地下根際：

席爾珂《儀式》中時間、地方與故事的連結

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【摘要】

席爾珂的小說《儀式》中，主角泰猶總是在新、舊之間位移，未完全屬於任何一端，同時也部份屬於兩方；換言之，他從不停滯在一個固定的狀態。如同《儀式》環環相扣的書寫模式，Deleuze 跟 Guattari 的地下根莖具有獨立且相互指涉的敘事特性，讓讀者更自主地隨機組合所涉及的世界。地下根莖式的書寫，並非意味讀者需沿著固定的路徑進行閱讀，而書的結尾也不代表結局。《儀式》一書用了「日出」作為結尾，也暗指即將展開的新旅程。

【關鍵詞】

流變，集體記憶，多樣性，地下根莖，位移。

【Abstract】

In Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, the protagonist, Tayo, is constantly shifting between the old and the new—he does not fully belong to either of them; rather, he is part of both, and does not reach a permanent or fixed state. Just as Silko's circular writing technique that shifts between episodes, Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizome" has its independent but cross-referential narratives, which invite the reader to a randomly arranged world. The "rhizome" is not

meant for any reader to follow in any settled order, and the conclusion of a book does not suggest the end. This feature resembles that of the conclusion of *Ceremony*, which ends with the word "sunrise" that suggests another beginning is taking shape.

【Keywords】

becoming, collective memories, multiplicity, rhizome, shifting.

Stories are told by everything, animate or inanimate. American Indians pass on their oral tradition as the way to keep old stories alive. The deceased, even inanimate objects such as pebbles, bones, and dust, are never truly dead; rather, they are being transformed over and over by the telling and retelling of stories. Each telling of the stories conjures up the dead, linking the people of the past, the present and the future. As it is in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, the ancient myths are constantly being retold, mingled with the present events, and the ancient and the present stories are intertwined into narratives that serve as the matrix for the future time.

Each story has its own backdrop (a place), each event is happening in a particular place, and the connections between the stories, places and people create a sense of place that represents a combination of these elements. The stories are adding up, growing inside the people, evolving into a web of oral stories that are extending with time—this web may bear a resemblance to rhizomes[1] that continue to root and sprawl under the leaves and stems, unperceivable unless we embark on a series of digging and finding events.

[1] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari develop the idea of rhizome in *A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). Rhizomes are the horizontal stems of some plants that can be found just below the surface of the earth. Deleuze and Guattari adapt the botanical rhizome, and transform it into an art of connections: "To be rhizomorphous is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses" (Deleuze and Guattari 15). In *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction* (2005), Todd May expounds Deleuzian concept of rhizomes. He depicts the rhizomes' figuration as: "it has no beginning: no roots. It has no middle, always in process. There is no particular shape it has to take and no particular territory to which it is bound. It can connect from any part of itself to a tree, to the ground, to a fence, to other plants, to itself" (May 133). By fusing this Deleuzian concept with the web of stories in Silko's novel, I do not mean to impose an affiliation on them, but to form probable connections of living forces and to infuse *Ceremony* with potentialities of stories that are growing with time.

In *Ceremony*, Tayo, the protagonist, suffers from shell shock after his return as a veteran from the Second World War. To gather himself together, Tayo is instructed to perform a quest that leads him to complete a healing ceremony. Under the guidance of a Laguna medicine man Ku'oosh, Tayo sets off on his journey to meet the other medicine man, Old Betonie, who shows him the way to complete the ceremony.

Unlike the traditional medicine man Ku'oosh, Old Betonie is a mixed blood just as Tayo is, and they are connected by this shared living existence: "Tayo looked at his eyes. They were hazel like his own. The medicine man nodded. 'My grandmother was a remarkable Mexican with green eyes'" (*Ceremony* 119). Being a mixed blood, Tayo is constantly dangling in double consciousness, which prevents him from acquiring a sense of belonging throughout his upbringing. Being raised by his Auntie, Tayo is close to Uncle Josiah and his cousin, Rocky; but Tayo is somehow excluded from the family under Auntie's watchful eyes:

> She would not let Tayo go outside or play in another room alone. She wanted him close enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them. The two little boys accepted the distance, but Rocky was never cruel to Tayo. He seemed to know that the narrow silence was reserved only for times when the three of them were alone together. (*Ceremony* 67)

Staying in the family for the whole time, Tayo is kept out of place in the meanwhile—just as a pendulum—he is never truly settled, and can hardly find his place in the family. As part of his family and the Laguna Pueblo culture, his existence of a half-breed is also pushing him toward the boundary while detaining him inside a fine line; his existence is an outsider inside the family where he is supposed to belong.

For Tayo, standing in between cultures has its ups and downs. Just like Old Betonie, the mixed-blood identity allows Tayo to see things from both sides,

since he never truly belongs. Old Betonie knows the convenience of living on the border. The medicine man lives on the edge of Navajo reservation, overlooking Gallup[2]. Even his "natural home" is built on and beneath the land: "The old man pointed to the back of the circular room. 'The west side is built into the hill in the old-style way. Sand and dirt for roof; just about halfway underground. You can feel it, can't you?'" (*Ceremony* 119). By posing this rhetorical question, Old Betonie expects Tayo to sense the living space as one that is literally merged with the place (half protruding outside the earth and half embedded inside).

