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The edge of the abyss: Metamorphosis as reality in contemporary Native American literature

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The University of Arizona, 1993

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THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS:
METAMORPHOSIS AS REALITY IN CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN
LITERATURE

by

Miriam Elise Marubbio

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I would like to thank all of those people who have read and reread this thesis in order to keep me at my best. Also, I am in complete debt to those people who helped with the mask making and the photographs.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis in memory to: Dennis Buck who died February 3, 1992; Edith Brawley who died March 23, 1992; to Bosco who was put to sleep on November 30, 1992; and to Marjorie Marubbio who died on February 2, 1993.

To Dennis Buck, a dear friend and teacher without whose support and respect I would not have gotten here. Thank you Dennis, I know you are with me always. I also thank his wife and friend Laura for her strength.

To Bosco who died during Chapter Two and prior to his seventh birthday. He was my constant writing companion. I see you often in my mind's eye.

To Grandma may there be plenty of pickles in heaven with your name on them.

A final thank you to Thomas and Lavonne Marubbio who encourage me and have faith in me always. Thanks mom and dad.
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ABSTRACT

The Edge of the Abyss: Metamorphosis as Reality in Contemporary Native American Literature, approaches the concept of metamorphosis from a metaphysical and philosophical perspective as a culturally defined reality. It focuses on the works of contemporary Native American writers: Leslie Silko, Scott Momaday, Gerald Vizenor, and Louis Erdrich, who address the metamorphic properties of Time and the metamorphic abilities of Man as a continuing link to the supernatural and natural worlds through stories which descend from a history of oral traditions.

The Edge of the Abyss explores the use of language and stories as a cultural survival technique for the retention of tribal ideology and world view. It addresses the fine line which exists between Western and Native American concepts of reality in order to re-define metamorphosis within a cultural context.

This thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach utilizing anthropological, sociological, shamanistic, literary, and cultural materials in a comparative analysis.
"To imagine the world is to be in the world; to invent the world with academic predications is to separate human experiences from the world, a secular transcendence and denial of chance and mortalities." 1

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1 Vizenor, Gerald, People Named the Chippewa: Narrative Histories (Minneapolis:University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 27.
"To imagine the world is to be in the world; to invent the world with academic predications is to separate..."² Philosophically speaking, the purpose of this thesis is to weave together the seemingly desperate ideas presented in the preceding quote. Metamorphosis exists in the "imagined" world as well as from the academic point of view, but it is the boundaries which are created around the terminology that define the extent of metamorphosis' existence as a reality. For example, in one culture metamorphosis may play a very real and important part in the ideological, the epistemological, and the world view which makes up that culture.³ Another culture, however, may term metamorphosis as an idea of the "imagination" or as an extension of a philosophical concept not based in concrete reality. It may exist academically, then, as a conceptualization of Man's inner fears or past relationships with Nature, but it does not play a substantial part in the human experience. In the contemporary literature of some Native American writers: Leslie Marmon Silko, N.Scott Momaday, Gerald Vizenor, and Louis Erdrich for example, there appears to be a synthesis of these disparate ideas. Many contemporary Native American writers are using metamorphosis as a fundamental part of their writing in such a way as to relate it in a cultural context to specific orientations toward Nature, Man's role in Nature, the Spiritual and the Sacred.

²Vizenor, People Named the Chippewa 27.
³The term culture within this thesis will be used in a broad sense to mean a group of people bound together by a common set of ideologies, sacred histories, morals, social dynamics and language. As Clifford Geertz has defined it, culture is located in the hearts and minds of men, it is public, and it is a context - a description of social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes. Culture is how we define ourselves as a distinct group of human beings. [see Geertz, Clifford, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 11-14.]
which allow metamorphosis to be real. These writers create within a fictional
genre a reality that on one level may be "imagined" or on another may be
based in a long history of corporeality.

The objectives of this thesis are to approach the concept of
metamorphosis from a metaphysical and philosophical perspective in order to
define and re-define reality and what constitutes reality. In order to approach
this metamorphic perspective, general concepts must be discussed which will
aid in this re-definition of reality and metamorphosis. Further,
metamorphosis must be addressed as a reality in contemporary Native
American literature and this may be accomplished by looking at possible
connections within cultural contexts. These objectives are approached by
exploring some large concepts which surface in traditional and some
contemporary Native American oral and written literatures. Also utilized in
the approach are photographic interpretations of the types of metamorphic

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4The use of the words Spiritual and Sacred are related in this thesis to world
view and religion in that they accompany and help define both. Spiritual and
Sacred are used in the sense of the un-ordinary and sometimes the
undefinable. They are often inseparable from the ordinary because they help
to define and order what is tangible in the every day world and what is special.
The idea of sacredness comes from those happenings -- visions, dreams,
experiences-- which aid Man in understanding his place in the world. These
sacred events may be shared through ceremony and ritual to become part of a
people's religious customs, or it may be a personal experience which helps
guide or gives knowledge to a person. Sacred events and knowledge make up
the core of religions and are a bridge, in a sense, between Man and the
Spiritual world. The Spiritual usually refers to other than common plains of
existence such as the spirit world, and to those who are not human. Spiritual
encompasses the spirits of the dead, the ancient ancestors of a group of people,
spirits of animals, other-than -human beings, some examples would be the
Manitou of the Ojibway and the Katsina of the Hopi, the Raven of the Tlingit or
Buddha of the Hindu and Christ of the Christians. Spiritual also refers to an
experience which relates to sacredness or religion.
reality that exist within these literatures and which are discussed in this thesis.

The challenge of this thesis is not only to rework definitions, but to successfully discuss in general, concepts as loaded with meaning and controversy as "Native American viewpoint", "Native American reality", and "Native American spirituality". If one reads much of the literature on contemporary Native American writers, literary genre, philosophy, or spirituality, one will notice that it is approached in a very general manner. The generalities are not a rash attempt to lump individual tribes together or to perpetuate the mythic "Indian" stereotype. Rather, the method is a means to discuss and explain the similarities and dissimilarities which arise in the philosophies, ideologies, oral traditions, and visualizations of vastly different tribal groups in the Americas. The categories most often discussed in these critical works are: views of Nature; connection to Nature; way of "seeing"; and use of language in connection to Nature and Man, to name a few.5 Much of the research for this thesis is based on these types of writings because the subject of metamorphosis arises in so many groups, not solely in one tribe's history or literature. Thus, a broad, encompassing, "general" ideal of Native American spirituality, shamanism, and philosophy has been used. This thesis also utilizes an abstract rather than a scientific approach to understanding and

5Many Native American writers use metaphysical thought to describe "seeing" or viewing from the inside, the inner mind, the soul. "Seeing" is the ability to see the essence of something not its outer shell or facade. As Barre Toelken explains it, the real world is not what you see visibly, but what you see via "ritual and sacred patterning."

explaining broad ideas and concepts which surface in traditional and some contemporary oral and written Native American literatures.

Not all contemporary Native American writers address literature from a traditional perspective or as an extension of storytelling. However, the writers who focus on or discuss metamorphosis seem to relate their work to oral tradition and to many traditional attitudes toward Nature and the reality of Man's world and the spirit world. This attitude toward Nature and the Spiritual maybe summed up by a quote by N. Scott Momaday in an interview with Matthias Schubnell:

For traditional American Indian communities the spiritual implications of the natural world stood at the very center of their world views...virtually all tribal philosophies maintain a fluid line between what is natural and supernatural, material and spiritual, conscious and unconscious... they conceived of themselves as interrelated with the whole of the universe in a complex system of kinship. Their interaction with the environment aimed at achieving a state of balance and harmony rather than dominance.  

It is this need to speak in a large way about a vast idea that causes my orientation toward this same direction.

This thesis will explore metamorphosis from the metaphysical perspective of reality by looking at two significant areas which appear frequently in contemporary Native American literature and which I have labeled: Man Into Animal and The Space- Time Continuum. Encompassing these two areas is a theoretical framework labeled What are Reality and Non-Reality. These three sections will concentrate on the literature of four

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contemporary Native American writers: Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*; N. Scott Momaday's *The Ancient Child*; both Gerald Vizenor's *Griever: An American Monkey King in China* and *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*, and Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*. These works will be compared to and supplemented with examples of other contemporary literature and analytical material as well as material from traditional oral literature, poetry, prayers, and narratives.

Chapter Two, *Man Into Animal*, concentrates on the metamorphosis of Man into animal as the ability of a person to become an animal spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. What this means is that the person for all intents and purpose becomes the animal. He may shift shape physically as well as adopt all of the characteristics of the animal; the ability to see, smell, and function like that animal. He is the essence of the animal. Chapter Two discusses this along with how metamorphosis effects the human and animal world through the work of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*, N. Scott Momaday's *The Ancient Child*, and Gerald Vizenor's *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*. These novels are examples of contemporary Native American literature that focus on the idea of metamorphosis as a reality. The authors delve into a cultural, emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual evolution of the character that undergoes the metamorphic process. The manner and perspective in which these writers create and tell the stories promotes the atmosphere of reality. The reader believes that which is happening and the metamorphic process becomes one which is tactile, conceptual, and believable.

*The Space-Time Continuum* examines the transformational quality of Time in Native American tradition in which Time's cyclical qualities are
manifested into contemporary literature where the past, the present, and the future are one and the same. Western concepts of time as a linear progression are compared with the idea of Time as equivalent to a large circle consisting of smaller points of time on which no point is more important than another. The unilateral importance of all Time relates to metamorphosis in the simple idea that Man is able to be in the past and the present at the same instant. Through the metamorphic process Man transcends Time and Space to unite the past, the future, and the present in a cyclical manner. Chapter Three looks at this relationship between Space and Time as expressed in Silko's, Erdrich's and Momaday's novels, and in Gerald Vizenor's *Griever: An American Monkey King in China*. In their work, metamorphosis becomes a unifying bond between humans and animals, plants, and spirits which enables Man to continue the tenuous balance necessary to maintain existence within the organic, the Spiritual, the Sacred and the secular.

Chapter Three explores the connection that memory, ritual, "imagination", and stories have to the multi-dimensionality of Space and Time. It is through memory and ritual that the past becomes a part of the present and future in a non-linear fashion. The conceptualization of Space and Time are shifted by these authors from a linear perspective toward a dimensional one in which planes of reality are forever shifting tangentially one into the other.

Chapter Four, *What Are Reality and Non-Reality*, as the encompassing theoretical framework of and conclusion to this thesis, concentrates on the dichotomy between what is meant by or what is understood by the terms "reality" and "non-reality". Language and the bonds between language,
cultural epistemologies, and world views seem to be fundamental factors in understanding how a concept such as metamorphosis can be simultaneously defined as real and non-real. Chapter Four explores this in an attempt to illustrate the connections that the ideas discussed in Chapters Two and Three have within a cultural context. The focus on metamorphosis as reality by Native American authors suggests a continuance of beliefs which precede contact and the English language. Arising from this focus are the political ramifications of metamorphosis being addressed as an absolute, and of Native American tribal beliefs and cultural orientations surviving and expanding into the English literary format.

There is an important need to understand these contemporary literatures in relation to how those of Euro-American ancestry understand them, because there seems to be a fundamental difference in how the two groups define reality. What encompasses these physical and metaphysical happenings is the cultural perception of what is real in the world and what is not. Traditionally, Native American cultures have looked at the world from a holistic, organic and spiritual perspective which encompasses shamanistic reality, spirit world reality, and animal world reality as equal and important to our world which is neither separate nor superior. This perspective carries through into the contemporary literature of many Native American writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich and Gerald Vizenor. Richard Hugo is quoted by Duane Niatum as saying, in essence, that within the paradigm of the contemporary Native American poet is the combination of cultural traditions that are "still a living thing in the memory" and the contemporary individual who is locked in "an idealization of a past
they never knew." Many contemporary Native American writers of fiction breach the paradigm and utilize traditional oral stories, formats, and world views of their tribes to create contemporary extensions which contain the same attitude of belief toward a cultural reality as the oral predecessors. These writers' perspectives continue to support the idea of Man as a part of Nature in union with multi realities in which "the cultural tradition does not just exist in memory. It exists in act, thought, speech...".

Metamorphosis in Western literature in comparison to Native American literature shifts the emphasis from the union of Man and Nature and the psychological bond between the two, to a struggle against Nature and the psychological bonds that hold Man and Nature together. Western European oral literature abounded in metamorphic characters likened to those in Native American tradition in that the process of metamorphosis or the attitude toward Nature and Nature's transformational properties were similar. The Greek myths are a prime example, with stories of Zeus changing into a swan in order to copulate with Lida or his changing into a sunbeam for a similar excursion. Although Zeus appears more as a metamorphic trickster figure than as a tragic one in the sense that Kafka's Greggor is, he is still uniting with Nature in a process of physical change. The story of Narcissus is closer to that of Kafka's Greggor as an example of Man changing physically and his change being a moral anecdote. Unlike Kafka's Greggor, however, the metamorphosis of Narcissus is not portrayed in a negative or unnatural way. It is made to seem usual and in the Greek tradition in which the gods and the god's world unite.

8Niatum, Harper's Anthology xxii.
with Man's in one reality. In this way, the attitude toward metamorphosis is comparable to that of Native Americans. Further, the myths were a unified part of Greek culture and ideology as are examples of metamorphosis in Native American oral tradition. Also similar in the attitude of Man and Nature as a unite are the Egyptian gods and goddess. Ra, for example, was part man and part hawk, Osiris had the head of an owl and Anubis had the head of a jackal. These gods and goddess played a living and spiritual role in the life of the Egyptians and are frequently part of hieroglyphics and tomb art.

Through "progress" and Western Europe's religious reformation, cultural unification, industrialization and individualization, the union with Nature has shifted in its perspective from one of companionship to one of alienation. Man has moved into isolation from the Natural and the Supernatural worlds and has become isolated in a world of his own. This may have been caused by the neolithic trend toward husbandry and the suppression of animals by Man. Also a factor may have been the Christian attitude illustrated in the story of Adam and Eve which separates man from animals and gives Man (Adam) lordship over them. The alienation, despite its origin, is evident in contemporary Western literature in which the act of metamorphosis is best characterized by fiction such as Kafka's Metamorphosis and by analysis such as Massey's The Gaping Pig and Spectorsky's Man Into Beast:Strange Tales of Transformation. Within this literature the act of metamorphosis is viewed as an act of sin; it is viewed with disgust and horror:
Greggor left the door and lay on the leather sofa, whose coolness was so soothing to his body, burning with anxiety and shame.9

In the case of Greggor, he continues to carry the human self along with his insect body although at times one dominates the other. He is intellectually anguished as his body contradicts his mind by continuing the metamorphosis into an insect. The point is that in Kafka's example the person metamorphosing continues to hold onto the Self, the soul, the part of us that in Western society elevates Man above beasts and Nature. In the end, Greggor dies. He has become a savior figure who through his death liberates his family from shame and puts them back on a social level above beasts. Irving Massey suggests that the purpose of metamorphosis in literature is to point out a moral or to provide an escape from an unhappy situation. This is evident in Kafka's story which is a metaphor, not a depiction of reality.10 It fits into social, psychological and religious guidelines in order to fulfil its purpose as a moral tale or search. Massey's analysis seems to hold true in Western Euro-American literature in which the act of metamorphosis has detached itself from Nature, but it does not seem an effective analysis for Native American literature.

Metamorphosis as a natural transition between Man's and Nature's boundaries exists as a genre within contemporary Native American literature. Massey's and Kafka's perspective on the metamorphic process differs

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10The difference between metamorphosis as reality and metamorphosis as metaphor is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Four. Briefly, metaphors are used to bridge two dissimilar ideas into one. Metaphors allow for the combining of descriptions and objects which are not similar. The idea, in Kafka's case that Greggor's metamorphosis is a metaphor for ill lived life is not applicable to the idea of metamorphosis as a reality of life not a figment of illustrated morality.
considerably from this genre of Native American literature, oral and contemporary, in which the process of change is not seen as a degradation or a sin. Rather, the change is a passage of the human into a state of reality that binds him again with Nature in a union that exists from the beginning of a clan's naming, creation stories, and sacred histories. The person metamorphosing does not carry the load of society's morals or his own loss of Self with him when he transforms. Rather, his act of transformation is an understood part of the ties that are inherent between human beings and other beings. The transformation comes with an "intense awareness of the nature of the animal". The person changing does not analyze and anguish over his change if he is in complete acceptance of the change as reality and within his historical past. This link to historical past is what Jamake Highwater terms the primal awareness in which primal peoples' or tribal peoples' relationships to the Earth and to the power of Nature are strong enough to continue the traditional perception of "other" realities and to allow transformation to occur. This idea of multi-realities will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Again the reader is urged to keep in mind that this thesis is an overview of ideas linked to Native tribal ideologies, and for that matter, to tribal peoples in general. Much of the material gathered comes from literature that, like its

11Luci Tapahonso, a Navajo poet, gives an example of the relationship between one's clan name, one's tribe, and the Natural world. This relationship revolves around identity. Her mother's name is Todikozhi "salt water" and her father's is Todich'iin'i "bitter water". Together they mean "edge of the big water". "... my identity is in terms of the clan, which places the Navajo person in the world and defines one's relationship to other people and one's responsibilities. It places me in certain waters... And so my name is already connected to history, and origin, and my relatives." Capps, Seeing 197.

subject, is broad and encompasses many tribal values and tenets of Native American spirituality and world views.\(^{13}\)

The ability to transform oneself into another reality is valid and acceptable in many Native American cultures such as the Ojibway, the Sioux, and the Laguna. Whether this concept is universal is unknown although examples of mythic figures and trickster figures are argued by Joseph Campbell and Paul Radin to be so.\(^{14}\) This concept might be more easily understood if compared to Taoism and the concept of *pien*. The word *pien*, according to Isabelle Robinet, has assumed a generic sense that includes many types of powers not unlike those of shamans who can traverse great distances rapidly, render themselves invisible, or migrate through different planes -- material or spiritual.\(^{15}\) According to Taoism, there is no discontinuity in Nature. Rather, at times people are unaware of the unity "they do not see what passes progressively from one form to another, imperceptible and tenuous."\(^{16}\) In her article, Robinet equates transformation to the idea of ying and yang, the tangible and the intangible, the directions, Space and Time with a wisdom which is a part of all things. To transform oneself is to encompass oneself

\(^{13}\)There has been some controversy over the writings of Jamake Highwater due to his authenticity as a Native American. The reader may decide whether or not to accept the information here as trustworthy or valid for thought or pertinence.


