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WHIRLING DARKNESS:
WITCHERY'S ASCENT IN
THE WRITINGS OF LESLIE MARMON SILKO

A Thesis

by

Kristin Monahan
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ABSTRACT

Whirling Darkness: WITCHERY'S ASCENT IN

THE WRITINGS OF LESLIE MARMON SILKO

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Apocalyptic imagery spirals throughout Leslie Marmon Silko's works. The destruction of individuals, cultures, and eventually the Earth are purported by the grand plan of witchery. Evil has existed among Native American's in the form of witchery since time began. Its forces reside within all things. Yet with the tools provided by the spirits, namely the oral tradition and ceremonies, witchery can be controlled: the stories explain its origin and its power, showing how witchery has been overcome in the past, while the ceremonies provide a means of healing those who have been afflicted. By maintaining connections to the universe, past, and community, a powerful bond is created which blocks the effects of witchery. But even one individual, one action can destroy this link and allow witchery to infest the tribe.

After centuries of existence under a foreign culture, Native Americans have grown away from their heritage. As the stories of the past fade with time, the ancestor and spirit worlds are forgotten. Silko's works detail the effects of this collapsed circle and, in effect, foretell the inevitable end to humanity's actions.

Witchery's destruction evolves throughout Silko's works. It

strikes first at the center of tribe, the individual, then gradually pervades through the community itself. It eventually infests all aspects of life, even the land itself by way of the atomic bomb. This time not only humanity is threatened, but the Earth risks annihilation. Yet humanity will not have a chance to destroy it. While they have doomed themselves by their actions, the Earth still maintains ultimate power over its creations. In order to save herself from the cataclysm which witchery has mapped out for the world, the Earth provides an apocalyptic ending to humanity and the fifth world.

Though Silko's works involve specific Native American tradition, her message is relevant to all cultures. In their search for identity, her characters struggle to recall their ancient traditions, to reconnect themselves with nature, their ancestors, and their community. This is also the plight of the modern individual who has been alienated from nature through technology, separated from the past through a search for adventure or wealth, and isolated from a community by the confining walls of cities. Progress offers greed in the place of spiritual and social wholeness. Humanity destroys itself by integrating witchery's destructive end to their story.

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INTRODUCTION

As a child, Leslie Marmon Silko stumbled upon a book of Norse mythology. Fascinated by the Scandinavian tales, she came across a chapter entitled "Twilight of the gods." She discovered, much to her horror, that for the Scandinavians eventually all things would end. Not only humanity, but the gods and all life would perish as well: "It was tragic for me, because at Laguna, we believe that those times did not truly end, but that things only change, and so I was quite horrified to read that for some other people in this other place, that there was this twilight of the gods" (Silko, qtd. in Seyersted, "Two" 27). Though of mixed heritage, Laguna Pueblo, Mexican, and White, Silko grew up believing that oral tradition, as a "living presence" (Seyersted, Leslie 43), preserves all things; therefore the stories survive. And while perhaps shocked by the prospect of total devastation as a child, Silko has changed her world view somewhat.

The possibility of total destruction has become a reality in Silko's lifetime. The natural cycle of death and regeneration has shifted due to the increasing dehumanization brought on by modern industrial societies, as well as the overreaching nuclear holocaust capabilities which threaten all life. People have turned against one another, severing ties to nature, community, and the past in the process; and they now threaten to destroy the world. Although some of Silko's early poetry and her first novel Ceremony offer the possibility of renewal, the annihilation of humanity has become an unavoidable reality by the end of Almanac

of the Dead. Yet because of her Native American tradition, Silko knows that the Earth and her spirits will survive. Silko traces, through her works, how humanity dooms itself by becoming a part of the evil, referred to by Silko as witchery, which ultimately works for the destruction of the world. In effect, Silko prophesies an inescapable apocalypse for humanity.

In order to understand the eventual decay and destruction of the human race, it is necessary to return to humanity's origin. After emerging into the present world through a hole in the Earth, the Laguna Pueblo Indians are given both positive and negative qualities, according to Per Seyersted (Leslie 32). This concept is not limited to the Laguna Pueblos; Joseph Campbell remarks that the "World Navel" is the source of all life, and it "yields the world's plenitude of both good and evil" (Hero 44). Universally each person is created with the capacity for both good and evil. Consequently, there arises a constant struggle between these forces within each person. This personal struggle is only a part of a much larger, ancient conflict of force and counterforce. In either instance, global or individual, the battle cannot be won alone.

Silko explains in an interview, after Ceremony had been written, that instead of referring to good or evil, she adheres to an old way of viewing the world, by way of force and counterforce:

I've tried to go beyond any specific kind of Laguna witchery or Navajo witchery, and to begin to see

witchery as a metaphor for the destroyers, or the counterforce, that force which counters vitality and birth. The counterforce is destruction and death. I tried to get away from talking about good and evil, and to return to an old, old, old way of looking at the world that I think is valid--the idea of balance, that the world was created with these opposing forces.

(Silko, qtd. in Swan, "Healing" 314)

These two forces at work in the world are engaged in a constant struggle to overcome the other and thereby rule the world. A balance between these opposing forces is necessary for the world to function: too much force and there will be neither death nor regeneration; too much counterforce and all life will stagnate, eventually ending in a final cataclysm with no hope of renewal.

This terminology of force and counterforce disregards any specific culture or race. Evil is not inherent in one race or culture; Silko writes, "that's too simplistic, mind-less ... they [those controlled by witchery--Destroyers] try to encourage people to blame just certain groups, to focus in on just certain people and blame them for everything. Then you can't see what the counter people or the counter forces are really doing" (qtd. in Evers and Carr 32). Silko explains that the counterforce manifests itself in the world through witchery; and not only witchery's effects, but also its beginnings are universal. Those who advance the negative forces at work are referred to as the Destroyers, and they include members of all cultures.

B. A. St. Andrews defines witchery as "fragmentation, illness, and evil" (87). A witch has been split in two--fragmented--possessing two souls and two hearts for falsehoods. Illness is often associated with acts of witchery, especially among the Navajo and Eskimo. All actions have symbolic meanings, either good or evil. When an evil act is performed, evil overcomes good within a person, and the individual becomes possessed by witchery, which results in illness. Witchery among Native Americans is used only for evil and destructive purposes, to gain control over individuals and eventually the world. Among the Navajo there are several distinct forms of witchcraft that are never lumped together under a general term. And each tribe has different definitions of witchery. Though Silko writes primarily about the Navajo and Pueblo people, she also applies the beliefs of other tribal cultures to her works to place witchery on a global scale. Therefore, I will be referring to all destructive acts as witchery.¹

Per Seyersted writes, the old stories of witchcraft come about "when the Pueblos deviate from the old ways, it [witchcraft] manifests itself through the misuse of power..." (Leslie 21). Humans are constantly seduced by witchery. Witchery tempts people to abandon their ancient traditions, to sever the ties to nature and to the past; it offers them power to control and destroy. In one sense the influence of white culture has caused this split between the ancient and modern ways.² The Europeans create an image for themselves with the

destructive power they use to conquer the Americas. The new technology and world vision the whites offer the Natives changes their way of life forever. Silko explains that this is all a part of witchery's grand plan to destroy the world; the whites are simply the soldiers who carry out witchery's strategy. And the Native Americans themselves are the cause of the ensuing disaster, for they are viewed as the creators of the white race. Whites are a result of Indian destruction; ultimately the "destructive spiritual force com[es] out of their own Pueblo existence" (Seyersted, Leslie 21).

Her fictitious story entitled "Long Time Ago," describes how one witch molds the white race into the ultimate destructive weapon (see Appendix A, page one). Whites, as a race, are created by Native American sorcerers to assist them in witchery's plan of global destruction. The invasion of the Americas by the Europeans is regarded by the Natives as an attempt to engulf Native People, to manipulate them into joining the counterforce, thus upsetting the balance of the world.

It is witchery which causes some Natives to abandon their heritage in favor of following the negative aspects of the white way of life. Silko is not suggesting that all whites are evil, but their radically different lifestyle disrupts the web of life Native Americans have created for themselves. Witchery makes the Native Americans believe that the whites are to blame for the evils of modern civilization, but Silko's works demonstrate that the problem is much more complex. The medicine man, Bentonie, in

Ceremony, warns against blaming the whites for personal failure: "That is the trickery of witchcraft They want us to believe all evil resides with white people. Then we will look no further to see what is really happening. They want us to separate ourselves from white people, to be ignorant and helpless as we watch our own destruction" (Ceremony 132). Native Americans have the power together to fight the witchery, but they have become paralysed by its lies. Silko's perception of evil goes beyond any human boundaries. While she guards against categorizing all whites as evil, she does generalize them in her works, because of their historical impact, as the oppressor and ultimate vehicle of Native American annihilation.

The Native American perception is that the whites are the Destroyers who seek to stifle all life, severing humanity's link with nature, the past, and communities. Without those connections, people turn to external stimulants, such as alcohol, and to violence to fill the gap left within them; they begin to use witchery's tools and inevitably, sometimes inadvertently, further the grand design of the Destroyers. Eventually all humans will be pawns in their plan and turn on each other in a final dooming act. Witchery goes beyond any traditional act of witchcraft used to harm any one person or group. It is a destructive force that manipulates people to achieve global control.

In a more general sense, the people must struggle against alienation from and suffocation by a technological civilization.

As Ambrose Lucero puts it, the struggle is against American civilization, not the American people (3). Silko is not blaming white people for the existing atrocities; rather, she is warning that all people are threatened by the separation from nature and each other sustained in the modern world.

Even though Silko warns against blanket stereotypes, she does use the white race as her model for the destructive force. Human weakness--their inability to counter witchery--causes the balance finally to be tipped in favor of the counterforce, causing the world to spiral towards decay. Native peoples have been corrupted culturally and spiritually. There are no new ceremonies or stories to counter the new evils brought by the Europeans. Consequently, the Natives give up their traditional beliefs for corrupt white inventions and technology. In this way they slowly separate themselves from the Earth and community. Modern society's preoccupation with industrialization and capitalism alienates and dehumanizes people. At the same time the individual is more highly regarded than the community, and self-advancement is preferred to community success. This system also promotes the Earth to be used solely in terms of human benefit. Thus, the Natives begin to allow the desecration of their sacred lands for profit with the discovery of gold and uranium. As a result, they destroy themselves because of the loss of their bond to the Earth; alcohol and drugs cannot replace spiritual harmony. The Natives are spiritually deadening themselves in this way, removing themselves from their past and

the stories which define identity. Without stories, the people forget their ancestors and the importance of the Earth and ultimately threaten their own survival.

The land is perhaps the most important element of life among the Native Americans. Silko associates herself first with a place: "I am of mixed breed ancestry, but what I know is Laguna" (qtd. in Velei 106). Her heritage emerges from the land and the stories which are immersed in geography. In the Laguna Pueblo creation myth the people move through four underground worlds and eventually out into the fifth, or present world. They actually emerge--are born--out of the Earth through a hole, the Shipap. In this way, the Earth is seen as the ultimate life-giver and is therefore considered a sacred entity: "the land and the People are the same The earth is the source and the being of the People, and the People are equally the being of the earth. The land is not really the place, separate from ourselves ... rather ... it is being" (Allen 7). The people recognize that the Earth is not only essential to the identity of the people, but is also necessary for survival; the Earth sustains life providing food, water, shelter, and spiritual wholeness. Without the land, the people would be physically and spiritually helpless. Consequently, the land becomes a part of their religion, their art, and especially their myths.

The Earth is alive, growing and changing like all life forms: "Throughout all Indian America, the universe, this world, our present Earth, always has been regarded as a living entity"

(Waters, Mexico 95). So it follows that all earthly objects also contain a life-force; when the people desecrate any one part, a mountain or plant, they adversely affect the whole. Desecration of the land, therefore, results in desecration of humanity. In Silko's writings, humanity has severed its ties to the Earth, and both sides suffer from this break. While it appears that the Earth and the people are equally doomed--the people will starve as the Earth becomes dormant--the Earth will renew itself through a natural cycle of death and regeneration. Humans will find their fate tied to their actions, and the catastrophe they create will be irreversible for them.

The European arrival introduces a new way of looking at the world. Western preoccupation with utilitarianism and conquest enables humans simply to use the land, taking from it what is valuable. They have no link to their environment, no stories that bridge gaps of linear time or connect them to a past and sense of place. The whites do not know where they belong in the universe because they are not rooted in the Earth. They believe they inherit ownership of the land after conquering and dividing the Americas, but the land is a part of the Natives, and the two can never be forcibly separated. As Matthias Schubnell writes,

The land, from a tribal point of view, is the common denominator of a community's mythical and historical past as well as its present and future. The oral traditions of Indian peoples teach that the land is the place of tribal origin. And the respective

geographical features--mountains, caves, or lakes--are worshipped as sacred shrines. The awareness of the presence of previous generations in the soil has also been a strong motive behind the resistance to relinquishing homelands. (Momaday 65)

For many Indian tribes the land and the stories are inextricably bonded.

The land becomes an inherent part of the myths, for myths emerge out of it: "the stories are so much a part of these places that it is almost impossible for future generations to lose the stories because there are so many imposing geological elements" (Silko, qtd. in Fiedler 69). Native American culture is immersed in mythology. Every aspect of their lives is in some way related and explained through their myths. The people must understand the world around them if they are to survive; and myths form personal and tribal identities by providing a greater understanding of nature. In a general sense, myths explain unnatural phenomena. They make nature familiar, less threatening. Myths also collapse time: "A unified perception of the cosmos is attained through the unification of all time, the timelessness of myth that patterns and structures the events of the novel into a cycle both ancient and modern, into a process of knowledge and significant experiences" (Sands 4). This fluidity of time allows contemporary peoples to identify with past generations, creating a timeless bond. All things on Earth are considered alive; and all life must be treated as sacred.

Without knowledge of the spirits at work in the universe through myths, humans would view the world as a dead thing, to be abused and destroyed without consequence.

Myths reveal humanity's place in the universe and therefore create identity. A common ancestry--common myths--helps unite communities as well. Through a common heritage, tribal memories come together as one. One "recognizes in the myth his [one's] own features and experience, the life and appearance of his ancestors, and the faces of the gods who rule his universe, and he feels that the myth has put him in intimate contact with the ultimate powers which shape all of life" (Slotkin 7).

Similarly, Silko points out that "The Origin story functions basically as a maker of our identity--with the story we know who we are" (qtd. in Fiedler 57). Silko parallels stories to maps in her essay "Language and Literature" (in Fiedler 64). Words and stories are the building blocks of a community, and they locate the people in time and space. With the stories, each generation can trace all things back to their ancestors; this way nothing is lost within the oral tradition. Language erases the boundaries of time, distance, and culture, allowing people to be a part of the past.

Modern Native Americans can experience the universe just as their ancestors did through memory and imagination: "By cultivating active memories, particularly of the old stories, individuals give their own lives definition and, at the same time, forestall the witchery which is advanced, if not generated,

through forgetfulness" (Scarberry 19). And rituals (ceremonies, storytelling) become the method for conjuring up the past in the present; by performing rituals, characters can reconnect themselves with ancestral memories: "Linear time--beginning, middle, end--dissolves into a cycle of recapitulation and repetition" (Bell 49).

In a culture which relies on oral tradition, "A word is intrinsically powerful. If you believe in the power of words, you can bring about physical change in the universe" (Momaday, qtd. in Woodard 86). N. Scott Momaday explains that "A story does not have to be told to exist" (qtd. in Woodard 120); once a myth has been played out, it exists. Stories do not require active listeners. Words and stories have the power to transcend time, rather to flow as time does, mixing the past, present, and future. The importance of memory is linked to the significance of words; they also have the power to create and destroy. Therefore, storytelling is at the heart of Native American culture because the word is sacred: "all words create meaning; if the words are used without thought, they create chaos" (Buller 167).

The stories are within every individual. Thoughts develop into stories which, once spoken, have the power to create or destroy. Thought-Woman, from Laguna mythology, creates the universe with her thoughts: "whatever she thinks about appears. / ... as she named them [her thoughts] they appeared" (Ceremony 1). As she voices a thought, through names, the object

materializes. Similarly, this power can be used to destroy. Words and stories can be manipulated by witchery and can change the outcome of a story. Silko's poem "Ceremony" explains that the stories are kept in the belly; as the stories are at the center of one's identity, they are placed in the center of one's body. The pregnant male storyteller in "Ceremony" describes the stories within him as "life" for the people and stresses that stories "aren't just entertainment. / Don't be fooled. / They are all we have, you see, / all we have to fight off / illness and death" (Ceremony 2). As a result, witchery attempts to disembowel the people, to rip their defenses from their bellies. Silko carries this image throughout her works, emphasizing that witchery strikes always at the center of an individual, community, or race.

Stories are essential for a person to create an identity: "that's how you know you belong, if the stories incorporate you into them In a sense, you are told who you are, or you know who you are by the stories that are told about you" (Silko, qtd. in Ruppert 54). Stories link contemporary people to their ancestors, bonding them as they enter the future. In this way, there can be no future without a past. Ancestors are continually present when stories are told. Silko writes that they "give us their gifts which are these stories, and that through the stories ... there was a belief that it all came back very immediately ... in the stories everything was held together, regardless of time" (Silko, qtd. in Seyersted, "Two" 28). Stories allow generation

after generation to remember the ways of their ancestors, to see how they conquered hardships. By remembering events, the ancestors themselves are remembered. Individuals will never die as long as their stories are preserved. These ancestral spirits protect the living; they are always with the tribe. Without a community, the individual suffers from isolation from the land, her past, and her future. Joseph Campbell stresses the need for connections:

Society was there before you, it is there after you are gone, and you are a member of it. The myths that link you to your social group, the tribal myths, affirm that you are an organ of the larger organism. Society itself is an organ of a larger organism, which is the landscape, the world in which the tribe moves. (Power 72)

As long as these connections are maintained, ancestral power will not diminish with time, but flow back and forth, giving modern Indians the strength to face new problems. Carol Mitchell comments on this idea in reference to Ceremony: "Not only is Tayo cured by the old stories and changing ceremonies, but the form of the novel may bring a new storytelling tradition into the Indian tradition that will help to cure some of the hopelessness and despair of the contemporary Indian who is caught between two ways of life" (28). An individual requires the support of the community and the guidance of the ancient stories to be healed. And, for example, Tayo's ceremony now becomes myth from which

future generations can conquer new evils. Tribal members will know that they are not alone but, instead, have an ancient history to draw upon: "through stories from each other we can feel that we are not alone, that we are not the first and the last to confront losses such as these" (Silko, qtd. in Wright 68).

Only by knowing all experiences are universal, that no one person or group is alone, will the battle against witchery be controlled. By keeping in touch with one's ancestors through stories, rituals, and ceremonies, each generation sees that it faces similar hardships. Old stories teach survival: "The old stories contain the truth, the old verities about universal emotions and experiences ... there are no boundaries, in the sense that life is repetition..." (Seyersted, Leslie 33). Stories and traditions must remain with the people because they are the base of a culture and even foretell the future due to the circular nature of time: "Inherent in this belief is the feeling that one does not recover or get well by one's self, but it is together that we look after each other and take care of each other" (Silko, qtd. in Fiedler 59).

Silko does reveal ways in which witchery's pattern of destruction can be fought. By drawing on past tribal experiences to modernize the ceremonies and rituals, new forms of evil are countered. Tribal traditions and stories provide a unified base; they allow individuals to discover their identity through a common heritage and connection to the land. This "insure[s]

survival" (Seyersted, Leslie 33).

Silko's short story, "Humaweepee, the Warrior Priest," tells that the old ways can be maintained even in a modern world. Humaweepee discovers his place within the tribe and in relation to the planet by embarking on a ritualistic journey, just as Tayo does in Ceremony. Humaweepee's link with nature and with his ancestors has become rare in modern society, something the other children have forgotten in the white schools. But by learning how to "derive strength" (Silko, qtd. in Rosen 163) from his culture, Humaweepee allows his unconscious ancestral knowledge to guide him through life. Everyone possesses ancient knowledge, one must only discover how to listen to their voices in order to be reconnected to the traditions.

While Humaweepee maintains the tribal tradition, insuring cultural survival through storytelling, the two brothers in "A Man to Send Rain Clouds" demonstrate the power of rituals in action. The old ways can reverse the effects of evil. Leon and Ken tie a feather in the dead man's hair and paint his face with the sacred four colors, throwing corn meal into the air to offer food and respect to the Winds (Ruoff 4). Because they prepare the body properly for burial, the two men feel certain that the old man will return, as is the custom, in the form of rain clouds to end the drought.³ By reenacting, reliving the old ways, they feel assured that rain will come, just as Fly and Hummingbird are successful in gaining Corn Mother's favor and reversing the drought in the myth "One Time." The white influence can be

fought, as these stories illustrate, by building on the strengths of the traditions and roots which create a culture (Seyersted, Leslie 25). But these two stories are rare in Silko's writings. While revealing ways in which witchery can be fought, she also recognizes the impossibility of reversing witchery's growing power.

Silko explains in an interview that there are no new myths being created (Fisher 23). Laguna mythology has already been established, explaining origin and the universe. Stories, on the other hand, are constantly being created as a means of dealing with daily life. In a sense the two, myth and stories, are ultimately linked; the stories lead back to and are created out of the myths. For example, there are many contemporary renditions of the myths. All of Silko's work involves the combination of mythical stories with modern ones. These mythical stories are continually replayed in modern settings and come alive by virtue of the storyteller's imagination: "Ancient characters enter into the modern world and revitalize it as they have always done, insuring the continual re-creation of life" (Sands 3). Contemporary Indians are sometimes lost in the modern world, not quite understanding where tradition fits in. Silko's characters explore and attempt to resolve this conflict, thus giving contemporary Indians a model, a new story they can apply to their own lives. The stories reconnect people to their ancestors and their ancient histories. In this way, they are once again integrated with the land, their origin: "there are

actually, no beginnings and no endings in the world's time, only an endless flow out of the eternity of the past and into the eternity of the future" (Bell 57).

