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Guest Editor's Introduction

Linda Danielson

Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*, like Beth Brant's *Mohawk Trail*, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's *Then Badger Said This*, and N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, is one of those unclassifiable works, defying the concept of genre that has shaped both literary scholarship and the modern American publishing industry. (When *Rainy Mountain* first appeared on the paperback market, its publisher classified it as Anthropology; a later edition, as I remember, was labelled as a *novel*.) *Storyteller* has received similar treatment, often appearing in bookstores on the "Native American" shelf along with mostly History, Anthropology, and New Age revisionist versions of Indian spirituality, while *Ceremony* is assured shelf space in the Literature section. Meanwhile, scholars have tended to tip-toe respectfully around such genre-bending works until recently, when mainstream developments in critical theory about the creative relationship among reader, author, and oral sources have raised new possibilities for seeing such works as *Storyteller* whole.

Rainy Mountain, with its clear governing point of view, its neatly triadic structure, and its popularly white-approved view of "The" Indian as a noble figure of the past whose culture is dying, has gained wide critical acceptance outside the specialized study of Native American Literatures, as suggested by MLA's publication of *Approaches to Teaching Momaday's* Way to Rainy Mountain. *Storyteller* has fared less well in terms of critical attention. Silko asks much of readers steeped in EuroAmerican literary tradition. She asks that they accept historical fact, autobiography, and tribal oral tradition in a single work, as does Momaday; then she asks that they see fiction and poetry as coequal with these other forms, shaped by her own and others' individual and collective experiences of history, tribal lore, and personal story. Moreover, her stories are to be seen as *versions* and not as any kind of "sentimental privileging of old ways" (Krupat 166). Her themes range widely, points of view vary, and the structure is like nothing any

graduate school ever trained us to understand.

Those involved in the publication of this special issue are mostly white scholars, primarily trained in the ahistorical analysis of New Criticism. To a scholarly community raised on New Critics, the organic basis of *Storyteller* could seem elusive. In point of fact, a number of the pieces in *Storyteller* have been published separately. About half of the poems in *Laguna Woman* reappear in *Storyteller*. The witchery poems and "He was a small child" had appeared earlier in *Ceremony*. All of the short stories had been previously published.

Until recently, the book has received little critical attention as a whole, having been thought of as a sampler or collage of collected works. In mainstream literary practice, publishing one's collected works simply suggests gathering and consolidating what one has produced, usually organized in chronological fashion, in response to the culturally perceived importance of linear time. Thus we may have been tempted to dismiss *Storyteller* simply as a patchwork, full of good things, but having little formal significance. What the scholarly tradition has not prepared us to understand is that patchwork can indeed offer a structural principle (see the review of *Mohawk Trail* in this issue). In fact, non-linear structures are what we need to be looking for, with coherence achieved through relational categories rather than through time sequence and EuroAmerican formalism.

Moreover, pieces previously published and now placed in the context of *Storyteller* may carry a different weight of meaning than they had in other settings. Much of Silko's work derives from oral traditions, which survive because they nurture people in a variety of life situations. The meanings of traditional stories are changed and revitalized as they move from one context to another. New meanings are created by rearrangement. Old stories change as they are spoken into new situations. New stories, even including bits of gossip, take on meaning because they are told in a context in which the other stories are known.[1] Juxtaposing all these modes of storytelling with one another and exploring the potential ways those modes may interact with each other make *Storyteller* a fresh and unified work, not simply a collection. Examining the nature of *Storyteller* demands that we look at it whole—its structure, its central statement, and its unified effect on us as readers. This issue of *SAIL* moves toward such an effort.

Despite the existence of good essays on individual pieces from *Storyteller*—some of which date from early, separate appearances of some of the short fiction—I know of very few critical works that treat *Storyteller* as a whole. In addition to Arnold Krupat's discussion of the work's polyphonic quality in *The Voice in the Margin*, former *SAIL* Editor Helen Jaskoski's essay "Words Like Bones" examines the

problem of context for both Native and non-Native readers of *Storyteller*, suggesting that the work "challenges every reader to assume the role of storyteller's audience in co-creating text and context" (3); she further examines the question of context and the importance of seeing the work as an integrated whole in "From Time Immemorial: Native American Traditions in Contemporary Short Fiction." Bernard A. Hirsch examines the work as an extension of oral tradition in his *American Indian Quarterly* essay. In two essays, I have interpreted *Storyteller* through the structurally unifying metaphor of the spiderweb as suggestive of the creativity that sustains the culture. A holistic view of *Storyteller* shaped a panel convened by Toby Langen at the 1992 American Literature Association meeting (San Diego, May 28-31), which included presentations by Robert Nelson, Hertha Wong, and me.

In this issue, Toby Langen begins with the premise that *Storyteller* produces for the reader the effect of participation in oral tradition. She explores how a multiplicity of authorial/storyteller voices evokes traditional referentiality, John Miles Foley's term for ways in which any single narration, metaphor, or epithet in oral culture summons a whole range of variants (7-10). She suggests how Silko has, by the arrangement of text and photos, both disowned her particular authority and fostered the possibility that the reader might experience "something ultimately unreadable," the resonance of oral culture. One literary strategy Silko uses to produce this effect, suggests Langen, is the figured cluster, which she sees operating in thematic groups of text/photo pieces and also in the patterns of dynamic concentricity within single pieces.

Through a detailed comparative reading of John Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat" text and four pieces from *Storyteller*, Robert Nelson contrasts the functions of storytelling as consciously portrayed by Silko and as tacitly assumed by Gunn, historian and recounter of "old yarns" from Keres tradition. Besides comparing the ways in which Gunn's and Silko's treatments of the stories illustrate different world views, Nelson also examines the way a written version of Keresan stories, seen through the lens of a foreign culture, nonetheless becomes a portion of the larger tribal story—and thus a pre-text, along with Aunt Susie's stories and other oral narratives, for Silko's text.

Helen Jaskoski's use of *Storyteller* as the focal point of an upper-division general education course, "Literature of the American Indians," addresses problems of identity and difference in such ways that the literatures become experiences of personal engagement as well as of critical interpretation. Specifically, she addresses the problem of positive but still stereotypical fascination with Indians, either as the "exotic other" or as just like "us," through a series of writing assignments that move both Native and non-Native students toward a sense

of community in the examination of Silko's themes in their own lives. At the same time, in Jaskoski's course, *Storyteller* functions as a source of archetypal commonalities and particularizing contrasts among many Indian Literatures. In the meantime, an intensive reading of the text evokes the experience of participating in an oral culture, full of indeterminacies within the holistic setting of the context.

Finally, Diane Glancy's "Halfact" offers an imaginative counterpoint to these critical and scholarly esays on *Storyteller*, attempting and achieving many of the same goals and effects, but from a different cultural context and in a decidedly creative voice. Challenging, examining, and expanding the generic boundaries of drama (as both text and performance), poem, prose, and ceremony, this short work will be included in a volume of her collected plays, *War Cries*, to be published by Holy Cow! Press later this year.

Most of us involved in the publication of this issue met during a 1987 National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar for college teachers. We owe a debt of thanks to each other, and most particularly to seminar director Larry Evers, Professor of English at the University of Arizona, who has continued to be a supportive presence in our lives and far-flung dialogues. *Storyteller* was for all of us the object of much thought in those weeks, and we have continued to talk to each other not only about that work, but also about our work in the whole field of American Indian Literatures. We have to thank Larry not only for an exciting exploration of both traditional and written literatures, but also for helping us to generate a sense of community and collectivity in our work that is still functioning five years later.

Notes

[1]For a fuller discussion of these points see Roger Abrahams, "Our Native Notions of Story," 38 ff.

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There is a tall Hopi Basket with a single figure
woven into it which might be a Grasshopper or
a Hummingbird Man. Inside the basket are hundreds
of photographs taken since the 1890's around Laguna.
. . . . . .
Photographs have alays had special significance
with the people of my family and the people at Laguna.
A photograph is serious business and many people
still do not trust just anyone to take their picture.

It wasn't until I began this book
that I realized that the photographs in the Hopi basket
have a special relationship to the stories as I remember them.
The photographs are here because they are part of many of the stories
and because many of the stories can be traced in the photographs. (1)

Leslie Marmon Silko
Storyteller
(photograph by Lee Marmon)

Storyteller *as Hopi Basket*

Toby C. S. Langen

In creating *Storyteller*, Leslie Marmon Silko has employed a silent, tangible object used by one person at a time—a book—to effect that person's participation in an audible, intangible, communal art—storytelling.[1] Since part of her aim in this undertaking is to honor an oral tradition, she cannot allow her audience of solitaries simply to read, nor can she herself just write.

The solitude of the reader is mitigated by Silko's offering to us a multiplicity of storytellers, causing us to become a multiplicity of readers as we react to the voices speaking to us. The kind of assemblage we have here is not a collection or anthology; it is what is usually called a *tradition*: the pieces are part of a whole that includes *Storyteller* as well. We hear a variety of performers within the tradition, storytellers related to each other by blood and ceremony as well as art —Aunt Susie is the great-aunt of one and the daughter-in-law of another —and the stories in their particular tellings participate in the relations of the tellers. In Leslie's voice, we hear Aunt Susie's ("This is the way Aunt Susie told the story" is, in fact, the first line of a frame in which Leslie goes on to tell us more about her aunt's way of speaking), and we also know that when Leslie is speaking in her own voice to her friend Mei about butterflies, we hear what she says through the voices of ancestral storytellers who have been speaking about butterflies forever.

This kind of polyvocality (not just the presence of multiple voices, but the sounding of voices through each other) is one indication of the working in *Storyteller* of traditional referentiality, the way traditional structures of narrative and rhetoric refer beyond the immediate to the immanent. The term "traditional referentiality" comes from the study of oral epic, not Laguna storytelling, and in applying it to *Storyteller* I am following what seems to me its natural extension into an area that John Miles Foley, who coins the term in his *Immanent Art*, does not explore. In a discussion of the use of epithets in the *Iliad*, Foley asks

why, for example, Achilles is called "swift-footed" at times in the story when he is motionless. The inconsistency of the epithet at such points in the poem is dissolved by the audience's expectations of Homeric meter and other poetic conventions, which the epithet satisfies, and by a cultural conditioning that allows the epithet to summon for its hearers the entire mythic presence of Achilles, who has an existence beyond the received text of the *Iliad* and doubtless beyond Homer. Thus, traditional referentiality is metonymic: "We must be aware that such traditional structures as noun-epithet formulas bear only nominal denotative meanings, that their connotative, inherent meanings are summoned to narrative present under an agreement negotiated over generations" (60).

Traditional referentiality reveals the literary particular as always to some extent figurative of the whole art. One difference between traditional referentiality and the notion of "context" in book-culture is that the "text" of the told story (the words plus the presence of the teller) acts out its referents with its very sound, whereas "context," like the setting of a jewel, is external. Traditional referentiality is, I think, one name for what Leslie Silko is thinking about when in this letter to a friend she tries to conceptualize her experience of the relationships between different versions of a traditional story:

> . . . —there actually is "the story" which people hear and tell, with different details, according to how their family or village tells it. But there is also another sense of the story, and that is "the story" of a particular telling (as with music, I suppose) the story that will never again be told in quite the same way with quite the same context.
>
> I don't know why I am so intrigued with this—perhaps because it seems a way of understanding . . . how some elements seem to come through "change" without themselves having lost certain characteristics. (*Delicacy* 86)

Particular realizations are various while being part of a tradition that is conceived of as unchanging because they never are explicitly realized.

The contemporary pieces in *Storyteller* share in ways they would not in another setting (in an anthology, for instance) the multiple existence of Laguna story as immediate telling, as particular remembered telling, and as traditional property. To the extent that we hear this tension between novelty and conservatism humming through the immediacy of all the pieces in *Storyteller*, our consciousness is divided between our reading and our becoming members of the audience to whom Leslie Silko is offering something ultimately unreadable. Like a scribe who writes down the *Iliad* or the *Beowulf* of his people for the first time, Silko has found herself in a time and place that enable her to capture oral traditional referentiality for the use of readers, but she

goes beyond scribal activity in presenting not only the ancient and oral, but also newly written original texts as members of the tradition.

The artful use of page layout to mimic traditional rhetorical forms is one of the ways Leslie Silko sets traditional referentiality to work in *Storyteller*. Since we will be paying attention to the appearance of the book, it is necessary to observe at the start that the front cover is not part of that appearance.[2] In Silko's opinion, the picture of her head and shoulders underneath the word *storyteller* "confuse[s] what I was trying to say, which was [that] the storyteller I'm thinking about is . . . the person beyond time and space . . . it should be anonymous" ("Poetics" 30). Silko has remarked that while she has never been given any decision-making power by the men who have designed the jackets or covers for her books, she has been able to work on layout and endpapers with women who have been open to her ideas.

As readers of books, many of us think of authorship as the expression of individual vision and believe that our literary culture honors that individuality highly. And we tend to think of the world of oral literatures as one in which traditional and formal constraints operate so powerfully as to all but deny the expression of individual intention. It is a telling coincidence that a book that is intended in part to be a demonstration of the freedoms available to the traditional storyteller should also in its packaging demonstrate one of the ways in which the author in a book-culture lacks freedom.

Leslie Silko has assembled the parts of *Storyteller* to distress and interrupt the activity of reading and to disown the authority of writing and authorship. We cannot escape taking *Storyteller* in at the eye; when we are required to experience the photographs as equally active with the text-pieces in accomplishing the work of the book, we find we must not only read, moving our eyes quickly over the letters, but we must also slow down when we encounter pictures and allow ourselves to gaze. The gazing in turn requires us to search not only for the photographs' relation to what is on neighboring pages, but also for the photographs' labels in a list of captions placed at the end of the volume. Reading a story takes less time than listening to one; a function of the photographs in *Storyteller* is to invite a more "oral" tempo into our reading.

What the Table of Contents presents as the first thing in the book is the piece about the Hopi basket that in real life contains the collection of photographs from which those reproduced in the book were chosen:

> There is a tall Hopi basket with a single figure woven into it which might be a Grasshopper or a Hummingbird Man. Inside the basket are hundreds of photographs taken since

the 1890's around Laguna. (1)

What is presented as the last thing in the book is the group of captions to the photographs—the captions themselves interspersed with photographs as if to mark their status as text rather than apparatus, a notion already adumbrated in the Hopi basket poem: "The photographs are here because they are part of many of the stories / and because many of the stories can be traced in the photographs" (1). The leaves of the book lie within a frame of references to the collection of pictures just as the pictures in real life lie within the basket. In its alien Laguna setting, the Hopi figured weaving, only partly interpretable, summons up little that is immediate and much that is immanent.

Prior to our encounter with *Storyteller*, we are led to believe, there was enacted a scene that we mimic in our handling of the book: someone took the photos out of the basket and showed them to someone else, talked about the memories and identities traceable in them. Readers are aware of participating in the afterlife of that scene, of participating in a community of descendants of players in that scene, looking and listening and turning the photos/pages over to see the inscriptions on the back. We are not going to read this book, then; we are going to rummage in it.

While the storyteller has cast pictures and words for us in certain layouts—figured clusters—she cannot predict the order in which rummaging will assemble the book for us. We may skip some text pieces, misinterpret the photos until we turn to the inscriptions some time later, or encounter the inscriptions only when we reach the back of the book. This element of chance keeps the composition of the layouts or figures to some degree latent (in that they may be variously realized), though not imperceptible. I refer to as "clusters" groups assembled of text pieces and photographs sharing the same topic, such as hunting or the power to do evil, and also containing intercalary pieces or photos whose effect is to enlarge on the topic by suggesting its relation to the topics of other clusters. The elements in a cluster are often arranged in a traditional figure or pattern that strengthens their cohesion and in so doing also provides commentary. Thus, I speak of "figured clusters" that carry traditional referentiality in their very shapes.

In the discussion that follows, I begin by taking a look at the first figured cluster in *Storyteller*. Since this first cluster seems to operate as whole enterprise (acting out also the metonymy that is the relation between performance and tradition that we call "traditional referentiality"), it invites us to consider *Storyteller* a treatise on literature at the same time that we consider it a work of literature.

The first cluster that I see is laid out on pages 1-35. It offers a discussion of tribal literatures as memorial and communal, an introduction to the Marmon family storytellers, and samples of their work showing both traditional and adaptive strategies. The presentation of this material proceeds by means of a series of circular and concentric figures, patterns of organization that may occur at any level—sentence, passage, scene, plot or cluster—and that are at the heart of oral traditional discourse.[3]

In classical and medieval works, we find such figures used in the service of literate communication as well, and literary criticism has employed a variety of names for them: "ring composition," "frame," "envelope," "chiasmus," etc. I prefer to talk about circular and concentric figures because in oral and oral-derived literatures these figures are not just "the repetitious arrangement of narrative elements within a relatively static structure" (Tonsfeldt 452), but rather ways of developing an idea or of revealing complications in the relations between topics. There are relationships between the circumference members and the center of a figure, and between the circumference members themselves, that the literary-critical terminology has not allowed for. Adeline Bartlett's classic description of such figures in Old English literature does recognize them as coherence structures but describes their usefulness only as frames and topic markers (12, 21). We can see them working in both these ways in *Storyteller*, but their functioning seldom stops at this merely diacritic level.

Circular and concentric figures in *Storyteller* inscribe every piece with the traditional referentiality that is the book's reason for being: they reveal themselves by the effect they have on the meaning of their elements. Silko must have heard such figures in the cadences of Aunt Susie's voice and the voices of other storytellers, though interestingly enough she does not use these figures in the story that begins "This is how Aunt Susie told the story." Indeed, in the book as a whole, figures shape individual pieces far less often than they place them in relation to each other within the tradition—that is, effect traditional referentiality.

A circular figure is an *A-B-A´* construction: *A* might be a statement such as "I remember Aunt Susie"; *B* might tell about something specific that is remembered; and *A´* might recapitulate: "That is what I remember." When *A* and *A´* ("I remember" and "That is what I remember") say essentially the same thing, this device may be seen as framing and its function as ornamental or diacritic or both. It can be argued, though, that *A*, "I remember," is relatively empty, while *A´*, "That is what I remember," is relatively full, carrying with it the weight of the information presented in *B*, so that it is not merely a recapitulation of the first statement, but a development of it. The

difference between framing and circular figuration is that circularity emphasizes the difference between *A* and *A´* and sees their relation as dynamic, actually moving a story or discussion forward in a cumulative way, while framing is a static device, operating merely as a return to the point from which a digression was made.

Circular figures may be nested inside each other, constructing a concentric pattern, which is the way *Storyteller* continues after the poem about the Hopi basket:

Figure 1

A I always called her Aunt Susie
B my father's aunt
C married to Walter
D north of Old Laguna
E Carlisle
E´ Dickinson College in Carlisle
D´ return to Laguna
C´ helped Uncle Walter
B´ my father remembers
A´ From the time that I can remember her (3-4)

Reading through this four-part concentric figure with its reduplicated core (or hearing it, as we sometimes hear highly figured language when we read "silently"), we do not experience it as returning to a point of origin, but rather as developing information in such a way that it collects itself as it goes along.

In this example, verbal echo marks all the members of the figure (*A´* echoes the "I" of *A*, and so on), but in other circular figures the members may echo each other solely in terms of content, without being marked at the verbal level at all. Passages often also contain verbal echo that is not structural (cf. "the Indian School," line 12, page 3, and "at Old Laguna," line 20). Another member of the audience for this passage might distinguish differently between structure and echo than I do; and I believe the invitation to variety in ways of hearing these distinctions is a function of the text not unlike punning, but carried out with shapes or figures rather than phones.

Figures sometimes contain intercalary material that makes them inexact or lopsided (*A-B-C-B´-[X]-A´*), or one of the circumference members may be developed as a figure itself (*[A-X-A´]-B-C-B´-A´´*). At such times we may prefer to see the figure as latent rather than manifest or to consider a passage as concentrically or circularly organized, rather than neatly figured. All such instances depend on the same traditional strategy: the tidiness with which a certain passage fills the mould is far less important to our satisfaction as audience for the passage than is our recognition of the age-old communicative dynamic.

In the concentric figure that opens *Storyteller*, all the circumference elements are not the same size; *A* ("I always called her Aunt Susie") is only one clause taking up a single line, while *E* ("Around 1896 / when she was a young woman / she had been sent away to Carlisle Indian School / in Pennsylvania") is made up of two clauses taking up four lines. This kind of variation in the way figures are realized is not unusual in oral discourse (Langen "Organization").

The *A* and *A´* of Figure 1 seem to me to operate as a frame; that is, they make sense in relation to each other if what comes between them is left out: "I always called her Aunt Susie . . . From the time that I can remember her / she worked on her kitchen table." What is within this frame are facts that Leslie knew as a child by hearsay; what comes to us in the next figure will be her own memories.

Some definitions of circular figure or ring-composition (e.g., Niles 924) hold that the center or core of the figure should be unechoed (*A-B-C-B´-A´*), but to call Figure 1 a coreless figure in which *E* and *E´* are simply different points on the circumference of the same circle, like *A* and *A´*, is only partly accurate. It is true that *E´* is a development of *E* (not only did Aunt Susie do well back East at Carlisle, but she also went on to college back East) and thus has the same kind of relationship to *E* that is present between the members of each circumference (except the framing one) in this figure: the *D-D´* ring tells us that Aunt Susie was raised outside the village of Laguna itself and came home not to the village of her birth, but to the village of her marriage; *C´* tells us that marriage to Walter (*C*) involved raising children, helping her husband run the ranch, and teaching school; *B-B´* invites us to wonder whether it was because his own aunt (*B*) was his schoolteacher that Leslie's father used to misbehave (*B´*).

But while *E* and *E´* have this kind of relation to each other, they also stand in the relation of core to the other circumferences. The core idea is something that informs all the reiteration-hemispheres (*A´*, *B´*, etc.) of the figure and/or is taken up again at the close of the figure and/or pointedly recurs in later figures. In this case the core status of *E-E´* becomes most evident as the cluster proceeds: the mingled positive and negative effects of Indian school are summoned by the cores of other figures (see especially the discussion of Figure 2 below), by the evocation of Aunt Susie's scholarliness that accompanies the story of Waithea, and by the story "Lullaby," which initiates the rhythmic, refrain-like series of references to the idea of this first cluster that runs throughout the book. Within Figure 1, the idea of Indian school is a component of Aunt Susie's presentation as a competent woman, not only studious (*D´*), but also practical, active, and successful in the Laguna to which she returned (*C´*). In the next figure, the cost to the community of such adaptive accomplishment begins to be

assessed.

At the close of Figure 1, which has the topic of Carlisle Indian School at the center, Leslie continues to talk about Aunt Susie's education: "From the time that I can remember her / she worked on her kitchen table / with her books and papers spread over the oil cloth." The first line of this passage closes Figure 1, but it also opens the next figure (Figure 2 below). In oral traditions, figures may be overlapping (when they share an element, as here), interlocking (when the second figure begins before the first one has closed, e.g., *A-B-C-B´-x-A´-y-z-x´-y´*) or simply juxtaposed. The way Leslie continues to talk about Aunt Susie here is highly figured: circular and concentric shapes have the ability to carry with dignity and subtlety heartfelt utterance that may otherwise be difficult to control.

