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Ritual and Myth in Native American Fiction

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Americká indiánská literatura v sobě originálním způsobem kombinuje evropské a indiánské tradice a postupy. Cílem diplomové práce bude analýza role rituálu a mytologie v dílech zvolených autorů.

V úvodu práce studentka charakterizuje tradici americké indiánské literatury, uvede širší kontext tvorby zvolených autorů. Jádrem práce bude analýza a porovnání vybraných románů především z hlediska toho, jak se v nich obsahově i formálně promítají indiánské rituály a mytologie, jak text ožívují, jak v něm fungují, apod. Tvzení bude ilustrovat ukázkami z primárních děl a rovněž konzultovat či konfrontovat s odbornou sekundární literaturou.

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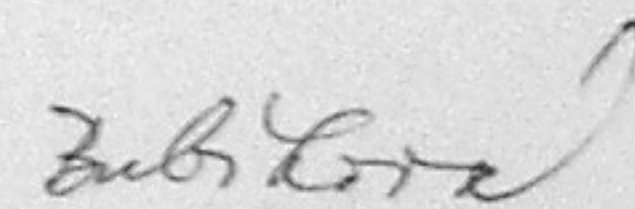
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Abstract

This diploma paper is focused on the presence of Native American myths and rituals in literature. It uses the novels *Ceremony*, *House made of Dawn* and *Love Medicine* to demonstrate the function and importance of rituals and myths in the chosen texts. The use of Native American elements is explored on the background of the authors, their tribes and mythologies. The investigation of storytelling tradition is aimed at showing and relating written literature to the native oral world. The characters and their roles are compared as well as the plots. Based on the comparison of some of the characters, the blood question opens. There is an attempt to draw a line between the Euramerican/"white" and the Indian side, emphasizing the emotionality of the Indians and the comeback to old traditions. In the next phase the focus moves to violence and death and their roles in the rituals and in the novels. In the final section, ceremonies are explored more in depth and analyzed in connection to rituals themselves, the books and even wider context. Storytelling and songs singing takes on the form of a ceremony, and brings relief and healing of soul.

Keywords

Silko, Erdrich, Momaday, Indian, Native American, Chippewa, Kiowa, Anishnaabe, Navajo, Laguna, Pueblo, Native American fiction, ceremony, ritual, myth, mythic background, storytelling, story, oral tradition, written literature, mixedblood, death, murder, violence, healing, curing, recovery.

Souhrn

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na přítomnost rituálů v literatuře amerických indiánů. Pokouší se na románech *Ceremony*, *House made of Dawn* a *Love Medicine* vysvětlit funkci a důležitost indiánských mýtů a rituálů. Práce se věnuje vypravěčské tradici konkrétních indiánských kmenů, od kterých odvozují svůj původ vybraní autoři, a jejímu přerodu v psanou literaturu. Srovnávány jsou jak samotné postavy románů, tak i jejich děj. Porovnáním hlavních postav se mimo jiné otevírá otázka smíšené krve protagonistů a jejich tíhnutí k indiánským hodnotám, respektive návratu k nim. S tím je spojena také otázka smrti, násilí a jejich funkce v rámci obřadů v těchto románech. Tímto se ocitáme v závěrečné kapitole věnované samotnému obřadu jakožto prvotnímu rituálu, knize jako obřadu v širším kontextu. Tradiční příběhy a písně se i v textech samy stávají jakýmsi obřadem přinášejícím úlevu a zhojení duše.

Klíčová slova

Silko, Erdrich, Momaday, indián, indiánský, Čipeva, Navajo, Kiowa, Laguna, Pueblo, rituál, obřad, mýtus, mýty, příběh, vyprávění příběhů, ústní tradice, psaná literatura, míšenec, smíšená krev, smrt, násilí, vražda, hojení, léčení, uzdravení.

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1. Introduction

Native Indian fiction is a range of novels that seems to carry some common features. Those are: being an Indian mixedblood, searching for own identity, coping with the “white” invasion, searching for the remains of the Indian culture, looking for the lost bond with the land. Robert Silberman comprises those works and authors into his consideration: D’Arcy McNickle’s *The surrounded*, N. Scott Momaday’s *The house made of Dawn*, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*, James Welch’s *Winter in the blood* and *The death of Jim Loney*. He considers those works to be the “[...] central texts in Native American literature, bearing a striking family resemblance to one another” (Silberman, 1993, 101). About those he also dares to say that: “Reduced to bare essentials, they tell of a young man’s troubled homecoming” (101).

The novels selected for this paper all to a great extent dive into the depths of humanity and human cognition of the world, they search for and find the attributes of life; they are all accompanied by a kind of ceremony. Literally it works for *Ceremony*, it also works in *House Made of Dawn*, and it is true for *Love Medicine* in a way, too. All the three novels also often share certain character types; troubled young men are one of them.

The authors meditate about Indianness; they retrace their way to the Indian understanding and intuition, that are immaculate and pure, ecological as well as respecting the godlike qualities, the divine nature of phenomena, creatures and things. Their fundamental theme is deeply human, applying to all humankind, although it comes from the base of the Indian tradition. They call for humanity and non-violence and bring the readers the experience of a miracle; the wholeness of the world, the interconnection of the old and the new stories, death and birth, sunrise; love as a path to take.

There are a few terms to be clarified. Most of all the term “white” which will be used throughout the paper, referring to non-Indian “rest of the world” that is possible to see as an Indian character does from his/her place. The chosen novels are Indian-centered, focusing on their race and their matters and are written by authors who identify with Indianness. What I will call white is simply what the novels call “white”.

This way I will be adopting the term to emphasize the situation referring to the ideas and events of the characters.

Krupat also struggles finding an appropriate word and he arrives with “Euramericans” (Krupat, 2002, 25), which is more accurate than “Eurocentric”, but still not quite resembles the term “white” which is used in the novels. “Eurocentric” or Krupat’s “Euramericans” might seem more appropriate at first, but this does not evoke clearly American people (the cowboy), the descendants of the English, French, etc. who came from Europe. Moreover the novels look at them in a critical pattern, making their way to reconciliation.

In *Love Medicine*, the Native Americans speak and after the appearance of the unfortunate Andy right at the start the whites are all but invisible, pushed to the margins, except for the caricature of the rich lady who makes Nector Kashpaw famous as naked warrior in a painting, “The Plunge of the brave.” (Silberman, 1993, 113)

Concerning the fact that the authors identify with Indian identity and definitely locate in America, the European reader acquires another quality of the reading.

There is a specific point of view, as the focus of this work is Native American literature from a point of view of a European “white”. The authors are looking for their identity, which is different from European, though Silko shows that in wider perspectives, as changes happen, humankind is one. This way she gives a completely new perspective on globalization, seeing it as a necessary change and something that is rebounding peoples together. All the characters are mixedblood, and their search for themselves is also a part of the change. As Silko’s shaman Betonie says: Changes are necessary to keep life. Paul Beekman Taylor clears the European point of view, as he shares with us.

I find the Indian example instructive for the European who senses that his own cultures are in a deeper crisis now than they were five hundred years ago when the competition for conquest and appropriation of the riches of the Western Hemisphere began. (2001, 23)

The novels are literature; though they aim much more. They aim to heal the world’s wounds. They try to bring back together what had been separated a long time ago. They help their heroes to recover by installing a lost identity into their hearts, they say that Indian, Japanese or European, all are people; we are.

2. Silko, Erdrich, Momaday and Storytelling

2.1. Indian Tradition, Power of Word

The importance of storytelling is emphasized, most significantly in Leslie Marmon Silko's view. For her and supposedly the "Indian soul", it is not just entertainment, but a whole life's reflection. A good description could be: an eye that sees and is seen. Silko's many comments on storytelling emphasize her place in a community.

At Laguna [...] storytelling is a whole way of seeing yourself, the people around you . . . the place of your life . . . not just in terms of nature and location, but in terms of what has gone before, what's happened to other people. So it's a whole way of being. (Silko in Graulich, 2001, 2)

The intention is to show the connection of the novels to their authors in the sense of Indian identity. Nevertheless it should be taken into account that the authors might not always think of themselves as of representatives of the Indians or tribes. Some authors may like to choose whether their products are representative for a larger group of people. Though, the fate of an artist often is to be put into some category. Jeff Karem is interested in the matter of representing one's culture.

Silko humbly declined to situate herself as a spokeswoman for Indians, Indian artists, or the Laguna tribe. Instead she carved out a much more narrow space for herself, speaking for "one human being, one Laguna woman." Silko's literary career has been marked by the tension between one's personal vision and representing one's culture. In the case of her first collection, Silko situated her work as speaking to the former goal, not personal. As she became a more prominent literary figure, however, with the publication of works such as *Ceremony*, *Storyteller* and *Almanac of the Dead*, the relationship between the personal and the representative would become more vexed. [...]. To make matters more complicated, Silko herself eventually came to welcome this representative stature. (2004, 159)

Karem later unsheathes what Hobson had in opinion:

[...] Hobson defended freedom of choice for indigenous authors, arguing that there was no single appropriate subject for them: "To insist that Indians write only 'Indian' poems or books is as myopic as wishing Joseph Conrad had written only

‘Polish’ novels. Just as non-Indian writers have found it profitable writing about Indians, so should Native American writers have that same freedom.” (2004, 187)

Undoubtedly there are elements in the novels of Silko, Momaday and Erdrich that speak of Indians from the inside. Somehow, these works radiate that the authors have at least been able to identify themselves with some of this. In fact, one can find quite an amount of such features. Robert A. Morace, who takes a closer look into *Love Medicine* and other Erdrich’s works, states: “In its very structure, *Love Medicine* calls attention to the communal nature of storytelling and to the communal need for story” (1999, 43).

Robert M. Nelson thinks that “Storytelling comes naturally enough at places like Laguna” (2001, 15). Storytelling might seem an easy and natural thing, but it is far more complex. There is a question concerning the process and the character of storytelling. When Gerald Vizenor analyses Indian narratives in a postmodern point of view, he quotes Jean-Francois Lyotard in an initial attempt to establish a definition of narratives.

[...] stories that one tells, that one hears, that one acts out; the people does not exist as a subject but as a mass of millions of insignificant and serious little stories that sometimes let themselves be collected together to constitute big stories and sometimes disperse into digressive elements (1993, 3)

The constituting of a bigger story is also what Silko looks at. Her hero, Tayo is accomplishing a quest in his own story but within other stories. These stories do meet at some place. Tayo’s story meets the story of wider peoples.

Essays about Native American literature included in *Narrative Chance* need to be approached with the knowledge of the fact that: “The critical attention in this collection is postmodernism: new essays on narrative discourse, authors, readers, tricksters and comic world views rather than tragic themes, individualism and modernism” (Vizenor, 1993, 3).

The postmodern view points out a few phenomena in Indian narrative tradition. One of these is a comical aspect ever-present in those narratives, according to Vizenor. “The oral and written narratives are language games, comic discourse rather than mere responses to colonialist demands or social science theories.” (Vizenor, 1993, 4) Here Vizenor defends native literature against seeing it as purely a reaction to outer influences, but he also says:

[...] native American Indian literatures have been pressed into cultural categories, transmuted by reductionism, animadversions and the hyperrealities of neocolonial consumerism.(5)

Hyperreality is a term Vizenor announces he had borrowed from Umberto Eco, who remarks that “the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred.” (5). Vizenor also unveils Ihab Hassan’s declaration of what postmodern signs can be: “postmodernism strikes us by contrast as playful, paratactical and deconstructionalist” (1993, 4). Outstandingly, all those elements are not difficult to find in *Ceremony*, *House Made of dawn* and last but not least in *Love Medicine*, as will be shown afterwards.

There are more significant similarities between Silko, Momaday and Erdrich and their backgrounds. This comes mainly from the fact that they deal with their native identity questions. Their blood and soul are mixed so they are able to genuinely reflect the distinct lines of white and Indian, material and ethereal world in their literature.

The identities of the mixed blood protagonists of Indian fiction of the past thirty years achieved or failed to achieve are “hybrid“ identities, to be sure, but most of them, I want to claim, must nonetheless be called “Indian“ identities. (Krupat, 2002, 109)

The tribes of their native ancestries are a vast range of mixed-bloodedness, establishing their identity. Krupat says:

Momaday’s novel powerfully portrays the disintegration and possible reintegration of a mixedblood World War II veteran named Abel, and makes clear the need to resist the dominant culture in a variety of complex ways. (Krupat, 2002, 107)

In Momaday’s case Kiowas (Ojibwas) are the tribe that is the inspiration for *House Made of Dawn*. Owens reminds that “On his mother’s side, Momaday is primarily of European ancestry, with a distant infusion of Cherokee blood” (1994, 92). He continues that “with Momaday, the question of identity [...] becomes an obsession” (92).

Momaday claims his identity to be Indian, though in search of it: “Again and again, more eloquently than any other Indian writer, Momaday has addressed this topic in essays, lectures, poetry and fiction” (Owens, 1994, 92). Momaday’s mother had already been in the same search and Momaday wrote that “She began to see herself as

an Indian. That dim native heritage became a fascination and cause for her.” (92) Owens also tells how Momaday tried to give details about his identity search to his students:

I think of myself as an Indian because at one time in my life I suddenly realized that my father had grown up speaking a language that I didn't grow up speaking, that my forebears on his side had made a migration from Canada [...] so I determined to find out something about these things and in the process I acquired an identity; it is an Indian identity, as far as I am concerned. (Owens, 1994, 93)

Krupat connects Momaday with Silko's Tayo: “Just as Momaday, for all the strands in his cultural formation, can reasonably call his identity ‘an Indian identity as far as I'm concerned,’ so, too, can Tayo” (2002, 111). For Silko, the situation is more complex. The area of Laguna Pueblo, where she comes from is a home for different peoples - Hopis, Zunis, Navajos, and whites (Biography of Silko literatureonline, 1). But Silko's biography explains that “the Laguna have a strong sense of their particular identity, and Silko's mixed-blood ancestry was a source of some pain and embarrassment in her youth”. Her blood is a mix of Laguna Indian and Mexican (Biography of Silko literatureonline, 1). Krupat explains how Silko likes to present herself:

In Pueblo Culture, however, to be known as a storyteller is to be known as someone who participates, in a communally sanctioned manner, in sustaining the group: for a Native American writer to identify herself as a storyteller today is to express a desire to perform such a function (Krupat, 1993, 59)

Louise Erdrich came from a reservation in North Dakota, her mother was part-French and part-Chippewa Indian and her father was German-American. (Biography of Erdrich literatureonline, 1) Erdrich's biography then explains how she was tied to the Chippewas: “Erdrich's maternal grandfather was a tribal chairman for the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe of North Dakota, and Erdrich is an enrolled member of this tribe” (1).

Another feature for the three authors is how they use the underlying tribal stories in the books. Momaday and even more significantly Silko use them as a guiding element. In *Ceremony* the stories of Laguna function as parallel stories that underlie the whole novel. The whole beginning is descending to us as a web-net the spider - the thought-woman is plotting (Silko, 1977, 1). Each time, the next telling happens to be only revealed after actions of Tayo are performed. This signifies a time when life flow

is being stopped for a moment in order to listen to a story, and this causes a feeling of something magic happening. The words are the magic, Silko feels and tells the readers. Moreover she manages to show it in a literary manner. Functioning as magic, the words flow and create not only a book, but also a story. And the story is a world where you can live for a time.

This skill and manner of writing probably ascend from her tribal ancestry and childhood in Laguna. There the words are valuable and important and thus they need to be handled most carefully and skillfully. J. J. Donahue comments on Silko's specific language, citing Brewster E. Fitz:

Using literary and biographical criticism, Fitz demonstrates how Silko's texts are informed by an appreciation of both written and oral language, an appreciation learned early on at home, especially through her Aunt Susie (2006, 1).

Donahue also points out that Fitz classifies the language Silko has developed in the row of her novels, *Ceremony* being somewhere in the middle: "a perfect 'language of love,' a language that moves beyond the oral/written split and is itself not a language of signification or representation, but of being itself" (2006, 1). Working with the magic of words is not the domain of Silko only, but it is common to the other Native American authors. Momaday shows their value through the character of Tosamah, the Priest of the Sun, who talks about his grandmother.

And be assured that her regard for words was always keen in proportion as she depended upon them. You see, for her 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 or sold. And she never threw words away. (Momaday, 1968, 85)

The priest of the sun is not modest with explanations. When he talks about Genesis, he shifts the whole beginning of the world to thinking in the means of quiet, then sound, a word. And the word of God is the world, is the creation, and is the magic. (81) Gretchen Ronnow emphasizes a Lacanian point of view, when writing about words and Indian tradition. Lacan is compared to an Indian shaman concerning the angle to look at words.

Much like Ku'oosh, Lacan believed that the word is instituted in the structure of a semantic word, that of a language. The word never has only one use. Every word

always has a beyond, sustains several functions, envelops several meanings. (Ronnow, 1993, 73)

Using words in Indian way descends from the traditional myths. Hertha D. Sweet Wong explains that: “As well as family and community stories, Erdrich has incorporated some traditional mythical and contemporary Chippewa narratives, characters, and images into her fiction” (2000, 97).

Myths and rituals used to be bound to reality in the time of oral narratives the Indians had, in the times before. Among other there are the stories of the Hummingbird and Fly. Domina introduces the idea from *Ceremony*, that the flies Tayo had killed in the war haunt him for he had caused a drought by doing so, knowing about the old stories.