Tayo and Betonie's mixed-blood ancestry is what they share in common which produces the knot[3] that connects them. They may share a certain level of experiences in their lives; and that helps to build Tayo's trust in the medicine man. As a rule, a medicine man is able to mix a kit of objects and perform ceremonies like healing rites. Betonie's hybridity also enables him to mix the objects from the white and Indian cultures so as to combine a healing process of the best proportion. As Allan Chavkin notes in his introduction to *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*, Betonie is an "unorthodox healer whose outlook is shaped by both white and American Indian cultures; Betonie combines parts of a traditional curing ritual based on the traditional Navajo Red Antway ceremony with professional counseling techniques" (Chavkin 6).

A great part of Tayo's disorder is caused by the battle fatigue from

[2] Gallup, New Mexico, is a city populated with multi American Indian ethnic groups, located in a region populated by the Navajo, Zuñi, and Hopi.

[3] In botanical rhizomes, knots are where the offshoots originate. In *A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), knots are the free space of growing connections: "there are knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots" (Deleuze and Guattari 20). From this perspective, there are probabilities to connect tree-roots (striated space) and rhizomes (smooth space) via assembling knots: "The important point is that the root-tree and canal-rhizome are not two opposed models..." (Deleuze and Guattari 20).

World Word II, where he witnesses his cousin's death in a violent combat. Even after the war, he is further struck by the unbearable fact that his Uncle Josiah died during the war. Returning to his homeland, Tayo is incessantly traumatized by shell shock and recollections of Uncle Josiah and his cousin, Rocky: "In the dark he could cry for all the dreams that Rocky had as he stared out of his graduation picture; he could cry for Josiah and the spotted cattle, all scattered now, all lost, sucked away in the dissolution that had taken everything from him" (*Ceremony* 31). All things have fallen apart in Tayo. To gather himself up, he follows grandma's advice and undertakes the healing ceremony.

Tayo sets out a journey, which also means a chance for going through a mixture of events that might reconstitute his body and mind; and above all, to belong to the place that he settles upon. Following the two medicine men's directions, Tayo travels through the regions around the Laguna Pueblo reservation, gathering stories from each place just as bee[4] collecting honey. One of his major purposes along the journey is to look for the lost spotted cattle that are presumably kept by some thieves or might be just wandering about. Getting the cattle back would suggest pretty much the same thing as reviving Uncle Josiah's dream of raising cattle on the reservation land which may also fulfill his own since their dreams are overlapping now and then.

Like Betonie (who has been rooted in the place just as his "living" place is embedded in the place), Tayo has to sponge the nutrients from the places and to take roots. Betonie is the beaconing star along the way of the wayfarer's tracks. He has something to teach this young rootless calf: "People wondering why I live so close to this filthy town. But see, this Hogan was here first. Built long before the white people ever came. It is that town down there which is out of place" (*Ceremony* 118). With his imaginative power, Betonie is counter-attacking the dominating power that most of the places were "owned" by white people. Betonie's sense of place has its roots in the history of the place; he perceives that the land cannot be owned, but

[4] A mythical figure in Laguna Pueblo traditional stories.

that people belong to the land, and people grow by the land.

Traveling helps Tayo constitute a wider sense of place through collecting stories and events happening on the places. Old Betonie has been collecting a miscellaneous of calendars that have names and pictures of places such as Phoenix and Albuquerque, and now his favorite is Santa Fe Railroad Calendars. Old Betonie claims that he has been traveling, and that he is a regular customer to the railroad station:

"All these things have stories alive in them." He pointed at the Santa Fe calendars. "I' m one of their best customers down there. I rode the train to Chicago in 1903." His eyes were shining then, and he was looking directly into Tayo' s eyes. "I know," he said proudly, "people are always surprised when I tell them the places I have traveled." He pointed at the telephone books. "I brought back the books with all the names in them. Keeping track of things." (*Ceremony* 121)

By making connections to the places and stories, Betonie' s sense of place is ever widening and deepening; in this sense, the places are on the surface of the land while all the stories evolve under in a rhizomatic manner. All the places Tayo roams through are linked as nodes and stalks sprawling in the soil; the stories are within the soil, as botanical rhizomes growing under, invisible before a series of digging and finding. The routes of the finding process leave traces, or stories, in the place. When other story collectors like Tayo follow the routes, they would encounter the stories embedded in the land, left in the place from the people of the past.

One' s sense of place emerges as a blank map to be explored and expanded. The depth of the map is composed of stories, events, and words. Hoarding up calendars with the names of places is the way for Betonie to "keep track of things," but it is the stories that are capable of making connections between the places. A place is instilled with life when being combined with stories; and all the places are interwoven into an organic configuration. As Lawrence Buell observes in *The Environmental Imagination*:

"Every place signifies; every place, every creature has a story connected with it that forms a web of significance (always in process, not a constant) within which human thought assumes form and meaning" (Buell 287). In the intricate web of places, each place works as a joint (knot) that keeps the net expanding. And the whole web of places is ever evolving when linked with new places and stories, which form into an individual's sense of place.

