

**DOUBLE-VOICE AND DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE**

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For those that believed in me

I dedicate this work.

### Abstract:

This thesis follows the interaction of “double-voicing” and “double-consciousness” in Native American literary history. It begins with surviving records from the time of colonial contact and ends with works by Leslie Marmon Silko and Thomas King, two contemporary authors of the Native American Literary Renaissance.

“Double-voicing” is a common feature found in many works preserved by early anthropologists from various Native American oral traditions. However, after colonial contact this feature largely disappears from literary works written by Native American authors, when it is replaced by the societal condition “double-consciousness.” With the revitalization of cultural knowledge in the mid-twentieth-century, Native authors also revitalize their rhetorical techniques in their writing and the “double-voice” feature re-emerges coupled with a bicultural awareness that is carried over from “double-consciousness.”

## Preface

This thesis looks at the history of Native American verbal art from its earliest surviving representations to the works of contemporary authors from the Native American Renaissance. In particular, it argues that this history can be understood through the development of two main features, “double-voicing” (chapter two) and “double-consciousness” (chapter three). Although there are many other ways of examining this topic, “double-voicing” and “double-consciousness” are particularly useful because they both are very characteristic of Native Verbal Art at various stages in its history.

The analysis of the history of these features in this thesis depends heavily on the work of M.M. Bakhtin, Paul Zolbrod, and W.E.B. DuBois, though I have not been afraid to contribute to and extend this theoretical discussion. The use of this combination of theorists is not common in Native American literary studies. Bakhtin’s and DuBois’ work are more commonly cited in African American studies. The application of these approaches to Native American literature in this thesis, however, is in my view very productive.

As a result of this decision I have made less use of other, perhaps equally useful, theoretical work on the topic, by scholars such as Paula Gunn Allen or Simon Ortiz, although their work has strongly influenced my discussion of cultural knowledge. In a larger dissertation, it would be useful to discuss the relative merits of the various approaches and attempt to create a synthesis of these sometimes competing views.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In the beginning, Native American verbal art<sup>1</sup> belonged to an oral performative tradition. In this tradition, stories were used as a vehicle for the conveyance of cultural knowledge and societal values. Stories and ceremonies were used to teach and entertain the audience through the performance of an oral storyteller or spiritual leader, who used this performance to pass along cultural knowledge from the older to the younger generations. From colonial contact and to the present, the oral tradition has developed from an oral into a written literary form in which Native American authors now revitalize and maintain past oral traditions or allusions to oral traditions.

These Native American oral traditions also maintained their own rhetorical features that can be compared to linguistic characteristics of written literature. As we shall see in chapter two, one particularly characteristic feature of this tradition was a varying use of linguistic register that M.M. Bakhtin refers to as “double-voice” (429). This feature then disappears during the time of North American colonial contact, when it is replaced with the societal condition, “double-consciousness,” in which Aboriginal authors situated their Native themes and political accounts firmly within the dominant Western literary tradition. Later, through the revitalization of Native American cultures and the storytelling tradition during the Native American renaissance and onwards,

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<sup>1</sup> Terminology concerning the naming or classification of text and recordings from oral traditions has been highly debated. Walter J. Ong provides an analysis on the use of the term “oral literature,” which is consistently used in literary criticism, for lack of a better term (10-15) and this is the term most accepted by Ong and other critics and scholars, and, will be referred to throughout this thesis.

“double-voice” re-appears in contemporary Native American literature. Coupled with a notion of bicultural awareness derived from the “double-consciousness” of early post-contact Native authors, it produces a new type of literature that entertains and instructs Native and non-Native audiences alike.

### Pre-Contact

Stories and ceremonies from Native American oral traditions contained highly sophisticated grammatical structures and styles. Most of these elemental characteristics were ignored and went unnoticed by early ethnographers and anthropologists when they collected and preserved written recordings of texts from oral storytellers. Early researchers such as Washington Matthews (Navaho Legends), Franz Boas (Keresan Texts), and Ruth Underhill (Singing for Power) meticulously collected and recorded stories from various Native traditions and later translated these texts into English. However, these translations were mainly reproduced in familiar English prose forms and thus disregarded the complex stylistic features that were characteristic of the original oral traditions. Though misunderstood, these early records are the closest representations of oral traditions in existence at the time of colonial contact. They allow us verbatim access to the surviving art of the pre-contact period.

Using these early records, more recent researchers, such as Dell Hymes (In Vain; “Boas”), Jerome Rothenberg, and Paul Zolbrod (Dine Bahane; “Navajo Poetry”) have since reanalyzed and retranslated the original texts, concentrating on their rhetorical and poetical features. In the process, Hymes and others were able to identify the stylistic elements that had been previously overlooked and misunderstood. What was previously misunderstood as prose was actually a form of poetry with its own poetic features,

repetition, parallel or appositional constructions, and variation in linguistic register. In particular Paul Zolbrod identifies this varying use of linguistic register as a key feature of Native American verbal art and further defines these registers as the lyrical and colloquial voices (Reading the Voice 40).

#### Early Post-Contact: Double-Consciousness

Since the time of colonial contact and the ensuing acts of assimilation and acculturation forced upon Native people in the Americas, Native languages and the oral traditions communicated through these languages were in danger of eradication. This meant that First Nations people were no longer allowed the right to maintain their Native languages or practice their oral traditions. Hence, oral traditions and their stylistic features, such as “double-voice,” all but disappeared during this time.

With the education of Native people in the English language, Native authors of the nineteenth-and early twentieth-centuries started to write and publish their works following Western literary standards. Though “Native” in theme or subject matter, their works were heavily influenced by Western literature of the time. This literary influence then created what W.E.B. DuBois named, in the context of African American literature, as “double-consciousness.” Double-consciousness is the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (2). What DuBois says is that minority writers see themselves not only through their own perceptions of self but also through the perceptions of others, particularly when these others see the minority as being racially different. Native writers write not only from the position of people from their own Native culture, but also from the position of the Native minority writing and participating within a dominant Western literary tradition. Although “double-consciousness” carries more

negative connotations in DuBois' work—and arguably in its initial appearances in Native American literature—Native authors have been able to work more positively with this consciousness, until by the late twentieth-century it develops into a far more positive biculturalism. We will first see this “double-consciousness”/early bicultural awareness in the works of Pauline Johnson. While there were other First Nations writers and political speakers during this time period such as Catherine Sutton and John Ojijatekha Brant-Sero (Petrone 65-68, 75-77), Johnson claimed both popular and political notoriety through her poetry and stage performances.

Johnson, in her collection of poetry in Flint and Feather, combines an awareness of her Mohawk ancestry with knowledge of Western literature and literary standards: she writes of the plight of the First Nations people in Canada, as well as the nature themes she is well known for. In doing so, Johnson conforms strictly to Western poetic standards. Throughout, she was well aware of her position as a Native writer and she allowed Western society to see her as a First Nations poet, albeit, through their own familiar literary standards.

#### Double-Consciousness and Double-Voicing

In the mid-twentieth-century and onward, the movement known as the Native American Renaissance brings about a revitalization and return to Native cultural traditions by Native American authors. These authors are reinventing the position of the storyteller and in doing so, are adopting some of the techniques previously used in the oral tradition. These techniques are then incorporated into contemporary Native American literature. Two contemporary Native American authors that both include and allude to stories and techniques from past oral traditions are Leslie Marmon Silko and

Thomas King. They become, in a sense, the modern storytellers and conveyers of their Native traditions. Both authors are similar in that they endeavour to create a sense of traditional storytelling and the storyteller from oral traditions in their works. However, each of these authors involve varying aspects from both cultures, the Native and the dominant, to create this sense and in doing so are different in their approaches. Silko re-creates the traditional events of storytelling within a modern day setting for her novel and King re-creates the role of the storyteller. While both authors incorporate elements from their Native traditions, the double-voice feature is more noticeable in Silko's work, while King's work draws particularly heavily on double-consciousness through a strong bicultural awareness, and in doing so requires his audience to have this same bicultural knowledge to better understand his work.

By combining double-voicing and double-consciousness, contemporary Native authors create a tension for their audience that is similar to the effects colonization previously had on First Nations people. Where Native people were originally forced to learn the English language and assimilate into Western society, these contemporary authors require their audiences to learn about Native cultures in order to participate in Native literature. Authors like Silko and King are at an advantage because they are bicultural: they know their Native cultures as well as the dominant culture, and use the literary and artistic techniques from each. This is in some ways a reversal of DuBois' idea of "double-consciousness": instead of strictly conforming to Western literary standards as in the past Native authors now appropriate and include literary techniques from Western traditions as well as the artistic techniques from Native oral traditions to produce English language works of great originality.

Emma LaRocque in her preface to Writing the Circle states:

Colonization works itself out in unpredictable ways. The fact is that English is the new Native language, literally and politically. English is the common language of Aboriginal peoples. It is English that is serving to raise the political consciousness in our community; it is English that is serving to de-colonize and to unite Aboriginal peoples. Personally, I see much poetic justice in this progress. (xxvi)

From their origins in oral tradition, to their near eradication, and subsequent revitalization, elements of the oral tradition and the Native American literary voice has continued to survive. Because Native literature has survived in new forms so too does the notion that past oral traditions were purposeful in their nature for the continuance of cultural traditions, societal values and beliefs. But now the audience has changed. Native authors write today to non-Native and Native readers alike with the same didactic intentions of passing along cultural knowledge and past experiences that their predecessors had in their verbal art. Like the oral traditions of the past, written literatures now carry on some of these cultural transmissions to their reading audiences.

## Chapter 2:

### Misunderstood Early Native American Texts and the Presence of Double-Voice

#### The Early Record

Oral traditions of North America were modes of cultural maintenance for Aboriginal people before colonial contact. Cultural knowledge, values, and beliefs were passed on through oral forms such as stories, songs, and prayers. These oral forms possessed highly complex elements, whose sophistication went largely unnoticed by early Western ethnographers and anthropologists.

One of the reasons for this misunderstanding is that the rhetorical elements in these oral forms were unfamiliar to Western researchers. Penny Petrone confirms both that “[h]istorically the oral literature of aboriginal peoples everywhere has been deemed inferior by literate western societies not only because it was unwritten, but also because it was not understood properly” (3) and that “[i]t was misunderstood because, although it did not conform to the conventions of Western literary criticism, scholars still treated it as Western literature” (3). Since Aboriginal oral traditions did not follow Western literary standards, these oral forms were dismissed as primitive and inferior in comparison to Western literature.

But while they did not always understand what they were studying, early researchers did conduct extensive fieldwork on many Native cultures and their languages. As a result, many texts from oral storytellers were recorded and carefully preserved by ethnographers and anthropologists from the eighteenth through to the early part of the twentieth centuries. These recordings were treated as anthropological specimens rather

than sophisticated works of art. Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses how Western researchers have approached research on indigenous groups. She notes that the “collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized” (1-2). As Smith emphasizes, indigenous people, along with their cultures and languages, were viewed and researched as if they were artifacts to be collected and identified, rather than understood as cultural equals. Because of this Western way of viewing Native societies and their traditions as primitive, it is understandable that artistic elements characteristic of oral traditions went unnoticed by early Western researchers.

#### Contemporary Scholarship

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the study of these collected texts from the oral traditions. As Brian Swann states: “[j]ust as there has been what has been called a ‘Native American renaissance’ in the arts during the last twenty or thirty years, so there has been a renaissance in the study and translation of Native languages and literatures” (xiv). Over the last decades, researchers have gone back to these early preserved texts only to discover that early scholars had misunderstood them and the complex rhetorical and poetic elements they contain. Stories and other oral forms collected by early researchers had been translated and written into familiar Western prose forms by Western researchers.

The extent of this misunderstanding can be seen perhaps best through an example. The “Loon Woman” story is from the Wintu tradition of Northern California. It was

originally recorded by D. Demetracopoulou in 1929 and later published, as prose, in The Journal of American Folklore:

Many people came into being. There was a couple who had many children, nine boys, one girl, ten children. Their first child was a beautiful boy, and they put him away. They named him Talimleluheres (He who was made beautiful?) and put him away rolled up in a bear hide. They lived there, and lived there, and lived there, and soon some of their children walked around, some played. The girl lived there, grew up into a woman, and then one morning she went down to the stream, she went down to the place where they got water, she sat down, that woman. She looked at the ground, she saw a hair, she took it up, looked at it, looked at the hair, one hair, she looked at the hair she had found. 'Whose hair? I want to know.' She looked at it long, looked at the hair, one long hair. The woman thought. 'Whose hair?' she thought. (Demetracopoulou 103-104).

