

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

跨越文化之兩難：論閱讀/書寫美國原住民文學之倫理
(II-II)

計畫類別：整合型計畫

計畫編號：NSC93-2411-H-018-004-

執行期間：93年08月01日至94年07月31日

執行單位：國立彰化師範大學英語學系暨研究所

計畫主持人：張月珍

報告類型：完整報告

處理方式：本計畫可公開查詢

中 華 民 國 94 年 12 月 11 日

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

蛻變中的北美原住民文學：詩學 文化與族群的交織——
跨越文化之兩難：論閱讀/書寫美國原住民文學之倫理(II-II)
The Dilemma of Crossing Cultures: On the Ethics of Reading/Writing
Native American Literature (II-II)

計畫編號：93-2411-H-018-004-

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Introduction

In his “Ethnic autobiography and the cult of authenticity,” Graham Huggan analyzes the reason why the mainstream public readers manifest huge interest in ethnic autobiographies. He contends that it is because ethnic autobiographies “signal the possibility of indirect access to ‘exotic’ cultures whose differences are acknowledged and celebrated even as they are rendered amenable to a mainstream reading public” (155). Ethnic autobiography, he says, like ethnicity itself, flourishes under the watchful eye of the dominant culture; both are caught in the dual processes of commodification and surveillance” (155). Ethnic people, in other words, are watched as if they were exotic creatures.

Patricia Linton, a European scholar on the study of Native American literature, frankly confesses that most Eurocentric readers are not competent enough to fully understand “either the core experiences or the epistemology and subjectivity represented in ethnic and post-colonial fiction.” (29). Even “critically informed Eurocentric readers” she suspects, “may ignore a ‘local’ context that exclude them, in favor of an overarching paradigm that seems to account adequately for the differences and disruptions in ethnic narrative” (31).

Linton’s recognition that Eurocentric readers tend to do an imperialist reading of an ethnic text, due to their ignorance of cultural elements imbedded in an ethnic text drives us, readers situated outside the realm of multi-ethnic American literature, to think over a myriad of questions concerning the reading of marginalized, culturally-specific, and sometimes politically-charged and sometimes ethnographically-ridden American indigenous texts. Questions that come to the front go as

follows: “What is a good act of reading while we approach indigenous texts?” “What responsibilities should writers or academic researchers assume in their representations of Native American cultures and literature?” “What is the ethics of cultural appropriation that should be taken into consideration when non-Native Americans intend to appropriate Native American cultural elements into the dominant white cultures?” “What is the ethics of writing while non-Native American writers engage themselves in collaborative writings about Native American life stories?” “What is the ethics of reading while non-Native readers intend to approach Native American literature?” “What is the significance of this reading act to discover the ethical and moral implications in a literary text by a conscientious writer who strives to inscribe the codes of conduct into his tribal text?” “Where does the ethical moment arise in our act of reading?” And, finally, “Does ethics (or the so-called universal moral law) integrated into storytelling affect the moral conducts of the protagonists or the Native and non-Native readers, in one way or another?”

The list of questions, I assume, should arrest our critical attentions if we intend to give a culturally and politically unbiased representations or understanding about the core of Native American cultures and literatures. As readers of indigenous texts, if we can approach indigenous literary texts with what Andrew Hadfield et al suggest “ethic consciousness of race and ethnicity”(7), we will probably act sensibly and scrupulously while doing our ethnic readings. That is to say, if we can realize that “foster[ing] some interracial dialogue without the imposition of a uni-racial perspective” (Hadfield et al 7) is essential to our reading of ethnic texts, we will read ethically. It is then plausible that an ethical relationship, the relationship between the self and the other, the author and the reader, the Natives and non-Natives, can be established through our willingness to carry a conversation in a respectful manner. “The representation of the relationship between author and reader,” as Daniel R. Schwartz writes, “is the representation of an ethical relationship”(3).

What is required is that non-Native readers develop that ethical consciousness to replace their imperialist or ethnocentric reading with a responsible and culturally-unbiased reading. The objective of ethical criticism should, therefore, aim not only to alert our attention to the risk of interpretive violence but to develop our abilities to be responsible readers. What is more imperative is that it directs to build up our sensibilities and sympathy for the suffering of the Other, forming an emphatic reading attitude. With these moral qualities reflected in reading, we will presumably become more sympathetic and understanding in our reading of terror and trauma that Native American testimony narratives expose. That is to say, the suppressed histories such as holocaust, genocide, and massacres will appeal to our soul. Our understanding about Native American tribal respect for environment and cosmos will furthermore

initiate us into an alternative epistemological as well as cosmological thinking, directing us to see the value of a reciprocal relationship.

Literature review:

The ethical exploration of literature has its root in Western philosophical tradition. In a myriad of studies about “the ethics of reading” (Hill Miller) “the ethics in literature” (Andrew Hadfield et al), and “the ethics of criticism” (Tobin Siebers), we can quickly spot the shadow of influential philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Rousseau, Kant, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, de Man, Foucault, Derrida, Levinas, etc. The ethical debates on the study of literature have continued for centuries in Western history of thought, but the debates have reached the low ebb since the late 1970s. Yet, the ethical debates never disappeared, for we see the resurgence of ethical studies of literature in recent years. “The turn to ethics” (Marjorie Garber et al) goes hand in hand with the rise of critical attention to morally as well as politically charged issues like racism and colonialism. Nowadays, what we are concerned with is not restricted to the issues like “what is the meaning of reading ethically,” a question posed by J. Hillis Miller in as early as 1987. That is to say, we care more than the notions of “ethical moment” in the act of reading, the moment which, in Miller’s view, “is neither cognitive, nor political, nor social, nor interpersonal, but properly and independently ethical” (1), and we try to look beyond the Miller’s idea that “there is a peculiar and unexpected relation between the affirmation of universal moral law and storyteller” and that “ethics and narration cannot be kept separate, though their relation is neither symmetrical nor harmonious” (2). We are not, as Siebers puts, so content with Miller’s insistence on “the necessity of submitting to linguistic structure” in that “the creation of an isolated linguistic morality robs ethical theory of its social context and renders ethics ineffectual” (38-9). We attempt to release reading from the prison-house of language and get rid of what Derrida terms “ethnocentric” interpretation. But we also bear in mind what Derrida means the relation between writing and intersubjective violence and the violence of representation (Siebers 83-4).

Furthermore, what we intend to know also goes beyond what Wayne Booth proposes: to look for the responsibilities of the readers to stories. Ethical criticism, Booth suggests, should not limit itself to the appraisal of the ethical values of stories or to their effects of stories on readers. Instead, it should "place more responsibilities on readers" (9). It is right that readers should take more responsibilities while they do their own reading. They should approach the reading materials with care and respect.

For “texts,” as Daniel R. Schwartz writes, “demand ethical responses from their readers in part because *saying* always has an ethical dimension *and* because *we* are our values, and we never take a moral holiday from our values. We can no more ignore the ethical implications of what we read than we can ignore the ethical implications of life”(5). We cannot afford to overlook the ethical implications of what we read because reading carries us into an imagined world which the artists envision from their cultural or epistemological standpoints. Thus, ethical reading in this today’s world requires that we attend to the moral issues not only generated by events described but arising from the cultural differences implicated in the texts.

In the 1990s, the rise of postcolonial and Third World literature urges that our scholarly attention be paid not merely to “what patterns of provisional representation are created by language [but to] the historical, political, and social grounds of that representation” (Schwarz 11). The study of the relation between ethics and politics requires that we recognize “the cultural particularism of literature” (Garber et al xi). Ethics, as Homi Bhabha suggests, should be reformulated “within the framework of cultural diversity” to reexamine how “selfhood, within cultures, is constructed and understood” (Garber et al xi). Besides, we need to penetrate into the moral implications of the “recognition politics” that the subjugated, subaltern Other turns to in a society that celebrates multiculturalism. For instance, Fanon’s controversial notion of “ethics of recognition” (Hanssen 144), i.e. his advocacy of using violence to seek recognition, directs us to see the slippery interrelations between ethics and politics. In fact, Fanonian reconsideration of ethics or moral law in a postcolonial condition has been extended to explicate situation in a multicultural society (Hanssen 132). The representation of violence in multi-ethnic literatures is frequently foregrounded by ethnic writers. Reading this representation of violence requires us not only to reconsider but to recontextualize “many versions of *ethos*, ethical habits, conventions, gestures, and narratives” (Hassen 132) that are coexistent with the Western versions.

Ethical studies of Native American literature

What can our studies of Native American literature benefit from the Western ethical studies of literature and criticism, which have been developed within an epistemological framework different from that of the Native Americans? If we give an overview of Native American literary and critical studies in recent decades, we can find that one subject which has attracted incessant and inconclusive debate is about the problems of representation and authenticity. Not only Non-Native critics but

Native Americans themselves are extremely concerned with such issues as “who can speak for them” and “how they are spoken to.” What they care about is whether any given stories told, images made, ceremonies presented about the Native people display any sense of integrity? Take the representation of Native American spirituality as an example. The diversity, uniqueness and variableness of Native religions virtually exceed what Native people can comprehend. It sometimes amounts to an impossibility to speak for or represent all tribes. Therefore, any generalization about Native people is thought to run the risk of misrepresentation and distortion. Native images projected in popular culture, ranging from “noble savages” to “shaman healers” and from “blood thirsty warriors” to “political radicals”, as Irwin argues, are so inauthentic that they fail to increase our real understanding about the complexity of Native American realities (4).

Another representation problem concerns the way the Native people are represented at the contact zone. How should the Native people and culture be represented, from whose perspectives and in whose voice? Is contact zone the site of contestation or the site of mediation for representation? Jana Sequoya’s “How (!) Is an Indian? A Contest of Stories,” and Inés Hernández-Ávila’s “Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation” explore this thorny issue from different aspects. They look into Indian storytelling tradition and spiritual tradition, respectively, in order to discover the responsibilities of both Native and non-Native researchers, writers, tribal members in their representations of Native American tradition. To Native peoples, vision, ceremony, ritual are thought to be the most sacred and mysterious part of their spiritual tradition. The secrecy of the ceremony, it is believed, should be preserved and passed down to the tribal people as their cultural heritage. It is always deemed improper for the tribal people to describe or release them to the cultural outsiders. Hence, using the story of Maria Sabina, “the Mazatec elder from Huatla de Jimenez, Mexico, who worked with the sacred mushrooms” (20), as an example to illustrate the meaning of ethics of representation, Hernández-Ávila calls attention to the pitfalls of improper cultural appropriation by the Western people. Appropriation, desacralization and consumerism, Hernández-Ávila condemns, are the ways Western foreigners “disrupt” the Indian community. The “demonization of Native belief-systems”, he furthermore analyzes, is another reason why Native elders hesitate to “pass on their knowledge or even languages to their younger generations, in some ways to protect them” (23). Commodification and commercialization of Native American spirituality, he deplores, “disturbs and disrupts the work of sustaining the spiritual tradition” (30). According to John A. Grim problematic representation is created not only by “whiteshamans” but by “plastic medicine men or women” who desire to earn profits from marketing Native cultures

to the white world (44).

The question of what ethics of representation implies is also addressed while critics look into collaborative writings on Native American spiritual autobiographies. Speculation about the dominant role the white writers play always discredits the authenticity of the book. The question of the ethics of collaborative writing is another issue under scrutiny. Native scholars, therefore, propose that writers of various Native communities be granted equal opportunities and freedom to speak for themselves, to negotiate through dialogical narratives with not only non-Native but Native communities, giving authentic self-representation without suppressing their voices or having their voices suppressed. Just as Irwin puts it, “What is required is a willingness to hear others in their own voice, to recognize diversity and difference, and then to give the voice a place to manifest that allows others to value its content and concerns” (6). This probably suggests the meaning of ethics of representation.

Dialogic perspective is actually what many scholars would recommend the students of Native American cultures to adopt, in order to maintain an interactive relation with the mainstream American culture. In fact, this insistence on cross-cultural, bicultural, and dialogical readings of Native American cultures and literatures emerge in opposition to rather political, polemical, agonistic and subversive readings that arise with deconstructive and postcolonial criticism in the 1990s. Many non-Native American critics and scholars such as Arnold Krupat, David L. Moore, James Ruppert are advocates of dialogical readings, attending to the features of mediation rather than resistance in the texts. However, their attention to cultural mediation receives rather cold response from Nativists, who adhere to the concept of authenticity, literary/cultural sovereignty, and indigenous perspective.

The study of ethics in literature cannot overlook the power of moral imagination that Momaday insists American Indian narratives possess. Whereas traditional oral narratives tell Native peoples how to behave ethically in relation with humans and non-humans, written literary narratives expose the moral dilemma that Native peoples confront in their daily colonial existence. Whether or not to assimilate into the mainstream culture is the first decision Native people living in the acculturation era are compelled to make. Another imperative ethical problem they are forced to grapple with concerns their attitude toward injustice inflicted on them: whether to resist or to eschew from it. Considerations about moral choices and ethical behavior Native Americans are compelled to make will probably enable us to see how Native cultures and traditions intervene and make a difference.

Research scope and objectives:

“An ethics of writing is to discover and to make heard silenced voices; an ethics of reading is to hear those voices,” writes Mark Ledbetter in his ethical study of prose fictions by Toni Morrison, D. M. Thomas, and J. M. Coetzee. The objective of this two-year consecutive project, following that line of thought, is to discover the muffled voices of the Native Americans, which are now articulated by Native American writers themselves. The project is targeted to explore the ethics of writing/representing and the ethics of telling and reading Native American texts. One objective of this reading is to examine whether Hillis Miller's idea about ethical moment, response, responsibility and performative effect can be illuminated in the act of reading non-canonical, minority, ethnic texts like Native American literature and culture. At the same time, it aims to discover if there are any specific and alternative strategies of reading and interpreting the literature of Other. Finally, it expects to see if any ideological or textual resistances are manifested in the texts, the readers, and the writers themselves, and to examine to what extent the practice of resistant violence becomes effectively subversive.

In this project, I initiate three studies of Native American literary texts in order to discover how the ethics of telling and representation are demonstrated in Native American literary texts, and how ethical moment can arise from our reading of the Native American fictions that either narrate the Indian-white political confrontations that lead to Indian massacred or portray the cultural encounters between the so-called civilized, Christianized European self and exotic, savage Native American other. Several texts are selected for analysis to illuminate the issues brought about in the process of reading. The texts chosen for discussion are *Black Elk Speaks*, a 1932 collaborative life writing about a Lakota holy man, *Heartsong of Charging Elk*, a 2000 James Welch's novel that fictionalizes and recreates the historic figure of Black Elk, and D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*, as well as N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*.

In view of their distinctive generative features, and different representation of Southwestern Indians, I concentrate my first part on the investigation of famous Native American first as-told-to narrative, and study Black Elk, the man and the text, in terms of textual, historical and religious representations. I explore the interaction between Black Elk and his collaborator, John Neihardt, in order to uncover the issue of ethnocentric textual choices and the ethics of representation. The study complicates our essentialist and romanticized understanding about the traditionalism that Black Elk is supposed to represent. The unearthing of the dual religious identities that this

traditional healing man possesses, and the deliberate downplay of Black Elk's acculturation tendency bring us to the ethical concerns with regard to the acts of telling American Indian vision, writing American Indian culture, and representing American Indian spiritual and testimonial narratives by the white writer.

The second part looks into the relations between self and other, an issue that exposes the ethical issue of treating the other at the contact zone. James Welch's portrayal of a nineteenth-century Lakota youth's cross-cultural experience in a European foreign land is appealing to the readers of the twenty-first-century readers because it also deals with some most current cultural issues such as diaspora, traveling, and otherness. Through examining the cultural ambivalence and struggle of an alienated Native American in exile, the study intends to analyze what it means by ethical behavior in dealing with the other as defined from an indigenous perspective by James Welch.

The third part of reading is directed to the moral issue of using violent force as a means of resistance for Native Americans to liberate themselves from various forms of white colonialism – for instance, cultural and political domination. The study reveals that Native Americans in their early stage of resistance proves inept and ineffectual, in that they are physically surrounded and mentally entrapped by the ideology and judicial system that dominant white institutions contrive to assimilate them. Both D'Arcy McNickle and N.Scott Momaday's novels illustrate the predicament of mixedblood Native Americans oscillating between two cultures (or two spiritual traditions), lost in the battle of acculturation and resistance, when they find themselves expropriated from native land and see their indigenous culture appropriated. Writing, respectively, in the 1930s and 1960s, they delineate the anguish of modern Natives, who are entangled by the conflicts of conventional and Western moral codes. In their attempt to challenge dominant legal and cultural codes, they both celebrate the restoration of tribalism as the primary responsibility of Native American writers.

Textual Analysis (see Appendix Part A, B, and C)

Conclusion

Native American writers cannot afford to see the erosion of their own tribal culture. They are anxious and concerned about the problem of representation. *Black Elk Speaks* illustrates this endeavor to articulate the indigenous voice even through

collaborative writing. The textual controversy directs us to examine the ethics of writing while the pen is controlled in the hand of the dominant white writer. The ethics of reading requires readers to see behind the scene and realize how narratives are transcribed. Modern Native American literary narratives examine and display the moral imagination that Momaday highly praises. Their preoccupations with moral issues like justice, violence, self-other relation and ethical treatment of the other are displayed in their delineation of the Native people oscillating between two cultures. They delineate the dilemma of crossing culture, and readers share their suffering and understand the sensibilities the writers intend to uncover, after they read with respect the representation of an ethnic group which were either dehumanized or romanticized.

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Self-Evaluation

The first and third essays will be polished and integrated into a book to be published as *Beyond Sacred Land and Spirituality: Ethics in Reading/Writing Native American Literature*. The second essay written in Chinese was already read in the 12th Conference on British and American Literature in ROC, 2004, and shall be revised for publication in a local journal.