Contemporary stories constantly interact with myths. Stories in this way insure that the myths will not be forgotten. Silko's stories work like ceremonies, to heal by connecting the present with the past. And her creation of new stories, like Tayo's in Ceremony, work as new ceremonies to face new evils: "Silko is pushing against this evil and ancient wind with the only weapon that can possibly maintain life, the story" (Lucero 9). The myths cannot change, cannot counter new technologies, but the stories can evolve to unite generations regardless of changing circumstance. Dexter Fisher comments on the importance of allowing the stories within an oral tradition to evolve:

To study American Indian literature is to study the power of language to shape one's perception of human experience. The word has power because it is the vehicle of the imagination and the means of clarifying relationships between individuals and their landscapes, communities, visions Language is the means by which one 'knows' the universe and shares that knowledge with the community. (5)

Europeans leave their myths in Europe when they travel to the new world. As a result, they must create a new mythology formed out of their experiences in America. The whites abandon their lands and ancestors; thus, the myths which explained and

united Europe become meaningless in the new world. Unable to survive the harsh wilderness and unfamiliar culture of the Americas alone, they create new myths based on violence: "The first colonists saw in America an opportunity to regenerate their futures, their spirits, and the power of their church and nation; but the means to that regeneration through violence became the structuring metaphor of the American experience" (Slotkin 5). Their new mythology in America is generated from adventurers, Indian wars, or hunts, from those "who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness" (Slotkin 4). Europeans have uprooted themselves by abandoning their homelands. Without a sense of place, they can have no regard for nature or the sacredness of all things. Once they leave their families and communities, Europeans become individuals seeking only personal gain. As their greed grows in the new world, they turn against each other, further isolating themselves. There is no longer a common heritage for them in the Americas, but an individual one based on personal merits.

Growing secularization also dismantles Christianity; the old religions lose their grip in the new world as individualism and utilitarianism replace spirituality. The Christian God has no place in the wilderness of the Americas and among the destructiveness of the explorers. Without anyone to share their hardships, without familiar lands or peoples, with no god to protect them, the Europeans turn to external stimuli to fill the emptiness. Alcohol and drugs replace spirituality, and they learn

to steal what they need culturally from others. They begin abusing the land, as well as themselves, for nothing has spiritual significance. Motivated purely by greed, they pollute the air and water, and extract natural resources from the Earth for profit. Their internal decadence is reflected in their creation of nations built on injustices and genocide.

By systematically acculturating the Native Americans, the Europeans begin to believe that they fulfill their newly created myths as victors. Believing their way to be the only and right way, the whites dismantle cultures and kill those who protest. Silko shows in her works that their methods have succeeded, that the Natives in turn have become Destroyers as well. They have abandoned their heritage and beliefs for white technology and monetary gain. But Silko also explains that these ways cannot endure. Humanity is only destroying itself through its greed, and the Earth and her spirits will eventually reclaim what they have created, ending human arrogance and witchery for all time.

Silko develops this prophecy through her writings, subtly warning that there will be retribution for humanity's actions. Silko's apocalyptic vision involves all of modern civilization. She cautions that if witchery continues on its present course, humanity will perish. The cultural and spiritual corruption eats away at the inner spirit of humanity; this decay leads to outward manifestations of that emptiness. Nature has been desecrated, mutilated in an ugly display of unabated consumption. Silko forebodes that abandoning one's distinctive heritage equals

annihilation, for without a past, there can be no future. Thus, it follows that because Europeans no longer have a hold on the past through stories, there can be no future for them: "The stories are not just entertainment, they are the heritage of a people, they validate the traditions of the cultures, they make the past come alive in the present, and they reassure that the past will continue into the future" (Mitchell 28).

On a larger scale, Silko's works seem to evolve into the prediction of inevitable doom. In her early works, Silko still implies that the story of destruction can be changed, that with reform, humanity will survive. But her most recent work, Almanac of the Dead, offers little hope. Her short works introduce witchery as a force which threatens individuals and communities. Witchery attains global significance in Ceremony. Here Silko introduces the threat of human annihilation by means of nuclear destruction, yet still indicates that this force can be stopped. But, with Almanac, Silko foretells that humanity is doomed. The natural cycle of the Earth is drawing to a close because of humanity's destructiveness; and while the Earth itself will emerge from this death into a new cycle of regeneration, humanity will not.

Silko uses several prophecies to predict the end of the world. One such myth is that of the Hopi. The Hopi Creation myth explains, as do those of many other Native American tribes, that the people travel through three worlds (most other Pueblo tribes believe in four) beneath the Earth before emerging into

the present, surface world: the people "had lived in three previous worlds which were successively destroyed when mankind ceased to follow the plan of all Creation, depending instead upon materialistic desires and technical inventions. Yet there was always a small minority who adhered to the divine plan, and escaped to the next world" (Waters, Mountain 119). Massau (also written Masau'u), the Hopi god of death, is the ruler of the surface world, and only with his permission can the people inhabit this fourth world. Massau invites the people from the lower world to live with him under the condition that they live a simplistic life as he does. The people's new home, the Four Corners area, is nothing but a "harsh desert heartland [where] they would have to depend upon nature for their simple livelihood, and so maintain the Creator's divine pattern of life instead of becoming profane and materialistic" (Mountain 119). When the people accept Massau's offer, they accept a life without much comfort, and they gain the assurance that their life will be free from temptations as witchery will be destroyed.

The Hopi believe that sorcerers created themselves in a previous world, introducing conflict (Courlander 19). As a result, the Hopi people move through the underworlds and out onto the surface to escape evil. When Grandmother Spider leads the people to the fourth world, she takes only the faithful with her (20). Yet one woman sorcerer secretly accompanies them. Once discovered, the others must allow her to remain in the fourth world because "she has already contaminated the place by her

presence. Good and evil are everywhere. From the beginning to the end of time good and evil must struggle against each other" (Courlander 29).

All tribes then separate from the Four Corners area, except for the Hopi, after emergence. The sorcerer accompanies the white people south, increasing their power. The other tribes know that "they [the whites] will grow strong. They will learn evil as well as good, and they will have secrets that are not known to us. Therefore, whenever we meet with the Bahanas [whites] let us listen with caution to what they say. Let us stand apart from their ways" (31). The other tribes know that the white race will be a threat to their way of life. Grandmother Spider warns the people not to forget where they have come from or their gods, for "Only those who forget why they came to this world will lose their way. They will disappear in the wilderness and be forgotten" (Courlander 33). Only the faithful will survive the regeneration process; the evil must eventually be sifted out of the world. Yet the continual infestation of each successive world by witchery dictates that only the total annihilation of the human race can completely eradicate corruption and destruction.

The Hopi emergence into the present world relies on a cycle of destruction and renewal brought about solely by human behavior. As time progresses and the Destroyers' influence grows stronger, many forget the promise they first made to Massau (Tyler 38). They are no longer willing to uphold that contract

and believe Massau's powers to be no match for technology. Each time the Hopi move to a new world, they take what Waters refers to as "a new step of human consciousness" (Mountain 120). Implied here is the belief that humanity will continue advancing until they reach a pure level. But even one counter productive individual can spread the seeds of witchery, and the battle seems impossible while destructive forces continue to gain power, rather than to lose it, with each new world.

The Hopi Prophecy blends with their creation story. The Hopi are given three stone tablets, which define the sacred lands, as they emerged from the Third World. Massau also gives the people a fourth tablet, marked by a missing corner. This tablet remains with the Fire Clan, while the corner is given to the Hopi's elder brother, Pahana (Waters, Mountain 121). A description of this stone tablet reveals, among other things, a snake "which represents the guarding of this life and land. As long as we remain fast and adhere to the teachings of the tablet the Snake will hold back the punishment that will take place in case we let go of this stone map" (Tyler 42). The legend tells of the return of Pahana who will be identified by the missing corner of the tablet he carries and by his ability to interpret its meaning (44). He will come when the people have been corrupted and separated from each other, to unite them and save the faithful from materialistic greed. The Hostiles, a group of Hopis against assimilating the white culture, believe that "the purifier will come upon this land if we make a mistake in

following this new pattern of the White man's way of life," but if the people remain faithful to the way of life Massau taught them, they will not be harmed (46). Pahana's appearance will mark the end of this world; and the faithful will unite at the place of their origin, the Four Corners region, to be taken to the next world. No one knows if this Savior will be White, Indian, or Massau himself, but he promises to divide the riches of the world equally among all peoples (45).

The Prophecy told by Massau is also inscribed on the stone tablet, telling of "an eventual apocalypse and purification day when the lost brother returns..." (Tyler 40), marking the end of the fourth world. Waters sees this not as an end, but as a regeneration. Pahana will create a new era with the faithful in the fifth world, "leading to everlasting life, in which all people will have one religion, one tongue, and share everything equally" (Waters, Mountain 133). The traditional people, the Hostiles, believe Massau has given the people this stone tablet to remind those who stray from the proper path: "'When this story is forgotten, something disastrous will happen.' Perhaps the stars will fall down into the ocean, and the ocean will become oil. Then the sun will set fire to it, and the conflagration will consume everyone. Perhaps there will be an earthquake that will kill everyone" (Tyler 41). This prophecy is not intended to create a utopia for the faithful, but to remind the people of their origin. And if there are no faithful followers remaining when the brother returns, the whole world

will be destroyed.

While the Hopi Prophecy appears to be similar to Silko's writing, she is not offering another chance as Massau does. Silko's message from the Pahana will be nothing less than an apocalyptic one. The people have been given several chances to overcome witchery, as is illustrated by the different worlds. But the destructive forces within all people have not died, in fact they seem to emerge stronger with each renewal. Humans are equipped with tools to fight evil--the ceremonies, traditions, the stories, even the spirits and ancestors intervene occasionally to assist them--but inevitably they are too weak. Witchery strikes at the memories, causing people to forget; they forget the traditions which hold communities together, allow the ceremonies to stagnate, and erase the stories--therefore severing connections to nature, ancestors, and ultimately the future. The Destroyers have taken control of all humans, not just whites, making them pawns in global destruction. With the Hopi Prophecy in mind, Frank Waters writes,

The Indians, first seeing in us their lost white brothers who would establish the universal pattern of Creation, had then projected on us the causes of our mutual failure. We in turn projected on them our own fears of the mysterious spirit-of-place of the new continent and of the inimical forces of nature within us. So it was that we both, the red and white, projected upon each other the repressed dark shadow of

our dual nature, bringing forth the tragedy of America.

(qtd. in Lincoln 222)

Each race harbors negative forces, which when brought together, will destroy each other. Left to their own devices, the people would ultimately destroy each other, but Mother Earth cannot wait for that to occur. The destruction and death humanity has caused all over the world will be sent back upon them. Her wrath will engulf the human race for the last time; the Earth will be rejuvenated, plants and animals restored, but humanity will not be offered another chance.

CHAPTER ONE

Pieces of Destruction:
SILKO'S SHORT WORKS

Leslie Silko's apocalyptic prophecy is introduced subtly throughout her early poetry and short stories. These ideas will gradually build in her first novel, Ceremony, and become the main thrust of Almanac of the Dead. But even her early vision reveals a world spiraling towards decay. The "balance" has been upset. Silko portrays a disconnected human race in her short pieces contained mainly within the autobiographical work, Storyteller. Witchery has taught humanity to separate itself from the Earth, to use the world; the inevitable eco-disaster is coupled with a break from the spirit and ancestral world. Because the Earth exists only for monetary value now with the European influence, the spirits who create and inhabit it are forgotten. The old ways slowly fade out; memories of ancestors and of survival methods preserved throughout time by the oral tradition are lost. This cultural death turns people against each other and the Earth in their individual struggle for personal gain and ultimately causes the death of humanity.

Silko introduces witchery as the main cause of cultural disintegration in her short stories and poetry. Witchery has always existed as an equal force to the positive force, as discussed in the introduction, and its effects can be traced to virtually all aspects of Native American life. While there are many individual witches performing heinous crimes, witchery has now become omnipotent and globally destructive. Humans cannot escape this power, and life becomes a constant struggle against it. Now that witchery dominates human life, the balance is

upset. The results of this disequilibrium are detailed throughout Silko's works. And eventually, she prophesies, the counterforce will triumph and Mother Earth, in her rage, will strike back against this destructive nature.

"Prophecy of Old Woman Mountain," an early work published April 1974, has been itself a prophecy for Silko's future writings. Silko foretells in four short stanzas what she will later detail in Ceremony and through some 750 pages in Almanac of the Dead--the decline of humanity. The witchery begins in "Prophecy," as in other stories, when the people begin to forget, and memories are replaced with white names and images. Absence of memory is evident by the use of the past tense in this poem: "When the names of the winds / were forgotten" (Journal of Ethnic Studies 70). The people have long since forgotten the life-giving winds¹ and their own origin--their link to the Earth; the consequence is a stream of destruction conjured up by natural forces to annihilate humanity. Forgetting is the ultimate work of evil in a tribal society which relies on oral tradition to carry on the tribal rituals and memories. "[A]lien [white] names" (Journal 70) take the place of traditional ones as witchery systematically assimilates peoples in its attempt to deconstruct cultures.

"Prophecy" continues, detailing the emergence of dark winds from the south which spread destruction. The persona of "Prophecy" refers to Old Woman Mountain as South Sky Mountain. Edith Swan in a later essay on Ceremony, places Mount Tautyuma to

the south, on the Navajo Reservation, and links it to the origin of the southern storm clouds ("Laguna" 234). The life-giving rain clouds, described by Swan, have been transformed in this poem by Mother Earth into terrible forces of destruction. The Earth is conjuring all her natural forces together to rid the surface world of humans. "[A]nd gray boulders roll dead tongues / to the sea" (Journal 70): the "tongues" of the Native languages which preserve Native traditions are forgotten, dead. Subsequently, the Earth will repossess them as they are then returned to the sea--their origin.²

The Earth makes "no mistakes" with humanity this time as she did with their creation. The people drain the life from the planet, the "blood from the Earth" (Journal 70). The scars Old Woman Mountain bears from the people's stripping her of resources and killing her wildlife will not heal without death. Joseph Campbell writes, "Only birth can conquer death ... [one must be] dismembered totally, and then reborn" (Hero 16-17). The Earth has been sucked dry of life by those she created, and now she takes that life back in order to preserve her own. In this poem only the persona remembers the mountain's name and is aware of the prophecy. In light of Frank Water's essay on the Hopi Prophecy, this one devout person in the poem will be saved because she has remembered, thus insuring that the human race will continue with her into the next world (Mountain 120). Yet another reading would suggest that the Earth has been destroyed, or is being destroyed, and that this is a chronicle of the

events, past or present, as preserved by a story. Only the story survives the Earth's wrath. Even though humanity will be destroyed, their stories will echo on through the power of oral tradition; there need be no active listener. Silko repeats this type of narrative voice--that of the story itself, without human voice--in a later short story, "Storyteller." This device proves how dispensable humanity is.

The most forceful theme at work in Silko's writings emerges out of this poem: witchery has perverted the human race, using them to destroy the Earth, but the power of the natural world will prevail. The poem concludes, "It is [only] a matter of time" (Journal 70); nothing can stop the flow of destruction, except the annihilation of the human race. Mother Earth will work with Father Sky to rid the universe of a corrupt race of beings.³

Silko provides in the above poem as well as in other works several methods of recognizing witchery at work. The following myths and stories demonstrate how the Destroyers continue to gain control of the modern world. Witchery robs humans of their memories. Without memories of the past and tribal ancestors, their way of life will be forgotten. Without a common heritage, tribal members lose the bond of community and are reduced to individuals, void of identity, wandering defenselessly through a destructive world. Individuals must identify with a whole if they are to survive the hardships of life. But these destructive qualities will eventually overcome them, preceding the

cataclysmic demise of the human race.

One traditional myth illustrates how Old Woman Ck'o'yo's son, Pa'caya'nyi, brings witchery to the Twin Brothers in "One Time."⁴ The Twins, enthralled with Pa'caya'nyi's magic, shirk their responsibility of tending The Mother Corn Altar, believing that "they didn't have to worry / about anything" (Storyteller 113). They no longer believe that Corn Mother is necessary for life if magic can create water and animals; witchery makes them forget. With no memory of Corn Mother, they have no memory of creation. Without the story of their creation, the Natives lose the most basic part of their identity and feel disconnected from the Earth--their life force. Nau'ts'ity'i, Corn Mother, in her anger against human ignorance, takes the plants and animals away and inflicts drought. To reverse this effect and heal the town requires an elaborate ritual and the help of animal spirit messengers and kachina mountain spirits. In this myth Corn Mother exposes how fragile the world is without her help: "It isn't very easy / to fix up things again" (121). Pa'caya'nyi's magic does not yet have all the strength of Ck'o'yo witchery, but this story discloses how easily people forget--a few tricks from a magician or lies from the whites can erase the past.

When humans allow witchery to control them, the spirits send the drought to warn them that they threaten their own existence with their actions. The above myth also offers an explanation for the drought. The drought at the start of "Tony's Story," and many subsequent stories, again shows the influence of witchery on

the world: "the summer rains did not come; the sheep were thin..." (123). The plants and animals suffer along with the humans when witchery grips the land. Maintaining a balance of water, plants, and animals is of central importance in the Southwest desert climate. Drought and death are explained as the result of witchery. And witchery is allowed to return again and again in different forms because people are weak and forget these stories. Tribal memory and these stories are the only defense against such corruption, for they teach the people how to defeat witchery.

Leon, Tony's friend, returns from the army in "Tony's Story" a white man psychologically but still a Navajo outwardly. Therefore, he is "restricted" by his heritage in a white world. Leon shakes Tony's hand "like a white man" and expresses his concern over dancing the Corn Dance for the tribe: "I hope I haven't forgotten what to do" (124 emphasis added). The whites have slowly erased his tribal memory, taking the stories and ceremonies from him. As a result, Leon does not understand why the police officer harasses them or why Tony must kill the cop: "he couldn't remember the stories that old Teofile told" (emphasis added 127). Leon has become blind to the works of witchery in the modern world, unable to recognize that the cop is a Destroyer. The whites teach Leon that superstitions are unfounded, that everything has a scientific explanation. As a result, the stories slip away from him.

Native beliefs in the protective powers of nature are eroded

by science. Landmarks become simply road maps, rather than explanations of origin or other historical tribal incidents. Gradually the world becomes a sterile place, void of life-giving stories. Leon refuses to wear the arrowhead Tony gives him for protection against the witch, choosing to trust his gun instead; but his gun is a product of that same white evil which now manifests itself as the policeman, and using it would mean giving in to witchery's methods. While dismissing old time beliefs about witchery, Leon goes even further to accuse Tony, ironically, of being "brainwashed" by the whites; it is, in fact, Leon who has been assimilated into white thought.

In order to understand Tony's belief that the officer is a witch, the ancient myth about the Gambler in "Up North" becomes useful. Kaup'a'ta, the Gambler, is yet another Ck'o'yo witch present in the ancient Pueblo myths. He wears "fancy clothes and expensive beads" (162) made from the sacred colors of blue turquoise and red coral to lure unsuspecting people in. By feeding his victims human blood mixed with blue cornmeal, he gains power over them. He gambles with his victims and always wins their souls. Then, one day, after beating the Storm Clouds in a gamble, Kaup'a'ta locks up the storm clouds--since they cannot be killed--and causes a three-year drought. Even after this period of time, it is only with the help of Spider Woman that Sun, their father, can free the clouds and defeat the evil which controls them. Sun outsmarts the Gambler at his own game, but witches cannot die; so Sun "cut out the Gambler's eyes / He

threw them into the south sky / and they became the horizon stars of autumn" (169).

The cop in "Tony's Story" wears sun glasses each time he appears in the story, hiding the vacant eyes of a witch as caused by Sun in the above story. After he hits Leon, the cop is fascinated with "the little patterns of blood in the dust near Leon's mouth" (Storyteller 124); he needs, as do all witches, to satisfy his thirst for blood. The cop also appears supernatural, sensing Tony's presence in the store without seeing him, and Tony now understands that this witch has brought the drought, as did the Gambler in "Up North." Ambrose Lucero views this story as a metaphor for the struggle against European rule:

The cop is America, and the signs of the ending of the drought at the hour of his death are Silko's evaluation of the whole term of American rule: that beneath the Americas the earth is shrivelling, and that only with their demise may the rainclouds gather again and rejuvenate the earth. (7)

The Earth and her people grow ill from witchery's infestation; witchery must be stopped or stagnation will destroy all life.

The rain clouds, as noted earlier, are in fact the dead returning to give life back to the Earth. It is also the spirits' way of communicating to the living that the balance has been restored. Dreams are another way the spirit world contacts the human realm. Tony dreams of the witch: "the big cop was pointing a long bone at me--they always use human bones ... He

didn't have a human face--only little, round, white-rimmed eyes on a black ceremonial mask" (Storyteller 125). Clearly the spirits are warning Tony of the cop's true nature, an idea exemplified further in Silko's rendition of the myth "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs." At the start of this myth, Estoy-eh-muut, Arrowboy, struggles against the drought as Tony does. He sleeps "without dreaming," not realizing that his wife, a witch, has taken his dreams away so that she can continue her witchery without his interference. Even though she controls his dreams, Arrowboy always wakes with "a fear for all of us / that leaves me shaking the rest of the day" (142); he fears what he suspects--that witchery is loose and plotting a destructive end to the world. The Destroyers have the power to take whatever shape they desire to perform heinous deeds--spreading madness, death, drought, and chasing the animals away. Arrowboy seeks the advice of "old Spider Woman, / who always helped the people / whenever they faced great difficulties" (141). With Spider Woman's help, he is able to destroy his wife with a rattlesnake; but his wife is only one of many.

