "warm, man-smelling kitchen" (*LM*, 6). Here, June is viewed to walk with an air of certainty and confidence. Though she dies, she remains a powerful presence throughout the novel.[116]

> Even when it started to snow she did not lose her sense of direction. Her feet grew numb, but she did not worry about the distance. The heavy winds couldn't blow her off course. She continued. Even when her heart clenched and skin turned cracking cold it didn't matter, because the pure and naked part of her went on.
>
> The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home. (*LM*, 6-7)

The quotation brings to mind the ethereal mythology of returning to the Native American homeland rather than the Christian ascendancy into the realm of heaven. According to Native American beliefs, June's spirit mingles with the living. Here, Native American notion of immortality counter-balances the Christian code of death and resurrection. This issue represents only "the beginning of a rich pattern of cultural duality."[117]

Throughout the story of June, Erdrich surrounds her character with water imagery that appears as a dominant and recurrent symbol in the novel. *Love Medicine* opens with

June crossing the snow, walking "over it like water" and closes with Lipsha Morrissey as he crosses the water after discovering his identity. In between, the novel also draws upon several instances of images of water to create a motif that reverberates throughout the book.[118]

Earlier in the novel, when June enters the bar, Erdrich introduces the event as if it "was like going under water" (*LM*, 2). The fact that June experiences some sort of immersion "under water" suggests that she will undertake a transcendence of her situation. The stain associated with June as a mixedblood character must be changed and a new life shaped to take its place. "Going under water" plays as a kind of liberation for the mixedbloods, one that prefigures the termination of the stereotypical characterization that presents nothing other than a negative view with respect to mixedblood figures. To put it simply, June, being a mixedblood figure, undergoes a kind of baptism that leads her to reject the image of powerlessness and loss. Harry Eiss argues that immersion in water indicates a return to the preformal state which carries a sense of death and annihilation on the one hand, but of rebirth and regeneration on the other, since immersion intensifies the life-force. Moreover, to Eiss, "It represents death and interment, life and resurrection. . . . When we plunge our head beneath water, as in a sepulcher, the old man becomes completely immersed and buried. When we leave the water, the new man suddenly appears."[119]

Consequently, June dies, but not in spirit. She offers her own way of salvation, making her death a redemptive one. Erdrich here emphasizes the deconstruction of the sacrificial role assigned to mixedblood stereotype. Keneth Lincoln supports this as he suggests that June "dies at the beginning to trigger all the stories as martyred savior." The sentence "The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home," in Lincoln's view, "cadences a three-in-one heroine walking beyond her death: the crucifixion (Easter), temptation in the wilderness (her forty years), and prophesied resurrection (came home)." It is through the spirit of this "martyred-and-mythically-reborn" woman that Lipsha is able to discover his identity and self- knowledge at the end of the novel.[120]

Although June dies, Erdrich's description does not include any sense of death. Evidences of magic and miracles are made through the references to Easter and walking upon water. June's personal ability to survive, even under the most difficult circumstances, is seen through her family's memories. Though she appears initially as blind, she works her

way through the dark water into a sinister situation, defining herself through risk, transformation, and death.[121]

Actually, the recuperation of June's identity is told immediately by Albertine who introduces her to the whole tribal self that comprises "an extended family that reciprocates among people, places," and history. June is indeed connected to a family and a place in their lives, and thus a clear, established identity despite the pains and doubts of her daily life. As she is woven into the stories of other characters, the reader is invited to piece June's self.[122]

Further illustration that refers to June as a successful character in the book is her childhood, narrated by her Aunt and foster mother, Marie Kashpaw. June is brought to Marie half-starved after the death of her mother, Lucille. She is forced, due to the severe conditions, to live a wild life like an animal.[123] As Marie narrates, "But then the two drunk ones told me how the girl had survived – by eating pine sap in the woods. Her mother was my sister, Lucille. She died alone with the girl out in the bush" (*LM*, 84).

Therefore, June chooses her own way of death as she walks over the snow like water. She must cross a bridge to another world, one in which she is able to free herself from the manacles that have chained mixedblood characters in a world of despair.[124] This idea is further revealed by Albertine when she rejects her mother's interpretation of June's death: "But June grew up on the plains. Even drunk she'd have known a storm was coming. She'd have known by the heaviness in the air, the smell in the clouds" (*LM*, 9-10).

The next story in which Erdrich depicts a different presentation of mixedblood characters appears in the internal struggle of Marie Lazarre, a girl of mixedblood Chippewa Native American and white Anglo-American heritage. Marie makes her way to join the Sacred Heart Convent in order to become a nun. Here, Erdrich directs her voice to criticize the hypocritical role played by the church, which has undoubtedly accomplished a colonizing task in its mission to Christianize Native Americans. This is apparent in Marie's encounter with the sadistic Sister Leopolda who subjects Marie to relentless abuse in the name of holiness.[125]

Because of her being a mixedblood, Marie suffers an internal struggle, attempting to define her individual and cultural identity. In order to compensate for this need, she, at first glance, seems to forfeit her Chippewa identity and embraces her white traits.[126] As she declares:

> So when I went there, I knew the dark fish must rise. Plumes of radiance had been soldered on me. No reservation girl had ever prayed so hard. There was no use in trying to ignore me any longer. I