\(^{15}\)Robinet, Isabelle, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance From the Corpse In Taoism," *History of Religions* Vol. 19, No.1(August, 1979):37.

\(^{16}\)Robinet, *Metamorphosis and Deliverance* 39.
within all that is Nature. This is, in essence, the same attitude that seems to embraces metamorphosis in Native American traditions.

The fundamental differences between how Native American cultures see metamorphosis and how Euro-American cultures see it may be related to how we see Nature through language, how we perceive language, and how we see the world around us in general. Kenneth Lincoln generalizes that in Native American traditions "Every 'word' translates the world we experience by aural or visual signs. Words embody reality". The power of language is the power to create and sustain a culture, a world. As N. Scott Momaday points out, to name something is to give it life, to bring it into being. In his view, language creates existence and language defines how we view the world. In oral traditions, words create stories; they are the oral tradition, which is language. Language provides the speaker with the means to contribute whole worlds, filled with the things that can be heard, seen, felt, tasted, smelled, and imagined. Speech, language, and words create a reality which is in the imagination of the speaker, listener, and the storyteller. Words do not come after or apart from what naturally is, they are animate, genitive beings; they create reality and they create stories, which are another side of reality.

19The imagination in this context is as real as the reality around us. It is not the false or invented ideas that Western society attributes to it, but rather, it is the other side of the visual. We spend much of our lives sleeping and dreaming: what is seen during those dream times is considered as real as what is seen during the waking times to most tribal peoples. What is real in dreams exists in different dimensions of reality and each dimension holds its own importance in the world. Dreams, although they are real, are not necessarily literal in the Western concept of literal. Rather, the literalness is defined by the type of dream, the place of the dream and the intensity of the dream.
Words are believed to carry the power to make things happen, ritualized in song, sacred story, and prayer. This natural force is at once common as daily speech and people's names... Indian traditions place words organically in the world... Words do not come after or apart from what naturally is, but are themselves natural genes, tribal history in the bodies of the people...“20

Thus, words allow us to survive as a people; they are the storage and creators of sacred histories. Words are reverence to sound, smell, texture, concepts, ideas, feelings, and ideologies. They are power, they are embodied with the ability to create and they are the power to form boundaries to what we are otherwise unable to bind. Concepts such as the Supernatural or the Sacred become comprehensible and we connect to these things through words.

The conclusiveness of these statements is less important than the underlying idea that language and words possess a power that is undeniable within a culture. The question may be whether a language defines a culture, a culture defines its language, or are they interconnected and inseparable. The concepts above relate to words and language on a creative level which may be seen as excluding or limiting the group and group language. Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir hypothesize whether language defines world view or whether our sense of reality predicates how we structure what we say and write.21 Either perspective, Lincoln's and Momaday's or Whorf's and Sapir's,

supports the idea that language and world view are a balanced equation which dictates the structures, ideals, and perceptions of a people. It must be kept in mind that while storytelling and creative visionary may be unique to an individual and perhaps a bit separate from a group perspective, they also originate and expand from a group's language and world view. It is this language and world view that shapes and creates the environment for storytelling.

Language, particularly oral tradition, is a crucial weapon for the defense, continuity, and ritual maintenance of the...universe...It is a crucial source of information about the present and the only source about the past\(^2\)

Language, communication, and words in Native American oral traditions unite entire aspects of being into the construction of the language. Leslie Silko speaks of this idea as being the ability to share experience with a community through words and stories. These stories grow and continue from generation to generation binding a community together in a common mind and frame of reference.\(^2\) As we will see, many of the authors discussed in this thesis utilize this aspect of the oral tradition in their written stories. They continually retell their stories or those from their traditions in their novels. It is a part of the interrelatedness of stories and people's lives. Our lives are a part of a larger story which is part of the reality of Time and Space; the metaphysical and the physical together. The importance here is to realize that


"story" does not mean fiction or falsehood. Stories can be teaching tools, sacred histories, and truths of the past, as well as entertainment. Truth is encompassed within stories and this truth is fundamental to our understanding of reality.

In contrast to the idea of existence connected to language, oral tradition and the aural word, Euro-American tradition has grown away from the essence of a word, from the reality of stories, and from Nature and the multiple perceptions of "reality" as Euro-Americans have sought the singular "truth" about themselves, the world that Man lives in, and the spiritual world which surrounds him. The perception of the word metamorphosis is an example of this. In Western literature metamorphosis has become a symbol or a metaphor for man's inner search for Self or for the demise of Self; it is no longer a possible actuality. Perhaps the reason Western literature views metamorphosis as metaphor or fiction is because within its structures the idea of transformation is equal to an inward search -- a psychological look at Man's place within the universe. Western literature has incorporated metamorphosis into works which ponder Man's soul, his place in the world, his morality, his sexuality, his psyche, and his individualism. The eternal quest for a sense of Self is so all important to Western Man that the idea of metamorphosis being a natural phenomenon threatens him. It places him within the structure of a much grandeur sphere of reality: one in which the mind, the subconscious and the "other", the Spiritual, play a major part in what determines who we are and how we become part of a larger collective whole. Man in this situation loses control because his cultural and social supports are not flexible enough to reinforce his identity.
In a Native American metamorphic situation, the conscious and the subconscious are not separate nor alien to reality, but are part of an all encompassing reality in which neither is more important. In other words, dream or subconscious reality is part of the conscious reality and dreams then also become realities. As Jung points out in *Philosophy and Religion*, dreams continue even when we are awake. Thus, what is seen in dream time is as much a part of "reality" as what is seen in waking or conscious time. It is a society's perspective on the importance of these sleep "realities" that determine their place in the "rational" world. In many tribal societies, what is seen in dreams is thought to be the part of the world that is more easily seen from dream perspective. It is the fine threads of the "other world" that exist within our world although we might regard them as "imagination". The Australian Aborigines believe that dreams are "Ancestral Beings" which "came before, and continue to inhere in, the living generations... The animate beings of the Dreaming are not night visions, nor are they idealized persons."24 They are both separate from their animal and human counterparts yet connected with these counterparts. Thus, dreaming and images within dreams contain a special, significant place in the defining and reaffirming of the realities around us.

A.E. Spectorsky comments that anthropologists assure us that the idea of metamorphosis has been in all cultures from the earliest times and has had a lasting place in mankind's life of the "imagination".25 This idea is supported

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by scholars such as Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung in a concept termed the "collective consciousness" and "universal man" in which Man is linked through similar mythic symbols within the subconscious mind to the natural and the supernatural worlds. Put more simply, Man is linked to all of being, the universe, through his inherent memory. Jung talks of this idea as related to dream images in which common traits or common symbols arise in all. People's dreams, these images, seem connected not to contemporary Western society but to a more primal one, a more tribal one. Campbell speaks of the "universal man" as the connection between all peoples, ancient and contemporary, through symbols of the Spiritual or the Sacred. The two concepts are quite similar and would fit easily into the philosophy of many who see Man, Nature, and the Supernatural as one large existing unit of life. Momaday speaks of a similar idea, "blood memory" or "racial memory", in which a person's tribal identity lives within the blood and is passed on through bloodlines. This is a "verbal dimension of reality which perpetuates cultural identity" or the idea a person has of himself in relation to his culture. Metamorphosis exists as an interlocking aspect of these ideas as a reality in Native tradition and an "imaginative" mystery in Western tradition.

Metaphysically speaking then, if metamorphosis has been in the imagination or the subconscious of all peoples from the earliest of times up to the present then perhaps it exists as reality! The problem, of course is that

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26 Jung seems to use the term tribal in the sense of a people's or societal orientation toward the Spiritual and the Supernatural as visual and tactile within the realms of everyday life. For more information see Jung's *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1938.)

27 Schubnell, *N. Scott Momaday* 55.
"...there are no methods by which we can translate a mentality and its alien ideas". Ideas which stray from the mainstream conception of what is real within our conscious, tactile world cause tension and fear because we are afraid to question the boundaries of what we have "proven" within our cultures to be true. These boundaries grow and change with the changes in a culture until, as in the case of Western culture, the word and the symbol of the word are two different things and the symbol comes to mean something other than the essence first named by the word. For example, in Hopi there is no term for corn. There are terms for each type of corn, blue, yellow, red and white. To use one word to mean all corn would be unthinkable as if one were eliminating the properties and importance that each kind of corn has on its own, for each corn is fundamentally different in representation, use, symbolism, taste, color and texture. In Western language when we say corn we think corn, and that is all. We do not, generally, associate the term corn with what corn means to our society, rather, the word is a symbol for an object. Although perhaps not true of all Native American tribes, this belief in the power of language seems to exist for the writers addressed in this thesis.

Language and its meanings preconceive ideas, but ideas later reform the concept of the language. As Roland Barthes discusses in Image:Music:Text, language or communication is a system of codes which can only receive its meaning from the world which makes use of it: social, economical, ideological, historical, and behavioral. People are a product of their language; viewing, judging and perceiving through that language. Thus, a person interprets and

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28Highwater, The Primal Mind 5.
understands a message based on the symbols he knows to be related to the symbols of the imagery. Language:

woven with habits and repetitions, with stereotypes, obligatory final clauses and key-words, each constitutes an ideolect, or more exactly a sociolect.\(^{29}\)

Further, the interpretations, stereotypes, and meanings for words in one language may, by no means, fit into the concept of the same word in another culture. Thus in conclusion, it is important to set aside or at least acknowledging the differences from which world views come in order to view contemporary and traditional Native American storytelling as what it is to Native Americans: stories as reality within and aside from metaphors. The reader is asked to do so now in terms of reading this text.

The questions raised by this thesis are metaphysical, psychological and social in that they question the boundaries to our conception of reality. As A. E. Taylor suggests:

So long as our various direct perceptions are not felt to conflict with one another, we readily accept them all as equally real and valid, and no question arises to their relative truth or falsehood.\(^{30}\)

However, when two apparently equally authenticated perceptions stand in conflict with one another we must try to answer that conflict and recognize that things are not always what they seem to be. What is logical and "real" to one culture may be illogical and "un-real" to another. In terms of this thesis, ideas like metamorphosis as reality, conflict with Western perceptions of reality, and therefore, are hard pressed to be understood in any other way


then from a metaphysical perspective. By utilizing metaphysical thought, by questioning what is meant by "real" and to what degree our theories about the world remain in harmony with the universal characteristics of "real existence", we are able to re-evaluate what we might otherwise have termed "un-real" from the perception of the real:

What appears to us is, sometimes at any rate, not real, and what really is does not always appear.\(^1\)

The relationship between conceptions of reality and cultural perspective is a tightly woven one, a reciprocal one in which neither the latter nor the former is more important. The significance of the relationship lies within the latitude of the structures that they create together. Metamorphosis fits into this relationship in that it is a phenomenon to be examined within other phenomena due to its nature as an all encompassing act. The very nature of the metamorphic process demands that we evaluate it from within itself, as an act of transformation and all that this includes, as well as evaluating it within the boundaries of the cultures that celebrates it or in other words from around itself. As Nancy Grey Diaz states "The ability of the individual members of society to transform themselves becomes the whole society's potential for metamorphosis".\(^2\) Thus, we must look at metamorphosis in Native American literature as an extension of its cultures, cultures which retain the potential for metamorphosis through oral traditions. I prefer to accept the stories as they are-- interwoven levels of experiences, all real, yet existing on different levels of Man's idea of reality. I do not attempt to draw

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\(^1\)Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics* 3.

any boundaries between rationalism and irrationalism, or fiction and non fiction, but to be prepared to find them woven together as one and the same.

All of the chapters of this thesis are approached from the perspective that the subject of that chapter demands. Chapter Two concentrates closely on the four novels and the character development. This is the most appropriate perspective to take due to the need to look at the process through which a metamorphic character goes. Chapter Three builds on the information about the characters that has been established in Chapter Two. While Chapter Two concentrates on the narrative in connection to metamorphosis of Man into animal, Chapter Three looks more closely at the philosophical idea of Space-Time. Due to the nature of Time as metamorphic, more emphasis is placed on concepts of Space and Time in Native American traditions in relation to Western traditions than on the character analysis. Chapter Four as the encompassing chapter connects the ideas that are discussed in Chapters One, Two, and Three. As a concluding and encompassing chapter, Chapter Four deals closely with issues which arise from what the literature suggests and from points brought up in the earlier chapters. Thus, each chapter has a unique perspective on a multidimensional concept. It is my feeling that to try and address each chapter in the same style would be erroneous. Rather, I have chosen to use poems, format, and photographs as both a unifier between the chapters and an extension of the concept of the thesis on a whole. I have also chosen to capitalize such terms as Man, Nature, the Sacred, the Spiritual, the Self, Time, and Space when they refer to a large metaphysical concept which can not be thoroughly understood from one singular perspective. These terms
are left in the lower case format when they refer to a specific idea such as sacred history, linear time, Native American spirituality, or spirit self.

Incorporated within the ideas of this thesis, its structure, and its purpose are photographs which are my interpretations of what metamorphosis creates. They are a pictorial extension, a visual discourse that illustrates what the written word is saying. Human beings are orally and visually oriented. We are conceived, we perceive, and we understand the world around us through the process of language and imagery. Thus, art has grown in cultures through attempts to make images of ideas or visualize a subject in a way that may or may not differ from another person's way of seeing. Oral tradition is aural as well as visual, physical, and an interaction of the orator and the listener. Contemporary Native American literature has taken the oral art form and expanded it into the written, in which words create an image. This thesis, however, is unable to communicate in the same beautiful orality that these authors have on a written page, and therefore, I have added to my written words a visual discourse.

The visual discourse that I offer here utilizes animal bones, masks, and human forms as symbols within a visual sentence. Masks play an important role in the metamorphic process in tribal ceremonies. They often represent shamanic dream experiences, transformations, or ancestral spirits. The mask, like the oral word, is a reality of its own. The wearer and the mask are one.
One has to remember that there is a continuity between Man, Spirits and the sensible world -- its animal, vegetal, cosmic or ritual manifestations -- which brings closer Man and Spirit, the mythical ancestors and the living, masks and appearances.\(^3\)\(^3\)

In Hopi tradition the man behind the Katsina mask is not behind a mask, he is the Katsina. The Katsina mask and wearer represent in dance the spiritual world, "the fuller dimension of Reality."\(^3\)\(^4\) Masks, then, are an important visual connection to the idea of metamorphosis because they are a man's representation and manifestation of the metamorphic process. Likewise bones and skulls within the images are not representative of "death" in the morbid sense, but rather, of transformation from one plane of existence to another.

I am a teacher. That is a mask. I am a bear. That is certainly a mask... Masks have to be understood as realities. They are not meant to confuse realities or to depart from reality. To the contrary. They are useful in presenting the reality of the moment... One can mask the reality of something, but in the process another reality is presented, and very often it is a more appropriate reality for that moment.\(^3\)\(^5\)

The photographs are my interpretations only: they are not an attempt to dictate visually what someone else might think. They are the attempt to create within the structure of the thesis a more personal, visual and written interpretation of ideas found in oral tradition. They are the attempt to expand the idea of a thesis from a two dimensional creation into a more well rounded, holistic project. I invite the reader to view these images as he/she views the

writing and to weave the two together into an understanding of the subject matter.

"We were animals and birds even when we were converted, and that was the difference between culture and civilization. We once spoke the language of animals, the missionaries were caught in word winds" (Reverend Hall). 36

36Vizenor, Gerald, People Named the Chippewa: Narrative Histories (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 46.
"Metamorphosis"

CHAPTER TWO:
MAN INTO ANIMAL

"Sometimes they were people
and sometimes animals
and there was no difference".37

Native American oral traditions are rich with images of Man changing into animal form: Man and animal uniting in a familiar bond of universal kinship. These images are neither obscure nor irregular but seemingly commonplace and natural. Metamorphosis, the ability of man to transform into an animal or other natural forms (plant, insect, or celestial), spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically, appears in sacred histories, stories, songs and prayers as a natural product of Man's union with the other beings of the world:

The caribou walked along well like me. Then I walked as he was walking. Then I took his path. And then I walked like the caribou, my trail looking like a caribou trail where I saw my tracks... I, indeed, am caribou Man. So I am called.38

The connection, like a kinship relationship, is unquestioned and communal—one in which relatives help and care for each other. The natural world, the spirits and the animals posses powers that human beings do not and vise a versa. Without the natural and the spirit world Man could not survive because he depends on the strength and powers inherent in the other beings to aid him where his own strengths fail. All beings have an essence, a reason for being, and this relationship is taken very seriously. As Black Elk stated, one should pay attention even to the smallest creatures because they may have a "valuable lesson to teach us, and even the smallest ant may wish to

All beings give and take in a reciprocal manner.

The respect for the "other beings" of the earth is evident and it is conveyed in prayers and songs. The bear, for example, is seen by many tribes as having great spiritual and physical power. Traditionally, hunters, lovers, and those seeking visions often addressed prayers to the bear to aid them where they were weakest and the bear was strongest:

Thank you, friend, that you did not make me walk about in vain.

Now you have come to take mercy on me so that I obtain game, that I may inherit your power of getting easily with your hands the salmon that you catch.40

The power that this hunter receives comes through the union of his spirit and the bear's spirit. Spiritual union manifests itself in many ways: through dreams, visions, and experiences. Joseph Epes Brown explains that in visions humans may turn into animals, and vise versa or one species of animal may shift into a plant form and that frequently, the animal or plant becomes the seeker's (dreamer's) helper spirit.41

There are numerous examples of Man seeking help from the animal world and speaking to them directly with no communication problems. For example, in Dancing Drum: A Cherokee Legend, a little boy named Dancing

Drum speaks to snakes, spiders, and the little men of the woods in order to learn how to make the Sun temper her glare. He understands and is understood by the spirit people and the animals. He also becomes a snake in order to frighten the Sun. In Sioux sacred history, White Buffalo Calf Woman appears to two young hunters out on the Plains. She is initially perceived as a cloud of dust and then a young buffalo calf and finally as a beautiful young woman dressed in white. She comes to the Sioux as a relative with the Sacred Pipe bundle and the ceremonies that are to be used with it. She teaches the Sioux the Pipe's uses and the rules that govern it. These become part of Sioux ideology. As White Buffalo Calf Woman leaves the group she changes into a buffalo calf again. She is a classic example of shapeshifting and transforming in traditional Native American stories. Her metamorphosis is neither odd nor questioned. It is regarded as part of her sacredness — her unexplainable otherness. The Sioux along with other Plains tribes accepted the buffalo as kin and as a sacred being calling them "people as we are." The buffalo and tribal histories are linked together as a union that is unquestioned and bounded by economics, ideology and spirituality. The buffalo were not only the economic staple of many Plains tribes providing clothing, housing, tools, weapons and food, they were relatives from time immemorial. To many, the buffalo like other animals had been the same as

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43 The Sacred Pipe is part of many Sioux religious ceremonies. It is claimed to be the first of the sacred rites of the Oglala Sioux by Black Elk (see The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux. Recorded and edited by Joseph Epes Brown.)
44 Brown, Animals 23.
humans at the time of creation— they were primordial kin.\textsuperscript{45} The buffalo were believed to be the ancient ancestors of the Sioux who are also known as the Buffalo People.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, the connection that the People have to these ancient kin united with their need for the sustenance creates a bond which is expressed through spiritual and ceremonial action in the use of the sacred pipe, through buffalo societies, and through the sacred history of the union of the People and the buffalo.