Just as in his dream, where the spirits warn Tony about the witch, when Tony turns to look at the cop, he realizes that "where the face should have been there were only the silvery lenses of the dark glasses he wore" (Storyteller 126). Tony strains to see the cop's eyes, but Tony's own image is all that is reflected in the glasses. This mirror image suggests that witches are the incarnation of the counter side of Native

Americans. Just as the Natives have spirits, such as Grandmother Spider, who help them with their mistakes, there is an equal force which counters these positive works. This mirror image simply reinforces Seyersted's comment stated in the introduction, that all humans have both positive and negative qualities (Seyersted, Leslie 32). This suggests an internal dichotomy, again the struggle to maintain the balance. Witches have always existed, growing in strength and number by destroying.

Tony does not wish to speak about the witchery to his family because he believes it would only bring the evil closer to them. But the evil tracks them nonetheless. The landscape reflects off of the cop's glasses; nothing penetrates this witch, as he only absorbs people to obtain more power. The cop claims he has been sent to the reservation because the whites "thought there wouldn't be as many [Indians] for me here" (Storyteller 126). This idea emphasizes the witches' desire for the genocide of the Natives. So when the witch raises his bone club to destroy Leon, Tony instinctively shoots him, unaware that he has the power to triumph over the witch alone. Linda Danielson sums up A. Lavonne Ruoff's interpretation of this encounter:

when Tony shoots the witch, he becomes a self-appointed old-time Pueblo war captain, and appoints Leon to the same role, derived from the mythic hero twins, Ma'sewi and Uyuyewi. Tony, as narrator, interprets his actions as restoring natural balance. The rain clouds appearing on the horizon immediately after he shoots

the officer seem to confirm his interpretation. (341)
The Earth sucks up the witch's blood, accepting Tony's sacrifice; and, as he sets fire to the body, the funeral pyre's "thick black smoke" rises into the sky, while "in the west, rainclouds were gathering" (Storyteller 129). The spirits--rain clouds--return now that this witch has been destroyed, to reveal that the balance has been restored.

Tony cannot bear the cop's glasses because they reflect back on him, reminding Tony that his race has created this evil and that each person is capable of equal destruction. Yet Tony must accept his place in the tribe and take part in the fight against the evil. While Silko demonstrates that killing the cop is the solution against witchery in this story, her later works reveal that violence is not the answer but part of the cause. By killing the cop, Tony has perpetuated the destructive process and contributed to the evil at work in the world.

The witch in "Tony's Story" is only one of many. Witches are not simply a danger to individuals, as with Leon and Tony, but they forebode something much larger. Several of the myths previously discussed explain the imbalance in nature in the form of drought. The drought reveals the separation of people from the land, from their tribal heritage, and from each other, and the Earth suffers from this condition as the people do.

Silko's short story, "Bravura," reveals that the Natives have lost interest in the reservations, and that the land has become worthless. The narrator attends a university in

Albuquerque to escape reservation life. He is skeptical of his friend Bravura's wish to visit the reservation as an outsider and is amused by Bravura's naive desire to spend time studying the people and the land. Ironically, the Indian narrator of "Bravura" returns to the city to learn white ways while the white man seeks out the Native culture. Here Silko reveals the death of both cultures: neither is satisfied.

The "timeless beauty" of the land is simply a shallow, poetic idea to Bravura, yet he feels that "the people who are born in this country appreciate it the least ... it takes someone from the outside to really appreciate it" (Silko, qtd. in Rosen 154). His words are packed with irony considering what outsiders have done to Indian land. Having no regard for its sacredness, whites have stripped it of its resources and spiritual significance. Yet they claim that the Natives have lost the ability to see the remaining beauty. Bravura implies that the whites are the only ones who can truly appreciate the land because they can objectify it; and he wants to write about the land in order to, in his mind, preserve it and its people in books. But this is entombment for the Natives. The living story of a people cannot be reduced and contained in a stagnant white tradition. Still the whites have reduced Native history to a collection of books resulting in the destruction of their oral tradition.

"Bravura" brings the subtle effects of witchery into a modern setting. The people are losing the stories and their

connection to the land, thus their identity. The Natives have become like the whites, without culture. Without their culture, the Natives cannot defend themselves against witchery and are doomed as the whites are. The race/role reversal at the end of this story offers a harsh view of reservation life; the Natives have become white and their culture confined to a written, stagnant medium.

Silko emphasizes the importance of memory and the oral tradition in another poem, "The Storyteller's Escape." The old teller in this poem remembers all escape journey stories in order to preserve the tribe and its history: "With these stories of ours / we can escape almost anything / with these stories we will survive" (Storyteller 247). The stories are told so that the tribe remembers its struggles and victories, so it keeps alive those who do not survive. They also provide references from which future generations can draw to overcome new threats. Stories, Silko believes, have the power to bring people together (Seyersted, Leslie 26). The oral tradition keeps the ancestral voices alive; the old woman remarks, "and in this way / we continue" (Storyteller 247). The old woman memorizes the faces of those who are left behind. But she knows there will come a time when she will be left, no longer able to make the journey. When the time comes, "she couldn't be sure / if there would be anyone / to look back / and later tell the others" (249). Bernard Hirsch writes, "the old storyteller's greatest fear as she waits for death is that she will go unremembered--unimagined"

(4). Without the stories, generations forget their ancestors, and consequently their own identity. The old woman does not know if the stories can survive the temptations of modern society. If the stories die, so too will the past and the future. Ancestral spirits and memory disappear without stories, and cyclic time becomes linear. Without a basis for identity and survival, there can be no hope for the future. In this story the old woman survives to tell yet another tale, but this will not always be so. If the stories are not preserved as a medium for past, present, and future, the existence of the human race is threatened.

"Where Mountain Lion Lay Down With Deer" tells what happens when there is no one left to remember the old woman storyteller's tales. This poem laments the loss of the old ways: "The old ones who remember me are gone / the old songs are all forgotten / and the story of my birth" (Storyteller 199). The old woman faces her death alone; she is the last of the traditional tribal members. The story of her birth has been lost, which means the creation myth for the whole tribe has been erased. Without that story there are no beginnings, no identities, and no futures; the tribe's history and connections to land disappear with the story. Once again the witchery of the whites has turned the people's attention away from what is important, causing forgetfulness. The woman returns in the poem to the mountain, the place of origin, to search for her ancestors as she nears death. After her death, her memories are left to spill out into

the world, existing on their own despite any active listeners. Her story will be kept alive by the power of the word; but the demise of the oral tradition guarantees the fact that she will not be remembered on Earth.

As witchery, through forgetfulness, grows, so too builds the anger inside the Earth. The natural forces can no longer sustain a human race which abuses that which sustains them. There are several poems which preface a kind of cataclysmic demise the Earth has planned for humanity as presented in "Storyteller." Silko's "Poem for Ben Barney" subtly implies that changes are approaching. Here Crow sums up the destruction loose in the world: "It has finally come to this / All their fine magic / It has finally come to this" (Laguna Woman 15). Crow witnesses the destruction witchery's magic has created. Yet the persona in the poem remains confident that as long as "we can summon together" (15) the powers of nature--the meadows, mountains, and winds--balance can be restored. As long as humans are still bonded to nature and the spirits, they have a place in the world. Even though this poem ends on a positive note, "sunshine not yet ended / sunshine not yet through" (Laguna Woman 15), indicating that the sun will sustain life for one more day, Crow knows that this pattern of destruction will not continue; nature is tired of human irreverence, and the apocalypse is descending.

In a similar vein, one of the Yellow Woman stories, "Cottonwood Part One: Story of Sun House," enumerates how Yellow Woman saves humanity. Abandoning her home and family to journey

to the cottonwood tree,⁵ she brings Sun out of his house so that he can make his journey across the sky; otherwise darkness and cold threaten to engulf the Earth. Times have changed: "Before that time, there were no stories / about drastic things which / must be done / for the world / to continue" (Storyteller 64-5). Silko offers no details or explanations as to why Sun man threatens to remain in his Sun House. One explanation would suggest that Sun has been forgotten. People have forgotten the stories, no longer believing how important the Sun is for the world to survive, just as Corn Mother is forgotten in "Up North." They no longer pray to him or offer thanks, as is evident by the statement "the people may not understand" Yellow Woman's journey (64); the sun no longer has a reason to make his journey across the sky, yet the people are ignorant of the imminent danger.

Another reading of "Cottonwood" emerges from the myth "Up North"; Sun throws the Gambler's eyes into the sky where they become the "horizon stars of autumn" (169). Sun's apathy in crossing the sky could pertain to witchery's control of the autumn sky. Yellow Woman must draw Sun out before it is too late, before "its freezing / approaching steadily /... before the winter constellations / closed around the sky forever / before the last chill silenced the earth" (66). This would indicate that the story is taking place in the autumn, also the setting for "Up North." Yellow Woman must reconnect the spirit world, represented by the Sky, with the natural, represented by the Earth, if the world is to survive. Otherwise, the world will be

trapped in winter for eternity--just as the apocalyptic tale "Storyteller" will describe. In this instance, Yellow Woman preserves the Earth; but had she not believed in the story, the fragile world would have collapsed.

"Lullaby" opens in a flurry of snow in the same tradition of arctic annihilation. The snow "steadily" fills Ayah's tracks, trying to blot out her existence. Ayah knows about the snow and the destruction intended for the human race: "She smiled at the snow which was trying to cover her little by little" (44). Yet she does not fear the coming calamity as she realizes it is inevitable. All that remains of the old woman's life are memories; no one will be left to tell her story, while her tribe and remaining children have been assimilated into the white culture. The snow continues "until the direction she had come from was gone" (emphasis added 43): The witchery will continue until the path which all Natives emerge from, their distinct heritage, has been erased.

As with all stories linked to witchery, drought is present in the beginning of "Lullaby," indicating stagnation and death. Ayah remembers what the land looks like in summer after five years of drought: "In the wide deep creek bed where only a trickle of water flowed in the summer, the skinny cows would wander, looking for new grass..." (43). Witchery has gripped the land, and the drought reveals the separation and destruction both the land and the people must consequently suffer.

Ayah is also personally a victim of witchery as described in

Silko's poem "Long Time Ago": "those they [the Destroyers] do not kill / will die anyway / at the destruction they see / ... at the loss of the children" (135). Though she is not witchery's direct target, Ayah will perish by its effects. Her son, Jimmie, is killed the white war, and her other children are taken from her because of white illness, laws, and language. She feels the pain of their loss most acutely in her stomach: Ayah "carried the pain in her belly and it was fed by everything she saw" (47). The stories are in Ayah's belly as they are in the pregnant male storyteller mentioned in the introduction. No one is left for Ayah to pass her stories on to; she guards the stories of a lifetime within her, but each destructive act brings Ayah closer to death and witchery closer to destroying her heritage. Ayah, like the Earth, has been stripped of the life she created. And she knows all of humanity is doomed by this witchery. "It snowed steadily and the luminous light from the snow gradually diminished into the darkness" (47): the sun is slowly fading in the winter sky, disappearing forever in the apocalypse.

As she enters the bar to find her husband, Chato, "They looked at her like she was a spider crawling slowly across the room. They were afraid; she could feel the fear" (Storyteller 48). The men in the bar stare at Ayah the way her children do on their last visit--they have forgotten her, yet sense her power. Just as Grandmother Spider creates the Earth in the Pueblo myth, so too does she possess the power to end it. Perhaps this passage is meant to connect Ayah with the Spider Woman. Linda

Danielson also makes this connection, noting the control Ayah possesses over her own life: "the witchcraft section, at the physical center of the book [Storyteller], leads into the heart of the web, to the dark side of existence where Grandmother Spider lives because that is where people need her help" (340). The Spider Woman, like Ayah, has lost her people to corrupted white ways; they have forgotten her, and now she will erase their existence from her world.

In the last scene of the story, Ayah sings an ancient lullaby as her and her husband freeze to death in the snow; it is a final farewell which, because spoken, will reverberate through time as a testimony to human existence. Hirsch writes that Ayah's final song is "a beautiful song expressing with delicate economy the world view in which she was raised, and its closing words doubtlessly provide some consolation: 'We are together always / ... There never was a time / when this / was not so'" (9). While Ayah is perhaps consoling herself with memories, she also realizes that this song no longer rings true. She has nothing left, her family and culture have all been destroyed through acculturation; and now, in death, they will perhaps be eternally separated as the ancestral world has been forgotten.

Just as "Lullaby" hints at an inevitable course of events, "Incantation" also foretells the apocalypse. In this story the witch creates a global cataclysm out of a personal vendetta; she makes use of white, modern technology to cast her spell over a

former lover and, in effect, the world. The television becomes her tool of destruction, replacing the "smokey quartz crystal" of old (Storyteller 105). This poem foreshadows the development of the Old Yupik witch character in Almanac of the Dead who uses the T.V. to turn back evil on its senders. Both characters manipulate the T.V. weather map, conjuring up storms and winds to destroy.

White technologies enhance the powers of witchery so that it can now be spread globally. Witchery learns to turn technology back on its creators, to manipulate them. Now the "gray video images" take over, interchanging pictures for oral stories (105). Human interaction and connections to the past stagnate as the T.V. manipulates and desensitizes human consciousness. No one notices the loss of color in reality because the light of the television replaces the sun. Technology distances humanity from nature, disregarding its necessity: "The television / lights up the room, / a continual presence" (104). Substituting natural, creative images with blank, gray ones, the T.V. provides an alternative, preprogrammed perception of the universe: "Even if / I could walk to the window / I would only see / gray video images / bending against the clouds" (104-5). Technology manipulates minds, destroying any link to nature now except for what is provided through television.

The narrator tells her lover, "you think you're leaving me / and the equation of this gray room" (Storyteller 106), but he cannot escape her witchery or its effects. With the T.V., the

witch has the power to "command into presence the image of events and persons far removed..." (Romanyshyn 1). The T.V. set and the sun have lost their colors, drained by culturally void minds; even the beauty of an ocean dawn is diminished by the light of her television: "Your ocean dawn is only the gray light / in the corner of this room" (Storyteller 107). The witch manipulates the weather map, collapsing distances and time, and creates static on the T.V. which grows into a blinding snowstorm, "until we both are buried" (107). The woman hints that this blinding snowstorm will continue, as in "Storyteller," until the world is frozen.

Again in "How to Write a Poem About the Sky," Silko collapses boundaries between the sky and Earth: "the earth / is lost in it [sky] / and there are no horizons" (177). Just as the girl in "Storyteller" struggles to distinguish between Earth and sky, this poem explains that they cannot be separated; they are one, created by "a single breath" (177). But in contrast to "Storyteller," the boundaries in the poem are not permanent: "the sun splits it open" (177), pushing the blue out into the sky. The sun is still strong enough to rip apart the congealing ice connection between Earth and sky, as it does in "Cottonwood" and "Lullaby"; yet the sun will not always have this power as Silko later reveals.

Silko combines many of the mythic and apocalyptic motifs presented in her poetry and short stories to create a final apocalyptic vision in "Storyteller." "This final winter had been

coming even then; there had been signs of its approach for many years" (Storyteller 19): Years of abuse to the Earth and dismemberment of Native cultures by the whites precedes this destruction. The evil developed by the Indians through witchery has gained too much power and must now be stopped by Mother Earth and Father Sky. Through "Storyteller," Silko creates a story not about Native revenge on the whites, rather one foretelling the annihilation of all things human by the spirit forces in nature. Matthias Schubnell writes:

Silko's emphasis on culture clash between modern America and tribal cultures is secondary to her focus on the conflict between man and the Earth. Man's abuse of his fellowman is only part of man's abuse of creation at large. The story, then, transcends racial issues and anticipates a cosmic revenge on man's destructive urge. ("Frozen" 23)

After this apocalyptic nightmare, the scars of the Earth and the stories will be the only surviving remnants of human civilization.

Stories exist outside of time or events for Native Americans. Because of the apocalyptic nature of this story, the reader must assume that the end has already come. The destruction has passed and the Earth is now silent. There is no known narrator because everyone is dead, yet the story is being told. Just as in "Prophecy of Old Woman Mountain," the story does not need an audience to exist. While traditionally in

Native American culture myths are applicable to all generations, Silko explains through "Storyteller" that myths also transcend human existence.

Words are tools for storytellers--to create as well as to destroy; and once spoken, the power of words cannot be retrieved. "Long Time Ago" is Silko's explanation for the horrors let loose in the world. One witch spins a tale of impending doom so terrifying that the others beg for it to be called back. Just as Thinking-Woman creates the universe with her words, this witch's prophetic tale of destruction takes form after the story is told; the white race materializes, and its dooming acts are carried out in "Storyteller." They are working for the end of the world in this story, yet the Earth will not allow its own destruction; it will retaliate.

Memory is described as fragile in this story (Storyteller 28); it is easily forgotten without stories. But, as with many of Silko's witchery tales, the people have forgotten. Because they are no longer in touch with their ancestors and nature, due to the absence of memory, they are unaware of nature's warnings of the end of the world. Only the storytellers are aware of humanity's fate. As a result, they attempt to preserve the race through the stories. The three storytellers--the grandmother, the old man, and the girl--while supported by their tribe, no longer convey their stories for the other tribe members--as they usually speak only to themselves--but tell the legacy of a dying human race. In this way, the stories become immortal.

Just as memory is fragile, so too is the Earth. The Earth is likened to "a river crane's egg" (Storyteller 27), encased in frost. Its delicate eco-system has been disrupted by the imbalance created by the Destroyers. Color trickles out of the sky and the sun as the ice wanders from the Earth to the sky. "The traditional Indian colors of the four winds are soiled with vengeance..." (Lincoln 229): the blue and yellow of the sky and sun have mixed with the ice and have faded, symbolizing a draining of the Earth's power to sustain a corrupted human race. The sky melts into a "pale blue, almost white," and the sun's light diffuses into a "pale yellow, worn thin by winter" (Storyteller 17-18). But, as in "Incantation," many do not notice the colors disappearing; they have become too self-absorbed. As a result, the boundaries "between the river and hills and sky were lost in the density of the pale ice" (17-18). Ice creeps across the Earth and into the sky, blending everything together into white, freezing the sun midway through the sky, threatening an external freeze.

The whites continue separating humanity and the land through ecological destruction. The witch in "Long Time Ago" describes how the whites will live: "Then they [whites] grow away from the earth / ... from the sun / ... from the plants and animals. / They see no life / When they look / they see only objects. / The world is a dead thing for them..." (133). The portable buildings that the whites transport up the river offer no permanence, and the insulation they stuff them with provides little protection

against the harsh environment. Their methods match their goals; they are only interested in a quick profit. After hunting the animals to near extinction, they drill deep into the Earth for oil: "They only come when there is something to steal" (22). Yet the whites soon find that they are out of their element, that nature is too powerful for them: "the cold had silenced their machines they were helpless against it" (18). They have forgotten how to function without their technology and machinery, yet they are still not phased by nature's power.

The whites have corrupted not only the environment, but also the Eskimos who have lived in harmony with nature for many years. As a result, the Natives grow away from the Earth. And because the Natives have not resisted and are such easy prey for the whites, they are equally guilty for the Earth's destruction. They have succumbed to the evil. By removing the Native children from their families and tribe, the whites force the Indians, through acculturation, to forget not only their language, but how to survive. Eskimos now rely on technology and do not realize that white inventions will be useless against the power of nature.

The grandmother in "Storyteller" can be viewed as a human manifestation of the Earth itself; their stories are the same. The Earth has been violated by machines and stripped by the greed of the whites. The grandmother shares this pain due to the loss of her child, murdered by the white storekeeper, and to the disintegration of her culture. Described as a part of nature,

the grandmother's eyes are likened to a "river stone" (19), and when she wears her wolfskin parka, "she was invisible in the snow" (20). Like the Earth, the grandmother's "joints are swollen with anger" (19). She does not cry out for her pain though, her rage is silent, just as the Earth quietly sends the ice. The sun has grown tired and is dying like the old woman: "The predawn light would be the color of an old woman. An old woman sky full of snow" (27). The image Silko creates in "In Cold Storm Light" of the powerful, sacred elk emerging out of the "thick ice sky" (178), bringing the storm winds and snow, is juxtaposed to the image in "Storyteller" of the dying caribou struggling to make the impossible journey of pulling the sun across the sky: "The sun had finally broken loose from the ice but it moved like a wounded caribou running on strength which only dying animals find ... Its light was weak and pale..." (32).

The grandmother, like Ayah in "Lullaby," has lost her child. In this way witchery has overcome her. As the prophecy of "Long Time Ago" dictates, she will die, like Ayah, because of the horrors she experiences throughout her life. The whites poison the grandmother's daughter and son-in-law with alcohol, just as the witch foretells the "poison[ing of] the water" in the same prophecy (134). Now she must tell their story, even though the power of the story empties her: "each word stole strength from her" (25). It is implied that the old woman knows the origin of the whites as told in "Long Time Ago": "white skin people" emerge from their caves looking "like the belly of a fish /

covered with hair" (133). The grandmother describes the Gussack storeman, who kills the girl's parents, similarly as embodied in a white fish: "She stabbed her knife into the belly of a whitefish ... she pulled the entrails from the fish" (25). Again Silko introduces the image of disemboweling, though this time the roles are reversed. Before witchery attempts to gut the Natives, now the grandmother is trying to take witchery's stories away. By destroying the corrupted, greed-filled stories growing within the whites, she hopes to change the destructive end to their story. While the storeman is not legally prosecuted for his crime, the old woman knows he will be disemboweled by her rage.