The story of the greenbottle fly is only one segment of an extended-creation myth intended to teach the people their place in the world and the respect they should show other creatures. (2004, 5)

Domina explains many of Laguna stories concern drought. One other story is about two sisters, Corn Woman and Reed Woman.

“Reed Woman spends her entire day bathing—and splashing water down to earth—while her sister, Corn Woman, works hard in the sun. Irritated at what she believes is an unfair division of labour, Corn Woman scolds Reed Woman, who leaves, taking the water with her. Without rain, all the animals and plants including, ironically, the corn, begin to die. All of creation is independent, the myth teaches, and no one will survive who offends another being.” (2004, 6)

Ceremony and *House Made of Dawn* bring their heroes back through such stories, so they are involved in a huge kind of ceremony, which extends beyond one evening, extends beyond any kind of time.

Silko is writing about stories in a story. The way she handles them is only halfway Indian and only halfway white. Though one could argue that she adopted European traditional techniques to use for Indian sake, the magic of a story read by people and living it through with Tayo, the Indian tradition provides with the attitude that you should not be using your enemy’s weapons. At least this is a message Tayo conveys to the reader:

Tayo had almost jammed the screwdriver into Emo's skull the way the witchery had wanted...Their deadly ritual for the autumn solstice would have been completed by him. (Silko, 1977, 253)

The tradition of native stories and songs comes from oral heritage. Each of the novels then contains a character who brings the stories to life. Singing and storytelling in *House Made of Dawn* is among others provided mainly by Ben:

Ben Benally functions as Abel's singer by singing prayers over him which engage the powers of restoration or self-healing...it is clear that Ben told Abel the bear stories in the hospital when he was recuperating from the beating, sang the Horse Song in a story, and sang the '*House Made of Dawn*' prayer on the night before Abel's departure on the train back to New Mexico. (García, 1990, 92-3)

When Ben is singing, the form of a song is largely of different quality than the other text. The same happens in *Ceremony*, where some parts of text are visually written like poetry. Those are supposedly old Indian stories and songs. Using poetry format thus has a special meaning, as suggested earlier. In the cases of its occurrence, it describes something close, but far above to what is happening in the novel. That happening is a parallel and a story that is given the patina of age and godly qualities. These narrative poems are the condensed happening in *Ceremony*, applied to whole-world events (Biography of Silko literatureonline, 1). Domina uses the term "sacred" to illuminate how it exactly functions.

Much of the material that is formatted as poetry in *Ceremony* is itself ceremonial. To some extent, the stories revealed through poetry have a different meaning, often a more clearly sacred meaning, than those revealed through more ordinary prose. (2004, 7)

This part of the text serves as a clue for an accurate understanding. As the old men around Ku'ooosh are pictured, we know that what Tayo had seen is a good sign: The meetings with Ts'eh were a blessing (Silko, 1977, 257):

They started crying
The old men started crying
"A'moo'oooh! A'moo'oooh!"
You have seen her
We will be blessed
Again.

The most powerful Indian weapons, Silko suggests, are words. The Words are important. How Lipsha had understood the Bible reflects the way to grip the reality of the world. The Priest of the Sun in *House Made of Dawn* quite in detail preaches about the importance of the Word. The speech of the Priest continues to tell us more about the Word and the oral tradition. Do we realize how much the word is connected to magic? The white and Eurocentric culture has forgotten that it was. Perhaps that is the reason why poor Nector Kashpaw has to yell his prayers aloud.

We sat down in our pews. Then the rosary got started up pre-Mass and that's when Grandpa filled up his chest and opened his mouth and belted out them words. HAIL MARIE FULL OF GRACE. He had a powerful set of lungs. And he kept on like that. He did not let up. He hollered and he yelled them prayers, and I guess people was used to him by now, because they only muttered theirs and did not quit and gawk like I did. I was getting red-faced, I admit. I give him the elbow once or twice, but that wasn't nothing to him. He kept on. He shrieked to heaven and he pleaded like a movie actor and he pounded his chest like Tarzan in the Lord I Am Not Worthies. I thought he might hurt himself. Then after a while I guess I got used to it, and that's when I wondered: How come? So afterwards I out and asked him. "How come? How come you yelled?" "God don't hear me otherwise," said Grandpa Kashpaw. (Erdrich, 1993, 235)

Lipsha, the narrator at the moment, comments on the situation. His verbalizations carry two mingling aspects, which are humorous simpleness together with some, often tragical revelation.

I sweat. I broke right into a little cold sweat at my hairline because I knew this was perfectly right and for years not one damn other person had noticed it. God's been going deaf. (Erdrich, 1993, 235)

The insight on word and discourse in general, is that it is the "maker of the world, not its mirror [...].The world is what we say it is, and what we speak of is the world": Vizenor chose to cite Stephen Tyler at this point. (1993, 4)

How the Word is losing its power through the "white man" the Priest of the Sun wonderfully describes:

He talks about the Word. He 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. (Momaday, 1968, 94)

How much of the original has remained is a question. The suggestion comes there is not any vast amount. One way is to say that the God is deafening, and the other way is to say we have lost the power to talk to him, lost the ability “to ask in the right way” (Erdrich, 1993, 236). Once again Erdrich brings the reader to laughter, involving a tragical strike; Lipsha is comically tragic and tragically comic:

Besides the dictionary, which I’m constantly in use of, I had this Bible once. I read it. I found there was discrepancies between then and now. It struck me. Here God used to raineth bread from clouds, smite Philipppines, sling fire down on red-light districts where people got stabbed. He even appeared in person every once in a while God used to pay attention, is what I’m saying. (236)

In Lipsha’s words, Erdrich also establishes a relationship between Gods of the Europeans and the Indians.

Our Gods aren’t perfect, is what I’m saying, but at least they come around. They’ll do a favor if you ask them right. You don’t have to yell. But you do have to know, like I said, how to ask in the right way. That makes problems, because to ask proper was an art that was lost to the Chippewas once the Catholics gained ground. (236)

House Made of Dawn is a title of English translation of a Navajo song. The song is a part of a ceremony. This way the mythical materials are made the core of the book. The material is of three different nations, which are Jemez Pueblo, Kiowa, and Navajo (Introduction. *House Made of Dawn* N. Scott Momaday, 1997). Krupat notices that *House Made of Dawn* begins with the traditional invocation of Jemez storytellers: ‘Dypaloh’.”(2002, 93) Krupat claims this word is a superimportant significance of shifting the whole text into a category different than classic Eurocentric novel. What Krupat says is also a considerable attribute of this paper. Analyzing *Ceremony* and *House Made of Dawn* is considerably nearing the matter of worldness.

With a single word, *House Made of Dawn* assumes a place within a Native American literary tradition in which stories have serious responsibilities: to tell us who we are and where we come from, to make us whole and heal us, to integrate us fully within the world in which we live and make that world inhabitable, to compel order and reality. (Krupat, 2002, 92-3)

Susan Scarberry García speaks not only about the beginning word, but also about the concluding one, which is “Qtsedaba”. She states that by doing this, Momaday

“is placing his story solidly within oral tradition” (1990, 8). Here, García comments that this is the device that Momaday uses to establish the “bond between narrator and audience or writer and reader (1990, 8).

Krupat notices that Linda Hogan had also investigated this issue and about *House Made of Dawn*, she wrote that it: “uses the traditional Native American oral concept of language where words function as poetic process of creation, transformation, and restoration” and that “The author, like the oral poet /singer is ‘he who puts together’ a disconnected life through a step-by-step process of visualization” (2002, 94).

The novel is composed as a fragmentary mosaic. There are glimpses of memories of different people mixed together with native stories about Tai-me (Momaday, 1968, 85). There is a description of a sound that is not heard first, because there is nobody to listen to it. Once the sound happens, the sound is which means the word is, something is. The wall has been broken through and a space is filling up. It is the old story of the Kiowa people, as they met Tai-me, their bread winner. The story is old and powerful and is told to the Priest of the Sun by his grandmother. The Priest preaches to his audience, when trying to explain the difference between white and Indian world.

The difference can also be shown on Abel’s performance. He has killed a white man, because he felt he was obliged to. He would do it again. There is a different perception of the affair from the side of the whites. Abel quite unexcitedly follows what they make of it. He can see that they use words as weapons against other people. Momaday uses the word dispose (102) to show what they do to him with words.

Word by word by word these men were disposing of him in 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. (102)

Forming the mind/world means the Word that Momaday describes through the Priest of the Sun. Silko presents it as a story of the Thinking Woman. Thoughts are forming the world. In *Ceremony* it happens through a story, through orality, ceremony and wizard games. Momaday’s contribution is more white in a way.

In the name of Abel, we can find a Biblical allusion and Momaday makes no argument to deny that he gathers much of the basis from the Bible. Still, Abel is less

than one-foot rooted in the white ways. He is an Indian, he does not even attempt the white ways very much. Nonetheless, the novel has its ways to prove the white part. If only the argument was in the fact that much of the events take place in a city, it could be enough for a comparison.

Mentioned at the beginning, we want to emphasize the Indian identity, which – obviously – is best seen if contrasted sharply with another. The thoughts are forming the world and getting to know the world means also formation and formulation. It also works backwards: The world forms the character/person and his thoughts. A story does the same. It informs and forms the listener. Another line from the Priest of the Sun confirms this thesis, when he speaks about his Indian grandmother: “When she told me those old stories, something strange and good and powerful was going on” (Momaday, 1968, 95). Retelling the story also is a lively process. It transforms the storyteller, the story and the listener.

There is one more aspect to the word. It is revealed in connection of Tayo’s search for real friends. Although he had known that he should be careful with Harley, Leroy and Emo, he forgot. He can not help himself feeling happy and relieved when he sees them approaching on the road.

Leroy’s truck. Leroy and Harley. His stomach smoothed out and he felt loose. He was smiling and suddenly close to tears because they had come when he needed friends most. (Silko, 1977, 238)

But the situation soon changes and he is able to realize what they were looking for. They betray him (See chapter 5.). Gretchen Ronnow observes a connection to the function of the word: “This betrayal is a function of words which wound easily and which are always devoted to ambiguity since they have no proper meaning” (1993, 72). Thus the word can be either good or evil; however is more likely unbiased, is a powerful instrument which carries the force of the creator, carries the thought, story, and enables the happening of it.

Words are the instrument. Among those instruments, the stories are also influenced by other elements. Gerald Vizenor introduces *Narrative Chance* by explaining how the landscape and motion function in the stories.

Native American stories are told and heard in motion, imagined and read over and over on a landscape that is never seen at once: words are heard in winter rivers, crows are written on the poplars, last words are never the end. (1993, xiii)

Suggesting that there is never an end to the telling pulls the narrative closer to the reality. Krupat is thinking about the postmodern borders between fact and fiction, and he mentions a “time when the line between history and myth was not very clearly marked. But that is the way things have always been for Native American literatures” (Krupat, 1993, 59). This is exactly what Silko and Momaday do: blur the line between the reader and the story, make the reader involved. This is also being referred to in an essay called “*Silko’s Blood Sacrifice*” in “*Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays*”.

[...], she leads her readers through the personal ritual of Ceremony to sacrifice their egos, their epistemologies, and their ideologies on the rebuilt altar of history in Almanac. By assuming the role she builds for them and bearing witness to a different history, recognizing “that theirs was a nation built on stolen land” (Silko 199), they may effect a different reality. (151)

This doubles the effect of the actual Ceremony, which Silko acknowledges by ending the novel with a song (262) that is the end of the *Ceremony*:

Sunrise,
Accept this offering,
Sunrise.

Momaday’s work is not left unnoticed, and the commentator is Kimberly Blaeser, who describes it as “passing the code”: “By his enactment of the reader’s role within the story of the text Momaday essentially teaches the imagination” (1993, 53).

There is also a note about the reader as he/she takes part on the literary work by reading it: “The same possibility exists for the reader as they respond to Momaday’s text and co-create the literary work” (1993, 53). Though Blaeser refers to *The way to Rainy Mountain*, this applies to *House Made of Dawn* as apposite.

However, in an orally kept story, changes happen. Change is also what Betonie underlines in rituals (See chapter 5). The ceremonies are connected with words tightly. Arnold Krupat elucidates this point:

[...] change is in fact a thoroughly traditional practice, and that oral cultures have always engaged in the sort of unnoticed selective forgetting or updating that can permit them to change while yet remaining the same [...]. Betonie says that the ceremonies are different though the same; they are “traditional.”(2002, 110)

What is the distance between oral story and literature, one might wonder. There are some features that enable seeing it in a similar way. Arnold Krupat theorizes about the shift between an orally kept (and thus lived and retold) story and the modern native literature. The novels of Silko, Erdrich, Momaday and other authors have descended from their orally conveyed foregoers, but have already moved into another field, which is more white. Krupat also thinks about the simple act of actually translating and writing the stories down for the first time. He is talking about “the transformation of oral literatures into textual literatures” (2002, 25). Krupat establishes an explanation to how we relate oral and written stories:

This is to say that Euramericans, to transcribe and translate Native American verbal expressions, must assume that it is in some degree *like* Euramerican (‘Western’) literary expression (otherwise it would not be recognizable to ‘us’ as literary art) but also that it is in some degree *unlike* Euramerican (‘Western’) literary expression (otherwise it would not take the obvious into account, that it is transmitted orally, in non-Indo-European languages, frequently in ritual or ceremonial performances, and so on). (2002, 25)

The meeting point of the white/Eurocentric and Native American worlds can be seen in the point where mixed blooded Indians put their stories down on a paper, in the sense of the white tradition and succeed in making their stories alive in the minds of the readers. The point is not in the stories being put down or conserved, but in their re-reading and thus re-living similar to re-telling. Accepting the losses that the Native Americans have met, more generally suggests embracement of the whole change, which also includes positive contributions the meeting of cultures has brought. Owens sums up what he believes Native American authors aim to tell:

The past permeates the present, coexisting through cyclical temporality within the spatial reality of the Native American world, staying with us in a single breath where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. As nearly every Native American author has sought to demonstrate, the loss of the past means a loss of self, a loss of order and meaning in the present moment, and an inability to contemplate a future that is part of that moment. Storytelling serves to prevent that loss; it bears, as Michel Foucault has said, “the duty of providing immortality” (2000, 59).

The story flows with own speed, in own world. Once we realize this is our world, too, and our speed, too. Things and Words people had before, but lost, rediscovered, wrote about, lived, and changed. This is the “Ceremony”. The message of Leslie Marmon Silko and Scott Momaday is not to give up but continue in the story, accepting and changing.

2.2. Mythic Trickster, Comical Aspect

Silko, Erdrich, Momaday and other authors incorporate their search for Indian identity into their works. The themes they write about are painful, though looked at in a very specific way. The characters are often comical in their behavior and in what happens to them. Tayo the least, only from time to time the reader cannot help a twisted smile to the way of his thinking; Indian. Lynn Domina admits one comical scene in *Ceremony*, which is when Harley is closed out on a farm to be kept out of troubles; nevertheless he plans a great bar route (Domina, 2004, 125). Tayo and Abel are sometimes pictured as pitiful fools, their sores being exhibited. In comparison to Tayo, Abel is more comical in effect. He is being described as a comically foolish character by his friend Ben Benally.

The comic sometimes connects to the figure of a trickster. We are told some trickster stories in *Ceremony*. These are stories of Kaup’a’ta and Pa’caya’nyi, upon which Domina comments:

A trickster figure persuades them to believe his magic is powerful enough to provide water and food; they no longer need to perform the rituals through which their mother provides sustenance. (2004, 6)

Love Medicine is essentially a comical work; tragicomical one should claim. William Gleason justifies the comic aspects, also citing Gene Lyons:

Many early reviewers of Louise Erdrich’s *Love Medicine* treat the novel as though it were at heart a tragic account of pain. They see Erdrich as merely a recorder of contemporary Indian suffering, as an evoker of her characters’ “conflicting feelings of pride and shame, guilt and rage—the disorderly intimacies of their lives on the reservation and their longings to escape” (2000, 115)

Gleason gives more examples of how some critics have described *Love Medicine* as tragic, and opposes their point of view: “Each of these descriptions betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the novel; any reckoning of *Love Medicine* as an ultimately tragic text begs contradiction” (2000, 115). He admits though that “the book contains much that is painful” and says what applies to Silko’s and Momaday’s novels as well: “she chronicles not defeat, but survival” (115).

What we witness in *Ceremony* and *House Made of Dawn* is exactly the matter of this “survival”. Tayo is told that: “we have done as much as we could do and still survive” (Silko, 1977, 134). Betonie talks about the Indians as a nation; Silko moves this border into upper spheres. Her claim is to all the humankind, being told by an Indian voice, as if the whole story of our being was an old Indian story or one her stories.

The nature of humor is to overcome hurt feelings; Gleason asserts: “In many ways, humor mirrors hurt in this novel, broad or sharp” (2000, 116).