Figure 2

A From the time that I can remember her (= *A´*, Fig. l)
B with her books
C handwriting, eyesight
D listen to questions
C´ handwriting, eyesight
D´ answer questions
B´ she had come to believe in books

E She was of a generation
F entire culture, entire history, entire vision
G retelling by subsequent generations
K *oral tradition*
H taking the children
I to Indian schools
H´ taking the children
G´ in all past generations told
F´ entire culture, entire identity
C´´ *handwriting, eyesight*
J *remembered accounts, what we remember*
E´ as with any generation
K *oral tradition*

J´ remembering portion together
J´ remembering together
whole story, long story (echoes *F*)

A´ I remember only a small part.
A´ But this is what I remember. (4, 6-7)

At first glance, the relation between *A*, "From the time I can

remember her," and *A´*, "But this is what I remember," may look like framing, but within their circumference the word "remember" has departed from referring to Leslie's private act concerning a member of her family and arrived at referring to a communal act involving the entire Laguna people, of whose culture Aunt Susie's legacy made available by Leslie's memories is a constituent. Both leaving a legacy and inheriting one are cooperative endeavors, a fact perhaps acted out by the chiastic form of *A´* ("remember"—"part"—"this"—"remember"), chiasmus in its reduplicating function being capable of carrying the notion of plurality. Within its *A-A´* circumference, Figure 2 contains three smaller figures, *B-B´*, *E-E´*, and *J-J´*. None of these small figures is tidy. The *B-B´* section has a core formed of both *C* and *D* and doubled. In the *E-E´* section, *K*, "oral tradition," is an intercalary element that as *K´* will form the core of the following *J-J´* section, and we can consider it as providing proleptic coherence; *C´´* is an intercalary element that echoes the core of the *B-B´* section and provides retrospective coherence. *J-J´* interlocks with *E-E´* (*J* comes before *E´*), interlock being another coherence device that subverts the apparent isolation of items arranged paratactically.

The cumulative intensity of *E-E´* as it nears its close is signalled by the frequency of intercalary items. The placement of *C´´*, which keeps Leslie's affection for Aunt Susie before us just as the poem moves on to speak of the community at large, is an especially good example of the discretion of language that is figured this way. *C´´* is preceded by *F´*, whose rhythmic iteration of the pattern "entire x, entire y" imbues *C´´* with the somber color carried in the parallelism. And it is followed by *J-J´*, which consists mainly of words and syntactic structures that incrementally echo each other in an appeal to feeling as much as to mind. *C´´* adumbrates this appeal to feeling by reminding us of two elements in family tradition about Aunt Susie that are already packed with admiration and regret, her valiant handwriting and her fragile eyesight. In this way, *J-J´* is given greater power without risk of overindulging itself in its verbal and syntactical texturing.

What I have called Figures 1 and 2 are in fact parts of a larger arrangement of overlapping and interlocking figures that leads up to the introduction of Aunt Susie's first story. The whole arrangement is abbreviated below in Figure 3:

Figure 3

A *I always called her Aunt Susie* [=
(overlap)
A I always called her Aunt Susie]
core: Carlisle Fig. 1
A´ From the time I can remember [=

(overlap)

A From the time I can remember]
B books
C handwriting, eyesight Fig. 2, *B-B´*
B´ books

E She was of a generation
F entire x, entire y
intercalary: oral tradition (=core, *J-J´*)
core: Indian schools Fig. 2, *E-E´*
F´ entire x, entire y
intercalary: handwriting, eyesight (= *C*)

J what we remember
E´ As with any generation
core: oral tradition Fig. 2, *J-J´*
J´ remembering together
A´ I remember only a small part

A´ But this is what I remember (3-4, 6-7)

What I have represented as Figures 1 and 2 are supplied with various coherence-devices that signal their participation in a single larger pattern. They share the same core ([Carlisle] Indian School). Of the three smaller figures contained in Figure 2, the first two are bound together by the occurrence in each of the element "handwriting, eyesight," and the last two by interlock and the occurrence in each of the element "oral tradition." The function of the structure described in Figure 3 is to collect and charge the topic of memory that signals the traditional referentiality of Aunt Susie's first story.

While I do not expect Figure 3 to be convincing to every reader in every detail, I hope the shape itself is persuasive. The figuration works beyond its immediate context because it has an independent existence in Laguna tradition outside *Storyteller*; it is a Laguna oral-traditional device whose inherent traditional referentiality is not only being talked about, but also performed. That it runs contrapuntally to the book-culture device of paragraphing is a situation paralleled in oral performance, in which pauses often occur independently of figuration, interrupting phrases or parallelisms rather than providing definition for them, and in which, as we have already noted, verbal echo may counterpoint structural markers (see also Tedlock 199).

The story by Aunt Susie that has been so carefully introduced by the opening figuration in *Storyteller* functions as a cap to Figure 3, a cap being an element from within the figure that is restated after the circularity closes. Actually, this cap does more than restate: it

constitutes an example of what has been discussed, Aunt Susie's functioning as a member of the last generation to pass down an entire culture by word of mouth. The cap itself is fashioned as a circular figure with the story at its core and with circumference members that deal in some detail with Aunt Susie's own "word of mouth." *A* is itself organized in concentric fashion, but its symmetry is broken by an evocation of Aunt Susie's scholarliness that reinforces the cohesion of cap and previous figure:

Cap to Figure 3

a "This is the way Aunt Susie told the story"
b certain distinctive words
core I write when I still hear her voice *A*
b´ surprising vocabulary
intercalary brilliant, scholar (*v.s. Fig. 2*)
a´ "This is the way I remember / she told"
story of Waithea *CORE*
"Aunt Susie always spoke the words of the mother" *A´*
(7-15)

In the echo of "words," *A´* changes the referent from individual diction to performance of a required story feature and thus situates Aunt Susie's particular telling style within the traditional.

Aunt Susie's story is followed by a text-piece about Great Grandmother Marie Anaya that includes an account of her husband and sons being badly treated at a hotel in Albuquerque. After that comes the story entitled "Storyteller," a meditation on truth and continuity in oral tradition. The piece on Marie Anaya seems to interrupt the focus on storytelling; the fact that its first verse paragraph (16) may be seen as circularly organized around a core that echoes the cores of previous figures ("She had been sent East / to the Indian school at Carlisle") is tantalizing, but in order to see how this piece in fact fits into the first cluster, we must return to the cluster's very beginning, which is not the "I always called her Aunt Susie" passage, but what faces the passage from the page before it, the photograph of a young woman who looks Indian, a man who looks white, and a baby.

I suspect that many people identify the woman as Aunt Susie. In order to find out for sure who the people in the picture are, we must look in the notes at the back of the book. On my own first reading of *Storyteller*, I assumed the woman in the photograph was Aunt Susie. I turned the page, which brought me more text on Aunt Susie and

another photograph. I do not remember whether it was before or after I read the text (which tells of Aunt Susie's willingness to interrupt her scholarly activities to talk to Leslie, then a child) that I paid closer attention to this second photograph. It shows a woman past middle age looking down on a child of about three. The look passing from woman to child seemed to me to carry that blend of attentiveness and detachment that characterizes some teachers. This was surely Aunt Susie, and, just as surely, this was not an older version of the woman in photograph one, with her distinctive heart-shaped face and latent smile. I consulted the Notes to Photographs at the back of the book and found out that the woman with the baby was named Marie Anaya. From that point on, I read with the expectation of meeting Marie Anaya again, of having it become clear to me how her photograph could function to introduce a cluster of items about stories and tradition.

And indeed it does become clear: the story "Storyteller" near the end of the cluster is in fact at the center of a circular organization whose *A* and *A´* are about Marie Anaya, the *A´* containing a photograph instantly recognizable as a white-haired version of the young woman with the latent smile. The circularity of the organization is emphasized by incremental verbal echo: *A* begins, "My great-grandmother was Marie Anaya" (16), and *A´* begins, "It was a long time before I learned that my Grandma A'mooh's real name was Marie Anaya Marmon" (33). This kind of discovery about Grandma A'mooh's name of course stands in a relation of circularity to "I always called her Aunt Susie / because she was my father's aunt / and that's what he called her" (1). That is how the part of *Storyteller* on pages 2-35 unfolded for me, and remembering that unfolding is part of the pleasure I take in the book.

We might look in several ways at the story that is presented in a surround of memories of Marie Anaya. The storytelling in "Storyteller" is carried out in a context of misunderstanding between Indian and non-Indian: if the main character, who is isolated in a jail cell, tells her story the way her grandfather would tell it, she will come to grief in the courts of the non-Indian justice system. The first part of the circle that surrounds this story talks about Marie Anaya's husband (to whom some white people gave the name "Squaw Man") being turned away from a hotel when accompanied with his Indian-looking sons. The closing part of the figure tells us that Marie Anaya when taken to Albuquerque in old age "did not last long without someone to talk to" (35). "Storyteller" and the Marie Anaya pieces may be seen as contextualizing each other with their analogous treatments of isolation and bigotry.

Unlike everything in the book so far, "Storyteller" is not a Pueblo piece: it is set in Alaska, where, as Silko has noted in an interview,

Pueblo ways of thinking may not be transferable (Coltelli 142). Unlike its surround of family oral tradition, too, "Storyteller" is a piece of book-literature: in the same interview, Silko describes her relation to this story as "taking myself as a *writer*, and working with stories, and making radical changes" (Coltelli 142; italics mine). What the figuration here demands is the audience's consent to the inclusion of written, non-Pueblo material in *Storyteller*'s consideration of literature: Pueblo family stories help Silko to tell Alaskan cosmological ones.

The text pieces about Marie Anaya do not present her as a storyteller like Aunt Susie, but the photograph that comes just after "Storyteller" shows her reading a book to two children. Evidently, the consideration of oral literatures that begins *Storyteller* is to include reading aloud from the printed page. Later on we will be told that the book Marie Anaya liked to read was about Brownie the Bear, and we will turn back to this photo and find that we can make out two teddy bears on the page of the book that faces us out of the picture. "Storyteller" and its surround may be considered the fourth figure in this cluster:

Figure 4

a My great grandmother was Marie Anaya
core Indian school at Carlisle *A*
a´ great-grandpa called "Squaw Man"
"Storyteller" *CORE*
a Grandma A'mooh's real name
core Photograph 3, Grandma A'mooh *A´*
a´ I had been hearing her say "a'moo'ooh"

CAP

Grandma A'mooh's isolation at her death (16-35)

The cap here picks up not only the subject of Grandma A'mooh but also "Storyteller"'s theme of the isolation of traditional people in modern settings: "She still washed her hair with yucca roots," used a metate by choice, and "did not last long" when taken to Albuquerque in old age to live with her daughter, who had to be gone all day at work.

We notice in Figure 4 for the first time the incorporation of a photograph into a circular structure. Actually, the three photographs in this first cluster are themselves arranged as a circular figure, the two of Marie Anaya encircling the one of Aunt Susie. Asked whether she planned to have readers revise their initial impression of photograph one (Marie Anaya, her husband, and baby) and be able to distinguish between Aunt Susie and Marie Anaya before Marie Anaya was fully introduced in the book, Silko has said:

> Yeah, I kind of did that. I wanted *Storyteller* to be a statement about the interplay between my childhood and the people I grew up with and what they told me. And then, of course, the other gloss, which is . . . the literary —I'm trying to imagine and write things within some kind of . . . genre, and so *Storyteller*'s layout [is] real deliberate. . . . The key to *Storyteller* is the way it's all put together. . . . I didn't see that right away, consciously, but I can see that now. ("Poetics" 29)

The first cluster of *Storyteller* extends from photograph one to photograph three and its surround; it is knit together by internal circularity, by recurring references to Indian school, and by the repeated act of naming its subject ancestors. The actions of photography, encircling, naming ancestors, and referring to Indian school are all set in train by the Hopi Basket poem and are all brought to a figured close in that poem's mirror, the last photograph (26) in the book. The poem and the photograph enclose the book in what might be conceived less as a circle than a spiral, a circle that leads back into itself or back through itself to something else, since the photograph does not lie on the rim of the basket, but within it.

In the Hopi Basket poem, we read: "My grandpa Hank first had a camera when he returned / from Indian School, and years later, my father learned / photography in the Army." The caption to the photograph that directly follows this poem tells us not only that the baby we see is "my grandpa Hank," but also that he changed his middle name, Anaya, to avoid being teased "for the way his initials spelled out H.A.M." (269). Next we encounter the circular construction I have called Figure 3, which surrounds the photograph of the woman Leslie called by the name her father used, the photograph itself taken, as the caption tells us, by Lee Marmon, identified as "my father" in the caption to the last photograph in the book, which was taken by Grandpa Hank (Henry C., as he named himself, Marmon).

The caption to photograph 26 begins, "With Pa'toe'ch Mesa visible at the extreme left" and goes on to identify, among others, Grandpa Hank's brothers, father (an older version of the man in photograph one), and brother-in-law (the husband of the daughter Grandma A'mooh went to live with in Albuquerque), as well as his successor photographer, the little boy Lee. Pa'toe'ch Mesa in the background on the left is balanced by a gleaming automobile in the foreground on the right. The car may be taken as a stand-in for the photographer, absent behind the lens. Grandpa Hank, shown in photograph 20 beside his 1933 Auburn, had wanted to be a designer of automobiles, "[b]ut in 1912 Indian schools were strictly vocational schools and the teachers at

Sherman told Grandpa that Indians didn't become automobile designers" (192). The mesa operates in several ways, but the prominence given it in the caption (its presence in the photograph is rather dim) invites us to see it functioning as the landscape does in another, nearby picture. Photograph 24 shows a woman sitting in a rocky landscape with her two dogs behind her. The caption reads, "In the Cottonwood Wash below Wasson Peak in the Tucson Mountains, Arizona," and the woman is unidentified. We may guess who she is (indeed, after seeing the front cover, we recognize her as the author), but the photograph and caption present her as a figure in a landscape, shaded and lighted in the same way as the stones and bushes. She is the present carrier of the role of timeless, anonymous storyteller. Pa'toe'ch Mesa in the book's final photograph allows us to consider the timeless, anonymous Laguna photographer working alongside the storyteller.

Though readers will never read a word in *Storyteller* to that effect, it is only by stopping reading that they can they admit *Storyteller*'s figuration to view. The book's first cluster, which contains the discussion and evocation of literary tradition that informs all the rest, is organized according to the principles of an ancient verbal art whose figured presence in this particular instance is established partly by nonverbal means. The circularity of the whole book that reflects the Hopi basket-like containerliness is demonstrated in the working of the last photograph on the first photograph and the first poem. The layout of the book is more consistently traditional than the text, but it is in the layout that photographs are endowed with traditional referentiality. In Silko's vision of a living tradition, photographs possess orality, English is a Native American language, and ancient registers of discourse are being invented every day.

Notes

[1]This study was completed while I was attending an NEH Summer Seminar, "The Oral Tradition in Literature," directed by John Miles Foley at the University of Missouri, Columbia, 15 June-7 August 1992. I wish to thank Professor Foley, Linda Danielson, and Helen Jaskoski for commenting on drafts of this paper. I am indebted to Larry Evers and Ofelia Zepeda of the University of Arizona for letting me sit in on their Native American Poetics and Politics seminar during Spring semester, 1992.

[2]A picture of the author is centered at the bottom of the cover, her head pierced with a white line that extends down from a sunburst design at the center and extends up to touch the "T" in the title. In this study, I use the name "Silko" to refer to the person who wrote the book and "Leslie" to refer to the storyteller within the book. I do not deal at all with the "author" as defined on

the cover.

[3]Circular and concentric figures have been treated extensively as they occur in Ancient Greek literature, especially in Homer, in Old English and in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. For Ancient Greek, Bassett's study of the hysteron-proteron figure in Homer (1920) is an early and important essay; van Otterloo (1948) saw that ring structures could form open or closed systems, and Gaisser (1969) proposes that these differences mark developmental stages in epic style; Thalmann's survey of the organization of thought in early Greek poetry provides an analysis of ring composition with examples drawn not only from Homer, but from other authors as well (1984). For Old English the seminal study is Bartlett (1935). She considers the envelope pattern as part of a group of organization-strategies that include parallelism; the basic pattern of chiasmus, A-B-B-A, can be construed as either ring structure or parallelism, depending on its function. The practice of embedding one kind of discourse in another also yields annular patterns (Parks 1988), and entire works such as *Beowulf* may be structured as a system of rings (Niles 1979). Although there are similarities between the uses of circular and concentric figures in Homer and in Old English, these figures do not operate the same way in every culture or in every register, as studies in the traditions of other cultures make plain. Lohr (1961), writing on the Gospel of Matthew, finds that the final journey to Jerusalem is modeled as a single chiastic structure and that pattern episodes are used to frame important scenes; the same kind of study is done at greater length by Talbert (1974) for Luke-Acts. Okpewho (1979) considers rings to be devices for stability, in contrast to formulaic repetition, which he sees as a technique of development; in the Introduction to the 1992 reissue of his edition of Fa-Digi Sisoko's *Son-Jara*, Johnson discusses embedding as a function of the multigeneric nature of African epic. Lord's "The Merging of Two Worlds" (1986) reminds us that event structures are often circular in themselves by proposing that ring composition in Serbo-Croatian epic song is an unconscious artifact, compelled from the bard by its inherence in the narrative. Conroy and Langen (1988) ascribe the coherence of the episodic Old Norse *Laxdoela saga* as an effect of the annular arrangement of the elements of the story pattern. For discussion of the varieties and uses of circular and concentric figures in a Native American Literature, see Langen 1989-90 and 1992. If a generalization can be made about the functions of circular figures in these diverse oral traditions, it is that, in works that are negotiating the exposure to literacy of their traditional audiences, the age-old familiar poetic techniques are more powerful than ever, imbued with a referentiality that incorporates the people's way of responding to change.

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KOPOT

[This and the following five pages are a facsimile of John M. Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat," as printed on pages 114-19 of *Schat-chen: History Traditions and Naratives* [sic] *of the Queres Indians of Laguna and Acoma* (Albuquerque: Albright & Anderson, 1917).

KO-POT KA-NAT.

This is probably a report, or what remains of it after being worked over for generations, of an expedition that went back to their island home from the settlement on the mainland. The terms of the race were to be once around the world where the land and water meet (Ko-wi-sho Putch), the edge or coast line of the sea showing that this land (Ship-op) was an island. Another thing you will observe: It speaks of the Kush-Kutret (White Village) of the southeast, showing that the migration was to the northwest. It also speaks of the Ko-wi-stchu-ma Kote, showing that this mountain must have been on the island, a volcano no doubt that erupted and destroyed the island.

I-ye-ti-ko and her sister, I-sto-a-ko-ya, lived in the Kush Kut-ret of the southwest. I-sto-a-ko-ya was in the habit of bathing in the big water. This she did almost continually, and it sorely tried the patience of her sister, so that one day I-ye-ti-ko scolded her because of it. This angered I-sto-a-ko-ya and she went back to Ship-op.

Now it was because of the fact that I-sto-a-ko-ya was almost constantly in the water that the rain fell at Kush Kut-ret. When she had gone the rains stopped, everything became parched and dry and Kush Kut-ret was threatened with famine. I-ye-ti-ko, who divined the cause of the drouth, repenting of her harshness to her sister and fearful I-sto-a-ko-ya had been overcome by hunger and had died, sent a blue-bottle fly to find her.

The fly flew to the east, the west, the north and the south, but could not find I-sto-a-ko-ya. So it returned to I-ye-ti-ko and reported that it was able to find only the footprints of I-sto-a-ko-ya, that the footprints led toward Ship-op, and that everywhere that she had trodden the grass grew luxuriantly, while everywhere else it was dry and parched.

I-ye-ti-ko next sent for Stchi-mu-ne-moot, a great runner and trailer, and told him to follow the trail of I-sto-a-ko-ya and bring her back to her home.

Stchi-mu-ne-moot lost no time in setting out. The

trail, marked by green grass and flowering plants, was easily followed. It was not until he had drawn near to Ship-op that he paused. Here he met the Kopot brothers, who lived in the vicinity of Ship-op. The Kopot brothers had heard of the fame of Stchi-mu-ni-moot as a runner, and so they halted him and asked him if he did not want to run a race with them.

"I am going to Ship-op," answered Stchi-mu-ni-moot, "to bring back our mother to Kush Kut-ret. When I have done this errand I will come back and run a race with you."

This pleased the Kopot brothers greatly, for they were fleet runners and wonderful magicians besides.

Stchi-mu-ne-moot continued to Ship-op, where he found I-sto-a-ko-ya. He explained to her his mission and asked her if she would go back with him. She replied that she would if I-ye-ti-ko would send her what she was in need of.

So Stchi-mu-ni-moot returned to I-ye-ti-ko with this answer. I-ye-ti-ko prepared a bundle of clothing for I-sto-a-ko-ya and with this Stchi-mu-ne-moot again went to Ship-op. When I-sto-a-ko-ya undid the bundle she found that her sister had forgotten to send a band for her hair. So Stchi-mu-ne-moot was forced to return again to Kush Kut-ret. He brought to I-sto-a-ko-ya the missing band, and she retuned with him to Kush Kut-ret. Upon her return the rains came back, giving new life to the dry earth and saving the people from famine.

Stchi-mu-ne-moot, having accomplished all that I-ye-ti-ko had required of him, told her that he desired to go and run a race with the Kopot brothers. She gave him her permission, and gave him also a to-wa-ka (a stick or bone about two inches long and an inch and a half in diameter,. that the runner, according to the rules of the game, is compelled to kick ahead of him). She told him to exchange the to-wa-ka for the one used by the Kopot

KO-KAH-KI-EH—BROTHER OF KOPOT

brothers. He took the to-wa-ka given him by I-ye-ti-ko and went to the Kopot brothers' house. The door of the house was in the roof and the Kopot brothers had placed a big turkey with outspread wings over the opening to cover it. After gaining admittance to the house, Stchi-mu-ne-moot succeeded in exchanging his to-wa-ka for the one used by the brothers.

They arranged the terms of the race. It was to be once around the world, where the water and the land meet, along the Ko-wai-sh Putch. The forfeit was, on the part of Stchi-mu-ne-moot, one eye; on the part of the Kopot brothers, one eye from each.

When all was ready the race began. At the first kick Stchi-mu-ne-moot sent his to-wa-ka nearly out of sight. When the Kopots kicked their to-wa-ka, it fell down into the house through the hole in the roof. They had to go down after it; and while they were looking for it the turkey spread out its wings over the hole and made it so dark within that it took the brothers a long time to find the to-wa-ka. When they came out they were so angry that they killed the turkey. By this time Stchi-mu-ne-moot was half way round the world. He won the race easily and claimed the forfeit. Taking an eye from each of the brothers, he threw them into the sky, where they remain to this day, in the tail of the constellation of the Scorpion.

Then the Kopot brothers were very angry. They threw the to-wa-ka that had been the cause of their defeat at Ko-wi-stchu-ma Kote and made a great hole in the side of the mountain. Out of the hole came the big water animal, Wa-waka, that vomited streams of water until all the surrounding country was flooded. Kush Kut-ret, the white city, was inundated. The people who were able to escape climbed to the top of a high tableland called Ma-wha-rah. These people kindled a fire and heated stones and threw them into the mouth of the Wa-wa-ka, finally

killing it. The water then subsided, but the people who had taken refuge on Ma-wha-rah were all turned into stone.