The old woman has made preparations for the end. She knows that witchery's story is too powerful for her to counter alone. So she preserves whale oil to be burned for heat as well as light when the sun no longer crosses the sky: "The old woman had saved everything they would need when the time came" (24). The grandmother's preparations recall the Hopi Prophecy. Perhaps the old woman gathers what the girl will need in her journey to the next world. Her family has adhered to the old ways, never sacrificing their heritage; therefore the old woman believes they will be saved. While the grandmother perhaps believes her preparations will make a difference, the girl knows she will not last much longer than the whites. Even in the beginning, as the villagers prepare for the cold, the girl knows their efforts are useless. When the girl nails red tin on to her house, "She had done it for the bright red color, not for added warmth the way

the village people had done" (19). The girl's preparations are for an afterlife, not a future life in another world. She witnesses the signs of the approaching apocalypse, and she knows that the end will be final.

The old man also knows about the end; his bear story is a metaphor for the death of the world. The old man tells the girl about the whites and their greed, then says to her, "'It is approaching. As it comes, ice will push across the sky' She remembered all this clearly because he began the story that day..." (22). The coming of the ice is in direct relation to the invasion of the whites; white greed and Indian apathy create a deadening world. The old man's story tells of the bear who carries the ice across the sky. The color of the bear is described as "pale blue glacier ice" (22). Just as the bear comes from the northwest in the old man's story, so too does the cold invade from the north--the Bering Sea (26-27): "The ice was crouching on the northwest horizon like the old man's bear" (Storyteller 29). The ice that once connected the Asian continent to the North American, bringing life across an ocean barrier to a new world, now returns to destroy that life. The boundaries between Earth and sea have disappeared permanently, and the ice seeps into the sky, trapping the sun: "The days of origin return" (Lincoln 228).

Towards the end of the story, the old man realizes that the girl must finish the story, for it is much like his. Both characters are being stalked: he by the bear, and she by the

storeman. And while Kenneth Lincoln views the old man's story as "the death of the ancestral past" (229), the girl's story marks the death of the future. The hunter (old man) is eventually literally overcome by the bear, just as he figuratively foretells that evil and death will inevitably overcome the world and the girl despite her personal victory against the storeman. The story encompasses all peoples; apocalypse is inevitable.

The girl knows what she must do, and her knowledge gives her power over the ignorance and weaknesses of the whites: "he [the storeman] didn't know about the ice. He did not know that it was prowling the Earth, or that it had already pushed its way into the sky to seize the sun" (Storyteller 29). Therefore, when she sees the vulnerability of the storeman resulting from his lust for her, she knows that it is time to fulfill the story (29). The air freezes the storeman's lungs as he chases her, and the icy river swallows him as it will soon swallow the sun. She must destroy this storeman as he and the one before him tried to destroy the Yupik spirit "because they [Yupiks] had something of value ... something which the Gussacks could never have. They thought they could take it, suck it out of the earth or cut it from the mountains; but they were fools" (29). The whites attempt to destroy the Yupik spirit because they do not understand it--because they fear it. Again the "Long Time Ago" witch has already predicted this: "They fear the world. / They destroy what they fear. / They fear themselves" (134). The whites fail to assimilate or kill all the Natives, but they do

insure their own demise through their fear.

The whites do not understand the power of stories. When the girl confesses her murder of the storeman, the attorney tells her "that she could not have killed him that way. He was a white man" (31). The whites do not understand that the girl weaves destiny through stories just as the old man does. Though she does not physically kill the storeman, she controls him through her story and predetermines his death. The whites believe that he dies by accident, but the girl knows she has committed murder. And she must tell the story so that everyone will know the truth: "it must be told, year after year as the old man had done, without lapse or silence" (32). Through repetition the story becomes alive. It will be imbedded in the peoples' minds and never be forgotten. So she begins as far back as she can remember--to the death of her parents. As she unravels her story, the villagers come to listen to her and bring her food; she has become the next tribal storyteller. When the old man dies, the girl continues the story as he did, even when all the villagers have gone. These words exist in and of themselves; they have power despite never being actively heard by anyone.

Their Native language is sacred to the Eskimos, but the whites attempt to silence them by forcing them to speak English. The girl's jailor and her school matron refuse to speak Yupik to her; they are ashamed of their Native tongue. The whites want to assimilate all Eskimos through language, but their words remain meaningless to the Yupiks. As the girl walks home with

the red-haired man, "The whine of the big generators at the construction camp sucked away the sound of his words" (23). Just as their equipment is useless in the arctic climate, the white's words have no power among the Eskimos. When the storeman tries to speak to the girl, "his words were only noises coming from his pale mouth" (Storyteller 29). The whites do not understand the importance of the Yupik language and the power of both spoken and unspoken words, even after the story of the end of the world has been unleashed.

All of the stories within Storyteller are being told to allow the fate of humanity to be understood, and to preserve their story no matter how destructive it is. Hirsch's comment about the old man's story is relevant for all of the storytellers: "it is the story that makes his death meaningful. The story is an expression of sacred natural processes, ancient and unending of which death is a part..." (5). Just as the death of the old man and grandmother are a part of the natural process in "Storyteller," so too, in a way, will it be the end of the human race. The witch in "Long Time Ago" cannot turn back the prophecy: "It's already turned loose" (Storyteller 137). Stories exist once spoken, and they echo on despite human interaction. The Earth and sun are frozen; all life has been stifled despite the white's machines, insulation, or the old woman's preparations.

"Storyteller" and Silko's other apocalyptic tales cannot be read as simply the annihilation of the white race, because the

Natives have themselves, for the most part, been incorporated into the white world. While there are those who maintain the old way of life, they do not attempt to stop the destruction. Over and over Silko details the horrors the whites have brought to the Americas: killing off the animals, disfiguring the landscape with fences and mines, and especially the genocide of the Native American's and their culture. But Silko does not point the blame at the whites; they are only a part of something much larger and more powerful--witchery. Lucero writes, Silko "does not blame anyone for what has happened and for what seems inevitable ... she instead blames a force of evil whose origins lay not with the white people but the Indians themselves..." (7). And the Natives play their part not only in the creation of this evil, as is shown through myths, but also in its perpetuation. Their peaceful nature, and tendency to place blame on the whites while idly watching their land and resources be destroyed, shows that they have given into the witchery; they are letting the ceremonies, language, and old ways slowly disappear in favor of the white ways. And the results of their actions have been described in the cataclysmic end in "Storyteller."

CHAPTER TWO

Patterns in the Rock: THE GLOBAL NUCLEAR THREAT IN CEREMONY

The apocalyptic themes which run throughout Silko's short stories and poetry reach an apex in Ceremony. Evil and witchery take on new dimensions in their struggle to upset the balance in the universe and to control humanity. Because of this, Tayo, a half-breed Navajo Indian, is caught between a desire to give in to the violence and death of the seemingly omnipotent forces of evil, or to attempt to alter its course. Whereas throughout Silko's short works, witchery is mainly confined to individual or, at most, tribal infestation, witchery now plagues the very root of all life--the landscape. In this way, witchery inherits globally destructive capabilities, for the land sustains all life forms. Evil has invaded the center of the Earth and the souls of humanity, locking the world in a deadly pattern. The story of force versus counterforce is not a new one, as the myths presented in Chapter One indicate; but today its implications reach far beyond Native American society to create a global apocalypse. While "Storyteller" is Silko's first tale to detail a cataclysmic end to humanity, Ceremony goes one step further to include ecological degradation and, ultimately, the destruction of the Earth through a nuclear holocaust.

Silko presents the Native American world torn apart by the white influence in Ceremony, yet she also offers a new ceremony to counter the ever-growing power of witchery. Not only does Tayo's story demonstrate how a ceremony can be used to fight off new evils, but the structure of the book itself reveals how the ancient myths can and must become a part of modern daily life.

Tayo's ceremony helps quell the destructive process for a time; yet, much like the poems and short stories, Ceremony nonetheless foretells the end of a disconnected race. Ambrose Lucero concludes that "It is a warning, her message. It is apocalyptic" (2). Ceremony is a story which parallels mythic tales to Tayo's ritualistic journey to relocate himself in relation to the land, his tribe, and his ancestors. His involvement in and witness to the horrors of World War II disconnect him, destroy his identity, and create a hollowness inside him. Only by following the myths and ancient rituals can Tayo move away from this witchery and be healed. He must confront the battle between force and counterforce internally; additionally, he becomes the representative for the whole tribe in his attempt to dispel witchery from the world. The tribe suffers, as Tayo does, from the separation of land and ancestors. Because the tribe is slowly broken up, as its members are assimilated into the white culture, it grows weaker; soon it will have no strength left to counter witchery, and evil will triumph. Tayo's story is only a part of a much larger one which ultimately foretells the end of the world. His is a specific experience of a larger archetypal action.

In contrast, Emo (also a war veteran) incarnates evil in Ceremony for he has turned against not only his Navajo heritage, but humanity and the world in general, becoming hollow and disconnected inside. He wears dark glasses like the officer in "Tony's Story," to hide the vacant eyes of a witch, and his

friends stand around him like "dogs standing over something dead" (Ceremony 57). Loving only destruction, "Emo grew from each killing. Emo fed off each man he killed..." (61). Not satisfied after destroying the enemy in World War II, he now turns on his own people, pitting them against each other. The extent of Emo's witchery surfaces when he plays with his war souvenirs, Japanese teeth from his victims. Nothing is sacred to Emo; he perverts even the art of storytelling by putting one of his tales of debauchery into poetic form (57). In this way he is creating new stories for the people to live by--stories of destruction. Emo has drawn Harley, Leroy, and the other war veterans into his evil design, using them as tools for his witchery (232). Harley now also wears dark glasses, like Emo, signaling his association with witchery. The witchery allows the veterans to blame the whites for their-hardships, to see "only the losses" (249).

In Ceremony, Silko reweaves the ancient Pueblo stories into the modern realities of Native American culture. The people believe they are left with nothing after the European invasion; they are physically and spiritually poor. By disbelieving the stories, they erase their identities and past. But without the stories the people will not survive, for stories "are all we have, you see, / all we have to fight off / illness and death So they [the Destroyers] try to destroy the stories / let the stories be confused or forgotten" (2). Witchery has made the people believe that they have lost the stories, but the stories are within each person. They cannot be destroyed, only

repressed. Ceremony teaches the people that the stories are still alive within each person, they must only be believed in for their power to work. The poem at the beginning of the book, entitled "Ceremony," presents the keeper of life, mentioned in the introduction, who holds the stories within his belly: "And in the belly of this story / the rituals and the ceremony / are still growing" (2). This storyteller preserves the stories for all people, keeping them alive. Yet at the same time, the Destroyers are spreading their destructive stories. Tayo feels witchery's stories growing within him after the war; thus, he attempts to vomit out the past, to expel the evil stories germinating within him. In this way he hopes to make way for a new ceremony to counter witchery's preplanned ending to his story--that of Tayo's transformation into a Destroyer. Yet just as Tayo begins to form a healing, positive story inside him, so too does Emo cultivate a destructive story. Tayo must realize that his story is only one of many which threaten the world, and he cannot defeat witchery on his own. Still, Tayo, as the mythic hero, attempts to stop Emo's stories first through violence, "shov[ing] the jagged glass into Emo's belly" (53). Tayo strikes for the center of Emo where the witchery stories--just as the healing stories--originate, and he tries to rip the powerful evil story out of him, to take away its breath. Later he learns that witchery cannot be stopped by violence for it feeds off of destruction.

When the persona of the poem "Ceremony," which begins the

novel, points to his stomach, he says, "There is life here..." (Ceremony 2). He is referring not only to the stories, but to a greater life force found in all things. The Navajo, as James McNeley documents, believe that all things come alive only when given the breath of the sacred Winds (8): "Holy Wind gives life, thought, speech, and the power of motion to all living things and serves as the means of communication between all elements of the living world" (McNeley 1). The Winds remain within humans, guiding them throughout their lives. Each person and his/her personality are determined by their Wind: "The 'goodness' or 'badness' of a person is attributed to the nature of his wind soul" according to Witherspoon (29). Yet one's nature is not solely determined at birth, even a person with a good Wind is not safe from evil. Witchcraft can interfere, causing a "bad" Wind to take over an individual, which sometimes results in death (McNeley 44).

Winds have also been placed in the mountains, giving them, in effect, life. Here they serve as messengers between the spirits and the people, protecting them from external influences (McNeley 36). "Winds were to be the means by which the inner forms would communicate with others and know what is happening on Earth's surface" (McNeley 21): in this way, the mountain Winds can learn from the animal and human Winds what transpires.

Winds become an important force in Ceremony. The presence of the Army recruiter on the Navajo reservation conjures up the Winds. There is "something relentless in the way the wind drove

the sand and dust ahead of it" that day (Ceremony 64); it has come to protect its people from the messenger of the Destroyers. The recruiter fights to keep his propaganda pamphlets from scattering, but the Wind only increases with the white man's disgust. Witchery invades Navajo life in the form of World War II this time. By recruiting the Indians to join the army, witchery gains souls in its fight for destruction. Though the Wind attempts to expel the messenger, to expose his lies, Tayo and his brother Rocky are not driven away by the Wind's warning. Rocky does not believe in the old traditions, wanting only to succeed in the white world, and he hears only white lies; promises flow without thought from the white recruiter's mouth, brainwashing Rocky as they have many others. When Rocky rejects his heritage, he discards the unity with and protection of nature: "If despite the advice and warnings given by Winds sent by the Holy Ones and the availability of their help through prayers and offerings, a person disregards their succorance and persists in a wrong way of life, his Wind may be taken from him..." (McNeley 49). Rocky's behavior eventually costs him his Wind--life.

Winds are an active part of the reservation life. They traditionally bring the rain from Mt. Taylor, and, in this novel, they bring Night Swan (one of the forms Thinking Woman takes) to the reservation to help Tayo recover. But the Wind can also be evil. In Asia, "the wind swept down from the green coastal mountains, whipping the rain into gray waves that blinded him

[Tayo]" (Ceremony 12). The Wind, in its anger against witchery, does not let up, and it drives Tayo to curse the rain away. Then, in its fury against Tayo's disrespect, the Wind sends drought to the reservation: "The wind had blown since late February and it did not stop after April. They said it had been that way for the past six years while he was gone. And all this time they had watched the sky expectantly for the rainclouds to come" (Ceremony 11). The Wind retaliates against Rocky and Tayo for not listening to its warnings, causing the whole tribe to suffer for their involvement in the witchery.

Without the Winds the Navajo believe that all life will die (McNeley 49). Taking this belief one step further, the destruction of the mountains, the Wind's place of origin, would put an end to the Winds and result in human demise. Yet the tribe continues to allow the whites to strip the land of vegetation, kill off the animals, and, most importantly, extract minerals from their sacred lands. When the whites leave in 1945, what remains are "only the barbed-wire fences, the watchman's shack, and the hole in the earth" (Ceremony 244). While extracting the profit from the hills in the form of uranium, they leave their waste behind, failing to repair the horrible scar and the used earth piled "like fresh graves" (245). The whites are not simply disfiguring the landscape as they tunnel into the mountains to extract minerals, they are taking the very Wind--breath--out of it, leaving behind a dead, hollowed-out hill.

These wounds in the Earth have not healed with time, but

instead, Silko shows, widen and now threaten to engulf the human race. Humanity's ecological desecration only increases, despite their knowledge of what may result. The people have grown away from the Earth, but without her they cannot survive. With each life force they destroy, the Wind force is diminished. And the death of the mountain means the death of their mythic emergence place--the Shipap, located where the whites are drilling.

Witchery's destruction will inevitably result in the death of all life as the Winds withdraw to the lower world through the hole, back to their place of origin.

The Natives are also separating themselves from the Earth by succumbing to white acculturation. They have been educated to believe that they want to leave the reservation, that they want to live like the whites (115). They do not realize that this will bring about their destruction. Bentonie, the medicine man, understands the importance of belonging to the land. He stays on the north side of town, not because he gives into the segregation of the Indians, but because "We [the tribe] know these hills, and we are comfortable here" (Ceremony 117). The land is part of their heritage, and without that connection, the people cannot be whole. The people have their origin in the Earth, and the tribal land locates them in the universe, creating their identity; their stories, history, religion, and art are inextricably tied to a specific place. Tayo must redefine this connection to the Earth for himself and, ultimately, for the tribe.

Just as Tayo must begin a journey to heal, witchery begins a

journey to destroy. The Pueblo creation myth tells how the people move through four lower worlds before arriving, with the help of the spirits, in the fifth, or present world through a large hole, the Shipap (also written Shibapu or Shipapu)--the place of emergence (Seyersted, Leslie 7). The Earth herself has given "birth" to the people; thus, she becomes a part of the people just as the spirits are part of her. The Shipap, therefore, also becomes the passageway from the spirit world to the upper world, allowing the spirits to move back and forth through it in order to communicate with the people. This entrance way is regarded as the spiritual and physical center of Pueblo life. It is also the center of destruction in this novel. Witchery infests the tribal lands and perverts the elements of their sacred mountain into a new form of annihilation. The uranium mined on this mountain is put to a globally destructive use in the form of the nuclear bomb by the white pawns of witchery.

All events in the book are linked by what is happening at the Shipap. The old medicine man, Ku'oosh, talks about a cave while performing the Scalp Ceremony (used to reconnect Tayo to his past) which sparks an ancient memory in Tayo; the memory of his origin. Tayo and his brother Rocky are drawn to this cave as children, discovering it is "deeper than the sound" of their rocks hitting bottom (Ceremony 35). That this is the cave of emergence is evident by the presence of the snakes: "the snakes went there to restore life to themselves" (35). Snakes are

traditionally known as the messengers between the upper and lower worlds. Their presence reminds Tayo of his origin. He must refocus his life so that his heritage is at the center of his being as the Shipap is the center of the world. But not only has Tayo forgotten, the whole tribe has abandoned this sacred place. For Tayo and the tribe the Shipap eventually becomes the center of the new healing ceremony, a means of reconnecting the tribe to the Earth and their ancestors. In another sense, though, the Shipap becomes the center of evil.

By allowing the destructive forces to destroy their spiritual center through mining and distorting the use of uranium, the Natives sever their own link to the spirit and ancestral world; they suffocate themselves, snuff out their own life-giving Winds. As long as spirits have a place in the fifth world, witchery can be balanced. But by destroying the Shipap, the whites destroy the passageway between the two worlds, and the link is broken. No new life can come into the world without the Shipap, and the dead will have no place to rest. There will be no Winds to blow the rain to the reservation, and the world will stagnate as physical and spiritual drought inhibits growth and renewal. In the absence of spiritual forces to assist the people, the Destroyers will challenge the work of the spirits, "to see how much can be lost, how much can be forgotten. They [will] destroy the feeling people have for each other" (Ceremony 229). All links between community, ancestors, and the land will be severed. The people will be left alone, without identity or

commonality; such isolation will bring spiritual death and eventual self-destruction.

The above link made between the center of life and the center of witchery in Ceremony can be supported. There are several theories as to the location of the Pueblo Shipap. Edith Swan locates the emergence place on Mt. Taylor ("Laguna" 233). This also happens to be the place of the largest open pit uranium deposit and mine in the U.S. (Seyersted, Leslie 12). The Shipap, the origin of all life, has been converted into a mine by the whites, and the sacred mountain transformed into a vehicle of global destruction. Witchery's ultimate weapon of annihilation is located in the rock of Mt. Taylor.

In contrast to Swan's location of the Shipap on Mt. Taylor, Per Seyersted translates the Keresan name, Katsi'ma--Enchanted Mesa--to mean "he who stands in the door" (31). He goes on to suggest that this door implies a passageway and could clearly pertain to the place of emergence, the door which leads to the four worlds below (Seyersted, Leslie 31). When Tayo reaches Enchanted Mesa towards the final stage of his healing ceremony, he feels that "All things seemed to converge there..."(Ceremony 237). This seems to support Seyersted's theory that all things come together at the place of origin. Concurring with Seyersted, Robert Nelson notes the geographical location of the uranium mines to be somewhere "between the barren salt weed wasteland of lava hills ... and Mt. Taylor" (309) and views this as a clue to the overall fate of humanity: "it seems that things could indeed

go either way here one can harness the power of the land to the ends of regeneration or final annihilation" (Nelson 309-10). The Earth will either be converted into a wasteland by nuclear explosions or confirm the majestic, spiritual beauty of Mt. Taylor; and, "Faced with the choice, the easier course to take, we are told, is the course of annihilation" (Nelson 310).

Regardless of geographical interpretations, both theories connect the place of emergence with latent destruction. The reservation is no longer a place of refuge from the white world; it has instead become the center of witchery's plans for destruction. The sacred mountains are filled with uranium, and the sparsely populated, desolate New Mexican landscape is ideal for bomb testing sites. Evil has invaded the very landscape, the spiritual heart of the reservation. And the final pattern of witchery is found in the geological layers of bright yellow uranium. Just as a medicine man places layer upon layer of sand to create a healing sandpainting, so too has witchery created their own destructive sandpainting placing the atomic components in layers of rock; out of the Earth comes the elements to destroy her. Whether any sandpainting is used for positive or negative purposes depends solely on the creator's intent, for the ceremonies and traditions can easily be turned against the people. And, in this story, the pattern in the rocks spells out the world's fate in nuclear terms.

As the sandpainting can have both positive and negative uses, so can words be twisted. On the one hand, stories keep the

people alive. While on the Batan Death March, Tayo creates stories to give his comrades strength: "[T]he words of the story poured out of his mouth as if they had substance, pebbles and stone extending to hold the corporal up..." (Ceremony 12). As the above passage indicates, Tayo knows that his words have power, yet later chooses to pervert that power by cursing the rain away in the hope of saving his brother, Rocky. Because of the devastation Tayo perpetuates in the war, he chooses to destroy rather than create--to become a part of the witchery. Just as with the sandpainting, humans are capable of evil and must constantly struggle against the desire to destroy. When Tayo sends the rain away with his words, he values the life of one individual more highly than that of the community and Earth, thus upsetting the balance.