> was going up there on the hill with the black-robe women. None were any lighter than me. I was going up there to pray as good as they could, because I don't have that much Indian blood. And they never thought they'd have a girl from this reservation as a saint they'd have to kneel to. But they were going to have me. (*LM*, 43)

However, though Marie soon receives physical abuse in the convent by Leopolda, she is revealed to be staunch in her belief that she is equal to the nuns, even superior. Besides, she longs for a time in which she becomes a distinguished and successful person, a time when all the sisters in the convent will bow down to her.[127] Additionally, Erdrich rejects to view Marie as a mixedblood on the verge of sacrificing her tribal heritage. Told in the first person narrator, some of the events of the story have a biographical origin in Erdrich's own family. These events prove that Marie's situation results from her exposure to Leopolda's education as a student. Therefore, Catholicism is reflected here as having the same danger of the smallpox discovered in the supplies of a white trader that infected nearly the entire tribe of the Pillagers from which Erdrich descends.[128]

> I was that girl who thought the black hem of her garment would help me rise. Veils of love which was only hate petrified by longing – that was me. I was like those bush Indians who stole the holy black hat of a Jesuit and swallowed little scraps of it to cure their fevers. But the hat itself carried smallpox and was killing them with belief. (*LM*, 45)

In the story of Marie, Erdrich shows the reader a "haunting and memorable scene involving the violent yoking of Western religious values and Ojibwe cultural traditions." Readers are also given a glimpse at the depth of the cultural crisis and spiritual fracture that Marie experiences.[129] She is proud to be a light-skinned girl like the nuns at the convent and determined to "pray as good as they could" (*LM*, 43). At the same time, she also claims to be superior, evident in her bestial description of the members of her Chippewa family who are so anxious to get into town that "we would have walked in on our hands and knees" (*LM*, 44).[130]

Tough, intelligent and willful, Marie embodies a "cultural conflict" in the psychological and social condition of mixedblood individuals. The nuns at the convent treat her with scorn, looking down at her as Indian. Upon Marie's arrival at the convent, Leopolda embarks on torturing and dehumanizing Marie. Leopolda sees that she fights the devil for control of Marie's soul and insurance of her salvation. As Helen Jaskoski points out, being half-Indian, Marie becomes a victim of Christian colonizers who try to maintain power over colonized peoples under the excuse of elevating them as "brothers in Christ."[131]

A deeper look at the reason that makes Marie enter the convent reveals that she is caught between two paradigms, since part of her begrudges the imposed authority of Sister Leopolda, another part makes her feel inferior, and yet another part has the recognition that they are similar in their ambitiousness.[132] "I wanted Sister Leopolda's heart. And here was the thing: sometimes I wanted her heart in love and admiration. Sometimes. And sometimes I wanted her heart to roast on a black stick" (*LM*, 49). In this respect, part of Marie represents a rebellious side of her personality that seeks to destroy Leopolda who tries to eliminate Marie's Indian identity. This is revealed in the novel when Marie hopes to bring those at the convent "down of their high horse" (*LM*, 43), or when she assumes the new goal of overcoming Leopolda by getting into "heaven first" (*LM*, 48).

Such change in attitudes reflects Marie's embodiment of "double consciousness" or "double vision." It mirrors the desire to be accepted by the colonizing culture and the shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their culture, which they were taught to see as inferior. This consciousness, according to Lois Tyson, is "a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community."[133]

Leopolda thinks that Marie, the half-caste reservation girl, is possessed by the Devil and that it is her duty to exorcise her from the clutches of "the dark one who wanted [her] most of all" (*LM*, 46). In an attempt to destroy Marie and bring about her dissolution under the justification of freeing her from the evil, she locks her into a black closet and scalds her with boiling water. This happens after Marie fails to get the "good cup" (*LM*, 51), which has rolled beneath the stove.[134]

> I heard the water as it came, tipped from the spout, cooling as it fell but still scalding as it struck. I must have twitched beneath her foot, because she steadied me . . . I felt how patient she would be. The water came. My mind went dead. Again . . . I could not stand it. I bit my lip so as not to satisfy her with a sound. She gave me more reason to keep still. "I will boil him from your mind if you make a peep," she said, "by filling up your ear." (*LM*, 52-53)

The boiling water episode clarifies Leopolda's spiritual cannibalism, manifested in her mania for gaining control of Marie. She has "snared in her black intelligence" (*LM*, 53) the lonely Marie through fear, as apparent in locking her in a coat closet, and through promise of love: "He *wants* you," Leopolda tells the girl. "That's the difference, I give you love" (*LM*, 8). It is this Leopolda who seeks to destroy Marie that must be confronted and defeated.[135]

After the scalding scene, Marie is about to “throw that cornmeal mush out to the birds and make a run for it” (*LM*, 54). While it seems that she accepts her defeat at the hands of Leopolda, Marie experiences a “vision that rose up blazing in [her] mind” (*LM*, 54). It is this vision through which she is able to defeat her oppressor. As she says:

> I was rippling gold. My breasts were bare and my nipples flashed and winked. Diamonds tipped them. I could walk through panes of glass . . . She was at my feet, swallowing the glass after each step I took . . . The glass she swallowed ground and cut until her starved insides were only a subtle dust . . . She coughed a cloud of dust. And then she was only a black rag of flapped off, snagged in bob wire, hung there for an age, and finally rotted in the breeze. (*LM*, 54)