These kinship bonds are also found in clan names, ceremonial group names, and kinship family names. For example, Professor Tom Holm tells his students that there used to be a bear clan of the Cherokees like there is a wolf clan but the "bear clan all became bears and now there aren't any."\textsuperscript{47} A member of a society (the Buffalo Society of the Sioux) dances and acts as a buffalo and "the man who acts the buffalo is said to have real buffalo inside of him."\textsuperscript{48} These societies that bear the names of animals were believed to have been founded by that animal.\textsuperscript{49} Further, the other beings, both immortal and mortals, were believed to have the ability to shift among several outward shapes. In Inuit stories, animals and humans changing appearances is common, it is in Inuit histories and manifested and remembered in ceremony.

Raven gave humans their origin and by removing his raven appearance

\textsuperscript{47}Professor Tom Holm, personal interview at the University of Arizona, Fall 1992.
\textsuperscript{48}Brown, \textit{Animals} 68.
\textsuperscript{49}Brown, \textit{Animals} 70.
revealed his human form. The raven ceremony still plays a large part in Inuit religious celebration.

Calvin Luther Martin examines this reciprocal union between Man and Nature in his work, *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Truth*, and concludes that the union is part of a universal human urge. Humans are bound to Nature from a beginning in Nature as are animals and other beings. This link remains in humans and is manifested in connections through myth and stories; for cultures still within the union—hunting and gathering societies—the link continues strongly in language. He argues that the language of tribal peoples incorporates and combines other being's languages within the tribal language and remains closer to Nature than does European or industrialized cultures' languages. This linguistic difference provides a unique perspective into the reality of communities who are in direct union with the Natural world. Language is not simply a means of communication through words and gestures but expression that hints at spiritual links between the earth and the Native American. Anthropologist Dorothy Lee explains that in the Wintu culture the relationship to Nature is expressed through speech and linguistic terminology. Their language is not aggressive as is English, or as Dorothy Lee puts it "we are aggressive toward reality. We say, This is bread, we do not say like the Wintu, I call this bread. The Wintu never starkly say this is, if he speaks of reality which is not within

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50 Gill, "Religious Forms and Themes" *America in 1992* 278.
his own restricting experience, he does not affirm it, he only implies it.\textsuperscript{53} Wintus do not try to control Nature and the realities around them, but accept the relationship with Nature as an intimate and mutual courtesy.\textsuperscript{54} In Ojibway culture language incorporates animate and seemingly inanimate objects as on a socially interactive level with humans. A stone, for example, is treated "as if it were a 'person,' not a 'thing.'"\textsuperscript{55} Stones are grammatically treated as animate in many cases; they are allocated an animate grammatical category as part of "culturally constituted cognitive 'set.'"\textsuperscript{56} This "set" leaves a door open that our orientation on dogmatic grounds keeps tightly shut.\textsuperscript{57} The Ojibway recognize that under certain circumstances a stone may be animate and this is reflected in their language.

Prayers and songs to animals are often learned through vision encounters with the animal to whom they are offered. Often these songs are in the language of the animal and can be learned only in vision and dream. Dreams allow the individual to come into direct communication with the "powerful person of other-than-human class."\textsuperscript{58} By learning the songs of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Lee, \textit{Wintu Thought} 130-140.
  \item Hallowell, \textit{Ojibway Ontology} 147-8.
  \item Hallowell, \textit{Ojibway Ontology} 148.
  \item Hallowell, \textit{Ojibway Ontology} 165.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
other-than-human beings, one becomes joined to them; more properly, one recollects one's ancient kinship with these beings.\(^9\)

"Once we were shape-shifters," hunters remind their children, in the language of myth; today we wear the skin of human people, but through language and art we continue to commune with the creatures into which our ancestors could be transformed.\(^0\)

Martin and Highwater suggest that humans who continue to be in direct contact with the Natural world, as a part of it not as a controller of it, maintain a tremendous ability to communicate both verbally, physically and psychologically with the other beings of the world. Martin suggests that when human beings began to control Nature and dominate it through husbandry and philosophical outlook, they lost the ability to communicate with the other beings.\(^1\)

Those peoples who maintain the original connection today may include shamans and traditionals of tribal cultures. Documentation continues on shaman/healers of Inuit, Labrador, the Steppe areas of Russia, and in South America which suggests that human beings still maintain the same reverence and connections to the other beings and levels of reality that exist in this world.\(^2\) Ethnographer, Selwyn Dewdney, recalls his encounter with the wife of James Horton on the Manitou Reserve near Emo, Ontario:

\(^{59}\)Martin, *Spirit of the Earth* 18.  
\(^{60}\)Martin, *Spirit of the Earth* 18-19.  
This song originated among the Montagnais-Naskapi of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula and dates back to the coming of Caribou Man(date unknown). \(^{61}\)Martin, *Spirit of the Earth* chapter 2.  
She informed my wife and me that she could not eat Sturgeon. Moreover, she knew whenever a sturgeon was caught in the Rainy River, because she herself was a Sturgeon.

Although one can not affirm that all Native American tribal members continue to believe in and maintain a union to these past connections, it may be said that some do in practice. It is clear that in contemporary literature these connections exist and are approached from a literal standpoint, not just a mythical or fictional one in the portrayal of metamorphic characters—dreamers, tricksters, spirit beings, and other beings with special ties to Nature.

Certain contemporary Native American literatures continue to carry these ideas of Man and Nature's kinship union through the metamorphic character by exploring what it means to be human and by exploring the primordial qualities of humanness. The literature often addresses what is lost and what is gained in transformation specifically supporting the idea that a Self exists in the context of that individual's world. The questions of who the metamorphic character in contemporary Native American literature is,


63Dewdney, Selwyn, The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway (Toronto and Buffalo: Glenbow-Alberta Institute and the University of Toronto Press, 1975) 30.

64Diaz, The Radical Self: Metamorphosis to Animal Form in Modern Latin American Narratives 98.

65Diaz 98.
why does the character transform, and what happens to him in the process
demand that we look at the process through which the characters that
metamorphose go, and that we look at what happens to them psychologically,
spiritually, emotionally and physically. How do the observers of the
metamorphic process respond? Finally, how does the act of metamorphosis
effect the human and the Natural world? This last question not only helps
define the process of metamorphosis, but it also aids in the understanding of
the cultural attitudes surrounding the process: is it accepted or rejected and
who is it that accepts and rejects it.

There seem to be three types of metamorphic characters: the marginal
character, one alienated from his tribal heritage; the traditional character
secure in his natural setting; and the spirit figure. The differences in how
their metamorphosis progresses relates directly to the acceptance of the idea
of metamorphosis as reality.

N. Scott Momaday's Locke Setman is a marginal person, a Kiowa
separated from his tribal heritage and raised as an Anglo. His separation plays
a role in his acceptance and understanding of the process that he undergoes.
His metamorphosis becomes a psychological as well as physical trauma which
can be analyzed from both Western and non-Western orientations. His
transformation is set in contemporary time causing a complex dichotomy
between his cultural views. Due to Set's culturally diverse upbringing, his
metamorphosis exemplifies the traumatic, psychological, emotional, physical,
and spiritual process that one might go through.

Louise Erdrich's Fleur is a traditional Ojibway whose metamorphic
abilities are constant and implied. Her transformations are neither traumatic
to her nor questioned as a reality as opposed to an insanity by those around her. Her character is set within the Allotment Period at the turn of the century, circa 1912, a time period in which tribal community and philosophy were still strongly in place. This, as well as the placement of the character within her kin community plays a role in how Fleur accepts and responds to her own metamorphoses. Akin to Erdrich's Fleur, Gerald Vizenor's Bearheart, links the ideas of both the marginal character and the non-marginal character. Bearheart believes that he is a bear, his narrative interchanges personal pronouns with bear, and the imagery which describes him is of bear. He is marginal in his distance from the other character, a young urban Indian who believes he is crazy.

The third type of metamorphic character is represented by Leslie Marmon Silko's spiritual character in *Ceremony*. Ts'eh's character represents a Katsina spirit who transforms into a human being in order to aid the main character, Tayo, in his healing process. Her transformations are expected by the traditionals of Tayo's Laguna society and by Tayo who becomes her lover. The spiritual character's metamorphosis differs from Set and Fleur's in that Ts'eh resides in the mythic, spirit realms more so than in the human realm of existence. The humans who acknowledge her spirit identity accept her changes as normal.

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66 The Allotment Period is an historical-political term referring to the period in which Indian tribal lands were sectioned off and allotted by acres to individual tribal members rather than to a tribe. Under the Dawes Act of 1887 reservations were broken down into 180 acre per tribal male. The effect of the act was to create a checkerboard reservation and a tremendous loss of tribal lands. Excess land was sold to interested white businesses and individuals.
Initially, let us examine Locke Setman to define the Self involved in the process of change. What happens to one's sense of Self when metamorphosis occurs? What are the changes in the spiritual self, the tangible self, the mind and the body? Locke's transformation demands that we consider the psychological and spiritual trauma of metamorphosis because he is a person who's Anglo orientation has forced the psychological rational mind to battle the metaphysical realities involved. To look at the changes in a persons' self one must first define the idea of Self. The Self is often seen as an interactive relationship between a person's inner id and ego and one's cultural orientation. To many non-Western peoples the idea may be expanded to include the Self as an inanimate and animate being, a human and non-human within the context of cultures that accept inanimate and animals as beings. The Self then, is both the essence within us, our soul perhaps, as well as it is a being of its own power and essence that exists in our waking realities and within our inner realities. It is our conscious and our subconscious together. The Self also contains "pieces" of the spirit world and the natural world. It is an encompassing corpus which houses all that it is to be human. This idea of the conscious and the subconscious will be elaborated on further in the discussion of Set and in Chapter Three.

Eight children were there at play, seven sisters and their brother. Suddenly the boy was struck dumb; he tumbled and began to run upon his hands and feet. His fingers became claws, and his body was covered with fur. directly there was a bear where the boy had been...

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N. Scott Momaday uses this Kiowa legend as the premise and as a continuing sketch for his story of Locke Setman the man who metamorphosis into a bear, the link in a line of men who carry the bear power within them: "Sep-pago, Set-tainte, Set-angya, Set-mante. Setman. Set." It is this power that calls them to metamorphose and reclaim or acknowledge their bear side. Throughout the novel images of this Kiowa legend, woven with a variety of memories and stories about bears, reiterates the connection that Locke Setman has to this legend and to his Kiowa heritage. Many of the adaptations are renditions of the Kiowa Bear Boy story which is the origin story of Tsoai-tai, the rock tree boy, in which the constellation of Ursa Major, the Great Bear and Devil's Tower are formed. The reader is given the essence of Set's being through these stories and memories. He is the Bear Boy.

Locke Setman's or Set's transition does not flow easily either physically or mentally unlike the images seen in the songs and prayers from the early part of this chapter. Due to his upbringing outside of an environment that cultivated the beliefs and attitudes that transformation is acceptable and possible, Set finds the transition to be a psychological problem and an emotional trauma. It takes time, realization and guidance from friends and his spiritual aid, Grey, to accept that he carries a power which relates him to his ancient kin the bear. His Anglo adoption and rearing left this section of his psyche and his heredity untouched, unawakened and therefore, unexplored.

68Momaday, Ancient Child 35.
69Devil's Tower is a natural rock formation that comes out of the ground and rises straight up into the air. It is very important to N. Scott Momaday and appears in many of his stories in relation to the Bear Boy. The formation is a tree which turned to stone after the Bear Boy tried to climb it in pursuit of his sisters. It is the tree that carries them into the sky where they become the Great Bear constellation.
When it is tapped the power surges forth into his subconscious and then into his conscious awareness and he is forced to understand and accept his "bearness." Unlike Kafka's Greggor however, Set is able to accept the transformation without a sense of sin or degradation. The issue of morality does not come into play in his trauma. This may be seen as the author's acceptance of such things as natural or it may be understood in the text alone as the awareness of those involved that sin and morality play no role in the process that is obvious and unstoppable.

Set's initial awareness that his being is only partially fulfilled, that something is missing occurs during his return to Oklahoma, land of his birth, for his "grandmother's" funeral and through his painting. While at the funeral Set becomes aware that he knows very little about who he is, who his people are, and where he comes from. He is a very Western Man in his isolation. He does not have the feeling of community and kinship that exists within tribal families. As Robert K. Thomas taught, tribal relationships and extended family bonds are more defined and important than individualism. Individuality is a Western ideal but this does not mean that the "individual" does not exist in tribal society. Rather, individuality exists within a group identity. The group being relatives, friends, and kin -- are a part of the individual as well as the group identity. Thus, Locke Setman's re-introduction to his relatives, his kin, evokes his feelings of "aloneness" prompted by his idea of the individual. The individual psyche and the tribal psyche are closely

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70 Set's own grandmother's best friend, Kope'mah becomes his adopted grandmother after his biological grandmother dies. Momaday, The Ancient Child 69-70.

related and one does not alienate oneself from one's kin in order to be an individual. He feels this loss and with it begins his transformation. Set's inherited responsibility remains dormant in his conscious for a long while, but it seems to be in his subconscious even before his transition begins. He becomes aware through Lola Bourne, who purchases one of his paintings, that a character of his painting is in transformation.\textsuperscript{72} This character is the painter, Set.

It is through the art, Set's paintings, and isolated instances in which Set questions his sanity that the reader and the Anglo characters in Set's life begin to notice his transformation. This is very important in understanding the psychological transformation of the Self because art which comes honestly from within the artist is a mirror to the artist's soul. As Calvin Luther Martin explains:

\begin{quote}
Artifice enables the craftsman to flow into another shape, another place of being; operating as a key, it unlocks the door to the realm of another being, with which the person merges. Artifice thus assists in setting the terms of selfness.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

We begin to glimpse at the interior of a man who has not acknowledged his entire soul -- his true and inner self-- yet. His art is the medium in which we see his subconscious dealing with the upcoming metamorphosis as his bear psyche begins to take over:

\textsuperscript{72}Momaday, \textit{Ancient Child} 107.
\textsuperscript{73}Martin, \textit{Spirit of the Earth} 11.
The reflection in the glass is the transparent mask of a man...

Are you Set?
Yes, I am Set. 74

Set stands in front of the mirror questioning the image that he sees. His mind rambles from lithographs of bears to the idea of art as the subconscious tool to the Being, the Mind. These thoughts and the analogy of the face in the mirror to a mask links more closely the ideas that our outward selves are only partially real. What is unseen and part of the "inner" Man is in reality hidden by masks or most importantly here, expressed by masks and reflections. Emory Sekaquaptwe explains that masks represent the spirit world in Hopi epistemology.75 Campbell and Jung both suggest that masks are alter egos in a sense; they represent our inner being. Thus if we combine what Emory Sekaquaptwe is suggesting with what Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung are saying we find that masks are our inner selves as well as spiritual world representatives. Our reality within masks is to unite our inner selves with the spirit beings. Further, it is a strengthening of the traditional bonds between Man and Nature.

Set believes that he is becoming obsessed about his painting and expresses this concern to his adopted father, Bent.76 What the obsessions signify is the realization that there is a power within his being that needs to come out and that it is not as human as his known self. His paintings change showing this, as his personality changes and becomes more charged with "animal energy". Set realizes that there is a connection between the new

74Momaday, Ancient Child 131-132.
75Sekaquaptwe, Hopi Indian Ceremonies 32.
76Momaday, Ancient Child 138.
forms and styles emerging in his work and his impending change. He is able to call the paintings self-portraits accepting that he will eventually confront the images from his canvas and his mind recognize and understand them.\(^7^7\) His paintings later become representations of or stand for "the condition of his mind and soul...they were somehow related to his spirit...beasts and anthropomorphic forms proceeding from the far reaches of time."\(^7^8\) His paintings reconnect the primordial link to Nature, in his case to the bear, far before his mind fully accepts it. At the time of this painting, Set's adopted father has died and he has already met his spirit helper and relative Grey. He has received the bear medicine bundle from Grey and its powers begin to physically change him. He becomes violent in his reaction to his mental link with the bear inside himself. He begins to dream of the bear and at points to act as bear. "The bear was taking hold of him."\(^7^9\) Set is transcending time; by becoming the bear which is his inherited legacy; he participates in the truths of the past, present, and the future. He embodies the metaphysical, the Natural, and the human realms of existence. He is accomplishing a complete metamorphic integration on all levels of reality and is contributing to the task of collective regeneration of the bear power.

The subconscious connection through art and dreams to the inner, primordial being, the man who is human and bear both, clearly differs in the character of Set from the Western European examples of Kafka's Greggor. Even though Set's transformation is traumatic and violent as is Greggor's, the sense surrounding it is vastly different. Greggor never becomes the vermin

\(^7^7\) Momaday, *Ancient Child* 144.
\(^7^8\) Momaday, *Ancient Child* 213.
\(^7^9\) Momaday, *Ancient Child* 229.
in his soul and mind both; he does not seek it out and control it. Set confronts his violence, a reaction to his confusion. His Western Anglo psyche connects his physical changes, his mental changes, and his dreams to a loss of sanity. This corresponds to the Western attitudes toward metamorphosis in which the loss of one's mind and soul are the greatest of all tragedies leaving one on the level of beasts. There is no gratuity given to the act; no realization that the soul may not be lost but rather changed in a reciprocal exchange with the new form.