Words can indeed destroy, in Tayo's case by depriving the people and the Earth of water: "The drought years had returned again, as they had after the First World War and in the twenties..." (10). Yet it is not simply Tayo's carelessness which causes this natural disaster; rather, the ensuing drought can be seen as a direct result of witchery. Just as in the short stories, here drought indicates an upset balance. Witchery has gained control again in modern times, taking away the rain clouds as the Ck'o'yo magic does in the myths "One Time" with the Twins, and in "Up North" with the gambler. Tayo must now journey, as the mythic hero, to retrieve the rain clouds and symbolically heal the tribe and its land. He begins his healing process in a

desperate attempt to recreate a healing ceremony by stepping into some "rusty steel hoops" he finds on the ranch (Ceremony 10). The steel hoops are a part of many Navajo healing ceremonies; the patient's passage through the hoops "symbolizes restoration of a mythic hero..." (Wyman 32). When Tayo later steps through the hoops in Bentonie's healing ceremony, he reverses the effect of evil by symbolically "walking back to belonging" (Ceremony 144). But the tools on the ranch are dead. The old ceremonies have been successful in countering witchery in the past, yet witchery constantly mutates to side step the ceremonies' affects. Because the people have lost faith in the traditions and do not change the ceremonies to confront new evils, the old ceremonies no longer have the power to reconnect the people to their heritage.

The Scalp Ceremony Ku'oosh performs on Tayo is the first he receives, and it pacifies the Japanese souls killed in the war so that they do not haunt his dreams (Hoilman 59). But this ceremony does not work for white warfare where soldiers do not see or touch their victims. What Tayo has witnessed in Asia is much more horrifying, something this ceremony cannot lay to rest. He has seen the devastating effects of the Destroyer's atomic weapon, knowing that it has been created out of his own tribe's sacred mountain and land. The loss and mutilation of sacred land haunts the Natives daily. Still the old ones on the reservation do not understand witchery's new plan and therefore do not know how to combat it. Only Tayo and his war comrades know the far

reaching implications of witchery's plan.

The Scalp Ceremony cannot heal Tayo because it is not designed for the realm of evil present in the modern world. Witchery has altered its form so that old ceremonies are no longer effective. Bentonie, though, has changed the ceremonies to incorporate the changing world, knowing that "things which don't shift and grow are dead things. They are things the witchery people want" (Ceremony 126). His hogan is now comprised of both old and new items in an attempt to bridge the gap between generations that the whites have formed. If the people do not change and grow, witchery "will triumph, and the people will be no more" (126). Tayo's whole life must become a ceremony, reintegrating him with the land and tribe. His healing is only the first step in reconnecting the whole tribe, for "His sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything" (125-6).

The whites tell Tayo he must forget his ties with the community and think only of himself. However, when he dreams, Tayo makes a global connection, wherein boundaries of time and space collapse. The Spanish song he hears merges with Japanese voices, which fade in and out with Laguna voices (6). In this dream where he communicates with spirit world, Tayo realizes that all humans are the same; the juxtaposition of languages remind him that the Japanese are the distant ancestors of his people, and that the human race is ultimately united through a common ancestry. This is why Tayo sees the faces of his Navajo relatives

materialize on the Japanese. Yet Tayo attempts to separate the cultures, believing in white boundaries and linear time rather than the unity afforded circular or mythic time. Tayo struggles to separate the voices and the memories as the whites tell him to, to make them "tied together like colts in a single file" (6). The whites wish to separate and alienate all cultures. Once their common heritage is diminished, witchery can gain control of the individual, turning all people against each other. But Bentonie tells Tayo the truth: "You saw who they were. Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers. You saw what the evil had done: you saw the witchery ranging as wide as this world" (124). Both characters know that witchery has made them believe the Asians are the enemy, when in fact they are their ancestors.

Evil attempts to isolate people, to turn them against each other, and, in effect, it has united humanity in its fate. Tayo's grandmother sees the results of the pattern in the rocks in an atomic flash from the testing site which appears to her as the rising sun (245). It is indeed the sun rising on a new age, this time on one of cataclysmic destruction. The sacred mountain shrine of the Twin Mountain Lions and home of the kachina has been transformed into a bomb test site (246); again, the sacred becomes a symbol of destruction. And after the explosion, the means by which the world will end materializes:

the lines of cultures and worlds were drawn in flat
dark lines on fine light sand, converging in the middle

of witchery's final ceremonial sandpainting. From that time on, human beings were one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them, for all living things; united by a circle of death that devoured people...." (246)

The pattern in the rock dictates the apocalypse. Witchery now possesses a weapon powerful enough to destroy humanity and all living things; and its drive towards destruction will end only with a nuclear war. Tayo now realizes that the Japanese victims of the nuclear age could easily be Indian, Black, or White. All humans are equally threatened by this inescapable fate.

Whites have confused the world by introducing a different view of life. Before the Europeans, "people shared the same consciousness," knowing exactly how the world should be (68). Now "Christianity separated the people from themselves; it tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone..." (68). The whites dismantle the tribe, assimilating individuals one by one. What those who abandon their heritage do not realize is that the tribe loses a part of itself every time another gives in to the witchery: "what happened to the girl [Tayo's mother] did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them" (69).

Guilt and remorse for the stolen land will eat away at the Native American's soul, which is all part of witchery's plan. The people will blame the whites for their hardships and want to take back what has been stolen; but doing so will only mean

succumbing to the methods of Destroyers. By fighting and killing for the land, the Natives will mimic the raging evil at work, and the people will, in effect, destroy themselves with their hatred.

The Native Americans envy the whites for their possessions and power. Yet the people who believe in the white lies and strive for materialistic gain are hollow inside and attempt to fill their emptiness with alcohol or tales of acceptance by the whites. What the Native Americans do not realize is that

the lie was destroying the white people faster than it was destroying Indian people. But the effects were hidden, evident only in the sterility of their art, which continued to feed off the vitality of other cultures, and in the dissolution of their consciousness into dead objects: the plastic and neon, the concrete and steel. (204)

By mimicking white ways, the Natives doom themselves. Witchery has made the whites spiritually and culturally sterile, so they attempt again to satisfy their emptiness by stealing. They take over Indian lands, but they can never possess the spiritual bond the Natives have with the land: Bentonie notes that "It is the people [Natives] who belong to the mountain" (128). Just as the narrator in "Storyteller" laughs at the ignorance of the whites, so too does Tayo because the whites did not know that they "had been conceived by witchery" (154), and they will be engulfed by its plan.

Tayo refuses to join the violence at the end of the book

when he is tempted to kill Emo in a futile attempt to stop the force of evil. He does not hate the way Emo and the others do, blaming the whites for their miseries and cursing the stolen land. He only hates the whites for the destruction they have done to the Earth and for their annihilation of the animals (203). Witchery is the root cause of all hatred, violence, and treachery, yet it blinds people from this destruction. The people cannot see how their hatreds and violence advance the witchery. Tayo and Rocky have been fooled by the white lies, just as the Twin brothers are fooled by the magic in "One Time." Witchery leads people to believe that the old traditions are no longer necessary, that with new inventions humans can control the Earth. Once witchery takes away ancient memories, the people become susceptible to the white lies. It is only a matter of time before witchery causes humans to self-destruct, for the whites have been taken in by their own lies and are destroying themselves:

If the white people never looked beyond the lie, to see that theirs was a nation built on stolen land, then they would never be able to understand how they had been used by the witchery ... white thievery and injustice boiling up the anger and hatred that would finally destroy the world...." (191)

Only by coming together as a united race can humanity have a chance against witchery. The tribe's ancestors fear what will happen if the tribe is broken up. Bentonie's grandmother hears

strange languages in Descheeny's hogan and immediately realizes: "'They [Destroyers] are working for the end of the world, aren't they?' 'Sometimes I don't know if the ceremony will be strong enough to stop them. We have to depend on people not even born yet'" (149-150). Her fears are not unfounded; future generations grow away from their past and each other, no longer realizing its effects. Yet the only way to defeat the growing power of witchery will be to counter it with an equal, united force. Descheeny and the grandmother work together on a new ceremony to shut out the darkness, but "It cannot be done alone. We must have power from everywhere" (150). Destruction can be countered only with everyone working together against it; but the individualism purported by modern society serves to undermine any hope of reversing the witchery now capable of global annihilation.

Silko suggests that this time the Earth will not escape human madness as it does in the short stories and poems. Witchery no longer simply manifests itself in individuals or in struggles between races or countries, but takes on global ecological dimensions. Ku'oosh explains the fragility of the world, likening it to a spider's web (35). According to the origin myth, Grandmother Spider creates the world as a spider interweaves a web. It follows that just as one broken thread causes the web to collapse, so too can any one person upset the balance of such a delicate world. Witchery has ripped apart this web through characters like Emo, destroying the threads so that they will never be reconnected in the same way. And now the web

appears irreparable: "Ku'oosh would have looked at the dismembered corpses and the atomic heat-flash outlines, where human bodies had evaporated, and the old man would have said something close and terrible had killed these people. Not even oldtime witches killed like that" (Ceremony 37). The balance has been irretrievably upset.

Though Tayo's personal story ends on a positive note with the success of his healing ceremony, the appearance of Thinking Woman--the creator--to "bless" the tribe, and the gathering of storm clouds as in "Tony's Story" signaling an end to the drought, Ceremony has not changed witchery's course. The land, though the drought has ended, remains scarred. It cannot be repaired; it "has too long been held in the service of the Gunnadeyahs [Destroyers] and their design, scarred so completely and violated so thoroughly that the land itself is irredeemable, irrevocable, lost forever..." (Nelson 311). And though Tayo returns to the Kiva to share his knowledge of witchery with the community, the old ones remain locked in their traditions, unable to understand or change to meet this new global challenge. As B. A. St. Andrews notes, only unity "can provide the true, all-inclusive 'ceremony' needed in our time, yet the race remains divided" (92). Tayo's personal renewal is offset by other war veterans still active in their destruction. Emo's banishment from tribal lands, an old solution to tribal problems, is no longer valid in a modern world. Not only can he always return, but his existence will be a continuous threat to all humanity.

Tayo's healing benefits the community; but the destruction Emo and the other veterans generate creates equal if not greater damage. Louis Owens proposes that "Evil cannot be destroyed, and to attempt to do so is to commit a dangerous error that would upset the delicate balance of the world" (190). Silko's balance between force and counterforce has been upset. While Owens believes that the existence of evil is necessary for human survival, it has grown like a cancer, now threatening the Earth as well as humanity with its catastrophic nuclear capabilities. There is no indication that at the end of the story the people will unite against it or that they can reverse what witchery has done.

The uranium mine in Ceremony represents the ultimate form of destruction, both of land and life forms. The creation and use of the product of these mines, the atomic bomb, fulfills the Hopi Prophecy as the "gourd of ashes" falling from the sky, ending this world (Kaiser 34). Ironically, Silko demonstrates, the end of the world will have its roots in Native American, not white culture, as many characters in the novel believe: not only does the raw material of the apocalypse grow in the Indian's spiritual center, the sacred mountain, but they themselves have created the white race who twist natural raw materials into forms of destruction, dooming the world. The sandpainting pattern in the rock reveals the method of humanity's doom, and the Native Americans feel helpless against the disfiguration of their land. The witch in "Long Time Ago" has already mapped out what the

whites will do with the uranium: "they will find the rocks, / rocks with veins of green and yellow and black. / They will lay the final pattern with these rocks / they will lay it across the world / and explode everything" (Storyteller 136, emphasis added). Witchery now has control over the ultimate weapon; its power is inexorable. Tayo's grandmother states at the end of the novel that the stories are the same, only "the names sound different" (Ceremony 260). Witchery has been going on for centuries, as is evident in the myths woven throughout the book. It cannot be defeated; and Ceremony foretells how it will finally be victorious.

CHAPTER THREE

Prophetic Visions Revealed:
APOCALYPTIC IMAGERY IN
ALMANAC OF THE DEAD

Leslie Silko's prophetic tone, carried throughout her works, culminates in Almanac of the Dead. In her previous writings, Silko sometimes includes the possibility that a destructive end to a story can be changed. The people can defeat witchery by returning to their traditions. Almanac is the story of what happens when people do not change, when they do not heed the warnings. The almanac within this novel is the fictitious version of an ancient Mayan Codex which foretells the apocalypse. The appearance of the Stone Snake in New Mexico and the return of the Twin Brother in Mexico fulfill the prophecies of Quetzalcoatl and the Hopi, respectively. This almanac predicts the plight of all peoples; there will be revolution, for the Natives are united under one cause, to retake the Americas from the Europeans. While a peaceful takeover is planned, there can be no justice without blood. Yet if the Natives resort to violence, as is explained in Ceremony, they are no better than the Destroyers. So, there exists a paradox in Silko's novel. In one sense she claims that only the Destroyers will perish in the apocalypse to come; the Natives will triumph, as they have after a similar uprising in Africa. The message of the spirits is a different one, though; their anger over the desecration of the Earth demands that all of humanity pay for the destruction. Only the Earth will survive this calamity.

Almanac reveals the state of the world immediately prior to the apocalypse. The same conditions which plagued the characters in Ceremony reappear in exaggerated form in Almanac. Again,

there are no ties to community, ancestors, or land; there are no stories to protect the people. Witchery has infiltrated all segments of life and infested all cultures. Europeans have been separated from their homeland, and with it their ancestral and communal memory. So they steal from the Natives in an attempt to mask their cultural and spiritual emptiness. They are living a lie, pretending that the land and culture of the Americas belong to them; but their acts are dooming. The majority of characters in this novel are portrayed as morbid, sexually perverse, drug addicted individuals. The whites have devoured all cultures in search of fulfillment, and con individuals from other races into joining the Destroyers. They derive pleasure only through destruction. Yet even after mutilating the land, killing off the animals, polluting the air and water, and detonating the atom bomb, the Destroyers are still hungry; now they have nothing but themselves to destroy.

There is no love or trust in this novel even among family members. Ancestral lineage is forgotten. Without a past or future, the people live only from stimulus to stimulus. They replace ties to land and community with drugs; criminality and injustice rule. Tayo learns, as the main character in Ceremony, that as long as there is love, the fifth world will endure; but love is forgotten in Almanac, and the existence of the fifth world is placed in jeopardy. As one character in Almanac states, "all lives are wasted" (23), and, indeed, the world itself has become a wasteland.

The reservation suffers a five-year drought in Ceremony before Tayo can heal the wounds and restore the rain. In Tucson decades of spiritual, cultural, and physical drought threaten to destroy all life. Tucson was built by outlaws and thieves who grew rich from the Indian Wars, and the city still remains the center of drug and arms smuggling with Mexico. The Tucson desert reflects the people who live there; they are dried out, collapsing internally. Seese, a drug addict from San Diego, describes those who live in the desert as "suspended in one endless interval between gusts of wind, and waves of dry heat" (Almanac 65), waiting only for death. The scarcity of water indicates how fragile life is in the desert. Still the whites are unconcerned with the balance of nature, wanting only to make a profit. They have polluted the rivers and used up the resources, yet one absurd character, Leah Blue, still plans to create the next Venice in the American desert. The Destroyers view the desert as a dead place; it has no spiritual significance or life-giving capabilities as it did for the Indians.

A similar story can be told about Alaska where Lecha, one of the keepers of the almanac, visits a Yupik village. She meets an insurance man for the largest petroleum exploration company in Alaska. "[T]he insurance man really believed there was no life on the tundra, nothing of value except what might be under the crust of snow and earth" (159): the drilling and abuse of the land for profit shown in "Storyteller" fervidly continues in

Almanac. Yet this time an old Yupik woman has found a way to counter the white attacks on the land.

The old Yupik witch mesmerizes the crowd with a display of her powers. She twirls an ivory tusk until it changes into an ocean shell, then a disk, a bird's wing, finally bursting into flames. The old witch also knows how to control the white people's gadgets. She uses the weather map on television, as the witch in "Incantation" does, "to turn the destruction back on its senders" (156). With the help of natural forces and the stories, the old woman creates a "plane-crashing spell" (156): she "gathered great surges of energy out of the atmosphere, by summoning spirit beings through recitations of the stories that were also indictments of the greedy destroyers of the land. With the stories the old woman was able to assemble powerful forces flowing from the spirits of ancestors" (156). She uses the power of the story to envelop the airplane in fog, freeze its instruments, and blend together the sea and sky, blocking off all escape routes (157). The old witch has knowledge of the universe, as do several other characters in this novel, because she is in touch with natural forces and the ancestors. This demonstration of one woman's power to obtain minor victories against the whites reveals how a united people could defeat witchery. By recovering the power of stories, ancestors, and nature present in the Americas, the Destroyers' evil can be countered.

The whites have no connections to the stories, ancestors, or

land as the Natives do. Spirituality requires this cohesion; and because the whites are disconnected, they are spiritually dead. Menardo's grandfather refers to the Europeans as "the orphan people" who have no attachment to the world: "They failed to recognize the earth was their mother. Europeans were like their first parents, Adam and Eve, wandering aimlessly because the insane God who had sired them had abandoned them" (258). The grandfather believes that their god, disgusted by their destructive behavior, banished the Europeans from their homelands (258). Now the whites roam the globe in search of peace which they can never achieve without their ancestral homeland, their roots: "The white man didn't seem to understand he had no future here because he had no past, no spirits of ancestors here" (313). They disconnect themselves from Earth, to exist solely for themselves. The Europeans separate themselves further with each killing they commit in the name of their God: "Only God had the right to kill everything because he had created everything" (611). Yet the Europeans believe all life is under their control and created exclusively for their benefit. As a result, their god abandons them in the new world.

Christianity cannot compare to the splendor and power of Native spirituality in the Americas (718). The Europeans fear the new world, afraid their medicines and religion will not have the same power in a foreign land: "The loss was their connection with the Earth. They all feared illness and physical change; since life led to death, consciousness terrified them, and they

had sought to control death by becoming killers themselves" (718). Their fears are not unfounded. The Christian god has no place in the Americas; Christianity belongs to Europe where nations were built on its principles and wars were fought in its name. These European traditions do not cross the ocean with them, and the efforts of the Europeans to reintroduce them in the new world are met with anger; the spirits of the Americas refuse to be forsaken. They are a part of the people, but more importantly they are a part of the land. Native religions cannot be separated from the land, for they are born from it. Yet witchery tricks the Natives, leading them to believe that they must reclaim ownership of the land to preserve their bond to it.

The Europeans believe that they own the Americas once they have staked their claims; they believe the land, the peoples and their cultures are now under their control. Nothing of Native culture is sacred or deserving of their respect. Oral tradition and the value of Native languages are discredited; the sacredness of land and artifacts are dismissed. 'Little Grandmother' and 'Little Grandfather' are stone figures given to the Laguna people by the kachina spirits when the people emerge into the Fifth World (31). These figures are the people's ancestors, symbolically uniting the spirits with the people throughout their journeys in the present world. But the Europeans steal them, as they do everything else in the Americas. The Indians then suffer from starvation and bitter winters until the figures reappear in a Santa Fe Museum. It is then that the

Natives discover that the Museum also contains "pottery and blankets so ancient they could only have come from the graves of ancient ancestors" (33). The whites have desecrated Native cultures, separating the dead from the land, and the living from their sacred objects. Enraged by what they find, the Natives are ready to reclaim what is theirs: "In that instant white man and Indian both caught a glimpse of what was yet to come" (33). The Indians know they must retake all lands, not just their sacred artifacts, to protect their heritage from the Destroyers. Both sides foresee the struggle for land and inevitable destruction of each other in that instance.

The stolen figures are just a small example of the white deceit. Their own laws forbid what the whites have done, yet the Europeans cling to the stolen territories as if they are their own. The land is not simply property, it is alive, just as the figures are not merely stone: "these were beings formed by the hands of the kachina spirits" (33). The figures and the land have the breath of life from the sacred Winds, and they are an integral part of every Native's identity. They must not be allowed to die, or the people will die with them.

The whites have not stopped stealing from the Indians, even in modern times. First they carve up the continent, dividing sacred lands for profit. Now the Europeans wish to "retake" the reservation lands allotted to the Indians because of its recently discovered profit value--minerals. Still Europeans do not understand that the Natives "don't believe in boundaries We

know where we belong on this earth..." (216). Europeans cannot take or retake the land from the Natives, for it will always be within them. The whites will never belong in America; imaginary boundary lines cannot divide the people of America. Soon the Natives will unite to retake their homelands. They do not fear the ensuing revolt, "Because it was the land itself, that protected native people" (222).

The people believe they have nothing to fear as long as they have the land, but the land is slowly being sifted out from under them by the whites. The whites blast and drill into the Earth, slowly destroying the mountains and rivers. Witchery inhabits all places now. There are no more escape routes. They have ecologically devastated the planet. Old Mahawla's, an old Yaqui woman, cautions her people: "remember that the soldiers had come once, and they would come again" (233). She warns the people against forgetfulness, against believing things will change. They must not disregard what the whites have done to their Earth, for time is circular. The whites will come again; they will not stop until they have taken and destroyed everything. European greed has no limits.

The Natives have forgotten what the whites have done to them, and they ignore the old ones' warnings against accepting white ways. Just as in Ceremony, the whites, through acculturation, are successful in removing the people from their past. Both Sterling, a Laguna Indian, and Seese believe they must erase all bad memories if they are to be healed. They have

forgotten that the past must be a part of the present. They cannot repress the memories, which eventually surface in dreams (as they did with Tayo); and again, modern medicine, this time in the form of Tums and self-help magazines, cannot cure them. These characters have been alienated from their communities and the land because they accept white ways. They do not realize that the whites try to shape the Natives in their image, taking the past away because they are not connected to their ancestors or land. Europeans proceed to rewrite the history of the Americas, starting only from the time of the Spanish invasion. By robbing the people of their tribal history, the whites believe they can erase all injustices. Without their past, the Natives have no reason to rebel, as the white way is the only way, and they are slowly taken in by the white culture.