At this point, Marie’s vision leads to a new stage in which the reader sees her in a pivotal moment, an empowered mixedblood. Now, she is not the victim of the stereotypical figure of the mixedblood, but one who is able to resolve and overcome the difficulties. She is seen in a feeling of transcendence.[136] This happens during a conversation with one of the other sisters who asks about the name of Leopolda’s new postulant. The sister compliments by naming her “Marie. Star of the Sea” (*LM*, 54). Here, it is Marie who has the vision, not Sister Leopolda who continually fasts. The ordeal of boiling water represents a test of physical endurance for Marie. In the depth of her ordeal she undergoes the loss of self that heralds the integrating vision: “I despaired. I felt I had no inside voice, nothing to direct me, no darkness, no Marie” (*LM*, 54). The act of throwing out her food represents a metaphorical fasting that precedes her vision.[137] Therefore, the vision as well as the star signal a new phase in the development of Marie as a mixedblood character. Like June, who makes her own choice that turns her into a Christ-like figure, Marie makes out her own resurrection, shining like the “Star of the Sea.”

> The title, "Star of the Sea," was originally "an epithet of Isis" which was later bestowed on the Virgin Mary by the Catholic Church . . . , and also relates to the 17th trump card of the Tarot known as The Star. The appearance of the Star in a Tarot reading signals the beginning of a new phase in the heroine's development . . . By re-casting Marie in the mold of Isis at this most crucial point in her struggle, Erdrich moves her dismembered mixedblood protagonist from the altar of sacrifice, and reconfigures her as the agent of her own resurrection. If we will recall, it was Isis who resurrected her murdered husband, Osiris, gathering together the dismembered pieces of his body and literally re-membering him.[138]

Marie’s triumph over Sister Leopolda appears when the two women engage in a brawl; Marie fails to destroy Leopolda by pushing her inside the oven. This attempts results in her being stabbed through the hand with a bread fork and knocked unconscious. However, when she awakens, Marie finds herself surrounded by the nuns who are

worshipping her because they believe that she has received the stigmata, the wounds of Christ.[139] As she narrates, "I was being worshipped. I had somehow gained the altar of a saint" (*LM*, 57). Triumphantly, Marie recognizes that Leopolda is defeated. She notes that "[Leopolda] could not speak. But she was beaten. It was in her eyes. She stared at me now with all the deep hate of the wheel of devilish dust that rolled wild within her emptiness" (*LM*, 59). Erdrich is apparently able to give another destiny with regard to the portrayal of mixedblood characters, one in which the mixedblood has the capacity to dismantle the stereotype of sacrificial victim. In addition, the physical torture triggers a sense of strength and power inside the heroine: "The pain had kept me strong" (*LM*, 55). Helga Ramsey-Kurz suggests that this experience "eventually convinces Marie that there must be some higher and kinder authority without the support of which she would not have been able to escape the measures of atonement to which she was subjected. At the same time, the recollection of the tortures she went through scars her for life."[140] Moreover, another sense of transcendence in Marie is that she does not give too much emphasis on Leopolda's downfall. Rather, from her experience with Sister Leopolda, Marie, recognizing her enemy's weakness and defeat, gains the gift of pity. As the novel declares:

> For I saw her kneeling there. Leopolda with her soul like a rubber overboot. With her face of a starved rat. With the desperate eyes drowning in the deep wells of her wrongness. There would be no one else after me. And I would leave. I saw Leopolda kneeling within the shambles of her love.
>
> My heart had been about to surge from my chest with the blackness of my joyous heat. Now it dropped. I pitied her. I pitied her . . . It was a feeling more terrible than any amount of boiling water and worse than being forked. Still, still, I could not help what I did. I had already smiled in a saint's mealy forgiveness. I heard myself speaking gently.
>
> "Receive the dispensation of my sacred blood," I whispered. (*LM*, 60)

After accomplishing her goal, Marie concludes that she cannot enjoy the adulation of the sisters and the groveling of Leopolda. She becomes conscious of the fact that no pleasure can be taken in the "dust" that is their lives. This is further strengthened by the chapter's concluding scene: "Rise up! I thought. Rise up and walk! There is no limit to this dust" (*LM*, 60). At this point, Marie refuses the idea of becoming the embittered woman that Leopolda embodies. In other words, she rejects what is called "the internalized self-hatred of the colonial subject, the Indian who wants to be white."[141] Erdrich's achievement here is overturning "the stereotype of the mixedblood as sacrificial victim." Marie is endowed with the power of regeneration, a power through which it possible for the mixedblood protagonist to exchange the role of "sacrificial goat" on the altar of "manifest destiny" for that of "officiating priestess at the crossroads" of change.[142]

Marie decides to depart from the convent and directs her way back into the Native American society, searching for new ways to establish a respected identity. As Nina Behr suggests, coming back also represents a "step towards internal healing and also a continuation of her search for love and empowerment."[143] In the chapter entitled "Wilde Geese," set in 1934, Marie runs into Nector Kashpaw outside the convent walls. As they grapple, their encounter turns sexual, and Nector recognizes in amazement that he, though in love with Lulu Nanapush, wants this "dirty Lazarre" (*LM*, 64). Marie becomes Nector's wife.