Characteristic features of native Indian literature include a comic aspect of the telling, often connected with the figure of a trickster, who is inseparable from the myths. “The trickster is a communal sign in a comic narrative; the comic holotrope is a consonance in tribal discourse” (Vizenor, 1993, 9). The trickster illustrates the narrative situation, which is comic rather than tragic because:

The trickster is not tragic because the narrative does not promise a happy ending. The comic and tragic, the hypotragic, are cultural variations; the trickster is opposed by silence and isolation, not social science. (Vizenor, 1993, 13)

The games and playing with words have a crucial role in Indian myths. Trickster figures in them, functioning as a healer: “the tribal trickster is a liberator and healer in a narrative, a comic sign [...] the trickster is a language game in a comic narrative” (Vizenor, 1993, 187). Vizenor also reveals what Paul Radin has in opinion: “Laughter, humour and irony permeate everything Trickster does.” Vizenor writes, that:

Radin also reviews the trickster as the “presence of a figure” and as a “theme or themes” which are told in various cultures. Radin seems to present the trickster as an “aesthetic presence” in narratives. (204)

He in addition shows another point of view: “On the other hand, Barnow declared that the trickster was a ‘real person’ and ‘neither human being nor a god, but of something both’”. This is why Vizenor can conclude: “The trickster is not a presence or a real person but a semiotic sign in a language game, in a comic narrative that denies presence” (1993, 204).

William Gleason observes that Paul Radin “terms trickster the oldest of all figure in American Indian mythologies, perhaps in all mythologies” (2000, 123). Hawley opposes that this figure is widespread and worldspread, though he speaks of “western literature” and not of mythologies:

Tricksters, especially those from Native American myth, and their peregrinations from this dung heap to the altar and many points between, have held the gaze of western scholars, from Carl Jung to Gary Snyder, in part because of the notable absence of such a character in Western literature. (Hawley, 2008, 2)

Paul Beekman Taylor seems quite confident about the fact we can find Trickster outside of Indian myth:

In the pre- or non-Christian story of the Germanic north, trickster figures like Loki of Nordic myth know something of the secrets of creation and destruction that are guarded zealously by the primal giants. They work their trickstery to bring about the inevitable destruction of the world for the same sort of purging and renewing that American Indian tricksters work. (2001, 33)

Gleason says that “many characters in *Love Medicine* act tricksterian” (2000, 123) and even nominates Nector Kashpaw to fantasize “playing trickster”:

[...] imagining himself surviving the jump and being washed to safety. He also revels in the way that loving Lulu lets him assume different forms: “I could twist like a rope. I could disappear beneath the surface. I could run to a halt and Lulu would have been there every moment.” (Gleason, 2000, 123)

There is a resemblance between June and the figure of a trickster, when she thinks her bus ticket would last forever, Owens observes. “The bus ticket would stay good, maybe forever” (2000, 56). After all, June is as Owens describes “one of those women who have washed up in the no-woman’s-land of prostitution on the parasitic edge of the reservation, displaced and alone” (2000, 56) and not afraid to die (See chapter 3).

Moreover, Owens adds:

With a bus ticket that will never expire, and no expectations, June—like trickster—assumes the role of a permanent traveler, infinitely dislocated with no family/community/tribe to expect her return. (2000, 56)

Her death in the time of Easter and Erdrich's sentence closing the initial part, the part about June, "The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home" (1993, 7), can as well as of trickster make the reader think of resurrection, as the whole book serves as one for June,

[...] the feminine Christ-figure resurrected as trickster, the fragmented culture hero made whole within memory and story, returning through the annual cycle of Easter/spring—death/resurrection—to her Indian community as mythic catalyst. (Owens, 2000, 56)

June is a lamb, someone who volunteered to fall in the arms of death. But even doing so, she keeps returning. Owens also asserts that:

Jay Cox has noted June's resemblance to trickster, suggesting perceptively that June is the 'chaotic everything' to all the characters in *Love Medicine* and that "June's death in the first chapter does little to impede her spirit from going along through-out the novel" (2000, 57).

That June is with the reader as well as with the narrators is another specific quality. Owens agrees that "By invoking Easter, Erdrich brings into the novel the myth of the crucifixion and resurrection" (2000, 57). He also points out the moment when "June walked over it like water", which reminds of the image of Christ (2000, 58).

But there are more candidates to the status. Owens puts Gerry in the perspective of a trickster, as he tells his son: "I won't ever really have what you'd call a home" (Owens, 2000, 57). Gerry Nanapush is a figure that carries many outstanding qualities. Being the lover of June and father of Lipsha, he carries the heritage of his father, Old man pillager and of his mother Lulu.

His magical escapes enhance Chippewa cultural identity while they add to his own idea of himself. Gerry consciously takes on a mythic role and becomes a living embodiment of the trickster. (Ruppert, 2000, 79)

Owens also highlights that Gerry uses a typical trickster speech when coming to King's apartment:

Impossible to contain, a shape shifter capable of impossible physical feats, when he arrives at King's apartment to confront the stoolie who has informed on him, Nanapush speaks the classic trickster line: "I want to play" [...]. Nanapush is a culture hero and shaman/trickster. (Owens, 2000, 60)

Gerry is constantly on the move; he has no other chance. Silberman describes: "As his son realizes, Gerry is a man on the run" (1993, 108). His escapes and returns resemble the pattern of a trickster play. Gleason writes:

He seems to escape primarily because he can, so skilled are his metamorphic abilities, and the escape-recapture cycle becomes ritualized trickster play. (2000, 124)

Annette van Dyke confirms the tricksterian characteristics of Gerry, when she is giving information about with who Lulu had conceived him: "As a result of her liaison with Moses, she gives birth to Gerry Nanapush, the magical trickster whom no jail can hold." (Chavkin, 1999, 136)

As Gerry has not shown many negatives, the reverse side of a Trickster is vast, and Steve Hawley has noted that:

The trickster is creator and culture hero to be sure, yet his simultaneous existence as dupe, hideous pervert, and clown seem to draw more attention. Coprophilic, phallic, and even transgendered adventure permeate much of Native American trickster lore. (Hawley, 2008, 1)

Trickster is much more than we can see in *Love Medicine*. The figure is mysterious and sensual, is here and isn't here, like Gerry. It is not a clue but a privilege to know more about the traditional figure, when many critics search for and find it in the novels. Hawley truly alerts that:

Native American trickster stories have come to possess a remarkable, irresistible draw for contemporary literary scholars, artists, and anthropologists. Scholars tend to couch their interest in the vernacular of the cultural critic or social scientist, but the attraction also lies partly in the opportunity to discuss trickster's absurdist antics, which broach subjects rarely touched upon in Western literature. Trickster's appetites-sexual, gastrointestinal, and otherwise, tend to defy comprehension through the lens of any particular Western mode of critical thought [...]. While trickster's sexual antics have been widely examined and interpreted, trickster crap seems to baffle social scientists and literature critics alike." (1)

Many of the essayists note the striking likeness of the name Nanapush to a trickster figure. Hertha D. Sweet Wong shows the closeness of the name with the traditional Chippewa mythic figure of a trickster called Nanabozho, Nanabush, Wenebojo or Manabozho (2000, 97). She adds that:

The family name Nanapush echoes the trickster's, just as the 250-pound Gerry Nanapush's antics in outwitting the police recall the trickster's mythical and hyperbolic escapades (2000, 97).

Of all the tricksterlike characters, Gerry seems a sure candidate for such labeling. Gleason states: "But Gerry *is* Trickster, literally" (2000, 124). The new identity Lipsha acquires is near his father's. Gleason doubts about Lipsha's touch and argues this is the comical aspect: Lipsha seeing himself as a healer.

Lipsha [...] is in his own way a holy fool. He is a modern pinball medicine man, who believes he has "the touch" [...] But he's not especially diligent about his medicine, particularly in acquiring the two goose hearts for Marie's love charm. (Lipsha is probably better at Space Invaders than at ritual healing.) (2000, 122)

Indian myths and figures, such as Trickster, permeate the novels and mix with other beliefs, most remarkably Christianity. *Love Medicine* is the ground for confronting those two backgrounds. Lipsha is a traditional believer; nevertheless he does carry the turkey hearts meant for the "love medicine" to the church to have them blessed (Erdrich, 1993, 247).

In Foreword to *Landmarks of Healing*, Andrew Wiget explains the easiness of incorporating Jesus in Indians own beliefs.

While Jesus slew no monsters, he certainly could be made to look the part of a culture hero. This was an overt practice among some proselytizing orders who identified Jesus with the Culture Hero and Satan with the Trickster figure. Christian salvation could then be structured as tribal healing was, the conforming of oneself to the pattern of the hero's death and rebirth. For this reason, many Indians, formerly and at present, have had little difficulty in incorporating Jesus into their religious belief and practice alongside their tribal religions. (1990, Foreword in García)

Although the intake of Christ is manageable and easy, there are still some problems, which refer to a completely different viewing oneself in the surrounding

community. In this aspect, the Indians are again perhaps in a way closer to Asian way of perception. Paul Beekman Taylor writes:

The bond between man and God took precedent over man's bond with the earth and its other denizens, a development that Tayo considers in *Ceremony* when he regrets how Christianity separated the people from themselves, how Christ would save only the individual soul, whereas what happened to his mother Laura happened to *all* people. (2001, 37)

In the same logic, illness is seen and felt: "Illness is not a strictly personal matter, because it is seen to be part of the larger sociocultural environment" (García, 1990, 90).

The trickster is in conflict with the Christian approach, because it is more complicated than just "evil". The trickster, who is incorporated in *Love Medicine*, is to the Indian side more than to any other. Gerry or June or Lipsha, they are all tricksterian at some point and there is an amount of inexplicable events around them, as they move along in their stories.

3. Characters: Indian versus White

The major attributes to discuss about the protagonists concern their mixed-bloodedness. The connection of the worlds (white and Indian) take place inside the characters, and that makes them stand in the centre of the change and ceremony. The mixed blood is signified by the color of eyes. Domina writes:

Then Tayo notices Betonie's eyes, which are hazel like Tayo's, and Betonie acknowledges his Mexican grandmother; both Betonie and Tayo—as well as others who will be significant participants in the ceremony—have mixed-race ancestry. (2004, 3)

Ceremony opens up with Tayo, lying in bed, involuntarily remembering the moments from the war. Retreating from the war seems to cause a retreating in life afterwards. Tayo and Abel suffer from the war-veteran syndrome. The issue of races origins stands out.

The skin. He saw the skin of the corpses again and again, in ditches on either side of the long muddy road—skin that was stretched shiny and dark over bloated hands; even white men were darker after death. (Silko, 1977, 7)

A similar incident of such a delusion happened to a character in *Love Medicine*. Henry Lamartine is another son of Lulu and a war veteran. “And he saw her as the woman back there [...]. She was out of her mind. You, me, same. Same. She pointed to her eyes and his eyes” (Erdrich, 1993, 176). This is in a situation when after he accidentally met Albertine, and after being nice to her, Henry presented himself as a crazy man, making her afraid of him by talking to himself, referring to the woman he had seen in war: “And anyway, what could I have asked? Huh? What the hell?” (176) James Ruppert comments this particular moment:

In the one wartime action of Henry's that we learn about he is ordered to interrogate a dying woman who claims the bond of relationship with him. His implication in the death of a relative puts him in conflict with Chippewa cultural values. (2000, 73)

Albertine is the granddaughter of Marie and Nector Kashpaw, running away from the reservation, and this is her first night out in town, moneyless, without a place to

go, where to stay. It is again Erdrich, who lets the threads tangle so. Later Albertine meets Gerry Nanapush, the father of Lipsha, and that is the only moment she actually mentions Henry.

I had heard Gerry Nanapush was around, and because he was famous for leading a hunger strike at the state pen, as well as having been Henry Lamartine's brother and some kind of boyfriend to Aunt June, I went to look for him. (Erdrich, 1993, 195)

In Tayo's memories there is one special moment, where he has a vision that makes everyone else to think he went mad. The soldiers are about to shoot the Japanese captives, when Tayo clearly sees his beloved uncle Josiah standing among them. He can see him being shot and death coming for him.

Tayo could not pull the trigger. The fever made him shiver, and the sweat was stinging his eyes and he couldn't see clearly; in that instant he saw Josiah standing there; the face was dark from the sun, and the eyes were squinting as though he were about to smile at Tayo. (Silko, 1977, 7-8)

An essential fact is that the leading characters of the novels like Tayo are unbalanced from the start. The torn soul asks for a healing to be given. Gretchen Ronnow observes how deranged Tayo appears already in the beginning:

Tayo enters the novel already misconstrued. He is an already dissociated self, a confusion of voices. He tosses in the old iron bed, the coiled springs squeaking, calling up dreams; loud voices roll him over and over like debris caught in a flood. Tonight the singing had come first, a man singing in Spanish; sometimes the Japanese voices, angry and loud; sometimes the wind; then Laguna voices, Uncle Josiah calling him, bringing him medicine. But before Josiah could come, the fever voices would drift and whirl –ordering voices, damp voices, women's voices, his mother's voice, loud jukebox music and language he could not understand. (1993, 71)

The war memories keep invading to Tayo and make his life seem like a total failure. Tayo often seems to be a coward, a weak person. The image is of a sick man, broken down. The same way, Abel in *House Made of Dawn* is pictured as a drunkard who could not properly walk after leaving the bus. He literally fell in his grandfather's arms. (See chapter 4)

Abel stepped heavily to the ground and reeled. He was drunk, and he fell against his grandfather and did not know him. His wet lips hung loose and his eyes were half-closed and rolling. (Momaday, 1968, 8)

Francisco, Abel's grandfather, is presented as an old and tired man, wise and carrying his Indian dignity, awaiting the return of a lost grandson. His reaction to Abel's behavior seems very Indian: silence over the first days rules between them. Indian matters tend to have a bitter aftertaste such as this kind of silence. The sadness is mixed with pride, the pride in the stories that has led the Indians to this point. When he is about to retrieve old Indian values, Tayo in *Ceremony* comes to doubts. "I wonder what good Indian ceremonies can do against the sickness which comes from their wars, their bombs, their lies?" (Silko, 1977, 132)

The landscape and the Nations suffered, and were made to believe their culture was pitiful and poor in comparison to the rich and clever whites. The belief that white things are actually better has raised Tayo's cousin/brother Rocky and others like Abel from *House Made of Dawn*. The brothers joined the army and Tayo has brought an intuitional knowledge of how this parallels the fate of whole Native Americans.

The character of Francisco in *House Made of Dawn* represents a paternal love, an essential love that is taken away by death only some time later than Josiah's love is taken from Tayo. Francisco is a grandfather, who raised Abel as his own son without a mother. The absence of a mother is common with Tayo, only Josiah who figures in the fathering role is his uncle.

Another important character in *House Made of Dawn* is Ben Benally. He is one of the keys to Abel's recovery. First, he offers him that they can share his flat. Later he suffers Tayo's drunken behavior, seeing and narrating about his alienation. Eventually they have an argument and Tayo leaves. Ben starts to worry about him and after three days he finds him terribly beaten in their house corridor. Abel then recovers in the hospital under Bens wake. Ben also brings Angela, a woman he knows Abel used to see. Angela does something miraculous. She tells Abel a story. She says she always thinks of Abel when she tells this story to her son. Ben is astonished:

Ei Yei! A bear! A bear and a maiden. And she was a white woman and she thought it up, you know, made it up out of her own mind, and it was like that old grandfather talking to me, telling me about *Esdzá shash nadle*, or *Dzil quigi*, yes, just like that. (Momaday, 1968, 164)

Abel goes back home, to Francisco by train. Ben gives Abel his only coat for the journey and says goodbye to him. All the good deeds he has done for Abel are a medicine for Abel, but the most powerful one is the telling and the singing he had done for him together with Angela. García writes about the singing that when Ben “sings the ‘With Beauty’ chant from Mountainway to heal Abel, or reharmonize him, the totality of power from the time of creation of the Navajo universe is invoked” (García, 1990, 4).

In *Love Medicine*, there is no main “hero”, but the way the story is told suggests a whole family history, narrated from each member at a time. There is one strong character that is comparable to Tayo and Abel, though a more positive one. His name is Lipsha Morrissey. Lipsha’s blood is Indian. When it is his turn to narrate, he mentions his magic powers of healing. Being the grandson of Lulu Lamartine, as he has revealed, he confirms the blood connection justifying his fear of Lulu.

I was quite careful. To tell the truth I was afraid of her. She scared people after the bandages came off her eyes, because she seemed to know everybody else’s business. No one understood that like I did. For you see, having what they call the near-divine healing touch, I know that such things are purely possible. If she had some kind of power, I wasn’t the one to doubt. (Erdrich, 1993, 333)

Ceremony teaches about illness and a need of healing. Indian myths are told to give a hand: “but as Spider Woman in *Ceremony* reminds Fly and Hummingbird in myth, undoing-what-has-been-done is never easy” (Ronnow, 1993, 72). Here, Jacques Lacan reminds that “destiny is not very benevolent” and Stuart Schneidermann’s interpretation follows: “when a man sets off on the path of his desire, he goes forth alone and betrayed” (Ronnow, 1993, 72). Clearly, Tayo has to travel his way alone and only time to time he meets a friendly company. He has to distinguish between real and fake friends. “Tayo is alone; he has been rejected by family and society. He will be betrayed by his friends” (Ronnow, 1993, 72). Betrayal is a big issue; it is the core of what the Indians feel. That is also why Tayo and Abel are symbols for wider communities of Indians. Such betrayal the Indians would expectedly drown in alcohol. Native American fiction seeks answer to why are the Indians so easily addicted to it. Perhaps it had some elements in common with the fact that their sensitive nature is as if directly opposed to the ratio of the surrounding culture that invaded into their land and their minds.