Appendix

Part A:

Ethics of Representation:

Writing Religion and Testimonial Narrative as Black Elk Speaks

Black Elk's life (1863-1950) spanned a very important and turbulent period in not only Native American history but also World history. Black Elk lived through two World Wars, growing up in "a time commonly known as the 'Indian Wars,' which dated from the Civil War to the massacre at Wounded Knee, 29 December 1890. During this period Congress closed the frontier and confined Indians to reservations,

free to leave only with passes from agents” (Lincoln 86). But what is more significant is that he lived in the time when “proposals for civilizing the American Indian were many” (Hagen 133). Acculturation proposals that aimed to civilize the American Indians included christianizing the aborigines, educating them through boarding school system and disrupting the communal concept of land with the idea of private property (Hagen 133). Between 1850 and 1934, many important government policies that affected the white-Indian relations were implemented. Many heartrending but effective historical events also ensued with the intervention of white government into American Indian affairs and communities. They include the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876), Dawes Act (1887), Wounded Knee Massacre (1890), Indian Citizenship Act (1924), New Deal (1930s), and Indian Reorganization Act (1934). It is indeed a period, which John Carlos Rowe describes as a time “local conflicts between Native- and Euro-Americans, and federal Indian policies and laws produced a history of extraordinary contradictions and inconsistencies” (218). Yet it, on the other hand, is also a time when the belief in the conquest of the Native Americans was gradually giving way to the idea of reviving Native American arts and ceremonies (Kaye 155-6).¹

Under this circumstance, Black Elk must have witnessed and experienced the oppression of the white colonizers and have strongly sensed the injustice that the white government had done on his people. He must have fully recognized the subjugated conditions of his tribal people, for in his narrative Lakota people were simply termed as “prisoners of war” (Schmitz 119). Thus, how Black Elk perceives and relates Lakota’s relation with “Wasichus”, the white men, in their eyes must be of great interest to readers if they listen to Black Elk speaks as a witness of the Lakota history. Unfortunately, for decades, critical attention tends to focus on Black Elk’s spiritual experience, and leave Black Elk’s political and social life relatively ignored. Besides, little criticism or commentaries have been made upon Black Elk’s involvement with Catholic religious activities despite the fact that Black Elk had been an active missionary before he told his Lakota stories. Although some critics argue that Black Elk’s case demonstrates a good example of religious syncretism or what R. Todd Wise terms “disassociative acculturation” (38), this idea of religious syncretism, however, does not suffice to elucidate the manifested contradictions that stem from the epistemological, cultural and religious differences between the Native American communities and the white mainstream society.

Therefore, an ethical plus a postcolonial reading² of how Black Elk gives his

¹John Collier’s promotion of Native American arts renaissance is the clearest example.

²In his “Postcolonial Reading of Black Elk,” Dale Stover refers to Greg Sarris as the first scholar who adopted a postcolonial model to read Black Elk. According to him, postcolonial retelling “includes both political critique and bicultural dialogue in which the native voice plays a critical role” (143).

religious and testimonial narratives may perhaps shed new light on our understanding about the entangled issues concerning the conditions and positions of Native Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. An interrogation into the ethics of collaborative writing and testimonial narrative will enable us to uncover the textual and cultural meanings implicated in cultural phenomenon accompanying the so-called Black Elk studies. By uncovering the intricate textual, cultural and historical meanings implicated in the production of Black Elk narratives, we will probably see the possibilities of deconstructing the spiritual myth surrounding Black Elk as a Lakota holy man. By ascertaining the ethics of representing Black Elk, the man, the text, and the history along with it, we will furthermore see the likelihood of unsettling any essentialist assumptions about Native American spiritual tradition that Black Elk is supposed to embody.

I. Listen as Black Elk Speaks

An investigation of Black Elk, the man and the text, cannot begin without a scrutiny into the way John G. Neihardt approaches Black Elk and the effect this cross-cultural encounter entails. In August 1930, Neihardt, a white poet and Western historian, paid a visit to Black Elk, who was, at that time, an old Oglala Sioux holy man at the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. Neihardt visited Black Elk in order to seek indigenous interpretations about the “deeper spiritual significance” of the Messiah Movement, which “occurred in the middle 80’s of the 19th century and ended with the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on December 29, 1890” (Neihardt xv).³ In fact, when Neihardt approached Black Elk for information, he was working on his frontier epic of North America in free verse, *The Song of the Messiah: A Cycle of the West*. In 1931, Neihardt paid a second visit, and conducted his interview with Black Elk, who was then accompanied by several of his friends. Black Elk related to Neihardt stories about his vision quest, stories about Crazy Horse, memories about the Battle of Little Bighorn that occurred in his boyhood, and his travel to London. The narrative ended at his brief account about his witness of massacre at Wounded Knee. Black Elk’s oral narrative was translated by his son, Ben Black Elk, and transcribed afterwards by Neihardt’s daughter Enid into English manuscript. This product of joint efforts that revealed “the life story of a holy man as told through John G. Neihardt” was published in 1932 as *Black Elk Speaks: Being the*

³A writer himself, Neihardt himself has produced two other books about Indians, *The Song of the Messiah: A Cycle of the West* and *When the Tree Flowered* besides *Black Elk Speaks*. But they are obviously ignored in comparison with *Black Elk Speaks*. *A Cycle of the West* contains two important narratives that provide context to our understanding about *Black Elk Speak: The Song of the Indian Wars* and *The Song of the Messiah*. For detailed information, refer to Frank Water’s “Neihardt and the Vision of Black Elk” in *a Sender of Words*, pp. 14-18.

Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux.⁴ The publication of the book, surprisingly, made Neihardt a renowned figure in the field of Native American religious studies.⁵

Black Elk Speaks, which is commended by Vine Deloria, Jr. as “a religious classic of this century, . . . a testimony indeed to the continuing strength of our species” (“Introduction” xi), is now canonized in American academy as an indispensable text to understand the theological and cultural traditions of the Northern Plains, Sioux people. In fact, in his introduction to *Black Elk Speaks*, Deloria points out the religious significance of the book in terms of its place in an increasingly industrialized America. The importance of the book, according to Deloria, emerged in the 1960s when people began to focus interest “on Indians and some of the spiritual realities they seemed to represent” (xii). To Indians of younger generation, *Black Elk Speaks* provides “spiritual guidance,” “sociological identity,” “political insight” and “affirmation of the continuing substance of Indian tribal life” (xiii). The text, as Deloria writes, has “dominated the literature dealing with Indian religions,” and “has become a North American bible of all tribes” (xii).

When *Black Elk Speaks* made its appearance, it was clearly indicated as a narrative told through John G. Neihardt. But the book has been highly acclaimed for its literary, cultural and religious significances for some reasons. First, this is a first as-told-to narrative that records the spiritual growth of a Sioux youth into a holy man. That Black Elk tells this white man some important tribal secrets about his “power-vision” and vision quest, which are not supposed to be released casually, contains significant ethical and cultural meanings.⁶ As a matter of fact, when Black Elk chose this way to save his vision, he was putting his life at risk. As he said, “I know I have given away my power when I have given away my vision, and maybe I

⁴Beside this narrative, Black Elk narratives are included in Neihardt’s historical novel, *When the Tree Flowered* (1951); Joseph Brown’s *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk’s Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (1951); and Raymond J. DeMallie’s *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk’s Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (1984). *When the Tree Flowered* is based on another interview Neihardt conducted in 1944 with Black Elk and his two friends. *The Sacred Pipe* is also a product of interview with Black Elk done in 1947 by Joseph Brown, an anthropologist. The most important contribution that verifies the faithfulness of Black Elk’s voice is DeMallie’s *The Sixth Grandfather*, which is the outcome of strenuous effort to transcribe two of Neihardt’s interviews with Black Elk in 1931 and 1944. For detailed description about these four narratives, refer to John Carlos Rowe’s “Nick Black Elk Narratives and U.S. Imperialism,” p. 219-220.

⁵In “Introduction” to *A Send of Words* (2005), a book paying tribute to G. Neihardt, Vine Deloria, Jr. indicates that although *Black Elk Speaks* brought international fame to Neihardt, what Neihardt was more concerned about was his literary epic poem about the mountain men, that is, *A Cycle of the West*. Refer to *A Sender of Words*, p. 3.

⁶ Black Elk’s struggle over whether he should tell the vision to a cultural outsider is reflected in his words: “I have lain awake at night worrying and wondering if I was doing right; for I know I have given away my power when I have given away my vision, and maybe I cannot live very long now. But I think I have done right to save the vision in this way, even though I may die sooner because I did it” (206).

cannot live very long now.” (*Black Elk Speaks* 206). Nonetheless, Black Elk was obliged to share the vision with Neihardt, because, as Deloria indicates, “he wished to pass along to future generations some of the reality of Oglala life” and “to share the burden of visions that remained unfulfilled with a compatible spirit” (“Introduction” xiii). Black Elk, in other words, must tell for the preservation and continuance of his tribal culture. Of course, Black Elk’s recount of his spiritual journey out of memory aroused discussions with regard to his attitude toward traditional Lakota religion, because by the time Black Elk gave this account he had practiced Catholicism for many years. Like Deloria, other critics also contended that one reason why Black Elk cannot wait to have his sacred knowledge passed on was that he must find a channel to accomplish his unfulfilled task as a medicine man in order to relieve his “burden” of knowledge. Critics argue that because after he was converted to be a catechist, Black Elk rarely performed traditional rituals and ceremonies. Black Elk felt terribly sorry that he failed to realize the power of his vision; he must tell, because he could no longer bear the burden.⁷

Secondly, Black Elk makes his narrative a testimony in which he presents “authentic” pictures of historical event like the Battle of Little Bighorn, the Wounded Knee massacre and other minor Indian-white confrontations. His testimonial narrative evidently relates what Dirlik calls “an alternative trajectory of history” repressed in the official history. In his account, stories of Sioux cultural heroes and political leaders during the nineteenth century are presented, for instance, the stories of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. But what is more significantly is that Black Elk recounts the impact of what Deloria terms “the machines of a scientific era” (xiii) and the impact of cultural genocide on Lakota people, who face the immanent threat of shattered culture but determine to transmit their own spiritual ceremony for cultural survival and continuance. His recounts demonstrate that notwithstanding their repudiation against the political conquest, cultural domination and colonization, Lakota people still strive to enter themselves into a cross-cultural interstice for survival.

It is evident that Black Elk has entered American literature and become a prototype of an aged medicine man and *wichasha wakon* (holy man, priest) in Native American literature.⁸ For if we scrutinize the “secular” role he plays in literary field, the striking feature that marks Black Elk as a medicine man does not arise so much from the spiritual and healing power he represents as his storytelling capacity. In his evaluation of the importance of Black Elk, N.Scott Momaday, for instance, describes

⁷Whether this speculation can be verified or not, it reveals the contradictions that Black Elk falls into. Black Elk is a man of contradictions; he is both a tribal healer and a warrior, a peace maker and a fighter, a Lakota healer and a Catholic missionary. He lived with the burden of sacred knowledge and survived under the shadows of white killings.

⁸In Silko’s *Ceremony*, we can find a medicine man, Betonie, who reminds us of Black Elk, and in Louise Erdrich’s *Tracks*, we can hear Nanapush tell stories like Black Elk.

Black Elk as “the first and foremost a storyteller” (“Save a Great Vision” 32). Reading *Black Elk Speaks* as revealing “the universal elements of the narrative, first as an example of oral tradition, then as literature” (32), Momaday praises Black Elk as a responsible storyteller, who “creates himself, and his listeners, through the power of his perception, his imagination, his expression, his devotion to important detail” (32). Momaday says,

To the extent that Black Elk re-creates his vision in words, he re-creates himself and in so doing re-affirms himself. He also affirms that he has existence in the element of language, and this affirmation is preeminently creative. He declares, in effect: *Behold, I give you my vision in these terms, and in the process I give you myself.* In the ultimate achievement of the storyteller’s purpose, he projects his spirit into language and therefore beyond the limits of his time and place. It is an act of sheer transcendence. Spiritually he will survive as long as his words survive. He inhabits his vision, and in the telling his vision becomes timeless. The storyteller and the story told are one (36. italics original).

Because of his remarkable command of language in telling stories, Black Elk, transmits to Neihardt “the rhythms, the inflections and alliterations of the holy man’s speech”, which, Momaday maintains, enable literary Neihardt to transform speech into writing “without the loss of the essential spirit of the original narration” (36-37). Momaday’s insistence on the shared literary sensibility between Black Elk and Neihardt is resonant with Raymond DeMallie’s observant statement that “Neihardt perceived Black Elk’s religion in terms of art; Black Elk perceived Neihardt’s art in term of religion” (qtd in Heflin, 166).⁹ Of course, both Momaday and DeMallie’s arguments suffice, in a sense, to explain the literariness of *Black Elk Speaks*, but whether it suffices to explain the faithfulness and accuracy that Neihardt or Black Elk or Ben Black Elk might have tried to maintain is still questionable.

For notwithstanding its remarkable literary features as Momaday notes, what makes *Black Elk Speaks* so valuable, without a doubt, still stems from the unique feature of Native spirituality implicated in the storytelling, a feature which makes Momaday insist that the book is not an autobiography, but a “testament” (34). By testament, Momaday perhaps means Black Elk’s legacy, or Black Elk’s strenuous effort to pass on to the future generation the sacred vision. According to Neihardt’s words, in Black Elk’s mind, Neihardt is the right person who shows up at the right

⁹DeMallie’s *The Sixth Grandfather*, in which DeMallie “reconstructs Neihardt’s stenographic record”, is an influential and important contribution to the study of Black Elk. DeMallie notes that Neihardt is selective in the use of Black Elk’s materials in order to “fit his literary purpose”. See Neil Schmitz’s *White Robe’s Dilemma*, p. 117.

moment when Black Elk sees it imperative to talk about his story.¹⁰ As Black Elk tells Neihardt: “My friend, I am going to tell you the story of my life, as you wish; and if it were only the story of my life I think I would not tell it; for what is one man that he should make much of his winters, even when they bend him like a heavy snow?” (*Black Elk Speaks* 1). The narrative opens with a fairly sad tone, revealing Black Elk’s intent of accepting this interview. As Wise suggests, Black Elk wants to “speak with the testimony of his people, not for himself alone but for the Lakota” (Wise 27). The consent to talk, in reality, reveals the fact that this Indian holy man perceives his individual story as insignificant in comparison with the communal tribal history and culture, and that he prefers to have his personal subjectivity subsumed into tribal subjectivity and legacy. But whether his intent to assert tribal subjectivity through this as-told-to-narrative can be realized is, undoubtedly, dependent on the way Neihardt, the interviewer and the collaborative writer, presents the story he speaks.

II. Writing as Black Elk Speaks : Neihardt’s role

Although it is hailed by some critics as “faithful” and “authentic” representations of uniquely Lakota religion and culture” (Monsma 122), *Black Elk Speaks* is, literarily and culturally, a controversial text. The generic features of the book are hard to define, although critics tend to categorize it as an indigenous autobiography (Holler xv). In recent years, the book stirs numerous scholarly discussions.¹¹ More and more scholars become skeptical of the authenticity of the texts, and call into question Black Elk’s role as an essentialist representative of Native American cultural and religious traditions. They refrain from taking the vision and sacred things that are celebrated in *Black Elk Speaks* as the prime criteria to assess Black Elk -- the holy man and the text – because Black Elk is far more complicated than it was represented. Debates arise, revolving around the cultural, historical and theological implications of Black Elk’s dual religious identities, his social involvement and his relations with John G. Neihardt. Kernel to myriad discussions is of course about the way Neihardt reacts to and writes about what Black Elk says about his tribal religion, culture and history. But

¹⁰Neihardt described his meeting with Black Elk as a sort of magical happening, for he did not expect that Black Elk would accept the interview. But it seemed that Black Elk had the haunch to know that Neihardt would come. Neihardt wrote down what Black Elk said to Flying Hawk, the interpreter, on the first meeting in the preface to *Black Elk Speaks*: “As I sit here, I can feel in this man beside me a strong desire to know the things of the Other World. He has been sent to learn what I know, and I will tell him.” (xvii). Of course, this description about Black Elk increases the mysticism of Native Americans.

¹¹Clyde Holler’s *The Black Elk Reader* (2000) is a good evidence to show scholarly interests in approaching Black Elk from myriad perspectives: literary, textual cultural, philosophical, theological and religious perspectives.

attention is also directed to the larger intricate web of ideologies in which Black Elk is entangled, and how Black Elk articulates and recounts the complicated history of colonization to which he bears witness. The conflict between tribal religion and Western Christianity surely stands at the core of Black Elk's inner struggle. What is of great interest to scholars of Black Elk is, moreover, how European Americans readers approach an indigenous text like *Black Elk Speaks*, for it discloses not only the implicit assumptions European Americans hold toward the indigenous people (Stover 130-2),¹² but, more importantly, the constraints that are imposed to affect the way whites and Indians perceive each other and to write about the Other. In fact, in *Black Elk Speaks* and other related texts about Black Elk, we can see that Black Elk always speaks and writes through Others. He is obviously re-presented while speaking for himself and his tribal culture.¹³

In terms of its spiritual, religious and cultural significances, *Black Elk Speaks* indeed demonstrates a vision alternative to the Western belief, which as Deloria says, "challenge[s] the Eastern and Western traditions as a way of looking at the world" ("Introduction" xiv); however, the book is argued to be a Neihardt's text, a text of translation and transcription, rather than the text of a Lakota holy man, who could barely speak English, because they contend that this so-called Indian spiritual autobiography was produced under the supervision of a white man, who might have domination over an Indian old man. Some scholars focus their discussions on the role Neihardt plays, charging that "professional ethics are nonexistent or not highly developed" in this collaborative writing (Couser 222). Others speculate that due to Neihardt's dominant position in overseeing the interview, Neihardt might have intruded into Black Elk's thoughts, belief system, wording and even editing the final product. They contend that Neihardt might have manipulated Black Elk's narration in the process of interview.¹⁴ Thus, if we take Black Elk's text as a testimonial narrative, Neihardt's role as an interlocutor, intermediary, and negotiator becomes extremely significant. For the authenticity of Black Elk's words, religious testament and

¹²Dale Stover argues that because in the nineteenth century vanishing-Indian myth dominates, Neihardt and the other writers of Black Elk narratives would think their collaboration with Black Elk "as an act of preservation." They were convinced that they were salvaging anthropology. This is one example of the assumptions underlying Black Elk studies.

¹³This speaking for the Other is attended to and discussed in R. Todd Wise's "Speaking Through Others: *Black Elk* as Testimonial Literature." Wise looks into Black Elk's "point of reference" in speaking for others. There are two possible points of reference: one is Lakota people, the other is universal human being. See Wise, p.24.

¹⁴A widely cited works about Neihardt's role in Black Elk's interview is Raymond DeMallie's *The Sixth Grandfather* (1984), in which he pointed out that Neihardt "was already 'writing' Black Elk's story by rephrasing his words in English" (qtd in Heflin 165). But according to John Carlos Rowe's study, Micahel F. Steltenkamp's biography, *Black Elk: Holy Man of the Oglala* showed that it was Black Elk's son, Ben, who did considerable changes in the content of what Black Elk said. See his "Nick Black Elk Narratives and U.S. Imperialism", p. 222.

historical testimony might as well be complicated by Neihardt's identity as a white writer and the way he listens and responds to Black Elk. Besides, Neihardt's personal tastes, preference, assumptions and cultural power might also have decided the form and the content of the book to be published. Just as DeMallie points out, Neihardt decides to keep the diction of the book simple to "reflect our expectation of Indian speech patterns" and "the vision's emphasis on war and destruction are minimized to focus on its messages of healing" (Heflin 167).