Ironically, Nector's original opinion of Marie is that "She is just a skinny white girl from a family so low you cannot even think they are in the same class as Kashpaws" (*LM*, 63). However, in Greg Sarris's view, despite all these obstacles, Marie does not allow them to cancel her out or destroy her life. Instead, she attempts to beat those others on their own terms and gain self-worth in their eyes. As she is successful in beating the nuns at their own game, she helps Nector to rise. Mary reveals her plan: "I decided I was going to make him into something big on this reservation. I didn't know what, not yet; I only knew when he got there they would not whisper 'dirty Lazarre' when I walked down from church. They would wish they were the woman I was. Marie Kashpaw" (*LM*, 88). She succeeds since Nector really becomes tribal chairman.[144]

Marie indeed puts Nector in a respected power position within both the Native American and white society. Such empowerment means that she "climbs the ladder of hierarchy in the tribal community, where her mixed blood as a Lazarre previously has put her at the bottom." As she says about Nector, "He is what he is because I made him" (*LM*, 150). In other words, Nector is very much her creation; she becomes the woman behind the man, the thinker and planner. She is hired at the Indian factory since she is regarded as one of the old leaders who have knowledge about culture and family relations.[145] In addition, Marie adopts many children, gaining respect not only as a Native American mother but as the mother of the whole tribe. For her, the notion of family is not only a matter of blood relations but also one of spiritual kinship and clan membership. Even after Nector's death, she does not lose her power, but remains strong in herself as a woman.[146] As she comments:

> But I was not going under, even if he left me. . . I could leave off my fear of ever being a Lazarre. I could leave off my fear, even losing Nector. . . I would not care if Marie Kashpaw had to wear an old shroud. I would not care if Lulu Lamartine ended up the wife of the chairman of the Chippewa tribe. I'd still be Marie. Marie. Star of the Sea! (*LM*, 161)

Erdrich brings the novel full circle through the character Lipsha Morrissey, June Kashpaw's unacknowledged son. Just like Abel and Tayo, Lipsha is a mixedblood who does not, for most of his narrative, know his father, and he has been abandoned by his mother. He is also subject to bouts of "confusion" and "bleak sadness sweeping through [his] brain" (*LM*, 305). And he is also, like Abel and Tayo, chosen by the gods to play the role of serving the community in significant ways. Lipsha must embark on a journey towards discovering his identity and do the work of revitalization.[147] He himself refers to his search for his father as his "quest" saying, "I had to get down to the bottom of my heritage" (*LM*, 308). Lipsha is aware of how his family is marred and devastated by the hand of the colonizer. Several characters embrace sexism, materialism, and/or alcoholism in response to economic and cultural oppression. Lipsha as well as other characters like June Morrissey and Albertine Johnson are among the characters of the novel who suffer from the death or abandonment of their fathers.[148] Gerry Nanapush, Lipsha's father, feels himself wronged by the white man, and his self-identity has always been at odds with the society in which he lives. When a "cowboy" asks him whether a Chippewa is also a "nigger," Gerry fights him by "reservation rules" and ends the fight by kicking the man in the groin. However, the white witnesses and the white doctor turn the evidence against him and he is sent to prison (*LM*, 197-198). He finally escapes from prison and hides from everyone.[149]

Lipsha discovers the true identity of his father, Gerry Nanapush, and his mother, June Kashpaw. At King Kashpaw's apartment, Lipsha reviews the life of father, mother and son before bringing the story full circle:

> I could see how his [Gerry's] mind leapt back making connections, jumping at the intersection points of our lives: his romance with June. The baby given to Grandma Kashpaw. June's son by Gordie. King. Her running me off. Me growing up. And then at last June walking toward home in the Easter snow that, I saw now, had resumed falling softly in this room. (*LM*, 322-323)

Lipsha wins his mother's car in a poker game, a car bought with the insurance money from June's death. For King, the car represents materialism, his assimilation into the white world and its values. Lipsha, however, offers a different path than that suggested by King. As driving the car after helping his father escape to freedom across the Canadian border, he comes to "the bridge over the boundary river," presumably dividing the reservation from the outside world (*LM*, 333). Suddenly, his "recognition that his family and community live on dry land suggests his refusal of death, his commitment to struggle, to survival. Rather than surrendering to the water, he crosses it. The bridge suggests

Lipsha's ability to bridge cultures."[150] At first, the car is "simply June's car, a reminder of her death, but eventually the car no longer represents June, it *is* June." "So there was nothing to do but cross the water, and bring her home" (*LM*, 333). Thus, as Karla Sanders argues, "the novel suggest that being an American and a Native American are not diametrically opposed identities," and that "exclusive either/or positions are not fruitful."[151]

Notes

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[3] Karla Sanders, "A Healthy Balance: Religion, Identity, and Community in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine," MELUS 23.2 (Summer 1998):* 129.

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[6] Ibid., 152.

[7] Sanders, 129-130.

[8] Mary Loving Blanchard and Cara Falcetti, *Poets For Young Adults: Their Lives and Works* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), 80.

[9] Catherine Rainwater, "Reading between Worlds: Narrativity in the Fiction of Louise Erdrich," in Wong, 163.