Now the crows at that time were white and possessed the power of speech. I-ye-ti-ko warned these crows not to pick out the eyes of the dead people, saying that if they did not heed her warning, a great punishment would overtake them. The crows flew over the city, where all the dead people lay in the streets. One crow said to another: "Let us take just one eye and see what it tastes like."

So they picked out an eye, and all at once all the crows turned black and lost the power of speech.

He Said / She Said: Writing Oral Tradition in John Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and Leslie Silko's Storyteller

Robert M. Nelson

The preceding story text is the second of twenty-two "Traditions and Narratives of the Queres" collected by John Gunn and printed originally in his book *Schat-chen*, published in 1917 and reprinted by AMS in 1980. Interesting in its own right as a more or less "typical" example of turn-of-the-century ethnography, the text (like the book as a whole) may also be of interest to readers of Leslie Silko's more contemporary books *Storyteller* and *Ceremony*, because one of the sources these three texts have in common is Laguna oral tradition. As I hope to show, one of the major differences between the personae of Gunn and Silko as storytellers-in-print has less to do with the sources of story than with divergent assumptions regarding the *function* of storytelling—assumptions that preshape significant differences in the structural and thematic elements of the resultant texts.

The historical bias in *Schat-chen*

From the outset of the book, Gunn's authorial role is that of the historian. The opening sentence of his Preface is a quotation from Renan, and his second concludes with a quotation from Baldwin;[1] the first word of the Introduction is "History." In full, this first sentence is: "History should be an accurate account of every significant fact, but a good deal of ancient history has come down to us from oral tradition" (7). "But": the problem with an oral tradition, it seems, is that it is bad history. Thanks to historians, he goes on, mankind has been able to understand the Greek legend of the Golden Fleece as a story about the historical circumnavigation of Africa by the Phoenicians and the story of Cadmus and the Dragon's Teeth as an account of the introduction of phonetic writing to Europe; Gunn's lament is that "[w]e have no Herodotus, no Plato, not Strabo or Diadorus to help us" to "decipher" the "old yarns" included in the second half of his book (8). By proposing some such decipherment of Keres tradition,[2] Gunn aligns himself with these classical historians and his text with the tradition of

historiography. This privileging of the historiographic tradition results in a text that derives its authority primarily from fellow historiographic texts—a category that excludes most oral, as opposed to written, sources.[3] Gunn mentions the names of dozens of historiographers but cites the name of not a single one of his oral sources.[4]

The major thesis being developed in both sections ("Schat-chen" and "Traditions and Narratives of the Queres") of Gunn's book is that the Keresan oral tradition is a continuation of the pre-Phoenician Cushite culture,[5] and Gunn refers to Baldwin, Cushing, and Ignacio Donnelly in support of this contention. This premise, which may have seemed controversial at the turn of the century but which is more likely to seem just curiously eccentric to today's reader,[6] governs Gunn's reading of the Laguna and Acoma narratives comprising the second half of *Schat-chen*, most overtly in the form of the headnotes that introduce—and contextualize within the framework of his hypothesis—ten of the twenty-two traditions and narratives. Further, Gunn presumes that the value of these pieces lies in their being (garbled) historical accounts, a presumption informing his attempts to sequence the narratives not in the order in which they were told to him but rather in the order of the events, understood as historical events, that he takes the narratives to be "about."[7]

There is no telling how much Gunn's thesis and its attendant preconceptions biased his hearing (let alone transcription, or "re-telling") of the narratives related to him by his sources; what is clear enough is that by the time these narratives occurred in print they had become as much illustrations of Gunn's worldview as records of a traditional Keres worldview.

"Ko-pot Ka-nat" as pre-text for *Storyteller*

Despite the radical differences in tone and texture deriving from Gunn's privileging of historiography on the one hand and Silko's privileging of oral performance on the other, "Ko-pot Ka-nat" (along with several other pieces in his "Traditions and Narratives of the Queres") warrants consideration as a pre-text for several of Silko's *Storyteller* pieces.

Silko herself provides us one rationale for such a reading. In her early story about Aunt Susie (3-7), we are reminded that "the oral tradition depends upon each person / listening and remembering a portion," while the "whole story / the long story of the people" depends upon "all of us / remembering what we have heard together." Silko says " I remember only a part," and so we are implicitly invited here (1) to read/hear each of the episodes comprising *Storyteller* as "portions" of some more complete story and (2) to listen to other

Laguna storytellers as well, and to treat those others' "portions" as part of the context for her own. Notwithstanding Silko's privileging of the human over the historiographic voice, and without minimizing the genuine shaping influence of the personal voices Silko constantly acknowledges in her text,[8] plenty of evidence suggests strongly that Silko's own familiarity with "the long story of the people" derives not exclusively from having heard oral performances of it but also from having read portions of it—including portions recorded in Boas' *Keresan Texts* and in Gunn's *Schat-chen*.[9] Considered in this light, Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat" may be considered to be "part of the story" of several pieces in *Storyteller*.

The structure of "Ko-pot Ka-nat"

Included in this one text are the makings of five potentially separate stories. As Gunn sequences them, they are (1) the quarrel between the sisters I-ye-ti-ko (Corn Woman) and I-sto-ako-ya (Reed Woman), featuring the latter's departure to sipapu; (2) the eventual return to the earth-surface world by Reed Woman and the rain clouds, a return mediated by messenger figures; (3) a Gambler story, featuring a contest between a messenger-hero (Stchi-mu-ne-moot)[10] and a mountain katsina (the twinned figure of Kopot and Ko-kah-ki-eh) in which the stakes turn out to include the Gambler's vision; (4) a flood story, featuring the flight of the people to a high mesa where they eventually turn into stone; and (5) a story about how Crow turned from white to black. The essences of these five motifs run the spectrum of conventional EuroAmerican categories of traditional Native story, moving from "myth" through "legend" to "folk tale," from "sacred" to "secular," from "true" to "made-up."[11] This blending of motifs, and of different EuroAmerican and Native categories of story, suggests that Gunn's text is a unique literary synthesis of more than one traditional oral performance.

Read as part of the context of traditional Keres story from which *Storyteller* derives its own authority, "Ko-pot Ka-nat" invites comparison with four of the pieces in *Storyteller*—"It was summertime," "One time," "Up North," and "The Laguna People."

1. The departure of I-sto-a-ko-ya

Except for their voicing, the story of I-sto-a-ko-ya's departure as told by Gunn in the opening six sentences of "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and as told by Silko in the five stanzas of "It was surnmertime" (*Storyteller* 158-59; *Ceremony* 13-14) are very similar: Gunn's "I-sto-a-ko-ya" and "I-ye-ti-ko" and Silko's "Iktoa'ak'o'ya–Reed Woman" and "Corn Woman" are versions of the twinned mother figure of the Keresan origin story recounted also in Boas' and Parsons' transcriptions, and the

place to which I-sto-a-ko-ya/Reed Woman returns (in Gunn, she departs for "Ship-op"; in Silko, she goes "back / to the original place / down below") recalls the topological structure of the Keresan emergence motif.

The differences in these two versions of the story of Reed Woman's departure are telling, too. In his headnote to "Ko-pot Ka-nat" Gunn calls our attention to the geography of the story, and, consistent with his thesis regarding the People's Phoenician ancestry, his I-sto-a-ko-ya spends her time bathing "in the big water," plausibly an allusion to the Atlantic Ocean (cf. Gunn 85-87, 127). Silko, however, has her Iktoa'ak'o'ya "sitting in the river"—thus allowing her audience to locate the story not only inland but even, reasonably, at Laguna. Here as elsewhere, Gunn's (re-)telling tends to fix the story in both historical time and physical space, whereas Silko's tendency is to allow for a strong element of recurrence in her telling: her version of the story is designed to be relevant to any period of drought and famine, at any of the places the People may have lived, including both those of storied past and those of recent memory.

Another signal difference in their retellings shows in the ways they choose to cast the relationship between Reed Woman's departure and the disappearance of the rains. Gunn tells us that the two events are causally and diachronically related, so that "it was because of the fact that I-sto-a-ko-ya was constantly in the water that the rain fell at Kush Kut-ret. When she had gone the rains stopped"; Silko, however, casts the two events in a coordinate or conjunctive syntactical relationship, allowing the two events to appear as two manifestations of some more elemental event (e.g., a withdrawal of life energy from the Fifth World of eventness back into a Fourth World of potentiality): "she went back / to the original place / down below. / And there was no more rain then."

2. Recovering I-sto-a-ko-ya

(a) The messenger Fly

In Gunn's story, the process of recovering I-sto-a-ko-ya begins when I-ye-ti-ko sends "a blue-bottle fly to find her." Once the fly reports back that I-sto-a-ko-ya has returned to Ship-op, Fly's role as messenger/tracker is transferred over to Stchi-mu-ne-moot, "a great runner and trailer." In Gunn's story, then, the single figure of Stchi-mu-ne-moot comes to link, sequentially, the story of the recovery of Reed Woman for the People with with the story of the People's confrontation with the brothers Kopot, katsinas of the North Mountain. Elsewhere in recorded Keres oral tradition, these two stories are presented separately; here as throughout "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and *Schat-*

chen more generally, Gunn's synthesis of traditional motifs seems to be motivated by his desire to "read" story as (diachronic) history, even when that means conflating separable lines of ritual narrative presumably bent towards differing ritual purposes.

Boas and Silko also offer oral traditional stories in which Fly is characterized as a scout or messenger figure involved in the process of recovering rain; Silko tells this story in *Storyteller* as "One time" (*Storyteller* 111-21) and again in *Ceremony*, where the piece functions as a nine-piece backbone, contextualizing Tayo's integrative and restorative ceremony.[12] In Silko's and Boas' Fly stories,[13] however, drought and famine result not from a quarrel between the sisters Corn Woman and Reed Woman but rather from the introduction of Ck'o'yo medicine (brought by the Gambler Pa'caya'nyi) into the ceremonial life of the People; Nau'ts'ity'i rather than I-sto-a-ko-ya/Reed Woman needs recovering; and Fly (who is green rather than blue) is twinned with Hummingbird as the People's messenger spirit. When the first part of "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and Silko's two stories "It was summertime" and "One time" are read as "portions" of the "whole story / the long story of the people," and especially when we take into account the way these two stories of Silko's function in the structure of *Ceremony*, we can begin to see how, in the oral tradition preceding Gunn's and Silko's versions, the figure of messenger Fly functions both to integrate the Reed Woman-Corn Woman motif (as it appears in in Silko and Gunn) with the Corn Mother-Gambler motif (as it appears in Silko and Boas) and to point to the analogical functions of the mountain katsinas Kaupata/Kopot and Pa'caya'nyi as Ck'o'yo medicine men. One upshot of such a comparative reading is the delicate sense that, within the context of the "whole story," these several etiological stories of drought and famine are better understood as synchronic manifestations of a singular and recurring event (as Silko's two stories clearly function in *Ceremony*) than as stories of unrelated events (as they might appear to be when comparing Gunn only with Boas, or when comparing the structure of Gunn's collection only with the structure of *Storyteller*) or as temporally separated events (as they appear to be in "Ko-pot Ka-nat").

(b) Stchi-mu-ne-moot's role in recovering Ik-to-a-ko-ya

Where Green Fly and Hummingbird help the People by serving as messengers/intermediaries between the earth-surface world and the absented mother Nau'ts'ity'i in Silko's and Boas's recovery stories, Stchi-mu-ne-moot mediates the return to the People (and the drought-diseased earth-surface world) of I-sto-a-ko-ya in Gunn's. This act of mediation and recovery, as Gunn tells it, involves three visits to the Mother figure subsequent to Fly's discovery of her location: the trip during which he encounters the Kopot brothers and agrees to compete

with them once his quest on behalf of the People is fulfilled, after which he learns I-sto-a-ko-ya requires a suitable gift from her sister as part of the terms of her return; and then two subsequent trips, the first to bring I-sto-a-ko-ya a bundle of clothes and the second to complete the bundle with a band for her hair.[14]

There is a curious lack of drama in this section of Gunn's text, especially when compared to Boas' and Silko's recovery stories: the passages recording Stchi-mu-ne-moot's three encounters with I-sto-a-ko-ya are composed of only about 125 words, barely longer than the account of Stchi-mu-ne-moot's *en route* encounter with the Kopot brothers. As cast by Gunn, the recovery story becomes less about Stchi-mu-ne-moot's role in recovering I-sto-a-ko-ya than I-sto-a-ko-ya's role in indirectly introducing Stchi-mu-ne-moot to the Kopot brothers; or, to put it differently, the major theme of recovery (of the clearly feminine principle of life and stability in Keresan culture, as implied in the versions of Silko, *et al*.) is in Gunn's version subordinated to the theme of historical continuity informed by the spirit of adventure.

3. Stchi-mu-ne-moot and the Kopots

As suggested both by the title of the text and by the relatively abrupt treatment accorded to the preceding two story motifs, the center of privileged attention in "Ko-pot Ka-nat" is the confrontation between Stchi-mu-ne-moot and the brothers Kopot. In the narrative context Gunn provides, the stakes of Stchi-mu-ne-moot's wager with Kopot and his brother—literally "an eye for an eye"—seem rather hubristic: the hero has nothing to gain except bragging rights, while the People, it turns out, have much to lose when he wins.

This lack of allocentric motivation for Stchi-mu-ne-moot's adventure sets Gunn's Kopot story off from other versions of Gambler stories deriving from Keres oral tradition—"Up North" in Silko's *Storyteller* (161-69; *Ceremony* 170-76), "Kaup'a·ta'" in Boas (76-82), and "Kaupat´a" in Benedict (62-65). In all three of these other versions, Kaupata represents a clear threat to the People, and Silko's Sun Man, Boas's Sun Youth, and Benedict's Tsutea (referred to as "the Sun's son") *must* gamble with Kaupata if they are to to recover the stolen life that Kaupata has horded up in the rooms of his mountain abode.[15] Gunn's account, however, carries no suggestion that Kopot and his brother pose any particular threat to the People prior to Stchi-mu-ne-moot's encounter with them. Perhaps this is because, as Gunn has structured his version, Stchi-mu-ne-moot has already returned I-sto-a-ko-ya, along with the rains, to the People, so that it would be both illogical and redundant (given his historiographic thesis) either to send Stchi-mu-ne-moot off to recover the rainclouds or to suggest that the

rainclouds are being held captive by the Kopots.[16] The essential anecdote of Gunn's Kopot episode also sets it off from these other traditional stories: Stchi-mu-ne-moot's contest with the Kopots takes the form of a kick-stick race rather than the more obvious game of chance (i.e., potential occasion for trickery) involved in the other three stories,[17] and (therefore?) the climactic guessing game, in which the protagonist must knowingly stake his life on Spider Grandmother's prognostications regarding the contents of bags hung on the walls of the Gambler's house, is absent from Gunn's version.[18]

These substantive differences make the similarities of the frame elements (the events that contextualize the anecdote of encounter) in both Silko's "Up North" and the Stchi-mu-ne-moot–Kopot episode in "Ko-pot Ka-nat" look all the more intriguing. In Gunn's version, an important element of Stchi-mu-ne-moot's preparation for his race with the Kopots is the help he receives from I-ye-ti-ko, who provides him with a special "to-wa-ka" (kickstick) and tells him to exchange it secretly for the (presumably magic) one used by the Kopots. In "Up North," Sun Man receives analogous help from Spider Grandmother prior to his encounter with Kaup'a'ta.[19] Reading "Ko-pot Ka-nat" as part of the context of traditional story from which Silko draws, then, we can see the homology in the roles of Iyetiko/Corn Mother and Tsitstsinako/Spider Grandmother both as reservoirs of wisdom and as prescient spirits committed to preserving the life of the People. A second major similarity between these two stories emerges near the end of each episode: Stchi-mu-ne-moot and Sun Man both signal completion of their dealings with Kaupata by cutting out the Gambler's eyes (in Gunn's version, one eye from each of the brothers Kopot) and tossing them into the sky. In Gunn's account these stars become "the tail of the constellation of the Scorpion"; in Silko's account they become "the horizon stars of autumn" in the south sky. In both cases, it seems, the protagonist not only must survive the encounter with the Gambler but must also disable him by exposing his empowering vision—literally and also figuratively—for all to see. This point becomes crucial when analyzing the function of "Up North" in *Ceremony*, where it appears in the text as a "preview" of Tayo's journey to Mount Taylor to recover the speckled cattle (cf. storm clouds) and at the same time to dis-cover, in his own thinking, that the white man Floyd Lee is, unwittingly or otherwise, an agent of the Ck'o'yo spirit of deception and separation. As Silko suggests near the end of the novel in another fragment of story,[20] the witchery doesn't work when it is exposed in vision, "seen" by the People for what it really is.

At the same time, these points of similarity in Gunn's and Silko's accounts point up a significant difference in their respective narrative biases, a difference that becomes clearer when their accounts are

considered within the immediate context of the text in which each appears. Within the event structure of "Ko-pot Ka-nat," the competitively masculine content of the Kaupata episode, already diachronically distanced from the preceding (and feminine) recovery episode, in turn becomes the "cause" of an ensuing episode. In contrast, Silko's election in "Up North" to end her account of the Sun Man/Kaupata story where she does, with the Gambler disabled and the storm clouds freed to return to the People, strongly privileges the principle of event synchronicity informing both *Storyteller* and *Ceremony*, in which the event of emergence is continually re-happening in any ceremony of recovery. From this perspective, Tayo's recovery of the speckled cattle, Sun Man's recovery of the storm clouds, and Hummingbird and Green Fly's recovery of Nautsityi are, one and all, re-happenings of the single ongoing germinal event by which life recovers itself.

4. The flood and the metamorphosis at Ma-wha-ra

However consistent Silko's narrative bias here may be with those of Keresan oral tradition, her account of the showdown between the spirit of regeneration and the spirit of possession in "Up North"—ending as it does with Sun Man's release of the captured storm clouds—is, judging from the corpus of existing printed versions of the Kaupata story, less complete (though certainly more engagingly detailed as far as it goes) than Gunn's in "Ko-pot Ka-nat." Though there is considerable variation in their detailing of the disaster that ensues, all three of these other printed accounts—Gunn's, Boas', and Benedict's—agree that the blinded Gambler wreaks havoc on the People.[21] In Gunn's account, the to-wa-ka provided by I-ye-ti-ko becomes the immediate instrument for actualizing the Kopots' destructive potential: throwing the stick into the side of their mountain abode Ko-wi-stchu-ma Kote,[22] they create a hole out of which emerges "the big water animal, Wa-waka, that vomited streams of water until all the surrounding country was flooded." Included in the flooded area is "Kush Kut-ret, the white city," the site of the drought brought about by I-sto-a-ko-ya's departure at the beginning of "Ko-pot Ka-nat." Those people able to escape the inundation gather on "the top of a high tableland called Ma-wha-ra," heat stones there, and (using fire to neutralize water) destroy the water monster; although their strategy succeeds in making the water subside, they are "all turned into stone." As cast by Gunn, several potentially separable events are presented as an inevitable-sounding cause-effect chain of events: within the space of a paragraph, the wrath of the Kopots results in the annihilation of the people of Kush Kut-ret.

Though the Kaupata stories in Boas and Benedict both tell of the Gambler's intention to destroy the People, in neither of these versions

does he succeed: he brings fire, not water, from the mountain, and his blind effort to destroy everything is thwarted by the rain clouds, who neutralize his fire with their water. Perhaps we are to infer from either of these stories that the considerable amount of rain required to neutralize Kaupata's fire (especially if that fire is understood to be volcanic lava) might incidentally have precipitated widespread flooding of the surrounding countryside, but neither version speaks of any such flooding nor of any such last stand of the People on a mesa as constitutes the climactic episode of "Ko-pot Ka-nat." Nor can I find anywhere else in either Boas or Benedict a story in which the elements of inundation/isolation/petrification are constellated as they are in Gunn's story.

Considered solely within the context of its contemporaneous printed texts, then, the climax of "Ko-pot Ka-nat" might well raise considerable suspicion about Gunn's reliability as a recorder of "authentic" Keresan oral tradition. But considered within the context of the Keresan oral tradition of which these three texts are (printed) "portions" (that is, reading this episode the way Silko advises us to read Keresan story, treating it as an event that helps to create as well as to preserve the body and life of the tradition [*Storyteller* 6-7]), this episode takes on a new meaning. For one of the "small part[s]" of "the whole story / the long story of the people" recorded by Silko, the piece in *Storyteller* entitled "The Laguna People" (382) reads easily as a confirmation of Gunn's story's "authenticity," that is, reads as another version of the episode in "Ko-pot Ka-nat" featuring the flight of the People to a mesa to escape a great flood and their metamorphosis there into stone. That the two texts refer at this point in their respective narratives to the same episode out of oral tradition is confirmed by their both being (rather literally) grounded in the same place: the refuge mesa spelled "Ma-wha-ra" by Gunn and "Mau'huatl" by Silko. On the one hand, then, "Ko-pot Ka-nat" here can be understood as a pre-text for "The Laguna People," one of at least two sources of Silko's own performance (the second being the story Silko says her Aunt Susie told her); in this sense, "Ko-pot Ka-nat" also helps to "locate" Aunt Susie's story within a flow of events that includes the departure and recovery of Reed Woman/Nautsityi, the showdown with the Gambler Kaupata, and a story about how crows turned from white to black.[23] On the other hand, Silko's performance can be understood as an expansion of a motif barely touched on in "Ko-pot Ka-nat," a fleshing out of part of the relatively bare-bones structure Gunn provides: whatever life Silko's version has can then be understood as "part of the story" Gunn has sketched out. The following observations derive from a reading of Silko's piece "The Laguna People" both as an elaboration of the Ma-wha-ra episode in Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and as a "portion" of the

broader text and story of *Storyteller*.

Structure of "The Laguna People"

Silko presents "The Laguna People" as a story told to her by her Aunt Susie, and she goes to some lengths to compose a text that implies some of the metanarrative features of an oral performance (hence, for instance, the italicization of several passages to denote what Tedlock calls "*interpretation* of" the text [47] as distinct from the story that theoretically precedes this particular telling and this particular teller). This textual narrative device produces the textural sense that at least four *kinds* of story are occurring simultaneously: (1) an event that took place prior to the telling of it; (2) a storytelling event that occurred in Silko's childhood; (3) the storytelling event that was occurring as Silko composed the text of "The Laguna People"; and (4) the storytelling event that occurs when this text is read (or re-read). Gunn's narrative version simplifies the story-as-event when it provides no such indices of metanarrative and thereby omits the element of oral performance from textual consideration: textually and texturally in Gunn, we have simply a single version of an event that took place prior to the telling of it, with no acknowledgement of or allusion to any other kind of event.[24] Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Gunn's text seems so "flat" compared to Silko's—a museum piece rather than an organically functioning component of ongoing human life.