Tayo is emotional and Rocky is ratio, in *Love Medicine* Eli is wild and Nector is educated. Abel is an emotional type (seen through Angela's eyes); there is a scene where Abel is "dancing" in the war – dancing in the middle of the war, avoiding bullets (See chapter 4). This dance is a Native American warrior dance.

There is a great similarity to the situation of Abel and Tayo, as they both had a brother (a cousin in Tayo's case but close as a brother). Abel saw the fragile beauty of the geese, while Vidal tried to kill them. Abel wanted to show his brother what he felt: "Did you see? Oh, they were beautiful! Oh Vidal my brother did you see?" (Momaday, 1968, 119) Rocky and Vidal were the stronger ones, and Tayo and Abel were the more sensitive ones depending on the point of view. They came back from the war. If Tayo was more the Indian side, Rocky was more white – and his family was proud of him incorporating in the outside world. To quite a lot Indians, there it seemed to be a better world – the white-man's. Pushed to a shameful situation, they were ready to abandon all their knowledge and tradition. "Tayo was suddenly sad, because what Rocky said was true. What did they know about raising cattle? They weren't scientists." (Silko, 1977, 76) The education of Nector and Eli is explained. Nector Kashpaw and Eli are brothers. Their mother, Rushes Bear "had let the government put Nector in school, but hidden Eli, the one she couldn't part with" (Erdrich, 1993, 19). Albertine further explains how their ways have differed. As Nector came back from school, he had become involved in the white people's culture "knowing white reading and writing" while Eli was the Indian side – knowing about the nature, forests around. "Hard to tell why or how, my Great-uncle Eli was still sharp, while Grandpa's mind had left us, gone wary and wild." (19) Owens comments on what happened to Nector: "He has become a victim of mechanical, entropic, historic time, while his brother has remained alert to the reality of his more traditional life on the other side of the time line" (Owens, 2000, 59). (See about Nector)

The characters that tend to be more Indian also tend to be more emotional. Their intuition is like a spring coming from earth, the knowing comes from the body. The feelings are as if known by own body but only slowly reaching up the mind – as if body was Indian domain while mind and rational thinking were connected to the whites as they are shown in the novel.

Tayo was halfway to the top of the hill before he stopped: suddenly it hit him, in the belly and spread to his chest in a single surge: he knew then that they were not his friends but had turned against him, and the knowledge left him hollow and dry inside, like the locust's shell. (Silko, 1977, 242)

White things like cars and alcohol work against Tayo's feelings, his intuition. Immediately after entering the truck driven by Harley, he begins to feel sick: "Tayo shook his head: suddenly he felt thin and dizzy" (Silko, 1977, 239). A while later, he is happy to let himself be lulled by sweet drunkenness in the car: "The truck's motion and the beer were soothing: the steel and glass closed out everything" (241). Beer, steel and glass are all the products of the invading white world. Later, after having gained his bodily intuition back, he realized:

He knew why he had felt weak and sick: he knew why he had lost the feeling Ts'eh had given him, and why he had doubted the ceremony: this was their place, and he was vulnerable (243).

Erdrich provides readers with a wonderful demonstration of the sharpened differences between the whites and the Indians. Gracefully she manages to add a high humorous point to it by introducing the situation: "Gerry's problem, you see, was he believed in justice, not laws" (Erdrich, 1993, 201). A description of the situation follows, where Gerry characteristically fights over: "the question with a cowboy of whether a Chippewa was also a nigger" (201). Then in the words of Albertine, his crime is revealed. "But there is nothing more vengeful and determined in this world than a cowboy with sore balls, and Gerry soon found this out." (201) Erdrich's humor continues when she explains Gerry never managed to resist escaping from the prison and thus had to go back again and again. His lifetime penalty has been kicking a white cowboy in the balls over a race question. The difference that Gerry found out is again not only sad, but deeply ironical/cynical.

He also found that white people are good witnesses to have on your side, because they have names, addresses, social security numbers, and work phones. But they are terrible witnesses to have against you, almost as bad as having Indians witness for you. (Erdrich, 1993, 201)

How the white people looked at Indians we learn from Tosamah, the priest of the sun, when he talks about Abel:

They gave him every advantage. They gave him a pair of shoes and told him to go to school. They deloused him and gave him a lot of free haircuts and let him fight on their side. But was he grateful? Hell, no, man. He was too damn dumb to be civilized. (Momaday, 1968, 131)

Tosamah is only pessimistic and does not like Abel. But he involuntarily reflects the issue that was already dealt with in *Ceremony* and *Love Medicine* that a lot of the Indians try to act white, do not manage and drown in alcohol. They become to a stage of hating everything Indian, most of it themselves. Many come to despise their own person or, as the early Marie, focus on the white part in them. Allan Chavkin writes about this white Indian stereotype:

James McKenzie relates how his students at the Turtle Mountain Reservation feared that the 1984 *Love Medicine* would confirm white stereotypical views of Indians as drunk, violent, and sexually deviant and encourage racism. (1999, 91)

Misinterpretation is also what Erdrich herself feared and had to deal with. Chavkin says to it that: “Even more sympathetic reviewers than Silko, however, have grossly misinterpreted Erdrich’s work.” (1999, 91). He also mentions one of Marie’s sons, Gordie, speaking of alcohol: “[...] Gordie’s behavior in ‘Crown of Thorns might well have reinforced for some readers stereotype of the drunken Indian” (1999, 103).

Stereotype is present everywhere, but the true core of the texts deny them, they search for humanity and renaissance of Indian identity. The novels contain a number of male characters, but the women definitely are not pictured less in depth.

A white woman who was already mentioned in connection to Abel, Angela st. John, appears to be good listener, with a sense for nature. If she were not described as white, one could easily confuse her with an Indian-blood. Or we might conclude that the Indian emotionality has more to do with the intuition women keep more likely than men. Nevertheless Momaday describes her this way: “She listened through him to the sound of thunder and of rain that fell upon the mountain miles away, that split open the sky and set an awful tremor on the trees” (71). Angela could tell, by looking at Abel, that he had put more effort than necessary in his work, and that he had suffered a great pain. “Now, now that she could see, she was aware of some useless agony that was spent upon the wood, some hurt she could not have imagined until now.” (Momaday, 1968, 32)

In *Love Medicine*, the very opening presents us with June, the first character we meet in the novel. She is the biological mother of Lipsha, who was brought up by Grandma Kashpaw, not knowing who his real mother was. June is portrayed by Robert F. Gisch:

June, a child of nine when taken in by Marie, goes to live with Eli soon after, lured to him and the wild and the attractions embedded in Eli's songs, by "pine sap and grasses." (Gisch, 1999, 72)

June is an ethereal woman, who dies too soon after the readers meet her. Later it seems we find her at the end of every thread. Her soul seems to escort the reader through the whole novel. Owens quotes Jay Cox in agreement: "June's Death in the first chapter does little to impede her spirit from going along through-out the novel" (2000, 57).

Her story, as we meet her, is quickly aiming toward the inevitable end. We learn about the way she lives her life by the time: "Eating it, she found out, how hungry she was. The last money that the man before this one had given her was spent for the ticket." (Erdrich, 1993, 2) Her time is associated with men, cheapness, cigarettes and alcohol. She is as fragile and damaged by it as her feelings are described:

Walking toward the Ladies' 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. (Erdrich, 1993, 4)

She might be looked at as the land, the womb and the centre of the Indians, she and them both feeling and somehow injured. But something more alarming happens to her. She transcends out of her body and feels it as something old and worn, but at the same time unimportant.

All of a sudden 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 – only the skins were stiff and old. (Erdrich, 1993, 4)

All came from this land, the land into which she returned as described: "Even when her heart clenched and her skin turned crackling cold it didn't matter, because the pure and naked part of her went on" (Erdrich, 1993, 7).

In Ceremony we find Tayo, who can be seen as seeking motherly love which later transfers to the love for the land and for Ts'eh. The characters of Tayo, Abel and have been denied motherly love. Abel's mother died young and Tayo's mother had left him with her sister, who is referred to as "Auntie". He is treated in a way that suggests bullying.

Not only is Tayo illegitimate, his mother also abandons him as a small child. Her sister, 'Auntie' feeds and shelters him so that she may be seen as Christian by others, but she shuns him, denies him love, and forces upon him a separation from the family circle. Since Tayo is illegitimate and half-breed besides, he is also denied access to the nurturing influence of pueblo culture and religion. (Ronnow, 1993, 74)

This denial that borders with abuse or torture is not unknown to Marie Lazarre in *Love Medicine*. She tells about her torturer in the monastery, demoniac sister Leopolda.

I tried to scramble up, but her foot came down lightly behind my ear, and I was lowered. The foot came down more firmly at the base of my neck, and I was held [...]. I heard the valve opening, the hissed intake of breath, and knew that I should not have spoke. "You lie," she said. "You're cold. There is a wicked ice forming in your blood. You don't have a shred of devotion for God. Only wild cold dark lust. I know it. I know how you feel. I see the beast....the beast watches me out of your eyes sometimes. Cold." (Erdrich, 1993, 52)

Leopolda is resolutely standing out as an authority for Marie. What Sister Leopolda says is to be feared because she can "see". Marie clears her relationship with the devil a few pages before, admitting that it might have had a place in her. Though at the same time she imposes the question of who is God and who is the devil in connection to the native Indian voices.

She always said the Dark One wanted me most of all, and I believed this. I stood out. Evil was a common thing I trusted. Before sleep sometimes he came and whispered conversation in the old language of the bush. I listened. He told me things he never told anyone but Indians. (Erdrich, 1993, 46)

Marie decides between the voices she hears. She chooses to suffer and be a saint only to be able to close the heaven's gate in front of Leopolda's nose. Here some more reasons Leopolda managed to supply her with:

The urgent scrape of metal. It took a moment to know from where. Top of the stove. Kettle. Lessons. She was steadying herself with the iron poker [...]. I heard

the water as it came, tipped from the spout, cooling as it felt but still scalding as it struck.. (Erdrich, 1993, 52)

Leopolda chases the devil out of young Marie. “I will boil him from your mind if you make a peep,’ she said, ‘by filling up your ear.” The tortured girl has visions of God, praying and words fill their important role. Though Leopolda apparently has a kind of affection for Marie, she does not resist showing her how she despises the fate she prescribes her: “You have two choices. One, you can marry a no-good Indian, bear his brats, die like a dog. Or two, you can give yourself to God” (Erdrich, 1993, 48).

The question is what Marie was searching for in Leopolda. Allan Chavkin suggests she is in search of maternal figure:

[...] in fact the search culminates in a grotesque and disastrous confrontation in which Marie is physically and psychologically brutalized by Sister Leopolda, a deranged mixed-blood nun, whose self-hatred and contempt for Indians have caused her to assimilate so totally that she is unable to acknowledge her Indian ancestry. (Chavkin, 1999, 100)

Leopolda inevitably fancies ambiguity, when she tells the other nuns: “She will shine, when we have burned off the dark corrosion” and Marie comments: “they were mild and sturdy French, who did not understand Leopolda’s twisted jokes, although they muttered respectfully at things she said. I knew they wouldn’t believe what she had done with the kettle. There was no question. So I kept quiet” (Erdrich, 1993, 55). Marie resolves her further stay at the monastery:

Any sensible fool would have run back down the hill the minute Leopolda let them up from under her heel. But I was snared in her black intelligence by then. I could not think straight. I had prayed so hard I think I broke a cog in my mind. (Erdrich, 1993, 53)

Catherine Rainwater thinks about the relationship between Leopolda and Marie. “In the second chapter of *Love Medicine*, her sadomasochistic relationship with Sister Leopolda includes the desire to see the nun’s heart ‘roast on a black stick’” (2000, 176)

Everything connected to the Christian world seems to a degree twisted; the characters representing it are rather stiff in their faith, are described in a manner that evokes that they are handling the God’s words awkwardly and carelessly in contrast to the careful and precise Indian shamans who need to explain each word used to avoid

misinterpretation and misuse. Those characters include sister Leopolda in *Love Medicine*, Father Olquin in *House Made of Dawn* and perhaps Auntie in *Ceremony*.

The Christian factor seems to bend the Indian reality and is the negative sign in *Love Medicine*, when June eats eggs before getting drunk with a rich white man and dying in a snow storm. More significantly her death is firmly centered in the time of Easter.

But what was more important, she had a feeling. The eggs were lucky. And he had a good/natured slowness about him that seemed different. He could be different, she thought. (Erdrich, 1993, 3)

Her feeling was the one of another kind: the death is a close, cleansing and even desirable thing. There are suggestions, that she had had a kind of calling as a young girl. Grandma Kashpaw (the older self of Marie Lazarre) talks about their childhood affair with her daughter Zelda. “We had that rope around her neck and looped over the tree” (21). Later, Marie Kashpaw tells the story herself:

She was standing upright, tall and bone-thin and hopeless, with the rosary wrapped around her hand as it is wrapped around the hands of the dead. “You ruined it.” Her eyes blinked at me, dry, as she choked it out. “I stole their horse. So I was supposed to be hanged.”

I gaped at her.

“Child,” I said, “you don’t know how to play. It’s a game, but if they hang you they would hang you for real.”

She put her head down. I could almost have sworn she knew what was real and what was not real, and that I’d still ruined it. (90)

William Gleason adds to the scene: “The tension dissipates a moment later when June mutters ‘damn old bitch’ under her breath and Marie summarily packs her mouth with soap flakes” (2000, 119)

Marie observed the ill part of June, some hidden wound, almost like Tayo or Abel had. The sadness would take lead in June’s life afterwards. “There was a sadness I could not touch there. It was a hurt place, it was deep, it was with her all the time like a broke rib that stabbed when she breathed.”(91)

There is a hint of how the real June stood to death in a letter from Grandma Kashpaw to Albertine, including a time gap of Marie Kashpaw’s view at June then and now. The letter explains that and how June had died:

“Probably drank too much,” Mama wrote. She naturally hadn’t thought well of June. “Probably wandered off too intoxicated to realize about the storm.” 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. She’d have gotten that animal sinking in her bones. (10)

What did she have to lose, someone might ask themselves. Albertine describes how she would try a job and leave it after a while or be discharged and then try another, and from time to time would rejoin with her husband, Gordie, and then leave again.

As time went by, she broke, little by little, into someone whose shoulders sagged when she thought no one was looking, a woman with long ragged nails and hair always growing from its beauty-parlor cut. Her clothes were full of safety pins and hidden tears. (9)

June is a contrast to Albertine. June did not manage the run from the reservation. Albertine is of the few positive characters because she is not a drunkard, she is able to get and keep a job. She managed to get away and find a new life outside the unlucky family tangle. Louis Owens compares Albertine with June:

Though Albertine has run away in the past and has apparently flirted with the kind of disastrous life that killed June, she is the character in the novel who, among those of her generation, is most secure in her identity, a certainty provided, ironically, by her mother, who says defiantly, “I raised her as an Indian and that’s what she is”. Zelda, married for the second time to a Scandinavian husband and living in a trailer on the edge of the reservation....the one capable of providing her daughter with a sense of self lacking in many of the novel’s characters. (2000, 58).

Owens argues that the strength of Albertine’s identity comes through the knowledge of Indian stories and “her awareness that the past is a formative part of the present”. He reveals another connection of hers to Aunt June when he continues: “Albertine emphasizes the power of the past—through stories—to inform the present when she says of June: ‘She told me things you’d only tell another woman’” (2000, 58-9).

June only escaped her way, as a freed Indian soul “pure and naked” (Erdrich, 1993, 4). Although she died, and because she died, the novel can be centered around her death and remembering who she was. She connects the characters and although not clearly a positive influence at the start, where we are shocked by her dying, she later proves to unify the people around her and radiate from under the whole piece. Albertine

connects her with the feeling of wholeness of the world. She starts remembering a situation with Lipsha, who might have a similar influence upon her, being June's son.

We chewed the sweet grass tips and stared up and were lost. Everything seemed to be one piece. The air, our faces, all cool, moist, and dark, and the ghostly sky. Pale green licks of light pulsed and faded across it. Living Lights. Their fires lobbed over, higher, higher, then died out in blackness. At times the whole sky was ringed in shooting points and puckers of light gathering and falling, pulsing, fading, rhythmical as breathing. All of a piece. As if the sky were a pattern of nerves and our thought and memories traveled across it. As if the sky were one gigantic memory for us all. Or a dancehall. And all the world's wandering souls were dancing there. I thought of June. She would be dancing if there was a dance hall in space....Her amusement at both the bad and the good. Her defeat. Her reckless victory. Her sons. (Erdrich, 1993, 37)

Nector's mother, Rushes Bear proves to be a close one to Marie Kashpaw, when she almost dies delivering her last baby. Being an unwelcome guest and an enemy at first, she becomes a friend in the loneliness Marie has to bear after having lost Nector. She speaks of the event of the birth of her soon.

After that, things were different. I never saw her without knowing that she was my own mother, my own blood. What she did went beyond the frailer connections. More than saving my life, she put the shape of it back in place. (104)

Marie describes the relationship she had with Rushes Bear in more detail. Death is mentioned again in connection to her, and takes us back to June.