Neihardt's possibly inadvertent intrusion but deliberate textual choice, of course, might discredit the faithfulness and authenticity of the representation of not only Lakota culture itself but also the identity of Black Elk himself. As Clyde Holler, an influential scholar of Black Elk studies, points out, Neidhardt has held back some valuable information about Black Elk. For instance, Neihardt "de-emphasized Black Elk's stated intention of revitalizing Lakota traditions and fulfilling his vision by allowing Neihardt to tell it to the world" (Monsman 119); Neihardt hid the truth about Black Elk's deep "involvement with Christianity" for decades (Monsman 120). That is, Black Elk has practiced Christianity, served as a catechist, and traveled as a Roman Catholic missionary, but this aspect of Black Elk's religious identity as Nicholas Black Elk is rarely discussed.¹⁵ Moreover, how Black Elk's Christianity background might also have influenced his telling and interpretation of his visionary experience is not mentioned in this as-told-to narrative either.

By virtue of this deliberate erasure of Black Elk's complicated religious identities and overemphasis on Black Elk's traditional spirituality, Neihardt is criticized as a primitivist and romanticist.¹⁶ Scholars give different interpretation on this omission. Some speculate that Black Elk opts to give a narrative that "is ideologically secure in its traditionalist tribalism" (Schmitz 127). It suggests that both Black Elk and Neihardt choose to focus on Lakota tribalism, disregarding the political and ideological constraints from larger white polity. But Black Elk's complicated identities, as John Carlos Rowe suggests, "cannot be understood apart from the history of U.S. federal policies toward the Plains Indians in his lifetime" (225). He contends that Neihardt's omission of Black Elk's conversion in *Black Elk Speaks* reveals his penchant to "follow the pattern of the *Protestant* fortunate fall and salvation in its version of the tragic history of the Lakota Sioux from the Plains Wars of the 1860s and 1870s to the Massacre at Wounded Knee" (222-3). In other words, Neihardt's representation of the tragic history of the Lakota people in *Black Elk*

¹⁵In 1904 Black Elk was converted and baptized as Nicholas Black Elk. He became a Christian after he realized that his healing practice was not able to save the lives of his wife, his father and his son.

¹⁶Many critics, however, argue to foreground the features of religious syncretism manifested in Black Elk. Bradley J. Monsma, for instance, lays emphasis on how Christianity and tribal faiths were intermingled by Black Elk.

Speaks and his poetic epic, *A Cycle of the West* displays mainly his Protestant perception (Rowe 223). For instance, in Neihardt's *A Cycle of the West*, the Massacre at Wounded Knee, Rowe writes, is represented as "a reenactment of the Crucifixion. . . . The murder of 300 Lakota men, women, and children in December 1890 becomes a symbolic sacrifice that makes possible the poet's redemptive vision of Christian salvation and a secular dream of peace, love and brotherhood"(223). This representation and interpretation of Lakota tragic history from a protestant perspective demonstrates the working of Euro-American cultural imperialism. In his penetrating analysis of Black Elk narratives, Rowe contends that cultural imperialism manifested in the so-called Black Elk narratives dominates the spread of knowledge about Black Elk, and the marginalized Native Americans.

The attention to the cultural context of Black Elk's time suffices to explain the reason why Black Elk narratives can be popularized in the literary and cultural scenes of the United States. Yet that which must be captivating to the white audience but is unfortunately elided or de-emphasized in critical discussions is Black Elk's cross-cultural experiences. Thomas Couser notes that Black Elk's acculturation is suppressed in *Black Elk Speaks*. This suppression, Couser contends, shows that "Neihardt's representation of Black Elk did not completely conform to his self-image and the accepted image of him in his community" (215). It is true that Neihardt refrained from giving an exhaustive and well-rounded representation of Black Elk, especially his acculturation. This is probably, as Couser speculates, because Neihardt, like some ethnographic collaborative autobiographer, took liberty to appropriate life story "for purposes not shared, understood, or consented to by the subject" (218). Like some ethnographic writers, Neihardt probably wrote within a context of what James Clifford described as "enduring power imbalance within and against which the contact work of travel, exhibition, and interpretation occur[red]" (197). That is to say, Neihardt's white perspective might have prompted him to focus on "exotic displays" that revealed the American Indian difference as well as cultural specificity, rather than the sameness that white acculturation policies had produced.

Probably due to this suppression of Black Elk's acculturation, Black Elk is rarely categorized as an assimilationist like his contemporary Native American writer, Charles Eastman, for instance. But the reality is Black Elk did manifest strenuous efforts to adapt himself to the mainstream culture like many subjugated Native Americans at his time. His conversion to Catholicism is a clear example to show the effect of Christianization mission. His joining Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to perform in Europe as a tribal Lakota warrior is another indication of his attempt to cross culture. In 1882 when their buffalo herd were slaughtered by the whites to cut off their line of subsistence, Black Elk crossed the Atlantic Ocean, dancing in front of

Queen Victoria. This act of performance of course can be interpreted, as Neil Schmitz suggests, to be a sign that reveals Black Elk's "resacralizing intention" to turn the Lakota thing to the whites, forcing them to "his gaze" (Schmitz 130-1). Yet what should never be overlooked is Black Elk's willingness to enter into a white world to learn different custom and way of living, with a hope to bridge the gap between the Native American and the Western culture through "the herb of understanding." While seeing his people dying and his nation's sacred hoop broken and scattered (*Black Elk Speak* 214), Black Elk was in desperate need for a cure to stop the possible disruption of his own culture. His joining the show to Europe was a clear manifestation of his desire to resolve the conflicts between the white and the red people. As he claimed, it was his wish that journeying into a white world might enable him to "learn some secret of the Wasichu that would help [his] people somehow . . . Maybe . . . [he] could understand how to bring the sacred hoop together and make the tree to bloom again at the center of it" (215). However, in later years he confessed that this wish was proved foolish. He expressed his sorrow and guilt for fantasizing the goodness of white culture. As he said: "I was in despair, and I even then thought that if the Wasichus had a better way, then maybe my people should live that way. I know now that this was foolish, but I was young and in despair" (215).

III. Representation of Black Elk's testimonial narratives: The Great Vision and Wounded Knee Massacre

R. Todd Wise, in his analysis of the nature of confession and testimony of *Black Elk Speaks*, maintains: "Testimonies and confessions are spoken in reference to a community of others, presenting the confessor with the opportunity of speaking a 'truth'" yet "Black Elk did not tell us everything about his life" (37). It is indeed very likely that Black Elk might have been reticent about some aspects of his life and culture, because he was compelled to make confessions and testimonies under cultural and historical duress. Although he might not realize that his confessions or testimonies would some day be made into a spectacle and exploited by white culture as a commodity to display the so-called authentic Native American primitive spiritual tradition,¹⁷ he, however, strives to make as possibly as he can some clear and faithful statements about his Lakota spirituality and history. This effort clearly demonstrates his sense of responsibility for his tribe.

¹⁷In his *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, James Clifford taking "museums as contact zones" discusses how likely native culture was turned into a spectacle, exploited and miscomprehended in an ethnocentric encounter. For detailed discussion, refer to *Routes*, pp. 197-202.

In *Black Elk Speaks*, Black Elk's testimonial recounts are manifested in two aspects. One is his religious testimony and the other is his historical testimony. In fact, through communicating with his white listener, Black Elk makes known to the public not only his personal spiritual experience but also the collective historical event his tribal people experience. Not surprisingly, what should have made *Black Elk Speaks* a representative text of Native American spirituality is Black Elk's ingenuous, truthful and poetic accounts of his vision quest. It is a vision that grants him with the mission to continue the cultural legacy of his people. The telling of his vision that occurred at the age of five and nine is of course not meant to satisfy the curiosity of the white audience about the mystical aspects of Indian culture, but to demonstrate the very significance of his vision. As vision in Native American culture is "not just for me," vision then should not be buried inside for personal uses. Instead, it must be shared, spoken openly, enacted tribally, even performed publicly (Krupat *Ethnocriticism* 216-7).

Thus, in his narrative, Black Elk gave very precious messages about the visionary experiences a Lakota holy man must undergo, and made known to the public audience traditional Lakota ritual practices, and ceremonies like sweat lodge ceremonies and Sun Dance, for instance.¹⁸ He knew that a prophetic vision was conferred upon him, and the power to save his nation was placed on him. As he told:

I could see my people yonder running about, setting the smoke-flap poles and fastening down their tepees against the wind, for the storm cloud was coming on them very fast and black, and there were frightened swallows without number fleeing before the cloud.

The song of power came to me and I sang it there in the midst of that terrible place where I was. It went like this:

A good nation I will make live.

This the nation above has said.

They have given me the power to make over. (*Black Elk Speaks* 39-40).

Black Elk understood that his ultimate responsibility and mission, as a Lakota holy man, rested in maintaining the continuity of his tribe. Just as the Voice, which guided him when he was only a nine-year-old boy, said: "Behold, they have given you the center of the nation's hoop to make it live" (*Black Elk Speaks* 34). As a little boy, Black Elk was already burdened with this knowledge about the future of his Lakota

¹⁸ This narration about vision and ritual and ceremonies makes Paula Gunn Allen argue that what Black Elk tells of his vision is pretty close to myth and that demonstrates 'how myth relates to sacred songs, rituals, objects, and ornaments' (*The Sacred Hoop* 109).

people and his mission to rescue them. However, despite the fact that he perceived that his duty was to relieve his people of physical suffering, to deliver them from the spiritual bondages of white colonialism and to restore the ancient way, the holy tree, and nations' hoop, Black Elk was at that time too young to carry out this mission. Moreover, although he saw the vision that the way to save his people from annihilation by war, disease and massacre was by means of "herb of understanding", which was given by two men from the east (Allen 111-2), he was not able to realize the meaning of it until he was helped by an old medicine man, Black Road. Before that, he witnessed how old medicine man, like Chips, helped to alert his Lakota people to escape from the danger and threat of the white men who ran after gold in the Black Hills, the native land of the Lakota people.

The witness of the Battle of Little Big Horn initiated Black Elk to realize the Indian-white conflicts and the causes of his tribal afflictions. Black Elk was, in other words, situated in the historical context to see the meaning of power bestowed upon him. *Black Elk Speaks*, Frances W. Kaye suggests, should be "best understood as history, an ongoing account of the lives of a people who have survived hard times" (159). Indeed, if we place Black Elk back to history and read between the lines, we can detect that Black Elk, who R. Todd Wise describes as "appear[ing] historically within a largely hostile signifying system" (29), indeed discloses, to a certain extent, his fear, dissatisfaction and resistance in his seemingly benign attitude toward the intrusion of the white colonizers in Lakota history. Just as Wise states, "although [Black Elk's] testimony does not carry the sharp, more self-conscious activism of more recent testimonies, there is a clear judicial witness" (38). What agonized Black Elk was the decaying of his culture and dream, and what he endeavored to expose was not merely physical genocide but cultural genocide.

In one way or another, Black Elk must have witnessed injustice that white colonizers imposed on Sioux people -- lies, broken treaties, the insatiable greed of white people for indigenous land and animal hide. If narrative must be utilized as a vehicle for Native Americans to disseminate their Native vision, to reinscribe their repressed local history into official history and to display their resistance to the dominant culture, Black Elk seems to have achieved these aims through his testimonial narratives. On the surface, Black Elk appeared to be a passive informant, approached by a white historian eager to collect information about Lakota historical event. In his encounter with Neihardt, Black Elk maintained a modest posture and voice, keeping a friendly communication. Nonetheless, underlying this seemingly open communication were signs and traces that revealed his deliberately suppressed narrative voices, the voice that appeared to de-emphasize the impact of white colonization on Native American community. For instance, in his talk about his first

encounter with the white intruder into the Black Hill, he said, “I was ten years old that winter, and that was the first time I ever saw a Wasichu. At first I thought they all looked sick, and I was afraid they might just begin to fight us any time, but I got used to them” (*Black Elk Speaks* 62-3).

Moreover, that the relentlessly violent intrusion of White colonizers into their Indian territory had affected their lives was also told in a voice that revealed little but the nostalgic longing of the Lakota people for the ancient way of life.¹⁹ Of course, we could speculate that this simply shows the traces of Neihardt’s manipulation, as well as his suppression of native resistance and denigration of white intruders. But the reality is that Black Elk did refrain from talking about the violent stories about the Battle of Little Bighorn. This reservation might be due to his personal limitations. To compensate for his limitations, he actually allowed other voices to join in, sharing his witness stories. Standing Bear and Iron Hawk, for instance, gave fragmentary recounts concerning the battle they were engaged in. The telling of war by these Sioux people sitting around Black Elk participated in an oral ritual, contributing their own version of story and thereafter making up an extremely important testimonial narrative about American-Indian war. Black Elk, on the other hand, gave his full accounts of the stories of Red Cloud, an American Indian leader that advocated peace with the white colonizers, and the stories of Crazy Horse, a great chief leader in his admiration.

In his study, Wise categorizes *Black Elk Speaks* as a “testimonial genre,” although Wise also acknowledges that the construction of *Black Elk Speaks* in the 1930s does not follow the pattern of testimonial literature, in which ethnic distinctiveness is preserved “in order to discover the oppression of a particular people” (25-6). Wise, however, attends to the benefits of having Black Elk speak through others, regardless of the accusation given by Julian Rice and Raymond J. DeMallie about Black Elk’s obscured foreign voice in Neihardt’s “ethnocidal” text.

He defines the testimonial literature as being marked by the following features. According to him,

The testimonial militantly resists being read without a truthful or moral reference, and insist upon the acceptance of human otherness. It refuses to dismiss the ‘real’ or the historical. There is the preservation of ‘you write what I speak’; there is the nomadic other who is outside the literary reference point; and there is the silence of what is not said. But most important, there is the shared horror of real-life description that ultimately resists being reduced to literary

¹⁹ In 1874 when Black Elk was 11 years old, white government dispatched troops under Custer into the Black Hills to seek gold.

representation alone (28).

In *Black Elk Speaks*, what is neither fully “said” nor utterly “spoken” is obviously the “real-life” horror stories related to Wounded Knee Massacre, for the calamity can barely be reduced to simplistic representation. Wounded Knee Massacre, which took place on the banks of Wounded Knee Creek in 1890, was aimed to stop the Ghost Dance religious movement, led by Wovoka, a Paiute medicine man, who claimed to have the Messiah vision to liberate the Native Americans from the scourging treatment of white people. The promise of revitalizing the Indian nations through the practice of the new religion called Ghost Dance attracted the participation of Native Americans across the country. Fearing that the emerging Native American religious movement might threaten the existence of white settlers, the US government sent troops to protect the settlers but resulted in the Wounded Knee Massacre. This tragic event is “known as the event that ended the last of the Indian wars in America” (Liggett 1).

It is indeed true that Black Elk’s narration about Wounded Knee Massacre was by no means presented in a pronounced manner, despite the fact that Neihardt’s original motive to interview Black Elk was to gather information about Messiah movement (or the Ghost Dance religion) that led to Wounded Knee Massacre. In fact, in *Black Elk Speaks* the narration of this massacre ended rather briefly and abruptly. This brief representation of historically important link between Ghost Dance religion and the Wounded Knee Massacre made critics to contend that *Black Elk Speaks* was a “fabrication of a white man,” intended to meet the expectations of a white audience (Tatonetti 294). The editing of Black Elk’s words in different versions indeed serves as evidence to show that *Black Elk Speaks* fails, in some ways, to fully testify the horror of this tragic event in Native American history, nor does it reveal clearly the cause-effect of this catastrophic event.²⁰ However, notwithstanding its lack of clear reference to Ghost Dance religion and its deliberate omission of the connection between the emerging Indian religious movement and white military violence, *Black Elk Speaks* still maintains its testimonial power to the degree that it reveals the tremendous impact of Wounded Knee Massacre on the Plains people in Native American history. The impact is depicted in the last chapter of *Black Elk Speaks* —“The Butchering at Wounded Knee”— where Black Elk recounts the horror of massacre and the scene of the killing he eyewitnesses. There Black Elk gives extremely vivid testimonial descriptions about the struggles of the dying and

²⁰ Lisa Tatonetti, in her comparative study of Neidardt’s *Black Elk Speaks* and DeMallie’s *Six Grandfather*, indicates that many horrific stories narrated by Black Elk about massacre are erased in *Black Elk Speaks*.

surviving Indians at the scene, highlighting the predicament of Indians in suffering while he describes the courage that Indians take to fight with the white soldiers. As he narrates: “Just below the head of the dry gulch, there were some women and children who were huddled under a clay bank, and some cavalymen were there pointing guns at them. . . . Then I rode over the ridge and the others after me, and we were crying: ‘Take courage! It is time to fight!’ The soldiers who were guarding our relatives shot at us and then ran away fast” (*Black Elk Speaks* 257-8).

The violence of the white soldiers is, furthermore, given in explicit contrast with the suffering of the Indians on the verge of death. The eyewitness accounts of abhorrent murderous scenes unveil, by all means, the trauma this genocide has inflicted on the Indians at that time:

We followed down along the dry gulch, and what we saw was terrible. Dead and wounded women and children and little babies were scattered all along there where they had been trying to run away. The soldiers had followed along the gulch, as they ran, and murdered them in there. Sometimes they were in heaps because they had huddle together, and some were scattered all along. Sometimes bunches of them had been killed and torn to pieces where the wagon guns hit them. I saw a little baby trying to suck its mother, but she was bloody and dead. (*Black Elk Speaks* 259).

A most famous horrific narrative given by Black Elk is his ironical recount of the scene of the massacre. To him, what is most unbearable tragedy is the burial of “the beautiful dream” of his people.

I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people’s dream died there. It was a beautiful dream. (*Black Elk Speaks* 270).

IV. Conclusion

What can a Native American religious and literary classic like *Black Elk Speaks* tell or teach both Native and non-Native readers? How can readers approach and perceive a culturally significant but controversial text like *Black Elk Speaks*, due to the manipulation of a white collaborative writer? In his *White Robe’s Dilemma*, Neil

Schmitz writes, “If we might think of Black Elk’s texts as bundles, collections of tales, then opening the book, reading the individual texts inside, requires an exact knowledge of the articles, the prayers and songs, of Lakota tropes and Lakota characterization. It requires the grounding of a Lakota context. Readers in American literature must therefore tribalize their understanding, enter Black Elk’s sacred Lakota discourse as postulants, reverse the missionary position, be catechized” (129). Of course, for non-Native readers who intend to understand Black Elk legacy, what they need to do is to “tribalize their understanding,” yet besides this understanding about a Lakota cultural context, what they also need to know if the ethics of writing and telling have been achieved by Neihardt and Black Elk, respectively. For Neihardt, we are still uncertain about whether he did observe or violate the “professional ethics” of representing the Other voices, but we are sure that for Black Elk, a conscientious holy man, his will to follow the ethics of telling vision can never be discredited. Just as he confesses near the end of the book,

But I have told what can be told.