Several of the pieces in *Storyteller* are titled according to the first phrase of the story, so it might be presumptuous to infer that the subject of the story is "the Laguna People"—perhaps it's about the Acoma people—though clearly enough the story is offered by Aunt Susie in part to allow at least one of its hearers (her audience includes the persona of Silko as a child) to reconstellate her own Laguna identity to the context created by this story. From this perspective, we might presume that the story would have provided an opportunity for Silko, as a child, to establish provisional identity with the "older sister" who becomes the protagonist of this story—allowing the auditor to imagine herself taking care of either of her two younger sisters and learning also how the People sometimes console themselves by consoling each other (in this case, by singing the embedded song that articulates the feelings of the consoler as well as those of the one consoled). Such a story, then, might have a particular appeal to a child whose mother worked outside the home while she was growing up. In this sense, insofar as the story speaks to the condition of a Laguna family situation, it can indeed be said to be a story about "the Laguna People." When read in the context of Gunn's narrative, the Aunt Susie performance also seems less dead-ended: though sometimes "there are no

explanations," there is, underpinning the wider performance of which any individual story is a "portion," the synchronic (or, from a historical perspective, repeated) theme of life returned to the land/people to palliate what otherwise might seem to be a tragic end to things—a theme that Gunn's treatment of the Ma-wha-ra/Mau'huatl episode diachronically assigns, and limits, to an earlier point in the history of the People.

"The Laguna People" within the context of *Storyteller*

When I consider "The Laguna People" as a "portion" of "the long story of the people" as collected by Silko in *Storyteller*, I immediately notice that it is the second of three consecutive "lullabye" pieces, preceded and in a formal sense framed by "Indian Song: Survival," which precedes it, and by the short story "Lullabye," which follows it. One step out in each direction, this portion is framed again, this time by a first person reminiscence (in each case, a memory "snapshot" of one of Silko's grandmothers) accompanied by a photo; in the first case, the reminiscence is about "Grandma A'mooh" (Marie Anaya Marmon), who "cared for me while my mother worked. . . . I spent a lot of time with her" (33, 35) and who "did not last long / without someone to talk to" (35), while in the second the subject is "Grandma Lillie" (Francesca Stegnor Marmon), whose name becomes the launching point for a chain anecdote that ends up recalling the theme of "Indian Song: Survival." The photo accompanying the first of these "grandmother" pieces is of Grandma A'mooh reading a story to Silko's younger sisters Wendy and Gigi; the photo accompanying the second of these pieces is "Looking southwest from the sandhills a mile east of Laguna" (269)—a point about halfway between Los Lunas (where, we are told, Grandma Lillie was born) and the setting "somewhere around Acoma" where Aunt Susie's story takes place. (It's probably worth noting, too, that the katsinas, when they come to Laguna, come from these sandhills; thus the photo may encode a visual rallying point, within the scope of which both Laguna life taking place at Los Lunas to the east and Laguna life taking place around Acoma to the west get united on their way into the pueblo from the southeast.) Structurally, then, "The Laguna People," itself a celebration of Aunt Susie's power to console with story, also looks backward and forward to two other grandmaternal figures from Silko's life. Further, the pattern of framing and reframing here implies the connection between people and the land as the source of story: the shared identity of Grandma A'mooh, Aunt Susie, and Grandma Lillie in this sequence (as sources of stories, both in their roles as storytellers and in their roles as the subjects of stories) becomes "fixed" in a photograph of a place where their lives and their stories overlap. And, finally, the sequence of frames in this section of *Storyteller* serves to

remind us of the abiding connection between "secular" and "sacred story," between the spirit of the "humma-ha" story and the spirit of the "maaímá uúbeétaányi," and between what we might otherwise be tempted to classify separately as the "classical" narrative voice informing the structure of, say, "The Laguna People" and the more contemporary/anecdotal/idiosyncratic voice informing the structure of, say, "Grandma Lillie was born in Los Lunas, New Mexico." Here as throughout *Storyteller* the development is concentric rather than linear, associational rather than chronologically determined.

As I hope this study indicates, one of the major differences between the storytelling styles of Gunn and Silko derives from their very different assumptions about the value of traditional story per se. Arguably, Silko's style in *Storyteller* more closely approximates the function of storytelling in the Keresan oral tradition than Gunn's, and Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat," when read as a version of Keresan "traditions and narratives," suffers greatly from his historiographic bias. Even so, Gunn's text is a version of "a story the people tell," and as such it is one of those pieces of the overall story of the people Silko acknowledges as the source of her own performance. Additionally, the text of Gunn's "Ko-pot Ka-nat" provides a relatively integrated narrative structuring of elements that recur in Silko's pieces "It was summertime," "One time," "Up North," and "The Laguna People"; when taken together, Gunn's and Silko's texts provide us with a much more complete sense of, and appreciation for, "the whole story / the long story of the people" than either does alone.

Notes

[1]Here as elsewhere in the text of *Schat-chen*, Gunn's occasional nineteenth-century *philologue philosophe* mannerisms presume a contemporary—and now strongly dated—armchair cultural literacy. The style favors allusion over documentation and a learned rather than scholarly discourse. Gunn's "Renan" is no doubt Ernest Renan (1823-92), a noted French philologist and Orientalist canonized in Irving Babbitt's popular 1912 *Masters of Modern Criticism*, probably best known in this country for his five-volume *History of the People of Israel* (c. 1895) and seven-volume *The Origins of Christianity* (1897-1904). The "Baldwin" Gunn quotes may be the American James M. Baldwin (1861-1934), author of *Mental Development in the Child and the Race* (1896) and editor-in-chief of the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1915).

[2]Gunn's use of the term "tradition" is somewhat equivocal throughout *Schat-chen*. Here he uses the word to imply myth or legend, not in the sense of a process (the "action of handing over") but rather in the sense of an object ("that which gets handed over"). In the second half of his work ("Traditions

and Narratives of the Queres") he uses the terms "tradition" and "narrative" to denote two categories of oral narrative (rather than to denote, respectively, a process and a mode of processing); his usage there corresponds—roughly—to the distinction drawn by many of his contemporary EuroAmerican ethnographers between "myth" and "folk tale" (for more on this, see note 11). This equivocation can be especially confusing for readers who tend to understand such texts as performance-based.

[3]More precisely: the authority of Gunn's historiographic voice derives from fellow historio*graphers*. The text of the first half of *Schat-chen* (the section titled "Schat-chen") is rife with allusions to classical historians as well as (more predictably) with passages quoted from early Spanish recorders of exploration and settlement (e.g., De Thoma 11, Alvaredo 11-13, and Castaneda 18), along with a scattering of quotations from and allusions to miscellaneous sources ranging in respectability from Addison (91) to Ignacio Donnelly (87). However, he provides his reader with very little actual bibliographical information. The text includes no bibliography, and only one pre-text (Frank Hamilton Cushing's "Exploration of Ancient Key Dwellers' Remains on the Gulf Coast of Florida") is explicitly identified. Intentionally or not, Gunn has thus constructed a text in which the writer *of* history (rather than the history per se) figures as "Authority" and in which Gunn's own narrative voice functions, in the style of the personal essay, as the final authority on the "traditions and narratives of the Queres."

[4]To be sure, Gunn frequently uses the attributory phrase "they say" to refer to the existence of oral pre-texts of his study. However, nowhere does he cite an informant by name, and in fact nowhere does he allude to any individual story*teller* other than himself. I take this to be a consequence of Gunn's privileging of the historiographic tradition as a source of not only authority but also authenticity: cf. Gunn 64, where the operant definition of "authentic history or traditions" is that "which can be verified by historic records."

On the subject of Gunn's oral sources, Paula Gunn Allen states that "Gunn (my mother's uncle) spoke Laguna (Keres) and gathered information in somewhat informal ways while sitting in the sun visiting with older people. He married Meta Atseye, my grandmother, years after her husband (John Gunn's brother) died and may have taken much of his information from her stories or explanations of Laguna ceremonial events" (282-83).

[5]The term "Cushite" derives from the Book of Genesis, where Cush is listed as the eldest son of Ham (who is the eldest son of Noah). As the *Britannica* (11th ed., 1911) article on "Cush" notes, "the locality of the land of Cush has long been a much-vexed question," though the consensus of the times held the ancient homeland to be northern Africa (Ethiopia or Nubia), perhaps also parts of Arabia. The question of who the Cushites were and to what degree their culture and language evolved into or blended with other, better-known cultural and linguistic traditions (particularly Hamite, Semite, and Aryan) is equally vexatious. Such matters were the subject of endless popular speculation and serious scholarship, both in the U.S. and abroad, during the latter Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

[6]This is especially so when such a hypothesis is linked, as it is in Gunn's Preface, to both racist assumptions of cultural supremacy and the Vanishing American motif: "We of today, the great Aryan race, who hold the scepter of

civilization, must acknowledge our indebtedness—'with becoming admiration, what we have inherited from our Cushite predecessors.'—Baldwin. . . . Hannibal, Thales, Dido and Cleopatra were of that nationality. And the Queres Indians of Laguna and Acoma are one of the last fading remnants of that great people" (3).

[7]Such a historical bias is by no means unusual in the ethnography of Gunn's times. See, for instance, Boas' ordering principle in *Keresan Texts*—a principle he first seems to discount as invalid ("I do not feel certain that it [a Keresan origin myth] exists as a definite sequence") but then, later in the same sentence, reconstructs ("it seems likely, that here and there incidents may be added that have no definite position *in the sequence*") (Boas 217; my italics).

[8]On these, see Linda Danielson, "The Storytellers in *Storyteller*."

[9]I'm speaking here of textual evidence. I will be alluding to some of these possible antecedent texts later in this essay; the reader who wishes to pursue this line of inquiry further may wish to note the following:

Gunn and Silko: In addition to the links between "Ko-pot Ka-nat" and "The Laguna People" discussed in this essay, compare the plot lines in "The Tradition of Ship-op" and "One time" (which recurs in *Ceremony*), "I-Sto-A-Moot and the Buffalo Man" and "Cottonwood: Part Two" (treated by Danielson in *JSW*), "Yo-A-Schi-Moot and the Kun-Ni-Te-Ya" and "Estoy-eh-mut and the Kunideeyahs" (treated by Langen in *SAIL*), and "The Hunter Girl and the Giantess" and "Aunt Alice told this story to my sisters and me one time." Significant motifs recurring in Gunn and both *Storyteller* and *Ceremony* include the guessing game involving constellations—Orion and Pleiades, Big Dipper and Scorpion—hung on the walls of a mountain spirit's house ("Sutsu-Nuts, the Ruler of the Ka-Tsi-Na"); the ritual creation of a fly to serve as a scout in the process of recovering life for the people ("Masts-Tru-Oi, the Cliff Dweller"); and the quest of a child of the Sun to recover stolen life from a Gambler, involving both loss of the Gambler's eyes and subsequent volcanic activity that forces the people to flee to the mesatops ("Pais-Chun-Ni-Moot, the Fire Brand Boy").

Boas and Silko: Silko refers to the work of both Boas and Parsons in *Storyteller* (254-55), where she cites her great-grandfather (Robert G. Marmon) as one of their oral sources. While I have yet to conduct anything like a thorough study of correspondences among the stories collected by Boas and those told/retold by Silko, my sense is that *Keresan Texts* might be a primary source for several of Silko's pieces; see, for instance, Boas' "The Humming-bird" and "P'acaya·'n^{y}i" in relation to Silko's "One time" (mentioned in this essay) and "The Witches and Arrow-Boy" (30-40) in relation to "Estoy-eh-moot and the Kunideeyahs" (treated thoroughly by Langen).

In addition to such textual evidence, I've been told by Lee Marmon, Silko's father, that at one time there were several copies of *Schat-chen* about the house (he having been for awhile involved in a plan to have the book republished) while Silko was growing up at Laguna, and other sources assure me that several Laguna households owned copies of *Keresan Texts*, many of them complimentary copies from either Boas or Parsons. My point is that Silko would have had easy access to both of these books.

[10]The text of *Schat-chen* is riddled with orthographical inconsistencies. In the

text of "Ko-pot Ka-nat," for instance, it is "Ko-pot" in the title but "Kopot" throughout the rest of the text; "Kush-Kutret" in the headnote but "Kush Kut-ret" elsewhere in the story; "Stchi-mu-ne-moot" the first time he is mentioned in the text and eight times thereafter but "Stchi-mu-ni-moot" thrice on p. 116. For consistency's sake I use the spellings "Kopot," "Kush Kut-ret," and "Stchi-mu-ne-moot" in this essay except where quotation dictates otherwise.

The texts of Gunn, Silko, Boas, and Benedict also vary from one another orthographically; except where reference to a particular text dictates a proper spelling, I've elected to simplify and regularize the spelling of such key story figures as Iyetiko, Nautsityi, Istoakoya (Reed Woman), and Kaupata.

[11]Gunn does not clearly classify his stories beyond acknowledging rather generally that they are stories told at Laguna and Acoma, what are called at Laguna kuúku-uúbeétaányi ("winter tales") or, using Wiget's categories of traditional American Indian Literature, "oral narratives." It is not clear whether Gunn's terms "tradition" and "narrative" correlate to the categories of "myth and legend" and "folk tale" respectively. But although Gunn draws no particular distinction between "secular" and "sacred" stories, other Laguna storytellers conventionally distinguish between "hama-ha" ("made-up" stories) and "maaíma uúbeétaányi" (those "true" stories that get reenacted in the ceremonies): cf. the White Mountain Apache distinction between "le'gocho" and "na'godi'ee" and the Hopi distinction between "tuuwutsi" and "ka'atsa" (Evers).

Boas (*Keresan Texts*) chooses to call the text versions of his informants' performances "tales," and he discerns two categories of "tales," "ceremonial tales" and "animal tales" (216); these categories correspond nicely to the kuúku-uúbeétaányi (= tale)—hama-ha (= animal tale)—maaíma uúbeétaányi (= ceremonial tale) distinctions still made by some Laguna storytellers today.

[12]In *Ceremony*, the text of this story [re-]emerges to fuse with Tayo's story on pp. 46-49, 53-54, 71-72, 82, 105-06, 113, 151-52, 180, and 255-56. Using the term *backbone* to describe the formal relationship of this story to the rest of the novel's text is consistent with one of the traditional elements of Keres storytelling: to signal the end of a performance and to acknowledge the story's source, the narrator may say "that long is my aunt's [or uncle's, or grandmother's] backbone." See many of the story transcriptions in Boas.

[13]The most likely print pre-text for Silko's story "One time" is Boas' *Keresan Texts*; her story of the creation of Green Fly to help Hummingbird and their subsequent recovery of Nau'ts'ity'i (a complicated process involving visits to the fourth world and enlisting the aid of Caterpillar and Turkey Buzzard) is strikingly similar in structure, imagery, and diction to the text of "The Hummingbird" that Boas attributes to a Laguna "informant" named Pedro Martin (11-13), while the first half of her story (Pa'caya'nyi's origins, the ceremony he performs to distract the Twin Brothers Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'-wi from their duties towards the Corn Mother altar, and Nau'ts'ity'i's consequent departure) is very similar in these same respects to the first half of "P'acaya·´n^{y}i" as told by Ko·´T^{Y}e (13-16).

[14]Such a gift of clothing figures in another of Gunn's stories, "Sutsu-nuts, the Ruler of the Katsi-na," a Yellow Woman story in which Kochinninako leaves the People to live with Sutsu-nuts, who like Kaupata gains control over people when they eat bread made of "dough mixed with human blood." As

Gunn tells it, Kochininako's return to the people is mediated by her twin boys, who prove their identity to her father and their grandfather, "Hutch-a-mun Kai-ok, the ruler of Kush Kut-ret," by correctly identifying constellations hanging in bags on the four walls of his room (an image that strongly recalls the Kaupata story as recounted in Silko and Boas), after which he "sent them back [to fetch his daughter] with clothes and presents and a welcome home for Ko-chin-ni-na-ko." The ceremony of return is ruined, however, when one of her sisters cries as Kochinninako is completing the transition back into her family circle, so that Sutsu-nuts regains possession of both Kochinninako and her sons. This story in most of its essentials appears also in Boas, categorized under "Abduction Stories" (Boas' "Ts'its'ïnïts`" = Gunn's "Sutsu-nuts"). Silko's *Storyteller* abounds in Kochinninako/Yellow Woman stories, but she does not retell this one—although she does incorporate most of the telling motifs of this story into one or the other of her pieces (including the image of the headband associated with Kochinninako's separation from the People: see "the coiled ring of / woven yucca fiber" Estoy-eh-muut uses to kill her at the conclusion of "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs" [154]).

[15]More specifically, Silko's Sun Man, like Sun Youth in the Boas version attributed to Ko·´T^{Y}e, goes to Kaupata's house to recover the rainclouds (thereby echoing the quest of Hummingbird and Green Fly in the recovery stories associated with Istoakoya/Reed Woman and Nautsityi), while Tsutea in the version recorded by Benedict is out to "recover the lives [Kaupata] has destroyed" (64).

[16]There is little doubt that Gunn's "Kopot," Silko's "Kaup'a'ta," Boas's "Kaup`a·ta´," and Benedict's "Kaupat´a" are variant spellings of the same word. Gunn's text includes two page-sized drawings, both provided in his issue of *SAIL* (25, 30): one (verso to the first page of Gunn's text of "Ko-pot Ka-nat") labelled "Kopot" and the other (Gunn 117) labelled "Ko-kah-ki-eh—Brother of Kopot"; both of these drawings are reproduced also in Parsons's *Notes on Ceremonialism at Laguna*, identified (with others) as drawings of katsinas who visit Laguna annually. Boas (253-54) discusses Gunn's Kopot as a variant of "The Gambler" Kaup`a·ta´ depicted in a story told by Ko·´T^{Y}e. In a note to her story "Kaupat´a" gathered at Acoma, Benedict says that "Kaupat´a appears as a masked dancer at the Winter Solstice ceremony. He is blind and is led by his old grandmother" (62, n5).

[17]In Silko's and Boas' stories, Kaupata works with "gambling sticks." In the version collected from Acoma by Benedict, we are told (623) that of the four gambling games favored by katsinas and the People—"quoits," "the stick race" (the basis of Stchi-mu-ne-moot's contest with the Kopots), "toss," and "hidden ball"—Kaupata, "the most dangerous of all the supernatural gamblers" (64), specializes in the latter. Perhaps Silko's Kaupata plays the same game Benedict's does; if so, the "gambling sticks" would be the counters that Tsutea institutes as part of the hidden ball game (Benedict 64). The relationship between the cylinder and the ball is replicated in these versions by the relationship between the bags and the stars they contain (a relationship reproduced finally by "hanging" Kaupata's eyes on the "walls" of the sky).

[18]Elsewhere in *Schat-chen*, a hero must correctly identify the contents of bags hung on the walls of a house: see "Sutsu-nuts, Ruler of the Ka-tsi-na,"

discussed in n. 14 of his essay. My sense is that Gunn may have been familiar with the Kaupata story more or less as Silko reproduces it, but that he might well have felt compelled by his historiographic premise about the function of oral tradition to include the star-guessing episode to one or the other of two stories containing it, since to include it in both would be to contribute to that garbling of history he laments in his headnote to "Ko-pot Ka-nat."

[19]More specifically, Silko's Sun Man (like Boas' Sun Youth) receives from Spider Grandmother both medicine (to neutralize the black ducks guarding the Gambler's house) and advice: not only does she tell him where they are ("That Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta the Gambler has them locked up") and warn him of the pitfalls awaiting him (sentinel ducks, Ck'o'yo medicine in the form of bloodsoaked food), but she also offers a complete detailed forecast of the Gambler's star riddle along with a verbal script for Sun Man to follow. As noted earlier, Gunn has Kochinninako providing her sons with similar information prior to their encounter with their grandfather (who is a human being rather than a katsina). Benedict's Sun's Son Tsuwea receives orders to teach Kaupat´a a lesson (but not much advice about how to do this or what to expect) from his father the Sun rather than from Spider Grandmother.

[20]See p. 247 of *Ceremony*. Though this passage appears to be a fragment from a longer narrative (i.e., is cast typographically as a poem or part of a poem, with its lines centered on the page and its text set off from the prose stream by white space on both sides of the poetic space), no passage containing these words appears anywhere in *Storyteller*; see, however, the passage bearing the same gist in "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunnedeyahs," pp. 145-46. "Arrow-boy" is an approximate translation of the word "Estoy-eh-muut" (spelled by Gunn "Is-to-a-moot"); Boas translates the word as "Arrow-Youth." Note also that in order to complete the integrative ceremony that will restore his own life to the People, Tayo must see the witchery in motion at the Jackpile Mine but must not attempt to kill Emo or the others (cf. Sun Man's refusal in Silko to attempt to cut out Kaup'a'ta's heart, even when invited to by Kaup'a'ta); in the story, it is enough to witness the Ck'o'yo/Kunnedeyah work with a good heart, and then to publicize that vision, to disable it.

[21]In the account given in Boas (told by Ko·´T^{Y}e, 1919), four days after Sun-Youth leaves, blind Kaup`a·ta', vowing to "destroy the people," gathers pitch at the south end of his mountain and spreads it to "the west mountain at the south end," then sets fire to it and, stirring the pitch in front of the fire as he goes, moves back northward. When he eventually veers eastward, the storm clouds take note of his coming and vow to "extinguish" the fires and "kill" the Gambler. As the storm clouds run "alongside eastward" the fires, putting out the fires there, Kaup`a·ta' "was surrounded by flames and was ablaze" and dies.

In Benedict's account, the people whose lives the Gambler has previously won are revived and directed by Tsutea to strip Kaupat´a's house of everything of value; all they leave is "a powerful torch which was hidden in the ceiling between two rafters," which the blind Gambler later finds and sets ablaze. Then, setting fire to "pitch from the piñon trees," he sets his house afire and stirs it so that "the lava flowed in both directions to the north and east." Several species of white birds then attempt to "beat out the fire with [their] wings," only to turn brown or black forever; but "hummingbird flew around

to the great waters to the north, west, south and east, to rouse the tides to put out the fire"; the clouds then converge from all directions and, after hail fails to extinguish "the burning lava rock," rain succeeds.

Notable in both these versions is that Kaupata's revenge takes the form of volcanic eruption and burning rock—lava—rather than the form of a flood; however, and again interestingly, burning rock and water are cast as one another's neutralizers in all three of these texts (including Gunn's).

Perhaps some of the differences in these two versions can be attributed to provenance—Boas' a Laguna version and Benedict's an Acoma version of a common Keres story.

[22]In his chapter entitled "Ancient History," Gunn translates "Ko-wi-stchu-ma Kote" as meaning "literally 'the mountain of the white lake,' but probably a snow-capped mountain" (75). Consistent with his thesis that this story is a record of the People's history prior to settling at present-day Laguna, Gunn hypothesizes that this mountain was one of the "significant landmarks" of either some extinct Atlantic island (i.e., Atlantis: Gunn 103)) or of the Four Corners area. A synchronic reading suggests that "Ko-wi-stchu-ma Kote" would also refer to Mount Taylor (sometimes called "Kaweshtima" at Acoma: see, for instance, Simon Ortiz' reference to this place in "Heyaashi Guutah").

In the account in Boas (82), Kaupata moves south down the side of a mountain and proceeds north all the way to "the west mountain at the south end," pouring pitch all the way; then he sets fire to the pitch and retraces his path, stirring the fire as he goes. At some point he steers the fire eastwards, where the storm clouds then array themselves along the east flank of the blaze so that the burning pitch gets only as far east as "the west gap" before the fire is put out. The pattern of Kaupata's movement in this version would be consistent with an eruption of Mount Taylor and with the configuration of the so-called Malpais in relation to the current locations of Acoma and Laguna.