Those waves were taking her onward, through night, through day, the water beating and slashing across her unknown path. She struggled to continue. She was traveling hard, and death was her light. (105)

Nector Kashpaw is a rather proud and stubborn man. He happens to do things in life he had not intended to, not wanted to. Gleason argues Nector is only after Lipsha a candidate for a *heyoka*, a figure that does things backwards, as Gleason cites John Lame Deer: "A heyoka does strange things.... He says 'yes' when he means 'no'. He rides his horse backward" (2000, 122). These attributes appear like Nector Kashpaw's. His mind leaves him early in a state close to wilderness. One might question then, how did it happen to him, that he had married a "dirty Lazzar" although he had loved Lulu all the time and how did he manage to put his mistress's house on fire. He seems to be somehow senile from the beginning, which Lulu confirms: "People said Nector

Kashpaw had changed, but the truth was he'd just become more like himself than ever" (Ruppert, 2000, 78). Ruppert also comments about Nector and his path in life:

Psychologically, Nector sees himself as floating down a river that has calm spots, rapids, and unexpected branchings. His sense of himself is that of a person being carried along by events as he struggles to maintain control of them. Nector's retreat to apparent senility becomes a way in which he can finally completely define himself in the midst of the river flow of emotions and the demands of politics. (2000, 78)

Gleason describes that "he is a man trapped by opposites, caught between the conflicting worlds of Marie and Lulu." Gleason also comes back to the church scene, observing that: "He is a marvelously inappropriate churchgoer, who turns the normally hushed tone of the Catholic sanctuary into an evangelical shouting contest." There is one other matter of interest for Gleason, who comments on Nector's prayer: "He even converts the Virgin's name to his wife's" (2000, 123). (See chapter 3).

Compared with her lover, Lulu is bright, and gets even brighter after having her eyes bandaged. She was being helped by no one else than Marie Kashpaw after her house had been burned and her eyes scorched. While compared to Nector, all the characters would seem bright in the novel. Lulu as a matter of fact is more than bright; she has an insight. Lipsha describes her when she tries to lure him in for a talk in Senior Citizens home:

She had red lacquer on her hooks, bangle jewelry all up her arms, and her head was like a closet of crows. A raging wig [...]. I was quite careful. To tell the truth I was afraid of her. She scared people after the bandages came off her eyes, because she seemed to know everybody else's business. (Erdrich, 1993, 333)

Lulu represents the wild, untamed Indian. She is a strong character; witchlike. Many people consider her so. As the blood that supplies Lipsha with his healing touch had come through her, too. She is a woman who gets what she wants; easiest of all men: all women around hate her, and all men admire her. She is different than the other women.

Lulu Lamartine plays the communal role of the libertine. As a woman with eight boys and one girl who are fathered by a variety of husbands, she is hated by the wives in the community and loved by their husbands. (Ruppert, 2000, 78)

The biggest reason for hating her perhaps has Marie Kashpaw. Her relationship to Lulu and her status in the community is described:

As wife of the tribal chairman, her social position should be one of leadership, but her communal identity as “a dirty Lazarre” deprives her of this status. As a wife who is left at home during an ongoing extra –marital relationship, her sense of a sociological identity is also undercut. (Ruppert, 2000, 78)

Lipsha Morrissey is a character that is pictured as a poor child abused by his brother King (about whom he did not know he was his brother) and not knowing who his parents were, although everybody else knew. On the other side he is a bright young man, humorous and in possession of the “touch”. Lulu thinks that knowing his roots is a “knowledge that could make or break” (337) him. Ruppert acknowledges that he is communally accepted as the grandson of a great shaman: “Communally, Lipsha is a healer, grandson of the powerful old shaman, Old Man Pillager” (2000, 79). Casually Catherine Rainwater mentions “Lipsha Morrissey, born with the shaman’s healing touch” in the connection with growing up “with both Native American and Roman Catholic religious belief” (2000, 163). William Gleason doubts about Lipsha’s qualities and compares his “qualities” to trickster and heyoka (See chapter 2.2).

Rainwater observed the use of elements that seems to affect and create the individual characters in *Love Medicine*: “Especially in *Love Medicine*, characters are formed through various syntagmatic series of references to natural elements such as air, earth, fire, and water.”

June and her sons are defined by water: “In the opening section June walks on water, figuratively, and in the end Lipsha travels across the water”. Nector is characterized by a river, his life being like a river. Finally, there are Marie’s visions when she is scalded by burning water from Leopolda’s hands and later she is helping Lulu after the fire on the house as Lulu’s hair were burned off and eyes got sore: “Marie’s personality is evoked through references to fire” (Rainwater, 2000, 176).

A lot of characters in *Love Medicine* draw back to their Indian backgrounds. They contribute to the novel with a variety of views. *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* emphasize the Indian tradition equally, if anyone can dare to (and certainly someone has) compare the level of Indianness in them. Tayo’s point of view is most similar to Abel’s, although Abel keeps himself closed and heals inside while Tayo

seems to find a new approach to the world. This new approach is a new sight:
welcoming and intaking with opened arms.

4. Death and Violence

4.1 Empty Hearts: Native American War Veterans

In the works of Leslie Marmon Silko, Navarre Scott Momaday and Louise Erdrich (*Ceremony*, *House Made of Dawn* and *Love Medicine*) there is an Indian war veteran, still fighting although the war is over. Those characters open the issue of what a person of native origin represents as a soldier in the American army and what are the specifics of it.

There is an issue of questioning the identity of the Indians as whether closer to the whites or to the Asian soldiers. Tayo is struck by a vision of his uncle Josiah standing among the captives to be killed. (See chapter 3) Later Betonie tells him: “It isn’t surprising you saw him with them. You saw who they were. Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers.” (Silko, 1977, 124)

Whatever reasons they had, twenty-five thousands American Indians took part in World War II as a matter of a fact. (Owens, 1994, 31) And as far as we can observe, Native Indian authors like to write about them, opening more than an identity question. A radical change happened to the veterans. Change as a space to be explored in literature.

Surviving such circumstances, to a large extent against their tradition, the Indian war veterans came back tragically hurt in core. Owens notes: “The Indian veteran became a common sight in urban Indian gatherings and back on the reservation” (1994, 31). They as well might serve as a parallel for the suffering of the whole native Indian nations. Tayo solves this problem with alcohol, which is a customary “solution” for contemporary Indians, and specifically for war veterans. The case of Indian encounters with alcohol also can be seen as though the whites are a spell working against the Indians; and themselves as well. It is the powerful weapon that helped to waste the lives of so many of the natives. Abel also escapes into the safe and dull world of drunkenness. Following the flow of thoughts about his Indian body, Abel is described in this manner: “He had never been sick until he was sick with alcohol” (Momaday, 1968, 89).

In *Ceremony*, alcohol is also an important part of the “black magic” of the wizards (Silko, 1977, 132), carried out by Emo, Tayo’s enemy and the torturer of Harley. It decimates King, Gordie and Nector in *Love Medicine*. Obviously there are more scenes which depict devastating alcohol consumption, as in *House Made of Dawn*, we are presented with such a view: “the fat, degenerate squaws, insensible with drink, and the sad, sullen bucks, hanging on” (Momaday, 1968, 69).

Tosamah, the priest of the sun looks down on Abel. When he talks to his friend Ben, he immediately establishes Abel’s life as an alcohol disaster: that would only be the lighter possibility, Tosamah thinks.

Oh, he was going to make his way, all right. He would get some fat little squaw all knocked up, and they would lie around all day and get drunk and raise a lot of little government wards. They would make some pottery, man, and boost the economy. (Momaday, 1968, 131)

There is a vast amount of situations that present the readers with sad scenes; sad because alcohol is only one of the tools used by the witchery, which Silko talks about.

As for the Deaths in the novels, it is an issue to be discussed. Each of the novels includes some. It starts with the vague haunting memories from the war the veterans brought home. Henry in *Love Medicine* lets them kill him; he finds no better way. James Ruppert writes that:

Henry’s inability to resume normal life at home and his subsequent death can be seen as resulting from the fact that his actions are out of harmony with the Chippewa sense of war, death, humor, and right thinking. As a draftee, Henry has no choice in his actions. He does not go off to war with a vision that will give him power, nor does he dance the warrior’s dance. (2000, 73)

The bilance is two surviving, one dead veteran and a few empty-hearted, which is obviously worse than dead as Ts’eh reminds in *Ceremony* (229). Abel and Tayo are the veterans who manage the return to life and bring the readers to the source of healing.

Abel and Tayo are able to overcome their troubles in the end. But there is more. Abel committed murder on a character in the book, the albino Juan. Krupat notes that “As is well known, Abel kills a white man, an Indian albino, using a knife first to pierce his rib cage, then to disembowel him”(Krupat, 2002, 107). When Tosamah speaks to Ben, he mentions Abel’s murder: “He turned out to be a real primitive sonuvabitch, and the first time he got hold of a knife he killed a man” (Momaday, 1968, 131).

A comment that flashes through the text is: “‘I mean,’ said Father Olquin, ‘that in his own mind it was not a man he killed. It was something else.’” (Momaday, 1968, 90) If Abel had seen Juan as a witch, he had killed the evil. García does not oppose this point of view:

Grandfather Francisco had confronted evil in the person of the albino whose presence in the cornfield threatened to harm the town’s main food source. It seems that Francisco’s ‘blessing upon the corn’ was spiritually strong enough to temporarily ward off the witch’s evil influence, a few days before Abel killed him. (García, 1990, 43)

No matter how we look at it, the situation is very vaguely described. Presently, one more issue occurs near Abel’s murdering the man. Murder is already a point of view. As we read: “*Murder* is a moral term. *Death* is a universal human term.” (Momaday, 1968, 90)

Karl Kroeber proposes some explanations in the essay *Technology and Tribal Narrative*, where one is that the albino had humiliated him at the contest. Another is: “One must agree with Larry Ever’s interpretation that the albino represents the white man in Abel, but one notices also that the representation occurs through schematic symbolizing.” (1993, 17)

Krupat also comments on Ever’s idea by saying that it is “hard to deny” that Abel had in fact symbolically killed a white, negative part of himself, but is sceptical to such interpretation. “If Abel is striking a blow against the whiteness within him and the destructive effects of white privilege, the novel does not develop that possibility” (2002, 108). He also says:

House Made of Dawn dramatizes a number of important issues and posits subtle means of resistance to dominance. But it does not overtly represent Indian rage, nor suggest that Abel’s actions derive from that rage. (2002, 108)

Krupat is simply convinced that this violence Abel committed is of another character, and documents it with the original text: “Hardly a killing prompted by rage, this is a killing done ‘naturally’, as a matter of course; Abel ‘killed the white man’ and he ‘would kill the white man again, if he had a chance’” (2002, 108)

By contrast, Kroeber develops Ever’s idea even further. He believes that by the fulfillment of such murder (notice Abel killed, whereas Tayo did not), Abel must have

released some alien forces inside him and made himself vulnerable to them in the same moment. This need to kill is felt as a personal duty to Abel, reminds Kroeber (1993, 19). This is what had happened to Tayo, when he wanted to kill Emo. Also Betonie the shaman suggests the evil things happen creepily. Obviously, Tayo meant well by wanting to kill the cruel and traitorous Emo. The problem was that he wished to do so not only to prevent Emo from doing other evil, but also to take personal revenge. There we can see a message how to deal with anger: importance of not doing it, not letting another violence happen. Betonie the shaman explains to Tayo: “that is the trickstery of the witchcraft” (Silko, 1977, 132). David L. Moore calls more attention to what Betonie told Tayo about such violence and such feelings in the essay *Silko’s Blood Sacrifice*:

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 as we could do and still survive. (Silko, 1977, 134)

Krupat comes with similar information, only applying it upon wider context. He tells that Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Marmon Silko and Navarre Scott Momaday all address the damage done to Indian people by the white America and propose measures to resist and undo that violence (2002, 108).

The mythic witches in *Ceremony* are represented by real characters at the end of the book. They are the people who let lies eat their hearts, the war veterans and Tayo’s old friends. Throughout the novel all Emo, Harley and Leroy do is that they drive around in a truck and get drunk in the bars all around. Ronnow recorded when they agreed to let the evil settle in them:

Toward the end of the novel, Emo, a demented war veteran with a fixated ego, succumbs to these evils and seeks Tayo’s life. In their perversions and psychoses, witches like Emo has become seek to “gut human beings while they are still breathing, to hold the heart still beating so the victim will never feel anything again. When they finish you watch yourself from a distance and you can’t even cry.” (1993, 83)

Silko puts the knowing words into Ts’eh’s mouth: “They destroy the feeling people have for each other” (Silko, 1977, 229). She also explains that “The violence of the struggle excites them, and the killing soothes them” (232). Like old Betonie she has a sight that goes beyond what Tayo can see, and she lets him realize the fact by giving him advice.

They walk this way. The doctors have medicine to quiet you. The others bring guns. Emo has told them you are crazy, that you live in the cave here and you think you are a Jap soldier. They are all afraid of you. (232)

There is something distant in her manners. She is not only a mysterious woman, but reminds of the shaman's powers. Those powers and hearing the voices are the same that Betonie's grandmother had. The whole woman is tender and sad, by which she again resembles the Indian land. Tayo asks her how she knew and she does not reply.

When she did not answer, he knew; like old Betonie, she could see reflections in sandrock pools of rainwater, images shifting in the flames of juniper fire; she heard voices, low and distant in the night. (232)

Emo and his companions try to get Tayo, but he has an intuitive feeling and runs away from them. He gets to the old uranium mine, the only place around where he could find water. Surprisingly, his "friends" arrive the same evening – Leroy, Emo and Pinkie. The balancing of whom and what to trust maintains its place in Tayo again. Seeing them first he knows:

The destroyers. They would be there all night, he knew it, working for drought to sear the land, to kill the livestock, to stunt the corn plants and squash in the gardens, leaving people more vulnerable to the lies; and the young people would leave, go to towns like Albuquerque and Gallup where bitterness would overwhelm them, and they would lose their hope and finally themselves in drinking.

The witchery would be at work all night so that the people would see only the losses—the land and the lives lost—since the whites came; the witchery would work so that the people would be fooled into blaming only the whites and not the witchery. (249)

In this precise moment of the ceremony, Tayo has all the time and all the gates still opened to wander around in his thoughts. He wonders if the destroyers knew about his presence: "like a thirsty animal, certain they would find him near the only source of water in that area" (249). The scene is the highest moment in Silko's novel and connects death and ceremony as both phenomena and events in the novels.

Tayo's course of thinking is completely natural, although it changes its direction every so often: "If he had not known about their witchery, they might have fooled him" (250). Tayo almost gets to jump and show himself: "His throat got tight. He might be wrong about them" (250).

But they stop him by a strange behavior: they hit the car trunk. Later it is revealed what had been hidden there. Harley; the one who did not manage to guard Tayo when they were on the way with the truck: “We told you to watch him. We told you to stay there.” (251) He suffers the horrible view that follows, holding his screwdriver tight. He hates Emo for many reasons Emo had given him in the past, and most for what is happening in front of his eyes. “Emo and his cohorts mark and cut Harley’s body, substituting it for Tayo’s whom they cannot capture” (Ronnow, 1993, 84). The reader knows about this substitution, but he is afraid Tayo might forget near the beginning of the scene. But luckily enough, Tayo “understood that Harley had bargained for it; he realized that Harley knew how it would end if he failed to get the victim he had named” (252). There is more to fear about Tayo watching the scene.

This was the time. But his fingers were numb, and he fumbled with the screwdriver as he tried to rub warmth back into his hands. There would be no one to help Emo. But Tayo stayed on his knees in the shadows. (Silko, 1977, 253)

Tayo’s body seems to know better: “He moved back into the boulders. It had been a close call” (253). The message of the ceremony/*Ceremony* must not be forgotten. Something happens and the only thing the blinded eyes are able to see then is revenge. In the process of the ceremony Betonie prepared for Tayo there cannot be any violence. Violence only encourages violence. In the situation when a former friend is abused by the two others, all of them Native war veterans, there is the need of all possible reasoning. Harley betrayed Tayo, and now has to carry the fate he had tried to establish for him. Tayo manages to quietly suffer the rage he feels and not do anything, although it is very difficult to resist such a “temptation“.

Tayo had almost jammed the screwdriver into Emo’s skull the way the witchery had wanted [...]. Their deadly ritual for the autumn solstice would have been completed by him. (Silko, 1977, 253)

In the moment he needs to be patient and to understand the land under his feet, so that he can be his land, his people. The need to prevent Emo from acting is dangerous; it is a good sign in the result. It means he had regained his heart, his feelings.

4.2 Uranium

Even before Tayo had the chance to realize about the closeness Trinity site, where Uranium had been mined, which he later does, the readers are presented with a song/story of the beginning of the whole witchery. The Indian witches seem to cause everything; after one of them had set this story in motion, the job of a shaman gets more difficult. The story speaks of the creation of white people and of the mining:

[...]
white skin people
like the belly of a fish
covered with hair.
[...]
Up here
In these hills
they will find the rocks,
rocks with veins of green and yellow and black.
They will lay the final pattern with these rocks
they will lay it across the world
and explode everything. (Silko, 1977, 135-7)

Silko comes back to this, adding a mysterious sensation. The sensation she manages by revealing the facts in a slow pace. She treats the facts in a manner that reminds of retracing a mystery, which indeed is what she does:

When years before they had first come to the people living on the Cebolleta land grant, they had not said what kind of mineral it was. They were driving U.S. Government cars, and they paid the land-grant association five thousand dollars not to ask questions about the test holes they were drilling. (1977, 243)

Tayo is remembering his grandmother speaking to him, telling of a bright light she had seen one night. She said that: “[...] there was a flash of light through the window. So big, so bright even my old clouded-up eyes could see it.” (245) The old lady had posed a question then: “Now I only wonder why, grandson. Why did they make a thing like that?” (245) The first atomic bomb had been tried near, which connects to Tayo’s sick dreams: the mixing up Japanese soldier for Josiah was not pure craziness. He learns there was truth in what he saw. Ronnow relates Harley’s death.