It has made me very sad to do this at last, and I have laid awake at night worrying and wondering if I was doing right; for I know I have given away my power when I have given away my vision and maybe I cannot live very long now. But I think I have done right to save the vision in this way, even though I may die sooner because I did it; for I know the meaning of the vision is wise and beautiful and good; and you can see that I am only a pitiful old man after all. (*Black Elk Speaks* 206).

Part B

異世界的自我他者化：

威爾遜《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中原住民文化再想像的矛盾

前言

1930年白人約翰·內哈特(John G. Neihardt)前往奧格拉拉蘇族(Oglala Sioux)的松脊保留區(Pine Ridge Reservation)聆聽並記錄蘇族先知(holy man)黑麋鹿(Black Elk)講述他偉大的宗教靈視經驗，以及所曾見證的蘇族歷史故事。根據黑麋鹿口述，內哈特以英文寫成深深影響美國主流文化及世人對印第安宗教，

化，歷史瞭解的名作——《黑麋鹿如是說》(Black Elk Speaks)。這部屬於見證自傳體的《黑麋鹿如是說》揭開隱沒於主流歷史的蘇族領袖人物如瘋馬(Crazy Horse)，坐牛(Sitting Bull)與白人抗衡的故事，呈現十九世紀蘇族人面對自己的部族及文化將分崩離析，瀕臨滅絕所產生的恐懼感，以及決心讓蘇族文化永續流傳的使命感。

《黑麋鹿如是說》著名的篇章當然是最後有關傷膝灘之役的大屠殺，然而比較有趣的故事是黑麋鹿陳述他橫渡大西洋，前往歐洲，在英國女王，御前表演之事。根據黑麋鹿所說，1883年，白人(Wasichus)屠殺最後一批野牛，斷絕蘇族人賴以生存的命脈，私吞華盛頓首府送來救助蘇族印第安人的錢，致使蘇族挨餓受凍，民不聊生，年輕的黑麋鹿目睹白人滿口撒謊貪婪的行徑，及族人被零零星星圍剿在某些劃定的疆界中，絕望無助生活的樣子，感慨維繫蘇族命脈的科聖籬環(sacred hoop)已破碎(213-4)。1886年，23歲的黑麋鹿加入奧格拉拉表演團，橫渡大西洋，前往歐洲表演。他認為他應該加入表演團，前往異地，因為他想或許首瓦西楚的「偉大世界」，「一探瓦西楚的秘密」，他就會「知道如何修復科聖籬環，讓聖樹再度在中央開花」(215)。他希望「如果瓦西楚有更好的生活方式，或許族人才應該模仿，過那樣的生活」(215)。雖然黑麋鹿在中顧他年輕時的想法，語帶自責，認為自己想法愚蠢，然而，這企欲跨越疆域，一探他者文化，以增加理解，進而想吸取合於他者生活方式於自我文化的想法，其實反映年輕黑麋鹿，甚或是一般原住民，願意放棄我們/他們的對立(us vs. them)觀念，對不同文化展現包容的胸襟。

2000年，威爾曲的第五部小說《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》(The Heartsong of Charging Elk)顯然是以黑麋鹿口述，由哈特寫成的《黑麋鹿如是說》為藍本²¹，巧妙地將十九世紀的美國印第安人抽離限制其文化流動的保留區，將之置於歐陸異世界，重新想像觀照十九世紀末的原住民青年旅行異地，接觸跨文化洗禮所可能面對的內在衝突。威爾曲將歷史時間置於1889年以後，將場景置於法國馬賽港，深入麋鹿內心世界，探索精神擺盪在兩個文化之間的蘇族青年如何為融入當地文化，降低疏離感，將自我他者化；他方面，又描寫看似選擇消融自我，化於異國文化的外國人，企圖以再想像的方式，摸索重建記憶中遙遠的本土文化。就某一層次來看，威爾曲所極欲探討的正是美國印第安人，自與殖民他者相遇後所有的「異化」經驗²²，這包括因為和土地分離的流離失所感，被殖民者驅趕安置於蠻荒貧瘠地區所產生的邊陲感，以及自身文化分解斷裂所帶來的文化疏離感。然而，更重要的是威爾曲企圖進一步探索失落文化歸屬的印第安異鄉

²¹ 威爾曲本人未曾提及兩文本間的關係，只提及寫作靈感來源是一位羈旅法國的原住民故事。而且，在小說中，他才寫入黑麋鹿參加表演團，經歷一場科識中鄉的靈視之旅，與水牛比爾出現於法國街頭的史實，並刻意指出黑麋鹿長衝鋒麋鹿三歲等等。威爾曲在虛構與史實間遊走，未能減損《黑麋鹿如是說》的影響力和《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》小說間互涉的關係。

²² 此處所指的異化經驗更恰當地說應該是指自我與自然分離引發的疏離感(alienation)，人與人之間關係疏遠的隔離感(estrangement)。美國原住民的異化經驗一直是當代美國原住民作家所偏愛探討的主題之一，也是威爾曲小說一貫重點主題。

人，如何能從抗拒被妖魔化/浪漫化的印第安刻板印象，與異文化結合中，重建自我與他者的關係，開展新的生命。本論文企圖從十九世紀水牛比爾組織的蠻荒西部秀，這樣一個藉日旅行表演將美國西部神話，原住民文化形象物化扭曲傳佈的表演團體的文化意義談起，並從原住民角度思考「外來異種」相對於「本土原生種」的概念如何因地域轉換，遷移而建構與鬆動。屆時呈現威爾曲如何試圖從瞭解自我，他者，主客異位的觀看角度，探索印第安人在異文化的情境中與他者建立積極關係的可能性。

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刻板形象/他者化/卑賤體

白人想像印第安人，印第安人想像白人，在交互對「他者」的想像中，二者似乎並沒有交集。自白人侵入美國新大陸，和印第安相遇的時刻開始，白人和印第安人對待彼此的方式呈現不對等的狀態。白人外來者，以文明自居，「征服異己」，用高壓姿態將美國印第安原住民「對象化」(objectify)為「怪物」(grotesque, monster)，視之為「非人的種族」(inhuman race)(Cassuto 26)。白人藉日將印第安人他者化為文化道德低落的野蠻人，以肯定自我文化的優越及道德的高貴。Roy Harvey Pearce 在《野蠻主義和文明》一書中指出，「印第安對英國心靈之所以重要，並不是因為他的處境亦涵，而是他展示給文明人讓他們知道甚麼是不應該存在的」(qtd Huhndorf 6)。換言之，印第安人在白人眼中，借那克莉絲蒂娃的概念，是「卑賤體」，應當從美洲大陸驅逐，排除，以騰出空間，供白人文明發展。十九世紀中葉，在國土擴張論者(expansionists)，「要文明或滅亡」("civilization or extinction")的威脅性論述下，印第安人被逼讓出東部土地供開發，遷往密西西比河以西的大平原地區，待西部的土地開發價值被覬覦，白人又以保留區的制度將印第安人隔離。將印第安人依部族，聚集隔離在畫定的土地。「讓它成為文明海中的野蠻島嶼，希望印第安人生活在自己的島上，最後可以驅向適當的文明」(Pearce 239)。印第安人並未如白人所期待消失或朝其所界定的文明發展，但文明必戰勝野蠻的想法卻使白人建構另一套挾帶天命說的種族論述——「紅種人劣於黃種人，應該被毀滅，黃種人可以藉日貿易，征服，通婚將之帶入更高尚的文明」(Pearce 239)。

十九世紀，白人對印第安人的刻板印象是印第安人為消逝中的野蠻人，所採取的政策是要將印第安人納入所謂的文明美國社會。誠如《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中的美國政府駐法官員法蘭克林·貝爾 (Franklin Bell) 在評論衝鋒麋鹿時所說，美國印第安人除非讓自己的族裔同化到美國社會，否則沒有未來的。他批評道：「他們是怪異的種族... 仍然想穿戴羽毛，珠飾，活在過去。這可能可以理解，因為他們根本沒有未來可言。... 以現在的處境來看，他們是可憐的一群。遲早是要消失，否則越早加入美國，對他們越好。」(The Heartsong 82)。

但在原住民看來，這種認為原住民及其文化遲早要滅絕消失的論述其實是白人殖民者所建構散播。而「外來異種」相對於「本土原生種」的概念才是被白人操縱建構，可以因為白人的遷移，地理轉換，而任意鬆動。如美國原住民批評家Jace Weaver所說，印第安原住民應消失，必消失的論述是殖民者使原住民存在正當性的一種手段，企圖在所定居的殖民地(settler colony)，建立自己乃原產品種(indigeneity)的假相，一種充滿「焦慮的假相」(uneasy illusion)(Weaver 228)。焦慮之所以產生應如另一位原住民宗教文化批評家Vine Deloria, Jr.所指，是因為白人殖民者「知道他是外來者(alien)，也知道北美是屬於印第安人的」。白人「不會鬆手丟掉印第安形象，因為他知道只要稍加巧思操縱，他就可以得到其實並不屬於他的原真性(authenticity)」(qtd in Weaver 228)。

在白人的殖民論述中，為維護血統的純粹，殖民者保持高高在上的姿態，害怕接近原住民(going native)，避免和原住民混雜。不過，從十九世紀末二十世紀初開始，殖民外來者想要驅近學習印第安人，參加原住民的慶典儀式活動，生活像當地原生的住民(going native)的現象，卻流露出在外來者想進一步操弄原住民符號的一種內在焦慮。Shari M. Huhndorf在探討美國文化想像中的印第安人時，指出美國文化中going native一直是美國人用以界定及建構歐美屬性與歷史「重要且必要的手段」(2)。他認為，從革命時期以降，扮演裝扮印第安人(playing Indian)，穿印第安服裝，學習印第安人行為其用意是來幫助歐洲美國人找尋其屬性及道地性(identity and authenticity)(7)，而十九世紀末開始的going native則是歐洲美國人認為需要採取印第安人的生活視野見識，以重建歐洲美國人的種族及國家認同(8)。他認為going native以各種不同形式在美國文化出現，一方面是要解決現代性的矛盾衝突，另一方面則是要化解因為認知到美國的建國乃充滿一連串暴力所滋生的焦慮感(2, 8)。內戰結束後，主導美國國家發展的歐美精英領導份子，面對國家地理版圖的向外擴張，不同文化人口的遷徙流動，為建構美國人統一的國家認同及屬性，無法規避的歷史問題是歐洲先民入侵為殖民征服大量屠殺原住民的史實及與美國和平建國的矛盾。十九世紀末，資本主義興起，社會達爾文主義宣揚社會進步論及白人種族優越論，現代化的進步發展反而讓人們懷舊，想到原點(origin)，所以，將原住民生活浪漫化，學習原始，Huhndorf聲稱，這些都只是歐洲美國人想從現代社會逃避的一種心理(14)。

自此觀之，對1887年，日白人水牛比爾(William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody)所組成的水牛比爾蠻荒西部秀(Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show)來說，邀請西部牛仔在舞台上穿著豔麗服裝，表演射擊，騎馬，表演平原區白人和紅人間戰役，安排印第安原住民穿著傳統服飾，頭插羽毛，表演傳統祭典舞蹈，並攻擊白人等暴力場面等等，可以說是為了滿足歐美人士對美國西部蠻荒地帶的窺視，及想像成為印第安人的愛恨矛盾情結。水牛比爾是有生意頭腦的白人資本家的代表，他把美國西部的景觀，動物，和人搬上舞台，將之馬戲班化，娛樂化，表演所到之處深受歡迎。蠻荒西部秀才到海外如英國，法國，德國等地巡迴表演。一方面他把美國西部神話和印第安原住民野蠻暴力的刻板印象傳播到過去的殖民者母國，深化且

延續殖民者對印第安人野蠻，暴力等的負面印象，引發歐洲白人對印第安野蠻怪物的恐懼，但另一方面，他才很矯飾地藉由包裝「高貴野蠻人」(noble savage)的形象，成為商品符號，引發歐洲觀眾對原始異文化的想像和產生進入該文化的欲望。

高貴野蠻人的主題，如海頓·懷特(Hayden White)所指出，自十八世紀以來，早已像物神般，盲目被崇拜。懷特從傳統民俗學，心理學及譬喻三層面解釋物神(fetish)的三重意義時指出，物神是具有神奇力量的自然物品(natural object)，人們對之產生非理性的崇拜，物神才可指任何物品或身體的一部份，為人們轉移其性慾方面興趣的對象。延伸此一概念，懷特解讀高貴野蠻人的概念中所蘊藏的拜物性時強調，高貴野蠻人的譬喻是謬誤的，人們對之崇拜是非理性的，更重要的藉由拜物，人們轉移了一種和種族主義有關的性慾方面的興趣(libidinal interest and satisfaction)(184)。從馬克思的商品拜物的概念談起，他分析道，15世紀末起，新世界原住民就被視為自然界裡的物品，隨征服者的慾望被任意消費，轉換與摧毀(186)。至於高貴野蠻人的概念，乃因對人(humanity)觀念的所造成的逆轉，但不論將原住民看成是野人(Wild Man)，或把原住民偶像化成高貴的野蠻人其實都不脫從人為正常/不正常，潔淨/汙穢，高貴/低賤的二元劃分。原住民才從原來早期被視為怪物，存在的他者客體(object)，轉變成被慾望的東西(thing)(187-8)。

同樣地，巴巴(Homi Bhabha)才主張以拜物的觀念來解讀殖民論述中的刻板形象(74)。巴巴將刻板形象定義為是一種「具拜物性的再現模式」(fetishistic mode of representation)(76)，指出拜物源自於陽具匱缺(lack)與性別差異(difference)的焦慮，要將差異規範化(normalization of that difference)，否認差異(74)。依此引伸，殖民論述中，拜物代表原初幻想(primal fantasy)的重新啟動，主體渴望純粹的源頭(pure origin)，但又必須面對種族，膚色與文化差異的威脅，他認為拜物或刻板形象之問題不在於「其簡化，錯誤再現現實，而是它是一種僵硬固定的再現，否認差異，無法再現主體的心理與社會關係。」(75) 僵硬固定(fixity)無疑是巴巴批判的重點。他指出，殖民者藉此觀念來建構他者性(otherness)，用於再現模式(66)。然而，他者，在巴巴的觀念裡，卻是具有兩種相反衝突(ambivalent)性質：「既為慾望才是嘲弄的對象，既陳述差異又陳述認同」(67)。

二

異世界的陌生人：自身與他者相遇

在威爾曲的《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中，衝鋒麋鹿，像蘇族歷史人物黑麋鹿一樣，想藉著參加水牛比耶的蠻荒部秀出走。對蘇族年輕人而言，這樣的出走深具意義，因為逃離保留區是平原區蘇族人突破生活藩籬，掙脫外在及心理束縛

的一種反動方式。²³蘇族年輕人希望走出保留區疆界，到歐洲白人的世界旅行表演，認為這除了可以讓他們有機會領略白人的文化生活面貌外，還可以傳揚自己的文化；但是，很不幸也很諷刺的是，參與水牛比爾蠻荒西部秀的印第安表演者不僅在白人總監的控制下，喪失文化主體性與自主性，也成為美國白人拿印第安人做商品矇混觀眾的幫兇。小說中，水牛比爾聲稱，他組秀的目的是要將印第安人純樸的智慧教給為工業資本價值所惑的法國人(*The Heartsong* 59-60)，團員因此要表現出印第安人的「勇氣，智慧，寬宏大量——像舊日的領袖們一般」(*The Heartsong* 51)。這樣刻意再現的印第安文化是矯揉造作，虛假，不真實的。再說，這樣板式的表演只強化了歐洲人心中印第安人高貴野蠻人，消逝中野蠻人的刻板形象，可是這刻板再現背後卻夾雜著蘇族人複雜矛盾的心理。事實上，不僅歐洲白人透過這「商品拜物」的方式降低了面對野蠻人的焦慮，蘇族年輕人本身也從這樣的扭曲的再現得到滿足。他們覺得他們的表演，不僅讓法國人見識到蘇族的文化，提高了文化的能見度，更重要的是他們得到了在美國本土所得不到的尊重與「同情」，並且從中肯定了自我文化的認同。誠如衝鋒麋鹿所說：「當然，他知道這[表演]全是假的，家鄉的老人家才反對年輕人離鄉參加白人弄的假玩意，可是他對唱剝頭皮歌(*scalping song*)，跳剝頭皮舞不再感到罪惡。他覺得能對這些法國人呈現古老的傳統，是一種驕傲，因為法國人欣賞印第安人，而且，看來真正同情他們」(*The Heartsong* 52)。

可惜的是，一般法國人所同情的是消逝中的印第安符號，而不是印第安個體。當他褪去表演者矯飾的外衣，恢復本然自我面貌，衝鋒麋鹿隨即感受到被排斥的孤寂。當意外從馬上摔落生病，被表演團遺棄，送進法國醫院後逃出，衝鋒麋鹿流落街頭，他感受到在異邦，人們對他懷疑與敵視的眼光：「衝鋒麋鹿進入這城市時，是很神氣的，民眾歡迎他。現在，他們那懷疑的眼神看著他，甚至充滿敵意，就像美國人一樣待他。」(*The Heartsong* 52)。這不同場域的注視眼光迫使衝鋒麋鹿檢視自己在，重新調整他主客體的位置，省察自身和他者關係，而在確立與他者的關係過程中又必須認知差異。小說中，威爾曲做為敘事者以變換敘事的觀點，表現這主客觀者位置的跳動，並突顯男主角的差異性(*difference*)，與格格不入的外來性(*alienness, strangeness, foreignness*)。²⁴因此，這篇小說，雖

²³ 十九世紀末，西部蘇族人和白人間最著名的戰役是1876年的小大角之役(*The Battle of Little Bighorn*)。蘇族印第安人領袖「坐牛」(*Sitting Bull*)殺害了突擊蘇族營地的白人將軍卡斯特(*George Armstrong Custer*)。這勝利的代價是蘇族人被白人政府以更嚴厲的制度限制，被圍入保留區中生活。被圍拳在保留區中的蘇族人從此失去了文化自主性；上白人辦的寄宿學校，被禁止說母語，蘇族人生活在白人殖民的文化枷鎖之中。因此，掙脫白人殖民禁錮枷鎖，追求自日一直是蘇族族人的夢想。