[10] Lorena L. Stookey, *Louise Erdrich: A Critical Companion* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 2-3.

[11]Sheryl Ciccarelli and Marie Rose Napierkowski, eds., *Novels For Students, 5* (Detroit: Gale, 1999), 210.

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[16] Ibid.

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[19] Ibid., 7.

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[23] Stookey, 13.

[24] James Ruppert, "Mediation in Contemporary Native American Writing," in *Native American Perspectives on Literature and History*, edited by Alan R. Velie, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 134-135.

[25] Eva Slana, "The Theme of Home in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*," (Bachelor Thesis, Masaryk University, 2012), 11.

[26] Ciccarelli and Napierkowski, 217.

[27] Julie Maristuen-Rodakowski, "The Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota: Its History as Depicted in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen*," in Wong, 13-15.

[28] James Nagel, *The Contemporary American Short-Story Cycle: The Ethnic Resonance of Genre* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 39-40.

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[30] Blanchard and Falcetti, 82.

[31]John T. Gillespie, *Historical Fiction for Young Readers (Grades 4-8): An Introduction* (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2008), 358.

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[33] Seema Kurup, *Understanding Louise Erdrich* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 13.

[34] Ibid.

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[37] Ute Lischke, " "Blitzkuchen": An Exploration of Story-Telling in Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*," in *Interdisciplinary and Cross-cultural Narratives in North America*, edited by Mark Cronlund Anderson and Irene Maria F. Blayer (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 66.

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[41] Hafen, 24.

[42] David Stirrup, *Louise Erdrich* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 123.

[43] Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 359-361.

[44] Jamil Khader, *Cartographies of Transnationalism in Postcolonial Feminisms: Geography, Culture, Identity, Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 114-115.

[45] Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009). All further quotations taken from this ovel will be made to this version. Henceforth, they are parenthetically marked as (*LM*) followed by page number.

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[47] Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 187.

[48] Berninghausen, 208.

[49] Louise Erdrich, *Bingo Palace* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 271.

[50] Karen Janet McKinney, "False Miracles and Failed Vision in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*," *Critique*, 40, Issue 2, (Winter 1999): 152-153.

[51] Rainwater, "Reading between Worlds,"164.

[52] Stacey Donohue, "Louise Erdrich," in *Catholic Women Writers: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook,* edited by Mary R. Reichardt (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 96.

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[75] Unknown, "Exploring Native Heritage (Love Medicine and Tracks)," https://www.google.iq/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwigq6-c9Y7OAhVGVSwKHYHBBgsQFggaMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fshodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in%2Fbitstream%2F10603%2F8046%2F10%2F10_chapter%25204.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGeNx6OfDkEVK3ZctvyUldmFR_zow&bvm=bv.127984354,d.d24 (Accessed: July, 25, 2016), 186-187.

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[87] Guillermina Saravia, "Circularity in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*," https://www.google.iq/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwi_ntO9q6zOAhXkdpoKHQV4BMcQFggiMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbdigital.uncu.edu.ar%2Fobjetos_digitales%2F2646%2Fsaraviacircularitylove.pdf&usg=AFQjCNG791l-xZqVV6zMFJs4fMQF6LsWbw&bvm=bv.129391328,d.bGs (Accessed: July, 28, 2016), 250-251.

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[89] Berninghausen, 191.

[90] Stookey, 14-15.

[91] Owens, 205.

[92] Patricia Riley, "There Is No Limit to this Dust: The Refusal of Sacrifice in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*," *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, Series 2, Vol. 12, No. 2, Louise Erdrich(Summer 2000), 13. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20736959. (Accessed: May 24, 2016). Perhaps the most familiar example of the negative characterization of mixedbloods in the nineteenth century can be found in Mark Twain's portrayal of the brutal and degraded Injun Joe in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. For a discussion of Twain's portrayal see Patricia Riley, "'That Murderin' Halfbreed': The Abjectification of the Mixedblood in

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*" in *Native North America: Critical and Cultural Perspectives*, Renee Hulan, ed. Toronto: ECW Press, 1999.

[93] Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 22.

[94] As Qtd. in Ibid.

[95] William J. Scheick, *The Half-Blood: A Cultural Symbol in 19th-Century American Fiction* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 83.

[96] Riley, 13.

[97] Linda Karell, "As If The Sky Were One Gigantic memory For Us All: Louise Erdrich and Native American Authorship," in *The Shadow of the Precursor*, edited by Diana Glenn and et al. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 273.

[98] Laurie Alberts, *Showing & Telling: Learn How to Show & When to Tell for Powerful & Balanced Writing* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 2010), 79.

[99] Owens, 195.

[100] Nora Barry and Mary Prescott, "The Triumph of the Brave: *Love Medicine's* Holistic Vision," *Critique* 30.2 (Winter 1989): 130.

[101] Michelle Pacht, "Creating Community: Motherhood and the Search for Identity in Louise *Erdrich's Love Medicine*," in *Narratives of Community: Womens Short Story Sequences*, edited by Roxanne Harde (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 158-159.

[102] Melissa Schoeffel, *Maternal Conditions: Reading Kingsolver, Castillo, Erdrich, and Ozeki* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 85.

[103] Owens, 195.