Significantly, his death occurs at an abandoned mining site, a cut in the earth from which uranium was mined for the first atomic bombs and close to the Trinity Site where the tests were made for the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1993, 84)

The rocks from Indian land: stolen by the whites, the bombs made of the rocks and dropped upon Japanese people. Tayo admits he had not known the answer the time she asked it, but felt clear about it entering the mine.

He had been so close to it, caught up in it for so long that its simplicity struck him deep inside his chest; 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 land the government took from Cochiti Pueblo....From the jungles of his dreaming he recognized why the Japanese voices had merged with Laguna voices, with Josiah's voice and Rocky's voice [...] victims who had never known these mesas, who had never seen the delicate colors of the rocks which boiled up their slaughter. (Silko, 1977, 245-6)

At this point the myths and old stories meet with the reality within the novel; in a particular moment, which is the culmination of the ceremony: "the feeling became overwhelming: the pattern of the ceremony was completed there" (246). There is something in Tayo's fear which is present in the stories that he senses as something old and powerful, even before having entrusted in Betonie's ritual. The revealing of the connection between the old stories and the pain contemporary present seems very surprising for him: "The old man only made him certain of something he had feared all along, something in the old stories." (Silko, 1977, 38) Throughout the course of the affairs that accompany Tayo, we can hear the Laguna country telling those old stories. These are the Thinking woman Ts'its'tsi'nako as a spider, The Gambler magician Kaup'a'ta or Nau'ts'ity'i - our mother who gets angry seeing the foulness of the folks and takes the rain clouds away. Those stories fit with Tayo's story, they meet.

He cried the relief he felt at finally seeing the pattern, the way all the stories fit together—the old stories, the war stories, and their stories—to become the story that was still being told. (Silko, 1977, 246)

Ronnow comments that "Tayo has learned to read the irruptions of truth from the unconscious" (1993, 85), and this he does as the characters of *Love Medicine* do,

especially Lipsha and Marie. The human beings are confronted with death or some other influential experience, before they are let into the next level.

4.3 Death and Violence as a Transformation

Meeting Ts'eh in the mountains carries the odor of death among liveliness and the revealing of the unconscious, but in her eyes, it is all only a part of life. Ronnow brings this event of *Ceremony* to light. He quotes the woman's words. She had said:

Death isn't much, [...]. Sometimes they don't make it. That's all. It isn't very far away. There are much worse things, you know. The destroyers: they work to see how much can be lost, how much can be forgotten. They destroy the feeling people have for each other. (1993, 86)

Death is the side of the ceremony that the old witchery established. Betonie can see this is happening in Tayo—he had been close to inner death, the one of dying in the heart. Betonie's ceremony helped Tayo return. The other side of darkness and death, the one that prevails and keeps life going is love. Love to Ts'eh, to the land, to life.

As death accompanies the heroes, there is a procession of ghosts in the novels. The dead from the war, Josiah, Abel's mother, Rocky, Nector Kashpaw, June. After June had died, her husband, Gordie, encounters her. There is a filter to how the reader perceives the situation, Ruppert explains:

The use of cultural code to illuminate the other is best shown in Erdrich's treatment of ghosts in *Love Medicine*. Although ghosts are a very real part of the Chippewa worldview, they are not believed to be often troubling to the living if dealt with properly [...]. Conventional Western thought does not consider ghosts a real [...]. So when Gordie sees June's ghost, a reader whose orientations are Western will not see the encounter as real but will instead see it as a delusion brought on by alcohol and grief. (2000, 74)

When Nector dies, it happens suddenly, unexpectedly, Ruppert announces. He describes how Nector has love bonds to the two women and to Lipsha that drive him back, and that this encounter “cannot be explained away, as in Gordie's case, as drunken hallucination” (2000, 75).

June's death is *Love Medicine's* greatest death; it is the mystery that escorts the reader through the whole piece of story. Silberman comes to a conclusion her death is the central moment.

Somewhat in the manner of a murder mystery, the death becomes a means of exploring not only the victim's life but the lives of those around her. *Love Medicine* could have been called "Who Killed June Kashpaw?" or rather "What Killed Her?" since the responsibility and guilt are shared by many individuals embedded in an entire way of life, a complex mesh of biographical and historical factors. (2000, 138).

June has been trying to escape from her reservation routine, and after failing outside, she attempted to return, but seemingly had no home to hold her strongly enough. Having no home again is a tricksterian attribute. Complimentary to escaping is the attempt to return, which is also the case of Tayo, Abel, Henry and Gerry. Silberman studies this matter in *Love Medicine*:

The beginning of *Love Medicine* therefore signals a recasting a recasting of the tradition represented by the other works even as it partly continues t work within the older conventions and share many of the same concerns: the consequences of an individual's return or attempted return to the reservation, the significance of home and family [...]. (1993, 103).

Strangest of all is the return that June managed; it is suggested that she did in the novel, in a way the living cannot grasp fully, because this time, she happened to forget her body behind. Also the characters, remembering her, bring her back. This way she is somehow backwards. Silberman considers her return a fail; all her previous both returns and escapes and returns were a fail. The reasoning for why Silberman views the case so is connected to looking at the novel as it goes backwards in comparison to all other native Indian novels he analyses:

The narrative at once departs from the earlier novels in several key ways. The central figure is a woman, not a man. The return, the first step, does not lead to a series of prolonged encounters and soul-searching that make up the body of the work and ultimately prove defeating or redeeming; instead of first June's step is her last. (1993, 103)

Mysterious as death is there is also a mystery to Abel's beating in *House Made of Dawn*. That is simply because the part of the story is not there. We learn everything

from Ben Benally, who after three days of Abel's absence finds him and brings him to hospital.

He was lying there on his stomach and I turned him over and I wanted to get sick and cry. He was all broken and torn and covered with blood. Most of the blood was dry; it had dried up on his clothes and in his hair. He had lost an awful lot of blood, and his skin was pale yellow in the light. His eyes were swollen shut and his nose was broken and his mouth was raw and bleeding. And his hands were broken; they were broken all over. That was all I could see, his head and his hands, and I didn't want to open his clothing. I had to look away. It was the worst beating I had ever seen. (Momaday, 1968, 161)

This exact text is cited by García as she investigates the scene. She says to it that: "The actual event of Martinez beating Abel is a scene 'deleted' from the prose of the novel, which takes place in the reader's imagination instead." (García, 1990, 87)

García later uses a sentence she borrows from Evers to talk about the situation when Abel lays on the beach, terribly beaten: "Yet it is by the sea that Abel gains the insight required to begin his own re-emergence" (García, 1990, 88). García's own words are that: "The imagery of death and rebirth is empowering in this scene" (1990, 88). Again natural elements are taking over and the Indian blood simmers.

The amount of violence and death that occurs in the novels has a firm place in them. As Tayo and Ben had to undergo a suffering of a friend (a former friend in the case of Tayo), they participate in the healing force. At the point of analyzing violence and death, there is a link to ceremony to be admitted. Yet an ending to be a progressive one, a changed one, must contain a crisis. In the three novels such crisis is represented by death and violence. Enduring life takes over death with the help of Ben Benally, Angela, Betonie, Ts'eh, Lipsha, Lulu Nanapush and all the other speakers from *Love Medicine*.

5. Ceremony: Described Rituals, Healing Effect

Tayo has seen too much of death. Ghosts haunt him and he fails to accept the new world at first. His struggle is to cope with the losses and deaths. Ronnow writes:

His endeavor is to learn to manage such deaths by himself by way of “word cures” and to learn to repair his relationship to the dead. In his case this includes his mother, his father, his brother Rocky, his Uncle Josiah and the war dead that haunt him. (1993, 72)

Ronnow also recognizes that: “[...] his very existence is a constant search for the return of a nurturing mother figure. This strong desire finally leads him to search for the scattered cattle with which he and Josiah had once planned to start a herd.” (70) This searching is the middle part of the ceremony.

Although there is a way out, which is found in the end, it is not so sure for the early Tayo at the start of the novel. At a time we balance on the top of his “illness” and wonder whether there is a possibility of cure. These are the moments he seems to be closer to death. The reader has space to wonder if his real desire is death or life. “We ultimately see that Tayo’s desire is for death rather than to ‘live happily ever after’ as it may appear to the casual reader” (Ronnow, 1993, 70), Ronnow assumes and also notes that “he is fragmented, confused and disowned, alienated from self, family, land and tribal tradition”. (70) The hero is given a ceremonial cure to gain his self back, to regain the bond to the mother earth and his identity of an Indian.

The whole mythical background of the authors and their projected characters center those works on a ritual. The fact descends from the need of a ceremony that those authors and their heroes have. *Ceremony* and *House made of Dawn* have to a great extent a positive result. In *House made of Dawn*, Abel takes his cure through a running ceremony and as Silko’s title suggest, Tayo is equally provided with a ceremony. “What she said: The only cure I know is a good Ceremony, that’s what she said.” (3) However it must be a proper one. The ceremony ought not to be simply any old ritual, but something new and powerful, living.

Love Medicine is more intricate in this aspect. As the title suggests the only literal ritual here is not to save the world, but to waken love. Erdrich’s sense of irony present in the text proves an attempt at a “love medicine” unsuccessful. Moreover, the

irony forces a smile: a sad smile that belongs to a Native American face. It undisputedly contains a feeling of loss. This loss though is looked at in a postmodern way, making it a mixture of love and death. The story is life where the one who lives it sometimes cries, then smiles and then laughs at himself/herself. This medicine Lipsha tries to provide for his step-mother, Marie Kashpaw. It is supposed to be a Love bringing one. Pure and positive, the closest to their Indian tradition, Lipsha was able to heal people and had some skills that had been mostly forgotten. It is Erdrich's sense of irony that the ritual is connected with eating bird hearts poor Lipsha had bought in a supermarket, unable to hunt wild geese.

The loss in turn can be a gain for what remained. That is also what Silko and Momaday convey to their audience. The force of life regained by Tayo and Abel through their ceremonies is the drive that carries on. Even before the culmination of Tayo's ceremony, he realizes the direction where he is going.

"The dreams had been terror at loss, at something lost forever: but nothing was lost: all was retained between the sky and the earth, and within himself. He had lost nothing." (Silko, 1977, 219) This sentence is also cited by Gretchen Ronnow, who observes that for Tayo, "The old stories, his story and the stories of his dead loved ones have come full circle." (1993, 87)

Silko argues that one must resist the call for revenge and not return violence, which according to her story, is exactly what the black magicians planned:

Corpses for us
Blood for us
Killing killing killing killing. (136)

What Silko evaluates as the important matter is to overcome the rage with love. Tayo has a powerful helper: a mysterious woman, Ts'eh, who comforts him in every way and gives him love and power to regain a similar love for the land and his nation. Some critics see her as another Silko's Yellow woman, an old-stories character bringing good to the Indians. One sentence might be interpreted as a clear hint to the Yellow woman: "He could feel where she had come from, and he understood where she would always be." (Silko, 1977, 230)

The love is connected to the land and to the woman: "The mountain outdistanced their destruction, just as love had outdistanced death" (Silko, 1977, 219). Tayo suddenly

knows that although they killed the deer and chopped the woods, the mountain remains (219). The essay *Tayo, Death and Desire* speaks of the connections. “Obviously there are close connections made in the novel among Ts’eh, the mountain Tse-pi’na and Thought Woman (Mother of us all).” (Ronnow, 1993, 81) The text also notes Paula Gunn Allen, who said: “It is clear that the land is female” (1993, 81). The ceremony which Betonie started returned Tayo into feeling the loving hearts around him and the one inside himself.

Tayo realizes that he is surrounded by women, by mothers who love him: the encircling mountains, tse-pi’na, “the woman veiled in clouds”; Ts’eh, who is also a “mountain” surnamed Montaña; the cattle, signs of Josiah’s presence and desire; and Mother Earth into whom he is drawn. (81).

In another essay *Shifting Patterns, Changing Stories*, the authors note the name and surname the woman reveals to Tayo: “Later she tells Tayo her name – Ts’eh Montaña. Ts’eh, she tells him, is a nickname; it is short for Tse-pi’na, the Laguna name for Mount Taylor” (Nelson-Nelson, 2001, 127)

The parallel of the land and Tayo’s beloved uncle and brother is clearly felt by Tayo: “The damage that had been done had never reached this feeling” (220). He understands that although they are dead, he still loves them and anything else matters.

Some time after Tayo’s own discovery Ts’eh says exactly the same, and this time she refers to the old Indian rituals, when they are looking at a painting of a female Elk with a big, gravid belly. She may mean the time they spent together, too. This mingles in memories not to be forgotten:

Nobody has come to paint it since the war. But as long as you remember what you have seen, then nothing is gone. As long as you remember, it is a part of this story we have together. (Silko, 1977, 231)

Ronnow comments in a related sense: “Tayo and Ts’eh are complementary signifiers in the larger story that is still being told” (1993, 82).

In fairy tales, the good only wins by an inch and so happens in other stories. That the “good” has won could be a metaphor for “life”. Keeping life going is very fragile, but at the same time magically persistent. The fragility of the Ceremony is very remarkable. Tayo almost does kill Emo with the screwdriver he is holding, but as if miraculously the moonlight that suddenly hid helped him realize this way he would

respond to violence by violence. It would not only make any sense, but even create more evil and would turn the ceremony into a “bad end”.

Ronnow observes the importance of the word “fragility”. He chooses to cite an old shaman from *Ceremony*, Ku’oosh, because his words explain:

The word he chose to express “fragile” was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process, and with strength inherent in spider webs woven across paths through sand hills where early in the morning 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 has been said: and this demanded great patience and love. (1993, 73)

A feeling of rightness is a religious feeling on the base of myths and narratives of the Indians. After Ts’eh left, Tayo is running away from the “destroyers”, who he recognized clearly thanks to her. But he is mistaken and happy to see Leroy’s truck, with Leroy and Harley, his companions from the war and old friends. Lynn Domina grasps the situation this way: “Soon, he does meet up with Leroy and Harley, who are drunk, and while he is relieved to see his friends, he also senses that something is drastically wrong.” (2004, 4)

His body immediately gives him a sign of warning: “Tayo shook his head: suddenly he felt thin and dizzy” (Silko, 1977, 239). Only an instant earlier he had the feeling of compactness of the place, even the whole world, an intensive but forgettable one in the time of doubts.

Yet at that moment in the sunrise, it was all so beautiful, everything, from all directions, evenly, perfectly, balancing day with night, summer months with winter. The valley was enclosing his totality, like the mind holding all thoughts together in a single moment. (Silko, 1977, 237)

There are good times and there are bad times. Essentially, after a peaceful moment, the harmony would somehow twist; the scales would swing to the other side as doubts are a necessity on the way:

It was difficult then to call up the feeling the stories had, the feeling of Ts’eh and old Betonie. It was easier to feel and to believe rumors. Crazy. Crazy Indian. Seeing things. Imagining things. (Silko, 1977, 242)

Medicine is a thing or process that can be seen very differently. As suggested, medicine is a pill or a talk with a therapist from the Euramerican perspective, a hospital is a “white place”. Domina comments upon this in her introduction to *Understanding Ceremony*: “Related to the conflict between traditional healing practices and modern Western medicine is an implicit conflict between European and Native American cultures, generally” (2004). Betonie the old shaman knows another way how to deal with tangled lives.

That’s true, the old man said, you can go back to that white place...but if you are going to do that, you might as well go down there, with the rest of them, sleeping in the mud, vomiting cheap wine, rolling over women. Die that way and get it over with [...]. In that hospital they don’t bury the dead, they keep them in rooms and talk to them. (Silko, 1977, 123)

To the whiteness there is more: white color symbolizes Tayo’s otherness and disintegrity. The European hospitals are white. White hospitals for white people, the white way of healing. Perhaps it was good enough for a character of Euramerican origin, but it is worse than insufficient for an Indian from Tayo’s perspective: “They sent me to this place after the war. It was white. Everything in that place was white. Except for me. I was invisible.” (Silko, 1977, 123) Tayo’s feeling of invisibility in the place reminds of Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, but more likely relates to how Tayo was hiding himself from himself, how he denied his identity instead of seeking medicine that could be painful. It was comfortable for him this way:

But I wasn’t afraid there. I didn’t feel things sneaking up behind me. I didn’t cry for Rocky or Josiah. There were no voices and no dreams. Maybe I belong back in that place. (123).

Tayo only stays with the old shaman because he thinks he has lost everything and everybody. He is frightened of him, because there are wild rumors about Betonie. Tayo thinks his family sent him there only to get rid of him. His thought flow goes like this:

They didn’t want him around. They blamed him. And now they had sent him here, and this would be the end of him. The Gallup police would find his body in the bushes around the big arroyo, and he would be just the one of the two or three they’d find dead that week. (122)

He thinks of running away: “He thought about running again; he was stronger than the old man and he could fight his way out of this” (122), but feels betrayed. This is not the only time when betrayal is in the spot: he will have to regain some initial strength or will, but then again will fight with traitorous thoughts, not only traitorous friends. The thoughts are his greatest enemy to overcome, but as well they are a part of the whole story, the *Ceremony*.