In Betonie's Vision, everything comes alive when there are stories evolving in them. As Robert M. Nelson remarks on the significance of storytelling in the Laguna culture:

> Storytelling comes naturally enough at places like Old Laguna. Each house, and each crumbling adobe shell of a house, has stories attached to it; every mesa, cerro, arroyo, and spring in the surrounding countryside is home to some recountable event, or waiting to become so. (Nelson 15)

All the calendars (or to be specific, all the objects, substances and beings to be specific) Betonie collected convey meanings when he recounts or describes them. A story is being established when a series of events are chained together by the conjunction "and."[5] The conjunction makes space for other recountable events, and leaves space for the things untold. "And" —in Deleuzian logic of the "AND" —plays a major role in mediating events; "and" always intervenes, makes ties. They are what link up events and form stories.

[5] In *A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), the conjunction "and" functions as a "flow-producing machine" that is vital to "the productive synthesis": "the production of production, is inherently connective in nature: 'and...' 'and then...'"(Deleuze and Guattari 5). Deleuze and Guattari further develops a logic of the AND: "The tree imposes the verb 'to be,' but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and...and...and...'" (Deleuze and Guattari 25)

"Ing"[6] has a similar function like "and" in telling stories, which transforms words or events into a continuous state. "Ing" injects vitamins into the word and keeps it from inertia. All things keep reincarnating and circulating when being dubbed by "ing." In "The Feminine Landscape of Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony," Paula Gunn Allen comments: "for Americans like Betonie, the earth *is* being, as all creatures are also being: aware, palpable, intelligent, alive" (Allen 128). "Ing" metamorphoses "be" or any verb into a living existence, which is more tangible than a verb; "ing" also makes a verb more dynamic, a present continual tense is always in the making or becoming which opens up more probabilities. Silko's Ceremony opens with a traditional poem that tells the story of the becoming of the "Universe":

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,

[6] The concept of "ing" is especially prolific in Laguna Pueblo oral story-telling. In this paper, the fluent "ing" is pertinent to Deleuzian "becoming" which suggests as fluid state. As Barbara M. Kennedy notes in *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (2002): "The concept of 'becoming' is … sometimes referred to as multiplicity, change, world, life, or flux, 'becoming' exemplifies a continuum…" (Kennedy 87).

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 (*Ceremony* 1)

Unlike the Bible, this creation story opens in present continual tense. Here, even if the becoming of the world took place in the past, it is taken as an even that occurs "now." The poem accentuates the magical power of thoughts, which constitute the worlds we see and other worlds we do not perceive but may have great influence on the people when they attempt to locate them. Instead of using commas, Silko uses the conjunction "and" incessantly to show the continuing process of the creation. The creation story is based on thoughts: the activity of thinking, which is omnipresent regardless of time and space, and is always now (not a fixed time), in the process of becoming.

The creation story in the Bible tells the story of the world created by God where there is a demarcation between the past and present. On the other side,

Silko blends time and place; the past is happening side by side with the present and the future, in that the world is constructed as an ever expanding gigantic web where things are circulating within. Time sequence in *Ceremony* is not chronologically managed. Each moment generates links to pother moments. In the present continual sequence of *Ceremony*, Tayo is shaping the future while modifying the past concomitantly. Just as oral tradition is accumulated with time while being transformed from time to time; the old tradition is constantly being modified by the contemporary practices.

The formation of the gigantic web does not have a fixed pattern. It is fabricated by a chain of "ands." This idea concurs with Gilles Deleuze's rhizomatic concept. As John Rajchman notes in *The Deleuze Connections*: "Deleuze himself often refers to this attempt, developing it in his own way—he talks about making vision or language stutter, as if speaking a foreign tongue saying '… and, and, and' rather than 'is'" (Rajchman 125). The development of the rhizomes is to make ramifications of thought, as if composing a new language within a given one. To think rhizomatically means to defy linear patterns and the thoughts can always trace back to a certain point of initiation, back to the old times of mythical stories. Rajchman remarks: "Making connections involves logic of a peculiar sort. Outside established identities, divisions, and determinations, logical and syntactical as well as pragmatic, it has often been assumed that there is only chaos, anarchy, undifferention, or 'absurdity'" (Rajchman 8).

The thinking process is natural, even more natural than "organized" languages. What may be seen as supernatural is also part of the natural world. The thinking is chaotic, rebellious and even absurd. It requires a peculiar kind of logic, not constructed as a tree above the surface of earth but flows under—as if rampant stems that are permeating. As Constantin V. Boundas puts it: "In nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one" (Boundas 27). The thinking, the ideas, and words are tied into a web where nothing exists apart from the other. The web is intricate but fragile since it is interwoven and connected by

filaments.

When the medicine man Ku' oosh tries to explain this fragile world to Tayo: "The word he chose to express 'fragile' was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process" (*Ceremony* 35). From the view of Ku' oosh, the word fragile does not exist alone, and it takes a stream of words to convey a wider picture he attempts to impress on Tayo. "It took a long time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word had to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way" (*Ceremony* 35). Distinct from Betonie, Ku' oosh does not invent new ceremonies to heal the new kind of disease; he follows the old ways of doing things and teaches Tayo traditional values. He explains to Tayo the key ingredients of their stories, why they are there and how it comes to be; most importantly, by what means the tradition is kept in their blood memory.