²⁴ 他者，外來者，異者之間的差別為何？Richard Waldenfels 從語意分辨指出，他者視之為多樣(*diversity*)，其相反為同一(*sameness*)，他者之為外(*foreignness*)則相對於我所有的(*ownness*)概念。他從領域範圍(*place*)，所有權性質(*possession*)及行為(*manner*)來說明相對應於法語 "autre, alterite 和英語 "other, otherness" 的德語 "fremd" 的涵義。德語的 fremd 的解釋，包括我領域以外發生的(是陌生的，外國的)，屬於別人的(*alien*)，及異質的，怪異的，不常見的，古怪的。中文語詞中，「外」亦相對於本屬範圍，以處所論相對於本地，「他」則是人稱詞，只你我以外的第三者，「異」則與奇，怪，殊異義。見 Richard Waldenfels, "The Other and the Foreign." p. 113; 唐何

然以衝鋒麋鹿男主角的故事發展為中心，但威爾曲卻不斷呈現歐洲白人和真實生活中的印第安人接觸後所形成的觀看印第安人視域；並以這視象敘事，洩露歐洲白人對異文化或美化，或浪漫化，或醜化等等複雜的幻想。

首先，威爾曲將衝鋒麋鹿鎖定在一個像孤兒般的外國人，異鄉客，陌生人的生存困境：孤零無依，啞口無言，身心難安。因語言的隔閡，感受到強烈陌生感；因為不熟悉當地語言，甚至於連美國國家的語言——英語——都不會，使他感受到在美國本土一樣的疏離感，他壓抑自我，成了道地的圈外人(outsiders)，一個如克莉絲蒂娃所形容的「沒有聲音，沒有發聲的舞台，沒有聽眾，沒有影響力，也沒有社會地位」的外國人(20)。在異文化的世界，他不能自如母語和人暢快溝通，只有將母語祕密「保存」起來，「任其滯萎」。這種痛苦，克莉絲蒂娃最明白，表達的最深刻。克莉絲蒂娃在《我們之中的陌生人》(Strangers to Ourselves)中指出：當人陷在新語言和母語之間，母語無從發揮，且使用陌生的新語言又常因為怪聲怪語讓聽者茫然，說者尷尬時，這時唯有沉默才是歸所(15)。所以，語言的陌生讓他在馬賽變成沉默的他者，需要美國官員，法國記者及官員代言，轉譯其需求。除此之外，外國人面對另一層的困境是沒有明確的公民權，沒有清晰的法律身份定位，遊移在國家律法邊緣，既不屬於此，也不歸類於彼的尷尬。對於美國原住民而言，他們和美國政府的關係既獨立又模糊，加深他們身份屬性模糊所帶來的困擾。十九世紀，美國政府和原住民動不動就以簽訂協約(treaty)，給予原住民相當的保障與承諾，然而美國政府常任意毀約。依據協約，原住民部落乃獨立的國家實體(is its own separate nation)，但在白人不尊重協約精神，原住民又得不到公民權的情況下，美國原住民在屬於自己的土地上，生存處境卻像異邦人。²⁵小說中，衝鋒麋鹿在法國，真正的異國，因為不是美國公民，不受美國和法國間的法律協議所約束，成了美法兩國官僚體制的受害者。身份的模糊讓他被作弄擺佈，無法及早被遣送回國，終而流落異鄉。²⁶

威爾曲因之將衝鋒麋鹿置於兩個世界(新舊世界)，兩個文化(西方文化與部族文化)以及兩個時間標的(過去和現在)中，深入探索陷入其間拉扯所感受的迷惘。這迷惘深深影響衝鋒麋鹿對自我的認知以及和他者的關係。衝鋒麋鹿被動式的沉默，使得他無法充分傳達自我的需求。從他者異樣的眼光中，他被迫檢視自己的身體，膚色，體格，裝扮，而清楚意識到他自身的差異，及在他者眼中他是異類，怪物與野蠻者，所有負面刻板印象的綜合(The Heartsong 42-43)。對異鄉遊子來說，本土文化的記憶與召喚遂成為精神依靠。讓衝鋒麋鹿魂牽夢縈的是家園的景物，童年的生活點滴，年輕時的夢想，然而，隨著時空的隔離，記憶逐漸模糊，依附的力量漸失，加深他在異鄉的失落無依之感。例如，小說一開始，衝

主編國語活冊辭典。

²⁵威爾曲對美國原住民所面對的司法體系與法律制度不無批判，這議題才成為他另外兩部小說 *The Indian Lawyer* 及 *The Death of Jim Loney* 觸及的面向。

²⁶諷刺的是，第一次因流落街頭當流浪漢被逮，關進監獄，第二次因謀殺罪被關十年，然而，最後謀殺罪被從一般刑案被歸類為政治案，得到赦免，法國政府還為關他十年的錯誤道歉(*The Heartsong* 361)。

鋒麋鹿隻身躺在醫院中，神識回到家鄉，清楚地記得自己和同伴們對部族領袖瘋馬的追隨崇拜，其對白人永不妥協屈服的誓言，以及瘋馬被殺，奧格拉拉族人遷入松脊保留區，他被迫上白人學校學習英語，以及他 13 歲逃離至 Stronghold，學習古老的印第安生活，經驗靈視之旅，得到 wicasa wakan 聖靈庇佑，所獵殺的獾爪做成的項鍊，成為他的護身符(*The Heartsong* 14)。然而，在異文化裡，他對這些精神力量存在與否的信心開始迷惑，他惶恐他所依附的精神體逐漸失去力量：「他試著以正確的方法抽煙，可是沒有 *pejuta wicasa*——在精神世界，沒有力量。顯然，他的動物助手再也沒法代表他和 Wakan Tanka 說話。在那個地方離開了他？Yellow Breast 是不是遺棄了他呢？」(*The Heartsong* 130-1)。

事實上，衝鋒麋鹿對自我的信心必須建立在明確的自我文化認同上。當他感受到部族文化給予他的力量，他主體性確立，個人內在力量就增長，否則他只能壓縮隱藏自我，屈服於異邦人的索求，唯唯諾諾。比如，代表印第安精神力量的神靈，死亡之歌，在某方面，成為他對抗異族歧視侮辱的「神奇武器」，提振其自信與能見度的方法 (*The Heartsong* 204)。在一次與侮辱他的白人水手的衝突中，他發現唱原住民死亡之歌，竟能讓威脅他的一群白人驚嚇惶恐，措手不及(*The Heartsong* 200-1)，他對自我的肯定就增加了。相反地，當自我認同的文化正在消失中(vanishing)的恐懼與失落滋長，他就渴望將這份失落轉移。對法國妓女瑪莉(Marie)的愛戀就是在自我離異狀態下，情感移位的結果。他想到夢裡最最常出現的場景總是親人對他聲聲的召喚道「你是我唯一的兒子」("You are my only son")，可是每當他夢見自己重申代表 Lakota 傳統文化的 Stronghold 營地時，他發現所有的一切都消失了——「沒有人，沒有馬，沒有狗，沒有住處。沒有篷架，沒有火堆，到處只剩下蔓草覆蓋。好似 Lakota 的人已經從地球上消失」(*The Heartsong* 235; 434-5)。這種文化失落的空白需填補，所以，他認為「唯一能對抗這頑強不斷出現的夢境的方法，就是多想想那穿藍袍的女子，好將這夢擠出去」(*The Heartsong* 236)。

和妓女瑪莉的關係，一方面反映出衝鋒麋鹿在異國難以安頓的多重邊緣化的存在狀態，另一方面，才顯示他對異文化幻想，融入該社會的慾求。法國妓女是社會的邊緣人，衝鋒麋鹿是流落異鄉的外國人，在社會的角落偷偷摸摸地靠勞力過活，是道地的邊緣人。透過對社會邊緣底層人士的認同，衝鋒麋鹿以為他找到心理可以依附的對象。他被她異國的肢體所吸引，以為他自己的真情可以跨越種族性別藩籬，藉日肢體的結合，滿足他融入當地社會的心理欲求，殊不知，吸引誘惑衝鋒麋鹿，讓他迷惘的其實是如克莉絲蒂娃所稱的「詭異的陌生性」(uncanny strangeness)。援引佛洛伊德的詭異(uncanny)觀念，克莉絲蒂娃指出外國人(foreigner)在我們心中產生的既排拒(rejection)，又吸引(fascination)的力量，那是佛洛伊德所稱的「嬰兒期的慾望及對他者的恐懼——對死亡他者，對女性他者，對無法克制的衝動他者的恐懼」(191)。她聲稱，「外國人在我們的心中」(*The foreigner is within us*)，逃離外國人，就是和自己的無意識戰鬥(191)。在《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中，顯然地，無論是衝鋒麋鹿或在地法國人都必須面對這

在的外國人，與自己的無意識戰鬥。

他方面，對異文化的不實幻想才帶來災難。不僅衝鋒麋鹿連把衝鋒麋鹿定位為卑賤體的法國人都蒙受其害。小說中，瑪莉屈服在她同性戀老闆的權力和金錢的威脅下，設計出賣下藥迷昏衝鋒麋鹿，讓同性戀變態狂玩弄衝鋒麋鹿。蘇醒後的衝鋒麋鹿發現猥褻行為感到一陣作嘔。在驚恐受辱之中，衝鋒麋鹿毫不猶疑地殺死了同性戀變態狂。在此，威菲曲無疑地呈現出一個克莉絲蒂娃在《<恐怖的才量>》中所謂的「道德性」卑賤情境。²⁷對衝鋒麋鹿而言，這情境之卑賤在於瑪莉的背叛，為金錢出賣他的身體，以取悅滿足同性戀老闆對異國身體的既愛戀又鄙視之幻想。更甚者則是來自於同性戀男子所造成的心理威脅與恐懼。在衝鋒麋鹿看來，同性戀者的行為是Siyoko，是蘇族文化中邪惡與污穢的象徵，應該被鏟除。他認為這情境是Great Mystery派來考驗他的勇氣與決心，所以縱使在驚恐中，他仍深信：「即使過了兩晚，他還是強烈的覺得他應該殺死這siyoko。這是再簡單不過——人只要碰到邪惡，就得將它殺掉。」(The Heartson 297)。不幸的是，衝鋒麋鹿自以為是替天行道的行為非但未能得到法國人理解，反而被看成是野蠻者既有的暴力表現。法國馬賽當地人馬上用二元對立的思考方式，界定了衝鋒麋鹿。如記者 St-Cyr 所揣測，衝鋒麋鹿「是沒有家園的人。他沒有人可以交談，給他安慰。這是為甚麼他會完完全全豁出去的原因。」(295)。St-Cyr 利用媒體大肆報導衝鋒麋鹿的故事，「要讓全馬賽的人知道這來自美國的怪異生物，他奇異的癖好，他想成為法國人的可憐作法，以及他野蠻的規範(code)和文明法律間的衝突」(295)。St-Cyr 就如一般的歐洲白人，未能深入了解衝鋒麋鹿對他的排斥，涉及更深的文化差異認知問題。

若衝鋒麋鹿無法拔除其在無意識對他的(同性戀，西方異文化)的排斥，源自於文化差異，小說中另一個對他的懼戀情境則是水牛比菲蠻荒西部秀所製造的印第安人野蠻暴力場面。大蓬車，追逐的印第安人，奔馳的野牛群，半裸上身，冷酷殘忍的眼神，及野蠻人的吼叫聲等(Heartson 112)進入觀看者的無意識中，由此形成主體所認知的印第安野蠻形象，造成觀看者對「卑賤體」的排斥，引發孩童及婦女的恐懼。因此，當小說中虔誠的基督教徒Madame Soulas被要求收容流落異鄉的衝鋒麋鹿時，內心便承受無比的焦慮，恐懼，掙扎等煎熬。在基督教道德觀的教導下，Madame Soulas 下意识應該要為野蠻人的福祉禱告，但是從從觀看蠻荒西部秀所形成的印第安野蠻形象讓她害怕，讓她抗拒應有的接納。歡迎，接待陌生者到自己的家庭所展現的親切好客(hospitality)姿態背後，如德希達所指出，是蘊藏著主(host)客(guest)間，歡笑與淚水拉扯的矛盾。接納異己不易，接納以所謂歐洲文明為價值標準，判定為野蠻的人類更需要勇氣。文明與野蠻這二元對立的觀念，其實是立基在所謂陌生與熟悉的對立觀念。Madame Soulas 坦

²⁷ 克莉絲蒂娃曾對「卑賤情境」(abjection)做了這樣的揭示。她說：「在卑賤情境之中，其實蘊含著一種狂烈而模糊的反抗，它是出自存有者在面臨威脅時，所激起的對抗；這威脅可能來自主體之外，亦可能從主體之內部外溢而出，讓人全然無從準備、無法忍受、無可料想。它就在那裡，靠得極近極近，卻無法被同化。它煽動、煩擾、壟惑著從不輕易任人引惑的欲望。異常受驚，他轉身離去；心至極，他拒斥一切。」(《<恐怖的才量>》3)。

白地質問：「他們真正能提供給這野蠻人感到舒服的東西嗎？他們有充分的準備讓他們住進家裡來嗎？孩子們要怎麼樣調整自己，適應這樣的怪物？野蠻人要住到文明的社群裡，他們會怎麼想？」（*The Heart Song* 110）就因為在她的眼中，印第安人是異類，會格格不入，才更擔心家無法提供舒適的環境，讓家不成家，讓作客在家的外國人不自在。

三

與他者共存，文化再想像的矛盾

如何看待及對待他者？Tzvetan Todorov 在《征服美洲：他者的問題》（*The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*）書中，分析哥倫布對待美國原住民時指出兩種可能方式，一是將印第安人視為和自己一樣的人類，應該和自己有一樣的人權，宗教信仰，行為和生活方式，而加以同化，或者看出差異，將之視為異己，認為我優彼劣。兩者皆出於自我中心主義，將我的價值視為普遍的價值（42-3）。同化雖出於人道精神，立基於平等原則，但是也是消除差異的一種方式。其中更涉及一種殖民者的欲望，一種想讓他們改信其宗教，遵循其生活習慣的欲望（43）。《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中，Soulas 家庭克服了心理恐懼，收容衝鋒麋鹿，但是基本上，他們並未去除以自我文化為中心的態度來對待衝鋒麋鹿這位外國人。他們安排他在魚市場工作，教他基本的法語及法國所謂文明社會的飲食，衣著，工作方式，甚而鼓勵他上教堂，望彌撒；他們待他如親，但也讓衝鋒麋鹿感覺自己是「孩子」。這樣並非對等的關係或許是衝鋒麋鹿脫離 Soulas 家庭至肥皂工廠工作，選擇開始獨立自主生活的原因之一。

相較於無法以融入他者的方式，真正瞭解接納衝鋒麋鹿的 Soulas 基督教家庭來說，法國農場 Gazier 父女對衝鋒麋鹿的對待才讓衝鋒麋鹿有機會進入 Todorov 在《歷史的道德》書中，談到的自我對他者的認識（knowledge of the other）的第三個階段——自我恢復，與他者對話。²⁸這也讓和衝鋒麋鹿互動的法國人真正表現出克莉絲蒂娃所謂的「有能力想像，把自己變成他者」。克莉絲蒂娃認為，「與他者，外國人，生活在一起，給予我們做為他者（being an other）的可能性。這不只單純只我們可以——很有人道精神地——接受他者，而是可以設身處地。」（*Strangers* 13）法國女子 Nathalie Gazier 對衝鋒麋鹿背景與文化的好奇固然部份是出於法國人對高貴野蠻人的崇拜，然而，她願意融入，對衝鋒麋鹿所敘述的文化投以關注與想像，試圖了解文化差異，完全接納尊重信任衝鋒麋鹿，因此給予衝鋒麋鹿極大的精神支援。

衝鋒麋鹿和 Nathalie 結婚象徵著消除對異己刻板印象的恐懼，與接納的可

²⁸Todorov 所謂的四個步驟為：1. 以自我為中心，將他者同化到自我（自我的觀點立場認知去瞭解他者）2. 為他人著想消融自我，壓抑自我主體 設法調整以適應他者自我消失只剩他者 3. 恢復自我，與他者對話 4. 抽離自我，從對他者的知識，來瞭解自我，不斷有新的自我認識（14-15）。

能。但是對衝鋒麋鹿來說，異鄉人的恐懼，痛苦未曾減少。縱使他因婚姻取得合法的法國公民權，他發現自己無論如何都難以融入當地社會，難以掙脫當地人以異樣眼光注視他，他很遺憾「他在這國家始終是個陌生人，曾為他的無知付出代價」(*The Heartsong* 428)。在某一方面，他身不由己，被動地成為流落異鄉，失去家園的流亡者。流亡者，如薩伊德所說，「在中間地帶生存，既不能完全和新環境水乳交融，又不能和舊社會完全斬斷情絲，被這種藕斷絲連式的關係所糾纏苦惱，在某一層次是既想家又濫情，另一方面，又是位擅長摹擬，偷偷摸摸的流浪人(a secret outcast)」(*The Edward Said Reader* 370-1)。語言的障礙切斷衝鋒麋鹿與家鄉的聯繫，他無法日閱報紙的新聞來瞭解美國本土的事情，只能從卸貨碼頭工人口中知道點滲消息(*The Heartsong* 419-2)。支撐衝鋒麋鹿度過16年在異地艱困生活的力量是他自認為仍保持的家鄉記憶，以及聖靈的庇佑。當他知道來自家鄉的水牛比耶蠻荒部團體到法國表演，他陷入痛苦的掙扎，一股近鄉情怯的恐懼油然而起。記憶中的故鄉事在他腦海中重新洗牌。

他前往觀看比耶的蠻荒部秀的表演，在這主客觀者位置互異的情境中，他看到表演台上的自己，似曾相識的熟悉感讓他感到極端的不舒服與厭惡。表演以他曾經參與過的卡斯特歷史事件為主軸，可是表演明顯扭曲史實，尤其最後一幕更令人髮指。水牛比耶衝出，一刀刺進印第安人心臟，以討好歐洲白人認為印第安人該被殺的口吻。從過去被觀看的位置，跳脫到現在觀看的位置，他清楚看到印第安人被物化成只是馬戲團表演中的怪物，供人戲弄嘲笑。