But the pain of betrayal pushed into his throat like a fist. He blinked back the tears, but he didn’t move. He was tired of fighting. If there was no one left to trust, then he had no more reason to live (122).

Tayo stayed and what he “could feel was powerful, but there was no way to be sure what it was” (124). He started speaking and the words brought out some tears: Betonie looked serious and worried and meditated about the role of the Japanese soldiers. He got excited thinking about the whole affair and the cattle. “The old man had jumped up. He was walking around the fire pit. Moving behind Tayo as he went around. He was excited and from time to time he would say something to himself in Navajo.” And he searched through his old cardboard boxes, came up with a notebook and sat down. “I’m beginning to see something [...], yes. Something very important. [...] This has been going on for a long time” (Silko, 1977, 125), he said.

What Betonie sees and tells does not appear nice to Tayo, he is irritated about the revealing truth.

“Look”, Tayo said through clenched teeth, “I’ve been sick, and half the time I don’t know if I’m still crazy or not. I don’t know anything about ceremonies or these things you talk about. I don’t know how long anything has been going on. I just need help.” (125).

The shaman tried to explain, he “sounded as if he were explaining something simple but important to a small child” (125), but Tayo still finds it difficult to realize why he was so infuriated: “There was something large and terrifying in the old man’s words”(125). That feeling must have been like suddenly seeing a huge chasm in the place where you intended to step in the next second.

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 when the white doctors were telling him he could get well and he was trying to believe them: medicine didn't work that way, because the world didn't work that way. (Silko, 1977, 125)

When Tayo encounters Betonie, a lot of things are to be explained and revealed. Betonie explains the change in ceremonies. He points out the changes are "if only in the different voices from generation to generation" (Silko, 1977, 126) and declares that "in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing" (126). In the shaman's presence, Tayo listens and finally seems to have accepted but when Betonie leaves the hogan, he doubts again. The "white things" seem better and new, the new seems better. The materialistic point of view takes over. He can only see that Indians and their culture are living on leftovers which would mean they are not so worthy. It is a quest to believe the hidden powers:

The old man's clothes were dirty and old, probably collected like his calendars. The leftover things the whites didn't want All Betonie owned was in this room. What kind of healing power was in this? (127)

Tayo shows his feelings to the shaman by asking: "They took almost everything, didn't they?" Of course Betonie had been thinking of this issue well before, and his view is clear as a freshly washed windowpane. This is the essential question of Indian identity. All the characters think either quietly or loudly or at least know about it. Betonie promptly answers.

It was planned that way. For all the anger and 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 [...]. They only fool themselves when they think it's theirs. The deeds and papers don't mean anything. It is the people who belong to the mountain. (127-8)

Betonie is someone with a deep insight, which should be the attribute of a shaman: he is considered wild and genius; he is Tayo's last chance, Ku'oosh assumes. He proves to be one of the few to realize and continue the motion of the time, of the things, events and moreover, not to lose his head or orientation. His mind is open: "But don't be so quick to call something good or bad" (130). Openness can be difficult to match with knowing, and Betonie's knowing also embraces the world's character:

“There are balances and harmonies always shifting, always necessary to maintain” (130).

To understand the wholeness of the ceremony, it is crucial to know more about what Betonie told Tayo. He said not only that “they want us to believe all evil resides with white people” and that the Indians “will look no further to see what is really happening” (132), but Betonie goes further. He expresses that he considers the white race to be the invention of Indian trickstery.

But white people are only tools that the witchery manipulates; and I tell you we can deal with white people, with their machines and their beliefs. We can because we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place. (132)

Then there is a magnificent old style telling, a narrative song about how it exactly happened. The verses work as a brief outline, the column being thinner; more is left to imagination and the piece of text carries more urgency. The form makes the story burst with magical empowerment; it is the power of catching the readers, the power of its trueness; at least for Tayo, the power with which it captures the Indians and everyone’s pace and place in the world, it works as an incantation or charming. It speaks of the meeting of the witches, how one of them had put this in motion and has won the contest, and would not call it back. How the white race will emerge, how “they will fear what they find / they will fear the people / they kill what they fear” (136), how the whites will “poison the water”, “spin the water away” and “bring terrible diseases”.

There is enough reason and feeling to do the right thing, and Tayo is taken to the mountain top to go through the ceremony. The mountain is the bellybutton of the ceremony. It is sand-tilted on the floor, it is where Tayo is. The mountain is the mother. Betonie symbolically leads him through sand-tilt bear footsteps, praying (143):

eh-hey-yah-ah-na!
eh-hey-yah-ah-na!
eh-hey-yah-ah-na!
eh-hey-yah-ah-na!
eh-hey-yah-ah-na!

At the Dark Mountain
Born from the mountain
Walked along the mountain
I will bring you through my hoop,

I will bring you back.

Following my footprints
walk home
following my footprints
Come home, happily
return belonging to your home
return to long life and happiness again
return to long life and happiness.

This is all the reader gets to know about what happened. The format again signifies something different is happening. It seems to be something different than literature, evoking the place and time. As Momaday managed with using the word “Dypaloh”, Silko now manages to establish a deeper bond to the reader. Ronnow comments:

The old medicine man Betonie initiates Tayo’s healing ceremony, his induction into the world of stories and of fragmented discourse, by actually cutting Tayo’s head. After making the cut with a flint knife, Betonie prays signifiers of pure sound, “eh-hey-yah-ah-na! eh-hey-yah-ah-na!” as the blood oozes along Tayo’s scalp. (1993, 83)

After this Betonie and his helper lead Tayo out of the hogan, give him a blanket and “Indian tea” and tell him to sleep. The bear footsteps are to be Tayo’s footsteps. We find a bear in a healing function in *House Made of Dawn*, even in a more prominent position. García explains about the meaning of a bear’s presence.

Bear emerges prominently in *House Made of Dawn*. Momaday utilized ideas from the Navajo creation story and passages from Mountainway, as well as hunting stories from Jemez Pueblo tradition, to create a pervasive bear presence in the novel, a presence so strongly delineated that it envelops even one of the non-Indian characters, Angela. Essentially Momaday uses bear stories in the novel to present an image of physical and spiritual renewal through contact with the wilderness. In both Pueblo and Navajo traditions, Bear is both enemy and healer, a powerful transformer of self and of other persons. (1990, 46)

Thus it is significant that there is a “bear boy” near Betonie, Shush, his assistant. Domina describes briefly Betonie’s ceremony:

Betonie introduces Tayo to his assistant, Shush, who also has a mythic identity as bear-child. Betonie and Shush perform a ceremony during which they create a sand painting around Tayo and call on the Bear People, who have the power to restore a person to himself. (2004, Introduction)

Tayo dreams about seeing the speckled cattle his uncle bought and lost. “He woke up and he was shivering. He stood and the blanket covering him slid to the ground. He wanted to leave that night to find the cattle; there would be no peace until he did.”(145) Ronnow describes the change that the initial part of Betonie’s ceremony arouses:

Tayo finally learns that to desire as Josiah desired is enough to reinstate Josiah into his on-going story. His desire impels Tayo to the action of searching for the cattle [...]. Tayo is motivated to find the cattle for several reasons: the cattle are missing, Josiah is dead and the regaining of the cattle substitutes for him by displacement or metonymy, and Tayo himself has felt empty and purposeless until he decides to regather the cattle. (1993, 80)

The journey south to restore the cattle herd is the heart of the ceremony. Tayo knows from the stars Betonie saw in a dream after the opening ritual performance. “‘Remember these stars,’ he said. ‘I’ve seen them and I’ve seen the spotted cattle; I’ve seen a mountain and I’ve seen a woman.’” Tayo also saw the cattle and is ready to go.

He displaces the hollowness in him by the search. What is more he also finds love with Ts’eh. “On the journey of refinding the cattle, substitutes for mother/Josiah, Tayo also refinds the body of the M(Other) in Mother Earth and in the woman he meets” (Ronnow, 1993, 81). If she is also connected to the mountain, one may wonder. As mentioned during the analysis of the individual characters, she is the mountain. She is Mother Earth, and she is the Yellow Woman, a lucky sign, the healer, and lover. She is only rare to encounter, she is more likely a precious remembrance to Tayo, a promise. Ronnow comments that: “She does not stay with him; she only promises to return. But the promise and her remembered presence is enough.” (1993, 81) Ronnow adds a proof from *Ceremony*: “the terror of the dreaming he had done on the bed was gone, uprooted from his belly; the woman had filled the hollow spaces with new dreams” (1993, 81). He furthermore notices how Paula Gunn Allen gives more explanation: “love can cure him—Love in the form of the mountain spirit Ts’eh”. Gunn explains that the “water (Ts’e) woman (nako) is the creatrix of the waters of love that flow from a woman and bless the earth and the beloved with healing” (Ronnow, 1993, 81).

After Betonie’s initial ceremony, Tayo travels with a truck driver. His mind is different now, he is more sensible to the white style, to everything white. When they

stop at a gas station, he is primarily caught with a picture which comprises the negative influences of the imported culture upon the Indian soul:

He stared at the calendar for a long time; the horse's mane was bleached white, and there was no trace of dust on its coat. The hooves were waxed with dark polish shining like metal. The woman's eyes and the display of her teeth made him remember the glassy eyes of the stuffed bobcat above the bar in Bibo. The teeth were the same. (154)

Then the station man comes in; it is the first "white man" Tayo sees after talking with Betonie: "He had never seen a white person so clearly. He had to turn away." (154) He also wants no more to ride in a car, as its influence upon him seemed to make him feel like drunk and weak. He decided: "He didn't want any more rides. He wanted to walk until he recognized himself again." (Silko, 1977, 154)

Silko gives details to how Tayo stands on his way: She assures that:

The Scalp Ceremony lay to rest the Japanese souls in the green humid jungles [...]. But there was something else now, as Betonie said: it was everything they had seen—the cities, the tall buildings, the noise and the lights, the power of their weapons and machines. (169)

Tayo began to see the wider perspective; scientific evolution and weaponry and changing the way of living the white have come with. Noise and lights that necessarily accompany city life are a huge contrast to an old time Indian village lightened by fires only. A concrete house and the separation inside are in contrast to closeness to the nature, soft Indian shoes.

The magical moments, ones that promise Betonie's ceremony will be completed successfully, are connected with nature: with the land and the natural light. As in *Ceremony* it is sunrise, in *Love Medicine*, there is a similar moment that Albertine spends with Lipsha and they watch the night sky. (Erdrich, 1993, 37)

Robert Silberman comments on this exact moment in the novel:

With her poet's voice Erdrich often moves away from the mundane and the matter of fact, but she rarely explores exalted realms of the spirit: a vision of the northern lights shared by Lipsha and Albertine is perhaps the one notable exception. (1993, 109)

Silberman thinks that "Indian ritual has no place in *Love Medicine* except in the "touch" of Lipsha", and he is not far from right. However we can observe that there is

also some background healing ceremony, soothing words and memories that refer to June's death, but the only Indian ritual we are presented with is rather satirical. Silberman describes how Lipsha "replaces goose hearts with store-bought frozen turkey hearts, and helplessly watches his 'patient' choke to death" (109).

There are rituals and ceremonies in the novel, though they all involve a wider perspective. There are more moments that can be seen as the ceremony in a broader sense of a healing process. García assures: "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." (1990, 2) In *Love Medicine* there is the family, only clinging together by the means of common memories of June; they rejoin to talk about her, though not always complementarily.

The next thing is how Albertine succeeded to carry on her life outside the reservation; they all tried to escape, but not many managed. Some of the Indians did not find home outside the reservation and had to be provided with help to be able to return. Their return is equally a healing of the soul, its homecoming. A ceremony or a healing aspect is what connects *Love Medicine*, *Ceremony* and *House Made of Dawn*. Andrew Wiget announces:

Native American writing, however, is attracting more and more readers, precisely because much of it does not accept the brokenness of the present world as an immutable condition of things, but invokes deeper patterns of order and meaning, often rooted in the themes and images of tribal oral traditions, as a means of restoring wholeness. (1990, Foreword in García)

As Wiget believes, *House Made of Dawn* holds a unique place here (1990, Foreword in García). Running has a special meaning. It is the actual ceremony Abel performs, and is connected to the story his friend had told him while he was lying in the hospital with his hands all broken. Abel had retraced his way to the old ritual and not thinking about anything, he ran. *House Made of Dawn* starts at that point. Owens chooses to cite the opening of the novel, the second paragraph: "Abel was running. He was alone and running, hard at first, heavily, but then easily and well" (Owens, 1994, 94) and he comments Abel's run: "In the Jemez Pueblo, as within many Native American Indian cultures, running can have serious ceremonial applications". (94)

Running is the final stage of Abel's recovery; what precedes is the stage when Abel is listening to Angela's story and to Ben, who actually prays for him: He sings

exclusively for Abel. “I kept it down because I didn’t want anybody but him to hear it.” The intake of the healing song is Abel’s true inner ceremony. What Ben sings to Abel resembles to Betonie’s song is Ceremony; the purpose of both is to heal (Momaday, 1968. 130).

Tségihi.
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,
House made of pollen,
House made of grasshoppers
[...]
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.

We witness two kinds of ceremonies: the ones that are ritualized performances and other, that go beyond the surface. These are the most important and true ones, the ones that breathe from the novels into the reader and carry a healing power. Ruppert shows how Paula Gunn Allen explains the importance of ceremony, and the nature of it:

The purpose of a ceremony is to integrate: to fuse the individual with his or her fellows, the community of people with that of the other kingdoms, and this larger communal group with the worlds beyond this one. (2000, 71)

The layers of ceremonies are especially eloquent in *Ceremony*. It starts with its title, moves to a ceremony that is performed in the story, then extends to the whole novel, and, finally, extends to whole humankind. This is nicely described by Lynn Domina:

Several brief ceremonies occur within the novel, and Tayo completes a more extensive and complex ceremony as part of his reincorporation into his culture. In this sense, the novel is about ceremonies. Yet the novel is also itself a ceremony; its form both duplicates and exceeds its content. (Domina, 2004, 1)

The ceremony is magical by curing the characters and applying the healing to wide reality. However not only the ceremonies and healing processes in *Love Medicine*, *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony* are the carriers of magical powers. The whole text leads the reader into the world of Indian mysteries, where a slightest sigh can have vast consequences, just as the harmony of the world needs to be balanced well, as human mind, too. The mysterious is connected to the material. Ruppert says:

What begins on a physical level may start to take on a larger significance, but Erdrich leaves the connections mysterious. These mysterious connections show both the characters and the implied readers the paths to sacred processes of the universe. (2000, 71)

Ruppert then gives the example of the mysterious meeting of Marie Lazarre descending the monastery hill with her hand wounded and Nector Kashpaw going up with some dead geese. Nector thought that Marie had stolen something, merely for the family she came from. This encounter leads the whole tangle of relationship into an even more chaotic position. Just before meeting Marie, Nector explains he is a “good looking boy, tall and slim, without a belly hanging in the way” (Erdrich, 1993, 61) and in that connection he clears his intentions: “I can have a pick of girls, is what I’m saying. But that doesn’t matter anyhow, because I have already decided that Lulu Nanapush is the one. She is the only one of them I want.” (Erdrich, 1993, 62)

Nector all the time insists Marie had stolen something from the monastery, because he cannot imagine otherwise. He steps in her way and then he “pin[s]” her to the ground, which leads to a rather intimate scene. Suddenly, after this meeting he does not want her, but he wants her and he “cannot let go” (Erdrich, 1993, 67).

The chapter where this takes place is narrated by Nector and its name is significant: *Wild Geese*. The wildness of the geese is the wildness of fate, or rather the tangling of wild emotions, untamed and working according to their instinct, however strange and for Nector almost contra productive. John Purdy comments: “The section is entitled ‘Wild Geese,’ after all, and they represent an ‘external,’ non-human force at work in the event” (Purdy, 1999, 13).

This meeting of Marie and Nector has been sometimes misinterpreted as a sexual intercourse or even rape. Erdrich commented upon the issue and changed the text that was printed as the second edition to a less ambiguous one.

[...] some readers have described the sexual encounter in *Wild Geese* as a scene of rape. As Erdrich explains in a published interview, this reading was not the one she intended to evoke (Stookey, 1999, 30)

Also Chavkin remarks: “Erdrich also alters another line to leave no doubt that sexual encounter here does not culminate in coitus” (Chavkin, 1999, 92). The relationship of Nector and Marie has first developed on a physical level, then transferred to something more: such situation presumably arises when a ritual transfers into a wider ceremony, begins to function. How the ceremony works is how somebody’s reality virtually changes.

The healing comes through a ceremony, through the land and through women. It comes through love to oneself and to his/her own background. García comments on *House Made of Dawn*: “[...] healing occurs when the characters internalize images of the land by means of the symbolic acts of singing and storytelling” (García, 1990, 2). The oral tradition is carried by ceremonial songs as well as stories.

The ceremonies have more than one layer, they reclaim the Indian identity and the Indian respect for the land, the natural elements and all live beings. The ceremonies restore the respect all the people should honor. This respect and love is what the Indians in the novels regain; therefore it cures them from their illnesses.

6. Conclusion

House Made of Dawn, *Love Medicine* and *Ceremony* are works written on a common basis. The ceremonies have led to some positive result in all cases. In *Love Medicine* the remembrance of June gets the family back together, Lipsha found out his real self as well as his father. In *Ceremony* Tayo was brought back to life and prevented a larger evil that was threatening to the world. Abel recovered this way: He came back to his Indian identity finalizing his homecoming through running the race of the dead.