Ku' oosh says that something has to be done in a particular way and some words must be voiced in a certain manner. Being part of Laguna Pueblo, it is the people' s responsibility to keep the words chained together, and to tell the stories in the manner that they are ingredients of their lives: "That was the responsibility that went with being human, old Ku' oosh said, the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said; and this demanded great patience and love" (*Ceremony* 35-36). Even though the traditional healing ceremony from Ku' oosh does not provide what is required to cure the new disease engendered by the war and the lost sense of belonging, his words do possess Laguna wisdom which Tayo needs the most and what he believes in. The traditional way of doing things alleviates Tayo' s "symptoms" engendered by the new world. The traditional and new-invented ceremonies work side by side to perform the best portion of magic on Tayo; just as the oral tradition is still existing and parallel to "now."

While instilling Tayo with love and patience, Ku' oosh also teaches Tayo the responsibility of being connected to Laguna Pueblo. In *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism*, Joni Adamson points out

how people are connected to the place and that they are entrusted with a sense of place:

> The development of a deeply felt sense of connection to local people and places is often the first step in the development of a sense of responsibility, which in turn can lead to the formation of alliances with others who are committed to finding situations to the urgent problems that face us as we move into a new century. (Adamson 115)

To be linked up to the place, one has to mingle with the people living there and appreciate their bond with the place. Only when people are close to the land, can they sense the "spirit of the place." The spirit of the place is interwoven in the culture (stories, collective memories of the local people and tradition); the spirit may also dwell in physical objects such as hogan, adobe, pebbles, sand; or inhabit interpersonal bonds (in Tayo's case, it is Uncle Josiah, Ku'oosh, Betonie whom he takes with along his journey). Tayo's journey is both horizontal and vertical, horizontally traveling through the places on the map, and vertically probing into the cultural matrix of Pueblo. Aside from the map that people dwell upon, there are other maps juxtaposed to this chartered map, the whole world has multilayered and "deeper" maps[7] interwoven by

[7] This idea of multiple maps comes in line with Deleuzian perception of maps. It is discussed in the introduction of *A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), "... the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari 21). In *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (2002), Kennedy expounds this perception: "Maps, mapping and rhizomes offer a creative and experimental panoply in the light of Deleuzian ideas.... A map, not a tracing, suggests Deleuze, is how we experience existence, how we articulate and 'feel,' albeit at a proto-subjective level, within the molecular structures of the autopoetic realms of our being, our 'becoming' with

history, stories, memories, folklore etc.

In his "Introduction" to *The Deleuze Connections*, John Rajchman explicitly explains:

> This book is a map, but not a program, a plan, a project. It is made up of many connections, intended to suggest others—connections of a particular sort. For of course Deleuze's philosophy is about connections; in some sense, it is an art of multiple things held together by "disjunctive synthesis," by logical conjunctions prior and irreducible to prediction and identification. (Rajchman 4)

Rajchman explains a way of writing which intends to make connections should not be considered a project or plan with a clear starting point or ending, but a map that keeps extending and fusing with other maps. In accordance with this notion, traveling routes drift along the surface of a place to find probable alternatives. What constitutes the multiplicity is a process of "disjunctive synthesis" 8 that produces a symbiosis of opposite or heterogeneous thoughts, ideas, stories and words. In this sense, Tayo's oscillating identity may boost him to perceive the vision generated by Old Betonie. In his sand painting, Betonie reproduces his vision in the form of constellation, a map of configured stars. In a way, he transforms the thoughts

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the world" (Kennedy 147).

[8] A logic of either, or, or.... In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977), Deleuze and Guattari narrates three types of synthesis: 1. productive synthesis (which, in this paper, is referred to as a logic of "AND"); 2. conjunctive synthesis (the convergence of two, or more, series); 3. disjunctive synthesis (the affirmation of divergent series). As Deleuze and Guattari writes: "The 'either... or ... or' of the schizophrenic takes over from the 'and then': no matter what two organs are involved, the way in which they are attached to the body without organs must be such that all the disjunctive syntheses between the two amount to the same on the slippery surface" (Deleuze and Guattari 12).

and reifies them in the form of a map, with which Tayo embarks on his journey. He finds stories from those places and shapes his own. Places and stories are therefore incessantly shaping each other and keep mapping out a sense of place that continues to grow. As Nelson puts it in "The Function of the Landscape of Ceremony": ". . . in the relationship between vision and place, shaping can and does operate in the reciprocal direction as well" (Nelson 139).