Curiously, Benedict's teller seems to locate Kaupata's abode at Acoma rather than at the north mountain: in the version as she records it, the lava Kaupata stirs up "flowed in both directions to the north and west" (65), i.e., from Acoma towards Mount Taylor.

[23]Regarding the fifth and final episode (as I count them in this essay) of "Ko-pot Ka-nat," nowhere in *Storyteller* does Silko tell a "that's how the crows turned black" story. However, this element does recur in several other printed Keres stories. In two versions of the Shakok-Miochin story, one in Gunn and the other collected by George H. Pradt and published in 1902, Miochin's animal helpers are turned black or brown by the the thick smoke of the fire he uses as a weapon against Shakok: "The thick black smoke of Yat-chum-me's fires blackened all the animals Miochin had with him, and that is why the animals in the south are black or brown" (Pradt 90); "All the animals of the army [of Miochin], encountering the smoke from Ya-chun-ne-ne-moot's fires, were colored by the smoke so that, from that day, the animals from the south have been black or brown in color" (Gunn 221). In a story collected from Acoma, published by Benedict almost three decades after Pradt, crow turns black in a Kaupata story that is analogous in overall structure to but differing in most details from the Kaupata story appearing in both *Storyteller* ("Up North") and *Ceremony*: after Tsutea, "the Sun's son" (cf. Silko's Sun Man), has dug out the gambler's eyes and tossed them into the sky to become stars,

Kaupata (apparently, to avenge himself—cf. Kopot in Gunn's story, as well as Kai-na-ni in Gunn's "Pais-Chun-Ni-Moot, the Fire Brand Boy") sets his house on fire, so that "lava flowed in both directions to the north and west" (65), whereupon "The birds tried to put a stop to the burning earth. Crow was snow-white. He tried to beat out the fire with his wings and he was changed by the heat till he became black" (65)—as is eagle, kowata, and buzzard (though hummingbird, who has the sense to gather water to put out the fires, flies through a rainbow and thus now "wears the colors of the rainbow in the feathers round his neck"). Once again, the "portions" of story in these various texts seem to cycle back or "chain" in such a way that one is related by recurring imagery to others that might otherwise seem rather distant in the overall series; or to use Danielson's metaphor, portions that seem headed in very different directions are linked through recurring image or event to one another in the way that radials and concentrics of a spiderweb invariably intersect one another at some point(s).

[24]To be sure, we may take Gunn's reference to this tale as a "traditional" story to imply an indefinite number of storytelling events of the (2) variety; my point is that Gunn makes no attempt to construct a text that empowers any of those hypothetical events. Gunn's version presents itself as "the" story rather than (more candidly) as a version of some story or as (even more candidly) Gunn's version of others' versions of some antecedent event.

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Teaching with Storyteller *at the Center*

Helen Jaskoski

Teaching a three-unit, undergraduate course in Literature of the American Indians at my university poses the challenge of how to select from such a vast body of literature and how to present it in a coherent, meaningful way. Most students come to the class with no background information, or with misinformation and stereotype, as the ground against which they are prepared to read the texts. Paula Gunn Allen's *Studies in American Indian Literature* has been immensely helpful, especially in developing courses around thematic or genre concerns; in one semester I focused on images of women, and in another on autobiographies and life-history narratives. One of the most successful focuses, however, has been on Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*. In a semester offering of this upper-division, general-education course, I have structured readings with *Storyteller* as a core, related readings from other authors placed in dialogue with Silko's multi-layered text. A key requirement was weekly informal writing assignments as preparation for discussion; these writings helped students sort out often confusing and bewildering responses to the literature they were being introduced to. In the following paragraphs, I discuss five of the fifteen weekly reading and writing assignments, showing how they work with *Storyteller* to permit insight into American Indian Literatures—and indeed all literature.

(1) *Oral Storytelling*. Reading: Opening pages of *Storyteller*, especially Aunt Susie's story of Waithea. (There was no additional reading for this week, but *Running on the Edge of the Rainbow* had been shown in class during the initial class meeting. This film is a wonderful introduction to a theory of storytelling that can be tested against texts read and performances experienced throughout the class.) Writing: "Write down a story you have heard, in your family, from friends, or at your place of work. Compare your story and the function of storytelling with what Leslie Silko says about

this subject. Be prepared to tell your story in class." In discussing this writing assignment, I offer a story of my own (an urban folk tale I heard waiting in line for a movie: "The Man with the Axe in the Back of the Car").

It is hard to overestimate the benefits of this assignment, especially in the first weeks of class. It comes to be a demonstration of what Silko says in *Storyteller* and *Running on the Edge of the Rainbow* about the function of storytelling in creating community, as the sharing of stories by students makes a community of the class (a difficult thing to achieve in my large, commuter university).[1] All kinds of stories emerge: familiar folk stories (I now have many versions of "La Llorona," a popular Mexican story), family reminiscences, urban folklore ("Ex-Lax Brownies" is making a comeback). Students' performances of stories in class provide an opportunity to discuss such issues as contextualizing personal or family stories for a wider audience, framing techniques, construction of dialogue, and other literary devices—all that goes into the transition from oral to written literature. Within this comparative framework we can look at Aunt Susie's story and Silko's rendition of it with new insight and also begin to define terminology and critical approaches for other readings to come.

I think this assignment has one other value. Often students come to the study of "exotic" material in the hope of mining it for truths or values they feel are missing in their own backgrounds. Approaching Silko's stories from the point of view of one's own stories permits a respect for one's own heritage that allows less exploitive approaches to other people's. Indeed, one of the most frequent outcomes of this course is a resolve on the part of students of any background to respect and preserve family and ethnic history that they had previously regarded with indifference or even contempt.

(2) *Exoticism*. Readings: "Storyteller"; selected passages from Knud Rasmussen's *Across Arctic America* (the chapter titled "A Wizard and His Household" and selected stories and songs).[2] Writing: "Find yourself and/or people you know in these stories. How do you see these characters, in their traits or actions, showing some resemblance to yourself or people you have observed?" This assignment also requires some advance discussion, and often students report difficulty with it.

The purpose of this assignment and the one following is to engage the issues of identity and difference.[3] What Clements has shown with respect to translators seems to hold true with other readers, including

students. In confronting materials across cultures, a reader's bias will tend to one or the other extreme: seeing the work (and synedochally the whole culture) as "basically" or "underneath" identical to the reader's own, or seeing the text (and the people who produce it) as entirely different. The first attitude is patronizing, a blindness to unique qualities; the second is dismissive, a variety of exoticism that refuses to grapple with issues of mutual importance.

Silko's short story titled "Storyteller" and the depiction of Inuit life in Rasmussen both confront students with material they are not prepared to see as having any familiar or even comprehensible aspect. Some preparatory discussion can help students begin to probe the traditional tales. However, leaving them to face the problem of these particular tales pretty much on their own can also be salutary: it is a difficult assignment and requires more thought than many students are expected to give to literature. I believe this assignment demands a level of abstraction necessary to be able to read the stories with real critical attention as literature, rather than merely as anthropological documents. I have also found the exercise worth repeating, in preparing, for instance, to discuss other oral tales rendered in *Storyteller*—the tale of the jealous sister, for instance, and the legend of Tayo and the Gambler.

For most students, difference will also be the outstanding feature of "Storyteller," which offers no compromise with bourgeois sensibilities. Probing for areas of identity brings the story home to readers who imagine they can have nothing in common with this situation seemingly at the ends of the earth. While the protagonist of "Storyteller" offers intriguing points of comparison with Alice Walker's Celie or Melville's Bartleby, most students in this course have not read those works, and comparisons with their own lives must be a starting point. The boundary-making operation of self-definition is one useful focus of discussion of this story, especially in the context of categories of clean/unclean. Every culture has its definition of "filth," but items assigned to the categories of "clean" and "dirty" vary immensely.

Finally, some students simply cannot complete the task they are asked to do: no stretch of their imaginations can bring them to find any commonality between what they are reading and what they encounter in their daily lives. There must always be the alternative of writing about this experience as well, to explain that—and as far as possible why—one can find no common ground. Here is the main benefit of using the written assignment as basis for class discussion: as students hear each other's comparisons, they begin to see possibility of drawing out familiar ideas in such unfamiliar-seeming material, and they really do learn from each other as they begin to realize they can produce thoughts of their own as well as write down the instructor's ideas.

(3) *Images and Stereotypes of Women*. Reading: "Yellow Woman" and the Cottonwood stories in *Storyteller*; poems by Joy Harjo, Wendy Rose, Linda Hogan. Writing: "Discuss parallels you find between Yellow Woman in the stories we are reading and characters and stories from popular culture (film, video, song) or other oral sources (legends, fairy tales). Write your discussion as a letter to a friend."

This is another difficult assignment, since students are often still not able to accomplish a level of abstraction that permits the kind of comparisons the assignment requires. But the successful examples that are produced are enlightening and encouraging. Soap operas figure prominently, of course, in the comparison examples. Romance novels do not come up as much as I had expected, although students recognize the notion of escape into fantasy narrative when it is introduced in class. One of the most appealing and fruitful topics for discussion was an extended comparison one student made between "Yellow Woman" and the film *Desperately Seeking Susan*. The theme of the young wife who leaves her comfortable, mundane life for a few days' adventure, who takes on a different persona in order to live—for a moment—a different life, emerged with more clarity as a result of the comparison.

What I was not prepared for, in class discussion and even more in the preparatory writings when I collected them, was the widespread criticism of "Yellow Woman" as prurient. This seemed to be a particularly strong reaction from some of the men in the class, including one unforgettable comment at the end of a brief analysis of the story: "Ordinarily I don't read literature as smutty as this." One of the hazards of encouraging students to speak their minds is that they will do so, and then one must deal with it. Of course, the thematic emphasis on women and images of women in this set of readings allows for discussion of prevalent stereotypes ("Mazola Princess," "squaw") as well as examination of the different values attributed to aging, nurturing, production, and so on in the cultures expressed in the readings as compared with the culture in which the students live. Here, in contrast to the discussion of oral tales, the emphasis is on difference rather than identity: students who expect Native American texts to express their twenty-something estimation of beauty (youth, individuality) or gender have an opportunity to confront different definitions of these concepts. I wish I could say that students become more tolerant or open to variation in human belief and behavior as a result of experiences like this, but I have my doubts; the most that one can say, perhaps, is that they have the opportunity.

The more technical literary discussion of these works offers an

opportunity to examine Silko's manipulation of narrative perspective and point of view, with a backward glance for comparison at "Storyteller." The question of the reliability of the narrator of "Yellow Woman" emerges in the crucial confrontation scene, when the narrator interprets the mood and motivations of the white ranchers ("The white man got angry when he heard Silva speak in a language he couldn't understand. . . . The rancher must have been unarmed because he was very frightened and if he had a gun he would have pulled it out then" [61]). Subsequently, the mysterious four shots ("I think four shots were fired" [61]) epitomize the openness and pervasive ambiguity central to both "Yellow Woman" and "Storyteller." The perplexities of point of view in "Storyteller" (comparable to James' manipulation of point of view in "Daisy Miller"), the imminent devolution of that story at every point into silence and absence, become clearer through the comparison with "Yellow Woman."

Students new to literature often find ambiguity and lack of closure unsettling, and analysis along these lines makes it easier to deal with both the modern stories and the traditional Yellow Woman tales in the two Cottonwood episodes. In particular, the overdetermined motives of Arrow-Boy in shooting Yellow Woman emerge as both valid possibilities and intractably undecidable. Arrow-Boy may be enraged by jealousy, or purely altruistic, or following a divine mandate—or all of these. Similarly undecidable is Yellow Woman's "marking" of the buffalo calf with her urine. Here is a physiological response that is both controllable and uncontrollable, opening wonderful possibilities for unconscious or conflictual or ambivalent motivation. Psychological complexity in "folk tales" is something that even scholars often ignore, and this set of modern and traditional stories placed in juxtaposition provides an opportunity to explore such issues.

The writing assignment as I have given it here actually combines two different tasks. For another set of poems assigned later in the course, the written preparation is to write a letter to a friend responding freely to the poems. The free response or connection with personal experience helps those students (and they are many) who are intimidated or put off by poetry. The letter helps them visualize a sympathetic audience and to get away from the dreary and awkward formality of the "essays" they believe all teachers want. The poems were chosen for the sense of strength and public commitment in them, another counter to the stereotypes of woman-as-object. Another surprise occurred in one class: Linda Hogan's "Black Hills Survival Gathering" mystified everyone, and I learned to my surprise that no one in the room besides myself had ever seen—let alone participated in—an anti-nuclear demonstration.

(4) *Oral Tradition and Poetry*. Readings: in *Storyteller* "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" and the poems on pages 177-209; the Laguna selections in Curtis' *The Indians' Book*; selected translations from Spinden. Writing: "Memorize one of the poems, and then teach it to another person (you have to teach it without using any written text). What poem did you choose, and what did you learn from this exercise about oral tradition?"

This was a wonderful assignment when it was repeated in class: students paired up and taught their poems to each other. The result was cacophony, not unfamiliar to those students who had experienced a traditional Chinese school in which pupils chant memorized lessons. No other exercise brings home quite so forcefully the differences between literate and oral cultures. Significant topics emerged: the relation of orality and esteem for age, the importance of context and the contextualized and holistic (as distinct from isolated and compartmentalized) character of learning in oral culture, the way in which the meanings of texts are derived and "literary criticism" is carried on in the absence of writing.

The first insight—the relationship between age ranking and oral culture—came simply from the observation that the most successful (or satisfying) outcomes occurred when adults taught children. The reasons were not always clear; perhaps the children were less self-conscious, or just more ready to oblige, and probably most learned more quickly. Less successful were trials with spouses or friends, and no one reported even attempting to teach an older person in this way. The exercise provided yet another approach to "The Man to Send Rain Clouds" and other stories, as well as appreciation for Silko's loving esteem for her forebears. Extrapolating from this exercise to a situation in which all knowledge is held exclusively in the minds of living people who have learned it through experience or have been told it by another person provides an insight available in no other way into the necessity for revering the knowledge of elders. The experience illustrates in a partial but vivid way Michael Dorris' comment that the essential educational project of an oral culture is the transmission of the lexicon from one generation to the next. When even a single word is left untaught, it will be gone forever.

The contextualization of learning was also clearly apparent from this experiment. Students perceived immediately that people do not sit down at pre-ordained times and say, "Now we're going to do oral tradition." The obvious example of corn-grinding songs learned in the rhythmic carrying out of the task compares easily with more familiar

work songs like sea chanties or track-laying blues; the content of corn-grinding songs as relating to geographical and historical knowledge, to mythology and explanations of origins, shows how interwoven and organic are the elements of the life expressed in the literatures. The contrast with urban life and the organization of learning in the university—compartmentalized courses, hours, departments, degrees—could not be more apparent. Contextualization of oral learning within the students' own experience is also a useful comparison: song texts are usually learned half-consciously, and nursery rhymes are apprehended at an early age. The comparison carries us to the perception of texts, authorship and ownership, and criticism in non-writing cultures.

Ownership of texts comes up as an issue in the course of memorization. Immediately clear, once the experiment is tried, is that a person who holds a text in memory owns that text in a fundamental way that has nothing to do with merely owning a written copy—or even a copyright. This intimate ownership of a text, and the right to perform it, suggests a different way of looking at literature and its analysis: the memorized text is made a part of the experiencing subject instead of remaining alienated as an object for analysis. The seemingly offhand way in which some American Indian commentators regard interpretation of texts has often been noted. Maria Chona asserts that "The song is very short because we understand so much" (51). She goes on to elaborate meanings for her amanuensis, adding: "All those things my father told me when he used to sing that song in our house. I did not understand, though, when I was a little girl" (51). Likewise Delfina Cuero maintains that "We knew these stories were told to teach us how to behave and what to expect. The old people did not have to tell us what the story explained at the end of the story" (42). These commentators take for granted that all persons at all stages of life do not find the same meaning in songs or stories. Rather, once a story or song text is internalized—possessed—through memorization, it is always there, always available. It may be called upon at any time to illuminate some event or phenomenon in the life of the individual, and a story communally held may perform the same function for the group.

Conversely, just as texts explain life, life glosses texts: a song or story that seems obscure or meaningless when first learned gains significance in an event that suddenly reveals a new meaning. Inevitably, we are prodded to re-evaluate the maligned practice of rote memorization: it may be that the memorizing of texts should precede an understanding of them, since the memorized text is available to the unexpected insight, the fortuitous connection.

This is an approach to texts very different from the analytical probing that we mostly mean when we speak of studying or "learning"

literature, emphasizing a qualitative, meditative appreciation rather than the quantitative, "dismembering" methods we are used to. By this I mean that we are likely to find that the oral approach requires living with a few texts, repeatedly and over a long period of time, to extract profound insight from them, rather than absorbing a great many texts in order to synthesize some new meaning.[4] Students may recognize analogues in the not-too-distant past of Euro-American culture, notably the practice of memorizing Biblical texts that were then expected to become part of a person's ethical and spiritual repertoire, to be called upon and referred to as a guide and source of insight throughout life. The ethical paradigms may differ from culture to culture, but the process seems to be similar.

Besides the issue of orality and memorization, the other topic taken up in connection with these readings is that of language and translation. The selections from *Songs of the Tewa* provide, in the first place, an occasion for discussion of naming. I introduce the concepts of language families and lineages as means for designating groups of peoples and take up the question of the names of the pueblos: some are now commonly identified by the Spanish names of European saints. The impulse to regard texts, even translated texts like Spinden's, as transparent statements can also be dealt with, especially as we look at the permutations in Curtis' attempts at translation.[5] Engaging with the scholarship that produces the texts we read balances the memorization exercise: while memorization emphasizes an attitude that regards the texts as authoritative, study of the translations emphasizes their status as made objects, constructions with many intermediaries.

(5) *Version and Story*. Readings: "A Geronimo Story"; the Geronimo section in Curtis; testimony of Geronimo and Cochise in *Chronicles of American Indian Protest* including the excerpt from S. M. Barrett's script of Geronimo's autobiography; Jason Betzinez' recollections of Geronimo in Nabokov. Writing: "What similarities and differences do you find in the different accounts of Geronimo? Who was Geronimo, really?"

In the 1920s a man named Mr. Stack, who lived in Bisbee, Arizona, would reminisce about his recollections of Geronimo. "Many is the time," he used to say, "when I would see Geronimo and his warriors riding along that ridge, outlined against the sky, looking down over the town." I heard this story when I was about five years old; I was visiting in Bisbee, and the lady I was staying with had heard it from Mr. Stack when she was a little girl. She pointed up to the ridge of mountains beyond the town and its enormous mile-deep copper mine

as she told it to me. This story has remained with me as a link I have to the legendary figure of Geronimo; it is my Geronimo story.

Geronimo stories, and comparison of them, is the focus of this discussion. The writing assignment is probably the most conventional of the exercises I use, calling forth straightforward comparison and contrast. Authority and mediation are the central topics for discussion of the assigned texts. Consideration of the different texts, of the circumstances of their production, and of the assumptions about authorship that we bring to texts—all these offer the opportunity to look at personal identity as relational and constructed, rather than as absolute and essential. These readings also offer a chance to loop back to the earlier stories, and especially to "Storyteller," to contrast the polyvocal comedy of "A Geronimo Story" with the single tragic story that the protagonist of "Storyteller" literally stakes her life on.

Conclusion. These are five samples of discussion topics from a fifteen-week course. The last week's reading and writing assignments should also be noted. The final reading assignment asks the students to review their own weekly assignments gathered together as a course diary or journal (which turns out to have a format not unlike *Storyteller* itself). The last writing task is to comment on the journey through the material that the student has made during the course: what was the starting point? what ideas have changed? what new things have been learned? Sometimes these review testimonials are quite remarkable. I quote from one, which its author and I agree is "a story which shouldn't go untold":

> First, there is a story which I must tell about a young woman who has just taken a recent interest in her heritage. This is out of context with the rest of this scrapbook because it is regarding the Cherokee tribe, but it's a story which shouldn't go untold.
>
> N— has been an acquaintance of mine for a short time only, but last week when I was reading some Indian Literature she told me that she was 1/8 Cherokee Indian. I asked her if I could interview her and she agreed but didn't really know too much about her Indian background. She came back in a couple of days and was very eager to tell me all that she had learned about herself and her heritage.
>
> Her grandmother, her father's mother, was a full-blooded Cherokee who came from Florida. She soon moved to the Texana reservation in Oklahoma. When I asked N— if her grandmother liked to tell stories, she got a big grin on her face and told me that yes, her grand-

> mother did indeed like to tell stories. Her grandmother told her about how when she was a little girl she would go hunting with her mother, N—'s great-grandmother. They used to hunt deer for their family of nine. She also told N— of her great desire to go to school, which she was never able to do because they were too poor.
>
> N— didn't know anything of her background before this episode, and I'm proud to know that I, and this scrapbook, were able to encourage her to learn about her heritage. She told me she was thankful to me for doing so, also.

The one consistent theme emerging from these reflective summaries seems to be the personal engagement with the material and the process of understanding it that contrasts with much of the students' other educational experience. This I take to be a tribute to *Storyteller* and its ability to engage us all in a profound experience of re-thinking and re-centering.

Notes

[1]Indeed for just this community-building function, I now find some excuse to require this assignment in all the courses I teach. The assignment can be as illuminating with Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* or Toni Morrison's *Sula* as it is with Native American oral stories.

[2]Ken Lincoln was one of the first to point out the connection between the Mistress of the Sea story as Rasmussen relates it and Leslie Silko's short story "Storyteller."

[3]I have taken this cue from William Clements' discussion of approaches to translation seen along a continuum of identity and difference. What Clements has to say about translators' approaches to texts is relevant to students' confrontations with those texts as well.

[4]This is how I understand N. Scott Momaday's on-going meditation on such texts as the stories of the arrow-maker and the boy who becomes a bear. Momaday has been criticized for telling the same story over and over; I believe he models a contemplative approach in doing this.

[5]This course was given before I read Karl Kroeber's article on reformulating the study of comparative literature with attention to translation as a central issue. My class of juniors and seniors majoring in computer science and advertising (among other things) as well as English does not approach the theoretical sophistication Kroeber addresses, yet I think our work was salutary for just the reasons he suggests: we came to a much clearer understanding of our limitations and both the limitations and value of what we were able to learn

as a result of our attention to the process of translation.

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A Laguna Portfolio

photographs by Lee Marmon

text compiled by Robert M. Nelson
from Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*

***Grandma A'mooh**: Marie Anaya Marmon, Leslie Marmon Silko's paternal great-grandmother, with her great-granddaughters Wendy (on her right) and Leslie.*

It was a long time before
I learned that my Grandma A'mooh's
real name was Marie Anaya Marmon.
I thought her name really was "A'mooh."
. . . . . .
I had been hearing her say
"*a'moo'ooh*"
which is the Laguna expression of endearment
for a young child
spoken with great feeling and love.