In recent years, Dell Hymes reanalyzed this same text and reformatted "Loon Woman" to reflect poetic elements inherent in the Wintu oral tradition ("Sung Epic" 294). The following is the same excerpt as above rendered in a format that emphasizes its poetic structure and patterning:<sup>1</sup>

They live there,  
Many people came into being.  
After that two,  
A pair

---

<sup>1</sup> I am using the poetic form that Dell Hymes and others use in their translations. Lines are grouped in staggered stanza forms to show the appositional features and denote changes in theme or action.

A man and wife live there,  
They have many children,  
A lot of children  
Nine boys,  
One girl,  
Ten children.  
The first born (is) a beautiful boy.  
And then they leave him put away inside.  
He-who-is-made-beautiful is what they name him,  
They leave him put away inside,  
They leave him to stay rolled up in a bear hide.  
They live there,  
Live there,  
Live there,  
Some of the children walk around  
Children play around.  
That 'girl' lives there,  
The girl grows bigger,  
Turns into a woman.  
After that, one morning the woman goes to a certain stream,  
She goes to where they get water,  
She sits down, that woman.  
She looks at the ground,

She sees a hair,  
She takes it up.  
She looks,  
She looks at the hair,  
One hair.  
She looks at the hair she has found:  
'Whose hair?'  
she wants to know.  
She looks at it long,  
Looks at the hair,  
One long hair.  
That woman thinks,  
She thinks, 'Whose hair?' ("Sung Epic" 327-328)

What is noticeable in both renditions of "Loon Woman" is the fact that there are obvious redundancies. Hymes' presentation brings these repetitions forward in order to emphasize them as features that form groups similar in effect to stanzas. What was earlier misunderstood as prose now takes its proper prosodic form through Hymes' retranslation and representation. This story is but one example that illustrates the misperception of texts from oral traditions by early Western researchers. As a result of their reanalyses, Hymes and others have identified the various prosodic elements within these texts, and discovered that these texts, in turn, retained highly complex artistic components that demonstrate them as forms of poetry rather than prose.

Verbal art from Native oral traditions, then, consists of various poetic features that are inherent to these traditions but very different from Western literary forms. Some of these characteristics include repetition and appositional repetition, groupings of lines in threes, fours, fives, and sixes, and the use of “double-voicing” or changes in register within a given text (Hymes, “Use All” 99-105; Zolbrod, Reading the Voice 40, 48, 54-59, 64-66).

### Voice

In addition to the discovery of these structural and prosodic patterns by recent scholarship concerning contact-era Native storytelling, Paul Zolbrod also pointed out the function of register within these texts. He has argued that these texts can be placed on a continuum of linguistic register whose extreme ends can be described as “lyrical” and “colloquial” (Zolbrod, Reading the Voice 40). Lyrical voice is the register used in more formal situations such as ceremonies and invocations; colloquial voice is utilized for less formal situations when telling stories and teaching the younger generations. As we shall see, the lyrical and colloquial often are combined in Native American verbal art to show double-voicing. Double-voicing can be best explained by appealing to M.M. Bakhtin’s discussion of heteroglossia and hybridization. Heteroglossia is the idea that,

At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, meteorological, physiological—that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces. (428)

Hybridization is the mixing “of two or more different linguistic consciousnesses, often widely separated in time and social space” (429). In double-voicing, the heteroglossic registers, formal and informal, are hybridized. This is found commonly in the preserved texts from oral traditions and is one of the original features misunderstood by Western anthropologists. It is also a prominent feature, as well as other rhetorical devices, revitalized in contemporary writing by Native authors, discussed in chapters four and five. This chapter will, however, concentrate on the early, collected texts.

Differences in register within Native American literature can be seen just as register difference is noted in the every day conversational to more formal speech. Asif Agha argues that “[I]anguage users often employ labels like ‘polite language,’ ‘informal speech,’ ‘upper-class speech,’ ‘women’s speech,’ ‘literary usage,’ ‘scientific term,’ ‘religious language,’ ‘slang,’ and others, to describe differences among speech forms (23). In the case of early Native American literature, the presence of “religious language” and “informal speech” are two examples of the registers. Sometimes these registers are used uniformly throughout a given text. More often they are combined. After a discussion of the two registers in their pure state, this chapter will look at how they are combined in “double-voicing.”

### Lyrical Voice

Religious language can be equated with Zolbrod’s lyrical voice (Reading the Voice 47) while informal speech is a more colloquial voice (64). To start with, the aspects of lyrical voice are more formal and are used for purposes such as ceremonies, prayers, and invocations (38-39). These are events of a sacred or reverential nature that require a similar register. Zolbrod continues that the lyric voice, especially in lyric poetry,

possesses “a greater-than-human reality, or at least a reality greater than oneself” (38). In this sense, an elevated or reverent tone of the language is present. In Native American lyric poetry, Zolbrod reports that an important aspect of this register is an “incremental repetition” (54-55). In its purest form, such texts employ strictly repetitive patterns. Repetitions and apposition are found particularly within ceremonial texts, which tend to be purely poetic rather than prosaic.<sup>2</sup>

Examples of these features are seen in the following excerpts from an extensive song/poem, “Running The Deer,” from the Yaqui people of Mexico and Southern Arizona:

#1

First you just look;  
    later you will find, find.  
First you just look;  
    later you will find, find.  
First you just look;  
    later you will find, find.  
First you just look;  
    later you will find, find.  
Over there, I, in an opening  
    in the flower-covered grove,  
    I went out;  
    then you will find, find.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dell Hymes provides detailed analyses on the forms and structures of early Native American oral texts in “Use All There is to Use,” and “In Vain I Tried to Tell You.” Paul Zolbrod also refers to Hymes’ research in his explanations of these poetic forms and structures in Reading the Voice.

First you just look;

later you will find, find.

...

#7

You who are each other's brothers

are shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting beautifully together.

You who are each other's brothers

are shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting beautifully together.

You who are each other's brothers

are shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting well, beautifully together,

shouting beautifully together.

Over there, I in the center

of the flower-covered opening,

we are running.

Just I, in flower fawn's

flower dust,

we are running.

...

#11

Never again I,

will I on this world,

I, around will I be walking.

Just I, never again I,

will I on this world,

I, around will I be walking.

Just I, never again I,

will I on this world,

I, around will I be walking.

Just I, never again I,

will I on this world,

I, around will I be walking.

Over there, I,

in an opening in the flower-covered grove,

as I am walking.

Just I, Yevuku Yoleme's bow

overpowered me in an enchanted way.

Yevuku Yoleme's bamboo arrow

overpowered me in an enchanted way.

Never again I,

will I on this world,

I, around will I be walking.

...

#16

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

My enchanted flower body,

fire, above the fire,

side by side is hung.

Over there, I, in Yevuku Yoleme's

flower-covered flower patio,

here I am scattered;

I become enchanted;  
here I am scattered;  
I become flower.  
My enchanted flower body,  
fire, above the fire,  
side by side is hung. (Evers and Molina 525-540)

This song/poem is incremental in that the actions of seeking, finding, killing, and honouring the deer are portrayed through a series of eighteen passages. These excerpts are also both repetitious and appositional, with the second last stanza of each section appositionally paralleling the content of the previously repeated verses. In each passage, the first two or three to four or six verses are identical and the second last verse is variant but related to the previous verses. The last verse then repeats the earlier verses within the same passage. Paula Gunn Allen provides an explanation for this use of repetitions:

Repetition is of two kinds, incremental and simple. In the first, variations will occur. A stanza may be repeated in its entirety four times – once for each of the directions – or six times – once for each lateral direction plus above and below – or seven times – once for each direction plus the center ‘where we stand.’ (64)

The use of repetition is a part of the religious language register. Allen’s explanation connects the anthropological analyses provided by modern day researchers on structure and form with the religious knowledge that explains some aspects of Native American spirituality. This provides an example of the societal conditions that go with a particular register. As well, this song also portrays a meeting between the worlds of animals and

humans or the meeting of the spiritual world with the earthly world (Evers and Molina 522) therefore demonstrating the idea of the “greater-than-human reality” (Zolbrod, Reading the Voice 38) within the text. Both the structural properties and the elevated tone are qualities of the lyrical voice.

In addition to linguistic register variance, another characteristic of the lyrical voice is a content-based theme of cardinal directions also found in ceremonies, invocations and other performed rites that show reverence to land and all things natural. Robert M. Nelson argues how these ideas are “generally encoded in many Native American cultural traditions themselves, that place—in the sense of a real geophysical entity—matters, that ‘life’ is a ‘property’ of the land as well as of the life forms occupying it” (Place and Vision 3). The land, animals, and other natural matters of life are highly respected and impressed with, again, that “greater-than-human reality” (Zolbrod, Reading the Voice 38).

These themes are prominent throughout texts that use lyrical voice. The next example, “Songs for Pouring in the Water,” is also an excerpt from a more extensive song/poem, which includes many references to directions, animals, and natural elements:

There from the north  
rainmaker priests,  
carrying their healing water,  
will make their sacred roads come forth.  
Where my white-shell bowl lies,  
four times  
they will make their sacred roads come in.

There from the west

rainmaker priests,

carrying their healing water,

will make their sacred roads come forth.

Where my white-shell bowl lies,

four times

they will make their sacred roads come in.

There from the south

rainmaker priests,

carrying their healing water,

will make their sacred roads come forth.

Where my white-shell bowl lies,

four times

they will make their sacred roads come in.

There from the east

rainmaker priests,

carrying their healing water,

will make their sacred roads come forth.

Where my white-shell bowl lies,

four times

they will make their sacred roads come in.

There from the above

rainmaker priests,

carrying their healing water,

will make their sacred roads come forth.

Where my white-shell bowl lies,

four times

they will make their sacred roads come in.

There from the below

rainmaker priests,

carrying their healing water,

will make their sacred roads come forth.

Where my white-shell bowl lies,

four times

they will make their sacred roads come in. (M.J. Young 564-579)

In this extract both repetition and appositional repetition are seen. For each segment of verse only one word is varied and the remainder and chorus of each verse stays the same. As well, each cardinal direction is revered separately so a greater sense of balance is maintained. (In this excerpt of the much larger text, only the cardinal directions are shown). The rest of the song/poem, however, pays homage in the same manner to varying themes including animals, birds, winds, trees, and colour. Within the representation of colour, another idea is put forward: colour is also strongly associated with and symbolic of the cardinal directions (Shaul 680; M.J. Young 567). In the final sequence of this example the “yellow stone,” “blue stone,” “red stone,” “white stone,” “many-colored stone,” and “black stone” are representative and carry the meanings of the

cardinal directions with which they are listed (M.J. Young 576-579). Texts that refer to colour then also demonstrate the same reverence as cardinal direction.

These features, with their references and adherence to the more elevated level of language, are all a part of the linguistic register of lyrical voice. Zolbrod further argues that although these “incremental repetition[s]” may be “deceptively simple,” they “project[] far more thought and design than our own alphabetical poetry conditions us to expect, including, in some instances, nothing less than a carefully articulated cosmic vision” (Reading the Voice 57). Lyrical voice is associated with the language used within the context of the sacred, ceremonial, and revered cosmological aspects and societal influences of Native American culture and language.

### Colloquial Voice

The next level of register to consider is the colloquial voice. Colloquial voice is narrative and a more conversational or casual level of language. Zolbrod suggests that colloquial voice represents “the language of the speaking voice containing fewer manifestly artificial features, often with a different sort of content. It goes beyond the structural constraints of measured lyric; it follows the loose, more natural cadences of speech[]” (Reading the Voice 64):

the voice heard is that of a storyteller relating an action or a sequence of events occurring sometime in the past; that of an orator speaking discursively to transmit a body of information or to impart ideas; or that of a character in a dialogue or a dramatic exchange. In alphabetical traditions, like those of America and of Europe, such colloquial works would likely be classed as

short stories and novels or as essays and their unmeasured style would qualify as prose. (64).

The language used is not as elevated as the lyrical voice; instead, this voice is used for relating stories to an audience and connecting these stories to more personal and everyday events. Petrone describes some of these texts as experiences from life “that completely transcended the ordinary to those that were commonplace. These were usually humorous, soothing, entertaining or instructive—lullabies, jokes, corn-grinding and work songs, dance songs” (19). As can be seen from this list, the colloquial voice encompasses a larger area of theme and structure; therefore, the structure of a text for colloquial voice is also not as rigid in its form and content as that of text from the lyrical voice. Zolbrod notes that “[c]ontent becomes more open, as does style, allowing for such things as a greater range of thought” (Reading the Voice 64).

The following passages of text contain examples of colloquial voice from various Native oral traditions. This first example is from the Innu people of the Labrador Peninsula entitled “Wolverine Creates the World,”

Long, long ago was a time of great floods. Almost the whole world lay underwater. Wolverine was able to keep dry only by leaping from stone to stone. He said to himself, “If these floods get any worse, even my stepping-stones will be submerged, and that’ll put an end to my wandering, perhaps my life, too.”