Angelita La Escapia, a Marxist revolutionary in Mexico and Cuba, knows she must revive the history of indigenous peoples if their culture is to survive. The whites try to erase that past from books, but the story of injustice remains within the people and is fueled by the power of their ancestors, guiding them to revolution: "within 'history' reside relentless forces, powerful spirits, vengeful, relentlessly seeking justice" (316). Their stories, carried by oral tradition, are alive; and with the help of the spirits and ancestors, the ending that witchery has created for the Natives' story--that of complete annihilation--will be changed into a victory for the repressed. As long as they preserve the stories, the Natives have a chance for

survival; otherwise, they will become, like the Europeans, lost. The stories reassure them that there will be a day when the Europeans and destruction will dissolve: "Death was on the horizon" (316).

Tribal history, though, is in danger of dissolving before the Europeans leave, as humans continually separate themselves. Not only the Native Americans, but also African tribes, have been spread all over the world by white imperialism. Though the Mexicans still look like Natives, they are no longer a part of any tribe or greater ancestral community (88). As Sterling now realizes, by separating the young from their roots for a white education, the children lose something much more valuable: "they had lost contact with their tribes and their ancestors' worlds" (Almanac 88). The old world fades each time an old one dies, and soon, without any young replacements, the old ways and stories will be lost forever.

It is because an old tribe in Mexico fears their ways will be lost under encroaching white influences that the almanac is created. In order to preserve their culture in the absence of oral tradition, the tribe creates a written chronicle of their lives. Silko explains in an interview the basic principle of her book; historically, the Mayan people recorded their culture, spirituality, and daily lives in what are now known as the Codices: "There are four manuscripts that survived the on-going inquisition and persecution of the Mayan Indian people and all Indian peoples once the Spaniards and the Portuguese arrived"

(Silko, qtd. in Barnes 103-4). While the entire novel is a document of modern life, Silko creates a separate fictitious fifth manuscript within the book which is sent north as the tribe is dying out. Her Codex is a book of prophecies which foretell the fate of the human race: "Those old almanacs don't just tell you when to plant or harvest, they tell you about the days yet to come--drought or flood, plague, civil war, invasion" (Almanac 137). These manuscripts are left in the care of the twin sisters, Zeta and Lecha, who must translate them (they are written in code) if the destiny of humanity is to be understood.

Although many signs of the impending doom appear, the people have forgotten how to look for these signs. They need the almanac to realize what they have forgotten. That the people are distancing themselves from the past and their ancestors is evident even in the condition of the almanac: "the strange parchment got drier and more curled each season until someday the old almanac would reveal nothing more to an interpreter" (Almanac 245). The almanac is a last desperate act in the plight of a dying tribe to be remembered, for without it their souls will never rest. Silko comments in her interview with Kim Barnes: "they realized that with the cataclysm of the coming of the Europeans, they could no longer count on human memory if humans themselves were being destroyed" (qtd. in Barnes 104). The death and destruction the Europeans bring to the Americas is the first real threat to the power of the oral tradition and the survival of Native peoples in general. Now time is running out;

if the almanac is not translated before the language is forgotten, a people will be lost. Even though the tribe may be annihilated, the almanac gives their people a chance to live on through their stories.

Contrary to the oral tradition, the almanac prevents the death of the stories which identify the tribe through the written language: "The people know if even part of their almanac survived, they as a people would return someday" (Almanac 246). Their deaths had been unnatural, and this injustice must be told. The Mayan believe that because of cyclic time, days will return and be played out in exactly the same way (qtd. in Barnes 104). According to the Maya, each day is associated with a living god; consequently, "These days and years [contained in the almanac] were all alive..." (Almanac 247). Because the days will be repeated, the tribe's story will be remembered.

Yoeme refers to the almanac as the "mouths" and "tongues" of the people (142). Though not intact, the almanac relays the stories as oral tradition does. It also contains an encoded message which explains the future of the Americas: "All Native American tribes had similar prophecies about the appearance, conflict with, and eventual disappearance of things European. The almanacs had warned the people hundreds of years before Europeans arrived" (570). Just as the almanac predicts the appearance of Cortes, so too does it predict the revolution yet to come. If the notebooks are decoded in time, the people can use them as a guide in their revolt: "the almanac had living

power within it, a power that would bring all the tribal people of the Americas together to retake the land" (569). The almanac unites the people in order to overcome their oppression.

Because of the almanac's power, those who care for it are in danger. Originally, the elders send four children north with the almanac to escape the witchery of the south, but the same wickedness awaits them all over the world. Witchery spans the globe, waiting for weakness in the Natives. A new epoch dawns with the approach of the Europeans, which Silko defines as the Death-Eye Dog, where "human beings, especially the alien invaders, would become obsessed with hungers and impulses commonly seen in wild dogs" (251). The insatiable desires for drugs and sex which the characters in this novel exhibit locate them in the Death-Eye Dog era. This era is the beginning of the decline of humanity, and it is ushered in by the white invasion. Cultural stagnation, spiritual emptiness, and mass genocides characterize this era. It is also referred to as the Reign of the Fire-eye Macaw by Menardo's grandfather, "because the sun had begun to burn with a deadly light, and the heat of this burning eye looking down on all the wretched humans and plants and animals had caused the earth to speed up too..." (257). The destruction committed by humans is not being overlooked by the spirits, and the above passage foreshadows the Earth's anger and consequential apocalypse.

Zeta and Lecha's father is the product of the Death-Eye Dog era. He is dead inside; even his children see him as "the

detached white man" (121). He has been cursed by the Earth for desecrating it, just as the Earth will eventually retaliate against all humans: "The white man [their father] had violated Mother Earth, and he had been stricken with the sensation of a gaping emptiness between his throat and his heart" (121). Those who see the entrance to the four lower worlds, as their father does, are cursed, their wind is taken and the Fire-eye Macaw set loose on them: "Years of dry winds and effects of the sunlight on milky-white skin had been devastating. Suddenly the man had dried up inside..." (120). The violation of the sacred Shipap, by their father and others, will not go unavenged. Their father extracts silver from the mines, just as the whites earlier had extracted the uranium. Because their father drains the Earth of part of its life, the Earth takes back part of his, leaving him empty. Their father destroys himself when he violates the Earth; his wind leaves him as it must vacate the mountain he hollows out. In the end, he "had consumed himself" and dried out like a mummified corpse (123). The material wealth gained by mining the sacred hills is worthless in the face of spiritual death.

Despite warnings of the old ones against tampering with the Earth so near the Shipap, the Laguna reservation becomes "the first of the Pueblos to realize wealth from something terrible done to the earth" (34). Silko reintroduces the history of the Laguna uranium mines in Almanac. The old ones foretell that "all people would pay, and pay terribly, for this desecration, this crime against all living things" (Almanac 35). Though the people

do not know their resulting punishment, when the Stone Snake appears near the mines, they know it is a warning. In his article on Ceremony, Ambrose Lucero notes that the uranium mining company on the reservation is rather ironically called the Anaconda--"the snake at the foot of the mountain" (1). Human desecration of the mountain conjures up the Snake who, as a messenger from the spirits, tells the people their time on this Earth is up. The Snake, though not a plumed serpent, symbolically represents the second coming of Quetzalcoatl and the end of the world.

John Bierhorst records the ancient Toltec and Aztec myth in which Mother Earth and Father Sky produce the hero-child Quetzalcoatl. Quetzalcoatl represents the duality of Earth and Sky, and his power can be felt in the wind (Bierhorst 3). His name has two meanings, the "plumed serpent"--the feathers are associated with the sky, as the snake is with the earth--and the "precious twin"--in which he is identified with solar light and the morning star. Given the latter definition, Quetzalcoatl becomes evening star's twin or Venus, the morning star (Bierhorst 4).

Quetzalcoatl is seen as the creator god, morning star, wind god, and culture hero (Carrasco 2); and his story is apocryphal. He is not only associated with the Toltec and Aztec, but with many other Central American tribes, namely Mayan. Though mythical, Quetzalcoatl is also believed to have existed as the first great ruler of the Toltec Empire. Each ruler in succession

is referred to as Quetzalcoatl, Maximillian in 1867 being the last (Duran 129). The myth of Quetzalcoatl is one of regeneration; in death, Quetzalcoatl promises to return and create a new empire, "to right old wrongs and reestablish his earthly kingdom" (Bierhorst 5). Though he promises a new era with his return, it will only be realized after this world has been destroyed. This death and renewal demonstrates nature's cyclic powers: "It may foreshadow, or hark back to, the cataclysmic destruction of the universe and its subsequent recreation" (Bierhorst 4).

The cycle of regeneration cannot be completed without destruction. Each Aztec cycle, or world, is associated with a sun. The first world, 4 Ocelotl, is represented by the Sun of the Tiger or Jaguar, and brings in an era of darkness (Waters, Mexico 97). This world is destroyed when the tigers devour the giants who inhabit it. The second sun then emerges, the Sun of Air--4 Ecatl; after a time this world is destroyed by Quetzalcoatl, the god of Wind. The third cycle, 4 Quianuitl, is represented and destroyed by the Sun of the Rain of Fire; and the fourth, 4 Atl, by flood. The present world, 4 Ollin, is controlled by the Sun of Movement (97). At the end of each cycle, "there is a cataclysm, the world is destroyed It is cyclic and ordered, for the destruction of each world and the creation of another world occurs on a day carrying the numeral 4" (98). The fifth Sun of Movement marks the beginning of humanity and of present time in August, 3114 B.C. And the ancient

calculations show that this world will end on December 24, 2011 (Waters, Mexico 258).

The Mayan use two cycles, the almanac year which has 260 days, and the calendar year which has 365; these two cycles meet only every 52 years (Thompson 123). When the two calendar years meet, mythically, they threaten to extinguish the sun (Thompson 176). So far this has happened only four times, perhaps at the end of the 400 year cycle called the baktun, as indicated by the four suns listed above. Prior to each cyclic closure, the next in 2011, the spirits send signs to warn the people. Years before the Spanish arrival, the Natives were given "omens of disaster" (Waters, Mexico 3). The warnings of the end of the fifth sun are given centuries before the final cataclysm, with the arrival of the Europeans. In all there appear eight signs to warn them. Silko's novel echoes this idea, displaying natural signs of destruction, such as earthquakes, which forewarn the next cataclysm. Frank Waters explains that the myth of Quetzalcoatl originated in the Toltec region and was passed to the Aztecs as "a god who had manifested himself as a white, bearded man, taught the people all the arts and sciences of civilization, and then disappeared with the promise to return someday in the year of his birth, Ce Acatl" (5). In the year 1 Reed Ce Acatl--1519, during the reign of Montezuma, the Europeans arrive (Waters, Mexico 8). Because Quetzalcoatl is seen as the "spiritual progenitor of Cortes and of the white man in general" (Duran 128), the Natives are convinced Cortes is Quetzalcoatl on his arrival in the new

world.

Though the Natives first view the Europeans as their saviors, they soon discover they are only part of witchery's plan. Before the European invasion, the people had been divided over the human sacrifices to the gods. Many travel north to escape "the Destroyers who delighted in blood" (Almanac 336). Blood makes the Destroyers powerful; and, as in Silko's other works, witchery feeds off of destruction and death. Witchery takes over the South, causing the people to crave more blood sacrifices and external stimulation. It is inescapable, and the Destroyers of the south simply "'called down' the alien invaders, sorcerer-cannibals from Europe, magically sent to hurry the destruction and slaughter already begun by the Destroyers' secret clan" (475). The European arrival is all part of witchery's plan to control the Earth. The Natives who witness the atrocities committed by the whites know that the Christians are no more than Destroyers themselves:

Yoeme alleged the Aztecs ignored the prophecies and warnings about the approach of the Europeans because Montezuma and his allies had been sorcerers who had called or even invented the European invaders with their sorcery. Those who worshipped destruction and blood secretly know one another Montezuma and Cortes had been meant for one another. Yoeme always said sorcery had been the undoing of people here, and everywhere in the world. (Almanac 570)

Mythically, there are two gods competing for control of the world, Tezcatlipoca--the god of darkness and evil--and Quetzalcoatl--who represents goodness and light. These two are in constant competition to be sun and ruler of the world (Waters, Mexico 116). So while Tezcatlipoca wins the first battle and control of the first world, Quetzalcoatl is champion of the second and so on. When Tezcatlipoca wins the fifth world, he refuses to move across the sky, threatening to stifle all life (117). Only Quetzalcoatl can challenge his power; as the wind god, Quetzalcoatl overpowers Tezcatlipoca, pushing him across the sky (119). Their struggle occurs daily, keeping the world alive, transforming night to day (120). This balance maintains life, allowing sunlight for growth but also darkness for relief. As it states in the prophecies, movement will be the destructive force that ends this world. The tension between Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca has kept the world alive; they are the force and counterforce Silko refers to. But now the counterforce is gaining power again and threatening the survival of the planet. The destructive movement is manifested within nature. Silko describes in Almanac a series of earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters. The Earth itself is shifting, and its natural cycles have been interrupted. The Natives, sensing the imbalance, are also moving. They are returning to the north, their place of origin, to unite in a final effort to retake their lands.

Waters, like Bierhorst, notes that Quetzalcoatl can also be

translated as "Precious Twin" or twin brother (122). In Mexico Mystique, Waters explains that the Hopi name for Quetzalcoatl is Pahana, in reference to "his prophesied return from across the great salt water in the direction of the rising sun..." as Venus (123). The creation myth of the Hopi, as explained in the introduction, tells that the missing corner of the stone tablet is given to the Hopis' elder brother, Pahana--meaning salt water (Waters, Mexico 123). When he returns, bringing the corner piece, the Hopis will be able to identify him as the "Lost White Brother" (Waters, Mountain 121). Pahana is viewed as the Messiah, and his coming marks the end of this world (Mountain 132).

The emergence of the Stone Snake near the uranium mines on the Laguna reservation in New Mexico can be explained as the symbolic return of Quetzalcoatl. With the snake's appearance, Zeta and Lecha know that this is the start of the "cruel years" (703). There will be much suffering before this world is over. One Laguna tribal woman explains at Sterling's trial that the Stone Snake returns out of vengeance: "The giant water snake that had always lived in the lake and that had loved and cared for the Laguna people as its children could not be found after the jealous ones had drained the lake" (Almanac 92). Outsiders had been jealous of the Snake in the past, thus the tribe believes those who see it now will also want to possess it. Despite the state of the world, the tribes' people are ignorant of the Snake's message at first.

The almanac's Notebook of the Snakes reveals the message of the Snake, telling the past and future of the people. This notebook recounts the same story the old woman tells at Sterling's trial of the disappearance of the giant serpent of the Laguna village. This Lake Snake has prepared the people with stories to protect them against the invaders. Yet this does not insure survival, and the Snake's return offers a different message: "What I have to tell you now is that / this world is about to end" (135). The Snake announces, through the almanac, the apocalypse in no uncertain terms. But its message is heard only by those who have kept in contact with the spirits. If the people lose touch with the snakes, the messages from the spirit world will not be heard: the snakes "heard the voices of the dead: actual conversations, and lone voices calling out to loved ones still living" (130). Zeta learns from the snakes how to communicate and uncover the dead. Now she must decipher the Notebook of the Snakes because it is "the key to understanding all the rest of the old almanac" (134).

The almanac notebooks claim that a story will arrive from the south, perhaps from a parrot trader, which will signal the return of Quetzalcoatl (135-6). Tacho, also known as Wacha for taming macaws, is the prophesied parrot trader from the notebooks. Along with his twin brother, El Feo, they spread the story of revolution. The brothers are separated after birth "because twins often attracted dangers from envious sorcerers" or may themselves use their powers for witchery (Almanac 469).

Though the twins are separated--one in a coastal, one a mountain village--they are drawn together; in adulthood they come together to lead the people north and return the land to its people. Their story mirrors the Hopi Prophecy; they are the Twin Brother's assistants, joining together to "right old wrongs" (Bierhorst 5).

The Hopi Prophecy, quoted by Waters, notes that when Quetzalcoat1 returns, he will be "not one, but many, large in population" (Mountain 132). The march of the thousands of Natives from the south, led by Tacho, El Feo, and Angelita, testifies to the fulfillment of this prophecy. Pahana himself is personified in Almanac as the Barefoot Hopi who sends the directions of the spirits to the people through dreams. Waters writes that "With him [Pahana] will be two powerful helpers" (Mountain 132). Tacho and El Feo are these helpers, organizing the people. Some characters see Tacho and El Feo as the mythical Twin Brothers, Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi (not to be confused with the Twin Brother of the Hopi), returning to save them as they protected the people before the coming of the Europeans. In any case, their presence is testament that change is approaching. There have been many signs, "In Africa and in the Americas too, the giant snakes, Damballah [the African version of Quetzalcoat1] and Quetzalcoat1, have returned to the people" (Almanac 735). The spirits return to people's psyche as well. They speak to them through their dreams, uniting millions behind the twin brothers to retake the land.

Tacho envisions a peaceful march north guided by the macaws who are incarnations of spirits. He believes that the Natives can take the border simply by their numbers: "if the people carried no weapons, then the old prophecies would come to pass, and all the dispossessed and the homeless would have land ... they did not believe the U.S. government would bomb its own border just to stop unarmed religious pilgrims" (711). The spirits will protect and reward those who participate in the pilgrimage:

Their faith lay in the spirits of the earth and the mountains that casually destroyed entire cities. Their faith lay in the spirits outraged by the Europeans who had burned alive the sacred macaws and parrots of Tenochtitlan;¹ for these crimes and all the killing and destruction, now the Europeans would suffocate in their burning cities without rain or water any longer.

(711)

Their ancestor's rage will not be quelled until the Europeans suffer for their crimes against the people.

Tacho knows that the spirits control the natural world and that, in their anger, they threaten to destroy humanity for the atrocities the Destroyers have committed against the Earth. Floods, earthquakes, and volcanoes erupt to show the Earth's anger against injustice. The poor have suffered long enough; now the spirits demand that the rich pay for their crimes. Just as the blood of the poor has been spilt for white advancement,

the blood of the rich will be taken as retribution. Ironically, when Ilana, Menardo's wife, dies, she falls from "The marble stairs [which] were imitations of the temple staircases the Indians had built" (339). Just as the Aztecs once offered blood to pacify the spirits and lengthen the duration of the fifth world at their temples, Ilana now becomes a token of the ensuing rich blood sacrifices to again appease the angry spirits.

All over the world Natives are rising up against their white oppressors: "The ancient prophecies had foretold a time when the destruction by man had left the Earth desolate, and the human race was itself endangered. This was the last chance the people had against the Destroyers, and they would never prevail if they did not work together as a common force" (747). The Africans' struggle to retake their lands is much like the Native Americans'. All oppressed Natives are connected by a common history. Lecha is drawn to Alaska and the Athabascan dog-sled racer because they have a common ancestry. While the Athabascan Indians are an Oregon/Canadian tribe, they share the same linguistic form as the southwest Navajo and Apache tribes. The north and south are linked in this way, just as the continents are linked by the spirits. The Africans are not abandoned by their gods when sent to America, as are the whites; their gods journey with them to protect them. Once on American soil, the African spirits become embedded in the Haitian, mainly, and in other evolving black cultures in the Americas, eventually joining with the preexisting American ones; they thereby link cultures

under a common spirit world. In this way, a "powerful consciousness" is formed between the races. All spirits are assembling, and as they come together, "Erzulie joins the Mother Earth. Damballah, great serpent of the sky and keeper of all spiritual knowledge, joins the giant plumed serpent, Quetzalcoatl" (429). All the spirits gather to create and perform a ceremony which will end with the takeover of all tribal lands.

Many of the spirits who came over to the Americas with the slaves have been changed by what they witness in the Americas, and see no possibility of a peaceful takeover. They are no longer gentle, as they were in Africa and in the Americas prior to European conquest, but become violent and brutal: "the Americas were full of furious, bitter spirits; five hundred years of slaughter had left the continents swarming with millions of spirits that never rested and would never stop until justice had been done" (424). Calabazas, a drug smuggler, tells one story of injustice against the Yaqui who, when they refused to acknowledge the Mexican government, had been shot and dumped into the arroyos. Their ghosts travel in search of peace, as do all souls who die unnaturally. All unwarranted deaths must be avenged. And it is only with the return of tribal lands to the Natives and a proper burial in sacred land that these souls will have peace. They can then join the people in their struggle to overcome the Destroyers. These ghosts await their release from "purgatory" so that they can assist their descendants in the

struggle to retake the land.

One's power intensifies after death, so many ancestors "had died off deliberately to spite the Europeans" (424). The experiences, knowledge, and links to the spirit world their ancestors possess are vital if the living are to succeed. This union of the living, ancestral, and spirit worlds creates a powerful force to counter the Destroyers. The Natives are in touch with their dead so that nothing is ever lost or forgotten. The dead live in the present, protecting and guiding the living, as opposed to the Europeans who are only tormented by them.