面對自家人的詢問，為什麼滯留異鄉不歸時，衝鋒麋鹿那為了要瞭解他國文化而應。他自己知道這回答根本是個謊言(432)。家鄉景物全非，找尋不到可以認同的文化才是主因。但當他聽到表演團體中年輕族人對部族生活及發展，慷慨激昂地發表意見，積極又進取時，衝鋒麋鹿為自我部族文化未因白人政府的統治分崩離析而高興，才樂觀地相信 Lakota 的文化將延續，但是，他那時才意識到自己早已變成擺盪在兩者文化間，身陷尷尬地位的中間者(in-between)。他對本土和異鄉的兩種文化充滿既熟悉又陌生，既親切又疏離的矛盾感。雖然他懷抱著深切的思鄉愁緒，但是回鄉的欲望還是被另一股力量所牽引。最後他選擇回到法國妻子身邊。他這樣陳述：「我說著這些人的語言，我的妻子是他們其中之一員，我的心就是她的心。她是我的生命，不久我們就有另外一個生命，屆時，我們會同心歌唱」(*The Heartsong* 437)。16年前，衝鋒麋鹿法定參加水牛比耶秀，家人在火車站，歡送鼓舞他要堅強勇敢所唱的「勇敢的心之歌」("braveheart song")，現在已轉化成他和法國妻子，未出世的孩子協議要同心同德，同唱的同心之歌。

衝鋒麋鹿的選擇或許意味著衝鋒麋鹿融入異文化的妥協與過份的信心，但這也顯示他瞭解他對他人的責任。他者，如法國哲學家 Emmanuel Levinas 所指出，「並非另外一個我自己(another myself)，參與我的生活，共同存在分享。他者和我的關係不是圓圍式的，和諧美好，也不是一種設身處地為彼此著想的感情。我們認知他者和我有相似之處，可是才知道他在我的外部；我和他者的關係是一種神秘體(a Mystery)的關係」(qtd. Wolfrey 173)。他者，Levinas 指出，不應該

當成威脅，不應該加以約化，或是被認知主體的我視為客體。他者幫助我發現對他者存在的責任(responsibility)，應予以回應(response-ability)，這責任讓我瞭解到倫理的存在，促使我與他者進行溝通(Certeau xvi)。

四

結語

從小說開始，威爾曲即不斷探索蘇族原住民青年如何能衝出監禁其主體發展的體制的可能性。衝鋒麋鹿表現出不斷地想逃離種種的禁制，以追求自我和自由的欲望。從保留區出走，從法國醫院逃跑都象徵他極才想掙脫白人常規管理與監禁，然而，衝鋒麋鹿卻總是從一個牢籠，進入另一個牢籠，承受形體和精神上被束縛的痛苦。²⁹ 逃離監禁，找尋自由，失落迷惘，歸鄉渴望在小說一開始即流露無遺。衝鋒麋鹿張開眼發現自己莫名其妙地躺在白人的醫療院所(a white man's healing house)的病床上，四週陌生人，操著他聽不懂的語言在交談，一切是生疏，蒼白與怪異的。他認為如果不逃離白人的病院，他必然失去找到回家的路的機會(*The Heart Song* 65)。因此，飛後即便是羈留異地十六載，衝鋒麋鹿總是擺脫不掉那種從保留區的家逃離後，又想設法找尋回家的路心的心理模式。這樣的離家—追尋—回家(departure-quest-return)好像符合神話原型模式，但其實這掙扎更充分反映出美國原住民長久以來不知何處是我家(homelessness)的迷惘與徬徨。衝鋒麋鹿的流落異地加深他對本土家鄉定義的困惑。留在異鄉並不表示他要成為永遠的異鄉外國人(expatriate)，而表示他願意像流亡者³⁰一般「跨越疆界，衝破思想和經驗的柵欄」。就如薩伊德所說，「流亡者知道，在這世俗，因緣和合的世界裡，家總是暫時的。疆界和柵欄，將人們圍在安全的熟悉領地中，才可以形成監獄... 流亡者跨越疆界，衝破思想和經驗的柵欄」("Reflections on Exile" 185)。

在《衝鋒麋鹿的心之歌》中，威爾曲顯然不僅探索因文化接觸所認知到的種族/文化差異問題，而且觸及重建自我與他者積極關係的可能。透過衝鋒麋鹿的異域經驗，他指出印第安原住民衝破僵化被妖魔化/被偶像化的印第安刻板形象，融入異文化的可能，融入不必然將自我他者化，而是如認知到克莉絲蒂娃所謂的「有才能想像，把自己變成他者」，或如 Levinas 所指出，日他者認知到自我的責任。

²⁹ 從醫院逃跑後，他因流浪街頭被警察抓到警局拘禁，後因召妓失手殺人，被判刑10年，被關進監獄。這些監禁都象徵另一種形式的保留區。他被不同形式的體制所局限。因此，10年牢獄生活，他能有幸從閉塞的牢房到牢房外從事園藝工作，對他而言，已經是一種自由。

³⁰ 薩伊德在《反思流亡》一文中，對流亡者，難民，外國人，移民者等無法歸鄉的人給予清楚的分辨與定義。他認為，流亡者乃被驅逐出境，被剝奪人權，過著悲慘，與人格格不入的局外人生活，而外國人則是為某種個人或社會理由自願留在異邦。但兩者對孤獨疏離的感受相同。依此觀之，美國原住民被白人殖民者逐出家園，遠遷異地，在心理的狀態上應是在自己土地上的流亡者。

Part C

Moving Into Tribal and Moral Imagination:
Reading D'Arcy McNickle and N.Scott Momaday Ethically

. . . He had lost his place, He had been long ago at the center, had known where he was, had lost his way, had wandered to the end of the earth, was even now reeling at the edge of the voice.

-- N. Scott Momaday, *The House Made of Dawn* 104.

Violence exists whenever human beings harm other human being. Indeed, the violence most threatening to human beings is human violence. It takes many forms, arising in physical attacks or words and actions that deprive human beings of their humanity. . . . Violence is a human problem. It is never an infernal machine without a driver. It is never without a victim. If it may be called systematic, it is only so because it establishes languages and patterns of behavior that can be repeated by others.

-- Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* 7.

Ethics exists to guarantee freedom, equality, and nonviolence.

-- Tobin Siebers, *The Ethics of Criticism* 17.

In his *White Robe's Dilemma: Tribal History in American Literature*, Neil Schmitz praises D'Arcy McNickle, N.Scott Momaday, and Leslie Silko as "the first Native American *new tribalists*," for these writers demonstrate their literary competence to integrate myth, legend, and modern history in their respective works and bring "to its presentation a re-thinking of the sacred in secular American literature" (8-9). Similarly, in his comments on Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, Arnold Krupat also says that because Momaday's novel clearly follows the Jemez Pueblo oral storytelling tradition, along with its celebration of Navajo 'night chant', healing ceremony, and the theme of returning to tradition, the novel renders tribalism "legitimate" (41). These critical observations are accurate to the extent that McNickle, Momaday, and Silko all display in their respective works what Schmitz and Krupat

mean by “tribalist” writing.

Nonetheless, there is also a sign showing that they encounter what Schmitz suggests as a “White Robe’s dilemma.”³¹ Writing in a white society, these Native American writers face a dilemma that often compels them to unsettle their supposedly tribalist perspectives and position. McNickle’s dual identities as an Indian public official and writer, for instance, put him into a fairly embarrassing political and cultural situation. Although the political ethos at his time, as Schmitz notes, “significantly reopened the question of tribal identity and governance” (3), McNickle’s writings, however, appear rather weak in demonstrating what is meant by tribalism.³² On the contrary, McNickle shows a strong tendency to portray the dilemma of the mixedblood Native people living under cultural duress. The juxtaposition of old tribal culture vis-à-vis new modern culture, the old religion against the new religion (e.g, French Jesuit against Salish traditionalist), compels protagonists as well as readers to make religious, cultural and moral assessments as well as choices. Likewise, in Momaday’s novel, such cultural and religious juxtapositions stand out as prominent features to suggest the morally, culturally and politically difficult situations that the protagonists are confronted with. The dilemma of whether or not to cross cultures is also demonstrated in the forms of narratives that these writers opt to. In fact, by blending traditional oral narrative with Western written prose, these writers initiate their attempt to disturb the opposition between Native orality and modern literacy, an opposition that usually relegate oral narratives to a secondary position.

The formal hybridization and cultural juxtaposition enforce readers to enter a fictional world, which is in many ways different from the Western world. If one of the author’s responsibilities, as Wayne C. Booth claims, is to discover the truth, to respect the realities as “things really are,” without “toning down dialect to make the narrative intelligible to outsiders and offensive to members of the ethnic group” (131),³³ Native American writers like McNickle and Momaday assume the authorial responsibilities to search for effective forms of narrative, through which they guide readers to appreciate the cultural values and moral codes of the Native people in the face of a morally, culturally, and epistemologically different European American society. The ethical positions of what Booth deems as implied author and readers surely determine the way the text can be interpreted, and the way the character as a moral agent may be evaluated.

³¹White Robe, according to Schmitz’s study, is a Mesquakie warrior, who faced the dilemma of whether to surrender to capture or to escape in capture while French intruded into the homeland of Wisconsin Mesquakies. See Schmitz 40-43.

³²

³³ Here Wayne C. Booth cites the debates on African American Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as an example.

This essay, therefore, seeks to explore the ethics of reading McNickle's *Surrounded* in comparison with Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* by analyzing their textual construction and their treatment of Native American responses to the conflicts between Native American and Euro-American cultures, which are manifested in the practices of religion and law. Moreover, by contextualizing these texts—that is, by placing them against the political ethos of their time, the essay intends to study the implications of violence as a means of resistance for Native Americans to liberate themselves from various forms of white colonialism. If ethics is, as Siebers writes, “supposed to be concerned with justice” (16), then what justice is done to Native American characters, who strive to return home to restore their own culture and identity but find themselves psychologically and physically entrapped and victimized in the conflicts of cultures? What can their responses to violence suggest about Native American sense of goodness and evil?

I

In the study of ethics of readings, critics like Hillis Miller and Wayne C. Booth call our attention to the diverse aspects of reading and the roles that the author, the narrator, the characters, and the reader, teacher, and critics play. Whereas Booth endeavors to look for the ways to “describe the encounters of a story-teller's ethos with that of the reader or listener”(8), Miller lays stresses on finding “an ethical moment in the act of reading” through rhetorical analysis rather than “response to a thematic content asserting this or that idea about morality”(5-9). As Miller claims that “nothing is more urgently needed these days in humanistic study than the incorporation of the rhetorical study of literature into the study of the historical, social and ideological dimensions of literature (7), his “deconstructive” approach seems to deviate our attention from the historical, political and cultural aspects of literature. The return to ethics, or ethics of reading, then, may refer to the attempt that we redress the inadequacy of the rhetorical deconstruction through what Danile R. Schwarz suggests as “a humanistic ethics of reading,” a kind of reading attitude that alerts us to the difference between an *ethics of reading* and an *ethics while reading* (12 italics original). If we follow Schwart's suggestion about an ethics while reading as “attention to moral issues generated by events described within an imagined world. It asks what ethical questions are involved in the act of transforming life into art [...]” (12), we then would not ignore the implicit working of ethics and politics in literature while we are performing what is considered as an ethics of reading. It is, therefore, ethically imperative that we observe also the intertwining working of political, historical and cultural concerns in the world of literary imagination.

While we approach a less well-known Native American novel like *The Surrounded*, it is then sensible to propose that we read the text from a larger scope, trying to understand it from different perspectives, so that we can redress our preconception or misconception about the unfamiliar Other. For *The Surrounded* is, indeed, less noticeable and less popular,³⁴ in comparison with *House Made of Dawn*, which has been accredited as a notable landmark in the progress of Native American literature and has attracted large readership and critical attention. In 1968 when Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, Native American critics and writers were excited and considered it heralding what they called Native American Renaissance. Later critical discussions and interpretations never ceased mentioning the significance of *House Made of Dawn* to the development of Native American literature. Yet the appearance of the novel and the award to it, as Momaday himself claimed, was because "the world was ready for it in 1968." (Isernhagen 35). This remark points out the truth that before Momaday, Native American writers have produced significant numbers of works, but they are ignored by readers not equipped with adequate knowledge or expectation to realize the essence of such literary production. Take the 1930s as an example. The production of Native American literature flourished during that period: *Black Elk Speaks* was published in 1932; in the same year, there were John Joseph Mathews's *Wah Kon-Tah* and James Paytiamo's *Flaming Arrow's People*; in 1933, Chief Luther Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle* appeared; in 1934, John Joseph Mathew published his *Sundown*; and in 1936 D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* was published (Purdy and Ruppert 622-23). But critics paid relatively little attention to it. Thus, in recent years critic like Ruth J. Heflin proposes in her *I Remain Alive: The Sioux Literary Renaissance* (2000) that Native American Renaissance start with McNickle rather than Momaday. Other writers like James Welch also paid tribute to McNickle, acknowledging that he, Momaday and Silko were the successors of McNickle's literary enterprise (Colterlli 197).

What makes McNickle an intriguing figure for literary and cultural studies is no doubt his multi-disciplinary backgrounds. Born on the Flathead/Salish reservation in Montana, McNickle grew up in a mixedblood family. He received trainings in anthropology, and later worked as an administrator and intellectual advisor to John

³⁴It is true that compared with Momaday and Silko, two renowned, well-established and canonized Native American writers, McNickle seems to have attested relatively little attentions from literary critics. It is only in recent years that McNickle's leading role in contemporary Indian literature is recognized. Influential Native American critics like Charles Larson, Andrew Wiget and Louis Owens all pay their tribute to McNickle and praise him as an accomplished writer of the 1930s. In 1996, Lloyd Purdy's edited work, *The Legacy of D'Arcy McNickle* provides considerable evidence to assess McNickle's importance as a historian, activist, and literary writer. Purdy's comprehensive evaluation no doubt helps establish McNickle's place in Native American literature.

Collier in the Indian New Deal. His assistance to an important white officer John Collier and his treatise *Native American Tribalism: Indian Survivals and Renewals* (1973) rendered his cultural and political role more complicated than the other Native American writers. Although a contemporary of Black Elk, McNickle never left an impression that he was a sole representative of his own tribal culture. In fact, like his contemporaries, John Joseph Mathews, McNickle actively participated in the promotion of Indian welfare and the definition of Red Power (Warrior 21-27). His active involvement in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) made him a political activist. By virtue of his devotion and contribution, few historians would downplay the influential role he played in assisting Collier to shape the Native American policy in the 1930s.

Unfortunately, it was also because of his position at Bureau of Indian Affairs that McNickle was compelled to move between Indian and White worlds, making him live a “broker’s life.” Moreover, the contradictory policies drove him to shuttle between two worlds, facing skepticism. The drafting of Indian Reorganization Act was case in point that brought him into a dilemma. Indian Reorganization Act, which was drafted by Collier, was ideally intended to grant American Indians the rights to seek self-governing, and to revive cultural and religious freedom of the Natives; however, the enactment of American assimilation policy in 1930s was, on the other hand, schemed to integrate the minorities into the mainstream and to erase their voices. The high-sounding objective that Indian Reorganization Act set to help revive Indian culture met with doubts and challenge from Indian traditionalists and Nativist activists alike, since many Native Americans suspected that the bureau hired Indians to manipulate Indian affairs rather than to make the Indians more self-governing (Pfister 202).

It is against this cultural and political background that McNickle produced his first fiction, *The Surrounded*, which got published in 1936 after McNickle was offered a position in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and after he made several revisions on the novel to meet the expectation of the white publisher and readers (Hans 224-5).³⁵ Set in 1920s, the novel, like many other Native American novels, opens with a homecoming scenario, yet it ends up with tragedy, a tragedy caused by irrational responses to the demand of Euro-American society. Archilde Leon, the protagonist, was born into a ‘Metis’ family, with a Flathead/Salish religious mother, Catharine and a Spanish ranch father, Max. He returned from Portland city as a fiddle player to his Flathead/Salish reservation in the Northwest only for a brief stay, yet due to the

³⁵In his thorough study of the evolution of McNickle’s *The Surrounded*, Birgit Hans indicates that the novel was first rejected by publishers because “they were afraid of the financial failure of a novel dealing in a new way with the theme of the American Indian” (225). The novel, according to Hans, underwent “three major structural stages, each marked by a different working title: *The Hungry Generations*, *Dead Grass*, and, finally, *The Surrounded*” (225).

crimes his brother and his mother committed, he was unexpectedly entrapped and was driven into a fugitive life that finally led to his imprisonment.

“McNickle’s novel,” Joel Pfister says, “narrates the anger and resentment many Natives felt in response to Euramerican efforts to make them dependent”(218). Indeed, anger and resentment accumulated and exploded at the moment when the Salish felt that they could no longer bear the pain or injustice inflicted on them. This infliction of pain or injustice could be traced back to the time when the first-generation American of European descent encountered the Salish, and when the Salish were forced to change their religious belief as well as lifestyle. Whereas the consequence of the first encounter with the Europeans was manifested in the conversion of the Salish into Christianity, the impact of imposing the General Allotment Act (1887) was demonstrated in the containment of the Salish within a small privately-owned land. Salish people were forced to change into farmers, and their traditional lifestyles were thereafter damaged.

In *The Surrounded*, McNickle delineates the sorrowful destinies of Salish people, concentrating on post-contact cultural conflicts, religious impacts and legal collision. He chronicles the events of Salish conversion as well as their struggle to rid themselves of this religious identity after the European whites invade their communities. By juxtaposing French Jesuit Father Grepilloux’s diary with Salish priest Modeste’s story, McNickle, with a mixture of genres, portrays, on the one hand, the epistemological discrepancy of European Jesuits and Salish Indians in their perception of tribal history; it, on the other hand, gives different interpretations about the forces of evil against the forces of good. The interpretation about Salish’s conversion makes explicit such discrepancies in thinking, perceptions and needs. Grepilloux’s account of Salish conversion appearing in an excerpt of journal dated in the 1850s provided an evidence to illustrate how Salish should be defined and perceived as “Wilderness Children” (50) and noble savage from a white European perspective. Grepilloux’s written journal affirmed that Salish people denied their own God and invited the Jesuit missionaries to their communities in order to be Christianized. This written record stands in sharp contrast to old blind chief Modeste’s oral narration about the resistance of Salish people against white belief system. To some Salish people, conversion to Jesuit served as one of a means to protect themselves from colonial oppression and brutalization; however, Grepilloux downplayed the existence of such oppression, although he recognized with sympathy that “these people have lost a way of life, and with it their pride, their dignity, their strength” (59). In his written record about the “primitive world” of the Salish people, what was emphasized was that Indian practice of whipping to cleanse wrongdoing was savage practice and needed to be supplanted by Christian practice of confessing sin. As Schmitz indicates, “Father Grepilloux’s

account is of the conversion, its agonies, its torment, its visible failure. He is constantly in non sequitur, justifying, denying” (18).