In Western literature about metamorphosis, that actual process is usually brought on by a committing of a sin, an alienation of the character, and a struggle with one's animal nature within the human body. In other words, the human soul is lost in the transformation. This basic aspect of being human is all important, therefore, the loss of the human body is reason for alienation, rejection, and condemnation. It is a morally judgable act. These Western ideas are looking into Western Man's idea of what it is to be a human being. One must keep in mind that in Western culture today animals are considered inferior to men. Man seems justified in suppressing and dominating animals. The inbreeding of dogs for human aesthetic pleasure is an example as are the methods used to procure fine and tender veal and chicken. Along another vein, Western folklore has placed certain animals such as werewolves, jackals, cocks, and snakes in connection with ideas of evil or satanic ritual. Those animals and humans associated with them become "evil." Thus, the idea that Man and Animal could transform into one or the other as a desired process does not complement the cultural attitudes surrounding Man's place as superior being. The act of being human, in
Western culture or in Christian belief, is one of guardian over animals, as the Adam of the Garden of Eden suggests. Through indoctrination or through scientific evolution, man has surpassed and conquered the animals. A reciprocal kinship union with them would acknowledge an equality that threatens Man's sense of himself and his place on earth.

In Native literature this human self, ego, id complex is not a question or an issue unless the character strays from or is raised outside of his culture as Set was. The person transforming simply becomes another animal or being. In outward manifestation, according to Hallowell, neither animal nor human characteristics define "categorical differences in the core of being...When confronted by a bear, the Indian cannot be sure if the bear is a man in bear form or vise versa."80 The Ojibway believe that the human soul may become detached from the body and undergo transformation into animal form.81 Thus, there is no hard and fast line that can be drawn between an animal form and a human form because metamorphosis is possible.82

In order to heal, Set redefines his reality by giving up his Anglo life and going back to his Kiowa homeland and to his kin. He returns to Oklahoma and with the aid of Grey begins to rehabilitate: to accept and understand what is within him (the bear) and what is around him that controls him (Nature). In direct opposition to the idea of the individual, he allows himself the understanding that Nature controls him; he does not control Nature.

This union of the soul, the mind, and the body is the final stage of Set's transformation. It is a transformation that he is ready for and goes to

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80Brown, Animals 33.
81Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 159-162.
82Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 162.
knowingly -- it is not a chance happening. Set leaves his pregnant wife and
spiritual guide, Grey, and journeys to see Tsoai, the rock tree, where the
original Kiowa Bear boy originated. During his viewing of Tsoai he becomes
the bear of the legend.

It was the image of a great bear, rearing against
Tsoai. It was the vision he had sought.

*Set, set!* they shouted. "The bear, the bear!" and
ran. And he ran after them. "Yes. I am set,"

His limbs had become very heavy, and his head. He
was dizzy. His vision blurred. The objects on the
ground at his feet were clear and sharply defined in
his sight, but in the distance were only vague
shapes in a light like fog...

...and he heard things he had never heard before,
separately, distinctly, with merely absolute
definition...

He could smell a thousand things at once and
perceive them individually...He could smell the oils
rising from the surface of his skin...

He tried to call to them, but he could not; he had no
longer a human voice.⁸³

Set becomes the bear; he sees and perceives as a bear would and finally he no
longer acts nor is a human --"He could no longer recognize them; they were
masks."⁸⁴ The idea of Self here must encompass the essence of the initial self
as well as the self that one becomes. It would defeat the purpose of the
transformation to divide the analysis and categorize Set as human versus Set
as bear because he is both bear and human. When he was a man without

⁸⁴Hallowell, *Ojibway Ontology* 314.
acceptance of his bear power he was only partially a man. With the uniting of both his beings he becomes whole.

Set is an example of a character whose transformation is traumatic because he does not initially consider himself part of the primordial link to Nature and the idea of transformation. There are characters represented in the contemporary literature who transform and accept it without questioning it at all. These characters involve implied transformation. Louise Erdrich’s Fleur, for example, does not go through the trauma that Set does. From the onset of her story she is described and portrayed as having an animal essence which is strong within her nature, her people and her lifestyle. Set in 1912 when the Chippewa lands of Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota were under Allotment and the people were under pressure to sell their lands to timber companies, Fleur’s story, like Set’s is one of turmoil and upheaval. Her family is dead of sickness and she is saved by one of the narrators of the story, Nanapush. She grows up to defend her family’s land from sale. Her character is defined and associated with her connection to Nature to her land and in her strength and powers to work with Nature for her own benefits. Fleur is described as Nature itself: sometimes fishlike, sometimes bear and often as wolf:
...her hips fishlike, slippery narrow... she turned and looked at me and grinned the white wolf grin...85

...we followed the tracks of her bare feet and saw where they changed, where the claws sprang out, the pad broadened and pressed into the dirt. by night we heard her chuffling cough, the bear cough.86

She sleeps with the water spirit Misshepeshu, the Underwater Lion of Ojibway lore, and she talks and sees the manitous, the spirits or ghosts of the dead.87

Her animal essence allows her to mediate between Man and the other beings:

... the manitous all through the woods spoke through Fleur, loose arguing. I recognized them turtle's quavering scratch, the Eagle's high shriek, Loon's crazy bitterness, Otter, the howl of Wolf, Bear's low rasp.

Perhaps the bear heard Fleur calling, and answered. (Nanapush)88

The narrative of this story focuses on Fleur through two characters: the Chippewa man, Nanapush and the Meti halfbreed, Pauline. What is most compelling about their descriptions of Fleur is that both refer to her using animal terminology. This seems appropriate from Nanapush whose own connections to Nature are strong and very closely related.89 He is able to call on animals and vision to aid him in his times of need. Pauline, however, is very removed from the primal qualities of Nature due to her Christian

86 Erdrich, Tracks 12.
87 See Dewdney, Sacred Scrolls 40, for further descriptions of Misshepeshu. He is a powerful water/lion manitou who legend tells slept with an old woman and caused her to have a child, half manitou and half human named Nanapush (p.129). Fleur's and Nanapush's characters may be based on this lore.
88 Erdrich, Tracks 59.
89 As was explained in footnote 87 Nanapush's character is related to Misshepeshu who slept with an old woman, Nanapush's mother. Nanapush is part manitou and part human.
indoctrination. She puts tremendous emphasis on the heathenistic qualities of all things around her; Nature in itself is wild and evil, linked to Satan. Pauline's visualizations of Fleur are always animal in their qualities and her evaluation of events equate that animalism with evil. She describes Fleur as fixed like a tree, rearing over her with the talons of a bear. Pauline calls to God for strength as the animal and natural qualities in Fleur strike terror in her Christian heart.\(^9^0\) Similarly to Set's case in which he as a mental halfbreed, one who was raised white, Pauline is also the one who defines and creates the mental anguish that surrounds Fleur's transformations.

Fleur takes strength from her encounters with Nature. Her submersions in Lake Matchimanito where she unites with the water spirit takes place three times. Each time she emerges stronger and with more wild power within her. It is this strength that Fleur uses to try and save her land:

She was the one who closed the door or swung it open. Between the people and the gold-eyed creature of the lake, the spirit which they said was neither good nor bad but simply had an appetite, Fleur was the hinge.\(^9^1\)

Fleur's metamorphosis differs from that of Set's in that we never witness her changes in the same manner that we do his. Fleur's transformations are constant states of visual shiftings from human to animal. Her animal descriptions: wolf, bear, and fish would connect Fleur to the spirit figures or manitous.\(^9^2\) She is the final phase that Set reaches; she is the union of two

\(^9^0\)Erdrich, *Tracks* 157-158.

\(^9^1\)Erdrich, *Tracks* 139.

\(^9^2\)The Ojibway, according to Dewdney, have a Great Bear, wolf, fish, and lion manitous who are supernatural beings. These descriptions of Fleur may allude to her manitous status as a spirit being which would explain her power and visage.
realities; she is both woman and animal. Her being is not a contradiction of one over the other, rather, it is an equilibrious state. Her body does not fight the transformations nor does her mind. Her transformations seem to be more on the lines of shapeshifting or innate animal quality within a human essence. The spirit of her being, her quintessence is what Taoists would call the balance of ying and yang. She is the existing union of metamorphosis, whereas Set is the example of the psychological and spiritual struggle toward that union.

Fleur exists as an extension of Ojibwa beliefs which in their metaphysical orientation, allow metamorphoses to be incorporated into the union with Man and the Universe. The Ojibway concept of person transcends the notion of a person in "the naturalistic sense; it likewise transcends a human appearance as constant attribute." Humans and other-than-humans, supernaturals, and plants are viewed as interconnected and there is no barrier drawn between animal form and human form. The term "supernatural" is of the utmost importance because it does not exist as a concept above "natural" in Ojibway thought. They make no presupposition of the concept of the natural. Rather beings of "supernatural" categories: mythic figures, and spirits, exist on an interactive level with humans. According to Irving Hallowell, myths are considered to be conscious beings, with power of thought and action. Characters within sacred stories or myths are, likewise, considered to be live entities who have existed from time immemorial. They are persons of other-than-human class. Mythic characters such as Misshepeshu, with whom Fleur

93 Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 158.
94 Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 150.
95 Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 150.
sleeps, are not fictitious but accepted as real living manitous, spirit people, and so the union of Fleur with Misshepeshu is not unrealistic. "The world of myth is not categorically distinct from the world as experienced by human beings in everyday life."96 Thus if we consider the ideas above, Fleur's transformational abilities, her sleeping and communication with other-than-human beings fits into the Ojibway ontological view of reality in which mythic beings, spirits, humans, and animals move shift, and weave themselves around and within each other. Fleur's metamorphosis is a union between all of these realms of reality.

Gerald Vizenor's Bearheart is somewhere in between these other two characters. He is the metamorphosis of the heart and the mind. Bearheart is an introductory character who initiates the Heirship Chronicles, a series of stories. It is in the prologue: Letter to the Reader, that we find his voice, his character described as bear:

The bear is in me now...
Listen ha ha ha haaaa.
We raise the secret language of bears in the darkness, stumble into the fourth world on twos and fours, and turn underwords ha ha ha haaaa in our visions. Bears are in our hearts.97

Bearheart tells the story of his youth at the Government boarding school; in these narratives he describes himself in terms of a crow and the bear. He is punished because of his orientation toward his tribal heritage and toward Nature. His description of these episodes are full of animals -- bears, and crows -- which speak through him. His fear of the white man is soothed

96Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 159.
by the bear bringing him into his bearheart. This acceptance of Bearheart by the bear is important because the bear remains a primary spiritual figure in Ojibway ontology. Bearheart is the voice of the past in the present. He tells his story during the Bureau of Indian Affairs takeover in the 1970's —"we laughed, no one in the cities would believe that we were related to animals, that we were bears in these stories." Through his conviction of his barness, his animalness, we witness a link to Nature that comes directly from the mouth of the metamorphic character. Unlike Fleur who we see as metamorphic in other's descriptions of her, Bearheart tells us that he is bear. We are told that this phenomenon is not out of the ordinary in Ojibway epistemology where "no sharp lines can be drawn dividing living beings" because metamorphosis is possible.

The body is very far from being simply form or objective mechanism. It is the vehicle by which the self occupies space and lives time. It is the source of motility, the place where perception and expression occur and the primary creator of meaning.

Characters... are no longer autonomous, self-contained psychological units. Rather they slide into and out of their ancestors, or move easily between the magic and the real.

The ideas expressed in the quotes above are also evident in Leslie Silko's character of Ts'eh who is representative of the third type of metamorphic

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98 Vizenor, Bearheart viii.
99 Dewdney, Sacred Scrolls 39.
100 Vizenor, Bearheart ix.
101 Hallowell, Ojibway Ontology 159.
102 Diaz, Radicle Self 7.
character, the spirit person. Ts'eh is: Ko'chinako, Yellow Woman, leader of the Corn Maidens. She is also Ts'its'its'nako, Spider Woman; Water Woman; and Mountain Spirit Woman. Her name, Ts'eh, implies that she is all of the above Laguna spirit women, she is a Katsina who is linked to Mount Taylor and as Katsina she harnesses "the elemental powers of the universe: fire, water, wind, snow, lights, and stars." One can more easily understand the connection of spirit to place and person to both if one conceives of them within the worldview of the Laguna. The Laguna are a Pueblo tribe whose worldview revolves around specific cardinal points of reference, Katsina spirits, rain, and storytelling all woven within one idea of place. The "world is a projection of thought encapsulated in stories; the stories that formed the Laguna world are thought of and told by Thought Woman, a supernatural being."

Central to the Laguna worldview are six cardinal points centered at mountains with Mount Taylor being to the North. On each mountain lives the supernaturals who made the mountains their homes after emerging from the lower world. These supernatural beings, Katsinas, may appear to humans as humans or as animals. It is the Katsinas that bring rain and life to the semi-desert world of the Laguna.

The cardinal points are each associated with a type of rain, a color and a Katsina. Ts'eh is incarnate of Mount Taylor and she is associated with the

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106 Swan, Laguna 246.
107 Swan, Laguna 230.
sacred color blue. She fits into the structure, the mythic history and the thought of Laguna because she can manifest herself into human form, bringing rain and healing to Tayo's world. Ts'eh's role within Ceremony is to aid the main character, Tayo, in his healing process. She, through her connections to the sacred elements and her knowledge of the world, teaches Tayo creating through her metamorphic abilities the needed "meanings" to heal Tayo's world. Her aiding in Tayo's recovery is reciprocal to the union of Katsina to Laguna people.

Tayo, a Viet Nam veteran, finds himself in a world that is full of witchery and illness; this causes his mental and physical illness. According to the medicine men of his Laguna community, he must heal himself in order to heal the world that is falling prey to the evils that have effected him and the other veterans. Ts'eh appears to Tayo in the form of a young woman when he is in need of guidance or help on his healing quest. She is always set within the landscape of water, sacred mountains, and the stars. These elements imply her connection to spirit figures as the Laguna believe that the dead come back as clouds bringing rain.  

Rain is healing and survival. She tells Tayo that her family name is Montano and her family is located across New Mexico and Arizona. The locations of the towns they live in are all near sacred mountains at all the cardinal points.

He could feel where she had come from, and he understood where she would always be.  

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Her spiritual connections are never directly stated in the story but are implied throughout by her relationship to Tayo and her companion who is hunter and mountain lion both and by the language and contexts that describe her. It is known by Tayo and the spiritual leaders of his community that she is special, not human:

...they stopped him frequently with questions about the location and the time of day; they asked about the direction she had come from and the color of her eyes.

A'moo'ooh, you say you have seen her
Last winter
up north
with Mountain Lion
the hunter

They started crying
the old men started crying
"A'moo'ooh! A'moo'ooh!"
You have seen her
We will be blessed
again.110

By splitting the spiritual and human self, Ts'eh is fully able to participate in the truths of the past, present, and future: she embodies the metaphysical, natural, and human realms of existence. Her union with Tayo creates a link between the spiritual world and the human world. Unlike the other metamorphic characters, Ts'eh's metamorphosis is more cerebral. It is the mythic union of storytelling and histories. The union within the context of history and storytelling as reality is then the union of the spirit world with Man's world through the metamorphic abilities of a select few. Ts'eh is in essence the White Buffalo Calf Woman of the Sioux; she comes to man in the form that he understands and gives him spiritual aid and knowledge. Her

110 Silko, Ceremony 269-270.
transformations are not into animal forms but are implied Natural forms: water, clouds and stars. Her presence which is celebrated by the spiritual leaders in the above song, brings the hope of rain after seven years of drought and the hope of healing a world that is suffering from evil. Her presence within the story is accepted by the other characters as easily as the evil is accepted as existing. Due to her spirit or sacred status, we can not analyze her process as we did the other characters but must attempt to understand it as we would understand the existence of Elija or other "mythic" characters of Western history.

Language is key to the acceptance of these characters and their stories because language supports and communicates the "total range of a people's values" and worldview. Bearheart's language reminds one that language defines reality, or as Dennis Tedlock explains "the noun that best express a speaker's nearness to his subject are those of blood relationship. John Fire Lame Deer, an elderly Sioux man tells us that a good way to start thinking about Nature is to not talk about it but "rather talk to it, talk to the rivers, to the lakes, to the winds as our relatives."

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112 Tedlock, Dennis and Barbara Tedlock, eds., Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1975) XVI.
We Sioux have a close relationship to the buffalo. He is our brother. We have many legends of buffalo changing themselves into men. And the Indians are built like buffalo too -- big shoulders, narrow hips... That animal was... part of our soul.114

The characters of Fleur, Ts'eh, and Bearheart remind the reader of what John Fire Lame Deer is explaining: they are the connection that is within our soul. These characters leave no room for psychological analysis of their transformations: it exists; it is theirs; and it is natural. They are not caught in the limbo between the reality of the world according to Western European interpretations and the interpretation of non-Western, often labeled right brain, oriented peoples. One has a harder time looking at the psychological character and how it changes because it is not an issue, the psychological contains and is contained within a world view which accepts realities as in flux and multifaceted. However, one can address how they change and why and to what extent it corresponds to traditional stories and philosophies of change as has been discussed in the case of Fleur and Ts'eh.

Are these metamorphic beings able to turn back into human form? Ts'eh, Fleur and Bearheart transform back and forth without question; they are never one form without the other. Locke Setman is an unclear case. The epilogue introduces his son, who, we are told has never seen Tsoai but that he knows Tsoai to be within him. He feels it in his mind's eye and within his blood and he transfers these feelings onto a shield painting.115 We are not told whether or not Set returns but it is inferred that Set's bear power, his bear essence has transfered itself to the next generation. The answer is

114Lame Deer and Erdoes, Lame Deer 130.
115Shield paintings are symbols of power and protection. The image painted on them often comes to a warrior in a vision from his spirit/animal helper. These images carry the sacred power to aid and protect the warrior.
unnecessary because what has been completed is the unending cycle of connection between the bear power within, the carrier of the power responding, and the next generation. The healing cycle is complete and the union continues. It seems that the cyclical idea of union of Man and Animal is the most important thing not the psychological or sociological implications which are minor remnants of another cultural view of reality.