Andrew Wiget emphasizes the healing effect not only for the characters in the book, but for the readers, too: "Healing comes to Angela and Abel as characters, but also to us as readers" (1990, Foreword in García). The context widens and the reader becomes a participant on the healing process, which is supported by the author's tendencies to narrow the writer-reader gap.

The characters of the novels act generally in an Indian manner. The authors are mixed bloods, the protagonists, too; however they incline more to the Indian part. Obviously some of them do enjoy fancying whiteness in them, like the young Marie, but later, she also finds a connection to her Indian blood. This happens in the presence of Rushes Bear, when Marie is close to death, giving birth to her last baby. Allan Chavkin makes a confirmational comment on the matter: "Here Marie reconnects with her heritage, primarily as a consequence of bonding with her mother-in-law, the old time traditional Rushes Bear." (Chavkin, 1999, 101)

As the characters experience, the white part does not save them, does not help the Indian part, though it works vice versa. The Indian blood then naturally takes over, as viewed from the point of a European reader. The Ceremony works in spite of the "Destroyers" (Silko, 1977, 249) who attempt to spoil it.

The ritual sometimes requires a sacrifice. The deaths and violence can be perceived this way. Violence is chiefly committed upon Abel in *House Made of Dawn*. We are given some clues of why and how it happened, but we are rather driven to see its victim than the act itself. Momaday chooses to skip this part, as we are informed through Abel's friend Ben. There is a murder, too, that Abel performed on an albino in his village, as he saw him as an evil witch. The verdict of whether it was so or not is left to the reader.

Tayo who witnesses torture and murder of his former friend manages to sense that Harley had turned against him. This part of the story Silko herself seems to see as the culmination of the story and an important moment of non-violence. Resistance to revenge is understood as a clue for the Indians as well as for the all the people.

In the beginning chapter of *Love Medicine* a woman dies, her death being an ever-present mystery in the other chapters of the novel. The whole novel then serves as a ceremony which restores the person of June in the minds of the readers. There is one minor “ritual”, which is the “love medicine” Lipsha tries to provide for Marie Kashpaw. In spite of his healing abilities the medicine fails completely. Moreover, as a result of it, Nector Kashpaw chokes to death instead of being driven to love his wife. Together with Lipsha Erdrich explains that Nector loved her anyway.

Ceremonies in the texts are a way to regain health and harmony. The ritual is ever-changing; it changes itself and changes the reality. It can be seen as return to society, to life. García has been investigating this field: “Abel’s personal transformation from illness to returning health in *House Made of Dawn* can be understood only within the context of the larger cultural/religious transformations of the story and these traditions’ inherent linkages to the yet larger patterns of reality in nature” (1990, 40).

The stories echo in the present, as in *Ceremony* they are told in a parallel to the current of the novel. The stories are as human as they can be: they live by being retold or reread and move forward as if they were a spiral entwining forward, either dragging or pushing the lives of humans around/listening upwards. Themes and motifs are repeated, as in ceremonies. Betonie explains the change that happens; He is the only one who can see the change, which the other shamans do not acknowledge or simply do not understand, and therefore they are afraid of Betonie. It seems that the scene never changes, the newborns take the place of the dead and the shape of life is a circle. But Betonie sees the change “if only in the different voices from generation to generation, singing the chants” (Silko, 1977, 126). Tayo’s grandmother is heard in the concluding sentence of *Ceremony*, which also Ronnow notices (1993, 87): “It seems like I already heard these stories before [...] only thing is, the names sound different” (260).

Indian oral tradition pushes the authors to narrowing the relationship between the reader and the writer. Silko, Momaday and Erdrich suggest that the readers take part in the story, in the ceremony, and remake of the world. As the importance of the stories

is to be retold, the importance of literature is to be read over again. The remaking of the world in which the readers take part in undoubtedly contains a healing force and contributes to the initiation of new undeniable values.

7. Resumé

Práce se zabývá srovnáním románů *Love Medicine*, *Ceremony* a *House Made of Dawn* a to zejména z hlediska kulturních odlišností. Tyto odlišnosti se v literatuře promítají právě indiánskými mýty a rituály. Na bázi smíšené krve vznikla tato díla jako jisté hledání identity jak svých protagonistů, tak autorů i celého lidského společenství.

Vybrané romány se noří do hlubokých vod lidskosti a lidského poznání, hledají a nacházejí atributy života, které jsou nesené jakýmsi doprovodným rituálem. Hovoříme-li o rituálu jakožto o ozdravném procesu i jako o tradičním indiánském obřadu, pro *Ceremony* to platí doslova, pro *House Made of Dawn* také, a v jistém smyslu je totéž možno tvrdit i o *Love Medicine*.

Struktura práce sleduje stanovené nosné linky. Nejdříve je nutné rozvést pozadí, na kterém každé dílo vznikalo. Zde je zejména důležité rozhraní samotného tradičního vyprávění příběhů a nové literatury, která je již produktem mísení našich kultur.

V podstatě tedy jde o přechod od ústní literatury k psané, který samotní autoři řeší různými způsoby. Indiánská strana mince se projevuje hlavně ve snaze navázat bližší kontakt se čtenářem, dosáhnout užšího spojení. U Momadaye například takto funguje vkládání tradičních indiánských slov do textu. Román začíná jediným slovem:

„Dypaloh“. Tímto slovem se běžně zahajuje vyprávění v jedné oblasti indiánského působení. Silko zase užívá možností formátování a literárních stylů: její text je protkán písněmi, jež se prolínají dějem románu. Erdrich navozuje dojem intimity prostřednictvím různých vypravěčů, z nichž každý nám svěřuje svá osobní tajemství.

Tato snaha vychází pochopitelně z ústní tradice, kdy dochází k přímému kontaktu vypravěče a posluchače. Právě rozdíl mezi psáním a vyprávěním, čtením a poslechem je cílem analýzy mnoha esejů. Zde ovšem slouží pouze k „otevření bran“ do světa indiánské literatury, neboť je prvkem nezbytným ke správnému porozumění textů.

Dalším krokem je rozbor klíčových postav všech románů, protože právě vykreslení jejich pohledu na svět a jejich vlastností umožňuje poznat i svět autorů a mytické pozadí. Pozorujeme vzor jejich činů, lásek, nenávistí, zoufalosti i uzdravení. Zde je možno ilustrovat i jak tato díla fungují a proč přitahují naši pozornost. Rituál, jež je cestou k uzdravení hrdiny, totiž nepřímo působí i na čtenáře románu, na což poukazuje zejména García ve své práci zaměřené právě na onen aspekt uzdravování.

V *Ceremony* se setkáváme s Tayem, vracejícím se z války, již je postižen jako nemocí. Jeho nemoc se projevuje zlými sny, neschopností opravdového návratu „domů“, tedy návratu do společnosti, sama k sobě a své identitě, která v Tayově případě byla na vahách již od jeho dětství. Tayo je míšenec vychovaný v rodině sestry své indiánské matky. Jeho teta mu dává patřičně najevo jeho méněcennost. Tato podřadnost spočívá v tom, že je nejen odloženým dítětem, ale hlavně míšencem – dítě zplazené neznámým „bílým“ otcem.

Romány shodně používají pro Američany evropského původu, kteří je okradli o zem, označení „white“. Mnohé postavy se též shodují v pohrdavém pohledu na tyto „bílé“ a v nechuti k nim. Postavy, které jsou neindiánského původu, v knihách většinou evokují ponížení, hloupost a krutost. Nutno dodat, že takovýchto postav se objevuje jen velmi málo, v naprosté většině se o nich mluví pouze jako o „whites“. Perspektiva románů se odráží v tom, jak autoři vnímají svou identitu, ač někteří kritici (například Krupat) se pokouší o jinou definici tohoto označení.

Tayo je tedy jedinec s rozbitou identitou, kterému schází domov a cit. Právě cit bude pro něj i pro ostatní postavy jedním z klíčových prvků uzdravení. Významným pro něj bude obřad šamana Betonieho, kterému též v žilách koluje smíšená krev, a jehož oči se podobají Tayovým (barva očí je často vyzdvihována). V rámci obřadu Tayovi podává pomocnou ruku žena jménem Ts'eh, která hraje v románu řadu rolí a kterou je možno chápat jako jednu z tradičních postav indiánské mytologie. Podobně jako Betonie, i Ts'eh je schopna vidět věci běžnému zraku skryté a naslouchá vzdáleným hlasům. Její příjmení v překladu znamená „hora“, a v knize funguje poměrně jasně jako symbol země, země která nepatří nikomu: to indiáni náleží jí. (cit)

V *House Made of Dawn* se setkáváme s Abelem, jehož osud se nápadně podobá Tayovu. I on je veterán smíšeného původu, kterého jeho dědeček Francisco vychovával v tradičně indiánském prostředí. Po návratu jej sužuje řada potíží a jedna z prvních věcí, které se mu po návratu „přihodí“, je, že spáchá vraždu. I tento samotný čin lze nahlížet dvojím pohledem, přičemž již samo slovo „vražda“ je jasně „bílý“ způsob vnímání věci. Ze svého pohledu však Abel zabil démona, čaroděje, který ohrožoval jeho samého i úrodu jeho dědečka. Abel u soudu zcela evidentně nechápe, o čem je řeč, a zastává názor, že zabil „hada“. Tuto událost lze interpretovat mnoha způsoby, tedy i tak, že zabil „bílou“ část své identity.

V Abelově životě vystupují dvě ženy. Angela, která hraje důležitou roli v jeho uzdravení také tím, že mu vypráví podivuhodně indiánský příběh. Druhou ženou v Abelově životě je Milly, sama zobrazená jako osamocená „oběť“, která však po mnoho dní vnáší světlo, smích a lásku do osamělých životů Abela a jeho přítele Bena Benallyho. Ten je další klíčovou postavou románu. Právě on zpívá starou píseň o „domu z úsvitu“, jež přináší zhojení duševních ran.

Love Medicine je skutečně bohatá na postavy. V samotném vyprávění se jich vystřídá šest: Marie Lazarre (Kashpaw), Lulu Nanapush (Lamartine), Nector Kashpaw, Albertine Johnson, Lyman Lamartine a Lipsha Morrissey. Jejich vyprávění jsou rovnocenně důležitá, společně vytvářejí celý příběh. Ten se točí kolem ženy, jež umírá v první kapitole: June Kashpaw. Ona je, jak někteří kritikové připomínají, hlavním bodem románu a elementem spojujícím osudy všech ostatních. V kritických esejích se rovněž často připomíná křesťanství jako výrazný prvek, který se mísí s původní indiánskou vírou. Právě zde můžeme spatřovat June ve funkci jakéhosi Krista, který umírá pro jistou oběť: spojení ostatních členů rodiny a vytvoření celého příběhu.

Nector Kashpaw je manželem Marie níž má mnoho dětí. Je také milencem Lulu a otcem jednoho z jejích synů. Lulu je oproti Marii divoká a nespoutaná, jejích synů je mnoho. Albertine je vnučkou Marie a Nectora a jako jedna z mála postav má pozitivní vyznění. Jako mnoho ostatních z rezervace utekla žít do „bílého“ světa a jako jedna z mála uspěla. Albertine se ve městě setkává s Gerrym Nanapusem, synem Lulu, který je zajímavý svou povahou. Charakterizují ho atributy obvykle v mýtech připisované figuře zvané „trickster“, jakési vzdálené obdobě evropského šaška. Není ani dobrý, ani zlý, ani šprýmař, ani podvodník. Je však velmi nespoutaný a mění svou podobu. Gerry znovu a znovu podniká záhadné útky z vězení, kam se vždy po čase musí opět vrátit. Na útěku se také setkává se svým synem, Lipshou.

Lipsha je po téměř celou dobu děje románu jedinec bez jasně identity: nezná svého otce ani matku. V závěru vychází najevo, že jeho matkou byla právě June, a otcem slavný Gerry. Tím, že mu Lulu toto tajemství vmete do tváře, způsobí, že se v Lipshovi začne odehrávat proces změny. Stává se z něj skutečný syn Gerryho, který již ví, odkud pochází jeho zvláštní schopnost léčit dotekem svých rukou.

Lyman Lamartine, syn Lulu a Nectora, především přibližuje čtenářům příběhu svého bratra Henryho. Henry se nachází v podobné situaci jako Tayo v románu

Ceremony anebo Abel v *House Made of Dawn*. Jeho však nespasí žádný rituál, šaman ani jiné nalezení klidu. Svůj klid nachází až v rozvodněné řece, kde jeho posledním sdělením bratrovi je, že se mu plní boty vodou.

Ve všech třech románech se v určité podobě setkáváme se smrtí a násilím v nějaké formě. Smrt June funguje v *Love Medicine* jako zprostředkování jakéhosi obřadu na druhé úrovni. Smrt a násilí páchané na Harleyovi v *Ceremony* jsou nutně součástí obřadu, který je iniciován Betoniem. Tayo se musí vyrovnat nejen sám se sebou, ale i se zradou kamarádů a s násilím, které jeden na druhém páchá. V tomto případě je Tayo na druhém břehu: stojí proti nim, proti Zlu, o kterém mluví Ts'eh a Betonie, Zlu které Taya pronásleduje v jeho snech. Konečně Abel sám se stává aktérem vraždy. Zabije albína Juana, kterého považuje za zlého kouzelníka. Dalo by se také říci, že tento muž/had slouží Abelovi i čtenáři jako zástupce zla v Abelově okolí.

Dostáváme se tak k samotnému prvku obřadu. V *Love Medicine* nalézáme Lipshův pokus o realizaci jakéhosi obřadu lásky, který je však spíše parodií. Ironie je obsažena už v Lipshově neschopnosti ulovit divoké husy, jejichž srdcí je k obřadu potřeba. Lipsha se uchýlí k nevinné lsti. Koupí v obchodě mražená krutí srdce, a pak je donese své adoptivní matce, Marii. Ta jedno srdce sní a druhé připraví pro svého muže. Situace, která pak nastává, je naprosto tragická. V kontextu vyprávění však událost působí ironicky a stává se tak téměř komickým prvkem. Zamýšlené navození lásky způsobí smrt „pacienta“. Tuto situaci je též možné popsat jako výsledek působení postavy, označované jako „trickster“.

Jak už ale bylo zmíněno, i *Love Medicine* obsahuje motiv obřadu, prvku, který znovu spojuje, co bylo rozpojeno, a hojí, co bylo nemocné: Smrt June a její vzkříšení skrze vyprávění všech postav.

V *House Made of Dawn* se Abel uzdravuje návratem k indiánské identitě starými tradičními písněmi a příběhy. Děje se tak po mnoha letech od jeho návratu do rezervace. Za vraždu si Abel musel odpykat řadu let ve vězení. Návrat je pro něj dosti problematický. Ve městě si sice najde práci, kde se spřátelí s Benem, avšak brzy o ni přijde. Jeho přítelem je Ben Benally. Abel se pravidelně opíjí a nakonec jej Ben jednou najde krutě zbitého na chodbě domu, kde oba bydlí. Abel se zotavuje v nemocnici a Ben nad ním bdí. Ben také zorganizuje návštěvu Angely, bílé ženy s níž se Abel před lety setkal. Později Ben Abela posadí na vlak a Abel se opět setkává se svým dědečkem

Franciscem, jehož život se chýlí ke svému konci. Po jeho smrti ho Abel ustrojí podle indiánských tradic a vydá se na dlouhý běh. Tento běh je vlastně starým rituálem, je to závod mrtvých. Abel se během navrací sám sobě, běží domů.

Kniha *Ceremony* je už od názvu od základu obřadem. Jak zmiňuje S. S. García, ozdravné účinky obřadů v knihách indiánských autorů působí i na čtenáře. Pro Tayo tento obřad začíná setkáním se šamanem Betoniem. Betonie vykonává tradiční rituál a za svolávání „eh-hey-yah-ah-na!“ ho symbolicky provádí medvědími stopami. Tayo poté usíná a zdá se mu sen. Betonie mu vypráví, co všechno viděl on, a Tayo se následujícího rána vydává na cestu za dobytkem, který za války utekl jeho strýčkovi Josiášovi. Tayo dobytek nalezne, a spolu s ním najde i ženu a lásku. Uzdravuje se. Zakončení obřadu však přichází až po noci, kdy Tayo sleduje skryt za skalami zlé čarodějně skutky, páchané prostřednictvím jeho bývalých kamarádů. Tento okamžik je klíčový pro správné završení obřadu. Tayo nyní vystupuje jako zástupce indiánů a odolává touze pomstít se. Silko posunuje význam tohoto obřadu a rozšiřuje jeho působení na celé lidstvo.

Romány *Ceremony*, *House Made of Dawn* a *Love Medicine* se zamýšlejí nad indiánskou, vracejí se k indiánskému poznání a vnímání světa, které je neposkvrněné, čisté, ekologické a respektuje boží přirozenost všech jevů, tvorů a věcí. Jejich prazákladní téma je hluboce lidské. Vychází ze základů indiánských tradic promísených „bílou krví“. Tato díla vybízejí k humánnosti a nenásilí a přináší čtenářům zážitek zázraku: Celistvost světa, spojení starých příběhů s novými, smrt a zrození, východ slunce: láska jako cesta.

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