Tayo's sense of place is shaped by the places and other people's vision of the place (or stories evolved from the places). In a way, Tayo absorbs the essence of the land from his own and others' experiences. While taking in "spirit of the place," Tayo merges into the land matrix, the deep map of the land—he is becoming part human and part land. As Paula Gunn Allen notes in "The Feminine Landscape of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*":

> We are the land. To the best of my understanding, that is the fundamental idea that permeates American Indian life; the land (Mother) and the people (mothers) are the same. . . . As Luther Standing Bear has said of his Lakota people, "We are the soil and the soil is of us." The earth is the source and the being of the people, and we are equally the being of the earth. The land is not really a place, separate from ourselves, where we act out the drama of our isolate destinies; the witchery makes us believe that false idea. (Allen 127-28)

From this aspect, Tayo becomes indistinguishable from the land. People commune with the land in a way that the same blood is flowing in them—and that makes each member a mixed blood, a continuous mutating crossbreed. Along with the healing ceremony, Tayo does not only obtain healing power from the places, he also intends to breathe life into the earth reciprocally. Literally, Tayo keeps pollinating the earth, bringing connections here and there as he travels. At such moments, he metamorphoses himself into the mythical figure "bee" by taking up a bee's job: "He had picked flowers along the path,

flowers with yellow long petals the color of the sunlight. He shook the pollen from them gently and sprinkled it over the water; he laid the blossoms beside the pool and waited" (*Ceremony* 94). In the novel, water plays a central role in maintaining the stability of the land. After sprinkling the pollen over the pool, Tayo performs a ceremony that conjures up life with the assistance of water. He does what he imagines as "the rituals the cloud priests performed during a drought. Here the dust and heat began to recede; the short grass and stunted corn seemed distant" (*Ceremony* 94). A medicine man takes up the responsibility of keeping a harmonious relationship with the place. In this case, Tayo does what he could to fulfill his responsibility to the place that he is connected with, and to keep life booming.

The healing process of Tayo and the vitalizing of the land work side by side. They are mutually dependant—the land provides nourishment to the life forms and they keep feeding back the land with fertilization. The relationship between people and the place resembles to mixed clusters of oral tradition, myth, stories and unfolding events. In the mythical sense, those elements are knit together in the web created by Spider Woman, where connections are made by her thoughts that keep things alive. The image of spider in *Ceremony* is one of powerful breeding capability while maintaining the balance of life, bringing life adjacent to water. When Tayo's invocating ceremony is carried out, the first life form he encounters is fortuitously a spider: "The spider came out first. She drank from the edge of the pool, careful to keep the delicate eggs sacs on her abdomen out of the water" (*Ceremony* 94). The spider's abdomen contains life just like a boat carrying life on the water—while water can hold up the boat, water also can sink it.

At this point, the traditional myth comes alive once more to deliver messages to Tayo. Time sequences can be randomly managed so as to fit into "now." This is achieved largely relying on stories (or collective memories) that have been passed down from time to time. Even if the time of the stories is not clearly defined (ex. once upon a time) or has been buried too deep under ground (ex. from time immemorial), their rhizomes can still find a link to

convey nutrition to the matrix of conventions. Each time Tayo recalls the stories, he absorbs substances from the collective knowledge of their people, and he communicates with all that are connected via the stories. In the novel, Tayo's grandma says: "Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened" (*Ceremony* 94-95). It is in their remote history that the people could communicate with other beings. People were created by Thought-Woman's imagination as well as all other life forms, and they may perceive other beings through imagination. It is collective memories and imagination that draw Tayo back to his people and the land. As Paula Gunn Allen comments: "The healing of Tayo and the land results from the reunification of land and person. Tayo is healed when he understands, in magical (mystical) and loving ways, that his being is within and outside him…" (Allen 128). The healing power is inside and outside of him; he finds rhizomes in the tradition while adjusting it to the present to fit in. The old ways are blended into "now," and are kept in balance.

In Tayo's mind, the past happens side by side with the present. Before the healing ceremony, his memories are tangled with the present. When Tayo's cousin dies in the jungle during the war; it was the rainy season in a "nameless" Pacific island jungle. The island bears no name in Tayo's memory. On the one hand, its nameless may be that it has no positive meaning to him; and it can be a protective mechanism that sinks Tayo into oblivion so as not to drown in the memory. The island is nameless so that it does not persist in Tayo's memory. In the jungle, Tayo curses the flies that harass Rocky's wounds, and pray the torrential rain away—so as to drive away the flies. Again, this event is sewn together with a traditional story poem that refers back to the theme of what causes the drought:

"It was summertime / and Iktoa'ak'o'ya-Reed Woman / was always taking a bath… / But her sister / Corn Woman worked hard all day / Corn Woman got tired of that / she got angry / she scolded / her sister / for bathing all day long" (*Ceremony* 13). The poem comes shortly after Tayo gets irritated by the rainfall and starts to chant voices against the rain. When the poem is inserted into a

contemporary event, the past and the present are brought side by side which enables them to coexist in "now."

Soon after Corn Woman is rebuked by her sister, the precipitation comes to an end: "Reed Woman / went away then / she went back to the original place down below. / And there was no more rain then. Everything dried up… / The people and the animals were thirsty. / They were starving" (*Ceremony* 13-14). The juxtaposition of the traditional story and present events signifies a recurrence of what occurs in the traditional story. Nonetheless, the meaning of the old story is not portrayed in a circular logic in which bad things will keep occurring without solution. Rather, the solution is in the old story itself, in the collective wisdom of stories. Bad things are bound to happen since they are also part of the world, and are part of the ingredients maintaining the balance of the world. As it is delivered in Uncle Josiah's saying: "Nothing was all good or all bad either; it all depended" (*Ceremony* 11). How things evolve is dependent on how the connections are being made—how to connect to a variety of events so as to achieve a mixture of balances.