Her house was next to ours
and as I grew up
I spent a lot of time with her. . . . (33-34)

Wendy Marmon, Marie Anaya Marmon, and Leslie Marmon

Grandpa Hank*: Henry C. Marmon, Leslie Marmon Silko's paternal grandfather.*

> . . . in 1912 Indian schools were strictly vocational and the teachers at Sherman told Grandpa that Indians didn't become automobile designers. So when Grandpa Hank came home from Sherman he had been trained to be a store clerk. . . . In 1957 when Ford brought out the Thunderbird in a hardtop convertible, Grandpa Hank bought one and that was his car until he died. (192)

> On Sundays Grandpa Hank liked to go driving.
> Usually we went to Los Lunas
> because Grandma Lillie had relatives there. (246)

Grandma Lillie*: Francesca Stagner Marmon, Leslie Marmon Silko's paternal grandmother.*

> Grandma Lillie was born in Los Lunas, New Mexico. She was baptized "Francesca," but her father, my great-grandpa Stagner, called her "Lillie" after one of his sisters he left behind in Texas when he ran away from home with his brother, Bill. (52)

> On Memorial Day when I was a girl
> Grandma Lillie and I always took flowers
> to Juana's grave in the old graveyard behind the village. (89)

Francesca Stagner Marmon

***Aunt Alice and Aunt Edith**: **Alice Marmon**, daughter of Walter G. Marmon (i.e., niece of Leslie Marmon Silko's paternal great-grandfather and niece by marriage of [great-]Grandma A'mooh); **Edith Marmon**, daughter of R.G. Marmon by his first wife (i.e., Aunt Susie's half-sister and stepdaughter of Grandma A'mooh).*

> Aunt Alice told my sisters and me this [Kochininako] story one time when she came to stay with us while our parents had gone up to Mt. Taylor deer hunting. I was seven years old the last time time I had to stay behind. And I felt very sad about not getting to go hunting. Maybe that's why Aunt Alice told us this story. (82)

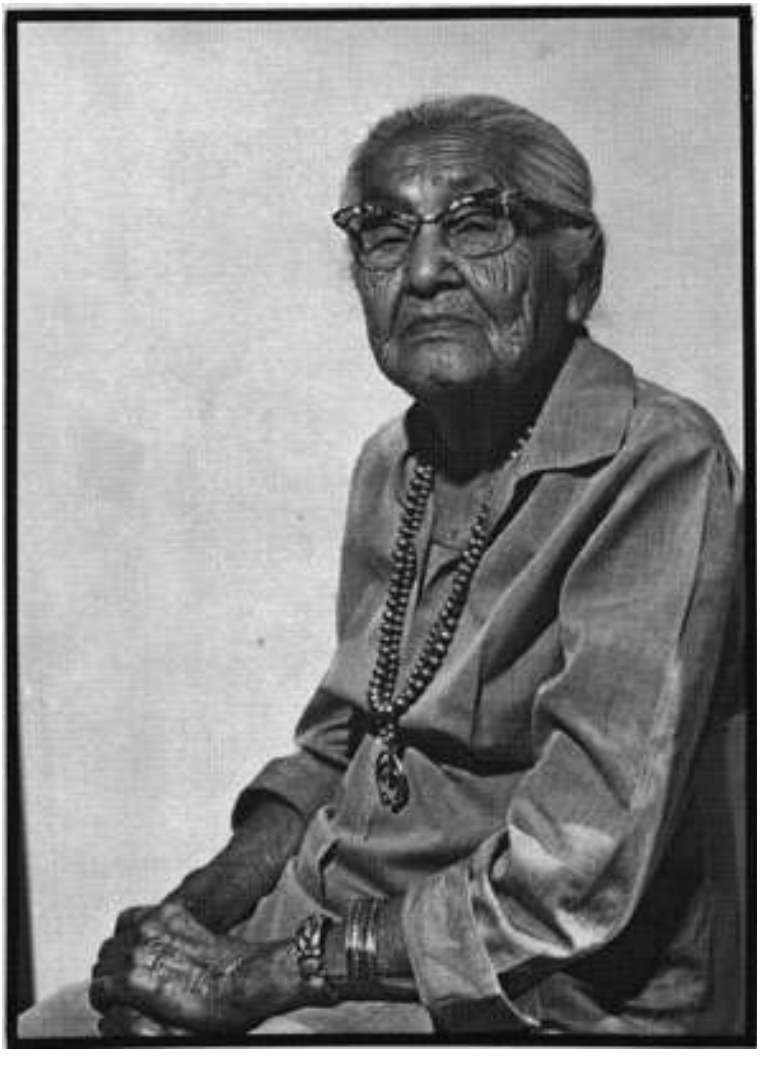
Alice Marmon and Edith Marmon

Aunt Susie*: Susan Reyes Marmon, Leslie Marmon Silko's paternal great-aunt.*

Aunt Susie always spoke the words of the mother to her
daughter
with great tenderness, with great feeling
as if Aunt Susie herself were the mother
addressing her little child. (15)

She had certain phrases, certain distinctive words
she used in her telling.
I write when I still hear
her voice as she tells the story. (7)

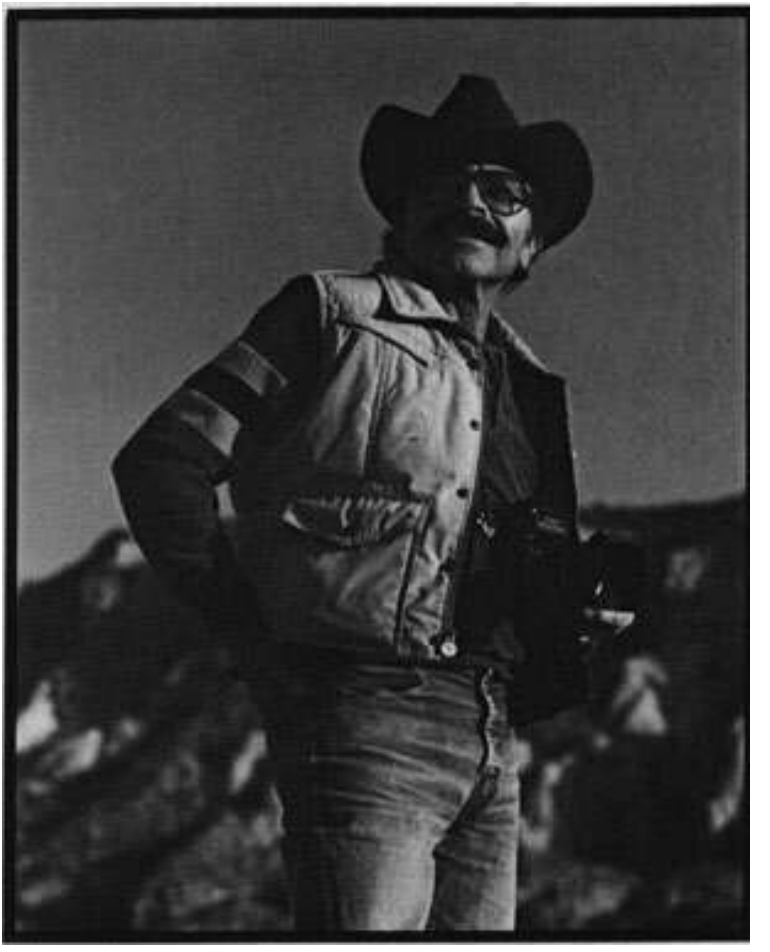
The Laguna people
always begin their stories
with "humma-hah":
that means long ago. (38)



Susan Reyes Marmon

Lee Marmon*: Leslie Marmon Silko's father.*

The hills and mesas around Laguna
were a second home for my father
when he was growing up.
He ran away from school for the hills
where he found less trouble.
. . . . . .
As I got older
he said I should become a writer
because writers worked their own hours
and they can live anywhere and do their work.
"You could even live
up here in these hills if you wanted." (160-61)



Lee H. Marmon

Leslie Marmon Silko

Halfact

Diane Glancy

CHARACTERS:

Coyote Girl
Coyote Boy
Narrator

SETTING:

The bare stage
Maybe three chairs

This is a play about language and imagination. An interdisciplinary world that walks the border between script and poem. A play of words that bend into one another in a new genre of short script or long poem. The compression and immediacy of a half act. A walking between two worlds or two genres in which the setting is pure imagery.

The theme is multicultural. There are different ways of seeing. There are other worlds and Coyote Girl and Coyote Boy bring one of those worlds into being. The oral tradition of the narrator. A dance of imagery, a visual and literal walk-the-border-between. A making of language where dreams dance with masks from the next world. I think it is the realm of the subconscious.

Coyote Girl is trying to climb to the roof where the men are. Away from her mother in the kitchen who dies from baking bread. The drama moves in and out of time. The narrator like an interlocutor. Coyote Girl lives a lot in imagination. She is left behind when her brother and father go to town. They have the power to drive and leave the farm. They try to use fear to keep her at home. A story of Coyote Girl growing up with incest, isolation, and a longing for escape. A surreal effect of a comic strip. An experiment with language. "Deadie. They said of mommie." The girl takes the place of her own mother and father. Native Amerlcan mythology in the form of the grandmother/owl

story to incorporate myth in drama. Silence and sound of experimental theater. Not motive or movement in chronological order with message and theme but the sharing of experience without thought of the usual structure of the play. Her search for escape and not finding any except in the idea of it.

NARRATOR

Out on the prairie. The sky doesn't reach the porch. The blue faded jeans of the sky.
On the roof there, Coyote Girl's Father and Brother tarring the shingles. See in the squint of your eye that's her on the roof. Her Father yelling at her to get back. The wind blows her eyes closed like curtains.

In the kitchen, a thin cloth covers the loaves of bread. Silence hangs on Coyote Girl's Mother like a hook.

In the shade of the barn
Coyote Girl makes a doll of pine needles.
There's a tree in the cemetery where she gathers pine cones from the ground like brown clouds.
Grandmother Coyote once had a pine cone from Louisiana. It was bigger than the pine cones in her cemetery.

COYOTE GIRL

We dance in the raking wind. The fingers of the hayfork between our feet.

NARRATOR

Coyote Boy climbs down from the roof.

COYOTE BOY

You'd be a fright if you fell from the barn.
Who'd dance with you with only half a head?
It's a long way down.
About half the fall of a comet from the sky.

NARRATOR

The farmtruck takes off on the dirt road,
blue as slow lightning
with ragged edges of a frayed wire.
The sky still jean blue and worn at the knees.
A hill in its back pocket.

COYOTE GIRL

He could have taken me to town
under these cream-pitcher clouds.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl wears a red kerchief on her head. When she steps in the pasture the grasshoppers take off from their missile silos buried in the dried grass. She walks to the woods on the far side of the pasture. She makes another pine-needle dress for her doll.

COYOTE GIRL

I hear my Father pounding the barn roof. It sounds like my Brother biting into an apple.

Already in the afternoon sky
the moon a silver button on the fly of his jeans.

I smell cowblood, the bone meal and manure.
Sometimes the tail-whiff of tar.

Over the pasture the sparrow flies like an arrow.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl would play longer in the woods by the pasture, but her Brother calls her name.

COYOTE BOY

Coyote Girl.

NARRATOR

Hear the expectation in her ear when she knows he's back from town.

COYOTE GIRL

I wish I had as much to say as the white church. The argyle socks of the church window.

COYOTE BOY

All the fangled woods you play in aren't you afraid?
The Chop Man get you, Sister.
The Goat Guy.

COYOTE GIRL

I'm afraid somewhat. Don't scare me worse.
I know we're deep in the woods.

There's danger all around.

The Earth traveling its orbit
passes robbers in space.
They would stop the stage but we get by somehow.

COYOTE BOY

There's space dust thick enough to stop us dead
in our tracks.

COYOTE GIRL

Is that why I need this scarf to keep my hair from always blowing? I also have a kerchief on my nose. They don't know I'm female and let me pass.

COYOTE BOY

The kitchen is waiting. You should help with the bread.

COYOTE GIRL

What do you think?
Do I look like a masked man?
I would steal the hairs from your face.
I wish we could play in the cemetery again without knowing.
As children.
Unaware.

COYOTE BOY

You'll get the grow-ups and never be the same. You want to be carried into the kitchen like wood for the stove?

COYOTE GIRL

No. I'll always be fresh. I'll always be mine.

COYOTE BOY

How can you be?

COYOTE GIRL

I am what I am.
The Chevy with its back to me, the license-plate like the carved mouth of a pumpkin. Its nose always headed off down the road.

COYOTE BOY

Would you head out of here too if you could?

COYOTE GIRL

If I had a carburetor and plugs. Yes I would.
But I'm leaving in my head. Already gone.
Just as horses in the trailer run without running.
Mane and tail fly. Ssshhhh. Ssshhh.
Gazzzah whoop.

COYOTE BOY

Sounds just as noisy too. The sky totters when you dance.
Bundled stars fall into the field.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl picks them up like berries
and dreams on them at night.
But now she goes to the kitchen.
You know that's where her Mother is.

COYOTE GIRL

We'll dance while cosmic dust claws the earth.
Ki yay hi yey.

NARRATOR

The Mother does not say anything but bakes more bread. Coyote Girl cuts the slices.

COYOTE GIRL

Look for the "shred" or "break" along the sides, just below the top-crust.
Cut the knife into the insides.
See the white, steaming-hot sponge.

Great Spirit
fill our pasture.
Let us kick our feet with the painted ponies.
The band is rented and this is our dance.

NARRATOR

Now it's supper.
The Coyote Father and Brother sit at the table.
Coyote Girl gives them bread.

COYOTE BOY

The barn-roof's shifted again.

Well the earth is all out of whack.
But it's like we have our old life back when Coyote Girl carries us bread. Her body shimmeying like the truck loaded for the rodeo.
We live like the land is ours again.
That's our half-act of bravery.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl's Mother walks to the table with more loaves of bread. Piles of them. As she sits down she falls face down on the table. You think she is dead.

COYOTE GIRL

She can't be. Mother!

COYOTE BOY

She's dead.

COYOTE GIRL

Dead of bread fumes. In this kitchen all day—

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl's Father and Brother carry Coyote Girl's Mother from the kitchen. They place her in the backyard on a board between two chairs. See her from the corner of your eye while you watch Coyote Girl grieve.

COYOTE GIRL

I rollie up the rug.
Ring the church bellies.
My arms agree.
I'm a proud owlie outta the tree.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl wears the headdress of her Brother's feathered hat with small ears and a beak.

COYOTE BOY

Coyote Girl is momentarily out of her head.

COYOYE GIRL

Hum hum. Lo yody. Lo yody.

Deadie. They said of mommie.
Disappeared in the kitchen. Nothing left but crumbs

on the meatloaf-platter.

NARRATOR

They take the Mother to the undertaker. See her riding off in the back of the pick-up.

COYOTE GIRL

Father tarring the roofie.
I mother now.
Waddu.
Watch out for the black-bucket night.
But wow the sparrowed arrowed rising me.

I feel the forest of the stars.
The nappy white clouds.
It stings to walk upright, to put on this house.
This turtle shell.
Now the others ride my back.

NARRATOR

In the back of the pick-up
on the way to the church
Coyote Girl retells a myth to herself:

COYOTE GIRL

Mother was sick in bed. Outside an owl hooted in a tree. Father went out and shot the owl. Now Mother's dead of a gunshot wound in her chest.

COYOTE BOY

Her coffin in the church.
A closed-in bed
resting in the forever of the afternoon.
The head left with its eyes open. Now she's closed.

NARRATOR

The Minister says, only half of her here.
The whole of her someplace else.
Isn't that life?
The split she walked.

Can't you see the Minister in the pulpit?
A congregation with their handkerchiefs
weeping before him.

COYOTE GIRL

Wasn't Mommie good? We had her fingernails and knuckles for years.
Her wrists, the tiny foot-bones. She lasted till we were nearly grown.

COYOTE BOY

She orbited the kitchen in her apron.
She gave herself for us.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl's Father speaks.
Others speak in the congregation on behalf of the dead Coyote Mother.

COYOTE GIRL

Mother I take your apron and grease the bread pans.
The voice of a woman is a foreign object.
It feels like silence in my mouth.

NARRATOR

It is the opera of the prairie.
Hear it in the loggia of the trees.
Imagine the milk-bucket of a belly.
The pasture of a woman.
Her skirts, the underneath of birth.
The locust scrapes its legs on the tree.
The fencerows stumble.

Inside the house
there is funeral rubble in Coyote Girl's room.
Weather-stained ribbons, a flower basket.
A row of pine cones on her dresser.

The sweet birth of fright.

Inside the porch where the sky doesn't reach,
thoughts are tucked like hair
into the old leather flight-cap she wears now.

They can't pass.
A border barricade.
Coyote Girl is Coyote Woman.

COYOTE GIRL

To even sit up
is a fine wire.

NARRATOR

Coyote Girl's Father is glad
to have a new wife. Ah the sex of it—
the fine smooth crotch, the divided fold of skin.

COYOTE GIRL

Take away my pine cone doll and laughter.
Take my memory and voice.
Let me be a spiny skeleton, a bony ladder.
A scaffolding which is nothing but structure
for the content of others.

A kitchen stage. The action of his climax
now in me.
The opera with voices in a language I understand.

NARRATOR

You can't believe what's happening.

COYOTE GIRL

Father Earth always moving.
Harsh. Unfeeling.

Mother Sky nuturing with yearnings afterlife.

COYOTE BOY

When the Great Spirit made the vagina
he took his finger from the stinkweed to do it.
Death and pleasure from the birth canal.

At least Coyote Girl can bake bread.

NARRATOR

You wanted down to the truth of it.
The separation from herself.
Coyote Girl's Mother died of untruth.
She was starved of her sense of person.

In the cemetery
Coyote girl writes, "Holding Silence Too Long"
on her mother's grave,
and "Devoured in the Kitchen Meal after Meal."

The cowbones ground to white dust.
Coyote Girl's Father powders the garden with it.

COYOTE GIRL

But the Coyote Mother could see no sense in herself as separate.
She said death to woman as she was.

I hold the pine-needle doll in her sharp dress.
Her space-suit ready for take-off.

NARRATOR
Coyote Girl's Father is calling her again.

COYOTE GIRL
Did you see that, Coyote doll?
Mother's spirit rising from the cemetery
just as we speak?
Yeah, we poke around in the ground for a while.
Finally we know we leave.

NARRATOR
Coyote Girl hears her Father call again.

COYOTE GIRL
Let me hold the funeral for the pine-needle doll first.

NARRATOR
Coyote Girl stirs the yeast into the warm water.
She stirs in the warm milk,
the sugar, salt and shortening.
She stirs in 2 cups of flour.

COYOTE BOY
She stirs until the dough is stiff.

NARRATOR
She rolls it out on a floured bread-board.

COYOTE GIRL
I roll it out on a floured bread-board.

NARRATOR
She kneads it.

COYOTE BOY
She kneads it.

NARRATOR

She covers it in a bowl and lets it rise.

COYOTE GIRL

My half-act of stirring.
The other half is the heat.

COYOTE GIRL

Meanwhile Coyote Boy steps into me.
His barn-breath on my knee.
The wad in his jeans
like a wedge under the table to hold the leg even.
I would think it was the stick from the tar-bucket.
It must have a bone.

A door-stop I couldn't do anything to close.

But an open door lets the bread-fumes out.

And the church bell speaks of the blood of Christ.
Shhh. There might be others.
The spookies from Halloween are crawling.
Hem hooooot hay.

COYOTE BOY

Shud up. You give me the scareds.

NARRATOR

Now the Coyote Father and Coyote Boy fight.
Maybe they're still tarring shingles.

Hear the Coyote Father howl.

COYOTE GIRL

Coyote Father has a broken toe.
Wheep. Wheep. Bom gazzah hizz.

Let them fuck one another.
Let 'em be 'et' under the greasy yellow sky.

Let me be the underbirth within.
It's the bravery I live.

NARRATOR

Now Coyote Girl wears a space helmet.

COYOTE GIRL

I dance with the ghost of my pine-needle doll.

She travels with the spirits up there.
Ah, the smell of bread.
The dark oven from which there is a rise.

See the hills like loaves of bread.

The trip of the earth,
its tail-lights blinking red.

FORUM

"There Is No Word For Goodbye"

Mary TallMountain's apt title occurs naturally to me as I end my term of service as Editor of *SAIL*: this is a farewell, but I still feel very much connected to the journal and all who have made it possible.

Some words of appreciation are in order first. I cannot sufficiently thank the able and generous Co-editors I have worked with. Dan Littlefield and James Parins took on the formidable task of initiating the new series with the first two issues, now collectors' items. From the last issue of volume one through the present, Bob Nelson has seen us through new design and the critical move to perfect binding; everybody should be lucky enough to have a collaborator as intelligent, responsible, and sensitive as Bob. Joe Bruchac, Poetry Editor, has overseen production of our two very special issues featuring many new as well as established poets and fiction writers. Also, the whole organization owes much to Elizabeth McDade for maintaining the subscription list first as a volunteer and then officially as ASAIL Treasurer.

More thanks go to editors of special issues: Toby Langen and Bonnie Barthold for the breakthrough issue on classical literature in translation; Larry Abbott for the issue on pedagogy; Linda Danielson for the present issue on Leslie Marmon Silko. Then there are the many, many people whom I called upon—if not daily, certainly frequently—for help, advice, sympathy, or other support, not to mention the people who also offered unsolicited help, compliments, excoriations, complaints, or praise. All was welcome, and to express my appreciation individually would make this note longer than the journal could take: I thank you also. I would like to offer particular thanks to the unpaid volunteers without whom I would not have been able to teach four courses on the side while editing *SAIL*: during the first two years, Jackie Budd and Sharon Dilloway made all the difference in the many quotidian tasks of editing a journal. Finally, my husband, Dan Brown,

and my son, Andrew Brown Jaskoski, have been ever-patient and supportive, besides correcting Latin texts for me.

The future of *SAIL* is in excellent hands. Rodney Simard brings excellent editorial and publishing experience to the job and has already embarked on the exciting project of a special issue on dramatic forms, and Bob Nelson will continue overseeing production with the support of the University of Richmond.

Recalling my anticipation, in graduate school, of the scholarly life—stimulating, enriching, full of intellectual controversy and discovery—I can say that editing *SAIL* has been one of the few experiences that has come close to that ideal. All our thanks are due to the many authors, most of them anonymous, who have so generously shared the riches of their tribal literatures and their individual genius with all of us. It has been a privilege to share my pleasure and delight in that literature through the pages of *SAIL* and to make it possible for others to do so as well.

Helen Jaskoski

"Looking Before and After"

Helen's evocation of Mary TallMountain turned my thoughts to Carter Revard's title as similarly apt for me at this time, although fellow Cherokee Diane Glancy's story title "A Sense of Continuity and Presence" also rings in my mind, for I am both humbled and honored by the achievements of my predecessors as editors of *SAIL*; their presence will always be felt in this journal, and I can only hope to continue their superb work in promoting and disseminating intellectual and cultural inquiry into American Indian Literatures—a daunting goal, but one I anticipate with genuine pleasure.