So he called a meeting of all the water animals. He asked each to help him save the world from drowning.

First he talked to Otter. “Dive down, Otter,” Wolverine said, “and bring me some ground.”

Otter dived down, but he came up without any ground. He said he couldn’t see anything down there except weeds and a few fish.

Next he talked to Beaver. He said, “If you bring up some ground, I will find a pretty little wife for you.”

Beaver also went down, but he didn’t bring back any ground either. “I can’t swim deep enough to reach the bottom,” he gasped, “and as for a wife, I’d rather live without one than drown.”

So Wolverine asked Muskrat to bring him some ground. “I’ll try,” Muskrat said, “but only if you tie a thong to my leg.”

The thong was tied, and Muskrat jumped into the water. He was down there for quite a while. “I hope he didn’t drown,” Wolverine thought. He pulled up the rope, and when he did, up came the thong...without Muskrat.

Too bad, thought Wolverine. That means only water, water, and more water from now on.

But just when he had given up, Muskrat surfaced. His mouth was so full of ground that he couldn’t talk. Nor could he breathe.

Wolverine put his lips to Muskrat’s ass and blew as hard as he could. Out came the ground from Muskrat’s mouth, more and more ground, heaps and heaps of it, seemingly without end.

This ground is the very earth we walk on today. (Millman 211)

Wolverine is a trickster figure that is used to explain this creation story for the Innu people. (The trickster is a prominent figure in stories from Native American oral traditions, see Petrone 16). This figure takes on the extreme characteristics of humanity (good, bad, foolishness, and more) to point out human limitations in a didactic manner (16). In this story, Wolverine shows various positive attributes of human nature – the desire to survive, to create new land to live on – as well as the shortcomings – laziness and getting others to do the work for him. As well, because there is dialogue present, the tale is a less structured, more colloquial form. This is a story of creation, so it is also ontological or instructional; because it is a trickster tale, moreover, a response is invited – that of “laughter” (Millman 210) – also making it an entertaining story.

The integral function of social expectations associated with the storyteller and his or her audience both partaking in this type of register illustrate Bahktin’s point that “each [register] is grounded in a completely different principle for marking differences and for establishing units (for some this principle is functional, in others it is the principle of theme and content, in yet others it is, properly speaking, a socio-dialectological principle)” (291). The colloquial voice used in this example is the voice of function and purpose: it presents an ontological, didactic story that explains both origin and human nature.

The next example is an excerpt of a story from the Athabaskan oral tradition, “Fog Woman:”

Then one day,  
as he was out hunting,  
he came upon a woman.

“Let me take you back with me,” he said to her.

“No,” she replied.

“But why not?” he said.

“By myself...

tomorrow, I’ll return to you,” he told her.

All that summer

he walked around there and

he kept returning to that woman on the mountain.

He kept doing that, constantly...

Then once more he returned to her, and then,

“Please come home with me,”

he said to her.

“No, what you say to me is wrong,” she told him.

“But it is all right,” he said to her,

and so she started back with him, and just then,

it began to rain on them a little.

He came home with her.

With her, he came back to where they were staying,

and just then it began to rain on them.

It rained and rained on them,

it never cleared up, it was always foggy, and

it rained.

They stayed there in camp, and

their food began to run out, too.

What they had hunted there that summer,

the meat and other things, was used up.

“This is the reason

I told you it was wrong, can you see how it’s raining on us now?”

It kept on that way, on and on, it kept raining on them.

It was always foggy. (Evan and McGary 107-108)

Again, this is a narrated poem with a storyteller giving an account of the tale. As well, this is also a story that is told as a sequence of events with consequential actions meant for didactic purposes: it teaches people the need to respect the “proper relationship of humans to nature and the importance of valuing the survival of the group over the desires of the individual” (Evan and McGary 94); it then warns against breaking spiritual taboos; and it teaches the need to respect a proper balance between humans and the natural world (94-95). As a result of this didacticism, the poem is colloquial. However, although “Fog Woman” may be more conversational and narrative in form, the idea of the “greater-than-human-reality” is present along with some obvious repetitions that are characteristic of the lyrical voice. As an example the lines, “He came home with her./With her, he came back to where they were staying” (107), clearly shows the appositional repetition that is characteristic of lyrical voice. “Fog Woman” demonstrates a dual use of register.

### Double-Voicing

More often than not, texts from these oral traditions display a combination of the differing levels of register to create what is then called a double-voice (Bakhtin 429).

Zolbrod puts forth the further notion that “all poetic artifacts can be located somewhere

on a voice continuum between the lyrical extreme of song and the colloquial extreme of ordinary conversation” (Reading the Voice 40). Therefore, within the example from the Athabaskan tradition, the level of dialogue and storytelling is more colloquial, but “Fog Woman” demonstrates a use of both the colloquial and lyrical voices. This variance of register then agrees with the notion of Zolbrod’s “continuum.”

To clarify how texts fall along the continuum, Allen discusses the categories of texts from the early Native American oral traditions. She states, “The two forms basic to American Indian literature are the ceremony and the myth. The ceremony is the ritual enactment of a specialized perception of a cosmic relationship, while the myth is a prose record of that relationship” (61). In this categorization, we can see how Zolbrod’s definitions fit. The lyrical is part of the ceremonial and colloquial voice is representative of the myth. However, according to Bakhtin, this hybridization is automatic and “not dialogically coordinated in the linguistic consciousness of the [speaker]” but is “passed from one [register] to the other without thinking” (296). Because there is an unconscious switching from one linguistic register to another, it is understandable that the majority of texts fall somewhere between the extreme ends of the continuum.

At one end of the continuum, the colloquial voice transmits information meant for instructional purposes and the other end of the continuum is represented by the elevated sense of the lyrical voice. Dorothy J. Hale argues: “Bakhtin accords language, the power to convert the realities of social stratification into a linguistic utopia of intellectual and conversational community” (458). In this, we can see how Allen’s explanation of the two forms of “American Indian literature” work together. One form (myth) has the purpose of teaching and explaining reasons behind the other form (ceremony) that reinforces the

purpose. Both kinds of social situations are needed in the maintenance of cultural knowledge for oral traditions.

The next example, "Coyote, Skunk, and the Prairie Dogs," retains aspects of both the colloquial and lyrical voice.

So he grabbed the stick and thrust it into the ground again;

a little prairie dog he dug up, it is said.

"I'm not going to eat this," he said,

and he flung it away toward the east.

*[light laughter]*

He thrust it into the ground again;

a little prairie dog he dug up.

"I'm not going to eat this," he said,

and he flung it away toward the south.

*[light laughter]*

He thrust it into the ground again;

a little prairie dog he dug up.

"I'm not going to eat this," he said,

and he flung it away toward the west.

He thrust it into the ground again;

a little prairie dog he dug up.

"I'm not going to eat this," he said,

and he flung it away toward the north.

He thrust repeatedly in many places, it is said,

and couldn't find any more.

Nothing, it is said.

There weren't any, it is said.

He got frustrated; he walked around in circles.

So he went around, and he picked up those little prairie dogs  
he had thrown away.

Then he picked up every little bit and ate it all.

*[soft laughter]*

Then he started to follow Golizhii's tracks, it is said,  
but he couldn't pick up the trail.

*[quiet laughter]*

He kept following the tracks, back and forth,  
to where the rock meets the sand.

(He didn't bother to look up.)

Golizhii dropped a bone, and Ma'ii looked up, it is said.

It dropped at his feet.

*[quiet laughter]*

"Shilna'ash, share some meat with me again."

*[laughter]*

"Certainly not," Golizhii said to him, it is said.

Ma'ii was begging but to no avail, it is said.

Golizhii kept dropping bones down to him.

Ma'ii chewed the bones, it is said.

[laughter]

That's how it happened, it is said. (Toelken 599-600)

Cultural norms are violated in this tale on purpose to provide instruction to listeners. Coyote, another trickster figure, is used to portray human vices such as “anger, selfishness, immoderate or inconsiderate behaviour,” and “misuse of ritual” within this story (Toelken 591). These instructional elements, along with the narration and conversational dialogue, show the characteristics of colloquial voice. In addition, the form of this text follows a more rigid patterning, especially in reference to the cardinal directions that display the use of lyrical voice. The misuse of the healing ritual combined with the naming of the directions “is destructive and suggestive of witchery” according to Toelken (592). This again suggests the “greater-than-human reality” of the lyrical voice. The text, “Coyote, Skunk and the Prairie Dogs” contain many elements from the colloquial and the lyrical voice; these language registers and their societal conditions come together through “social stratification” that both uphold cultural beliefs and taboos and emphasizes these cultural ideals through the didactic storytelling form.

Native American oral traditions retained verbal artistic elements unique to these forms of art. Artistic as they were, the oral traditions were functional in nature to the various societal situations of Native culture. Along with this variety of function, there was also a need for the varying levels of language register required for each situation. Since oral traditions were meant for didactic, entertaining, and sacred purposes, the duality of linguistic register is a natural feature that encompasses the multi-purposeful nature of oral traditions.

Later, in the early post-contact period, we will see how these rhetorical features of Native American verbal art would fall out of use by writers, such as Pauline Johnson, who worked within the literary traditions of the dominant Western culture (see chapter three). These oral rhetorical techniques are revived with great success, however, by the authors of the Native American Renaissance, especially Leslie Marmon Silko and Thomas King, who would use them to produce a particularly Native form of contemporary literature.

### Chapter 3:

#### Pauline Johnson' Poetry and the Emergence of Double-Consciousness

In chapter two, we saw the two main registers in pre-contact Native American literature and saw how their combination, or “double-voicing,” was characteristic of the oral tradition. With the imposition of colonization and Euro-American society with its Western literary standards upon the Aboriginal people of North America, this linguistic feature was no longer seen among works by Native authors, especially, those published in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. The disappearance of oral traditional practices was due to acculturation and assimilation policies that forced Native authors to conform with the Western literary publishing practices of the time in order to make their works known to the reading audience. Instead of drawing upon their multiple use of linguistic register, Aboriginal authors now had to negotiate within the different expectations of the dominant culture.

##### E. Pauline Johnson

Pauline Johnson is one such Aboriginal author. Her published works present content from the two cultures in which she lived, the dominant and the Aboriginal; but her works also show how she was consistently conscious of her audience's Western literary expectations. In this way, Johnson's works demonstrate W.E.B. DuBois' theory of “double-consciousness.” (below) This bicultural awareness enabled Johnson to not only include the themes of nature and the plight of Canada's Aboriginal people in her poetry, but she also presented these ideas and themes through the appropriation of

Western literary standards to the Euro-American audience. The idea of “double-consciousness,” then, replaces the “double-voicedness” of the earlier, oral, Aboriginal literatures.

Johnson lived in a time when North America was implementing governmental policies of acculturation and assimilation for all North American Native people. Scott B. Vickers attests to this fact in North American history:

With the coming of the colonists, the processes of deracination and enculturation slowly eroded the embedded values of the oral tradition. As we have seen, both governmental agencies and missionary Christians largely perceived Indian ceremonialism as primitive, heathenish, and even satanic, and sought to suppress not only the major ceremonials where their poetry might be heard, but also the storytelling and other oral transmissions of medicine men, shaman, and tribal elders. The eradication of Indians’ native tongues was the goal of some missionary and government boarding schools, where children were isolated from their families and sometimes beaten for speaking their own language. In short, many Indians were shamed or beaten into forsaking or camouflaging their tribal languages, the only languages they had for remembering and retaining their tribal identities. Oral traditions obviously need audiences and participants within the community, talkers and hearers, who conjoin in continuously reinventing the culture in which they live. Without such community, confirmed by language, Indians were forced into a position of articulating their individual Indianness via the white man’s language. (126)

Through these actions, Aboriginal people could no longer practice their languages and oral traditions, and, subsequently, artistic and prosodic elements, such as double voicing, had all but disappeared from published works by Native authors. Instead, Native authors like Johnson learned to conform to western literary practices “via the white man’s language” (126). Johnson, like other Aboriginal people, was forced to be educated in English and learn the literary standards of Western society.

Throughout her education, however, Johnson was able to maintain her own familial ties and learn of the traditions from her own Mohawk ancestry. In Johnson’s biographical account of her English mother’s story, Johnson explains how she and her siblings

were reared on the strictest lines of both Indian and English principles. They were taught the legends, the traditions, the culture and the etiquette of both races to which they belonged; but above all, their mother instilled into them from the very cradle that they were of their father’s people, not of hers.