It would appear that the psychological concerns are primarily Western ones as are the sociological implications. Dennis Tedlock gives an example that relates to this dichotomy. He tells of an Ojibwa describing his metamorphosis during his boyhood vision. He discovered that his own body was covered with feathers, he realized that he had become an eagle. The issue of reality obviously does not exist: human beings can change into animals. It is not an illusion nor a metaphor. The language in the Ojibwa man's description leaves no place for question: he became an eagle which, as pointed out earlier fits into Ojibway worldview. Set, then, becomes a bear and the real question here is why did he have so much trouble? The trouble stems from his initial orientation to a way of thinking about reality, the Self, and his importance as a human being. If these things are of paramount importance then the giving of them toward a different union of Self is near impossible.

Set had to first conquer the part of himself that had been alienated from Nature in order to fully accept his union with Nature. His ordeal may cause readers to assume that transformation is mentally triggered or psychologically and physically devastating to one's being. However, Fleur and Bearheart lead us to a different conclusion; the devastation if it exists is triggered within the

116 Tedlock, Teachings XVI.
metamorphic person or by those around him if they are not completely accepting of it's reality.

You will know when you walk in bear country...

And you will remain with them locked forever inside yourself your eyes will see you dark shaggy and thick.

...where you stopped to look back and saw only bear tracks behind you.

They will try to bring you back (the bear priests)... back to the place you stopped and found only bear prints in the sand where your feet had been. (Parenthesis mine) 117

The idea being circled here is that Man's union with Nature is a reality within its own time and place: a reality that exists for the person involved. As Set and Bearheart illustrate, the reality of metamorphosis existed for them physically and mentally and it existed for those around them in some context as well. How does this reality appear to those observers:

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"Your feet," I said to him. "They'll freeze."
"Does the wolf freeze his feet?" the old man asked me.
I shook my head.
"Well then," he said.
"but you aren't a wolf," I started to say.
The old man's eyes opened wide and then looked at me narrowly, sharply, squinting and shining. He gave a long, wailing, wolf cry with his head raised toward the winter sky... I thought I heard a wailing answer.118

The social reaction of how these episodes appear to the observer seems to fall into three categories: those who accept metamorphosis as reality, an actual physical, mental, and spiritual change; those who see metamorphosis as an act of degradation or sin; and those who question metamorphosis as a reality seeing it as a psychosis or a mental imbalance rather than a reality.

Proude drew a deep breath and exhaled in a slow whistle. then he raised his head high like an animal scenting his enemies on the wind, expanding his chest and growling with the great power of the bears. The sound was deep and wild. The federal official and the detachment turned and ran from the cedar circle.119

Proude Cedarfair, another metamorphic character in Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles, like Fleur shifts from Nature to animal to Human. His connection with Nature is spiritually through his cedar forests which he cares for and guards. The cedar are his personal source of power. His transformation into cedar causes one to witness him as a part of Nature first and human being second. He dreams of and with the trees and he becomes the cedar. Proude Cedarfair explains to his sons that they are the breath of the

woodland and that they are the cedar.\textsuperscript{120} His ability to transform into animal form, unlike Set's, is never questioned even by the Anglo or dominant culture represented here by forest officials, sheriffs and federal officials such as Coward the elected president of the reservation government. "Coward screamed...'You should be shot and stuffed like the goddamn dumb bear you are..."\textsuperscript{121} Coward no longer attaches himself to the tradition of his people in the way that Bearheart and Proude do. The ability to metamorphose into animal is not within his soul, although he can witness it in others as he does above.

Lola Bourne, Set's lover, also accepts the existence of a connection which is beyond her ability to touch. She witnesses Set's psychological and emotional transformation examining his trauma within the context of Dr. Terriman's analysis and use of the term self-centered:

\begin{quote}
But now it was as if she had grasped the concept of \textit{Self-centered} for the first time. \textit{Self-centered}.\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

She is unable to comprehend the term from a psychiatric perspective but she seems to sense its meaning on a deeper level as a deeply inward understanding of what constitutes one's self. Lola knows Set to be bear, "I imagine that I could deal more easily with a hundred bears than with this one."\textsuperscript{123} Again language implies acceptance here, the reality of the process exists -- that is not questioned. For Lola Bourne, the question of why it is happening is paramount. She, however, labels the transformation as a sickness that has

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{120}Vizenor, \textit{Bearheart} 7.  \\
\textsuperscript{121}Vizenor, \textit{Bearheart} 24.  \\
\textsuperscript{122}Momaday, \textit{Ancient Child} 236,  \\
\textsuperscript{123}Momaday, \textit{Ancient Child} 235.
\end{footnotesize}
effected Set's mind. This label of affliction, perhaps, comes from her lack of orientation toward metamorphosis as a reality.

Acceptance of the process becomes problematic for those who are not acculturated toward it. However, Grey, the Kiowa-Navajo medicine woman, accepts Set's change as inevitable of one who carries the bear power. She has been raised and trained by Kope'mah to aid Set in his transformation and to be the vehicle that would carry on the bear power line. She explains to Set that she aids him because he is Set, the bear, and that he will be bear no matter what happens. She also elaborates that she has no choice in her role of teacher and healer of Set.¹²⁴

The orator of Track's, Nanapush, and Fleur's orientation most clearly resemble the acceptance to natural unions and human — spirit transformations and meldings that are expressed by Black Elk the Oglala Sioux medicine man:

> then he rose very tall and started running toward the South, and was an elk; and as he stood among the buckskin yonder, they too were elks.¹²⁵

Black Elk describes his sacred vision in which transformation and the Spirit World are main elements. He told his story to John Neihardt and it has been published as a bibliographic narrative. The story and the happenings within it are not fiction. Although the image above is from a vision, it is a vision that Black Elk played a physical role in and witnessed. Vision is reality here, and

¹²⁴Momaday, Ancient Child 235.
the transformation of man into elk and horses (buckskin) into elk is real as well.

We must keep in mind that vision does not carry the same meaning in English that it does to many non-English speaking peoples. To many Western readers, vision connotes illusion. Western culture recognizes dreaming as self related but we do not accord this experience the same status as waking reality. Often dreams are considered dependent upon Man's imagination or as Jung might explain it, dreams and the image within them are symbolic portraits of the dreamer's subconscious and of his past. In other words dreams are re-inventions of images and thoughts we possess.

Black Elk's orientation focuses on vision as another facet of reality. Happenings within visions and dreams are often considered as real as happenings in "normal" reality. To many non-Western cultures' dreams are communication pathways which allow Man to speak with the other-than-human beings. They are an existing part of waking reality. As Joseph Epes Brown explains there is ample evidence to demonstrate the fact and frequency of the waking visionary experience. These happenings go beyond normal reality; they are a shift to another level of understanding which is conditioned by the world view of a culture that supports it. Dream/vision experiences function integrally with the other recalled memory images. Dreaming is not subordinate to non-dreaming reality; it is simply different. To Grey and

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128 Hallowell, *Ojibway Ontology* 165.
Nanapush the metamorphic abilities of Set and Fleur are another facet of reality as well. To Lola Bourne the physical and emotional reaction to metamorphosis is real but the actual transformation may not be accepted as real.

Let us look at those who do not accept the metamorphosis as reality. I found only two characters within Tracks, The Ancient Child, Ceremony, and Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles who are closely involved with the metamorphic character and yet do not accept the reality of metamorphosis on some level. In The Ancient Child, Dr. Charles Teaque Terriman tells Lola Bourne that Set is preoccupied with being a bear. He continues his analysis by concluding that Set is dangerously self-centered due to his acute awareness of himself.\(^{129}\) If we look at this carefully, it resembles the Western psychiatric analysis of a human being. The use of terms such as "preoccupied with the thought of being...", "he wants to be cared for..." imply that Dr. Terriman can only view Set's changes from a clinical perspective, disallowing that indeed he may be changing. The orientation of his psychoanalysis centers on the self-identity of Set from a Western perspective of Self ignoring the information being presented from the non-Western perspective Lola Bourne's retort redefines the narrowness of Dr. Terriman's reality by claiming that the bear is preoccupied with being a man.

Here are two very different perspectives on reality and within reality. Dr. Terriman's analysis follows closely the ideas addressed by Irving Massey and Harold Skulsky, both analysts of the metamorphic process. According to Massey metamorphosis is typically violent and not within the boundaries of

\(^{129}\)Momaday, Ancient Child 235.
reason. Further, the act of metamorphosis has something to do with the search for identity, or in some cases its antithesis, the refusal to develop. Both Massey and Dr. Terriman equate the process of searching for identity and "self-centeredness" with an inner mental turmoil: a problem that has to do with one's idea of Self or loss of Self. This loss of Self may be due to a radical change in one's life or circumstances which will inevitably force a change in one's awareness of the world. This propagates a concern for one's mental well being and a fear of loss. There analysis, although accurate on some levels, seems limited. By focusing on the mind alone, they eliminate the possibility of the body and soul. Often actions which involve the spirit or soul are neglected because they are not scientifically proven realities. Lola Bourne's analysis that the bear is preoccupied with being a man addresses the mental, the physical and the spiritual involvement of the metamorphic person. It also acknowledges the animal component of the process allowing that the action in a reciprocal one in which the animal also may become human or at least in Set's case interact with the human. This concept of animals becoming human will be discussed later in this chapter.

In Gerald Vizenor's *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*, a young urban Indian woman hides in the closet of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters with Bearheart. She does not believe in his bearness or in the ability for bearness because her priorities revolve around the power struggles of her life: The American Indian Movement (AIM) versus Anglo bureaucracy:

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Listen, ha ha ha haaaa.

You the hairship man? she asks... The white lies that would be our tribal inheritance...What bear?

Some bear, she says and mocks the laughter.\(^{131}\)

she is a revolutionary carrying tribal religion and spirituality as a shield; yet she is not part of it. Her acceptance of bear power is a symbolic act of a past tradition that she does not practice. She wears "plastic bear claws" and is unsure of herself.\(^{132}\) Her "acknowledgment" of Bearheart as bear comes through a sexual arousal during which she refers to Bearheart as "old bear."\(^{133}\)

The reader is partially convinced of her acceptance of Bearheart as bear but her language acknowledges some compromise and association. The intrigue is that she is Native and supposedly a believer in the "Indian Way." She, as a member of AIM, opposes white colonialism and all that this implies: language; Christianity; ideological view; and social order. She applauds what she idealizes to be Indian: leather, bear claws(plastic) and feathers, yet she misses the spiritual connection that Bearheart retains. She and Dr. Terriman are both locked into the struggle to avoid the issue of the reality of bears residing in and with humans. They can not understand within their being as well as in their intellect, that Man and animals can be united spiritually, physically and mentally. It is not simply myth and legends of the past, in the concept of Western myth, it is the concept of myth as the Ojibway and Sioux see it: reality on many levels of existence. Both of these characters lack the

\(^{131}\)Vizenor, *Bearheart* X.

\(^{132}\)Vizenor, *Bearheart* XI.

\(^{133}\)Vizenor, *Bearheart* XI-XIV.
ability to view the world as part of the mythic or primordial past within the present. These concepts of Space and Time will be discussed further in Chapter Three, but for now it is important to understand that many cultures view spiritual, mythical, and animal beings to be related to human beings and within that relationship to be able to unite and interact on what may be seen as an illogical level.

The metamorphosis of Man into animal is psychological as well as emotional and spiritual due to the context in which it happens. It is psychological not only in cases such as Set's where cultural epistemologies are at risk, but also in cases such as Fleur's or Proude Cedarfairs. The psychological impact of the latter two characters' transformation relates to the connection of something deeper than Man's to himself; it is the link to primordial relationships with a stronger force than Man, that of Nature. This association is psychological for it resides within Man's mind, his psyche, as Nancy Grey Diaz mentioned, his culture's identity, and within an existing area of Nature's identity. At this point, one must adjust one's own orientation and look at the bond that is being presented here; it is a spiritual, metaphysical, and an epistemological bond between Man and Nature.

The connection between Man and Nature is a reciprocal one and so it seem prudent to question Nature's response to the metamorphic process. There are stories told of animals turning into men and then turning back into animals. For example, Tom Pelis Sr. tells Nora Marks Dauenhauer of the Athabaskan Woman who married a "man" who is in fact a bear. Initially, he appears to her as a Tlinkit or human but eventually he appears as bear. After
he is killed by her brothers she puts on his skin and becomes bear.134 The raven of the Northwest coast, the coyote of the Southwest and Ikitome the spider of the Plains are also examples of this. These stories are often creation myths which like the Sioux story of the Buffalo People tell of humans and animals being related and present together as a tribe. The animals often aid in the structuring of the land to form the sacred land on which the generations of humans live. Often these transformations are part of a trickster ruse in which the animal returns to animal form. However, the choice is there to be man or to be animal and the process does seem to include the desire or decision on the part of both humans and animals.

One may ask whether or not Nature can have an epistemological orientation. More importantly, are the questions being asked here simply personifying Nature in order to create an excuse for the ability of Man to redefine his link with Nature? Some may say yes, however, many tribal groups, as Joseph Epes Brown in Animals of the Soul, Black Elk in Black Elk Speaks, and Dennis and Barbara Tedlock in Teachings From the American Earth have shown, have an idea of Nature that suggests such an orientation. This is clear from stories and songs for and about Nature: look again at the Sioux belief in White Buffalo Calf Woman or the Tlingit belief in Raven. The Laguna believe that "the dead come back as rain clouds. They bring rain."135 This is a communication or a tie between the spirits, Nature, and Man who in Laguna territory of the Southwest always needs rain. Another example can be

135Lincoln, Native American Renaissance 235.
seen in the Tewa world view in which the spirits or deities are incorporated in the land, mountains, lakes, hills and villages of the Tewa. Each sacred direction, sacred mountain, and lake is representative of and houses a deity from the mythical past. Some of these mythic people followed the Tewa into the present. Tewa social structure: classes, clans, and moieties; dance societies and rituals, are defined by categories established in the mythic past in reference to spirit beings. "There is no simple spatial opposition between the sacred and the profane." Some spirits live together with humans on this world and in the underworld. The spirit world and the Tewa world are inseparable because one defines the other. Spirits are in the land and in the air; they are the land, water and air.

These connections with Nature exist clear back to creation for many tribes; why then would metamorphosis be absurd or fictitious? It is plainly evident that metamorphosis would not be absurd in the reaction that the metamorphic character receives from his companions, his relatives, and from Nature. Nature accepts the metamorphic being by joining in the union. One may argue that contemporary, educated peoples do not believe this to be true as it is physically impossible and not within reason. However, as Barbara Tedlock makes clear in *Dreaming*, the sciences today are beginning the re-evaluation of reason and reality: adjusting analysis and hypothesis to incorporate non-Western concepts of reason and reality. There is a conscious effort to incorporate non-Western perspectives in healing and psychology. There is also a growing awareness that a broader more holistic view of what

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makes up our world is helpful in understanding many concepts in science, anthropology, and medicine. This will be expanded upon in Chapter Four.

N. Scott Momaday, an educated, Nobel Prize winning author acknowledges the possibility as reality:

Set, my work in progress, is about a boy who turns into a bear, and in a sense I am writing about myself. I'm not writing an autobiography, but I am imagining a story that proceeds out of my own experience of the bear power. It is full of magic, but sometimes the bear is difficult... Because his power is wild. He is hard to control. Bears are always hard to control.137

Momaday tells Woodard that in his experience it is a sense of power, strength that he gets occasionally... his mind and spirit become close to bear. In his Oral Tradition Class at the University of Arizona, Momaday clearly acknowledged his being bear. Due to the perspective and voice that these writers use to communicate the idea, the implications are that metamorphosis of Man into Animal exists in some capacity. These stories are believable because the force of the author's conviction as well as of an awakening awareness of other people's scope of reality. Perhaps this capacity encompasses a maintaining of past ideas, and a ritualization or a renewal of tribal ideologies. The format does exist in the storytelling framework and as a product of it must also be understood from that angle.

Storytelling is the oral tradition in a process or transformation because it links concepts, visions, and images into a contextual vehicle for retaining the past within the present. Storytelling keeps alive the memories, events,

and beliefs of the past by bringing them into the present as contemporary
issues as well:

...the storytelling always includes the audience and
the listeners, and in fact, a great deal of the story is
believed to be inside the listener, and the
storyteller's role is to draw the story out of the
listeners. This kind of shared experience grows out
of a strong community base. The storytelling goes
on and continues from generation to generation.138

The phrases: "act of interpretation", "within the listener", in relationship to
the ideas of storytelling prompt the idea that the ability exists for each human
to contain and meld with an animal or a part of Nature: it exists within us.
These stories can be interpreted as extensions of all Man, especially if the
stories are considered live entities of their own as in Ojibway and Laguna
thought. This coincides with the idea in Western literature that
metamorphosis within the story is an inner search for the animal within us.
The idea forming here, is that whereas in Western literature, the image and
the search for the link between man and Nature or Animal has become
metaphorical, in contemporary Native American literature it is not
metaphorical as much as it is a re-emphasis of still existing realities within the
storytelling tradition. It is within Native American traditions that connect Man
to Nature on a kinship or a reciprocal level:

138 Silko, Leslie Marmon, "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian
Perspective," English Literature: Selected Papers from the English Institute,
1979, eds. Leslie Fiedler and Houston A. Baker, Jr. (Baltimore and London: The
I've told you stories before, other characters have
told you
stories in the novel about creation possibilities that
all life has some relationship -- it's a worldview.
There have been marriages between animals and
humans. And you can accept that on a kind of folk
level, mythic level, but here it is, now what do you
do? Is it too real? Has it lost its mythic power or is
myth just make-believe? Is myth just for fairy-tale
movies or is myth a powerful reality, a truth that
can be experienced? I believe it can be experienced
and I did it on the page.1^9

Metamorphosis is psychological as well as emotional and spiritual due to
the context in which it happens. In the case of these characters, the
metamorphosis is accepted by the culture that aids in its process or profits and
grows (heals) from its process. Gerald Vizenor addresses the problems
involved with defining myth and stories as fiction: to some they exist as
realities. Perhaps the realities were more dominant in the past, but that does
not preclude the possibility of their existence today. The use of
metamorphosis in Native American literature is perhaps as a re-telling of
ideas or as in case of clans, maintaining actual blood relations, or a connection
existing in sacred history that continues today. It is a tie to the past: Momaday
as bear writing of bear, Silko as storyteller healing through stories; and
Vizenor re-telling of mythic realities. It is the conviction with which these
writers tell the stories that adds to their capacity as reality. These writers are
addressing stories from the standpoint of story as the possibility of reality and
this seems to fit into traditional views of storytelling.