In contrast to Grepilloux’s account are stories of rejection by Modeste and Catharine. Their stories are deployed to “enclose Father Grepilloux’s narrative” (Schmitz 18). In fact, textual operation “encloses” as well as discloses this discrepancy in the perception of legitimacy of religious colonization, as well as the idea of morality. In his interpretation of *The Surrounded* from Wolfgang Iser’s ideas about the implied author and reader, James Ruppert indicates:

Conventional morality is again questioned through the introduction of Grepilloux’s diary and Modeste’s story. The private motivations of both the whites and the Salish clearly express misunderstanding of each other. Grepilloux reads his diary to Max and the reader, but the protagonist, Archilde, is not allowed to see it. The implied reader is offered privileged insider information and sees more completely than any character, including Archilde. [...] As a result, the implied reader is presented with historical and mythic stories as if he were an audience at the foot of a story-teller. The total effect is that of foregrounding the questioning of the conventional morality. (74)

It is likely that the conventional morality may be questioned due to this presentation of Grepilloux’s sidelong comments about Salish’s acceptance of Christianity, yet Modeste’s lengthy historical narratives about the devastating effects that Western religion, technologies, concept of law (treaties, for instance) and weapons (gun, in particular) exerted on the Native people subvert this account. Modeste’s narration, in one way or another, served effectively to disturb the Western conception of just law and moral act, enforcing the implied readers to scrutinize the act of Western imperialistic violence. The introduction of Western technologies and the imposition of Western values and religion virtually brought more harms than injuries on the Native people. To elucidate this repressed history, McNickle brought the implied readers, along with Archilde, to the “the foot” of Modeste, the blind Salish chief, listening to his oral stories. As Modeste told:

[...]When we made a treaty with the Government they saw how it was, and that was the country we owned. We had a strong nation and those who later became our greatest enemies, the Blackfeet and their kinsmen, and the Crows too, they respected us. We went twice a year to hunt on the Missouri and there were few who dared invade or hunting ground [...]. No other Indians got these guns, only the Blackfeet. That was when our trouble began. [...] And we could not stop

being friendly once we had got some guns, as the foolish ones wished, because we had to have more guns. It was a different world from that time. In the old days of our wars a few men would be killed and fighting was a thing you could enjoy, like hunting. But now it became a bitter thing. Old scores of blood revenge could never be settled because too many were killed. (70-1)

Modeste's lamentation about the loss of traditional values and the rise of violence culture is foregrounded in his account of Salish's using guns to fight with other human beings. The use of gun, he lamented, did not help solve the problems that the Native people encountered; rather, in killing, the Native people lost their understanding about the meaning of killing that was implicated in traditional hunting. He said, "We thought guns would save our hunting grounds and make the old times return. But it was a mistake. This new kind of fighting just meant that more men were killed. It was bitter fighting. And we gained nothing" (72). Hunting animals with guns is by no means defined as an act of violence; however, fighting with guns is an act of violence that breeds more violence.³⁶ Besides, the acceptance of "black-robe Fathers" failed to bring them either bliss or happiness as they expected. Instead, in their conversion to the Western religion, they relinquished their own lifeways. As Modeste's said deplorably, "We thought they would bring back the power we had lost—but today we had less" (74).

Modeste traced the Salish history from an indigenous perspective; however, his storytelling barely caught the attention of the younger generations, nor was it understood emphatically by the white people who lived together with them. As Archilde confessed, "He had heard the story many times, but he had not listened. It had tired him. Now he saw that it had happened and it left him feeling weak. It destroyed his stiffness toward the old people" (74). Or just as what was described about the way Archilde's Spanish father, Max, reacted to the storytelling activity,

Voices would come up to him. He would frown and turn his face away. He tried to be angry at them for the noise they made, but pity was there ahead of his anger. Why was it that after forty years he did not know these people and was not trusted by them? He had never interfered in their affairs, and he had never cheated them. They had lost a way of life, as Father Grepilloux said, but—damn it! Why couldn't just one of his sons have the sense and the courage to make himself a new way of life! He rolled away from the glow of light, but still the

³⁶That the use of gun led to tragedy constitutes a pivotal scene in the novel. The turning point of the novel occurred at the time when the Sheriff and Leon's brothers had disagreement about the idea and act of shooting/hunting the deer. The discussion about the meaning of hunting/killing/violence will be given in the following passages.

voices reached him. What were they saying? Why didn't they talk to him? (75).

The discrepancy between the white world and the Indian world is embodied in this communication failure due to little mutual trust arising from cultural as well as language barriers. The reluctance to learn the language and culture of the other race as a gesture to maintain a sense of white supremacy is one of the reasons that estranges the white father from the Indian sons. However, the choice to be assimilated into the white culture is another possible reason that separates the urban, assimilated Indians from the traditional, reservation Indians. Thus when urbanized Archilde returned home, he could barely understand the acts of his brother, Louis, and his nephews, Mike and Narcisse. As he reflected on his attitude towards his reservation people:

He was always forgetting that his way of seeing things was his own. His people could not understand it, but thought he was chasing after damn fool notions. All ideas were damn fool until they were understood and believed. [...] Not so very long ago he snorted at their childish attitude toward his going away from the Reservation and the dress and manners he brought back with him. He accepted the strangeness that had grown up between them, [...]. (247)

The acceptance of white ways of living kept Archilde distanced from his tribal people, but it is also the aberrant behaviors of his brother and nephews that drew him back to examine the situation of his tribal people. Like what is commonly portrayed in later Native American novels by Momaday, Silko and James Welch, modern American Indians must overcome the plaguing sense of alienation/estrangement by returning to reservation. Archilde's returning home, in a way, suggests the possibilities of renewing his sense of Indian identity. Urged by his Indian mother to go hunting in the mountains, Archilde was pushed to perceive the real meaning of hunting. Initially, Archilde was not able to observe the demand of the tribal ritual, due to the fact that he had "lost some of his traditional affinity with the natural world" (Larson 88). His refusal to shoot a male deer was therefore condemned by his mother as an inability to display "Indianness"; nonetheless, to urbanized Archilde, the decline to shoot an innocent animal perhaps meant that what should be born in mind was ecological concerns rather than the traditional demand for masculinity (Parker 57). Here, if we follow Parker's suggestion, Western concept of ecological concerns seemed to overshadow the tribal definition about Indianness. Because of this conflict, Archilde was confronted with a situation where not many choices could be made. What he had to learn was that hunting was what sustained the Indian survival on earth. The excitement of hunting, as he said, did not arise from killing itself but from the

hope that Indians would not starve to death:

Hunting stories had always excited him, giving him a feeling that he would like to be envied for his good shooting and his hunting sense. But it was clear that he had not understood himself, he had not understood about killing. The excitement was in matching one's wits against animal cunning. The excitement was increased when a man kept himself from starving by his hunting skill. (121)

Hunting carries a cultural and spiritual meaning different from what Western people know about killing with guns. It is this understanding about the cultural and spiritual implications of hunting and killing animals that enables Archilde to confront the accusation from the white authorities about Indian practices of killing animals. Thus when Louis was caught by the game warden killing the female deer, Archilde stood up, arguing against game warden's accusation about Louis' "illegal killing". He retorted: "Indians are free from all game laws by special treaty" (135). What he intended to challenge was "the Law [that] was a threatening symbol" (124). The attempt to defy white legal control over the Indian lifestyle, unfortunately, was of little avail. The reservation youths like Louis and Narcisse were often condemned by the white people as leading fugitive and aimless lives; they were chased after by the public officials because of their violating the law. Louis's stealing horses, and Narcisse's escape from boarding school education ended up with nothing but disaster. Louis was killed by the game warden, who thought that Louis was reaching his gun to shoot him. And Louis' mother, Catharine, was run after by the white polices and led a fugitive life too, because in anger she killed the game warden with a hatchet. The unexpected chaos put Archilde into moral jeopardy, leaving him in a state of confusion and loss, simply because he was the only person who restrained himself from killing. In the face of two dead bodies, Archilde faced the decision of whether to report or to escape from the mistakes being made.

Thus by having Catharine murdered the warden, McNickle indeed pushes Archilde "into ethical and ideological quicksand" (Parker 58). Archilde was in dilemma, having few choices to make, for he could either lie or tell the truth; that is, he could either be sided with his Indian criminal mother or get credit from the white world by betraying his Indian mother. In *The Surrounded*, Catharine's killing the game warden after Louis was shot to death is suggestive of the anger hidden in the heart of the Indians. Murdering the warden is clearly a manifestation of Salish's resistance to the threat of white authorities. Killing made by the so-called "Faithful Catharine" in fact contains more cultural, socio-political and even ethical meanings than what has been addressed before. Called by her community people "Faithful

Catharine,” Catharine Le Loup was one of the first Salish women to be baptized by what they called “black-robe Fathers”; however, her early conversion to Catholicism did not bring her the happiness she anticipated. Instead, she was perplexed by the teaching of the white fathers and Christianity. In the novel, McNickle allows Catharine, along with Modeste, to “sustain counter-narratives which resist the hegemonic pressure of the dominant interpretations presented by the priests and enforced ultimately by the police” (Holton 77). As a result, when Catharine’s memory of the past Salish life grew, she was brought closer to her Salish culture. Her faith in Christianity was also shattered when her immersion in her native culture and religion grew. In Catharine’s mind, the most intriguing thing about Salish lifeways was their willingness to adjust themselves in struggle with the unfavorable circumstances. As she accounted: “They would live on their allotment until they got restless; then they would take their tepee poles and travel to some relative’s place or to some likely vacant site; later they would try still another place” (172). Due to this identification with conventional way of migratory lifestyle, Catharine could accept the fact that her sons stayed in the mountains, carrying on a roaming and straying life.

Like Modeste, Catharine blamed the loss, muddle and bewilderment of her sons on the invasion of Western laws, the laws that fail to enforce the Indian youths to tell right from wrong. Whereas Father Grepilloux was boastful of the abolition of Indian whipping practice, Modeste and Catharine deplored that the replacement of Indian whipping practice with Western practice of praying and confession failed to provide sufficient moral guidance, instructing Indians how to behave. As Modeste said, “In the old days [whipping] was a good thing because it kept the people straight. We knew our guilt and we told it; or, if we tried to forget, somebody would speak up and then it came out. When we were told to give this up, they said they would give us new laws. Well, they gave us those new laws and now nobody is straight” (207).

In the eyes of the white agents and sheriffs, nobody in the reservation is straight. They monitor every movement of the Indians, pushing them to the corner, from where there is no escape. Under this circumstance, even innocent Indians feel the menace of the encroaching white power. Distrust in the justice of the white institution spread among Salish people; thus after Archilde made the confession to the local government that it was his mother who killed the game warden, Archilde was dragged to hide in the mountains by Elise La Rose (Modeste’s granddaughter), because there was a fear that Archilde might be persecuted, regardless of the fact that Archilde already made confession and told truth. The distrust arises from the painful experience with series of tricks that the white people has played on them. Just as Archilde commented on the spectacle of the dancing ceremony, which was distorted to satisfy the commercial needs of the white tourist market: “It was a sad spectacle to watch. It was like looking

on while crude jokes were played on an old grandmother, who was too blind to see that the chair had been pulled away just before she went to sit down. He felt the hurt which the old men suffered unknowingly” (217). It is virtually the white jokes played on innocent American Indians that torment Indians in the history of white-Indian contact.

In *The Surrounded* the journey with his Indian mother to go hunting and then to carry the dead body of his brother along not only compels Archilde to identify the value of old tribal cultures, but also prompts him to penetrate into the pains of American Indians, who are ultimately engulfed by dominant white institutions. Archilde comes to realize that in Salish search of liberation from the white bondage, little hope for cultural and spiritual freedom is virtually in prospect. Just as Mike and Narcisse described about their feelings while living in a depressing white-dominant society, where the arrival of new priest, Father Jerome, brought no charity, affection or trust but indifference and dogmatism:

Just one glance of Father Jerome’s stern eyes had taught them again how much greater – how everlasting – was the world of priests and schools, the world which engulfed them. When they had sensed that again, nothing interested them. Everything was hopeless. It made no difference whether they stayed at home or went to the mountains. When they were wanted, by priest or agent or devil, they would be sent for, and that was all. (286)

McNickle contrasts Father Grepilloux and Father Jerome’s attitude toward the Salish people to exemplify how the loss of missionary enthusiasm about other culture and the growing apathy and indifference of Church to Indian affairs alter the relations between the white and the Indians.

[...] Father Jerome, like other recent arrivals, was apt to be impatient with those who responded slowly or not at all. It rather got on his nerves that the Indian congregation which sat always at the back of the church still followed its old custom of breaking out into its own prayers and its own songs at odd moment of the Mass. [...] Realities of this sort, which had amused Father Grepilloux or moved him to soft reproach, in time became irritating. (263)

The new rigidity of the Church, as Birgit Hans notes, sets another physical and spiritual boundaries that encircle the Salish people (232). It leaves little room for Salish people to adjust their own customs but to give in and assimilate.

At the end, when Archilde extends his hand to be cuffed, he is in fact, as Pfister

writes, “handcuffed by the legalized colonial machinery of coercion that hunts him down in mountains the Salish regard as sacred” (219). Archilde is overwhelmed by the pervasive legal power, from which he finds no escape. Thus, although critics like Schmitz tend to insist that “McNickle's narrative affirms the return to traditional belief and practice, even though the Salish still find themselves encircled, surrounded” (Schmitz 18), yet Archilde’s final surrender manifests little but a pathetic submission to white power and a recognition that there is no alternative but to follow the white law. Just as Mr. Parker said sneeringly at the end of the novel, “It’s too damn bad you people never learn that you can’t run away. It’s pathetic” (296-7). Thus, notwithstanding his strenuous efforts to celebrate tribalism, McNickle’s portrayal of Archilde’s ultimate agreement to imprisonment clearly suggests that McNickle is not optimistic about the freedom that the American Indians could be granted in the New Era.³⁷ His move into tribal imagination is frustrated by his recognition of the reality that the Native people are still constrained by the laws set up by the white government. In other words, what the Native people regard as not-an-immoral act of killing is defined as breaking the law by the white. That no negotiation is reached in the face of this conflict between ethics and law, a conflict arising from cultural differences, is virtually the last thing that both the Native and the non-Native people would like to see.

II

McNickle is, as Paula Gunn Allen insists, “the first Native American novelist to successfully use the novel to present a tribal point of view” (84). However, McNickle, as Allen accurately observes, “treats the Indian as tragic victim as do the novels of non-Indian American writers” (84). It seems that between assimilation and extinction, McNickle does not provide too many options for Indian and non-Indian readers to make. Despite his endeavor to lead them into a tribally imaginative world by “pitting traditional values and customs against those of the alien invaders” (84), McNickle gives a fairly fatalistic presentation of Indian destinies. This bleak perception is, as Allen suggests, the result of imagining a tribal world on the basis of restrictive binary thinking. As Allen puts, “When Indian is pitted against white, ritual against technology, and spirit-based value systems against materialistic philosophies, there can be no resolution other than the destruction of the tribal, that is, the ritual life of the colonized” (85).

³⁷As Joel Pfister writes, “Clearly, McNickle did not want the revised published version of his novel to seem as optimistic about Native-White relations as his BIA reform work with Collier, which conceptualized protomulticultural ways to bring Natives into capitalist versions of ‘the modern’ while maintaining their cultural identities” (220).

What then is the resolution to the conflicts between two cultures and worlds? It is also a question that puzzles Momaday in the 1960s. Like McNickle, Momaday works hard to play a role as a cultural broker, striving to negotiate between two cultures while celebrating his particular Kiowa culture. But unlike McNickle, who displays his activism of Indianness through multiple channels and in multiple forms, Momaday endeavors to have his “Indianness” demonstrated in his “indigenous” belief that “words” have the tremendous power to conduct human life, and that literary artists can utilize language and imagination to retain American Indian cultural memory, making their living in universe spiritually meaningful. Words, he believes, have that power to turn fact into truth through the act of imagination. Artistic expression through imagination is, in other words, what Momaday firmly believes to be the most effective way to pass down his messages about the realities of the Native American world. He thus preaches the power of Words in series of his writings. In his *The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories Passages* (1997), a collection of his autobiographical reminiscences and allegorical stories, Momaday chronicles his thirty-year writing experiences in Native American community, revealing his deep belief in the power of words and imagination. But it is in *House Made of Dawn*, this emphasis on the power of Word becomes the core idea of a sermon, which exhibits Indian convictions different from the beliefs promoted by a Western Christian society.

By virtue of his profound trust in the power of words and imagination, Momaday can always demonstrate his ability to, as Kenneth Lincoln puts it, “translate older Indian ways,” turning “religious and cultural views of the past” into “aesthetic faith in the present” (95). Indeed, in *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday’s tremendous writing ability to translate, in a dramatic way, different languages (oral into written), cultures (western and Indians), and religions (Catholicism and Tanoan religion), between the past and the present is clearly displayed.