(Moccasin Maker 69)

This bicultural exposure to both societies enabled Johnson to write and perform her poetry and to express Native culture through her written works. Not all Native people were given the same concessions as Johnson: because her parents each came from well-educated backgrounds, Johnson received a bi-cultural education. Johnson’s father, George H.M. Johnson was named “as a hereditary Mohawk chief” and held a position as government translator with the Six Nations (Strong-Boag and Gerson 48). Her mother, Emily Howells, “came from an economically comfortable English family sympathetic to evangelical and anti-slavery campaigns” (48). These sympathies also extended to rights

for Aboriginal people. Because Johnson was raised in an affluent family, she was allowed more liberties and was thus able to attain a bi-cultural knowledge that exemplifies “double consciousness” within her works.

#### Double-Consciousness/Double-Colonization: Johnson as First Nations and Woman

W.E.B. DuBois’ idea of “double-consciousness” was formulated in relation to African American people, living in Euro-American society. This same concept can be applied appropriately to other ethnic minority populations within North America, however, when they share similar histories. In the case of Native Americans/First Nations, this involved the oppressive acts of assimilation. Native people could then only look at themselves from the perspective of Western society. Adopting DuBois’ description of the situation facing African Americans to that facing Aboriginal people, we can say this society was

a world which yields [them, the non-dominant people] no true self-consciousness, but only lets [them] see [themselves] through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels [this] two-ness, ... two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois 2)

In literary works by Native authors such as Johnson, there is a consciousness of self-identity as a member of an ethnic group other than that of the dominant culture. This is what DuBois refers to in his passage. There are two views for Native writers: their view

of themselves as a dominated people, and their understanding, as participants in the larger culture, of how they are perceived by the dominant Euro-American audience. This double-consciousness is apparent in Johnson's social and literary life since "[s]he was simultaneously female, middle class, and Mixed-race" and "had to make her way as a respectable woman in a world that regarded her as an exotic other" (Strong-Boag and Gerson 95). Johnson had to live and function within two worlds and she was consciously aware of her position in Canadian society as a writer, performer, and a woman but also as a woman of Aboriginal descent. Johnson had to contend not only with her position as a person of First Nations' heritage but also with the status of women during her lifetime.

"Double colonization" is a term Robert J. C. Young uses to describe the position indigenous women found themselves in within a colonized society; he explains that "[w]omen therefore had to fight the double colonization of patriarchal domination in its local as well as its imperial forms" (379). Young goes on to say that women "also sought to win their liberation as a sex, by claiming rights, equality, access to public space and public activism, and to education" (370). Johnson had to contend with the status of women in Canada as well as her own "mixed-race" status. These are the same issues that were raised in the "New Woman" movement in which Johnson was an active participant. In Canada, "the New Woman signaled modernity in her espousal of many causes, including better education, paid work, egalitarian marriage, and health and dress reform, to improve her own lot and that of her sex in general" (Strong-Boag and Gerson 59). Although both women's rights issues and Aboriginal issues were calling for the same privileges and rights, such as equal "education" and "economic opportunity," the two were separate since each were concerned with the political agendas of their particular

communities (68). Hence, Johnson straddled both political areas giving her a “double-colonization.” At the same time, her middle-class background, though mixed-blood, allowed her the liberty to write, publish and perform her poetry (70). Strong-Boag and Gerson confirm that “class was an essential part of [Johnson’s] repertoire” and “[b]y clinging to its privileges, she could hope to counteract other disadvantages” such as the discriminatory attitudes toward women and Aboriginal people that were held by colonizers (70).

#### Johnson’s Poetry: Native Themes and Western Traditions

The best way to examine Johnson’s “double-consciousness” is through her poetry: here she displays her dual sense of the Western literary self and of the “other.” On the one hand, her works often examine themes of nature and the impact of colonization upon First Nations people; on the other, they utilize prosodic elements adopted from the literary standards of Western publications. In an excerpt of one of her best-known poems, “The Song My Paddle Sings,” Johnson incorporates the theme of nature and her love for the sport of canoeing:

West wind, blow from your prairie nest  
Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.  
The sail is idle, the sailor too;  
O! wind of the west, we wait for you.  
Blow, blow!  
I have wooed you so,  
But never a favour you bestow.  
You rock your cradle the hills between,

But scorn to notice my white lateen.  
I stow the sail, unship the mast:  
I wooed you long but my wooing's past;  
My paddle will lull you into rest.  
O! drowsy wind of the drowsy west,  
Sleep, sleep,  
By your mountain steep,  
Or down where the prairie grasses sweep!  
Now fold in slumber your laggard wings,  
For soft is the song my paddle sings.  
August is laughing across the sky,  
Laughing while paddle, canoe and I,  
Drift, drift,  
Where the hills uplift  
On either side of the current swift.

... (Flint and Feather 31)

This poem is “Native” in that canoeing is a stereotypically “Native” activity. As well, the subject matter and form are also comfortably Western. During the period when Johnson wrote this poem, nature was a popular poetic theme in Euro-Canadian society. Strong-Boag and Gerson argue that Johnson’s nature and canoeing poems “strongly resemble similar verse by non-Native Canadian poets of the 1890s” (115). Johnson was also a member of a women’s canoe club (80) and many of her poems reflect this passion for the sport of canoeing and enthusiasm that complemented the New Woman’s movement’s

interest in health reform (59). Her themes, nature and canoeing, are both Native and reflect the popularity of poetic content from Western society and her involvement with political agendas for the women's movement. By so closely integrating the two, Johnson's work was accepted by the Euro-Canadian audience and publishers.

Another aspect that allowed for the popularity of Johnson's poetry was that her – verse was also written according to Western prosodic styles. What is most noticeable is the use of rhyming schemes within the texts. In "The Song My Paddle Sings," variations of rhyming schemes consist of *aa*, *bb*, *ccc*, *aa*, *bb*, or *aa*, *bbb*. Johnson's education was greatly influenced by her English mother and thus she was exposed to the works of poets such as Longfellow, Byron, Shakespeare, and Emerson: indeed, "Johnson also read the important poets and prose writers of the day" (Brown, Bennett and Cooke 144). Style and form were then influenced by Johnson's knowledge of Western poetry and prose.

In the next excerpt, from "The Bird's Lullaby," nature is presented with the rhyming scheme *ab ab aaa*:

I

Sing to us, cedars; the twilight is creeping  
With shadowy garments, the wilderness through;  
All day we have carolled, and now would be sleeping,  
So echo the anthems we warbled to you;  
While we swing, swing,  
And your branches sing,  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering.

...

### III

Sing to us, cedars; your voice is so lowly,  
Your breathing so fragrant, your branches so strong;  
Our little nest-cradles are swaying so slowly,  
While zephyrs are breathing their slumberous song,  
And we swing, swing,  
While your branches sing,  
And we drowse to your dreamy whispering. (Flint and Feather 52-53)

The “Bird’s Lullaby” shows that Johnson’s work “was well in tune with the canonical poets of her generation” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 152). These variations of rhyming schemes are prevalent throughout all of Johnson’s poetry. She wrote in the style that was familiar to her audience. Johnson was consciously aware of audience expectations and because she conformed to Western literary standards, her poetry was accepted.

Another Western aspect of Johnson’s poetry is the “unitary voice” that is unlike the “double-voicedness” of early Native American oral literature. Bakhtin argues that “[t]he very rhythm of poetic genres does not promote any appreciable degree of stratification” (298). Western literary standards of poetry do not include varying levels of register but restricts itself to a single language. Bakhtin further states that “[r]hythm serves to strengthen and concentrate even further the unity and hermetic quality of the surface of poetic style, and of the unitary language that this style posits” (298). Johnson’s use of rigid metrics and rhythm, according to Western poetic standards, and the thematic content portrayed in these two examples demonstrates her appropriation and presence of consciousness within her poetry. The “double-voicedness” of Aboriginal oral traditions is

not a part of these early, published works. Johnson's conformity to the "unitary voice" of Western literary standards replaces the traditional practices of the "double voice."

### Johnson's Poetry: Politicization

Although the majority of Johnson's poetry follows these aspects of popular theme and strict poetic style, in a smaller representation of her poetry, Johnson brings forth an awareness of political position from her First Nations ancestry. Several of Johnson's poems portray the unjust treatment and the effects of colonization for Native people. Despite the appropriation of the English language and Western literary practices, Johnson also includes themes of Native plight within her poetry. In his essay, Arnold Krupat notes that the "Indian had to assimilate—become 'civilized'—or vanish" (90). Johnson had assimilated into the dominant society by becoming educated and adopting Western writing practices, but she also chose to use these skills to portray the injustices that were perpetuated upon her people. The next excerpt, from "The Cattle Thief," is an example that demonstrates Johnson's concern for her Native heritage.

...

You have cursed, and called him a Cattle Thief, though you robbed him first  
of bread—

Robbed him and robbed my people—look there, at that shrunken face,

Starved with a hollow hunger, we owe to you and your race.

What have you left to us of land, what have you left of game,

What have you brought but evil, and curses since you came?

How have you paid us for our game? how paid us for our land?

By a *book*, to save our souls from the sins *you* brought in your other hand.

Go back with your new religion, we never have understood  
Your robbing an Indian's *body*, and mocking his *soul* with food.  
Go back with your new religion, and find—if find you can—  
The *honest* man you have ever made from out a *starving* man.  
You say your cattle are not ours, your meat is not our meat;  
When *you* pay for the land you live in, *we'll* pay for the meat we eat.  
Give back our land and our country, give back our herds of game;  
Give back the furs and the forests that were ours before you came;  
Give back the peace and the plenty. Then come with your new belief,  
And blame, if you dare, the hunger that *drove* him to be a thief." (Flint and Feather 15-16)

In this passage, Johnson draws attention to the effects of colonial and governmental policies upon Aboriginal people. "The Cattle Thief," as Strong-Boag and Gerson contend, "present[s] a politicized awareness of not only the utter disempowerment of Indians, but also the starvation resulting from destruction of their traditional economies," and that Johnson also "accuse[s] the 'English settlers' of consciously participating in genocide" (148). She speaks out, through this poem, on such topics as hunger, land loss, the imposition and hypocrisy of Judeo-Christian religion, and the inequality of Native rights. This poem explicitly condemns the colonial mistreatment of Aboriginal people. By drawing attention to these injustices, Johnson displays her "double-consciousness." The portrayal of the "disempowerment" of First Nations people is communicated through the Western standards of publication that the dominant audience is familiar with.

In another poem, "Silhouette," Johnson illustrates the economic destruction of Aboriginal people by colonizers:

The sky-line melts from the russet into blue,  
Unbroken the horizon, saving where  
A wreath of smoke curls up the far, thin air,  
And points the distant lodges of the Sioux.  
Etched where the lands and cloudlands touch and die  
A solitary Indian tepee stands,  
The only habitation of these lands,  
That roll their magnitude from sky to sky.  
The tent poles lift and loom in thin relief,  
The upward floating smoke ascends between,  
And near the open doorway, gaunt and lean,  
And shadow-like, there stands an Indian Chief.  
With eyes that lost their lustre long ago,  
With visage fixed and stern as fate's decree,  
He looks towards the empty west, to see  
The never-coming herd of buffalo.  
Only the bones that bleach upon the plains,  
Only the fleshless skeletons that lie  
In ghastly nakedness and silence, cry  
Out mutely that naught else to him remains. (Flint and Feather 107)

This poem depicts the disappearance of the way of life that the Plains people once knew. Due to the effects of colonization, the economic dependence upon the buffalo no longer exists for the Aboriginal people of the plains. Johnson shows this in her descriptions of “a solitary Indian tepee,” “a Chief” “gaunt and lean,” a land that is “empty west,” and the “never coming herd of buffalo” (107). While the previous poem, “The Cattle Thief,” bluntly blames Western society for the plights and conditions of Aboriginal people, “Silhouette” portrays this oppression in a more subtle way. However, the effects of colonization are apparent in both poems. By appropriating Western literary standards, Johnson subverts these practices while forcing the English language to “bear the burden of [her] own cultural experience” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 38). She uses the dominant language to express the experiences of a colonized people from whom she is a descendent.

Through this subversive use of Western poetic style, Johnson shows her own “double-consciousness” because she knows how to effectively use Western literary standards to present her knowledge of First Nations people. Johnson had to live with the cultural tension between her two heritages. As Gerson and Strong-Boag argue,

Johnson’s verse, fiction, and non-fiction are ultimately the abiding legacy of a Mohawk-Canadian woman who tested the boundaries of what it meant to be Mixed-race and female in the imperial and patriarchal world of Europe and North America during the decades after the creation of the new Dominion of Canada in 1867. (E. Pauline Johnson xiii)

The themes of Johnson’s poetry, nature, canoeing, and politics concerning First Nations people, coupled with the knowledge of Western literary techniques and the dominant

language creates a tension between the two cultures, the dominant and the Native, thereby extending DuBois' idea of "double-consciousness" in Johnson's poetry.