My gratitude goes to all who have participated in *SAIL*, those who have produced and contributed as well as those who have read and found illumination, but particularly to Helen Jaskoski, a friend and colleague, *emerita* in all the most excellent ways; and to Bob Nelson,

working with whom on the journal will be a deepening of an established friendship, respect, and collaboration, for I hope I have been of some small help to him on his soon-to-be-released *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in Native American Fiction*. I am also grateful to Linda Danielson, Guest Editor of this issue and most responsible for its content, making my transition less intimidating; the slight delay in the appearance of volume 5 is solely because of my own hesitant deliberation of my new responsibilities (certainly, in the future, I intend to offer contributors the opportunity to review proofs of their work prior to publication, unfortunately impossible with this issue).

I plan no radical shifts or mutations in *SAIL*, but I hope that I will be able to bring some new contributions from my own personal perspective, experience, position, and culture. I believe that our journal is the appropriate forum for an engagement of some of the pressing issues and questions of our discipline and profession: multiculturalism and the American melting pot; the ethnic, cultural, political, and geographic implications of and disagreements about such terms and rubrics as *American Indian* and *Native American*; the contributions and potentialities of ethnopoetics, contemporary theory, crossdisciplinary revitalization, and the like. I hope to hear from you on these, and many other topics, and such a polyvocal forum will be a feature of future issues.

I would also like to emphasize the verbal/visual link of Native Literatures (as in this issue), perhaps including more photography, art, and considerations of film and performance, as well as expanding the traditional rhetorical boundaries of the scholarly essay. Also, the wonderful special issues of imaginative writing that Joe Bruchac has edited in the past inspire me to suggest inclusion of work in each issue, even an annual chapbook insert featuring an individual writer. My inclusion of Diane Glancy's bold "Halfact" in this issue is a step in this new direction. *SAIL*'s past achievements have been many, particularly in traditional literatures, but noting that a study of contemporary poetry has never been included, I hope to be able to promote a dialogic balance between the past, present, and future, as well as between various cultures and perspectives.

Personally, I have found the special issues enormously rewarding, and I want to continue to emphasize them, encouraging guest editors to join in the effort from their areas of expertise. Already in progress are Susan Gardner's issue on Feminist and Post-Colonial Approaches, Greg Sarris' on Critical Approaches, and Birgit Hans' on European Criticism and Scholarship; now, my own on Contemporary Film, Drama, and Theater no longer seems so particularly "special." I have begun work on an issue that compiles the elusive but essential contents of Series

One, and issues on Children's Literatures and Contemporary Poetry, among others, have been proposed if not yet confirmed. I strongly encourage all of you among the growing audience of *SAIL* to suggest, propose, correct, and take issue with everything I suggest here.

I offer my genuine thanks to all for this honor and responsibility. I hope I will be able to fulfill your confidence and serve the journal and Native American Literatures well in the future.

Nvwhtohiyada,
Rodney Simard

ASAIL President's Report on the 1992 MLA

1992, the infamous quincentennial year, was a busy time of transformation for the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL). Among the most dramatic changes was the acquisition of a new editor of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* (*SAIL*). Welcome to Rodney Simard, who brings rich and diverse editing and publishing experience, as he begins as the new General Editor of *SAIL* with this issue. Special thanks go to outgoing Editor Helen Jaskoski for her many years of superb work on the journal. Thanks also to the ongoing work of Robert Nelson, who will continue as Production Editor of *SAIL*. Finally, thanks are due to the Executive Committee and to Paula Gunn Allen, Joseph Bruchac, Daniel Littlefield, James Parins, Carter Revard, and Kathryn Shanley who provided invaluable assistance in the search.

Last year was also the time for MLA's review of ASAIL's status as an *allied organization* of MLA. With the advice of LaVonne Brown Ruoff, Jarold Ramsey, Wayne Franklin, Larry Evers, Bob Sayre, Helen Jaskoski, and many others, I wrote the report. Last Spring MLA officials informed us that ASAIL has had its allied organization status renewed. From this point on, such renewal reviews will take place every seven years. ASAIL's next allied status review, then, will be in 1999. At the same time, LaVonne Brown Ruoff wrote the report

(which she graciously shared as a model for my report) that resulted in the American Indian Literatures MLA *Discussion Group* being upgraded to the American Indian Literatures MLA *Division*. Congratulations all around.

This year ASAIL and the very new American Indian Literatures Division (chaired in 1992 by Kate Shanley) worked even more closely together than in previous years. Next year in Toronto, in fact, we have agreed to try something new: a joint business meeting. The advantages of a combined meeting include the ease of coordinating MLA sessions devoted to Native American Literatures, a decrease in the number of business meetings to attend (since most of us attend both), and a freeing up of a time slot (an issue about which MLA officials are concerned because the MLA conference continues to grow). If the joint meeting works out, with sufficient time to accomplish the business of both allied organization and division, we will negotiate its continuance. If the joint meeting does not work out, ASAIL can resume its individual business meeting in 1994. At this time, let me encourage all of you to attend the business meeting and, if you have not yet done so, to become involved in the ongoing work of ASAIL.

The ASAIL business meeting itself included a number of brief reports: no progress to report on ASAIL incorporation; ongoing work on the directory of Native American Studies programs; thanks to Helen Jaskoski, outgoing Editor of *SAIL*, and welcome to Rodney Simard, incoming Editor; thanks to outgoing Vice-President Gretchen Ronnow for her work on the American Studies Association journal exhibit and to outgoing Secretary Toby Langen for organizing ASAIL participation (an entire day's worth) at the 1992 American Literature Association; announcement of renewal of allied status; announcement of a new, one-year Treasurer, Robert Nelson, and thanks to outgoing Treasurer Elizabeth McDade. The Treasurer's Report, submitted by Robert Nelson, notes that ASAIL is in the black again this year. All present approved Elizabeth McDade's recommendation that ASAIL membership funds should be allocated as follows: out of an individual membership fee of $25.00, $16.00 will go to *SAIL* publication; $4.00 to *ASAIL Notes* publication; and $5.00 to general funds for conferences. The decision to hold a second ASAIL business meeting each year in June at the American Literature Association (ALA) was supported enthusiastically.

According to Helen Jaskoski's report on *SAIL*, three issues of *SAIL* (volumes 4.1, 4.2/3, and 4.4) were published in 1992. The materials for 5.1 were delivered to Rodney Simard. *SAIL* subscriptions are now over 300, including library and overseas subscriptions. As a member of the Conference of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ), *SAIL* was

eligible to share display space at the CELJ booth at MLA. In addition, *SAIL* was part of a joint display with *American Indian Quarterly*, *American Indian Research and Culture Journal*, *Wicazo Sa Review*, and *News from Native California* at the University of Oklahoma booth at the American Studies Association in Costa Mesa, California (November 1992).

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant, obtained by Helen Jaskoski, began officially in April 1992. This grant helps to fund a joint publication project. As the report explains, a contract was negotiated with the University of Arizona Press for publication of an anthology, collecting work produced in connection with the "Returning the Gift" festival in Oklahoma in July 1992, edited by Joe Bruchac. The book should be completed in late 1993 or early 1994. All *SAIL* subscribers will receive a copy. "The project will continue to be administered at California State University, Fullerton," the report explains. " All other *SAIL* editorial matters should be referred to Rodney Simard at California State University, San Bernardino." Helen concludes with thanks: "Special appreciation to my patient co-editors, first Dan Littlefield and Jim Parins, then Bob Nelson, and Joe Bruchac, and to Elizabeth McDade who always did the right thing with the money. Also thanks to the University of Richmond, which makes it possible for us to publish at all by subsidizing much of our typesetting."

In addition, ASAIL elections were held. The ASAIL by-laws call for the President and the Treasurer to be elected to two-year terms in odd-numbered years, and the Vice-President and Secretary to be elected to two-year terms in even-numbered years. The following ASAIL officers were elected at our 1992 business meeting: Vice-President, Betty Louise Bell (Harvard University), and Secretary, Ines Hernandez (University of California, Davis). Thanks to outgoing officers Gretchen Ronnow (Vice-President) and Toby Langen (Secretary) for their contributions. Because Elizabeth McDade (Treasurer) requested that we find a replacement for her, Robert Nelson will take over the responsibilities of Treasurer for one year. This arrangement will allow for the greatest continuity as we search for a new treasurer (scheduled to be elected in 1993). If you have nominations for the 1993 elections (President and Treasurer), please mail them to me.

In 1992, for the first time, allied organization representatives were invited to a breakfast meeting to confer with Phyllis Franklin (Executive Director of MLA) and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Convention. Although nothing was decided at the meeting, this standing-room-only breakfast was the first step in what I hope will be more direct communication between MLA officials and allied organiza-

tions.

As well as conducting the business noted above at the 1992 MLA, ASAIL sponsored two sessions and a social event (unfortunately called a "Cash Bar" by MLA guidelines), all of which were well attended. Although scheduled early in the morning, "Gender and Gay and Lesbian Studies in Native American Literatures," chaired by Janice Gould (University of New Mexico), attracted a healthy crowd. "Literature in Native Languages," chaired by Luci Tapahonso (University of Kansas), was scheduled for the final session of MLA. Usually, such a time slot would insure a poor showing, but the panel generated a great turnout. This may have been the first MLA panel in which you could hear the languages of the Navajo, Lakota, and To'ono O'odham, as well as English, spoken.

ASAIL has plans for active participation in the 1993 MLA in Toronto as well. ASAIL is sponsoring two sessions and the American Indian Literatures Division is organizing three sessions to be held at the 1993 MLA. We encourage your participation. Topics include intellectual property rights; film and theater; migration stories and songs of place; Linda Hogan; and literary genre crossings. For detailed information, please see the Call for Papers section in this issue. Papers that focus on oral literatures are welcome in all areas. Submit papers or proposals by March 20. In addition, plans for special events (readings, performances, and films by Native North Americans) are underway.

Another conference to consider is the 1993 American Literature Association (ALA) Conference that will be held in Baltimore this June. John Purdy is organizing as many as five ASAIL sessions. Topics being considered so far include: literary criticism and creative writing dialogue; teaching Native Literatures; "internalized colonialism" in Native texts; and early Native American writers. For submissions or more information, write or call James Purdy (see Call for Papers).

Finally, two brief announcements: *ASAIL Notes* has a new publication date. *Notes* will be published on November 15 rather than November 1. Franchot Ballinger is still working on a directory of Native American Studies programs. Please encourage departments on your campus to complete his questionnaire. If you have any information you would like to share, send it to Franchot Ballinger at: Mail Location 205, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati OH 45221.

Happy New Year to everyone in this, the Year of Indigenous People.

Respectfully yours,
Hertha D. Wong
ASAIL President

1993 ASAIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Calls for Papers

1993 MLA TORONTO

ASAIL-SPONSORED SESSIONS:

Intellectual Property Rights in Native North America: Whose Story is This, Anyway? Chair, David L. Moore, 407 N. Aurora, Ithaca NY 14850; "ethics of criticism in relation to translating, editing, anthologizing, copyrighting, or critiquing traditional and contemporary Native Literatures. How can professional academics avoid a mercantile relation to the texts of literary ethnography?"

Film and Theater in Native North America. Chair, Angela Aleiss, American Indian Studies, 3220 Campbell Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles CA 90024.

AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURES DIVISION-SPONSORED SESSIONS:

Crossing the Medicine Line I: Native American Migration Stories and Songs of Place. Chair, Susan Scarberry-García, American Indian Studies, 3220 Campbell Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles CA 90024.

Linda Hogan. Chair, Betty Louise Bell, Department of English, Harvard University, Cambridge MA 02138.

Genre Crossing: Trickster, Tropes, and Transformations in Native American Literatures. Chair, Hertha D. Wong, Department of English, University of California, Berkeley CA 94720.

PROPOSED RELEVANT SESSIONS:

A Commedia for Our Time: Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*. Chair, Louise K. Barnett, 306 Winding Hill Dr., Lancaster PA 17601.

Teaching Native American Literature in Canadian and American Institutions. Chair, Lally Grauer, English Department, University of Toronto, Toronto ON M5S 1A1, Canada.

Cross-Cultural Images: European Perceptions of Native Americans. Chair, Brigitte Gerl; "focus on representations of indigenous populations of the Americas in 20th-century European literary and popular witing; the textualizations of the exotic or primitive other as a response to the decentering of 'Europe' as a frame of reference."

Native American Poetry. Chair, Brian Conniff; "contemporary or historical perspectives; relation to the canon; relation to theories of postcolonialism; understanding of heritage."

1993 AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION (ALA) BALTIMORE (MAY)

ASAIL-sponsored topics being considered so far include: literary

criticism and creative writing dialogue; teaching Native American Literatures; "internalized colonialism" in Native texts; early Native American writers. For submissions or more information, write or call James Purdy, Department of English, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225-5996.

Notices

NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN PROSE AWARD

A publication prize for the best new work by an American Indian writer has been established by the University of Nebraska Press in cooperation with the University of California at Berkeley and the University of California at Santa Cruz. The award-winning manuscript will be published by the University of Nebraska Press. Its author will receive a $1000 advance. The award is given anually. Deadline for submission for the award is July 1. Finalists will be selected by November 1. The decision of the judges will be announced the following January.

There are two stages of consideration. The University of Nebraska Press solicits refereed readings for manuscripts as it deems necessary. On the basis of these reports and its editorial judgment, the Press selects three or more finalists for submission to the contest jury: Gerald Vizenor (chairman), Diane Glancy, Louis Owens, and A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff.

Rules for entry: (1) Manuscripts must be prose book-length nonfiction. Novels, short stories, drama, and poetry will not be considered. Eligible manuscripts include history, biography, autobiography, literary criticism, essays, non-fiction works for children, and political commentary. (2) Manuscripts must be previously unpublished in book form. They may include parts that have been published in journals, but all rights and permissions must be secured by the author. (3) Manuscripts may not be under consideration at another press. (4) Manuscripts must be submitted in doublespaced typescript. Improperly prepared typescripts will be returned to the authors unread. (5)

Manuscripts should be accompanied by a return envelope with adequate return postage. (6) The competition and award are limited exclusively to people of American Indian descent. Authors should include a résumé or brief autobiographical sketch. (7) Manuscripts submitted for the award will be considered for publication on their own merits, whether or not they win the award.

Manuscripts and queries should be directed to: North American Indian Prose Award, c/o University of Nebraska Press, 327 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln NE 68588-0520.

SNOWBIRD PUBLISHING COMPANY

Snowbird Publishing Company, owned and operated by American Indians for Indian writers, seeks "books by Indian writers so that others—both Indians and non-Indians—can see what we already know—that the true vision of America is an *Indian* one." Last year, Snowbird also began publishing *The Four Directions: American Indian Literary Magazine* and continues to seek contributions in both traditional and non-traditional genres. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to: Snowbird Publishing Co., PO Box 729, Tellico Plains TN 37385, 615/546-7001, FAX 615/524-8612.

THE SMITHSONIAN SERIES OF STUDIES IN NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

Series Editors: Arnold Krupat (Literature Faculty, Sarah Lawrence College) and Brian Swann (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Cooper Union). Editorial Board: William Bright, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Alfonso Ortiz, Gerald Vizenor, and Ofelia Zepeda. In the past two decades at least, scholars from a variety of disciplines in the Americas and in Europe have increasingly recognized that the study of Native American cultures and their literatures are central to their concerns. This recognition has inspired a body of work that now constitutes a new field, one which as yet has no proper name.

Defining "literature" in the broadest sense, the Smithsonian Series of Studies in Native American Literatures seeks to provide a center for

this new interdiscipline. The Series will publish scholarly and critical essays of distinction on the literary cultures of indigenous peoples, as well as lively writing whose concerns and modes of presentation do not generally fall within the usual scholarly bounds.

The Series is projected as a sustained commitment to the importance of indigenous literary cultures and envisions itself as both shaping and being shaped by new developments in the field. The Series Editors welcome suggestions for further projects.

All royalties from the Series publications will be donated to Native American rights and education funds. Correspondence may be directed to: Daniel Goodwin, Editorial Director, Smithsonian Institution Press, 470 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7100, Washington DC 20560.

THE NATIVE WRITER CIRCLE OF THE AMERICAS

In addition to the volume co-published by *SAIL* and the University of Arizona Press, with support from the NEA, edited by Joe Bruchac, last year's "Returning the Gift" conference has also sparked a new organization, The Native Writer Circle of the Americas, which has set annual dues at $5 and is planning a newsletter. For more information, contact Joseph Bruchac at: The Greenfield Review Press, 2 Middle Grove Ave., Greenfield Center NY 12833, 518/584-1728.

TALKING LEAF

Having folded in 1986, this popular and useful publication has been resurrected by former editor Mike Burgess, who, along with Marcelyn Kropp, Sandra Dixon, Eva Northrup-Sy, and Isaac Irquidie, founded American Indian Communications Arts in 1992. *Talking Leaf* can be contacted at: 145 S. Berkeley Ave., Pasadena CA 91107.

NATIVE AMERICANS OF THE NORTHEAST

"Native Americans of the Northeast: Culture, History, and the Contemporary," edited by Colin G.Calloway, History, University of Wyoming, and Barry O'Connell, English and American Studies, Amherst College, is a series that will explore the diverse cultures and histories of the Indian peoples of New England, the Middle Atlantic states, eastern Canada, and the Great Lakes region. The focus will be on the continuing vitality and presence of these Native Americans, long considered a "vanishing" people and much less studied than the Indians of the Plains and Southwest. For this reason the editors are especially interested in works that examine neglected topics in Native American Studies: cultural survival, resistance, and innovation from the late Seventeenth Century to the present; the relationship between Indian and African American communities; the urban experience, and Indians in industrial occupations, among others.

More generally, the editors are looking for works that explore all forms of Native American culture, past and present. These might include short stories, poems, novels, and other writings by Native Americans; collections of neglected or previously unpublished writings by Native Americans; histories of specific communities and biographies of important individuals; ethnographies and folklore; archaeological studies of Indian history before and after European contact; linguistic studies that address readers both in and beyond the field; explorations of the visual and spiritual traditions of the many peoples in this region.

Please address inquiries to: the series editors, c/o Colin G. Calloway, History, University of Wyoming, PO Box 3198, Laramie WY 82071, or to Clark Dougan, Senior Editor, University of Massachusetts Press, PO Box 429, Amherst MA 01004.

Native Storytellers

Compiled by Joseph Bruchac, this preliminary listing of American Indian Storytellers arose from the 1992 National Storytelling Festival, held annually since 1973 in Jonesborough, Tennessee; last year, over

80 storytellers were featured. In 1975, Jimmy Neil Smith founded the National Association for the Preservation of Storytelling, and he can be contacted at: PO Box 309, Jonesborough TN 37659, 615/753-2171.

Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki)
PO Box 308
Greenfield Ctr NY 12833
518/584-1728

Lloyd Arneach (Cherokee)
3071 Burnett Rd.
Suwanee GA 30174
404/271-7268

Diane Benson (Tlingit)
200 West 34th #379
Anchorage AL 99503

Sharon Manybeads Bowers (Assiniboine and Haida)
2114 Mt. Vernon Rd SE
Cedar Rapids IA 52403

Matoaka Eagle (Apache/Chickahominy/Pueblo)
Brooklyn NY 11215
718/788-1491

Ed Edmo (Shoshone)
9430 NE Prescott
Portland OR 97220
503/256-2557

Ron Evans (Chippewa-Cree)
Tucson AZ

Steve Fadden (Mohawk)
American Indian Program
Cornell University
Ithaca NY 14850
607/255-6587

Greg Gomez (Lipan Apache)
11820 Eloise Dr.
Balch Springs TX 75180
214/289-5741

Vi Hilbert (Skagit)
10832 Des Moines Way S.
Seattle WA 98168

Matthew Jones (Kiowa)
Native American Public Broadcasting Network
Box 83111
Lincoln NE 68501
402/472-3522

Geri Keams (Navajo)
5152 LaVista Ct.
Los Angeles CA 90004
213/461-5695

Michael Lacapa (Apache/Hopi/Pueblo)
PO Box 587
Taylor AZ 85939
602/536-4164

Harold Littlebird (Pueblo)
2000 Hopewell Bldg. A
Apartment 103
Santa Fe NM 87501
505/474-0763

Kevin Locke (Lakota)
PO Box 241
Mobridge SD 57601

Chuna McIntyre (Yupick)
917 Dorine Avenue
Rohnert Park CA 94928
707/585-8052

Medicine Story (Wampanoag)
Mettanokit Outreach
Route 123
Greenville NH 03048
603/878-2310

Bill Miller (Stockbridge Munsee)
7416 Stacy Drive
Nashville TN 3721
615/662-0365

Marion Miller (Seneca)
10 Sycamore Drive
Avon NY 14414
716/226-3295

John Mitchell (Penobscot)
8 Oak Hill Street
Old Town ME 04468
207/827-2219

Joel Monture (Mohawk)
Inst. of American Indian Arts
Santa Fe NM 87504
505/988-6463

Johnny Moses (Nootka)
Box 1210
La Conner WA 98257
206/454-4714

Yako Tahnahga Myers (Mohawk)
1042 19th Ave. SE
Minneapolis MN 55414
612/378-9234

Robert Perry (Chickasaw)
1853 South Keeler
Bartlesville OK 74003

Gayle Ross (Cherokee)
Rt. 3, Box 215B
Fredericksburg TX 78624
512/997-3661

Duncan Sings-Alone (Cherokee)
800 Oak Drive
Mechanicsville MD 20659
301/884-5605

Dovie Thomason (Lakota/Kiowa Apache)
PO Box 168
Canton Center CT 06020
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REVIEWS

Mohawk Trail. ***Beth Brant. Ithaca NY: Firebrand Books, 1985. ISBN 0-932379-02-8, $6.95. 94 pages.***

The mainstream scholarly world struggles to find names for kinds of literature that do not fit into accepted ideas of canon and genre. How are such works to be thought of, works like *Storyteller*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, and *Mohawk Trail*? In *Mohawk Trail*, Beth Brant writes in her own voice as well as in invented voices like and unlike her own. She combines autobiographical sketches with traditional myth, speculative myth-making, fiction, and poetry. Moreover, the book may jolt the white reader attuned to what we think of as the expected issues of American Indian life. *In Mohawk Trail*, race, class, and gender intersect. Urban Detroit, the auto industry, and labor union activism shaped Brant's life, not land and fishing rights. Feminism for her includes both pan-Indian politics and lesbianism.

Amid these intersections, Brant claims her Indian identity as central to her life and writing. She was born to the Turtle Clan, in the house of her Iroquois father's parents. As co-founder of Turtle Grandmother, an archive and clearing house of manuscripts and information by and about American Indian women, Brant has committed much of her energy to editing and archiving the writings of Indian women. She also edited the anthology, *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection by North American Indian Women*. Beyond that, she is a half-breed daughter of an Iroquois father and a white mother, a third-generation Detroit working class woman who acknowledges her lesbian lover and works for prison reform. She talks union politics and remembers her days as a waitress or cleaning woman, portrays lesbian eroticism, retells family

stories, and recalls a few words of her grandfather's Mohawk language. The diversity of the self-in-cultural-community that she portrays would seem to demand and justify the formal diversity of *Mohawk Trail*. Moreover, Brant's sense of what *story* encompasses serves to suggest to us her connection with a family oral tradition that shapes words according to need and opportunity, not according to customary forms.

A first read through the book is a bit of a roller coaster ride. But Brant sets and maintains her terms. All her people and characters are clinging with more or less courage to a place in a society that doesn't see or attend to their needs and that feels free to define them out of existence. Their commonality is dislocation, and the mechanics of oppression are pretty much the same from one century to another, one target group to another.