Just as what McNickle exhibits in his formal design of *The Surrounded*, Momaday also employs a mixture of genres in his *House Made of Dawn* to show how a tribal world is rifted and how it strives to seek spiritual wholeness and integration. By mixing genres like journals, oral histories, sermons, and chants, Momaday delineates, with ease and beauty, not only the migration history of the Kiowa tribe but the consequence of the encroachment of Catholicism into the Southwest tribal world.³⁸ In his portrayal of the life and history of his Kiowa people, Momaday reiterates that Kiowa tribe is “the product of [...]migration, [...] journey and [...] Odyssey.” (Isernhagen 46). He believes that it is impossible to “think of the Kiowas

³⁸In his writing career, Momaday has showed a profound interest in the migration stories and the nomadic experiences of his Kiowa ancestors, so migration and journey have become salient themes in his works (Woodard 47-8).

without thinking of the topography and their journey. And even since they arrived in the Southern Plains, the topography of Rainy Mountain and all of those wonderful places in just that part of the world are indivisible from their experience" (Isernhagen 46). Of course, in Momaday's writing career, the topographical meaning of Kiowa migration to the definition of the Kiowa tribe is re-emphasized on different occasions and in different genres. In *The Way to the Rainy Mountain*, and his memoir, *The Name*, for example, Momaday enables readers to recognize this close connection. But it is in *House Made of Dawn* that Momaday reveals his deepest empathy for and understanding about the suffering that an ancient migratory people experienced. By telling the story of how Bahkyula people were persecuted, and accepted as immigrants by the Cacique, and by recounting the ancestral history of the Eagle Watcher Society, the principal ceremonial organization of the Bahkyush immigrants, Momaday guides readers to see the struggle of this ancient people in the preservation of their own culture. Moreover, through relating cultural heritage that these immigrants carry on to sustain their ethnicity, dignity and lineage, he highlights the meaning of spiritual legacy to Native Americans in migration.³⁹

Like McNickle, Momaday relates the impact of Christianity on tribal community, as well as the resistance of Kiowa tribal people against the encroachment of this new imperialist, alien religion. As he describes:

The people of the town have little need. They do not hanker after progress and have never changed their essential way of life. Their invaders were a long time in conquering them; and now, after four centuries of Christianity, they still pray in Tanoan to the old deities of the earth and sky and make their living from the things that are and have always been within their reach; while in the discrimination of pride they acquire from their conquerors only the luxury of example. They have assumed the names and gestures of their enemies, but have held on to their own, secret souls; and in this there is a resistance and an overcoming, a long outwaiting. (*House Made of Dawn* 58)

The colonial situation drives Kiowa people into a state of estrangement and displacement, not merely in the ancient time but also in the modern age. The displaced Native American youths, like Abel and Benally for example, move between the reservation and the big city, Los Angeles, finding no place of their own, for even when they situate themselves in the big city, they are still tortured by the painful

³⁹In the story, Bahkyula carried "four things that should serve thereafter to signal who they were: a sacred flute; the bull and horse masks of Pecos; and the wooden statue of their patroness María de los Angeles, whom they called Porcingula" (*House Made of Dawn* 15-6).

memory of reservation life. Just as Benally says, reservation life is a memory he refuses to recall:

If you come from the reservation, you don't talk about it much; I don't know why. I guess you figure that it won't do you much good, so you just forget about it. You think about it sometimes; you can't help it, but then you just try to put it out of your mind. There's a whole lot more to think about, and it mixes you up sometimes if you don't just go along with it. I guess if we all came from the same place it would be different; we could talk about it, you know, and we could understand. (153)

Abel and Benally's silence and inarticulateness surely disclose the "unspeakable pain" of reservation life, yet their refusal to articulate their connection with the tribal community also reveal their deliberate intent to estrange themselves from their tribal culture. What is worse, this sort of silence keeps them from illuminating the reality that Kiowa youths are straddling between two cultures and two worlds, which history cannot turn back.

Thus, in *House Made of Dawn*, despite the fact that tribalism appears to be one of Momaday's thematic concerns, what Momaday virtually intends to explore is the response of his Kiowa people to the predicament of living in an entanglement of political, cultural and religious forces that render their tribal cultures apart. Set against the Jemez Pueblo reservation in New Mexico, *House Made of Dawn*, in one way or another, sketches out the aspiration of the Native people to get reunited with their own spiritual tradition and to affirm their spiritual sovereignty, while living under the dire circumstances of religious and cultural imperialism. Momaday shows that Kiowa people have been, historically, entangled in a delicate web of dual cultures. From his account of the origin of the Feast of Santiago, a culturally, politically and religiously charged story, Momaday exhibits that not only does St. Santiago's story embody the sacrifices the horse and the rooster made for the Jemez Pueblo people, it also discloses the significant role a Christian saint played in feeding and cultivating the lives of the Jemez Pueblo people. With this story, Momaday seems to suggest that it is unlikely to dissociate the Pueblo people and culture from the history of Christianization, that the annual hybridized Christian-Jemez feast of Santiago fulfills nothing but remind the Jemez Pueblo people that it is impossible to celebrate traditional ritual with the memory of Christianization erased or blocked out.

In Momaday's mind, the Feast of Santiago cannot be claimed to be a purely Indian festive event, due to this association with a white religious man. To complicate the cultural and political meanings of this festive event to Kiowa people, Momaday

has Angela Grace St. John, a white woman, intrude into the feast of Santiago. Carrying a name with rich Western religious connotation, Angela Grace St. John's intrusion into Kiowa community disturbs to a certain degree the order of the American Indian ceremonial life, unsettling the Indian-white relationship conventionally defined and set by boundaries. Angela's sexual relationship with Abel indeed yields no significant meanings, and it can be construed as, Lawrence J. Evers suggests, "an obstacle in Abel's re-emergence journey" (10). A white woman discontent with her marriage and pregnancy, Angela finds neither enjoyment nor happiness in a white society, so she escapes from her doctor husband, and seeks alternative therapy in an Indian reservation. However, as a cultural outsider, Angela could barely detect the true meaning of the American Indian ritual game. While observing the ritualistic rooster game, Angela was both attracted and petrified by the excitement, as well as the nastiness, of the Indian game:

She closed her eyes, but it was there still, the brilliant disorder of motion: the dark and darker gold of the earth and earthen walls and the deep incision of shade and the vague, violent procession of centaurs. So unintelligible the sharp sound of voices and hoofs, the odor of animals and sweat, so empty of meaning it all was, and yet so full of appearance. (43)

Here, her denial of the meaning of American Indian traditional ceremony reflects the perception of those white cultural outsiders, who are fascinated by nothing but the pretentious, flamboyant and showy appearance of the Indian ceremonies. They look upon Indian games as if they were jokes, and they play with it in a jokey manner, a manner that Archilde in *The Surrounded* condemns.

For Angela, in her involvement with the Native people, the only pleasure she thinks she gets is "an old fascination" (43), a sense of primitive pleasure obtained from sexual intercourse with Abel. The interaction between the white and the Native is suggestive in the sense that it reflects a structure of imbalance that has been existent in the history of Indian-white relations. On the part of Abel, his giving in to the white body of Angela merely suggests that he allows himself to be dominated and exploited by a white woman in a way their tribal heritages are exploited as commodities by the white dominant society. Abel's unconscious submission manifests nothing but his loss, and his lack of a sense of Indian self. In the first part of the novel, Abel is portrayed as a misfit veteran, who just returns to Walatowa from World War II. Like Archilde in *The Surrounded*, he returns to his reservation to seek identity. But as an orphaned child brought up by his grandfather, Francisco, and later put into a government boarding school, and then drafted into a world war, Abel finds himself unable to cast

away the shadow of whiteness, which has been reflected in the institutions that dominate his life—the school and the war. He struggles between a submersion into and emergence from the domination of whiteness. Like Archilde, he is entangled between two forces—the forces of assimilation and resistance.

Just as Archilde is unable to go through hunting ritual to demonstrate his Indianness, Abel is incompetent in his performance of a sacrificial ritual required in the rooster pull game held in the Feast of Santiago. The game, which was introduced by Spaniards, requires that the riders on the horseback compete to pull the head of the roosters out of the sand into which the body of the living rooster is buried. The winner then can beat one of the other riders with the still living rooster (*House Made of Dawn*, 38-9). This ritual full of religious and ceremonial meaning is virtually degenerated into a rather violent game, for which it seems that the Jemez Pueblo people must “yearly rehearse this sacrificial violence” (Douglas 8) It is in this violent game that Abel felt the intimidation of the albino, a white Indian, who, in Abel’s mind, arrogantly showed off his victory and beat him with force. Thus, in response to the violence, Abel stabbed the albino to death, in fury.

Abel’s seemingly inexplicable killing grows to be the most controversial episode in the novel, stirring heated discussion in terms of morality. Critics suggest that Abel’s aberrant behavior may be attributed to his lack of a sense of Indian self. Lawrence J. Evers, for instance, maintains that “when Abel kills the albino, in a real sense he kills a part of himself and his culture which he can no longer recognize and control” (14). Others argue that the killing is generated by Abel’s inner psychological fear of a person of different color, and that Momaday reverses the Western association of brightness and whiteness with goodness, and like what happens in Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Abel is driven by a desire to uproot the evil that is associated with whiteness. It is likely that in front of a “white” Indian, Abel, as Kenneth Lincoln suggests, sees the overwhelmingly threatening power of whiteness, and is overtaken by “terror and revulsion” that the white flesh stirs (118-9). The physical threat, in some ways, forces him to make an assault that he could not restrain. Just as what is described in the novel:

He seemed to look not at Abel but beyond, off into the darkness and the rain, the black infinity of sound and silence. Then he closed his hands upon Abel and drew him close. Abel heard the strange excitement of his white man’s breath, and the quick, uneven blowing at his ear, and felt the blue shivering lips upon him, felt even the scales of the lips and the hot slippery point of the tongue, writhing. He was sick with terror and revulsion, and he tried to fling himself away, but the white man held him close. The white immensity of flesh lay over him and

smothered him. He withdrew the knife and thrust again, lower, deep into the groin (82-3).

However, such interpretations about Abel's seemingly irrational violence on the basis of moral symbolism are inadequate, because they fail to uncover the reality that it is Abel's loss of linguistic, artistic and religious expressions that cut him off from his tribal root, weakening his imaginative ability to "face the other." Violence to the other, in a sense, reveals not merely his inability to face his self, but his incompetence to deal with the menace of the other face. It, furthermore, suggests his incapability to distinguish self and other in a rational manner.

Abel's irrational murder is without doubt a pivotal point in the development of the story, foreshadowing Abel's transformation. Abel, like Archilde in *The Surrounded*, must take the consequence of his irrational, unethical act of depriving the life of the other person. But if he wants to recover from his psychological illness, he must first of all face a complex reality, which, as white priest like Father Olguin testifies, is hard to figure out. Just as Father Olguin indicates, an act of killing a white man can be interpreted from different perspectives, for a multiplicity of legal, moral, cultural, and even language issues are entangled. Facing a dominant world with an entanglement of issues unresolved, and listening to the dialogue between Father Olguin and the court about charge against his act left Abel in a sheer state of helplessness and incompetence:

"[...] Anyway, there is no way to be objective or precise about such a thing. What shall I say? I believe that this man was moved to do what he did by an act of the imagination so compelling as to be inconceivable to us."

"Yes, yes, yes. But these are the facts: he killed a man—took the life of another human being. He did so of his own volition—he has admitted that—he was armed for no other reason. He committed a brutal and premeditated act which we have no choice but to call by its right name."

"Homocide is a legal term, but the law is not my context; and certainly it isn't his—"

"*Murder* is a moral term. *Death* is a universal human term."

When he had told his story once, simply, Abel refused to speak. [...] Word by word by word these men were disposing of him in language, their language, and they were making a bad job it. (101-2, italics original)

Accordingly, Abel, as James R. Giles suggest, needs the help of his grandfather, Francisco, in pursue of spiritual redemption (103-4). On a certain level, Abel must

restore himself from irrationality through learning the real meaning of killing implicated in the traditional hunting ritual. Like Archilde, only when he realizes the meaning of hunting trip that he went through when he was a young man could he understand the meaning of “ritualized violence that connects him to his community” (Douglas 9). In fact, only through his recalling the memory about the connection of ritual violence and land could he develop a deeper sense of compassion for nonhuman as well as human beings.⁴⁰ Furthermore, only from his understanding about the connection between human being and the earth can he recognize the “spiritual dimension’ of the earth, establish his emotional ties to the place, and thereby construct cultural identity, for this is what Southwestern writers like Momaday and Silko perceive as core meanings and values that memory and imagination play for Southwestern people (Chang 249). It is with the help of Benally, the Night Chanter that Abel realizes that “the songs from both the Beautyway and the Night Chant are designed to attract good and repel evil” (Evers 20). The ability to sing the song suggests a power to run after good rather than evil.

Thus, on the other level, what Abel must also realize is the ethical meaning of goodness, which is implicated in treating the other human being with love and nonviolence. In fact, this is the moral lesson that not only Abel, but Father Olguin, a white priest who represents the white church, and Martinez, the sadist white policeman who batters Abel’s body, must learn. In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday’s moral imagination is released not only in his presentation about the close tie human beings must maintain with the land, but in his condemnation of sadist racist violence represented by Martinez’s brutality toward Abel. Like those law enforcers portrayed in McNickle’s *The Surrounded*, Martinez’s coldness reveals no sense of compassion for the Native people. Instead, his violence, as Giles suggests, represents an evil force that works by “exploiting the fears and hatreds of the exploited” (109). Because Martinez has “thoroughly adopted the racist values of the dominant society,” his brutality is, sadly to say, a manifestation of his need to maintain his “illusion of power” by oppressing the Native Americans he hates (Giles 109).

Similar racist resentment and animosity against the Native people as well as their customs is disclosed in the journal of Francisco’s father, Fray Nicolas, a white priest who served at the pueblo in the 1870s. Nicolas’s journal recorded his uneasiness with what he judged as pagan belief, but showed no awareness of the dire consequence the Christian colonization and violence had on the Native people. He was intolerant of Indian customs and that intolerance was revealed in his bitterness toward Francisco, who, in contrast to him, “seem[ed] to have transcended his ancestry, as well as his

⁴⁰ For detailed discussions on this subject, refer to my paper, “‘We Are the Land’: Ecoethical Discourse and Moral Imagination in the Writings of Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko.”

father's and his own transgression, through an absorption in Native American traditions and mythology" (Giles 104). In the novel, the reading of the journal by Father Olguin is designed to juxtapose as well as parallel the lamentation of Christian missionaries for the "spiritual collapse of Christianity amidst what seems to them this empty landscape" (Douglas 13). Although through the discovery of journal that reveals the bias of a white religious man, Father Olguin "comes to a belated recognition of the limitations of his harsh and authoritarian faith," and feels sorry for his "contempt for the paganism of the Indian culture" (Giles 104), however, what plagues him most is seeing the incompatibility of two belief systems, and his incompetence to bring these pagan people into what is conceived as civilization.

Nevertheless, Francisco, in comparison with Father Olguin and Fray Nicolas, demonstrates more admirable wisdom in his oscillating between dual cultures and beliefs. Unlike his father, Nicolas, he practices Christian love by adopting parentless Abel and his brother Vidal; he demonstrates his acceptance of Indian reverence for land and universe in his constant teaching Abel and Vidal the meaning of place, words, and community that Pueblo people highly value. On his deathbed, it is his fragmentary memories about taking Abel and Vidal to "see the house of the sun" and teaching them to "learn the whole contour of the black mesa" that help Abel to restore his sense of place as well as his relation with the earth (Evers 22-3). His dying remarks in some ways put Abel's imbalance minds into order, helping Abel to be functional again.

After Francisco died, Abel faced the death of his grandfather calmly, but he refused the Christian way of dealing with the dead body, and on his grandfather's deathbed, he alone gave the traditional death ritual:

He drew the old man's head erect and laid water to the hair. He fashioned the long white hair in a queue and wound it around with yarn. He dressed the body in bright ceremonial colors: the old man's wine velveteen shirt, white trousers, and low moccasins, soft and white with kaolin. From the rafters he took down the pouches of pollen and of meal, the sacred feathers and the ledger book. These, together with ears of colored corn, he placed at his grandfather's side after he had sprinkled meal in the four directions. He wrapped the body in a blanket. (210).

The death ritual in a way, "offers Abel regeneration through Pueblo traditions" (Lincoln 117), but what signifies Abel's actual reconciliation with and acceptance of his community is his active participation with the Jemez Dawn Runners, and his realization of the true meaning of running, which his grandfather instructed him. In his past, when he was in a delirious state, what he longed for was running after evil

like runners, who he thought must “venture out to the confrontation” and “reckon dues and divide the world” (*House Made of Dawn* 104) But now he allowed his being to be “concentrated “in the sheer motion of running on, and he was past caring about the pain” (*House Made of Dawn* 212). And only in this spiritually blissful state could he “see the canyon and the mountains and the sky. He could see the rain and the river and the fields beyond. He could see the dark hills at dawn” (212). Abel began to sing while he was totally immersed in nature in harmony, with neither sense of confrontation, nor sense of division.

III.

Both McNickle and Momaday display their resistance to the political and religious constraints of the white world. They both investigate into the issue that Native Americans are compelled to grapple with. They strive to offer the answers to the questions like: How to act morally in the face of judicial law which was written by the white people and was ostensibly unfair to the indigenous people? What are the means to escape from the legal constraints, cultural imperialism as well as Christian violence of the white people? Is using such violence as killing and murdering, the only and last resort for American Indians to defend their vulnerable indigenous self while they are confronted with intimidation and oppression?

Like McNickle’s fiction, Momaday’s narrative prose also affirms the return to traditional belief and practice. Abel’s performance of death ceremony for his grandfather and his participation in the Jemez race are very clear indications that he comes to realize the meaning of traditional ritual. However, this does not prove that Abel is utterly repugnant against Roman Catholicism, shunning ultimately away from non-Native cultures. For after his completion of the traditional death ritual he still chooses to give his grandfather’s dead body to Father Olguin for burial. Between traditional and Western burial style, he, like Francisco, tries to negotiate, but he finally submits to the dominant religion. Therefore, whereas McNickle envisions the miserable destiny of the Salish Indian, seeing them encircled and surrounded by the white world, Momaday’s novel also implies that surrender to dominant culture is sometimes an inevitable choice. Both writers, in a contradictory and passive manner, allow their Indian characters to be engulfed and assimilated into the white culture while they reach an impasse. This submission suggests that Native Americans, in their early stage of resistance, are inept and ineffectual, because they are physically surrounded and mentally entrapped by the ideology and judicial system that dominant white institutions contrive to assimilate them.

Both D’Arcy McNickle and N.Scott Momaday’s novels illustrate the

predicament of mixedblood Native Americans oscillating between two cultures (or two spiritual traditions), lost in the battle of acculturation and resistance when they find themselves expropriated from native land and see their indigenous culture appropriated. Writing, respectively, in the 1930s and 1960s, they both delineate the anguish of modern Natives, who are entangled by the conflicts of conventional and Western moral codes. Despite the setback they meet with, they still manifest attempts to challenge dominant legal and cultural codes through celebrating the idea that the restoration of tribalism remains the primary responsibility of Native American writers.

Nevertheless, unlike McNickle, who holds a rather pessimistic view about the future of American Indians in the mainstream society, Momaday seems to put more faith in the possible transformation as well as the revival of Kiowa spiritual tradition. In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday brings together traditional Kiowa ceremonies, Native American religion and Roman Catholic belief, creating a multidimensional spiritual reality. Having his protagonist, Abel, engaged in the lives and activities of different religions, Momaday step by step leads readers to realize what he means by power of Words and imagination in shaping the morality of his tribal people. In the meanwhile, he guides readers to realize the kind of spiritual belief and practices that can truly represent the core value of the Southwestern tribes. He refrains from denouncing one spiritual belief over another; instead, he has his reader discover the virtue of embracing love that is implicated in a Christian practice of love in raising orphaned children of the other race. All in all, what Momaday intends to celebrate is that prospect of a multi-cultural American society, a society that affords to recognize the unique presence of the Native people and appreciate their culturally-specific legacy in history.