It is a Deleuzian idea that "we must always make connections, since they are not already given" (Rajchman 6). In connecting the past with the present, some events are recurrent. As Tayo's Old Grandma says by the end of the novel: "I guess I must be getting old, because these goings-on around Laguna don't get me excited any more. . . . It seems like I already heard these stories before . . . only thing is, the names sound different" (*Ceremony* 260). Grandma's wisdom opens her eye for a better understanding of the occurrences, and she knows how to untie some complex knots or to sort them into an interconnected web. Grandma's wisdom may provide solutions to some tough situations, but it does not mean that her wisdom suffices to end all the predicaments happening now. Stories may repeat, but that does not mean they are all the same. If the same story is told by different persons, there would be nuances, especially when it is practiced in Laguna's oral tradition—since stories are not recorded on paper, each time they are told, there could be variations in the ways they are told, in their tone, connotation or significance. There are

variations in the repetition of stories (also in the space and time that the stories are told).

As the world is changing and shifting, new diseases are introduced, and may not be cured by traditional medicine. More than that, there are new witcheries to traumatize the people. Tayo's sickness is caused by new weaponry and new ways of killing. Moreover, his identity as a half-breed also drives him to face a new dilemma. Traditional medicine may alleviate his pain but does not remove the pain that keeps circulating in him. That is why Ku'oosh sends Tayo to see Old Betonie (whose living place, blood relation and experiences are closer to the white people and he knows more about the new types of disease brought into the world).

The events and stories may repeat, but they are being reshaped or adapted into new forms in their repetition and difference. On the other side, diseases are also mutating so as to survive or to fit in the environment. In order to fight back the new diseases engendered by the time, Tayo needs something more than the traditional medicine provided by Ku'oosh; something made from traditional ingredients but being put to test over time so as to fit the syndrome. When Tayo is hospitalized, the medicine from the doctors never gets into him, because his symptoms come from the inner part of him, from his mind. As Allan Chavkin observes in his introduction to *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*:

> Certainly, the problem of Tayo's alienation has complex roots. The novel implies that if one is to understand properly Tayo's problem, one must see it in its historical context; that is, one must see it against the background of the tragic story of Native Americans after the arrival of the Europeans. (Chavkin 5)

Tayo's mind is in conflict with the outside world, where there are a lot of forces pointing at him: anger, hatred, killing, war. The war is all inclusive and global in its scale, and Tayo is engulfed in the powerful vortex without an easy

escape. Therefore, he has to embark on a long process of searching both inside and outside. After seeing Betonie, Tayo realizes that the "white" pills have no use in repelling all these illness: ". . . medicine didn't work that way, because the world didn't work that way. His sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything" (*Ceremony* 125-26). Tayo's cure is in the searching process of the remedy, to get the remedy does not mean that he would be cured; the question is how he attains the cure, and how he practices the ceremonies performed by other medicine men.

The experimental process is relevant to what Gilles Deleuze terms "Difference and Repetition." As Keith Ansell Pearson notes:

> . . . difference becomes a substantial multiplicity of divergent and diffusive series, exploding onto each other, immanently and continuously involving neutrality, tracking the vector of a singularity indifferent to the specificity of the concrete distribution it effects, not because it is a form applied to matter, but because it "occupies" a qualitatively intensive different space from which are composed the creation of new functions. It might be called redundancy, in the sense that it is excess to the concrete, relating 'surplus values in the order of a rhizome' which give rise to mutations in concrete assemblages. (Person 31)

Tayo's sickness is caused by multiple conditions, and there is no simple solution to it. The traditional medicine suppresses his pain so he can set off to search a new cure. By means of sand painting, Old Betonie shows Tayo a map to indicate places that may offer him what it takes to "neutralize" his disease. The map does show him some destinations but it does not suggest that the tracks are predestined; the route is painted on sand, showing him some places (or knots) in his journey. However, the sand is shifting in nature, and he may get into any place in the wilderness and deviate from the trodden tracks.

While following the pattern of traveling routes mapped by others, there are thousands of probabilities in nomadic roaming. Even if his route overlaps the seemingly predestined pattern, which may be seen as a redundant process, he still has to make the connections by himself since they are not already existed in his own experiences. By walking through those places, he can literally touch the history and stories of the places, and constitute emerging traveling routes from the repetitive old patterns.

Like Old Betonie's behavior of collecting calendars, when Tayo walks through the places, he also collects his sense of place. Through the routes, he is constantly being mixed up with the land—his action of pollinating the land can be seen as a process of enlivening the earth that will in turn bestow him with life. Tayo always bears Ku'oosh's saying in mind; it takes a lot of patience and affection to complete the ceremony. Not only that Tayo is cured by the ceremony; the ceremony to cure Tayo works side by side with the healing of the land. His patience and love for the land shows in some meticulous movements, even when he walks upon withered flowers: "He stepped carefully, pushing the toe of his foot into the weeds first to make sure the grasshoppers were gone before he set his foot down into the crackling leathery stalks of dead sunflowers" (*Ceremony* 155). Tayo avoids unnecessary killing, even if it is as tiny as grasshoppers or flies. The other example is: when he steps out of a little café and he sees an old man sitting by the front door with swatter in his hand, waiting for the flies to come in. Tayo manages to protect the flies from being killed by "opening the screen door only enough to squeeze out and closing it quickly so that no flies got in" (*Ceremony* 101). The patience and love shown by Tayo's carefulness contrasts sharply with the man he was turned into during the war; the furious combat makes him irate. In the warfare, he is filled with hatred and anger upon his brother's death; he curses the torrential rain and smacks the flies that are harassing Rocky's body.