### Religion

Another area of Johnson's poetry dwells on the theme of religion that also shows a "double-consciousness." "The Cattle Thief" shows the hypocrisy of Judeo-Christian values that endorse the situation described in the poem. Johnson displays her own uncertainties on this topic by writing poetry that both supports Judeo-Christianity and the aspects of Native beliefs concerning the afterlife. In "Brier: Good Friday," Johnson adheres to religious values from Euro-Canadian society.

Because, dear Christ, your tender, wounded arm  
Bends back the brier that edges life's long way  
That no hurt comes to heart, to soul no harm,  
I do not feel the thorns so much to-day.  
Because I never knew your care to tire,  
Your hand to weary guiding me aright,  
Because you walk before and crush the brier,  
It does not pierce my feet so much to-night.  
Because so often you have hearkened to  
My selfish prayers, I ask but one thing now,  
That these harsh hands of mine add not unto  
The crown of thorns upon your bleeding brow. (Flint and Feather 68)

"Brier" (1893) displays "heartfelt Christian belief" (Strong-Boag and Gerson 22).

However, a year later, "The Cattle Thief" (1894) outwardly criticizes these same values.

The latter poem shows consciousness for her Mohawk ancestry and Aboriginal people. Johnson is conscious of her Euro-Canadian audience with the earlier poem, so mixed ideals concerning religious beliefs come across through this “double-conscious” outlook. Johnson’s shift from Western to bicultural awareness came quite rapidly. This was in part as a result of her success as a recitalist: Johnson began her stage career in 1892 (Gerson and Strong-Boag xvi) and with her stage manager, Frank Yeigh, “quickly capitalized on [audience] enthusiasm for an attractive performer and liberal guilt about the repression of the First Nations” (xvi). Later, in 1894, Johnson also acquired support “with influential patrons, including the Duke of Connaught, Queen Victoria’s son and adopted chief of the Six Nations, and Theodore Watts-Dunton, the powerful literary critic” (xvii). With support from the Euro-Canadian and British audiences, Johnson was able to express her shift in both religious and political opinions in her poetry.

As a result of these contradictions, Johnson offers an alternate religious view that stratifies these uncertainties. Because of her notoriety as a performer Johnson was then able to put forth a Native interpretation of the afterlife in “The Happy Hunting Grounds.” This idea is comparative to the Judeo-Christian values and beliefs of the afterlife.

Into the rose gold westland, its yellow prairies roll,  
World of the bison’s freedom, home of the Indian’s soul.  
Roll out, O sea! in sunlight bathed,  
Your plains wind-tossed, and grass enswathed.  
Farther than vision ranges, farther than eagles fly,  
Stretches the land of beauty, arches the perfect sky,  
Hemm’d through the purple mists afar

By peaks that gleam like star on star.  
Fringing the prairie billows, fretting horizon's line,  
Darkly green are slumb'ring wildernesses of pine,  
Sleeping until the zephyrs throng  
To kiss their silence into song.  
Whispers freighted with odour swinging into the air,  
Russet needles as censers swing to an altar, where  
The angels' songs are less divine  
Than duo sung twixt breeze and pine.  
Laughing into the forest, dimples a mountain stream,  
Pure as the airs above it, soft as a summer dream,  
O! Lethean spring thou'rt only found  
Within this ideal hunting ground.  
Surely the great Hereafter cannot be more than this,  
Surely we'll see that country after Time's farewell kiss.  
Who would his lovely faith condole?  
Who envies not the Red-skin's soul,  
Sailing into the cloud land, sailing into the sun,  
Into the crimson portals ajar when life is done?  
O! dear dead race, my spirit too  
Would fain sail westward unto you. (Flint and Feather 71-72)

Elements on afterlife and paradise are images that audiences from Western society and First Nations can understand. The comparison of nature to the divine suggests a lofty

sublimity that the Euro-Canadian is familiar with from the Romantic poets of the time. As well, Johnson compares the burning of cedar, the “Russet needles,” to “censers” and the “altar.” The burning of cedar incense is a typically Native American religious practice and is subsequently equated with the familiar symbols from Judeo-Christianity (71). The Native afterlife is similarly located within the heavens with “Farther than vision ranges, farther than eagles fly,/Stretches the land of beauty, arches the perfect sky” (71). Johnson also suggests that “The Happy Hunting Ground” is a better place for Aboriginal people than the Judeo-Christian heaven is for non-Natives when she writes “Who envies not the Red-skin’s soul” (72). By the inclusion of the “yellow prairies,” the “bison’s freedom,” “wildernesses of pine,” and the “mountain stream,” Johnson’s portrayal of the Native afterlife expresses a return to a continuance of a life that the Aboriginal people once knew thus showing a better outcome for them. Whereas, according to Judeo-Christian doctrine, heaven is an unknown place in the afterlife for believers of this doctrine in Western society (Rev. 21.1-5). The Native afterlife is compared to Judeo-Christian afterlife in such a way that each has the sense of sublimity. Johnson compares these dual ideas of the afterlife in a way that includes the perceptions from the two societies. She is, again, conscious of her Aboriginal heritage and the religious beliefs from this background but she is also aware of the religious beliefs from Euro-Canadian society. In this poem, Johnson chooses to bring the two systems of belief together to create a hybrid outlook of the “hereafter” – although from her descriptions of “The Happy Hunting Grounds,” it is obvious that Johnson’s preference favours the Native afterlife.

### Johnson's Career as a Public Performer

While Johnson's poetry includes the conscious awareness of who she is both as a person of Mohawk descent and as a published writer within the dominant community, her career as a live performer emphasizes this notion in a visual way. It is through this visualization that Johnson gained her popularity with the Western audience thus allowing another area where Johnson found expression for her poetry and her dual heritage.

When Johnson became a public recitalist, she highlighted both her Mohawk heritage and her Western upbringing; this was accomplished through her choice of costume for performances. While reciting poems with an indigenous theme she would appear in Native costume, and when delivering poems with non-Native content, Johnson would dress according to current evening fashions (Strong-Boag and Gerson 110-113). By exploiting her Mohawk heritage on stage, Johnson knew "that eastern Canadian audiences were well educated to recognize what represented Indianness on stage" (111). In addition to exoticizing herself, Johnson's costume was also contrived of a mix of "Indigenous cultural artifacts" (111) to create the image of a "Mohawk princess" (116). Johnson knew what her audience's expectations were for her and this awareness of how the Euro-Canadian audience perceived her indicates Johnson's "double-consciousness" of herself, the image she presented, and Western perceptions of her as a person of mixed-race.

Western society retained a fascination toward the exotic other. Before Johnson began her stage career "Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, with its troupes of costumed Indians on horseback, had included Brantford in its 1885 tour of forty Canadian and American cities" (Strong-Boag and Gerson 111). Thus, when Johnson dressed in

Native costume, she knew that her audience was already well versed in the image of a Native person according to Western views. By representing herself in this dual manner, Johnson had played into Western notions of image for First Nations people. These images were perpetuated through European and Euro-Canadian beliefs that the “other,” anyone of non-European descent, were objects and specimens to be studied rather than viewed as already well-developed societies and individuals (Smith 24-25). Edward Said contends that

there emerged a complex [non-European] suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character. (7-8)

The “other” was a person who was different from anything European or Euro-Canadian. Differences in cultural beliefs and values were cause for study by those from the dominant society and therefore a fascination. However, Johnson continued to capitalize upon this aspect of the “other” when she toured overseas for public performances in 1894. Strong-Boag and Gerson maintain that “[t]he imperial metropolis’s fascination with the relatively exotic aspects of the former colony would contribute substantially to Johnson’s later self-dramatization for her British audiences, for whom she downplayed her English mother in order to highlight her Mohawk father” (102). Johnson’s British audience, as well, viewed her as the “other” and she purposely drew attention to her

Mohawk heritage because of these perceptions. Live performances by Johnson consistently showed the “two-ness” of her cultural awareness.

As a Native author living in the dominant society, Johnson adopted Western literary standards for the purposes of publishing and public performance. Instead of using the artistic elements from her First Nations’ oral tradition, Johnson appropriated the English language and its prosodic elements for the creation of her own works. This creates the effect of not only the awareness of her Aboriginal traditions and culture but more significantly of how Johnson sees herself through the perceptions from the Euro-Canadian society in which she lived. Double-consciousness thus replacing the linguistic element double-voice in an era when Native authors were limited in education and employment opportunities according to societal policies of assimilation and acculturation.

## Chapter 4:

### Re-appearance of Double-Voice in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

In the published works of Pauline Johnson, we see the loss of the oral tradition and its features as a consequence of colonial practices such as acculturation and assimilation. With the Native American Renaissance in the mid-twentieth-century and onward, the incorporation of stories and poetic elements from Aboriginal oral traditions becomes a significant factor in Native American literature. As in the past, this return to Native American tradition also involves and marks a return to the characteristic purposes such as the didactic and sacred: in the past, oral traditions communicated cultural knowledge through stories and ceremonies to teach the younger generations; now this didactic purpose is again transmitted, but through writing. Furthermore, the return of these functions is also accompanied by the reappearance of the characteristic oral rhetorical feature of “double-voicing.” Together, these features mark an attempt at restoring and representing a traditional Native American approach to storytelling in a contemporary literary setting. Writers of the Native American Renaissance combine both the “double-consciousness” – or bicultural awareness – of Pauline Johnson, with the “double-voicing” – or heteroglossia – of traditional oral culture in order to produce a new type of literature that is at home in both the Native and dominant Western traditions.

#### Double-Voice

Beginning in the mid-twentieth-century, the Native American Renaissance is the literary movement where Native American authors begin to incorporate their knowledge

of cultural traditions (Lyons 14-15) and thus some of the verbal artistic devices from storytelling traditions. Leslie Marmon Silko is one such Native American author who, in her novel Ceremony, displays her traditional knowledge of stories from her Keresan/Laguna background. She intertwines the old, stories of her Native heritage, with the new, the Western novel form. Through her use or intertextualization and application of these traditional stories in the larger narrative, Silko also reintroduces the “double-voice” feature found in the preserved and translated texts collected from Native American oral traditions. With her application of traditional stories and oral rhetorical devices, Silko extends her storytelling tradition onto a modern day setting within her novel, thus enabling the cyclic nature of the oral tradition.

It may seem confusing to think of oral tradition and oral storytelling in a written mode. However, Robert A. Lee proposes reading this literature as “[a] performative storytelling, [with] the ‘oral’ lightly assumed in the ‘written’” (462). Lee refers to the idea that the allusion to the storytelling tradition is present in works by contemporary Native authors, albeit through written means. This “performative storytelling” is what Silko adopts as a means of combining the traditional stories of her ancestors with the Western literary standards of her writing. By appropriating the literary standards and the language of the dominant culture, an author such as Silko allows her work to reach a wider audience; but by also incorporating a sense of the oral traditions within her writing, Silko also gives her audience an opportunity to participate in the storytelling experience.

#### Storytelling: the Past in the Present

The experience of audience participation begins right away because Silko’s novel opens with a story of origin from her Keresan/Laguna tradition.

Ts'its'tsinako, 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. (1)

By starting off her novel with this story, Silko immediately draws attention to her Native American background. She also brings in the notion of the cyclic nature of stories from oral traditions: what happened in the past is applicable in the present and, as Paula Gunn Allen argues in reference to the Native American view of the universe, “all things are related and are of one family” (60). Because of this beginning, Ceremony is then presented in a way that hearkens back to the storytelling method from Native American

oral traditions. Claire Keyes confirms that “Leslie Silko emerge[s] as a highly literate, contemporary storyteller[.]” (121). In addition, by applying past stories within her writing, Silko continues a cultural tradition in which “Laguna/Keres women played a crucial role ... in maintaining tribal memory” (121). Because part of her purpose is to maintain “tribal memory,” Silko’s use of this story about Thought-Woman and her sisters has a didactic intent. Its goal is to remember the deities and origins of the Keresan/Laguna traditions and show how these past figures and events affect the present day situations within Silko’s novel.

Didacticism, being a feature of colloquial voice from the oral traditions, includes with it the purpose of instruction – in a narrative form. These are two characteristics of the colloquial voice, as previously identified by Paul Zolbrod and discussed in chapter two that can be seen in the opening passage of Silko’s novel.

In continuing through the opening chapter to her novel, Silko also introduces two other Pueblo deities, who are also sisters, to explain the spiritual imbalance that causes drought in the land.

It was summertime  
and Iktoa’ak’o’ya-Reed Woman  
was always taking a bath.  
She spent all day long  
sitting in the river  
splashing down  
the summer rain.  
But her sister

Corn Woman  
worked hard all day  
sweating in the sun  
getting sore hands  
in the corn field.