[104] Mark Shackleton, ""June Walked over It like Water and Came Home": Cross-Cultural Symbolism in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*," in *Transatlantic Voices: Interpretations of Native North American Literatures*, edited by Elvira Pulitano (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 190-191.

[105] Reid, 77.

[106] John Purdy, "Building Bridges: Crossing the Waters to a *Love Medicine*," in *Teaching American Ethnic Literatures: Nineteen Essays*, edited by John R. Maitino and David R. Peck (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 85.

[107] Barry and Prescott, 130-131.

[108] Schoeffel, 82.

[109] Marvin Magalaner, "Louise Erdrich: Of Cars, Time, and the River," in *American Women Writing Fiction: Memory, Identity, Family, Space,* edited by Mickey Pearlman (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 102.

[110] Khader, 99.

[111] Maristuen-Rodakowski, 16.

[112] Chavkin and Chavkin, 170.

[113] Barry and Prescott, 131.

[114] Patsy J. Daniels, *Voice of the Oppressed in the Language of the Oppressor: A Discussion of Selected Postcolonial Literature from Ireland, Africa and America* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 142.

[115] Magalaner, 106.

[116] Rosenthal, 112.

[117] Nagel, 26.

[118] Stookey, 17. For a detailed discussion of the image of water in *Love Medicine*, see Magalaner, 95-101.

[119] Harry Eiss, *Divine Madness* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 215.

[120] Kenneth Lincoln, *Indi'n Humor: Bicultural Play in Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 219.

[121] Barry and Prescott, 132.

[122] Reid, 77-78.

[123] Larson, 88.

[124] Nagel, 26.

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[126] Rachel Leahy, "The Devils of Cultural Conflict in Louise Erdrich's "Saint Marie," 1, http://goo.gl/4YvI7P (accessed: July 20, 2016)

[127] Maristuen-Rodakowski, 20.

[128] Nagel, 30.

[129] Kurup, 23.

[130] Leahy, 1.

[131] Helen Jaskoski, "From the Time Immemorial: Native American Traditions in Contemporary Short Fiction," in Wong, 28.

[132] Leahy, 2.

[133] Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 421.

[134] Helga Ramsey-Kurz, *The Non-literate Other: Readings of Illiteracy in Twentieth-century Novels in English* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 240.

[135] Jaskoski, 31-32.

[136] Joyce, 271.

[137] Jaskoski, 32.

[138] Riley, 19.

[139] Robert Kiely, *Reverse Tradition: Postmodern Fictions and the Nineteenth Century Novel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 202.

[140] Ramsey-Kurz, 240.

[141] Jeana DelRosso, *Writing Catholic Women: Contemporary International Catholic Girlhood Narratives* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 143.

[142] Riley, 21.

[143] Nina Behr, "Love, Power and Respect: Marie's Empowerment in Erdrich's *Love Medicine*," (Feb. 2009), 16. http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:224492/fulltext01 (accessed: July, 18, 2016).

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[145] Behr, 17-19.

[146] Ibid., 19-21.

[147] McClure, 157.

[148] Angela Laflen, "Unmaking the self-made man: Louise Erdrich's Fictional Exploration of masculinity," in *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters, 1750-2000*, edited by Sarah S. G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 211.

[149] Ciccarelli and Napierkowski, 216.

[150] Susan Farrell, "Erdrich's Love Medicine," *Explicator* 56, Issue 2 (Winter, 1998): 112.

[151] Sanders, 153.

Conclusion

In spite of the historic, social, cultural and intellectual back-breaking hardship they went through, American Indian novelists have managed to establish a trend of fiction of their own, which is written in the Western tradition but maintained its Native American peculiarities. In addition, they have managed to mirror the cultural crisis of mixedblood Americans in their products.

Momaday, Silko and Erdrich are part and parcel of the American literary canon only when they write in the Western form. However, they continued to include themes related to their native culture. In a word, they reached to a compromise with the white culture; a state of healing after a bitter struggle. This is also what they reflected on their protagonists in their three novels.

Generally speaking, portrayals of mixedblood characters by contemporary Native American writers reflect many problems in terms of theme, plot and characterization. Characterization of mixedblood figures in most of the novels written before Momaday often bears the scar of Colonization. It is often limited within internalized either/or thinking. Besides, these novels have no improved ways towards the depiction of mixedbloods. Only themes such as personal fragmentation, disintegration, rejection by others and estrangement from the outside world that are abound in texts like Mourning Dove's *Cogewea: The Half-Blood*, John Joseph Mathews's *Sundown*, and D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*.

On the literary level, it seems that writers who introduce their works under the weight of the West and its literary legacies and imperatives find themselves restricted to writing stories that centre on loss of cultural self-determination; i.e., only loss of identity or genocide are the final expected resolution of the events of the story.

In contrast, Momaday, Silko and Erdrich create characters who show no resemblance to the figure of the tragic mulatto. These authors refuse to echo any beliefs with regard to the assumed negative consequences of miscegenation. In other words, what can be deduced from reading the novels is that the alienation and sense of loss are not to be regarded as the sole state of biological mixedbloods. This means that they are not inborn traits of mixedblood persons. Rather, such state is also imposed from outside, especially by the Euro-American notion of domination.