Similar, too, from one oppressive situation to another are the basics of survival: grit, making do; remembering one's people and identity, both ordinary and cosmic. Thus Grandmother in the prefatory poem, "Ride the Turtle's Back," is more than the particular and much loved Grandmother Margaret Rose Brant:

> I lie in Grandmother's bed
> and dream the earth into a turtle.
> She carries us slowly across the universe. (11)

Following the prefatory poem, Brant divides the book into three sections, the first of which is "Native Origins," where she develops a series of childhood memories and family stories. In the second part of a dyptych entitled "Indian Giver," a tale of a houseful of people living with each other's pet notions, Grandmother insists each year on having a bigger Christmas tree than the previous year's. One year Grandfather fits the big tree through a small front door by sawing off the branches. Brant's spare, colloquial prose trusts the humor of the situation:

> After all the big branches were cut off, we managed to get the tree in the front room where its trunk proved to be too big for the tree stand.
>
> Grandma said, "Now what, big smart man?"
>
> He ran to the fruit cellar, coming up with a tin bucket. He got my dad to mix some cement, placed the tree in the bucket, then poured cement inside. Grandpa said he'd just stand there holding the tree, waiting for the cement to harden. He stood there for a long time. (28-29)

These stories are framed by pieces on the larger mythic family: the section's title piece, "Native Origins," is a speculative recreation of an Iroquois old-women's ritual; and in Brant's invention, "Coyote Learns a New Trick," a female Coyote seeks to make a fool of another female

by disguising herself as a dapper dandy man and seducing Fox. Not at all fooled, Fox lures Coyote into the joys of lesbian sex, finally suggesting that Coyote take off her ridiculous get-up "so we can get down to *serious* business" (34). The tone of the Coyote story is just right, full of realistic detail and reminiscent of all those traditional stories in which Coyote takes an inappropriate sexual role to gratify an ego appetite. In a nice twist, here she is brought to the discovery of what turns out to be sex for its own sake, rather than as ego gratification: "'Mmmmm yeah,' says Coyote, 'this Fox is pretty clever with all the stuff she knows. This is the best trick I ever heard of. Why didn't I think of it?'" (35).

The theme of making do as a means of survival is underlined in the first section of the book by the motif of quilting, which furnishes the book's defining structural metaphor (the titles "Mohawk Trail" and "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul" are both names of quilt patterns). Brant and her book designer, Mary A. Scott, introduce the quilting motif on the front cover. The background to the broad green-and-white slash of the title, with its connotations of the masculine adventure story, is a stylization of the quilt pattern "Mohawk Trail," created by the author's grandmother almost fifty years ago, according to the credit page. Quilts are a means of making do beautifully, of surviving in body and spirit, like the Indian beadwork Brant associates with these same women. Moreover, these crafts suggest the multiethnic family culture being forged in the transition from the Bay of Quinte Mohawk reserve to the streets of Detroit.

The second section of the book, "Detroit Songs," introduces a patchwork of urban lives, evoking the style of oral history. Two sketches are apparently based on the voices of Brant's own parents. Others include a tough but tender woman immigrant from the Kentucky coal fields, a young woman who works at K-Mart and dances on weekends at a lesbian bar, and a young man compulsively fond of dressing as a woman and alarmed at the kind of world men have created. Brant does remarkably well at maintaining distinctive voices and a spoken tone through so many monologues. But in this section, her strength as a political activist becomes her weakness as a creative artist. These characters become mouthpieces for points of view admirable enough in themselves, but the total effect is sometimes manipulative. In this least successful section of the book, Brant needs to trust her facts and the integrity of her characters more than she does. I simply don't believe that Garnet Lee Taylor of Grassman's Gulch, Kentucky, would have had the time or impulse in her overworked and undereducated youth to read *Jane Eyre* a hundred times. And I'm perfectly ready to admire the character's compassion and tenacity without all that reading. Moreover, while I deplore the cynical injustice

of a society where a good-hearted transvestite is fair game, my imagination is strained when it turns out that Danny's is a voice from beyond death. This bit of melodrama could well have been sacrificed.

By far the strongest piece in this part of the book is the poem "Her Name Is Helen," in which Brant resists the urge to editorialize or idealize. Taking the stance of the ironic observer, Brant creates a movingly understated portrait of a woman who struggles inarticulately to hang onto her identity:

> Helen takes pictures of herself.
> Everytime she passes those Polaroid booths,
> one picture for a dollar,
> she closes the curtain and the camera flashes. (62)

Brant portrays a benign-looking face of racism in the people who want to define Helen:

> She's had lots of girlfriends.
> White women who wanted to take care of her,
> who liked Indians,
> who think she's a tragedy.
> . . . . . .
> Told her what to wear,
> what to say
> how to act more like an Indian. (62-63)

The results are like those of overtly denigrative racism—self-hate:

> "I'm a gay Indian girl.
> A dumb Indian.
> A fat, ugly squaw."
> This is what Helen says.
> . . . . . .
> She doesn't kiss.
> Doesn't talk much.
> Takes pictures of herself so she will know she is there.
> (64-65)

This poem carries us into the third section of the book, "Long Stories," which develops the theme of who defines whom. In the lives Brant portrays, white people have the power to define a proper Indian and thus to justify their own use of power, either with the misguided good intentions of Helen's women lovers or with the self-righteous and uncomprehending cruelty of BIA officials taking an Indian woman's children away to boarding school in "A Long Story."

Here Brant alternates passages from two different stories of mothers losing their children, showing how institutional cruelty and prejudice are the same, no matter their time or setting, and the mothers

of children lost to institutions are sisters. Interwoven with Annie's first-person narrative, set on an unspecified reservation in 1891, is Mary's narrative, dated 1979. An urban lesbian mother, she endures the agony of losing her daughter to a court order. In the final passages of each story, Brant develops a pattern of imagery that unites these two women. Annie speaks of the coming of white men:

> They sent the Blackrobes many years ago to teach us new magic. . . . They spoke of gods who would forgive us if we believed as they do. They brought the rum with the cross. This god is ugly! He killed our masks. He killed our men. He sends women screaming at the moon in terror. They want our power. They take our children to remove the inside of them. . . . I stand in the field watching the fire, The People watching me. We are waiting, but the answer is not clear yet. A crazy woman. That is what they call me. (84)

Meanwhile Mary has finally given up on rationality and joins Annie in inarticulate pain and craziness, suggested by the introduction of animal imagery into her story. Brant gets good mileage out of the obvious parallel between the two kinds of robed institutional functionaries:

> I open the door to Patricia's room. . . . I walk to the windows, begin to systematically tear down the curtains. I slowly start to rip the cloth apart. I enjoy hearing the sounds of destruction. Faster, I tear the material into strips. What won't come apart with my hands, I pull at with my teeth. . . . A noise gathers in my throat and finds its way out. I begin a scream that turns to howling, then becomes a hoarse choking. I want to take my fists, my strong fists, my brown fists, and smash the world until it bleeds. Bleeds! And all the judges in their flapping robes, and the fathers who look for revenge, are ground, ground into dust and disappear with the wind. (85)

Brant is a talented and adventurous writer who sometimes imposes her opinions between her reader and her act of imagination. Her argumentative purpose sometimes overpowers the integrity of her characters. I hope she will come to trust the experiential detail of lives and recognize that in art, argument is made by observation more than by premise and proposition. In Brant's strongest pieces this trust already lives.

Linda L. Danielson

Food & Spirits. *Beth Brant. New York: Firebrand, 1991. ISBN 0-932379-93-1, $18.95 cloth, $8.95 paper. 125 pages.*

Food & Spirits continues Beth Brant's giving voice to those not often heard. Following close on her first collection, *Mohawk Trail* (1985), these well crafted stories allow the voices of Native American survivors to speak: battered women, children confronted with the death of their mothers, an AIDS patient, a lesbian mother surviving the death of her child, an elderly man from the reservation visiting his granddaughters in the city. The stories make palpable the pain and the beauty of their lives:

> Love as piercing as the screwdriver's thrust.
> Love as searing as the marks on an infant's leg.
> Love as clear as her face.
> Love as clean as a sheet of yellow paper.
> Love as honest as a poem.
> I have to tell.
> It is the only thing I know to do. (17)

To place the stories within the Native American storytelling tradition, Brant begins with a finely detailed retelling of the story of Sky Woman, Turtle Mother, First Woman, and the Twin Sons. The story ends with the admonition to teach the sons (and daughters) "to honor the women who made them" or "that will be the end of the earth" (26), emphasizing the importance of women in Brant's tradition. Brant's Sky Woman story also introduces the concept of same-sex love as sacred, aligning herself with such interpretations as that of scholar and Native American critic Paula Gunn Allen in her *Sacred Hoop.* Brant says of Sky Woman and First Woman: "They laughed together and made language between them. They touched each other and made a language of touching: passion. They made medicine together. They make magic together" (24). Also part of Sky Woman and First Woman's sacred rites is "fix[ing] food together, feeding each other herbs and roots and plants" (24). Thus, the Sky Woman story sets the frame for the following contemporary stories and introduces the major

themes.

The story from which the title comes is unusual in that African American characters come together with Native American characters, sharing food and "spirits" after the model of Sky Woman. Brant is able to point out the similarities in these two disparate cultures, peoples whose lives are not so very different after all. In another story, "Turtle Gal," an elderly African American man adopts a young Native American girl who lives across the hall in their urban apartment building after the sudden death of her mother. Brant's elderly character is gay, but in Brant's story there is no hint of impropriety, countering the too-common sexist misperception that gay men are child molesters. This child is one of the society's throw-a-way children, but she is safe within the shelter that the gay man provides for her—both society's discards. One of the many strengths of Brant's writing is that she does equally well with the creation of male and female characters.

These are searing stories of characters making connections and coming home—physically and spiritually. I was not prepared for just how searing, even though I was familiar with her first very powerful collection of stories. These made me cry, not out of pity for the characters, but because something in the stories touched my life; I was part of them. This ability of the storyteller to make the listeners/readers participants in the stories is, I believe, an admirable goal of much of Native American storytelling and one at which Brant excels. She, indeed, gives voice to the forgotten and seldom heard without being preachy. Her "ear" for the nuances of language of the working poor, rural and urban, is remarkable.

One of the showpieces of this collection is her story "This Place," in which Brant offers the reader the gift of being allowed into a ceremony for the easing of the death of an AIDS patient come back to the reservation to die. In this story the patient's history is woven into the history of the people, bringing the parts back together again. When together, a spiritual healing is affected. The ceremony is "[t]o put the earth back together. It is broken. We look for truth to put us all together again. . . . *WE* make the truth" (64). Brant's talent is such that the reader can be drawn into the ceremony, realizing that we all have lost our parts and these stories can be part of our regaining them. They provide the rich sustenance of the food and spirits of the title.

Annette Van Dyke

Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story. *As told through Mark St. Pierre. U of Oklahoma P, 1991. ISBN 0-8061-2369-9, $19.95 cloth. 209 pages.*

This is the story of a survivor: Madonna Swan, who was named North American Indian Woman of the Year by her Cheyenne River Reservation tribal sisters in 1983. As such, it is an important autobiography to read in conjunction with male American Indian survival stories, such as *Black Elk Speaks*. Though not as overtly feminist as Paula Gunn Allen or Leslie Marmon Silko, Swan nonetheless tells a story of her *ishna ti cha lowan*, or coming of age as a woman. Perhaps this is not the central story of the book, which is arranged episodically and anecdotally, but it is one of the stories of the book. That this American Indian woman's story is "told through" an Anglo-American male writer is the central weakness of the work.

It seems that the writer, Mark St. Pierre, is well-intentioned. In the Preface, he writes:

> . . . reading the simple words in this collection still deeply moves me. This emotion is partly an outgrowth of the honest relationship Madonna Swan and I developed during our frequent interviews, but more, I suspect, a result of this Native American woman's keen ability to teach us. . . . (ix)

Yet the reader is left to wonder about the "honesty" of the text, its faithfulness to Madonna Swan's orally transmitted stories. In the Preface, St. Pierre speaks briefly of his revision process, that of literary editing and arranging intended to convey the "spirit" of the stories. Calling them "unified vignette[s]," St. Pierre distilled the stories from "triplicate versions" he recorded between 1975 and 1981 (ix). His "next challenge," he says, "was to add settings where needed and to write them in such a manner that the colloquial manner of the telling was left intact and had the proper mood and feeling" (ix). He then "arranged [the stories] in a loose chronological order, creating the sense of a story line" (ix). This and other statements imply a linear

artistic manipulation of circular American Indian story. The reader wonders why St. Pierre was not more direct in addressing the questions raised by his and other such "told through" collaborations, such as John G. Neihardt's collaboration with Black Elk, but St. Pierre skirts these issues.

Also questionable is the apparatus of copious endnotes that vary in quality from the informative to the obvious. For the reader familiar with American Indian cultures and literatures, the notes will seem, for the most part, simplistic and reductive. The very first note, for example, explains what a "giveaway" is (181). Other notes—such as a translation (191, n72) of "first moon, or monthly cycle" (40)—are, for any reader, unnecessary. Even when the narrative itself is the subject for commentary in the notes, St. Pierre presumes to interpret the stories for the reader rather than to comment on their editorial genesis. Thus, he writes: "This remarkable narration, quite unusual in published literature, reinforces our human understanding of Madonna's deepest dreams and hopes. . ." (198-99, n5). In only one note (186, n29) does St. Pierre give a clue to the extent of the collaborative process. He writes, "In reviewing the manuscript, Madonna commented that she did not like her version of the [Rock Boy] story, saying it lacked significant details. We did not come up with a better version, so hers stands."

The stories that stand are significant, and that is what highly recommends the book. Despite its textual problems, the narratives transcend as tales of the destructive and creative forces between reds and whites, between women and men. Sometimes the racial and gender forces are dually destructive and creative, as in the story of the white man who sexually harasses Swan in the presence of her husband:

> Gee, I saw red! I turned around, and I just hit him on the head with my purse and knocked him down. He was out cold! I said all kinds of things to him, and I said a lot of bad things, too! "No white man is ever going to touch this 'squaw' even if some squaws are that way. . . ." (158)

The stories are not sugar-coated, but they are bitter-sweetened with humor and softened with humanity. So after this encounter, Swan and her husband share a hearty laugh over the lethal weapon in her purse, a bottle of Jergen's lotion. And Swan plants a garden with her nearest neighbor, a white woman who, she later discovers, is the cousin of the man who harassed her:

> That summer we planted a garden together. We hauled water together and watered the garden. Whatever we got from the garden we shared. We canned together, picked wild cherries, we did all sorts of things together. (159)

As part of a tribal community, Madonna Swan tells a remarkable tale

of forced isolation because of a ten-year bout with tuberculosis. Placing these stories in the middle third of the book, St. Pierre intends them to be at the heart of Madonna Swan's life story. Swan herself seems to agree. Exiled to the Sioux San(itorium) from 1944-50 and then escaping to Sanitor, a "white" sanitorium where she recovered until 1954, Swan perceived her disease as a "disgrace" (63), and she tells, in poignant stories of imprisonment and punishment, what many American Indians faced. Whether imprisoned in sanitoriums or boarding schools, their sentence was the same: tribal alienation, a spiritual death comparable to the physical deaths to which many succumbed. At Sioux San, Swan and her friend Bernice Long calculated that in 1950 there were five hundred deaths (74). And as unsanitary and inhumane as the institution was, more haunting was the thought that she would die alone, away from family and home.

That she survived to return to her reservation and her tribe is a remarkable testimony to the perseverance of this Lakota woman. And as a testimony to the American Indian belief that their culture survives through their stories, *Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story* should have a long life indeed.

Sandra L. Sprayberry

Mud Woman: Poems from the Clay. ***Nora Naranjo-Morse. Sun Tracks 20. U of Arizona P, 1992. ISBN 0-8165-1248-5, $35.00 cloth, $15.95 paper. 121 pages.***

When one thinks of work in clay from the Pueblos and the Southwest, a range of images may come to mind: classic Mimbres pots and Hopi polychromes, Nampeyo's Hopi revival style of the late Nineteenth Century, Maria Martinez' San Ildefonso black-on-black pots, or the ubiquitous storytellers and tourist-market pottery sold in shops in Santa Fe and in some of the surrounding reservations in New

Mexico.

But over the last decade or so a newer generation of Pueblo artists working in clay have emerged to explore their visions and the possibilities of the medium. Even though their *imagery* differs from the more traditional pottery forms, these contemporary artists are not less connected to the *process* of working in clay than their parents and grandparents.

Mud Woman: Poems from the Clay, Volume 20 in the Sun Tracks series, charts Nora Naranjo-Morse's steadily evolving art and poetry over the last ten to fifteen years and reflects not only her personal experience and reality as a contemporary Pueblo woman but also the ever-growing impact of the "outside world" on the Pueblos generally and on Santa Clara in particular, and the sometimes difficult, and sometimes humorous, personal and cultural negotiations that must occur in a "multicultural" society. The thirty color reproductions and the poems reflect the impact of these negotiations.

Naranjo-Morse is an intuitive artist whose work reveals itself to her as she progresses, and some of the poems are meditations on this discovery process. The poems in the first of the four major sections of the book, "Mud Woman," detail her approach to her work. In "When Mud Woman Begins" she writes:

> Creating spirits
> calling invitations
> of celebration.
> What occurs
> in completed form,
> bright
> and bold,
> is motion
> from our mother's skin (19-20)

Also in the opening section is "When the Clay Calls": "Dusting off the sanded earth / as coarse surfaces level into fluid forms / I had not yet discovered, / so smooth and yet richly textured with life of its own." The poems in this opening section are meant to be explorations, and they begin to show a tentative movement outward from the studio and the Pueblo to the larger world.

The first contact Mud Woman makes with this outer world is unsettling. "The Living Exhibit Under the Museum's Portal" renders a bittersweet account of trying to sell work to the tourists who flock to the *portale* at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe and who only desire something "that will remind them of the curiously / silent Indians, / wrapped tightly in colorful / shawls, just like in the post-cards" (30); "Tradition and Change" echoes Wordsworth's despair at

the ethos of "getting and spending"; and "Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business" completes the first section with the recognition of innocence lost in the collision of self and world, artist and marketplace.

Naranjo-Morse becomes an artist traveling in an alien land, and her encounters and reactions to this land, and the inevitable collisions she faces, form the second coil of the book, "Wandering Pueblo Woman." The collisions, sometimes confusing, sometimes marvelous and amazing, are well-observed and clarify conflicts, even becoming sources of future poems, as in "Wandering Pueblo Woman." In "The Money Beasts" the poet imagines herself as a revolutionary check-out clerk subverting the "correct protocol" of the capitalist system by siding with the customers. In "Two Worlds," the poet chastises herself for enjoying a piña colada on a Kauai beach and begins to doubt her identity: "Was it true, had I forgotten who I was, / where I'd come from? . . . Where was my place in these opposing worlds?" (47-48). The resolution to this poem shows that one's sense of personal identity needs not be compromised by interaction with the non-Indian world: "I am a brown woman, / who will always be a Towa, / even under a hot Pacific sun" (50).

Naranjo-Morse may be best known for her *Pearlene* series of clay figures, and the book offers a selection of poems about and reproductions of Pearlene. In some ways an exaggerated alter ego of Naranjo-Morse, Pearlene is a poker-playing, credit-card using thoroughly modern Pueblo woman, whose wardrobe of glitzy sunglasses, purple tennis shoes and pink dresses makes her the subject of both gentle disapprobation and envy. Pearlene's Tewa matriarchs "see their niece / as a pitiful example / of a Pueblo woman" (63), while at the same time Aunt Virgie, back from a session of gossip at the *horno*, wistfully slices bread for dinner, "secretly wishing / to be Pearlene / for just one night" (66).

Pearlene highlights in a largely humorous way the tensions between tradition and modernity, the problems of gain *and* loss in the Native community, further extending one of Naranjo-Morse's major themes, that of self-identity. Although on the face of it, Pearlene seems to be the antithesis of what it means to be a Pueblo Indian, with her tattoos and passion-blue eye shadow, Naranjo-Morse probes more deeply than surface image. She recognizes that Indian identity is not based on superficial characteristics but comes from a deeper source, the source of community and tradition, and it is this tradition that connects the People to their roots.

Mud Woman completes the circle by its fourth and final section, "Home." This section focuses mainly on Naranjo-Morse's family,

mother, father, sisters, husband, children, and work, and contains some of the most powerful poems in the book. In "My Father's Hands" she writes: "I have hands like my father, / I know this myself, / but like hearing my daughter say so" (98). Many of these final poems solidify the sense of unity and integration that Mud Woman seeks. There are finally no distinctions between self, home, family, tradition, and work.

Naranjo-Morse's clay work encompasses landscapes, figures, fetishes, sculptures, and wall hangings, and the poems throughout the book are structured much like the clay itself when it is prepared to be worked. The lines of the poems become moist coils of different yet functional lengths, which are shaped and smoothed by the artist and finally made whole. And *Mud Woman* must be taken as a whole, not simply as a book of poems or an art book. The poems and the clay pieces are complementary, each medium illuminating the other. For Naranjo-Morse (if not also for many Native artists), there is no artificial distinction between word and image, between art and life. Each nurtures and sustains the other. Her experience is "Wrung out into these clay forms you see. / wrung out into these words I offer you" (56). *Mud Woman* celebrates her forms and words, and is a joy.

Lawrence Abbott

Other Council Fires Were Here Before Ours. ***A Classic Native American Creation Story as Retold by a Seneca Elder, Twylah Nitsch, and her granddaughter, Jamie Sams. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.***
ISBN 0-6-250763-X. 147 pages.

Using the Seneca Medicine Stone, Jamie Sams interprets the stories passed on from her grandmother. The trouble is that the book tries to "explain" often unspoken understandings of a tribal culture in the language of the dominant white culture. Thus we are told on the bottom

of page 81 that "The remnants of Turtle Island floated above the blue seas of seeming contentment as the new generations refused to look deeply into the watery past, which had left them with the legacy of separateness." And further on, this: "As the Two-legged children of our Planetary Family began to explore their individual beliefs, the understanding of the concept of the Great Mystery dwindled."

What do phrases like "the legacy of separateness," with their Madison Avenue packaging, violate, miss, and destroy? What New Age incursions do phrases like "our Planetary Family" betray? One can easily imagine the next level of distortion the reader is apt to make: don't bother to sit at the feet of the elders or put in years of studying a particular tribe; just read this book and discover a Pan-Indian/New Age way to gloss all North American tribes, a shortcut to the usual time-consuming homework for tribal understanding.

Let me emphasize that the book does not make this gross claim; the way it is written merely invites gross misunderstanding. The "Language of the Stones" section, for example, begins by explaining the basic symbol, the circle, thus:

> The circle is the shape of harmony, representing perfection for Time Eternal. It is the symbol of the Creator, the Infinite Spirit, the Medicine Wheel, Sacred Space. In stone reading, the circle means a valuable lesson learned.

It should be said on behalf of this volume that the retelling of the tales is riveting. However, the interpretations, slickly glib, invite misgivings. In this way the oral tradition is betrayed in print by being overtold.

Roger Weaver

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