Conversely, the Europeans abandon their dead, scattering possessions and memories so that the dead cannot rest: "Thus Europeans were haunted by the dead in their dream life and were driven mad by the incessant cries of unquiet ancestors' souls. No wonder they were such restless travellers; no wonder they wanted to go to Mars and Saturn" (Almanac 604). Fear and aversion to death and the dead scatter the Europeans all over the globe, just as they condemn their dead to an interminable quest for peace. Robert Romanyshyn explains that the early settler's fear of death expands, rather than abates, with time. Modern society, as both he and Silko demonstrate, disconnects itself from natural cycles through technology in an all out effort to achieve immortality: "To displace the body which is a part of the earth by a body which apart from it, to displace flesh by function, to wage war with the body of life, is, however, to symbolize in our departure from earth a dream of escaping death"

(Romanyshyn 28). But technology only draws humans closer to death as it creates methods of mass annihilation. The Europeans have overlooked Native cultures, which contain the answer to immortality through the oral tradition. And now their quest is futile, for they have irretrievably silenced an oral tradition which once preserved cultures, tribes, and individuals.

The Natives' ancestors and spirits communicate with the living through the sacred macaws in Mexico. The Blue Macaw who first taught humans to speak, Guacamaya, now communicates directly with Tacho. The macaws tell him that "the battle would be won or lost in the realm of dreams, not with airplanes or weapons" (Almanac 475). Angelita's Marxist revolution is not the only way to defeat the Europeans, for the whites are already spiritually and culturally dead. By infiltrating their dreams, the Natives uncover white weaknesses. As noted previously, the spirits send their messages to the people through dreams. This time the spirits send the same dream to all peoples: "the spirits were talking to dreamers all over the world. Awake people did not even realize the spirits had been instructing them" (419). The spirits unconsciously unite the people under a common cause, guiding them north. The return of land will come when all people dream the same dream sent by the spirits.

Mosca, a drug smuggler working for Calabazas, is also in touch with the spirit world and, in fact, has a spirit in his neck which tells him a messenger is approaching. The Barefoot Hopi is the messenger Mosca awaits. The Hopi travels the world

gaining financial support for the Native's cause to retake the land. People, regardless of race, listen and follow him just as the prophecy claims the Lost Brother will unite all peoples. His message is one of revolution:

a day would come as had not been seen in five thousand years. On this day, a conjunction would occur; everywhere at once, spontaneously, the prisoners, the slaves, and the dispossessed would rise up. The urge to rise up would come to them through their dreams. All at once, all over the world, police and soldiers would be outnumbered. (617)

His message refers to the end of a five thousand year cycle; and the people will witness the world's destruction just as the inhabitants of the fourth world saw their demise in 3114 B.C. The Barefoot Hopi, as the Lost Brother of the Hopi Prophecy, will be the one to draw all Natives together at the right time while he is in touch with "the spirit forces of wind, fire, water, and mountain ... [and] the people, the living and the dead" (619). Once the natural and human forces bond, the signal will be released to the people through dreams, and the revolt will begin.

Each character in the novel is plagued by mysterious dreams. The Hopi "made no mention of strikes or uprisings; instead the letters had consisted of the Hopi's stories about the Corn Mother, Old Spider Woman, and the big snake" (620). He uses the ancient myths, be they American or African, to speak to the people on a basic level. He unites all peoples through common

myths. These myths are necessary for survival and teach the people why they must reject the witchery loose in the world. As a result, the masses "no longer believed in so-called 'elected' leaders; they were listening to strange voices inside themselves ... the voices they heard were voices out of the past, voices of their earliest memories, voices of nightmares and voices of sweet dreams, voices of the ancestors" (513). Ancestral memories are within all Natives so that their past connects with their present. While these voices have been silenced by acculturation and white persecution, the Hopi has the power to awaken their presence in those who care to listen. Though it may lie dormant, the Natives cannot ever ignore or escape their heritage fully. The Hopi calls all Natives together to retake the tribal lands and create a new empire as Quetzalcoatl--Pahana--proclaimed. He includes all peoples in his religion, even whites.

The results of the Hopi's united dream crystallize in the opal El Feo gives Tacho. The spirits show Tacho the past and present and reveal how the Europeans will be annihilated. When he looks into the opal, Tacho sees the surface of the Earth, the Pacific coast line:

Then the clouds seemed to darken and thicken and there was fire; Tacho watched great cities burn; torches of ruby and garnet mushroomed hundreds of feet into the sky.... he was watching Mexico City burn again, but this time the sacred macaws had watched as cages full of human cannibal-sorcerers went up in smoke. (480-1)

All acts of violence will be turned against the Europeans. As Tacho watches television, he watches the world destroy oppressors through civil unrest, rioting, and anarchy. By working together, witchery will be turned back on the Destroyers in the end, just as the old Yupik witch does in Alaska. They will perish for what they have done to the Natives and the planet.

The civil unrest Tacho spies in the opal began centuries ago. Riots and rebellion are not new to the Americas or in any segment of the world tainted by European greed. Karl Marx observed the same oppressive atmosphere that the Europeans enforced in Europe during the 1800s. Marx chronicles the white evil of his day exposing death by industrialization (312). In conclusion, he incites revolution as the only means to escape the enslavement and brutality of European aggressors. Marx knows that the whites will not stop in the European cities he documents. The greed of capitalism drives the Europeans all over the world searching for power and wealth. Imperialism suffocates cultures throughout Africa, the Americas, and eventually Asia. Their own culture stagnates in the process, as they only develop scientifically. As a result, the Europeans distance themselves from nature, each other, and, especially, themselves. No longer in touch with their own bodies or natural processes, they cannot understand the need for ecological balance:

This was the end of what the white man had to offer the Americas: poison smog in the winter and choking clouds that swirled off sewage treatment leaching fields and

filled the sky with fecal dust in early spring. Here [the new world] was the place Marx had in mind as 'a place of human sacrifice, a shrine where thousands passed yearly through the fire as offerings to the Moloch of avarice.' (313)

Europeans sacrifice all--spirituality, culture, and even human lives--to satisfy their greed.

Marxism is gaining power in the Americas to defeat the deadening effects of repression, and "The history of the Americas made revolution against the European domination inevitable" (290). All Natives are united under one cause: to retake their homeland. Marx took his basic ideas of equality from Native American culture. Both also recognize the need to remember the past "because within it lay seeds of the present and future..." (311). The whites are rootless, and the Natives' only hope of survival will be to retake their land and reestablish their connection to the Earth and their forgotten ancestors. In Almanac of the Dead Silko finishes what Marx started in Das Kapital. She details the white crime committed in the Americas, as Marx does in England, revealing how the whites have perverted all things sacred into vehicles of destruction. But she also foretells that they will not succeed with their plan of global dominance.

The people are quietly preparing for revolution: "We simply wait for the Earth's natural forces already set loose, the exploding, fierce energy of all the dead slaves and dead

ancestors haunting the Americas We must protect Mother Earth from destruction" (518): The Earth will send the people a sign and help them rid the continent of Europeans. The Natives are prepared to wait to repossess their land, though. The prophecies tell them the land is theirs, and they know that Europeans will eventually be dealt with: "The old-time people had warned that Mother Earth would punish those who defiled and despoiled her. Fierce, hot winds would drive away the rain clouds; irrigation wells would go dry; all the plants and animals would disappear. Only few humans would survive" (Almanac 632). Africa serves as a model for such destruction. It has survived the revolt, and the people have taken back the continent, removing all Europeans. In their absence, the continent can replenish itself, recover from the ecological destruction. This idea is reminiscent of the Hopi Prophecy which claims that those who have remained faithful will be saved (Waters, Mountain 120). Humanity will be given another chance; once the Destroyers are gone, the Earth can heal herself.

Other prophets account that revolution need not be the only means of eradicating the whites: "the disappearance would not be caused by military action, necessarily, or by military action alone The disappearance had already begun at the spiritual level" (Almanac 511). The whites have no culture or spirituality of their own to base their lives on. They steal the artifacts and the land from the Natives, and their God remains powerless in the new world. Just as the Europeans abandoned their own Emperor

Maximillian and his wife Charlotte in Mexico to die in the 1800s, so too will the Europeans eventually leave their progeny to fend for themselves against civil unrest and northern migration (731). The Earth, her spirits, and her children despise the Destroyers for their spiritual bankruptcy. Together they will do anything to force witchery from the continent.

Europeans have no chance against forces which have ruled the continent long before their arrival: "The he-macaw told Tacho certain wild forces controlled all the Americas, and the saints and spirits and the gods of the Europeans were powerless on American soil" (511). All things European will eventually disappear, but the disappearance might take centuries to complete. Even so, the struggle which has raged for hundreds of years will not continue indefinitely, the prophecies tell. Each tribe has its own predictions about the future, yet "In each version one fact was clear: the world that the whites brought with them would not last. It would be swept away in a giant gust of wind. All they had to do was to wait. It would be only a matter of time" (235). The Europeans will eventually destroy themselves while they have nowhere else to escape to; the world has already been conquered through imperialism. Unable to face a confined and isolated existence, they will self-destruct.

Still, impatience leads the Natives to believe they must revolt now. El Feo knows that nothing is as important as the necessity of retaking tribal lands: "In the end only the Earth remained, and they'd all return to her as dust" (523). They want

to secure what remains of their sacred grounds. The Europeans have used up America's resources, draining its water supplies and allowing food to rot for profit. The Natives must halt the ecological devastation for future generations, for the survival of a race.

The Earth does not need the people to save her, though. They have not stopped the whites in the past, allowing their land and culture to undergo centuries of mutilation. Now, in her rage, Earth will put an end to the story:

The time had come when people were beginning to sense impending disaster and to see signs all around them-- great upheavals of the earth that cracked open mountains and crushed man-made walls. Great winds would flatten houses, and floods driven by great winds would drown thousands. All of man's computers and 'high technology' could do nothing in the face of the earth's power. (424-425)

The earthquakes and floods are signs from the spirits that the Sun of Movement is ending, just as the people are warned prior to the European invasion. Nothing can quell her centuries of fury; the Earth will not stop until all signs of humanity are wiped out.

While Weasel Tail, a prophet, claims that the prophecies dictate all will be ecologically restored in the Americas after the Europeans have been removed, he goes on to proclaim the anger of the spirits against those who have given in to the whites.

Ancestral spirits all over the world, from all cultures, are angry with humans because they have been forgotten. People have been taught by the whites to fear death and to remove themselves from any contact with the dead. As a result, they have lost touch with those who have the power to help them. The spirits are disregarded as white ways infiltrate the masses.

The spirits tell Tacho they are angry with the people for their weaknesses and inability to stand up to the Europeans. "The macaws had been sent because this was a time of great change and danger. The macaw spirits had a great many grievances with humans, but said humans were already being punished and would be punished much more for their stupid human behavior" (476): though they help the Natives, the macaws know humans must be destroyed. When Weasel Tail speaks to the people at the healing convention, he rebukes them for blaming the whites for the Earth's misery, telling them, "You forgot the stories with warnings" (721). Witchery is not confined to a single race or culture, and the whites cannot be blamed for the Native's errors. Europeans are only pawns in witchery's destruction, just as the Natives have been. Ceremony concludes that all people have a responsibility to reject evil, and only then can peace and harmony be restored. Yet the people in Almanac dismiss their responsibility. They have taken what the whites hand them without question, and they now turn on each other demanding more, consumed by greed: "Treachery has turned back upon itself. Brother has betrayed brother. Step back from envy, from sorcery

and poisoning" (721).

Those Natives who accept white culture are weakened by its witchery and are brainwashed into assisting the European cause. For too long the people have allowed the Europeans to take their lands, language, culture, and religion from them. Weakened by drugs and alcohol, many have given up; unwilling to resist any longer, they become a part of the destruction. But those who refuse to counter the white witchery will be destroyed by their enemies according to Weasel Tail:

'we will kill you for being so weak, for wringing your hands and whimpering while the invaders committed outrages against the forests and the mountains.' The spirits will harangue you, they will taunt you until you are forced to silence the voices with whiskey day after day. The spirits allow you no rest. The spirits say die fighting the invaders or die drunk. (723)

Yet Silko has shown (in Ceremony) that Weasel Tail's advocacy of violence is not the answer. If the Natives begin killing their own people for their cause, they will become identical to the Destroyers. Just as the whites have killed off non-believers throughout history, the Natives now wish to homogenize beliefs and to eradicate all who will not join in their revolt.

Almanac shows what happens when races become indistinguishable; they all die. "Survival had depended on differences" (202): differences in plants, animals, and races are vital to the balance of life. Physically race divisions

remain, but culturally and spiritually all are dead. The Natives have given up their past for a white future. And now the hostile Native Americans wish to use white methods to retake the continent. They are prepared to murder even their own people as the Europeans did, to get what they want. The blood of the Europeans will replace the blood of the Natives to satisfy the power of witchery.

Angelita La Escapia does not believe the continent will be retaken without bloodshed, so while pretending to go along with the twin brothers' peaceful march, she builds up the Tribal Army's forces: "These American continents were already soaked with Native American and African blood; violence beget violence..." (739). The sacred macaws are giving her a different message than the one Tacho receives: she "heard from spirits too--only her spirits were furious and they told her to defend the people from attack" (712). The macaws know defenseless people will be slaughtered. This is the people's last chance for victory; they must defeat the Europeans by their own devices. Angelita is prepared to protect the people in their violent takeover of the land, "because after all, this was war, the war to retake the Americas and to free all the people still enslaved. You did not fight a war for such a big change without the loss of blood" (532).

The inevitable violence increases the anger of the Earth. The natural disasters exploding across the globe become more frequent:

All the riches ripped from the heart of the earth will be reclaimed by the oceans and mountains. Earthquake and volcanic eruptions of enormous magnitude will devastate the accumulated wealth of the Pacific Rim. Entire coastal peninsulas will disappear under the sea; hundreds of thousand will die. The west coast of the Americas will be swept clean from Alaska to Chile in tidal waves and landslides. Drought and wildfire will rage across Europe to Asia. (Almanac 734-5)

The Sun of Movement is drawing to a close, sending warnings of impending doom. The devastation will not cease until all those who have taken part in the destruction or those who have failed to halt the witchery are themselves annihilated; all life will come to a violent end.

There can be no peace until humans are eliminated. Romanyshyn suggests that technology is the Earth's way of destroying humanity, "of ridding itself of ... [that] which would court its own destruction" (30). This perspective proposes that the Earth now has a plan for human annihilation. Just as witchery once plotted global destruction in favor of final death, the Earth now counters this, though with similar methods, in favor of selective regeneration and an end to witchery's plan:

Once the earth had been blasted open and brutally exploited, it was only logical the earth's offspring, all the earth's beings, would similarly be destroyed the earth would go on, the earth would outlast

anything man did to it, including the atomic bomb
The humans would not be a great loss to the earth.

(Almanac 718-9)

Yet technology is not the only means of ending human existence. Silko believes that the Earth will play a part in their downfall, through natural disasters. The Earth has ultimate power over those she gives life to, and it is clear she is tired of the incessant destruction on her surface. The ecological devastation must be repaired, and regeneration can only result from total devastation. The spirits send the Stone Snake, as promised in the Hopi Prophecy, to punish the unfaithful.

The Laguna peoples are puzzled by the appearance of the Stone Snake so near the nuclear tailings. Some believe the Snake is abandoning the Shipap, indicating that the Destroyers are successful in ridding the Earth of her spirits. This is not the case though, for the Snake comes bearing an apocalyptic message:

The snake didn't care if people were believers or not; the work for the spirits and prophecies went on regardless. Spirit beings might appear anywhere, even near open-pit mines. The snake didn't care about the uranium tailings; humans had desecrated only themselves with the mine, not the earth. Burned and radioactive, with all humans dead, the earth would still be sacred. Man was too insignificant to desecrate her. (Almanac 762, emphasis added)

Clearly, the Earth is plotting the end of humanity. The Snake

emerges because soon the spirits will reclaim the upper world for themselves. The Earth, her waters and mountains, are untouchable by human stupidity. When all humans disappear, the Earth will remain and will repair the scars of a wicked race.

Silko has created a monumental account of the history of the Americas in Almanac of the Dead, chronicling the injustices done to the Native American and African cultures by Europeans on stolen continents. She paints a vile picture of contemporary America, corrupted as a result of witchery's grand plan. The Destroyers have upset the balance forever. Though the Natives join together with the spirits to counter the destruction and retake the lands, their initiative comes too late. The Stone Snake and Lost Twin Brother have returned, ushering in the cataclysmic end of the world as the prophecies dictate. David Peek writes in a review of Almanac, "Silko knows what drugs and injustice are doing to the world. She also knows her Native American history and the stories and prophecies that are just beneath the surface" (16). The myths are indeed resurfacing, but this time the story describes the end of an era. The Earth's wrath can no longer be subdued; after centuries of neglect, she will finally rid the world of destruction for good. The Earth and her spirits will return to their existence prior to the emergence of the human race, and the circular nature of time will prevail. All things will be restored to their origins.

CONCLUSION

As most literature reflects a writer's heritage, Silko's grows out of her own Laguna, Mexican, and White tradition. Her multi-cultural background allows her to envision the universal qualities of myths in order to create her own. She interweaves myths from related cultures, mainly from Laguna as well as Navajo, Hopi, even Yupik, then later branches out to the ancient cultures of the Aztec and Mayan. By drawing on all aboriginal myths, Silko is able to synthesize them into a cross-cultural, unified vision of Native American life. Silko departs from authentic, distinct tribal cultures--such as the Navajo or Yupik--to overlay different Native American concepts of regeneration. And by taking liberties with these myths, she arrives at a unique apocalyptic conclusion.

Silko has been quoted on the role of stories in Ceremony: "One of the large battles Tayo begins to have to deal with is to keep the end of the story right. They're [the Destroyers] trying to manipulate him into doing something that would change the way the story has to go" (qtd. in Ruppert 56). Witchery attacks Tayo's center, his identity, just as it attacks the center of Native American life and of the human race in Almanac. While Silko's characters struggle against this counterforce, the end of Almanac reveals that witchery has changed the end of Ceremony; the hope for renewal Tayo reawakens in himself and his tribe does not last. Ultimately, the battle is lost. Humanity's weakness grows with the gradual loss of their heritage. By rejecting tribal traditions, by attempting to erase tribal memory, the

people have lost their defenses. Oneness with nature provides strength through identity and connections to the universe; it offers knowledge which can be used against the Destroyers. This bond with nature also places the people within the care of the spirits who guide them through their life journeys. The spirit world contains immense power, for it also houses ancestral forces. Through stories, ancestors live. Past struggles and victories can be called up through storytelling to help the people in their present cause. The stories also insure survival of individuals and cultures through oral tradition. Yet Silko reveals in her tales that modern society has abandoned these traditions for technology and greed. Left to struggle alone, without the help of ancestors, spirits, or nature, the people have no chance for survival. Witchery is given the power to destroy and so end the story.

People may never be free from witchery because its story exists: "Silko explained that the old stories have never ended, that they happen again and again..." (Wilson 23). Once told, all stories, even destructive ones, exist regardless of human activity, and they can resurface at any time. Tayo's Grandmother illuminates this idea when she comments at the end of Ceremony: "It seems like I already heard these stories before ... only thing is, the names sound different" (260). Tayo's battle against witchery and the global threat it brings is not a new one; only the pawns in its plan are different. The destructive stories are repeated in myths and materialize in the tribe's

daily life. Because of circular time, witchery is inexorable.

In their attempt to break with all things European, the Natives become trapped in witchery's grand plan. The characters in Almanac are blinded by rage over the destruction of the planet and the injustice against the people; thus, they cannot see that their methods of countering witchery are flawed. They plan to fight destruction with destruction, but by doing so they only add to witchery's corruption. Tayo, in Ceremony, escapes this vicious cycle only by rejecting violence, but the temptation has grown too strong to resist. The Natives allow themselves to become tools of witchery, to become pawns in their plan of global destruction. Marion Copeland describes well the conflict Silko introduces between using violence against witchery or allowing it to destroy the Earth: "The witchery cannot be conquered by those who use its own weapons, for they become instead its allies" (162). By violently revolting against the whites and initiating the proposed elimination of opposing Natives suggested in Almanac, those who demand to reclaim the Americas have succumbed to the ways of the Destroyers. The Natives have forgotten that they are never truly apart from the sacred lands as long as they remember the traditions and stories; if they hold on to their heritage, they will be returned to the land to become one with it in death. The destructiveness of the Europeans will pass; they are the effects rather than the cause of witchery. The Earth will care for herself; it is the people who require spiritual regeneration.

Witchery however, separates people. Members of the tribe have a duty to preserve the community. Yet in Silko's works the people have become apathetic, unconcerned with the survival of the community as a result of European influence; individual gain replaces spiritual wholeness. Without the support of the community, individuals are doomed. The struggle to regain tribal lands, though ultimately destructive, does work to unite all oppressed people. Many of the Indian tribes have a sense that an individual is inextricably bonded to the community as they are to the land. Even in death the Navajo believe individuals become "an indefinable part of the universal whole" (Reichard 42). In Ceremony, when one person leaves the tribe or commits an evil act, the whole community suffers. Edward Weyer comments on a similar custom among the Eskimos: "Strict compliance with ... taboos is regarded as a moral duty, however; for the violation of them will anger the spirits and bring calamity upon the whole group" (Weyer 230). There is no individual success or redemption among many Native Americans; they must remember that their fate depends upon the tribe or community. So it is in Silko's works: not only the behavior of the white Destroyers, but, more importantly, that of the radical Natives will bring catastrophe for the entire human race. If the Natives heal themselves as individuals and communities, the "white" problem will naturally be solved, while they are its creators.