Corn Woman got tired of that  
she got angry  
she scolded  
her sister  
for bathing all day long.

Iktoa'ak'o'ya-Reed Woman  
went away then  
she went back  
to the original place.  
down below.

And there was no more rain then.  
Everything dried up  
all the plants  
the corn  
the beans  
they all dried up  
and started blowing away  
in the wind.

The people and the animals

were thirsty.

They were starving. (13-14)

The deities and the actions that follow are applicable to the modern day events for Silko's protagonist, Tayo. The story of Reed Woman and Corn Woman is the traditional story of "Ko-pot and Ka-nat" from the Keresan culture (Nelson, "He Said" 34) and it is this knowledge that Silko draws upon and parallels with the actions and consequences for her main character. In Ceremony, it is Tayo who prays away the rain and causes there to be a drought within the land for his people.

He damned the rain until the words were a chant, and he sang it while he crawled through the mud to find the corporal and get him up before the Japanese saw them. He wanted the words to make a cloudless blue sky, pale with a summer sun pressing across wide and empty horizons. The words gathered inside him and gave him strength. He pulled on the corporal's arm; he lifted him to his knees and all the time he could hear his own voice praying against the rain. (12)

...

So he had prayed the rain away, and for the sixth year it was dry; the grass turned yellow and it did not grow. Wherever he looked, Tayo could see the consequences of his praying; the gray mule grew gaunt, and the goat and kid had to wander farther and farther each day to find weeds or dry shrubs to eat. (14)

Silko creates a modern day situation that is similar to the story from her Native heritage. In this manner she parallels the actions of the unending rain, the scolding and the damning of the rain by both Corn Woman and Tayo, its cessation, and finally the consequences that these actions produce, drought. Adapting the old story to a new situation is a traditional function of the storyteller in order to continue and transmit cultural knowledge in an oral tradition. Maria Moss expands upon this idea by arguing that “Silko adapt[s] ritual narrative structures to convey meaning. [She] thereby succeed[s] in re-creating and renewing the ancient relationship that exists between contemporary man and the people and events of the origin stories” (49). Cultural meaning and knowledge is passed on from the traditional stories and is made applicable to new situations. These were some of the purposes of oral traditions in the past. Petrone confirms that “[o]ral traditions have not been static. Their strength lies in their ability to survive through the power of tribal memory and to renew themselves by incorporating new elements” (17). It is in this renewal that Silko is mimetic and extends the changing and cyclic nature of past oral traditions onto her contemporary writing.

This paralleling is continued throughout Ceremony. After the rain stops, a messenger is needed to appease the deities. Tayo, as the modern day messenger, then represents the running storyline of “Fly and Hummingbird.” The representation of the messenger in traditional Keresan/Laguna stories is an example of cultural knowledge. Messenger figures, usually in the forms of animals, are prominent within stories from Native American oral traditions. The figures of hummingbird and fly act as “messengers/intermediaries between the earth-surface world and [Nau'ts'ity'i]” (Nelson,

“He Said” 36); Nau'ts'ity'i (or Reed Woman) is the rain deity in Silko's novel. These figures parallel Tayo's journey throughout Ceremony.

The wind stirred the dust.

The people were starving.

“She's [Nau'ts'ity'i] angry with us,”

the people said.

“Maybe because of that

Ck'o'yo magic

we were fooling with.

We better send someone

to ask our forgiveness.”

They noticed hummingbird

was fat and shiny

he had plenty to eat.

They asked how come he

looked so good.

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. (53-54)

The introduction of the messenger story also indicates the beginning of Tayo's journey to appease the spiritual imbalance between the people (mainly the war veterans) and the deities of the Pueblo people. Here Tayo is in conversation with his Uncle Robert:

Robert looked up at him. "The other day old man Ku'oosh came to the house. He told your grandma what some of the old men are thinking. They think you better get help pretty soon."

"But I haven't been in trouble for a long time, not since that time with Emo."

"I know, but there are other things too."

"Oh,," Tayo knew. There were other things. "It isn't just me, Robert. The other guys, they're messed up too. That ceremony didn't help them."

Robert didn't answer. His face was still; Tayo didn't know the last few minutes if it was anger or sadness he saw. He got up from the table slowly; all his energy had drained out of him.

"I'll go," he said softly, "whatever they say." (Silko 106)

The beginning of Tayo's journey mirrors the start of the journey for hummingbird and fly. He must face a personal and spiritual journey for himself in order to make right the imbalance he has caused for his people when he prayed the rain away. Similar comparisons between the two journeys continue throughout the novel, as hummingbird and fly meet with "old Buzzard" and Tayo meets with Betonie, a medicine man.

They took more pollen,

more beads, and more prayer sticks,  
and they went to see old Buzzard.  
They arrived at his place in the east.

“Who’s out there?”

Nobody ever came here before.”

“It’s us, Hummingbird and Fly.”

“Oh. What do you want?”

“We need you to purify our town.”

“Well, look here. Your offering isn’t  
complete. Where’s the tobacco?”

(You see, it wasn’t easy.)

Fly and Hummingbird

Had to fly back to town again. (113)

In the following passages, Betonie implies the same need for Tayo to continue and complete his journey.

‘One night or nine nights won’t do it any more,’ the medicine man said; ‘the ceremony isn’t finished yet.’ He was drawing in the dirt with his finger. ‘Remember these stars,’ he said. ‘I’ve seen them and I’ve seen the spotted cattle; I’ve seen a mountain and I’ve seen a woman.’

The wind came up and caught the sleeves of Tayo’s shirt. He smelled wood smoke and sage in the old man’s clothes. He reached for the billfold in his hip pocket. ‘I want to pay you for the ceremony you did tonight.’

Old Betonie shook his head. 'This has been going on for a long long time now. It's up to you. Don't let them stop you. Don't let them finish off this world.' (152)

In the end, the journey is complete in both storylines.

Hummingbird and Fly thanked him.

They took the tobacco to old Buzzard.

'Here it is. We finally got it but it

sure wasn't very easy.'

'Okay,' Buzzard said

'Go back and tell them

I'll purify the town.'

And he did—

First to the east

Then to the south

Then to the west

And finally to the north.

Everything was set straight again

After all that ck'o'yo' magic.

The storm clouds returned

The grass and plants started growing again.

So she told them

'Stay out of trouble

from now on.

It isn't very easy  
To fix up things again.  
Remember that  
Next time  
Some ck'o'yo magician  
comes to town.' (255-256)

And for Tayo:

When he felt the dampness of the river, he started running. The sun was pushing against the gray horizon hills, sending yellow light across the clouds, and the yellow river sand was speckled with the broken shadows of tamaric and river willow. The transition was completed. In the west and in the south too, the clouds with round heavy bellies had gathered for the dawn. It was not necessary, but it was right, and even if the sky had been cloudless the end was the same. The ear for the story and the eye for the pattern was theirs; the feeling was theirs: we came out of this land and we are hers. (255)

Through this intertextualization of the story of hummingbird and fly, Silko has re-created and paired a traditional story within her modern text. Nelson points out how Silko has, on differing occasions, both heard and learned of this messenger story through oral and literate means ("He Said" 34). In turn she incorporates hummingbird and fly through what Wolfgang Hochbruck terms "fabricated orality" (2). Hochbruck points out that fabricated orality is used to "invoke a sense of [the] oral tradition" (3) and that "texts employing fabricated orality are fictional prose or poetry in which the distance/difference between the 'oral' and the 'written' is thematized and part of the story" (2). This is a

trope that Silko employs to give her audience a sense of the oral traditions that influence her writing. The messenger story is “thematized” and paralleled with that of her protagonist, with the intention that what happened in the past is still applicable in modern day situations.

### Double-Voicing

By the combination of past oral traditions with the literary, another idea is presented within Silko’s work: in addition to the double-voicing discussed in chapter two, there is also the coming together of two traditions, the Native American and the dominant Western, to form a contemporary Native American literature. Bakhtin notes that “[t]he novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices” (262). This linguistic and social diversity is well represented in Silko’s novel since she combines knowledge from her Native heritage with Western standards of writing, thereby producing a hybrid style of literature that also shows a bicultural awareness in her writing. With the diversity of cultural awareness represented in Ceremony, this can be considered as a second form of heteroglossic double-voicing according to Bakhtin’s theory, leaving us with two types of double-voicing. Even more than this bicultural awareness and the diversity of social systems, Silko’s use and incorporation of Zolbrod’s “double-voice” stands out within her writing with examples from the colloquial and lyrical voices and their combination.

The passages of hummingbird and fly are representative of the characteristics from the colloquial and lyrical voice registers. These messenger figures draw on the idea of the need for spiritual balance between the spiritual world and the world of people. The content of these passages also suggest the “greater-than-human reality” (Zolbrod,

Reading the Voice 38) of the spiritual realm that brings to mind the impression of lyrical voice. The narrative and conversational manner in which these passages are presented, however, recalls the use of colloquial voice. As well, their didactic goal of explaining the “proper relationship of humans to nature” (Evan and McGary 94) is another characteristic of colloquial voice. The combinational use of register is then representative of Zolbrod’s continuum between lyrical and colloquial voice classifications (Reading the Voice 40).

### Lyrical Voice

Ceremony also contains examples drawn from the lyrical end of Zolbrod’s continuum. The ceremony is incorporated in a manner that shows how the cosmic relationship corresponds with the prose record of the myth (Allen 61) that parallels Tayo and the events of his journey. In the following examples of ceremonial passages from her novel, Silko re-constructs the sacred sense of lyrical voice,

In dangerous places you traveled  
in danger you traveled  
to a dangerous place you traveled  
in danger e-hey-ya-ah-na!

To the place  
where whirling darkness started its journey  
along the edges of the rocks  
along the places of the gentle wind  
along the edges of blue clouds  
along the edges of clear water.

Whirling darkness came up from the North

Whirling darkness moved along to the East

It came along the South

It arrived in the West

Whirling darkness spiraled downward

and it came up in the Middle. (142)

This passage is mimetic of an expiation ceremony (Petron 17). In this beginning passage of a larger ceremonial text, the origin of an imbalance is explained. The purpose of this ceremony is to put right what was made wrong in the story so Silko's protagonist must undergo this ritual. What is prominent within this text is that the author follows the style of lyrical voice. There is repetition in the first four lines. Then, appositional repetition becomes prevalent. The same theme of travel to dangerous or dark places is expressed throughout. In addition to this theme, Silko's poetry also adheres to the idea of paying homage to the elements of the earth (rocks, wind, clouds, and water) and the four cardinal directions (North, East South, and West). By the incorporation of such sacred or lyrical elements, "Silko attempts to recapture some of the original conditions, functions and spirit of native oral culture" (Gross 90), including the ceremony. Since the ceremony is also a more formal setting, the level of register required for this purpose is also more formal, therefore lyrical. Shannon T. Hiatt emphasizes that "tales and myths carry with them certain cultural elements which are not found in other cultures. These elements are language-bound and are very similar to other nativization techniques, i.e., register variation, style variation" (10). In Silko's novel, it is especially variation in register and style that prevails: from the previous stories of "Hummingbird and Fly," the use of the colloquial and lyrical voices together expresses register variation. However, from the

examples of Silko's reconstructed ceremonies, the lyrical register along with its style variation and repetitions is yet another demonstration of register use. Silko re-creates the sense of the oral tradition through these "nativization techniques."

Silko continues the sense of lyrical voice in this next passage. The tradition of the Deer Song is another "greater-than-human-reality" within Silko's writing.

Hey-ya-ah-na-ah! Hey-ya-ah-na-ah!  
Ku-ru-tsu-eh-ah-eh-na! Kr-ru-tsu-eh-ah-eh-na!  
to the east below  
to the south below  
the winter people come.  
Hey-ya-ah-na-ah! Hey-ya-ah-na-ah!  
Ku-ru-tsu-eh-ah-na! Ku-ru-tsu-eh-ah-eh-na!  
from the west above  
from the north above  
the winter people come.  
eh-ah-na-ah!  
eh-ah-na-ah!  
antlers of wind  
hooves of snow  
eyes glitter ice  
eyes glitter ice  
eh-ah-na-ah!  
eh-ah-na-ah!

antlers of wind

antlers of wind

eh-ah-na-ah! eh-ah-na-ah! (206)

Silko's deer song is reminiscent of the earlier deer song (see chapter two) from the Yaqui tradition. Within the deer song is "a ritual that celebrates a cycle of life, death, and spiritual continuance" (Evers and Molina 521). Again, interactions between the human and spiritual worlds play a large part of the context in these songs. Evers and Molina emphasize an "enchanted world" and the "wilderness world" (522) that speaks of the elevated sense of lyrical voice. In the example of the deer song, a reverent manner and the form of lyrical voice is used to portray veneration to the spirit of the deer within the spirit world that is in keeping with adherence to the proper relationship between the worlds of humans to deities. Cultural knowledge is extended in a manner that requires the reader to know the significance behind this deer song as it is presented in Silko's novel.