The negative stereotype of the mixedblood is totally overturned in *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony* and *Love Medicine*. Though the mixedblood characters often experience problematic and painful way of living, the end of their lives are not tragedies. As they reject

any sense of shame, they begin to elevate their status, emerging triumphantly beyond the stereotype of the tragic mixedblood or the figure of doom that has maimed many characters before them. Authors of the three novels have produced a kind of fiction in which mixedblood characters are not viewed as scapegoats moving inevitably towards their demise. In addition, they depart from associating mixedbloods with the images of pollution, brutality and degradation common in nineteenth century American literature.

The mixedblood character in *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony* and *Love Medicine* is no more the one like Cogewea, Chal Windzer and Archilde. Abel in Momaday's novel completes his quest when he makes a reunion with the land and the religious and artistic parts of his Native culture. It is only when he learns not to forget but to remember who he is that he is able to start a new life. He is no more the confused Cogewea in Dove's novel. Rather, he makes a change from levels of confusion to a new appreciative moment of self and heritage that is marked by a song. Therefore, though he suffers from biculturality, he resolves to be an American Indian when he performed a burial ceremony and ritual race.

In *Ceremony*, Tayo, aided by Betonie, accepts his mixed heritage because he realizes that it gives him strength rather than weakness. Besides, his journey towards healing begins when he refuses all external modes of definition, fighting against the power that seeks to divide rather than to connect. Though he recognizes that sometimes he is even disapproved as a half-breed in his tribe, he begins to understand that this notion is not indigenous in origin, but imposed onto the Native American thinking. As he criticizes both cultures, he comes to a conclusion that his mixedbloodedness is not something unusual. Therefore, he is not lost in the world of the voiceless mixedblood who does not have the ability to express himself, a fact permanent in Chal Windzer in Matthews's *Sundown*. *Ceremony*'s final scene ends with the voice of Tayo, one of power rather than silence, sleep, and inactivity.

In *Love Medicine*, although the demonstration of cultural trauma is essential to Erdrich, characters like June, Marie, and Lipsha resist becoming stuck as powerless victims. Despite the fact they have endured severe suffering, they are also rendered as retaining incredible strength and beauty. June Kashpaw is a victim, a tool for temporary pleasure. Yet, she never agrees to completely remove her personal protective shell and chooses death in her own terms. In this way, her role foreshadows the perfect refusal of mixedblood sacrifice that is made by Marie Lazarre, who is abused at the convent and dealt with as a devil. However, she is a victorious mixedblood, one who has a family and community that respect her. Finally, Erdrich succeeds in resolving the cultural trauma of Lipsha Morrissey. After discovering his

father and mother, Lipsha, as he stops over the bridge that connects the reservation with the outside world, turns out to be the hinge of blood that joins together all the families of the community. Consequently, one can notice the gesture towards the true future of mixedblood. The future is one in which he is no longer haunted or viewed tragically as a person with no people. June, Marie and Lipsha are all different facets to one character; i.e., the mixedblood who suffers from being trapped in two cultural worlds but one who finds recovery in being a man of his past and present. Therefore, Momaday, Silko and Erdrich have introduced a new story for their mixedblood characters. The mixedblood, though embodying the struggle of his heritage, has the potential to reach a state of transcendence.

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الملخص

لقد قَدَّمت رواياتُ الهنودِ الأمريكيين شخصيةَ مختلطِ الدم على أنهُ فردٌ يأتي من سُلالتي الامريكيينَ الاصليين والأوربيين فَيعيشُ في ظِلِّ ثقافتَين مُختلفتين وأحياناً مُتناقِضَتين ويَجِدُ نَفْسَهُ مُنْجَذِباً لقُطبينِ مُخْتلِفَين أحَدُهما غربي والآخرُ امريكيُّ الأصل ، هذا الامر أنشأ في داخِله ازمةً ثقافيةً تُسَيطِرُ على حياتِه جاعِلةً إياهُ في حالةِ عُزلةٍ حيثُ يَشْعرُ بنفسِه غريباً في كِلا العالَمين. لقد لُوحِظ انَّ هذهِ الازمةَ الثقافيةَ لمختلطي الدم هي من الموضوعاتِ المهمةِ في الرواياتِ المُعاصرة للهنود الامريكيين وهذا الموضوع جديرٌ بأن يُدرَس.

لقد ناقَشَ جُزءٌ ملحوظٌ من الأدبِ الغربي وأدبِ الهُنودِ الامريكيين العُقد والديناميكية الناتجة من ازدواجية الثقافة ، حيثُ قامَ بعضُ الكُتّاب بإعطاءِ صورةٍ سلبيةٍ عن مختلطي الدم من خلالِ تصويرِهم على أنَّهم شخصياتٌ غير اساسيةٍ هامشيةٍ وغير متطورة في حين كانت لبعض الكتّاب ، مثل (ان سكوت مومادي) في روايته (*منزل الفجر*) و (لزلي مارمون سلكو) في روايتها (*مراسم*) و (لويز ايردريك) في روايتها (*دواء الحب*) ، قصةً اخرى ليُخبروها و نصيباً آخرَ ليبيِّنوه ، ولهذا السبب تم اختيار هذه الروايات لكي تُدرَس بهذهِ الاطروحة.