The metamorphic property exists within these contexts and within the
union of Space and Time in relationship to Man. Storytelling allows this to

139 Colletti, Laura, "Gerald Vizenor," Winged Words: American Indian Writers
exists in contemporary times even though it is harder to separate the ever confining and encompassing aspects of logic from what may be as real as what we logically claim is not:

"...when both people and animals lived on earth, a person could become an animal if he wanted to and an animal could become a human being." 140

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140 Rothenberg and Rothenberg, Symposium 8.
CHAPTER THREE: 
THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM

I wheeled in the shadow of a hawk. 
Dizziness came upon me; 
The turns of time confined and confounded me.141

Space and Time in relation to Man and his place on the earth generate highly metaphysical and spiritual questions. This chapter will explore the idea of a Space-Time union from a metaphysical abstraction based upon the idea that Space and Time for Native Americans is a unified unseparated whole. They are an existence within themselves apart from a scientific construct which like Nature exists and works within the Universe. Many Native American tribes see Space and Time as a relationship unseparated from Man and the environment, not as with Euro-Americans, a lineal patterning, a lineal measurement of grids and straight lines created to control Nature and order life. The first section of this chapter will discuss ideas of Time and Space from Western and Native American viewpoints which will then be tied into contemporary Native American literature. It is through the idea of a Space-Time continuum, within and as a part of Nature, that allows for the discussion of metamorphosis to exist in Time.

The existence of a Space-Time continuum is of the utmost importance with regard to the discussion of metamorphosis as reality. Metamorphosis in relation to Space and Time incorporates specific attitudes: that they are interrelated, transgressable, and tangent. The metamorphic process is a timeless one which allows Man to unite the past within the present by achieving a balance in the dynamics of history and creation. While metamorphosis allows for a person to transfer what is part of his past into his present, to allow a survival of his future, it also demands that a person keep his mind, conscious and subconscious, clear and open to extraneous stimuli. As physicist Fritjof Capra explains it, in the spiritual world, time (past, present, and future)
condense into one point, the point of illumination or enlightenment. If one closes one's mind to the spirits and the powers around one and within one, one may lose the connection with the other worlds. Time may become linear and oriented only toward limited rationals; rationals that see only Space and Time as static three-dimensional infinite space and kinetic one-dimensional uniformly and perpetually flowing time. This orientation leaves Space and Time as two utterly separate and unconnected aspects of reality.

A recent *Newsweek* article discusses the idea behind physicist Stephen Hawking's theory of Black Holes. The author of the article refers to Time as a linear progression forward. The article describes the concept of Time in relation to disorder or entropy in which entropy increases with Time. Hawking explains that entropy increases with time because we define the direction of time to be that in which entropy increases. The significance of this statement directs us to language, and the role that language plays in world views. The title infers that Time is a straight line -- an arrow, and Begley's analysis of Hawking's ideas does as well. Hawking's quote however, explains that we define Time through our interpretation of it. Western culture explains Time as an arrow or a straight line. The extension of a line, which scientifically is never straight, is not extended to create a long spiral or a circle. Western conceptions of Space and Time atomize them to provide points in a determined space or at a determined time. The actual experience within that space and time are not incorporated as natural phenomenon. Rather they

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are minimized and mechanized in order to perpetuate an ordered flow of Time and Space. For example, Western science developed clocks to conquer the unknown rhythms of Nature and to find a means of ordering Man's life. Western time places each second, minute, and hour of a person's life into a compartmentalized philosophy about Time that is separate from Space and Nature.

Space and Time as concepts differ greatly from Native American tribal ideology to Euro-American ideology. Time is not necessarily compartmentalized into the past, present, and future but are more homogeneously seen as encompassing. The Hopi language, for example, does not differentiate between past and present. Time is not referred to either explicitly or implicitly.\textsuperscript{144} Joseph Epes Brown explains that most Native languages do not have a tense to explain the past or time future. They speak to a perennial reality of now.\textsuperscript{145} It is in order to verbalize the idea of Space-Time between Native American and Western concepts of time that the Western explanations are used here. As with the idea of metamorphosis in general, most Native Americans would not define it in the terminology that is expressed in this chapter, because it is seen in a completely different light. Native American cultures often explain Time through the analogy of a spiral or a circle in which all things are included -- the circle of life. Black Elk explains this idea by showing that the rhythms of the world in its mode of operation is circular:

\textsuperscript{145}Brown, Roots of Renewal 28.
You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round.¹⁴⁶

By looking at Time and Space from a circular rather than linear point of reference one may understand and conceptualize the unity of Man and Nature within a Space-Time continuum more fully. The ability to see the world as a circle of beings united by time, spiritual and physical bonds, creates a holistic world that is adaptable, expandable, and sustainable. Because Time is circular then life is also. Life or events within a place (Space) and a time are connected to Time and if Time is a circle then the events which happen within its reference will follow a similar pattern. All life is a part of a circle that expands and grows with need. On the vast circle of Life are points of time. They are all together on the circle; the past, the present, and the future. For example, if you are on a point it may be the present to you, but to someone on a point next to you or across from you it may be the past or the future. You are all on the circle at the same Time but in other times relative to your positioning: any action that occurs at any one point will have a direct effect on all the other points on the circle. This idea relates to metamorphosis in that as a person is able to transfer his being from one place to another or from human shape to animal he is able to unite Time. Thus, Time is a metamorphic medium. It is not metamorphic in the sense of an animate being, rather, it allows for metamorphosis to happen. In comparison, a linear world tends to force out all that surrounds the line of time and history, all that is not "real" or relevant. Extraneous information is forgotten or placed in categories of myth, folk tale, non-reality rather than reality, history, fact.

¹⁴⁶Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks 194.
The spiral analogy of Time is similar to that of the circle but is probably more easily related to the idea of time as an arrow. Visualize a spiral in which the upward or progressive loops are very long and extended like a stretched out slinky, not tightly grouped as in a spring. The curve is gradual and so points on the curving line do not overlap. This visualization allows one to progress "forward" in time, yet never in a straight line.

The idea of Time and Space being united on many levels: metaphysical; physical; and mental, coincides with modern ideas in physics. As modern physicists are discovering, Newtonian physics and the idea that the physical world is a separate dimension from Time and that Time flows in an orderly fashion from past to present to future, is not entirely true. According to the Theory of Relativity, space is not three dimensional in which time is a separate reality, but rather, space is four dimensional. Time and Space are intimately connected within this fourth dimension in a continuum called "space-time." What this means is that one can never talk about Time without talking about Space and vise versa. Further, there is no universal time flow, instead there are different observations. Individuals will order events differently in Time if they move with different velocities relative to the observed events. Likewise, individuals will record observed events from the viewpoint of their cultural orientation to Time.

Space, like silence speaks to the mind. In poetics the place of silence defines and shapes the meanings between words. Space, empty or full, visualized or witnessed defines the Time within and surrounding it. Time is relative to Space -- in quiet expansive or untouched spaces, Time seems to

147 Capra, *Tao of Physics* 62.
stand still while in noisy, congested spaces it "moves" quickly. Conversely, Time defines Space. Night spaces differ from day spaces. These are immediate observations, however, in the long term Time condenses in an abstract manner. For example, through ritual, "ancient" time becomes present time and the space or the lapse between the past and the present is insignificant. Though rituals may change, the importance of connecting Time remains. Man is able to metamorphose or superimpose the experiences of the present on those of the past and see that they are relatively similar. Capra compares this fourth dimension of physics to a state of higher consciousness through a quote by Lama Govinda:

> An experience of higher dimensionality is achieved by integration of experiences of different centers and levels of consciousness. Hence, the indescribability of certain experiences of meditation on the place of three-dimensional consciousness and within a system of logic which reduces the possibilities of expression by imposing further limits upon the process of thinking. - Lama Govinda\(^\text{148}\)

In other words, the fourth-dimension, Space-Time, of physics is a combination of force and matter with ideas of metaphysics to create a dimension where logic does not equal reality. Modern physics acknowledges that many properties: force and matter; particles and waves; motion and rest, are opposites or contradictory concepts which transcend modern physics. Many physicist admit that to unravel the ideas of physics one must put aside rational Western principles of Space, Time and Reality and adopt concepts that fit more closely to Eastern mysticism and Native American orientations towards Time, Space, and Reality in general:

\(^{148}\text{Capra, Tao of Physics 151.}\)
The Indian sense of space relationships is circular or spherical in nature as opposed to laddered. The circular concept requires that all "points" which make up the sphere of being be significant in their identity and function, while the linear model assumes that some "points" are more significant than others.\textsuperscript{149}

Paula Gunn Allen's explanation above, fits closely to the idea that Benjamin Lee Whorf describes as the Hopi philosophy of Time in which "time disappears and space is altered, so that it is no longer the homogeneous and instantaneous timeless space of our supposed intuition or of classical Newtonian mechanics."\textsuperscript{150} According to Whorf the Hopi have no linguistic references to Time in a Western sense of time. Rather, the universe is described without reference to Space or Time in terms that Whorf describes as mystical:

Yet, if MYSTICAL by perchance a term of abuse in the eyes of a modern Western scientist, it must be emphasized that these underlying abstractions and postulates of the Hopian metaphysics are, from a detached viewpoint, equally (or to the Hopi, more) justified pragmatically and experientially, as compared to the flowing time and static space of our own metaphysic, which are \textit{au fond} equally mystical.\textsuperscript{151}

The idea that Time and Space flow together and are interrelated rather than Time in motion and Space static as in the Newtonian model, is the main


\textsuperscript{151}Whorf, \textit{An American Indian Model of the Universe} 193.
focus of this chapter. Space and Time may not always work in a linear fashion if myths and stories as real aspects of a culture are to be incorporated into the present and future. As Zen Master Dogan explains "It is believed by most that time passes; in actual fact, it stays where it is. This idea of passing may be called time, but is in an incorrect idea, for since one sees it only as passing, one cannot understand that it stays just where it is."\(^{152}\) In English, one can divide the universe into two parts -- one which is natural and one which is "supernatural." As Paula Gunn Allen explains, man has no real part in either, being neither animal nor spirit. The Supernatural is discussed as though it were apart from people, and the Natural as though people were apart from it.\(^{153}\) However, as was shown in Chapter Two, Man, animals, and Other-than-human beings are not removed: being part of the animal world and within the "supernatural" world.

It is from the perspective that Space and Time are interconnected and always more dimensional than linear, that this discussion turns from physics to the metamorphic ideas of Time within contemporary Native American literature as extension of Native American views of Space-Time. If Space and Time are tangential then the Spiritual, the metaphysical, and the physical intertwine to create a continuum that relates to all of these aspects. The tangential quality of Space and Time may be witnessed in myths and sacred histories, flashback and imagination, in dreams and within dreams the conscious and subconscious often incorporating imagination, and finally in ceremony. All of these aspects shift the mind's focus from a linear now to a

\(^{152}\)Capra, Toa of Physics 186.

\(^{153}\)Allen, The Sacred Hoop 177.
multidimensional point of reference in which linear time is irrelevant to the importance of the happening.

Mythic time, it must be remembered, has a different order of perception, obligation and experience. As with non-mythic time, mythic time exists within cultural space in relation to a ordering of Time which is measured by the cycles of Nature and those that inhabit Nature. All of the experiences in mythic and non-mythic time take place within a suspended moment that links creation to every point in Time. During these occurrences, a person is able to simultaneously incorporate himself into more than one place in Time or more than one time within Time. Mythic or historical happenings may occur in the present, and people may interact through dreams or visions. It must be made clear here, that the use of the term imagination is not in the sense of make believe, non-reality, or fiction. Rather it is used in the sense of many non-Western philosophies to mean another aspect of reality. These aspects of the unification of Space and Time are prevalent in many Native American cultures and are predominant methods of describing metamorphosis in Native American literature.

The following sections of this chapter will concentrate on Space-Time as a continuum within the subconscious/conscious areas of sacred histories and myths, flashbacks and dreams, and ceremonial healing. Aspects of Silko's *Ceremony*, Vizenor's *Griever*, Erdrich's *Tracks*, and Momaday's *Ancient Child* will be discussed in connection to these four areas. Initially let us address the ideas of sacred history within mythic time and memory as a combined area within the metamorphic process of transcending Time.
You were talking to my blood
in those years before my memory
was awake...

You were talking me into life
and knowing...

You were making sense of things
in image and textures
stories of Old Ones Changers....
Or am I just remembering
from you from my blood.154

Memory is the experience of the past in a present moment of remembering. It may not necessarily be restricted to an individual's personal past but as the poem above expresses and N. Scott Momaday explains it, memory may be connected through oral tradition, historical and mythic past through imagination into the present. Through this conceptualization of Time, one's "ancestry provides a sense of belonging in the continuum of time...the memory which has been created by oral transmission can be activated and brought to life in the imagination."155 The term imagination is not meant to imply non-real, fictitious or fabricated but rather, it implies part of the workings of the mind that are not thoroughly explainable by rationalities and direct and linear reasoning. Memory, as a body of images, ideas, smells, events, concepts, and teachings is subjective. The idea that it must somehow be qualified in order to be true stems from a Western philosophical principle of relativity. One must have statistical proof in order to validate a happening. However, in many Native American cultures, visions are believed to be true.

happenings even if witnessed only by one person. This person generally reenacts his vision into a communal reality through ceremony. Black Elk's experience is a good example of this. He received his sacred vision at age nine but did not report it to anyone until he was much older. The time between his initial contact and his report were times of anguish and illness because according to his beliefs he was bound to tell and reenact the vision in order to fulfill it. When he finally does perform it with the aid of all the people in his tribe, his healing begins.

Carl Jung has explained that the unconscious mind is capable at times of assuming an intelligence and purposiveness which are superior to actual conscious insight. He questions whether one's unconscious mind is one's own or whether it is a collective -- an accumulation of human experiences or a collective subconscious. This collective subconscious houses the "primordial images" of all men. Similar to Momaday's idea of memory, this track of reasoning would imply that memory is an accumulation of human experiences housed in the subconscious or perhaps in the imagination. These "universal subconscious" memories are made individual by the specific recollections of their remembrance. In other words, one individualizes the universal subconscious by personalizing them.

Memory either in the blood, as Momaday suggests or as an universal inherent, primordial concept as Jung suggests, creates a basis for connections and retention of culture and the past. This becomes, depending on one's perspective, a conduit for Time and Space to be tangential. Sacred histories, as

157 Jung, Psychology and Religion 25.
was discussed in Chapter Two, play an unspeakable part in cultural world views, ideologies, and social interactions. In union with memory, sacred histories unify a people with everything that they are. It is within memory that mythic and spiritual time can unite in a specific time relative to a present. Time and Space can become tangential in a way similar to what both Jung and Momaday propose.

The Western concept of tangentiality is based in the geometric idea that two things, a line, a plane, or a circle, can touch at a point. This idea may be extrapolated to include more metaphysical ideas such as a Space and Time continuum. If mythic time were to occur on one plane of reality and contemporary time on another, their union at a specific place and Time in Space would be a tangential connection which could be called collective memory, blood memory, or subconscious reality. The point of conversion would be the remembering or re-linking or living in the mythic past at the time of the present. This is often seen in ceremonies and ritual.

Ts'eh, as was discussed in Chapter Two, is an example of mythic and spiritual time uniting in the present. Tayo, Silko's witness to this unification, slides easily from mythic time with Ts'eh into present time within a specific non-changing landscape or space. Tayo's connection to Ts'eh is significant because not only does Ts'eh represent the mythic or spiritual past of Laguna, she also represents the ties that the historical figures in Laguna ontology have to the land. As was see in Chapter Two, the land around Laguna is intimately integrated into the sacred stories creating a timelessness about the space. Tayo, as a man in need of healing, finds his ceremonial renewal in this specific space of Laguna land woven with contemporary ritual healing and
sacred historical remembrances. As Tayo heals (and in order to heal), he calls upon the memories of his personal past and his culture's past in order to create a place of intimate timelessness. This is done in a number of ways through locomotion, through memory and through connection to place.

Tayo travels through Laguna country to all of the cardinal points, the sacred mountains, including Mount Taylor. At these places he finds himself associating the places to stories from Laguna history and in so doing he finds Time standing still:

There are no boundaries: the world below and the sand paintings inside became the same that night. 158

Time becomes compressed through his act of memory into the present. The Laguna creation stories of Thought Woman, Humming Bird and the witches that are interspersed throughout Tayo's stories are ingrained in his actions and his reawakening of who and where he is -- each place recalls a story and a purpose from the past. The reader is made aware of these stories as is Tayo through the revival of his memory. Tayo's blood memory or his collective subconscious has awoken. He is no longer isolated from his tribal background. Joseph Epes Brown explains that historical-cultural traditions play an important role in determining how values, perceptions, and realities are created, defined and sustained by a community. These values correspond between levels of reality as if one reality reflected another as a total integral environment. 159 Tayo's awaking subconscious reconstructs and re-introduces to Tayo his historical-cultural traditions. Thus, he is initiated into the

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158 Silko, Ceremony 152.
159 Brown, Animals 8.
perceptions of the world that are his cultures where the mythic past can be in the present.

Louise Erdrich's Fleur, like Tayo shifts from contemporary time to mythic time through her ability to talk, sleep, and live with the beings of the past: Misshepeshu, the manitou, and the dead. She like the mythic beings, transcends physical reality by constant shiftings in appearance. Fleur is the hinge between the past and the present through her actions which define the future. If her ability to transcend Time, her ability to converse and be with the beings of the past, were lost the future would not incorporate the knowledge that she contains and passes on from the mythic past. The future would not include the mythic realities of the past as living realities but rather as memories of a distant fading reality. Doors between the planes of existence would be closed.

Another method of creating a unification of Space-Time is through flashbacks or rather, a bending of Time. More clearly put, Time and Space are folded to overlap. It would be as if you pinched a piece of cloth together so that two distant points on the cloth suddenly were side by side. In contemporary literature this example of Time being transformational is most noticeable when a character goes through a traumatic action. During the action what seem to be flashbacks occur. These flashbacks allow the character to be in more than one place and reality at the same time. They are not imagination in the sense that Euro-Americans use the term, but rather actual combining of points of time into one Space, all events are together in one point in Time.

160 Contemporary time in Fleur's case is around 1912.
161 See section in Chapter Two about Fluer, also see page 135 of Tracks for reference to the hinge.
This is usually a healing process in the end because the character is able to combine the needed information from one time with the problem of the time he is in.