Bicultural knowledge is necessary for a complete understanding of Ceremony. Native writers like Silko are writing from a position of living within two societies: a Native and a dominant, from which they both retain knowledge and use their bicultural knowledge in their writing. Simon Ortiz puts forth the term "creative development" to explain the adoption of foreign cultural elements through contact with other societies (121). He states, "It can be observed that this [creative development] was the primary element of a nationalistic impulse to make use of foreign ritual, ideas, and material in their own—Indian—terms. Today's writing by Indian authors is a continuation of that elemental impulse" (121). Silko creatively adapts the stories of oral traditions from the

past to fit with the current situation within her novel. In this manner she extends her storytelling tradition from an oral to a written mode.

Through the literary techniques of intertextualization and paralleling the old with the new Silko is able to pass along her cultural knowledge onto her readers. By incorporating the stories from her Laguna/Keresan traditions, the verbal artistic element of double-voice that had previously disappeared during Pauline Johnson's time once again resurfaces with the Native American Renaissance and the revitalization of cultural traditions.

## Chapter 5: Thomas King and Bicultural Writing

Like Silko, Thomas King is a Native author who includes knowledge of Native American oral traditions within his writing. In King's case, knowledge from the dominant and First Nations societies are blended into what he refers to as "interfusal" writing, "a blending of oral literature and written literature" (Godzilla 13). It is the knowledge of both traditions that King appropriates to create and extend the storytelling tradition. In his novel, Green Grass, Running Water, King alludes to and interweaves figures and deities of creation stories from the dominant and Native cultures in a manner that is mimetic of the Native American oral storytelling tradition, albeit in print. Stylistically, King also combines aspects drawn from Western literary traditions and oral performance. This bicultural fusion of style and content gives King's audience a pseudo-Native American storytelling experience with King acting as the traditional storyteller.

Although his novel is centered within the geographic region of Southern Alberta and the activities of Blackfoot people, King involves aspects of stories from other traditions including the Southwestern Navajo and Pueblo traditions in the United States (Ridington 28) and the Iroquois, Seneca, Cherokee, and Blackfoot (Wyile 110). Wyile continues that King "consistently draws on traditional forms of oral stories such as creation stories" (110) in his writing, thus displaying a more "pan-Native" (King, All My Relations ix) awareness of stories from Native American cultures in general. This pan-Nativeness is a result of the fact King is writing about Native experience and tradition but

in English. This both makes Native experience available to a wider audience, and allows King to draw from a wider range of Native tradition (ix).

### Creation Story Deities

First Woman and Changing Woman are both deities from Navajo traditions. Paul Zolbrod's translation of a Navajo creation story shows how First Woman and First Man are created from ears of corn by the "ancient ancestors:" who then give birth to and create a new race of people that populate the earth (Dine 50-52). Changing Woman is another Navajo deity, an "Air-Spirit," who is involved in the divine creation of life by sitting and watching the sun for four days (Dine 179-183). Despite the fact that the deities from the Navajo legends have different origins from the events King writes about, both deities are involved in acts of creation within King's novel as in their original creation stories.

Thought Woman, from the Pueblo tradition, and Old Woman, from the Blackfoot tradition, also play roles in Native creation stories. The most prominent representation of Thought Woman is found in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony, in which this deity creates her sisters by thinking of them and together the three create the universe and all living things (Silko 1). In the Blackfoot tradition, Old Woman is paired with Old Man and these two deities create the human race and provide rules for the new race to follow (Burke).

King's representation of these deities shows an integration of stories from the various traditions. First Woman in part one of the novel is as follows:

So that one [First Woman] starts falling.

Oh, oh, First Woman says, looks like a new adventure. And she is right.

Down below in that Water World, those water animals look up and they see that big, strong woman falling out of the sky. Those Ducks shout, look out, look out. And they fly up and catch that woman and bring her to the water.

What's all that noise? says grandmother Turtle, and when grandmother comes up to see what all the fuss is about, those Ducks put First Woman on her back.

Ho, says grandmother Turtle when she sees that woman on her back. You are on my back.

That's right, says First Woman. I guess we better make some land. So they do. First Woman and grandmother Turtle. They get some mud and they put that mud on grandmother Turtle's back and pretty soon that mud starts to grow. (Green Grass 39)

Rather than the Navajo story of First Woman, the story this deity is placed in is similar to a Huron creation tale. King's passage can be compared with the following:

In the beginning, there was nothing but water—nothing but a wide, wide sea. The only people in the world were the animals that live in and on water.

Then down from the sky world a woman fell, a divine person. Two loons flying over the water happened to look up and see her falling. Quickly they placed themselves beneath her and joined their bodies to make a cushion for her to rest upon.

While they held her, they cried with a loud voice to the other animals, asking for their help. The cry of the loon can be heard at a great distance over water, and so the other creatures gathered quickly.

As soon as Great Turtle learned the reason for the call, he stepped forth from the council.

“Give her to me,” he said to the loons. “Put her on my back. My back is broad.”

And so the loons were relieved of their burden. Then the council, discussing what they should do to save the life of the woman, decided that she must have earth to live on. So Great Turtle sent the creatures, one by one, to dive to the bottom of the sea and bring up some earth.

... This he gave to the woman.

She took the earth and placed it carefully around the edge of Great Turtle’s shell. There it became the beginning of dry land. (Clark 10-11)

King’s version and Clark’s Huron story are similar in that each has a divine deity who falls from the sky, is intercepted by birds, placed on a turtle’s back upon which earth is created by using mud. From these similarities and the use of the Navajo deity First Woman, King has combined stories from different traditions to extend his own knowledge to create his own form of a creation tale.

Similarly, the other deities Thought Woman, Changing Woman, and Old Woman follow comparable beginnings in parts two, three, and four of King’s novel. Each figure falls out of the sky, but the events leading up to and following the fall are drawn from various Native American traditions. In King’s novel, Thought Woman converses with a river and then floats down the river until she falls into the new world (Green Grass 231-232). This beginning is similar to Silko’s story and the integration of Reed Woman from the Pueblo tradition, who bathes and creates rain for the world (13-14). The final deity,

Old Woman, a figure who, in Blackfoot tradition, creates the world with Old Man, behaves in King's novel in a fashion more in keeping with the "Poia" legend from the Blackfoot tradition (Welch 350-351; Burke) or the Cherokee story "Star Maiden/Star Woman" (Flick 161). In the Poia legend Feather Woman digs up a giant turnip, or Star Maiden/Woman digs up a root, that creates a hole where this deity looks down from the spirit world into the world of people. Likewise, Old Woman digs up a "Tender Root" in King's version; while digging, "Old Woman digs and digs and that one chases that Tender Root under the Tree and around the Tree and pretty soon, that one has dug a big hole./ Ooops, says Old Woman, and she falls through that hole into the sky" (Green Grass 328-329). Through the retelling of various creation stories King is in fact replicating these stories much as an oral performer would in an actual storytelling performance. Jennifer Andrews confirms how "[t]he flexibility of oral transmission means that stories can be revised to suit the immediate needs of the community" (93). King shows this flexibility through the repeated yet changing events in each version of his creation stories thus replicating the performance situations for oral storytelling.

#### Judeo-Christian Tradition

The combination of content from various Native traditions in King's writing, along with the stylistic flexibility drawn from the oral tradition, demonstrates King's knowledge of "pan-Native" culture. But King also merges his own versions of creation stories with Western Judeo-Christian creation stories, demonstrating a bicultural knowledge of the Native and non-Native traditions within the same literary framework. As Reed Way Dasenbrock states, Native American literature is "[p]recisely the opposite of the Western tradition of closure and boundedness" and that these "stories are valued

for their overlap, for the way they lead to new stories in turn” (313). King overlaps both stories from the many various Native traditions with each other and he interweaves these stories with the Judeo-Christian Biblical stories to subvert the “boundedness” of Western literary standards thus extending this aspect of changeability from the storytelling tradition.

In part one of King’s novel, First Woman meets “Ahdamn” (Green Grass 40) and Changing Woman, from the second part of the novel, meets Noah (145). Both Ahdamn and Noah are figures from Judeo-Christian stories. Thought Woman, in the third part of the novel, meets A.A. Gabriel (271) who is named for the Biblical figure, the angel Gabriel (Flick 159); Old Woman, from part four of King’s novel, meets “Young Man Walking On Water” (Green Grass 349) who is the Biblical figure Jesus Christ (Flick 161). The encounters between the Native American deities with the figures from the Bible are representative of the clash between the two cultures and, also King’s bicultural knowledge of the history and effects of this encounter between them. Because King focuses on the Judeo-Christian figures, he brings out the religious implications and persecutions effected upon indigenous people by Western colonizers (Peters 71-72). This cultural tension is played out in each of the four parts of the novel as each deity runs into trouble and is admonished for not following rules, “Christian rules” and regulations from the dominant society (Green Grass 68-69, 147-148, 270-271, 349-350). King’s purpose behind the juxtaposition of Native and non-Native creation stories is to show that Native creation stories were present within the oral traditions long before the colonizers came to North America and proceeded to impose their religious beliefs upon the Native people. In each story of the four deities, the Native creation story is presented before the deity

encounters a figure from the Bible. In this manner King gives precedence to the stories from the oral traditions over the Judeo-Christian stories.

Through the presentation of creation stories from both cultures, King alludes to the oral traditions by incorporating these stories and having them interact with stories from the dominant, literate culture. When literary critics suggest that Native writers such as King show their writings as being “steeped in the oral tradition” (Weaver), it is the allusions to texts from the oral traditions that critics are referring. James Ruppert states “[c]ontemporary Native American writers insist on their freedom to use the tools and expectations of both Native and Western cultural codes to achieve the goals of the other as well as to satisfy the epistemological expectations of both audiences” (10-11). King takes advantage of his knowledge from both cultures when he switches between them, thereby establishing dialogue between them and locating himself “[a]s a participant in two literary and cultural traditions—Western and Native” (11). At the same time, King invites his audience to participate in this same manner, requiring bicultural knowledge from them as well.

### Literary and Film Figures

To continue the exploration in bicultural awareness, King also takes his deities another step further in that after the encounters with Biblical figures, these deities then meet with figures from literary and television history. These literary and film figures represent the marginalized image of Native people in Western society. King brings out the idea that Native people were seen as ignorant and uneducated through such encounters with the “Lone Ranger” and “Tonto” (Green Grass 71), from the television series The Lone Ranger (qtd. in Flick 141). The image of the faithful “Indian companion”

and the fact that the name “Tonto” is the Spanish word for “stupid man” or “stupid one” is illustrative of this notion (Flick 141). This view is emphasized three more times with other figures such as; “Ahab” and “Queequeg” (King, Green Grass 195) from Herman Melville’s Moby Dick (qtd. in Flick 141), “Robinson Crusoe” and “Friday” (King, Green Grass 294-295) from Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe (qtd. in Flick 142), and “Nathaniel Bumppo” and “Chingachgook” (King, Green Grass 392) from James Fenimore Cooper’s The Leatherstocking Saga (qtd. in Flick 141-142), where each faithful companion is also portrayed as the “Noble Savage” (141). These encounters are meant to compare and illustrate the differences between Native and Euro-American past ideals. King’s purpose in these comparisons, according to Peters, is to “demand[] increased effort from his readers, particularly from those outside Native cultures” (70). In order to understand King’s use and intertextualization of past literary figures, readers must have knowledge of the colonial ideologies, concerning indigenous populations, originally behind historical literature such as Moby Dick and Robinson Crusoe. Scott B. Vickers writes on the ideals behind colonization in that,

As the guiding mythos of the colonial cultures of white Euramerica, Christianity, both as a linguistic construct and a political force, has sought to destroy the historical identities of Indian cultures and individuals. In collusion with the political imperatives of colonialism, Christians and Christian societies have created numerous self-perpetuating stereotypes of Indians that, because they have submerged Indian histories, have sought both to void Indians of any viable sense of identity with their own cultures, mythologies, or even individuals, and also to inject in their stead the ‘whiteness’ endemic to

Christian culture and identity. American Indians, having no traditional written language, have had to contend with the Christian 'Word of God' largely on an intuitive, political, and ceremonial level. Their history over the last five hundred years has literally been written by the dominating culture, and this writing has replaced and obscured the oral and pictorial histories by which Indians knew themselves during the centuries before contact. (2-3)

Because of the differences between the oral and literate societies, the dominant, literate colonial society was responsible for the perpetuation of Native stereotypes and, as a result, in their literature. King brings an awareness of these colonial ideals and consequently subverts them in his own writing through the re-creation of his own version of creation stories.