وهذه الدراسة هي محاولةٌ لبيانِ الازمةِ الثقافية التي عانت منها شخصياتُ مختلطي الدم في ثلاثِ روايات وهي (*منزل الفجر*) للروائي مومادي و (*مراسم*) للروائية سلكو و (*دواء الحب*)

للروائية ايردريك ، حيث تحاولُ الدراسة ان تُظهِرَ الاصالةَ والابداعَ اللذانِ حققهُما كل من مومادي وسيلكو وايردريك في رواياتِهم الثلاث فيما يخصُّ تصويرَ شخصيةِ مختلطِ الدم.

تلمَّسَتِ الدراسةُ هذهِ الافكار ضمن اربع فصولٍ مُذيَّلة بخاتمة. يحاولُ الفصلُ الاول ان يقدِّم معلوماتٍ عن الهنودِ الامريكيين وتاريخِهم وهويتِهم وفنِهم الروائي و شخصيةِ مختلط الدم الناشئة ضمن مباحثَ ثلاثة ، يوضحُ المبحثُ الاول المشاكلَ الرئيسيةَ التي واجهتها هويةُ الهنودِ الامريكيين وخصوصاً عملياتِ الابادةِ الجسديةِ والثقافية ، يتناولُ المبحثُ الثاني نهضةَ رواياتِ الهنود الامريكيين حيثُ يناقشُ الاختلافَ مابين القصصِ الغربية وقصصِ الامريكيين الاصليين و مشكلةِ اللغة التي واجهها كتّابُ الهنود الامريكيين و مشاكلِ الفردية والتأليف والتدجين النصي للشفاهية في الروايات ، اما المبحثُ الثالث فيُعنى ببيان تطورِ شخصيةِ مختلط الدم في روايات كتبها بشكلٍ رئيسي كتّابٌ من الهنود الأمريكيين ، حيث يمكن ملاحظة المدى الذي وصَلتهُ تلك الروايات في تعزيز أومقاومة الصورة النمطية لمختلط الدم بكونهِ ضحيةً قربانيةً قُدِّر لها ان تعيشَ في عالمٍ من الوحدةِ والضياع.

خُصِّصَ الفصلُ الثاني لدراسةِ رواية (*منزل الفجر*) للروائي مومادي ضمنَ مباحث ثلاثة. يركِّزُ المبحثُ الاول على اعمالِ مومادي التي ساعَدت بوضعِ ادبِ الهنودِ الامريكيين على الخارطةِ الثقافيةِ الامريكية ، يُعنى المبحثُ الثاني بحياةِ مومادي ومشوارِه المهني كما ويوضحُ تناولَ مسالةِ الهوية في اعمالِه ، اما المبحثُ الثالث فيقومُ بتحليلِ رواية (*منزل الفجر*) مركزاً على الازمةِ الثقافية التي عصَفت بـ (آبل) وسعيهِ للانخراطِ مُجدَّداُ في المجتمع.

كُرِّسَ الفصلُ الثالث لمناقشةِ رواية (*مراسم*) للروائية سلكو ضمن مباحث ثلاثة. يقدم المبحثُ الاول شرحاً مبسطاً عن مكانةِ سلكو في الفنِ الروائي للهنود الامريكيين والصراع الذي

قاسى منه بطلُها (تايو) ، يناقشُ المبحثُ الثاني حياةَ سلكو ودورَها ككاتبةٍ متعددةِ الثقافات مُركزاً على ظهورِ الشخصيةِ الجديدة لمختلط الدم ، أما المبحثُ الثالث فيتناولُ تحليلَ رواية (*مراسم*) واضعاً الاصبع على صراع (تايو) الذي تم أبرازه كشخصيةٍ صلدةٍ مختلطة الدم يبجلُها القارئ بدل ان ينوح عليها.

خُصِّص الفصلُ الرابع لاستكشافِ رواية (*دواء الحب*) للروائية أيردريك ضمن مباحث ثلاثة. يقدمُ المبحثُ الأول نبذةً مختصرةً عن مكانةِ ايردريك في الفنِ الروائي للهنودِ الامريكيين ونوع الشخصيات التي صوَّرَتها ، يُسلِّطُ المبحثُ الثاني الضوءَ على حياةِ ايردريك ومشوارِها المهني ويبينُ ايضاً الطريقةَ التي وضَّحَت بها مسألةَ الهوية في كتاباتِها ، اما المبحثُ الثالث فيضْطَلِعُ بمهمةِ تحليلِ رواية (*دواء الحب*) مُركزاً على صراعِ بعضِ شخصياتِ الرواية من مختلطي الدم الذين تغيرت احوالُهم ومسكوا زمامَ امورِهم.

وفي النهاية تُلخص الخاتمة الاستنتاجات التي توصَّلت إليها الدراسة.

جامعـــة القادســـية

الأزمة الثقافية لشخصية مختلط الدم في روايـــات الهنـــود الامريكـــيين: دراسة في روايات مختارة لـ أن سكوت مومادي و لزلي مارمون سلكو و لويز ايردريك

رسالة تقدم بها

اركـــان نـــاصر حســـين

الى

مجلس كلية التربية ـ جامعة القادسية

جزءاً من متطلبات نيل شهادة الماجستير في الأدب الانكليزي

بإشراف

أ. د. قاسم سلمان سرحان

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