With Tayo, flashbacks or the folding of time occur early on during his army tour in the Philippians and later when he is ill. The clearest example comes with Tayo flashing from the face of a Japanese soldier to his uncle Josiah's face. It is at a moment of crisis when Tayo must kill a Japanese soldier, that his uncle's face appears and he watches as the other American soldiers shoot the Japanese and his uncle:

and he watched his uncle fall, and he knew it was Josiah... it was still Josiah lying there.\(^{162}\)

The importance of this is that Tayo and his uncle are united in the Philippian jungles at a specific moment. It is this union in Time of two places that re-affirms Tayo in his views (Laguna views) of reality. Even after his cousin Rocky explains the impossibility of the act it remains with Tayo. This will lead to his continuing reunion with his tribal past. Rocky has been severing his ties to his tribal heritage in order to become accepted into the white world. Tayo, however, has never felt the need to separate from his culture he seems to connect more to the ways of his tribal people and so works to keep those memories alive.

There are many such instances of what Jung calls synchronicity in Ceremony. For example when Tayo damns the rain in the Philippian jungles, Reed Woman appears within the text to reaffirm Tayo's actions by stopping the

\(^{162}\)Silko, Ceremony 7.
rain in the mythic time and in contemporary time at Laguna. When Tayo returns to Laguna after the war, he finds that there has been a draught similar to the mythic story of Reed Woman that corresponds to his damming of the rain. While Jung might call this a synchronistic or an acausal event, to Tayo they are a connecting of his actions in one place with what will happen in another. These happenings are orchestrated in the mythic past and re-enacted or simultaneously enacted in the present as a tangential occurrence.

Gerald Vizenor's Griever, like Tayo, manipulates or bends Space-Time in order to fit himself into a context which is understandable and beneficial to him. Grievery is a trickster figure and like most he moves through Time and Space by his use of language and by seeing through outward appearances into inner realities:

Grievery is a mixblood trickster, a close relative to the old mind monkeys; he holds cold reason on a lunge line while he imagines the world. With colored pens he thinks backward, stops time like a shaman, and reverses intersections, interior landscapes.

Trickster figures are often as much animal as they are human. Native American trickster figures such as the Sioux's Ikitome, and the Navajo's Coyote, are creator and destroyer, giver and negator at the same time. He is

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163 Throughout the novel, Silko intersperses creation and mythic stories such as Reed Woman's stopping of the rain, into the text. These stories become part of the story that is being told on another plain of the text. The novel contains the plane of Tayo's story, the historical stories of Laguna origin on another plane, and finally the plane of union of all these elements into a subconscious ceremony. When something happens to Tayo on his plane of the story a similar story from the Laguna historical past is told along side and within Tayo's story.

164 Vizenor, Grievery, 34.
neither good nor evil, yet as Paul Radin suggests he is responsible for both. Tricksters like ritual clowns are not bound by social values or morals. They re-enforce these things by ridiculing them. Trickster has the ability to be both part of the past as well as part of the future. Griever is the embodiment of this trickster persona.

Griever links the "mythic" histories of China with his tribal histories into what Joseph Campbell might term the "mythic image", the collective past of man, or the universal subconscious. When Griever pinches and folds his ear and twists a strand of wild hair he transforms Time. He moves backward in Time or he goes to another place in Time:

The tall blonde and the other faces in the audience were transmitted from scenes on his scroll to a classroom in a public school. He was a child at his desk four rows from the back of the room.166

He goes to another place in Time. Throughout the novel, Griever shifts from daily life in China to China's ancient past through pre-revolutionary character's stories. He becomes part of their stories and with them lives out another reality within the current one. He plays the part of the Mind Monkey, China's trickster figure, and he is recognized by the Chinese as such and thus as the Monkey King.167 As with the Native American trickster figures, the

166Vizenor, Griever 46.
167In the Sixteenth Century Wu Ch'eng-en wrote the Journey to the West based on Chinas ancient Taoist trickster figure Monkey. Monkey, born of supernatural occurrences spends his life seeking enlightenment and power. His escapades lead him to immortality and as with Native American tricksters, this immortality is often a mixture of ignorance, mischief and brilliance. For an abbreviated collection of the Monkey King stories see David Kherdian's Monkey: A Journey to the West: The Classic Chinese Tale of Pilgrimage and Adventure (Boston and London: Shambala Press, 1992.)
Monkey King is part spirit, mythic figure, and human. His duality allows him to slide between order and chaos creating and defining it for himself.

Within the novel, Griever shifts from China to his home reservation and images of that place. Like Tayo, these "flashbacks" are imposed one on top of the other so that both are happening at the same time. The reader's perceptions are of an undefined time passage between paragraphs, sentences and stories. Griever, his visions, perceptions, and his actions slide from one place to another in mental leaps. The sense of place does not play the importance here that it does in Tayo's world. In both Tayo's and Griever's stories Space-Time shifts imperceptibly in and out of each other between passages and times. In Ceremony, Silko interchanges sacred histories, mythic figures, and contemporary figures from one paragraph to another. Tayo's adventure is constantly overlaid with a traditional creation story of Thought Woman or of witchery. These are in conjunction with episodes where Tayo is either confronting contemporary witchery or is in mythic time.

The two novels' use of this Space-Time shifting, overlapping and merging differs in that Griever's experiences follow a pattern similar to shamanic reality and dreaming where as Tayo's flows along the lines of ceremonial healing. This latter idea will be discussed in more detail later. For the moment, let us look at the ideas behind shamanic time and dreaming. These two topics are at once related and separate. Dreaming may stands alone in many cultures as an everyday occurrence, as it does among the Tarahumara. Dreaming may also be seen as an interpretation of the world which may be communicated in art. The Australian Aborigines are an example of a people whose paintings and carvings come from dreaming and
are interpretations of the dreaming state of reality. Dreaming may also be used as a way of seeking knowledge and power as in shamanic dream states.

Dreaming and dream time are an interwoven part of the fabric created by the union of Space-Time. Dreaming becomes a mechanism for Time to transcend the boundaries of what has been established as linear time or clock time in Western orientation in which the future is unknowable due to its placement on the arrow of time. Ellen Basso suggests that dreaming involves the future, not the past or the current, experiences of a dreamer, although the images in a dream may have connections to the dreamer's past or recent experience. This hypothesis suggests that Time is transgressable through dreams and that the future may determine the present because the actions of the present will eventually determine the future. Time then becomes spiral like or circular perhaps cyclical:

One cannot 'fix' the Dreaming in time: it was and is, everywhere.

In Western European culture dreaming is rarely considered to be a rational happening. Those episodes of dreams forecasting future occurrences are categorized under the occult or as a rare exception. This is not true in many Native American cultures in which dreaming, dream visions and dream reality are an equally important part of everyday life. The Swampy Cree for

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example, believe that dreams like stories live in the world and interact on their own accord with human beings. Similarly according to Richard Dorson, the Ojibway believe that children go to school in dreams. The cultural orientation toward dreams is one of acceptance. Therefore, what is seen in dreams: how to receive bear power and the transformation of man into animal form, is considered important knowledge. It is accepted at the same level of importance as school knowledge, but within a different context and for a different purpose. Through dreams a man becomes part of that which he is dreaming. Alec Philemon explained to Richard Dorson that in dreams a man dreaming of the bear becomes part of the bear "a little claw, or a tooth, or an ear, or a little bear hair," due to the power of the bear. The wisdom and power that you receive in that dream is yours in waking time as well as in dream time. Importantly, some tribes like the Ojibway, believe that the dream world is the real world and that the waking world is an illusion. Thus, you take into the illusionary world of waking the knowledge learned in the real world of dreams. In the case of the Ojibway, the dream world would accept the powers of certain manitous such as the bear, the wolf, or Misshepshu, as more powerful than human beings. This is also a world in which Time functions on a different level than in the waking world. What might be thought of as "mythic time" and "mythic beings" are in reality actualities.

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173 Dorson, Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers 31.
174 Dewdney, Sacred Scrolls 137.
Thus, dreaming incorporates all parts of Man in all his states of being. Dream time - a valid part of a person's existence time, if you will, does not remain as a cerebral other to everyday orientations of the world. Rather, dream time becomes an interactive part of waking time, conscious and unconscious time. It becomes a complete part of Man's mental and, sometimes, physical existence. Dreams are actions in themselves and not merely statements of possible action. The Zuni, for example, believe that a segment of the dreamer's self travels outside of the body and has experiences in past, distant, or future times and places. The Zuni decide which aspects of their dream realities will become part of their waking reality. Western culture does this also to some extent, by deciding that dream images are catalogued from waking reality and reissued into dreams. The Zuni, however, see the two states as different and compatible, one is not subordinate to another.

This idea of separate action coincides with the Tarahumara Indians of Northern Mexico and the Kalapalo of Brazil who believe that the Self of a person is independent from the body. This Self takes actions upon itself while the corpus sleeps, in other words, dreams are the activities of a person's soul not his body. The Kalapalo believe that the individual's soul lives its own life experiences during the body's dream state. They interpret dreaming as a way that the Self defines and corrects a problem, the Self or the dream self becomes a creative entity. This is similar to Jung's subconscious dream state in which a person works out a problem in a dream under the symbolism and

176 Basso, Implications of Progressive Theory 86-104.
orientation of a dream. This differs from Jung's analysis in that the dream and the Self within the dream is seen as real and separate from the person, not simply the metaphorical alter ego.

What these beliefs in dream realities suggest is a cultural unification of Man to the universe through a cerebral or subconscious/conscious state. Dreaming allows Man to interact with existing realms of reality in a locomotive and visual capacity. Space-Time takes on a dimension different yet similar, separate yet attached to the waking dimension. In Plains Indian societies, according to Arthur Amiotte, dreams are considered as extra-psychic events which occur simultaneously on various planes of reality in both sacred and linear time as well as in sacred and physical geography. Thus, Space-Time as depicted here in dreams, visions, waking time, sacred histories, and culture are united in a multi-complex continuum of reality.

Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Silko, Scott Momaday and Louis Erdrich use these ideas of Space-Time within a dreamlike state of reality. Waud Kracke describes the thought perception process of dreaming as one of flux or fluid transitions from one space or image to another. Vizenor's novel is written as if in this dream time flux of reality. Griever for instance flows between one reality and another through foldings of Time, dreams, or waking reality -- the reader is never sure, nor is Griever which state he is in. At one point in the novel,

177Jung, *Psychology of Religion*.
Griever has his finger bitten off by an old monkey. He recovers the severed limb and places it back on his hand --backward. He shakes hands with an old woman who asks him what his "name, dream name" is. He continues what appears to be a nonsensical conversation during which the woman tells him about his recent dream. As she leaves he notices that his finger has been replaced in the correct position on his hand. The conversation, events and feeling of the occurrence is dreamlike in its flow and nonconformity of ideas. Yet, the reader perceives of it as a non-dream reality. Much of the novel is like this slipping between visions, events, thoughts, and places as if the distinction is unimportant. In *Ceremony* as well, the sequencing of events in Time is subordinate to the happenings and the final outcome.

Momaday adapts the idea of dream time playing an active role in waking time in his character, Grey. The concept that he expands upon is one of planes of Time. He uses a kaleidoscopic view of Time in which many planes contain similar or recognizable information yet each plane's orientation is slightly skewed in comparison to another. Grey is able to transcend planes of Space-Time through dreaming. She dreams through fantasy about Billy the Kid and she dreams to learn from her dead grandmother, Kope'mah. Grey's fantasies about Billy the Kid are often similar to Griever's reality in that she slides effortlessly into a place and time in the past from the present. She takes on all qualities of the past, yet the sequences that lead into and out of and within these fantasies are not dream like. They are very logical and ordered as in waking time. Her connection to these dreams remains in the present as she

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180 Vizenor, *Griever* 119.
181 Vizenor, *Griever* 119-123.
writes letters to and stories about Billy. She refers to herself as Billy's lover in passages that are not linked with fantasy -- the reader like the Zuni dreamer, is allowed to pick which aspects of these "dreams" to bring from either state of reality into his state.\(^{182}\)

On another plane, Grey transcends Time in conversations with her dead grandmother. Sometimes this happens through visions and sometimes while Grey is in waking time. During the visions, Grey becomes one with her grandmother as a young woman. Her grandmother, and or Grey, then communicates with Set who is not only in the present but is also in San Francisco while Grey is in Oklahoma.\(^{183}\) In waking time she communicates with her grandmother through the earth in order to learn how to be a medicine woman --"her reason for being; she dreamed it."\(^{184}\)

Grey is the metamorphosis of Space-Time. She floats between realities of her contemporary world in which she is a medicine woman and helper to Set's bear power into the realities of a past world of Billy the Kid. She lives her dreams: they are reality. Grey's actions and attitudes toward dreams and visions remind one of Black Elk who envisions the world as interconnected and overlapping images. In Black Elk's vision, grandfathers who represent knowledge turn into horses and then into elk, buffalo, and eagles. Time fluxes from old age to youth as the bay stallion or earth grandfather grows back into a young Black Elk.\(^{185}\) Here again, Space-Time is multidimensional -- kaleidoscopic.

\(^{182}\)Momaday, _Ancient Child_ 193-194.
\(^{183}\)Momaday, _Ancient Child_ 230-231.
\(^{184}\)Momaday, _Ancient Child_ 173.
\(^{185}\)Neihard, _Black Elk_ 23-46.
This visual idea of a Space-Time Continuum echoes the perception that shamanic reality gives. As Gerald Vizenor explains it "the shaman dissolves time and expresses the inspirations of death and rebirth with cultural acceptance; and as a healer the shaman is capable of ecstatic travel in search of lost souls." The shaman does this through trance, vision or dreaming which act as a conduit. They reshape or interpenetrate the spirit world and the natural world. Dreams relay visions from the spirit world; sacramental songs and ritualized dream myths. Vision quests and dreams are Space in which Man can metamorphose physically and mentally. The re-enactment of the vision through the telling of it or through ceremony continues the power of that ability cleansing and aiding the entire community.

In view of Vizenor's definition of shamanism, both Griever and Grey are shamans who cure through supernatural means. Supernatural in this context meaning knowledge and power received through dream or vision. Both characters heal lost souls. Grey heals Set connecting him back to his pasts both distant and primordial. Griever heals his own soul through the connection of the Chinese shamans and his Monkey King alter ego. In extension, Griever also aids the old pre-revolutionary visionaries of China who have hidden themselves in daily non-confrontational actions. Both Greiver

186 Shamans are those medicine people who have powers that exceed the bounds of a normal individual. They are people with supernatural gifts and supernatural powers which are given through dream to aid them in curing, and knowledge. In many Native American cultures, shamans are able to travel through the spirit world in search of the lost souls of those who are ill. Shamans are the mediators between Man and the spirit world. For more information see Marcea Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) or Ake Hultkrantz's *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama: Health and Medicine in Native North American Religious Tradition* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1992).

and Grey like shamans in tribal societies the world over, see the transcendence of "reality" into "Reality." Reality with a capital "R" is the complete image of the world as opposed to the reality of a partial image or a section. Mircea Eliade explains this sacred Reality as the eternal return to the origins of time, place and being. By returning, or uniting with this original time and place, shamans strengthen the mystical solidarity between Man and animal and they re-establish the situation that existed in mythic time when the divorce between Man and animal had not occurred.188

According to Stephen Larson, dreams have four basic points in all shamanic communities. Dreams are recognized as the key to inner life. They have meaning within ordinary chaotic surfaces of life. They, along with the inner life that they symbolize, are keys to what goes wrong in Man. Thus enactment of dreams is all important as a therapeutic technique in order to help Man understand and cope with the unknown around and within himself.189 All four of these points are connected to how deeply dreams are believed to be reality. It is through dreams and visions that the spirits and ancestors speak to the living. Dreams are channels to these other-than-human beings and through dreams Space and Time unite.

The multidimensional aspects of the metaphysical idea that Space and Time are an inseparable unit demands that Space be incorporated into or transgressed by Time in order to allow the union. In this case, Space is an idea of area not directly related to sense of place but perhaps, incorporating it at

times. Rather, Space is the infinite area of reality that must be crossed in order for Time to be circular or spiral like, incorporating mythic time, historical time, conscious and subconscious time, past, future, and present time. This tangential quality of Space-Time is most easily grasped and believed through storytelling because of the ability for stories to create a Space in which Time is coherently homogenized.

In oral traditions the idea that Time is synchronic and that the past is the future as well as the present is a common one. It is the past, conveyed in stories and sacred histories that teach the present and influence the future. The stories tie all of the times into one point and place as a unit not as a string of events. Joseph Epes Brown explains this in terms of events or processes that transmitted through oral traditions tend to be recounted "neither in terms of past or time future in a linear sense."¹⁹⁰ Events and experiences are repeated uniting all people in a common occurrence. Storytelling combines ritual, ceremony, silence, Time, and Space with words in a creation of place within Time where the listener and the story merge and Time stands still, or the listener and teller move with Time. In this fashion, storytelling and stories become ceremonies which like the Hopi Katsina dances invite the spiritual time and the mythic time to share a place in the present and the characters of the past become the people of the present.

Contemporary Native American storytelling often utilizes a structure including sacred histories and origin stories in a way which becomes ceremonial. Silko, Vizenor, Momaday and Erdrich all use aspects of a storytelling tradition to bring the contemporary character back home, to heal

¹⁹⁰Brown, Roots of Renewal 28.
the broken or wandering spirit. On another level, they are healing and uniting the culture through the character by re-telling the stories one more time:

...personal and collective history manifesting itself in who we are, where we make our home, how we live with one another, why we place ourselves in nature as-we-are. And the stories and songs: the origins of things are always with us. Rightly translated, sung, and told, the old ways rise up through the new ways. --Jacob Nibenegenesabe, Swampy Cree.191

It is important to keep in mind that stories are oral teachings, happenings and histories. If they are not told the past is lost. They are not lost because of a linear idea that Time progresses forward. Rather, they are lost because without the telling they may cease to be recognized. Similar events may occur but they will have no reference to the happening of the past. Time becomes disjointed and fragmented due to this loss. Also lost are the songs, dances, and music that is an inseparable part of the storytelling process, the ceremonial process.192 The storytelling process includes not only the teller, but the listener. This binds a group together because it is a method of survival. Listener, subject, and teller are a union of generations. On one level this is a simple example of Time being linked through a group, more elaborately, the past comes into the present instilling the future through the survival of the culture. The idea of a linear time flow is meaningless here, rather, the idea of

the re-telling of happenings and knowledge is paramount. The focus is not on
the direction of Time but on the survival in Time and of Time. There are no
observers only participants.