King's awareness of both cultures takes his readers to explore the pre-contact time for Native cultures to the time of colonial contact. From this time of contact, with the implications of assimilative practices, to the present way of thinking and revitalizing, mainly, Native American history and identity, King reverses the dominant way of thinking to allow for another perspective to be taken into account, the Native. By giving a preference for the Native American perception toward both cultures, King shows his bicultural awareness by asking his audience to also participate and see another perspective.

#### Oral Expression in the Written

To continue the literary experience with a Native point of view, King re-constructs some of his passages in a manner that is imitative of preserved, transcribed and translated texts from oral traditions (see chapter two). A noticeable feature from these

early preserved texts is seen in the use of demonstratives such as “that” and “those.” These demonstratives are prominent in the early, preserved oral texts collected by ethnographers and can be observed in the following example from a translated text of a Kathlamet Chinook tale, “The Sun’s Myth.”

At dark, [iii]

now *that* old woman came home.

Now again she hung up one [thing],

*that* which he wanted,

*that* thing shining all over. 110

He stayed there.

A long time he stayed there; III

now he took *that* young girl.

They stayed there.

In the early light, 115

already *that* old woman was gone. (Hymes 279-280 emphasis added)

This use of demonstratives is very characteristic of oral performance. “That” is more of a rhetorical device meant for speaking rather than writing to refer back to the designated noun or pronoun in this example. Teresa Gilbert, in her analysis of King, looks particularly at his style of writing and the narrative devices he appropriates to give a sense of the oral performance. These devices include techniques “such as word-repetitions, gaps, discontinuities, and a phatic rhetoric of address” (Gilbert 74). Once a noun has been introduced, “that” is then utilized through this “phatic rhetoric of address” to continue King’s sense of oral performance.

King's appropriation of this technique is replicated and greatly emphasized, particularly in the creation stories. The novel begins:

So.

In the beginning, there was nothing. Just the water.

Coyote was there, but Coyote was asleep. *That* Coyote was asleep and *that* Coyote was dreaming. When *that* Coyote dreams, anything can happen.

...

So, *that* Coyote is dreaming and pretty soon, one of *those* dreams gets loose and runs around. Makes a lot of noise.

Hooray, says *that* silly Dream, Coyote dream. I'm in charge of the world.

And then *that* Dreams sees all *that* water.

Oh, oh, says *that* noisy Dream. This is all wrong. Is that water we see? *that* silly Dream says to *those* dream eyes. (Green Grass 1 emphasis added)

In fact, King over-emphasizes this point in his replication of the device. In the above passage, demonstratives, both singular and plural, are about double as often as in "The Sun's Myth." Later on, in his account with First Woman's rendition of creation, King uses as many as three demonstratives in a single sentence, as compared to one demonstrative for every three lines of poetry from the oral text.

In another example from translated oral text, Dell Hymes also demonstrates singular and plural use of demonstratives within a passage about Coyote,

This done, they say, coyote joined some women going after wood.

As he did,

"*That* one is coming!" they say was said.

As it did, *that* fearsome being from the waist up, they say, was red;  
And there, from the waist down, they say, it was black.  
Then, they say, *those* women were afraid.  
Then, they say, Coyote hid.  
As he did, it came in *that* direction at a run;  
Coyote fought it, they say, *that* fearsome being.  
As he did, a great many Wolves,  
Catching *that* fearsome being,  
Were fighting it, they say.  
Doing so, they killed it, they say, *that* fearsome being.  
And then, they say, *those* Wolves left.  
Then Coyote went toward *that* camp that had no people. (“Use All” 108  
emphasis added)

The incidence of demonstratives is higher in this last passage in comparison with “The Sun’s Myth” but is still less than the amount seen in King’s renditions. Where Western literary standards one might expect to find definite articles, King instead utilizes demonstratives for rhetorical effect.

Thought Woman is walking. It is morning and Thought Woman is walking.  
So Thought Woman walks to the river.  
Hello, says Thought Woman to the river.  
Hello, says *that* River. Nice day for a walk.  
Are you warm today? says Thought Woman.  
Yes, says *that* River, I am very warm.

Then I believe I will have a bath, says Thought Woman.

That is one good idea, says *that* River, and *that* River stops flowing so Thought Woman can get in.

So *that* Thought Woman takes off her nice clothes, and *that* one gets in the River. (Green Grass 231 emphasis added)

In each of these passages from King's novel, nouns and pronouns are introduced and then referred to by "that" in the lines that follow, increasing their familiarity and lending a sense of "authenticity" to King's replication of an oral storytelling technique. Because demonstratives are significant in the transcribed oral texts, King fabricates this aspect in order to present his writing as if it were "performative" of oral traditions with the characteristic demonstratives from the "'oral' lightly assumed in the 'written'" text (Lee 462).

Green Grass, Running Water is not the only text in which King uses this narrative device. The same technique is also replicated in an earlier short story entitled "The One About Coyote Going West":

Tell me, grandmother, says Coyote. What does the clever one make first?

Well, I says. Maybe she makes *that* tree grows by the river. Maybe she makes *that* buffalo. Maybe she makes *that* mountain. Maybe she makes them clouds.

Maybe she makes *that* beautiful rainbow, says Coyote.

No, I says. She don't make *that* thing. Mink makes *that*.

Maybe she makes *that* beautiful moon, says Coyote.

No, I says. She don't do that either. Otter finds *that* moon in a pond later on.

Maybe she makes the oceans with *that* blue water, says Coyote.

No, I says. Oceans are already here. She don't do any of that. The first thing Coyote makes, I tell Coyote, is a mistake.

Boy, Coyote sit up straight. Them eyes pop open. *That* tail stop wagging.

*That* one swallow *that* smile. (All My Relations 97 emphasis added)

This short story also demonstrates the use of the other devices mentioned by Gilbert. In the above passage there is discontinuity and repetition in the conversation between Coyote and grandmother. Discontinuity is also seen in King's novel through his switching between the creation stories and the present day storylines of his main characters. As well, King's novel is repetitive in that the creation stories are repeated four times with differing versions.

What King shows in the novel, then, is an awareness of techniques drawn from oral and literate traditions. Although King assumes a narrative, conversational style within his novel that is mimetic of oral tradition, narration, and audience interaction, he uses this style within the literary form of the novel, thus combining Native and Western traditions. King is biculturally adept in the appropriation and use of content and literary forms and devices from both the oral and literary traditions.

Thomas King gives his audience a sense of what it is like to experience the storytelling tradition from a Native American point of view. Knowledge of the Native culture as well as the Euro-American and Euro-Canadian perspectives are needed and encouraged in order to participate in Green Grass, Running Water. Where in the past, double-consciousness referred primarily to the author's awareness of his or herself in

relation to the dominant culture, King's work subverts this condition by requiring a similar bicultural awareness from his literary audience – many of whom will not belong to a Native tradition – in order to fully enjoy his work.

## Conclusion

Contemporary Native American literature has undergone a transition from its original oral tradition to its present day literary form. This transformation is not absolute in that contemporary literature carries forth a resonance of the features that first characterized stories from the oral tradition. In this chronological account of oral texts and literatures from the time of colonial contact to the present, change and transition are prevalent. However, these transitions and changes also speak of the natural adaptabilities that were once a part of oral traditions. In order for a culture to survive, it must change. This is what has happened and is still happening in Native American literature.

Oral texts from the time of colonial contact underwent an immediate change in that stories from oral traditions were collected and written down thereby transforming them from their previous oral state to a fixed written form. Walter J. Ong explains the difference between oral and literary texts: "Written words are residue. Oral tradition has no such residue or deposit. When an often-told oral story is not actually being told, all that exists of it is the potential in certain human beings to tell it" (11). Stories from the oral traditions lived on and continued through memory and re-verbalizations whereas the written word is what is leftover of a story told in the past. This is what happened with the oral stories that were collected and preserved by early ethnographers and anthropologists; their recordings became the residual representations of a clash between an oral culture and a literate culture at the time of colonial contact. Stories from the oral traditions were

then made to take on written forms for a fuller appreciation and acceptance as literature by researchers from the colonizing society.

These preservations, however, unknowingly turn out to be a form of survival for oral traditions. Ong suggests that texts from oral traditions were viewed “as beneath serious scholarly attention” (8) therefore allowing for the misunderstanding of oral verbal art forms through the transliteration of languages as well as the transliteration of literary genres. Because of these misunderstandings, stories from the oral traditions remained fixed until later researchers could properly analyze, identify, and revitalize these forms of verbal art thus allowing for their survival.

During her lifetime, Pauline Johnson continued this process of adaptation in her own role as a public recitalist, rather than a traditional storyteller, through her poetry and live performances. Because of her mixed heritage, Johnson captured public interest in a way that allowed her to present First Nations content to the Euro-Canadian audience. Instead of performances in the spirit of oral traditions however, Johnson wrote her poetry using Western literary conventions, and recited it by rote. In this way, Johnson became a Native storyteller for a culturally different audience. However, this cultural difference and the interest shown by the Euro-Canadian audience encouraged Johnson to present the plight and history of the Native peoples from a Native point-of-view. Indeed, Johnson was often described as “The Indian Poet-Reciter,” “The Iroquois Indian Poet-Entertainer,” “The Mohawk Author-Entertainer,” as well as a “storyteller” in advertisements for her performances (qtd. in Strong-Boag and Gerson 105). In this manner, Johnson’s live performances, especially, showed an adaptation of the storyteller to the expectations of her time. Simon Ortiz argues

that it is entirely possible for a people [Native People] to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language. There is not a question of authenticity here; rather it is the way that Indian people have creatively responded to forced colonization. (122)

Johnson creatively responded in such a way that allowed for the survival of Native knowledge within a society where assimilative policies were forced upon First Nations people that prohibited the practice of their own Native languages and culture.

This survival and adaptation continues into literature by contemporary Native American authors. Leslie Marmon Silko's use of stories from her oral tradition attempts to capture a resonance of orality within her novel. By imitating the content and style of traditional oral stories and combining them with literary techniques of Western society, Silko gives an effect of an oral tradition performance within a literate medium. Konrad Gross contends

[i]n using the form of the novel [Silko] most certainly makes concessions to her white readers whom she thus wants to lure onto seemingly familiar territory. But as she intends to invite her nonnative audience to enter and respect the world of native thinking and feeling, she attempts to stress the features of orality, to submit the novel to the patterns of oral culture, and in this way to emphasize the validity of native values. (89)

Silko extends the poetic features that are mimetic of her oral tradition. In writing down this poetry, however, she inadvertently fixes her writing so that it in fact becomes a residual, written text, yet with an allusion to verbal art. Nevertheless, stories from Silko's Keresan/Laguna oral tradition have survived from their preserved state, been revitalized,

and now continue on in the contemporary form of Native American literature. Silko has been able to adapt her stories from the oral traditions within literary forms to continue her storytelling tradition.

In Thomas King's adaptation of the oral storyteller performance, he also continues the survival for Native American oral traditions. King's transliterations of demonstratives are meant to give a sense of what it may be like to listen to the oral storyteller. As well, it is this live performance of the storyteller that King attempts to continue in Green Grass, Running Water. Each of the four parts of his novel has a different narrator, each story starts out the same with the creation theme, and events unfold in varying manners. This changeability is part of the fluctuating nature of oral traditions. The story is never repeated in the same way with exactly the same words from an oral storyteller and this variance is what King emphasizes in his four versions of his creation stories. However, putting these stories in print inevitably fixes the text as a literary form. By bringing together the use of oral techniques, such as the use of demonstratives, with the four versions of the creation story, King also allows for an allusion to oral performance in a written context.

The intentions of oral traditions continue to survive in contemporary literate forms. Purposes such as didactic intent, sacred and ceremonial purpose, cultural transmission, as well as entertainment are elemental features of present day literature by Native authors just as they were important components of the oral traditions. Paula Gunn Allen puts it best when she states that "[t]he oral tradition is vital; it heals itself and the tribal web by adapting to the flow of the present while never relinquishing its connection to the past. Its adaptability has always been required, as many generations have

experienced” (45). Through its transition from the oral to the written, oral traditions have continued and continue to survive in these adapted forms. With these transitions we see the progression of the original double-voice feature from oral traditions to its disappearance and replacement with double-consciousness during Pauline Johnson’s lifetime. Then from the Native American Renaissance and onward, double-voice is revived but coupled with a bicultural awareness, at varying degrees, by authors such as Leslie Marmon Silko and Thomas King, in contemporary Native American literature.

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