Silko articulates the idea of the removal of all things European from the continent in Almanac. In a 1979 speech, Silko

hints at this ending in Almanac: "as the old stories say, if you wait long enough, they'll go [the European invaders and their ways] One wonders now, when you see what's happening to technocratic-industrial culture, now that we've used up most of the sources of energy, you think perhaps the old people are right" (qtd. in Fiedler 67). The Natives belong to the Americas, and they know how to survive there. Once the Europeans have used up all the resources, Almanac explains, they will desert the continents in search of new ground. Though the Europeans may abandoned the continents, Silko also makes it clear that their withdrawal will not repair the Earth. After centuries of European occupancy, the waters and air are polluted, just as the natural resources and energy have been used up. There is little hope of ecological revival without cataclysmic change. Gladys Reichard explains that "Restoration to youth is the pattern of the earth" (21). The Earth must restore itself through a period of dormancy, in order to emerge renewed. And Waters' citation of the Nahuas, Tibetan, Buddhists, Persians, Chinese, Icelandic, Polynesian, Greek, and Egyptian peoples, in addition to the ones mentioned in this paper, establishes that the myths about the creation and destruction of the world are universal (Mexico 104). Death is a natural part of life; but whether humans will be a part of the next life cycle is questionable.

According to Silko's myths and the Mayan Prophecies, the Earth has survived the creation and destruction of three worlds, and another is about to take place. An apocalypse is inevitable,

but humanity's mistakes speed up the process. Humans have thrown the world off balance with witchery. By allowing old traditions to falter, they have allowed witchery to gain control of them. Yet all indications are that human existence is insignificant in this natural cycle; humanity's destruction will only bring peace and regeneration to a marred planet. Their destruction will be a form of global cleansing.

This concept of purification is also universal. There is a need to eradicate wickedness, to return to a previous, perhaps more primal state of internal, communal, and ecological harmony. And Silko claims that the upset balance caused by witchery must be restored or humans will self-destruct. Many cultures have prophecies which predict the arrival of a god or hero, like the Hopi and Mayan, who will save the people. Rudolf Kaiser lists Christians, Jews, Hindus, as well as several Native American tribes to be among those who await second comings (97). One prophecy distinctly reminiscent of Quetzalcoatl is that of the Eskimos which claims, a "prophet sent by god would come during the night from the east to cleanse the souls of the people and to illumine and guide them" (Kaiser 97). While many believe the faithful humans will be given another chance, perhaps in another world, Silko maintains the idea that this is not guaranteed. Humans are dispensable, in fact detrimental to the cycle of life, and nature's powers could easily crush even the most advanced culture.

Silko's works, like myths and witchery, are universal not

only because she applies stories from so many different cultures, but because they address issues relevant to all people. They are not simply limited to a Native American experience: "the Indian dilemma does not differ noticeably from the plight of modern man, regardless of color or origin. If a sense of belonging or community is absent in life, then life ceases to be viable, and fragmentation and desecration descend <sic> upon man" (Clayton 27). Silko's story of the creation of a white race of Destroyers is not meant to accuse whites of all destructive acts committed on the planet; rather, it is to exaggerate the issues which are all too often blindly accepted. The Europeans did commit mass genocides and destroyed civilizations in their conquest of the Americas, but many tribes committed the same atrocities, in miniature, before the arrival of the Europeans. Witchery is inherent in all peoples, and must constantly be fought internally and on grand scales. The issues she discusses are inherent in all cultures, just as the concerns with ecological devastation must be addressed by all peoples if we are to survive.

Notes

Introduction

¹ For more information on Navajo witchcraft see Clyde Kluckhohn, Navajo Witchcraft (Boston: Beacon P, 1944).

² In keeping with other Native American literary critics, I will be capitalizing the term Natives, as it pertains to the Native Americans, but not the term whites, as Silko is using it as a generalization.

³ It is commonly believed among the Pueblo that the dead become mountain spirits, kachina, who return in the form of rain clouds, to bring life from death. Per Seyersted, Leslie Marmon Silko (Boise: Boise State U Western Writers Series, 1980) 8.

Chapter One: Pieces of Destruction

¹ see chapter two, page 66 +

² One myth, "Prayer to the Pacific," claims that people are brought to America from Asia on the backs of turtles. And all things return in death to the place of origin in Pueblo culture, in this case, the sea. Leslie Silko, Storyteller (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1981) 179-80.

³ One version of the creation myth states that Mother Earth and Father Sky join to create new humans (Seyersted, Leslie 8).

⁴ The Twin Brothers, Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi, are the mythical War Twins who once protected the human race, reeking havoc on evil ones. They were eventually subdued after being haunted by the souls of those they killed.

⁵ The cottonwood tree in Mayan cosmology, held up the sky and was used as a passageway between the Earth and Sky. According to Thompson, the ceiba "stands in the exact center of the earth. Its roots penetrate the underworld; its trunk and branches pierce the various layers of the skies. Some Maya groups hold that by its roots their ancestors ascended into the world, and by its trunk and branches the dead climb to the highest sky." J. Eric Thompson, Maya History and Religion (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1970) 195. With this Mayan belief in mind, Yellow Woman can be seen as using the cottonwood tree to reunite the earth and sky.

Chapter Three: Prophetic Visions Revealed

¹ The ancient capital of the Aztec Empire, now part of Mexico City.

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VITA

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This thesis was typed by Kristin Monahan.

APPENDIX A

Long time ago
in the beginning
there were no white people in this world
there was nothing European.
And this world might have gone on like that
except for one thing:
witchery.

This world was already complete
even without white people.

- There was everything
including witchery.

Then it happened.
These witch people got together.
Some came from far far away

across oceans
across mountains.

Some had slanty eyes
others had black skin.

They all got together for a contest
the way people have baseball tournaments nowadays
except this was a contest
in dark things.

So anyway.
they all got together
witch people from all directions
witches from all the Pueblos
and all the tribes.

They had Navajo witches there,
some from Hopi, and a few from Zuni.
They were having a witches' conference,
that's what it was

Way up in the lava rock hills
north of Cañoncito
they got together
to fool around in caves
with their animal skins.
Fox, badger, bobcat, and wolf
they circled the fire
and on the fourth time
they jumped into that animal's skin.

But this time it wasn't enough
and one of them
maybe a Sioux or some Eskimos
started showing off.
"That wasn't anything,
watch this."

The contest started like that.
Then some of them lifted the Tids

on their big cooking pots,
calling the rest of them over
to take a look:
dead babies simmering in blood
circles of skull cut away
all the brains sucked out.
Witch medicine
to dry and grind into powder
for new victims.

Others untied skin bundles of disgusting objects:
dark flints, cinders from burned hogans where the
dead lay
Whorls of skin
cut from fingertips
sliced from the penis end and clitoris tip.

Finally there was only one
who hadn't shown off charms or powers.
The witch stood in the shadows beyond the fire
and no one ever knew where this witch came from
which tribe
or if it was a woman or a man.
But the important thing was
this witch didn't show off any dark thunder charcoals
or red ant-hill beads.
This one just told them to listen:
"What I have is a story."

At first they all laughed
but this witch said

Okay
go ahead
laugh if you want to
but as I tell the story
it will begin to happen.

Set in motion now
set in motion by our witchery
to work for us.

Caves across the ocean
in caves of dark hills
white skin people
like the belly of a fish
covered with hair.

Then they grow away from the earth
then they grow away from the sun
then they grow away from the plants and animals.

They see no life
When they look
they see only objects.

The world is a dead thing for them
the trees and rivers are not alive
the mountains and stones are not alive.
The deer and bear are objects
They see no life.

*They fear
They fear the world.
They destroy what they fear.
They fear themselves.*

*The wind will blow them across the ocean
thousands of them in giant boats
swarming like larva
out of a crushed ant hill.*

*They will carry objects
which can shoot death
faster than the eye can see.*

*They will kill the things they fear.
all the animals
the people will starve.*

*They will poison the water
they will spin the water away
and there will be drought
the people will starve.*

*They will fear what they find
They will fear the people
They kill what they fear.*

*Entire villages will be wiped out
They will slaughter whole tribes.*

*Corpses for us
Blood for us
Killing killing killing killing.*

*And those they do not kill
will die anyway
at the destruction they see
at the loss
at the loss of the children
the loss will destroy the rest.*

*Stolen rivers and mountains
the stolen land will eat their hearts
and jerk their mouths from the Mother.
The people will starve.*

*They will bring terrible diseases
the people have never known.
Entire tribes will die out
covered with festered sores
shitting blood
vomiting blood.
Corpses for our work*

*Set in motion now
set in motion by our witchery
set in motion
to work for us.*

*They will take this world from ocean to ocean
they will turn on each other
they will destroy each other
Up here
in these hills
they will find the rocks,
rocks with veins of green and yellow and black.
They will lay the final pattern with these rocks
they will lay it across the world
and explode everything.*

*Set in motion now
set in motion
To destroy
To kill
Objects to work for us
objects to act for us
Performing the witchery
for suffering
for torment
for the stillborn
the deformed
the sterile
the dead.*

*Whirling
Whirling
Whirling*

*Whirling
set into motion now
set into motion.*

*So the other witches said
"Okay you win; you take the prize,
but what you said just now—
it isn't so funny
It doesn't sound so good.
We are doing okay without it
we can get along without that kind of thing.
Take it back.
Call that story back."*

*But the witch just shook its head
at the others in their stinking animal skins, fur
and feathers.
It's already turned loose.
It's already coming.
It can't be called back.*

Up North
around Reedleaf Town
there was this Ck'o'yo magician
they called Kaup'a'ta or the Gambler.

He was tall
and he had a handsome face
but he always wore spruce greens around his head, over his eyes.
He dressed in the finest white buckskins
his moccasins were perfectly sewn.
He had strings of sky blue turquoise
strings of red coral in his ears.
In all ways
the Gambler was very good to look at.

His house was high
in the peaks of the Zuni mountains
and he waited for people to wander
up to his place.
He kept the gambling sticks all stacked up
ready for them.

He walked and turned around
to show off his fancy clothes and expensive beads.
Then he told them he would gamble with them—
their clothes, their beads for his.
Most people wore their old clothes
when they went hunting in the mountains;
so they figured they didn't have much to lose.
Anyway, they might win all his fine things.
Not many could pass up his offer.

They ate the blue cornmeal
he offered them.
They didn't know
he mixed human blood with it.
Visitors who ate it
didn't have a chance.

He got power over them that way,
and when they started gambling with him
they did not stop until they lost
everything they owned.
And when they were naked
and he had everything
he'd say

"I tell you what.
Since I'm so good and generous
I'll give you one last chance.
See that rawhide bag hanging
on the north wall over there?
If you can guess what is in that bag
I'll give you back all your clothes and beads
and everything I have here too—
these feather blankets
all these strings of coral beads
these fine white buckskin moccasins
But if you don't guess right
you lose your life."

They were in his power.
They had lost everything.
It was their last chance.
So they usually said "okay"
but they never guessed
what was in the bag.

He hung them upside down in his storeroom,
side by side with the other victims.
He cut out their hearts
and let their blood run down
into the bins of blue cornmeal.

That is what the Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta did,
up there
in the Zuni mountains.
And one time
he even captured the stormclouds.
He won everything from them
but since they can't be killed,
all he could do
was lock them up
in four rooms of his house—

the clouds of the east in the east room
the clouds of the south in the south room
the clouds of the west in the west room
the clouds of the north in the north room

The Sun is their father.
Every morning he wakes them up.
But one morning he went
first to the north top of the west mountain
then to the west top of the south mountain
and then to the south top of the east mountain;
and finally, it was on the east top of the north mountain
he realized they were gone.

For three years the stormclouds disappeared
while the Gambler held them prisoners.
The land was drying up
the people and animals were starving.

They are his children
so he went looking for them.
He took blue pollen and yellow pollen
he took tobacco and coral beads;
and he walked into the open country
below the mesas.
There, in a sandy place by a blue flower vine,
Spider Woman was waiting for him.

"Grandson," she said.
"I hear your voice," he answered
"but where are you?"
"Down here, by your feet."
He looked down at the ground and saw a little hole.

"I brought you something, Grandma."
"Why thank you, Grandson,
I can always use these things," she said.

"The stormclouds are missing."
"That Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta the Gambler has them locked up,"
she told him.
"How will I get them back?"

"It won't be easy, Grandson,
but here,
take this medicine.
Blow it on the Gambler's black ducks
who guard his place.
Take him by surprise.
The next thing is:
don't eat anything he offers you.
Go ahead
gamble with him.
Let him think he has you too.
Then he will make you his offer—
your life for a chance to win everything:
even his life.

He will say
"What do I have hanging in that leather bag
on my east wall?"
You say "Maybe some shiny pebbles,"
then you pause a while and say "Let me think."
Then guess again,
say "Maybe some mosquitoes."
He'll begin to rub his flint blade and say

"This is your last chance."
But this time you will guess
"The Pleiades!"
He'll jump up and say "Heheya! You are the first to guess
Next he will point to a woven cotton bag
hanging on the south wall.
He will say
"What is it I have in there?"
You'll say
"Could it be some bumblebees?"
He'll laugh and say "No!"
"Maybe some butterflies, the small yellow kind."
"Maybe some tiny black ants," you'll say.
"No!" Kaup'a'ta will be smiling then.
"This is it," he'll say.

But this is the last time, Grandson,
you say "Maybe you have Orion in there."
And then
everything—
his clothing, his beads, his heart
and the rainclouds
will be yours."

"Okay, Grandma, I'll go."
He took the medicine into the Zuni mountains.
He left the trail and walked high on one of the peaks.

The black ducks rushed at him
but he blew the medicine on them
before they could squawk.

He came up behind the Gambler
practicing with the sticks
on the floor of his house.

"I'm fasting," he told Kaup'a'ta,
when he offered him the blue cornmeal
"but thanks anyway."
Sun Man pulled out his things:
four sets of new clothes
two pairs of new moccasins
two strings of white shell beads
Kaup'a'ta smiled when he saw these things
"We'll gamble all night," he said.

It happened
just the way Spider Woman said:
When he had lost everything
Kaup'a'ta gave him a last chance.
The Gambler bet everything he had
that Sun Man couldn't guess what he had
in the bag on the east wall.
Kaup'a'ta was betting his life
that he couldn't guess
what was in the sack hanging from the south wall.

"Heheya! You guessed right!
Take this black flint knife, Sun Man,
go ahead, cut out my heart, kill me"
Kaup'a'ta lay down on the floor
with his head toward the east.
But Sun Man knew Kaup'a'ta was magical
and he couldn't be killed anyway.
Kaup'a'ta was going to lie there
and pretend to be dead.

So Sun Man knew what to do:
He took the flint blade
and he cut out the Gambler's eyes
He threw them into the south sky
and they became the horizon stars of autumn.

Then he opened the doors of the four rooms
and he called to the stormclouds:
"My children," he said
I have found you!
Come on out. Come home again.
Your Mother, the Earth is crying for you.
Come home, children, come home."



PROPHECY OF OLD WOMAN MOUNTAIN
(16 April 1974, Ketchikan)

1
When the names of the winds
were forgotten
and they called mountains
by alien names,
The dark winds
began to gather
in crevices
on South Sky mountain.

2
They descend on
diaphanous night wings
beating furiously
the voice swells to a roar and a scream.
Whirling spruce logs
crush skulls
and gray boulders roll dead tongues
to the sea.

I climb the black rock mountain
stepping from day to day
silently
I smell the wind for my ancestors
pale blue leaves
crushed wild mountain smell.

Returning
up the gray stone cliff
where I descended
a thousand years ago
Returning to faded black stone
where mountain lion lay down with deer.
It is better to stay up here

watching wind's reflection
in tall yellow flowers.

The old ones who remember me are gone
the old songs are all forgotten
and the story of my birth.

How I danced in snow-frost moonlight
distant stars to the end of the Earth,
How I swam away

in freezing mountain water
narrow mossy canyon tumbling down
out of the mountain
out of deep canyon stone

down
the memory
spilling out
into the world.

3

There are no mistakes
this time.
They die
suckling blue feathers and blood from the Earth.
Embryos float in still water
their cries choked dumb
by the rain.

4

Old woman mountain,
landslide scars on your belly,
keeping snow squalls
in each eye.
I know your name,
I remember.
It is a matter of time
so I wait.

LESLIE SILKO

One time
Old Woman K'yo's
son came in
from Reedleaf town
up north.
His name was Pa'caya'nyi
and he didn't know who his father was.

He asked the people
"You people want to learn some magic?"
and the people said
"Yes, we can always use some."

Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi
the twin brothers
were caring for the
mother corn altar,
but they got interested
in this magic too.

"What kind of medicine man
are you,
anyway?" they asked him.
"A Ck'o'yo medicine man,"
he said.

"Tonight we'll see
if you really have magical power," they told him.

So that night
Pa'caya'nyi
came with his mountain lion.
He undressed
he painted his body
the whorls of flesh
the soles of his feet
the palms of his hands
the top of his head.
He wore feathers
on each side of his head.

He made an altar
with cactus spines
and purple locoweed flowers.
He lighted four cactus torches
at each corner.
He made the mountain lion lie
down in front and
then he was ready for his magic.

He struck the middle of the north wall
He took a piece of flint and
he struck the middle of the north wall.
Water poured out of the wall
and flowed down
toward the south.

He said "What does that look like?"
Is that magic power?"
He struck the middle of the west wall
and from the east wall
a bear came out.
"What do you call this?"
he said again.

"Yes, it looks like magic all right,"
Ma'see'wi said.
So it was finished
and Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi
and all the people were fooled by
that Ck'o'yo medicine man,
Pa'caya'nyi.

From that time on
they were
so busy
playing around with that
Ck'o'yo magic
they neglected the mother corn altar.
They thought they didn't have to worry
about anything
They thought this magic
could give life to plants
and animals.
They didn't know it was all just a trick.

Our mother
Nau'ts'ity'i
was very angry
over this
over the way
all of them
even Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi
fooled around with this
magic.

"I've had enough of that,"
she said,
"If they like that magic so much
let them live off it."

So she took
the plants and grass from them.

No baby animals were born.
She took the
rainclouds with her.

. . . .

Incantation

The television
lights up the room,
a continual presence.
Seconds minutes
flicker in gray intervals
on the wall beside my head.
Even if

I could walk to the window
I would only see
gray video images
bending against the clouds.

At one time
more might have been necessary—
a smokey quartz crystal
balanced in the center of the palm—

But tonight
there is enough.

The simple equation you found
in my notebook
frightened you
but I could have explained it:
After all bright colors of sunset and
leaves are added together
lovers are subtracted
children multiplied, are divided, taken away.

The remainder is small enough
to stay in this room forever
gray-shadowing restless
trapped on a gray glass plain.

I did not plan to tell you.
Better to lose colors gradually

first the blue of the eyes
then the red of blood
its salt taste fading
water gone suddenly bitter
when the last yellow light
blinks off the screen.

Wherever you're heading tonight
you think you're leaving me
and the equation of this gray room.

Hold her close
pray
these are lies I'm telling you.

As with the set which lost its color
and only hums gray outlines,
it is a matter of intensity and hue
and the increasing distance—
The interval will grow as imperceptibly
as it grew between us.

You'll drive on
putting distance and time between us—
the snow in the high Sierras
the dawn along the Pacific
dreaming you've left this narrow room.

But tonight
I have traced all escape routes
with my finger across the t.v. weather map.
Your ocean dawn is only the gray light
in the corner of this room
Your mountain snowstorm
flies against the glass screen
until we both are buried.

Cottonwood.

cottonwood.

It was under the cottonwood tree
in a sandy wash of the big canyon
under the tree you can find
even now

among all the others
this tree

where she came to wait for him.

"You will know,"

he said

"you will know by the colors—

cottonwood leaves
more colors of the sun
than the sun himself."

(But you see, he *was* the Sun,
he was only pretending to be
a human being.)

When the light
from the autumn edge of the sky
touched only the north canyon walls
(south walls in shadow)
When day balanced once more with night

it was the season
to go again
to find the place.

She left precise stone rooms
that hold the heart silently
She walked past white corn
hung in long rows from roof beams
the dry husks rattled in a thin autumn wind.

She left her home
her clan
and the people

(three small children
the youngest just weaned
her husband away cutting firewood)

She left for the place located
only by the colors of the sun.

"Travel across the swirled sandstone
go until you find a tree
distinct from all the others,"
he told her

"Only in this way
though it has not happened before.
You must

though the people may not understand."

(All this was happening long time ago, see?)
Before that time, there were no stories

about drastic things which
must be done

for the world
to continue

Out of love for this earth

cottonwood
sandstone
and sky.

She had been with him
only once.

His eyes (the light in them had blinded her)
so she had never seen him
only his eyes

and she did not know how to find him
except by the cottonwood tree.

"In a canyon of cloudy sky-stone,"
he told her (he was describing the Sun House then
but she did not know that)

"Colors—
more colors than the sun has
You will know that way,
you will know."

"But what if
the colors have faded
the leaves fallen already and scattered
the tree lost among all the others
their pale branches bare
How then will I find you?"

She had to outrun the long night
its freezing
approaching steadily

She had to find the place
before the winter constellations
closed around the sky forever
before the last chill silenced the earth.

"Kochininako, Yellow Woman, welcome,"
and he came out from the southeast to greet her.
He came out of the Sun House again.

And so the earth continued
as it has since that time.

Cottonwood,
cottonwood.
So much depends
upon one in the great canyon.

Ceremony

I will tell you something about stories,
[he said]

They aren't just entertainment.
Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,
all we have to fight off
illness and death.

You don't have anything
if you don't have the stories.

Their evil is mighty
but it can't stand up to our stories.
So they try to destroy the stories
let the stories be confused or forgotten.
They would like that
They would be happy
Because we would be defenseless then.

He rubbed his belly.
I keep them here
[he said]
Here, put your hand on it
See, it is moving.
There is life here
for the people.

And in the belly of this story
the rituals and the ceremony
are still growing.

Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-Woman,
is sitting in her room
and whatever she thinks about
appears.

She thought of her sisters,
Nau'ts'ity'i and I'tcts'ity'i,
and together they created the Universe
this world
and the four worlds below.

Thought-Woman, the spider,
named things and
as she named them
they appeared.

She is sitting in her room
thinking of a story now

I'm telling you the story
she is thinking.