Also, Tayo's patience and love is contrasted to Emo's reckless ravage on the land: "the flies were rubbing their feet on fragments of pulp and rind. He trampled the ants with his boots, and he kicked dirt over the seeds and pulp"

(*Ceremony* 62). His animosity towards the place is shown in his careless crushing of lives. The land gives little meaning to him: "Emo liked to say, 'Look what is here for us. Look. Here's the Indians' mother earth! Old dried-up thing!' Tayo's anger made his hands shake. Emo was wrong. All wrong" (*Ceremony* 25). Emo repeatedly curses the place: ". . . us Indians deserve something better than this goddamn dried-up country around here. Blowing away, every day . . . . What we need is what they got" (*Ceremony* 55). Even though Emo is an American Indian in blood (and he claims to be a pure breed), he does not identify himself with his mother earth. Emo covets the white people's way of being and regards them as thieves: "But they've got everything. And we don't got shit . . . . They took our land, they took everything!" (*Ceremony* 55). Being a mixed blood, Tayo sees what the land means to him through another's conduct of cursing the land; and that curse is ironically emitted by a self-acclaimed American Indian. Compared to Emo's disposition, the land means much more to Tayo. Parallel to Emo's damnation of the land, a mythic poem is sewn together and balances the hatred:

He said Down below

Three worlds below this one

everything is

green

all the plants are growing

the flowers are blooming.

I go down there

and eat. (*Ceremony* 54)

The speaker in the traditional poem is a hearty humming bird, which is tiny but full of life. It depicts other worlds under the surface, where life is abundant. The surface may be seen as a barren place; nevertheless, with a thorough and inward searching, one may find that life grows, moves, shifts under. And that is represented by the place where the hummingbird sips the spring of energy. While taking the nectar, the bird also pollinates, disseminates life at the same time. When the hummingbird sips energy, the bird returns life to the land reciprocally. Beings stay robust when the plants are flourishing, which is aided by the feedback of the lives. It is a circulating system which expands in continuum, in the reciprocal process of taking and giving life.

Life and stories are inseparable, where there is life, there are stories. Stories can also be seen as the source of energy. Stories are circulating within lives, they create links between lives, places and time—and they merge in the belly of a big Ceremony:

Ceremony

I will tell you something about stories,

[he said] . . .

They are all we have, you see,

all we have to fight off

Illness and death (*Ceremony* 2)

The mythic poem juxtaposes the Ceremony with stories, which implies their inseparability. The Ceremony is composed of stories while it is also part of the stories. In “Myth, History, and Identity in Silko and Young Bear,” David L. Moore points out the inseparability between mythic poem, stream of

consciousness (intricate ideas, thoughts), and stories: “through a mythopoetic stream of consciousness, drawing on the tradition of Laguna storytelling to enter the experiences of both persons and mythic powers and to make them mutual participants” (Moore 371). The passage shows that storytelling allows a person to enter the state of flux, a free flow from reality to the imaginary world where one can attain mythic powers. On the other side, the telling of mythic stories also fortifies the traditional stories. This interrelationship resembles the cycle of life on earth—the abundance of life keeps the system healthy. In this fluxional manner, Tayo’s stories are in line with traditional ones. And all the stories are held together in an expanding matrix. The mythic poem sings:

You don’t have anything

If you don’t have the stories.

. . .

He rubbed his belly.

I keep them here

. . .

See, it is moving.

There is life here

for the people. (*Ceremony* 2)

The stories here represent an assemblage of the people: they are stored in their collective memories which are growing with time. The growth of stories resembles the metabolism in a grand organism, which is always evolving and adapting. The old stories are attached to present stories; their reciprocal

relationship may take the form of a symbiosis which benefits both organisms so as to constitute a bigger one. The correlation keeps both sides healthy; should one side collapse, the other will fall therewith. This illustrates how stories are the driving force of the people, in the way that stories are fluxional in their bodies. As the poem demonstrates, the stories are kept in a limitless belly; and the belly provides immeasurable food of thoughts for the people.

Tayo's journey sets to reconnect himself with the Ceremony of his people. By linking time, places, and stories, he regains his life and builds up a sense of place. As Wendell Berry comments in *The Unsettling of America*: "Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed. Connection is health. And what our society does its best to disguise from us is how ordinary, how commonly attainable, health is…" (Berry 138). Bombarded by madness of the war, Tayo has lost his senses and perpetually vomits while lying in the veteran's hospital where he is in an invisible state. He vomits everything out of his belly, losing all his contents; what remains is but an empty shell without an audible voice: "He is invisible. His words are formed with an invisible tongue, they have no sound" (*Ceremony* 15). Buried in the chaotic darkness, his words are dissolved into nothing which suggests that he has lost the ability to form stories, to continue stories of life and to tell them. To make it worse, he is losing memories by accepting the "treatment": "Their medicine drained memory out of his thin arms and replaced it with a twilight cloud behind his eyes" (*Ceremony* 15). Instead of restoring his health, the treatment sinks Tayo into oblivion, driving memories out of him as if he were bewitched.

To erase what Tayo has does not alleviate his psychological damages since it does not connect him to where he belongs. He has to restore the broken link to what he had believed and where he is from, and thus to regenerate his health:

> He believed then that touching the sky had to do with where you were standing and how the clouds were that day. He had believed that on certain nights, when the moon rose full and wide as a corner

> of the sky, a person standing on the high sandstone cliff of that mesa could reach the moon. Distances and days existed in themselves then; they all had a story. They were not barriers. (*Ceremony* 19)

When Tayo and his brother Rocky climbed high above Bone Mesa, he believed that it is the link between the place and the sky. There exists no boundary as long as he can find a linkage, and the Mesa here yields a fissure for him to flow and blend into the sky where it provides him another link to touch the moon. Like Old Betonie's collection of time, places and stories, Tayo's concept of these elements is also not static; but one of shifting and expanding assemblage. Places such as Bone Mesa may join with the sky—through such a space Tayo may enter the other place (the moon in this case). The nonlinear time and places create a fusion of four-dimensional world allowing Tayo to enter any place or time through his memories and experiences. The world has no boundaries even if they are contained in the mind or in the "belly," as long as there are more connections in the rhizosphere, and this resembles a Deleuzian idea: to retain what only produces more connections.

The idea of a flowing world is triggered by a fluxional sense of time which constitutes a fusional sense of place. As Elizabeth Mchenry puts it in "Spinning a Fiction of Culture": "Rather, it is more accurate to consider that Silko's nonlinear form of narrative appears as it does because she sees it as the only appropriate vehicle of expression that will contain the transcription of her fragmented and collective experience" (Mchenry 102). The form of narrative yields multiple entrances for Tayo to freely get in and out of the four-dimensional fusion where places and stories both old and new are blended. His health is restored once he joins with what he had believed in and had been depreciated by the so called "teaching institute": "He had believed in the stories for a long time, until the teachers at Indian school taught him not to believe in that kind of 'nonsense'" (*Ceremony* 19).

Tayo's senses are lost not only because of the battle fatigue but that he has been deprived of his stories which have been kept in him faithfully. While

being treated in the hospital, the fundamental question has been: what is it in us that they respect; rather than how are we going to be healed by "their" medicine? He is invisible because the medicine could not stop him from vomiting out all that has been valued in him, and therefore empties his stories in his belly. The medicine does not instill him with energy; on the contrary, he is losing power because he is forced to accept other people's power. The network of connections is falling apart and his stories are forgotten while lying in the white hospital. Detained in the room, Tayo cannot see what's outside of him and has to endure the agonizing healing procedure. The ward detaches him from the outside world, isolates him from the probabilities of transformation and evolution. He has to be wild and to get back to the "wind," the wilderness, the preservation of his world. As Uncle Josiah says: ". . . only humans had to endure anything, because only humans resisted what they saw outside themselves. Animals did not resist. But they persisted, because they became part of the wind. 'Inside, Tayo, inside the belly of the wind'" (*Ceremony* 27).

Tayo needs to find the trapdoor to get outside, and then he can get inside the belly of the wind where he can sense the natural draft. In Tayo's journey, he gradually shifts back to the surface via immersing in the wind, listening to what the trees' and beings' whisper, becoming visible again:

> In a world of crickets and wind and cottonwood trees he was almost alive again; he was visible. The green waves of dead faces and the screams of the dying that had echoed in his head were buried. The sickness had receded into a shadow behind him, something he saw only out of the corners of his eyes, over his shoulder. (*Ceremony* 104)

Leaning against the adobe wall with his eyes closed, Tayo sees what he could not with eyes wide open: he feels the world outside with open senses. That is where the worlds merged, his back links him to the wall, and he feels the

multiplicity through the wall, adobe, sand, and everything else involving the place. All of them have some stories to tell, stories are told by everything, dead or alive. The adobe is animated when it is connected to other forms of life, and the adobe produces a link that guides Tayo back to the balanced matrix. When Tayo touches plaster, he also senses the history that links him to the traditional way of ceremony, back to where he came from:

> He picked up a fragment of fallen plaster and drew dusty white stripes across the backs of his hands, the way ceremonial dancers sometimes did, except they used white clay, and not old plaster. It was soothing to rub the dust over his hands . . . and then he knew why it was done by the dancers: it connected them to the earth. (*Ceremony* 104)

Touching the sand is also part of the ceremony because it provides rhizomatic connections sprawling downwards and upwards, and that is why Tayo has to go through the places: it literally draws him closer to the earth; just as a "belly" can contain the entire world, a grain of sand also houses a history in it. Tayo can hear the geological tick of time[9] from the silent sand, which gives him a sense of history, and therewith, an embracing sense of place.

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[9] The concept of "geologic time" derives from Aldo Leopold's "Marshland Elegy," *A Sand County Almanac*. The term indicates a historical sense of time that is embedded in layers of the geological formation (Leopold: 160).

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