Truths are space-time continuances passed on in a
good story.193

Language with all it embodies binds Time in a permanence of place; a
place in culture or a place in Nature. As we have seen many Native American
tribes link Nature and the land to the vitality of their world views. Oral
traditions describe circumscribed geographic areas and define boundaries --
earthly and supernatural, which are part of the makeup of a peoples' ideology,
ontology, and philosophy. Through stories linear history is bent into circular
history and ceremonies, verbal or visual, become kinetic ritual energy. The
stories are alive as the Swampy Cree believe them to be. They hold a place and
importance in the community's existence, therefore, they are timeless because
the continuance of a people is a timeless necessity.

Leslie Silko's Ceremony is a healing through words and stories which
tells Tayo's story as a curative act. Ceremony is a novel about healing. It is a
thought process healing: the curing is a constant cycle of learning,
reaffirming and creating changes that coupled with the ancient words and
meanings form a ceremony that is effective for all times because it changes
appropriately. The novel is the contemporary metamorphic form of past
curing rituals. It is an attempt on Silko's part to combine the traditional
healing ceremonies of Laguna with modern needs. As she mentions, she binds

193Garcia, Reyes, "Sense of Place in Ceremony," MELUS: The Journal of the
Society for the Study of the Muti-Ethnic Literature of the United States
mythic spiritual figures into contemporary reality in order to reconnect the two worlds. Silko uses the idea of Time as tangential to secure her readers in both historical and in mythic time by weaving the old stories and traditions into the contemporary story of Tayo in a way "that helps to make the old ways understandable and relevant to the contemporary situations." The ancient myths of Thought-Woman, Grandmother Spider, and Reed Woman tie into the present age and Tayo sees and hears the world as "it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time." Silko manipulates Time further to incorporate and elaborate on Tayo's awareness of the metamorphic qualities of Time; its boundlessness, its sacred quality, by incorporating his story into the stories of the past. Tayo becomes part of the spiritual and natural world. Through the help of Betonie, the Navajo medicine man, Night Swan, Ts'eh, and Josiah's teachings, Tayo learns how to understand the infinite quality of Time and the need to become part of the past times and the present times. It is this metamorphic property of Time that allows for the spiritual and the secular to cross time boundaries and to unite as one in the curing process.

The story begins in the oral past of Laguna; it migrates into the time of Tayo and World War II; it continues within our time, Silko's time. Accordingly, the metamorphic quality of Time brings all these points together into a specific place in the circle of time or the "Tortilla of Time" as Leslie Silko calls

196 Silko, *Ceremony* 258.
Her ideas of stories concentrate on condensing Time and Space into a circle idea in which stories have no beginning and no end. They are continually affirming and re-affirming their place in the culture of a people. This idea that your actions make you a part of things that happened before you and will happen after you is the focus of Tayo's ritual. It is Tayo's actions, his experiences that are re-enactments of past actions. His ceremonial re-living of the old stories, the old ways, and his migratory curing to all the sacred places and persons of Laguna history insures the future by continuing the story. As was mentioned earlier, stories and oral traditions are a living thing and within its life is sustained the life of the people whose customs and beliefs are woven into the stories.

Momaday's *The Ancient Child* also forms a healing process through words and images which brings Set back to his roots, heals him and binds him to the ancient power of the Bear in Kiowa society. For Momaday, the idea of ceremony, healing, and power comes from words. It is his philosophy that words embody the power to create what they name. Language, as it is conceived of in oral traditions contains creative, original, indestructible power to preserve human existence through Space-Time. These concepts permeate his work while he divides Time into shifting planes of reality. The bear soars up within Set: the bear is primal power of the ancient past and he is alive in the contemporary time of Set's life. The process of healing unifies

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197 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Poetics and Politics," Graduate Seminar in Native American Literature, University of Arizona, April 6, 1992.
Space-Time in place is within Set. The conviction of Momaday's belief in his bear power strengthens the power of his character Set, and the reader is made privy to this knowledge through the story. In a sense Momaday, like Silko is continuing the story. The story with Momaday is the Kiowa belief in Tsoai and the Bear Boy. Through his storytelling, Momaday retells the ancient stories and keeps alive the notion that the past can re-awaken in the present.

Louise Erdrich's concept of Space-Time is embodied in the traditional idea of the storyteller. Through her character Nanapush, she tells the story of Fleur as he tells it to Fleur's Child, Lulu. We are given the power of words to create and keep alive the story as language kept Nanapush and Fleur alive during a winter of terrible blizzards, illness, and hunger:

I talked both languages in a stream that ran alongside each other... The sound of my voice convinced me I was alive.-- Nanapush

Nanapush like the traditional storyteller creates images with words and pulls the listener into the reality of the story to become a part of it. He keeps the old language in existence by speaking it. He also keeps the idea that the Chippewa have of words being animate in his analogy to the language and the streams. Words are a part of Nature and with Nature they must remain alive for the people to remain alive. This statement is full of innuendo about the need to survive as a people. If the language is lost then the concept of the world that is embodied within that language is destroyed. Thus the culture loses its link to the stories, the views of Nature, animals, and the world.

200See Chapter Two for the discussion on Momaday's belief in his bear power. Summarized here, Momaday believes that he is bear and that the Bear Power comes upon him. He is without control of it and yet it aids him in his creativity.
201Erdrich, Tracks 7.
Gerald Vizenor states that while the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, did not create written histories the tribal past lives as an event in visual memories and oratorial gestures. "Space, which is a part of that past, exists not merely in a physical sense but in a metaphysical sense as well, an image which links past with the present, generation with generation." His novel creates visual memories in the reader through the highly elaborate descriptions of fractured images. The reader finds that he is thrown from images of the past into present, into imagination into dreams. All of these kaleidoscopic fragments unite in the story of Griever the trickster shaman. We are offered the view of Griever in the manner in which Griever sees, thinks, and moves through Time: fractured, sliding, and melding. Vizenor does not divide and order Space-Time. Rather, he allows it to flow in the directions and planes that it naturally might in a non-linear world. As he explains it, rather than shifting Time he is working on shifts in Time through narrative voice, "...the reader's coming with me in historical present or immediate past, and we just walk right into it so the reader sees it coming, and you just walk right into it with the character who's now 'wavering,' and then you come out the other end." 

The concepts behind a Space-Time as a non-linear continuum is embodied in traditional storytelling, ceremony, and visualization where images, concepts and memories live as reality within the moment of the present. Contemporary Native American writers like Silko, Momaday, Vizenor

and Erdrich have combined oral tradition, storytelling and the idea of Time as a multi-dimensional object to create a metamorphic process on paper which shifts Space-Time within a graspable reality. The character and the reader migrate through the ancient past, through dreams and through stories to emerge with them all combined in the present. The character and the reader become one with those of the time they are in at any specific point in Time. Neither the reader nor the character consciously differentiates between times, but rather, accepts them as shifts in perspective. It is a point where Space and Time are impressed upon one another in a constant place of union. This may not fit into a linear idea of ordered time, and it may often be awkward to describe using ideas based in the linear concept of time, however, the ideas do exists for many non-Western peoples.

The metaphysical perception of Time as non-linear does not exclude the idea of Time moving and shifting but it does not try and conform Time into an unnatural, purely philosophical idea. Instead, Time becomes something that exists within the world or Space in a non-separable manner. It is similar to the idea of world view in a culture. One can not separate out the ritual and ceremony and label it religion as a separate entity from the secular because the entire culture is connected. There is no separation between secular and religious, past and present. Myths are not tall tales of the past but are real extensions of the cultures heredity. They are as functional and alive as the people believing in them. Thus is Space-Time alive and a part of the people in the same manner --always existing and continuing, often repeating and overlapping.
The metamorphic ability of Space-Time to change, fold, and exist on any level of a culture creates an atmosphere of reality very different from that in Western culture. It allows dreams to be conduits of viable information while it accepts the soul of a being to be an individual power. Further, the metamorphic process of Space-Time in this context, perpetuates the existence of the spiritual world and the mythic world through which Man can travel in dream, vision, or ceremony. This metamorphosis of Space allows the spiritual realm, which many tribes believe echoes this one, to be a tangible concept.\textsuperscript{204} As a metamorphic medium, Time allows Man to be one with or within the dream or vision. Through ceremony, Man can become a part of the spirits or the animals in a transformational union.

In total the acceptance that mythic, spiritual, and dream reality are all a part of waking reality and are ever shifting and merging into one another supports the world view of Man as a part of Nature. Man is a fluid part of an ageless, timeless universe in which he neither dominates nor directs. Rather he works with the other-than-human beings which also exist.

And there was I, among ancient animals.
In the formality of the dance,
Remembering my face in the mirror of masks.\textsuperscript{205}

\textsuperscript{204}Many tribes like the Navajo and the Pomo believe that the spirit world is very similar in its makeup, its style of living, and its geographical surroundings to the one in which the people live.
\textsuperscript{205}Momaday, N. Scott, "At Risk," \textit{Poetics and Politics} Graduate Seminar in Native American Literature, University of Arizona, March 30, 1992.
CHAPTER FOUR
WHAT ARE REALITY AND NON-REALITY?

I sang the song Louis taught me:
a song to call the deer in Creek, when hunting,
and I am certainly hunting something as magic as deer
in this city far from the hammock of my mother's belly.
It works, of course, and the deer came into this room
and wondered at finding themselves
in a house near downtown Denver.206

206Harjo, Joy "Song for the Deer and Myself to Return On." In Mad Love and
Behind all of the ideas discussed thus far, lies the main questions of what is reality, what is not reality, and can they be defined as separate from each other. In order to think and expand on the ideas I have presented, one must be able to understand that what constitutes reality in Native American cultures, metamorphosis for example, may not correspond to the same ideas in one's own culture. This chapter will address the question of what forms the boundaries that define the fine line between what is real and what is not within culture, by comparing the concepts of reality offered in Chapters Two and Three with Western concepts of rationality, fantasy, imagination and possibility. Also explored will be the question of how the concepts such as metamorphosis are accepted when they are adapted from one culture's oral tradition into another's written one. In other words, how does taking something like metamorphosis out of context effect it? Finally, this chapter will address the question of whether Native American writers such as Silko, Momaday, Erdrich and Vizenor are writing as they do as a survival technique for tribal ideologies and oral traditions.

Metamorphosis is fantastic: the ability for people to harness the power within them and about them to metamorphose is unquestionably extraordinary. This wonder is part of the Sacred and the Spiritual which play a tremendous role in the ideologies of Native American cultures. It is the Sacred and the Spiritual which give man the knowledge to understand and the

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207 Sacred, here, means something extraordinary which may be a personal or a collective experience (a vision or a ceremony). These experiences are often described in ceremony or in oral histories, rituals and customs which helps to keep a culture alive. Moses' discussion with God at the burning bush would be a Western example of a sacred happening which was shared through oral tradition and finally became part of the written creed of the Jewish religion.
ability to transform into a part of the animal world in mind and action, spirit and essence. The spirit world and the knowledge therein allows Man to survive in a world of unanswerable questions and powers: a world in which Man is a powerless creature without the strength of the bear or the speed of the deer. This relationship to Nature is very important because of the reciprocity which exists between Man and Nature, animals and the Supernatural. The connection of Man to Nature remains from primordial times in Man and is manifested in connection through myths, stories, languages and dreams. These manifestations remind man of his kinship relationship to Nature. For example the White Buffalo Calf Woman from Sioux sacred history and cosmology is related to the Buffalo People or the Sioux who came from a previous subterranean existence. She brings to the Sioux the Sacred Pipe and with it the Sioux beliefs. White Buffalo Calf Woman is related to the Sioux from time immemorial but is also related to the buffalo -- she metamorphosis back and forth between a buffalo calf, a buffalo cow and a woman. This connects the Sioux through a cultural heroine, and "goddess" to the buffalo and to the ancient ones, the Buffalo People.\textsuperscript{208} Their sacred history and their stories revolve around this constant connection between the animal world, the spirit world and the human world as a kin structure.

Contemporary Native American literature describes these connections with Nature and the Supernatural through the metamorphic character whose transformation into animal is physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. Set, Ts'eh, and Fleur are examples of this. The metamorphic being may also, as

in the case of Fleur with Misshepeshu and Tayo with Ts'eh, physically bond
with spiritual beings. Their union re-establishes the connection that Man has
with Nature, animals, the Sacred, and the Supernatural and is a metamorphic
union between all realms of reality. As was discussed in Chapter Two, many
tribes believe that the spiritual world and their world are inseparable because
one defines the other and thus, the elimination of one is unthinkable or
unrealistic.

The belief in the sacred is what allows Man to be a part of the
transformational quality of the world without labeling it sinful or base. It is
the reality of these powers that sustain the circle of Time and the circle of
knowledge from the past to the present in a metaphysical view of Space and
Time that eliminates a direct line of time. Space and Time condense in a
continuum which allows the past of myths and sacred histories to combine
with spiritual figures and Man in a specific space. The definition of Time
becomes centered on the idea of a spiral or circle of past, present and future
events rather than a causal line effect. This Space-Time Continuum's
metamorphic property enables a person to transfer his being from one place
to another or from one shape to another and in so doing unites Space and Time
on a metaphysical, physical, and mental level. Mythic or historical
happenings may occur in the present and the people may interact through
dreams and visions as is seen in the characters of Ts'eh, Tayo and Grey.

Dreams, visions, and memory play an important part in binding sacred
pasts with mythic reality and conscious reality. These are seen by many tribes
as real event to be believed and acted upon. Through this action and belief,
Space-Time metamorphoses into a continuum where Man's present is shared by his past and his future with very little delineation.

The reality that our minds and bodies contain power given through the spirits and the earth may be unimaginable to people who do not accept the "irrational" as rational, the "unreal" as real and feel the need to term and create boundaries for these things. What is in our conscious mind as real exists in that capacity because we interact on a social and cultural level with those guidelines to reality. That which is not classified as real in Western society is stored away into the subconscious mind, according to Jung, as imagination or unconscious reality, not to be equated with conscious reality. As Capra explains, most individuals in Western culture are aware of themselves as isolated egos existing inside their bodies. The mind has been separated from the body and given the futile task of controlling it, thus causing an apparent conflict between the conscious will and the involuntary instincts. Each individual has been split up further into a large number of separate compartments, according to his or her activities, talents, feelings, beliefs, etc., which are engaged in endless conflicts generating metaphysical confusion and frustration.\(^\text{209}\) As a contrast, Eastern religions are aware of the unity and mutual interrelatedness of the inner and the outer being and of all things and the individual is not a reality. These two perspectives on how to view the world are fundamentally different in the same manner that Western concepts of reality differ from Native American. Where Native American cultures may see shamanic power and dreaming as acceptable methods for healing, as a sacred part of tribal practices and learning, Western culture often sees

\(^{209}\text{Capra, Tao of Physics 23.}\)
shamanic power and the unknown as fearful because it does not fit into the
mold of Western rationalizations:

> When the singer tells of journeying to the West and
climbing under the sky, the journey is one that
many have gone on in the past and will go on in the
future. And every traveler will describe the same
sights and sounds, and will enter and return in like
fashion. 210

According to this quote no experience is idiosyncratic. Rather,
experience is similar to Silko's ideas on stories. What is happening to you has
occurred before and will again. The feeling of being alone, overwhelmed or
isolated in one's experience is erased by the knowledge that others have also
seen or been in a similar situation. Man is placed within the events of Nature
and the Supernatural rather than being separate and above them. In essence,
Space and Time have been condensed so that one's own story or one's own
journey becomes a place in the living history of others. The idea that they
may be idiosyncratic or common to many flows unnaturally from Western
scientific thought because Western scientific thought has historically
shunned away from what is hard to explain as rational, scientifically proven
fact. That which is not scientifically provable is left to religion, philosophy or
psychiatry to explain. Such ideas as mind travel, time travel, metamorphosis,
animals speaking and thinking, Nature as a powerful living entity, and Man as
a small insignificant life form are regarded as unreal, fancy, or naive. Often
they are categorized as psychic or imaginary within the vast unexplainable
boundaries of the subconscious mind which Jung and those within the
psychological medical paradigm address as untrained and unscientific,

210 Allen, *The Sacred Hoop* 185.
irrational and deeply rooted in religious Archetypes. Those subjects which fall into the realms of the subconscious are often attributed to primitivism or to unscientific evolution causing them to be regarded as lacking in satisfaction and intellect. Jung's concept of the collective subconscious or the collective unconscious is attributed to the workings of Man's untrainable subconscious. It is the part of Man's mind that keeps him linked to the primal past, to primitivism.

Native American writer, Paula Gunn Allen explains that there is a significant difference between the psychological term of collective unconscious and psychic travel as illustrated in the quote above about the singer's journey. According to Western thought as understood by Paula Gunn Allen, the experiences, sights, sounds, and so forth encountered on psychic journeys are presumed to be imaginary and hallucinatory, just as thoughts are believed to be idiosyncratic events of no real consequence. No one suggests that these things are! The metamorphosis of the White Buffalo Calf Woman or Set are not seen as real. They are not regarded by Western culture as real but as illusions in one's mind of real things. They are in a sense metaphors for reality rather than realities, they are symbols just as the idea that mythic figures are symbols and not realities. Kafka's Greggor, as an European example, metamorphosis into a bug. His ordeal in the story is believable, however, the story is seen as a fantasy or fiction. Greggor becomes a symbol of Man's digression into a vermin; his metamorphosis is not real but symbolic. For many Native American tribes, the mythic figure such as White Buffalo Calf Woman, the Kiowa Bear Child, or the trickster may be symbolic but they are

211 Allen, *The Sacred Hoop* 185.
also viewed as continually existing realities. Thus, Momaday's use of Set as a man who transforms into a bear is deeper than the symbolism it reacts to because of the cultural beliefs that view it as possible. The fundamental difference between Momaday's Set and Kafka's Greggor is the underlying belief in the story's plausibility in a culturally defined reality.

According to A.E. Taylor, reality is a purely relative term. There is no such thing as an ultimate reality, there are only the special realities which correspond to our special individual purposes. Put another way, the world is not an illusion, rather the illusion merely lies in our point of view formed by symbols into words. Words form our concepts of reality and "since words are always an abstract, approximate map of reality, the verbal interpretations of a scientific experiment or of a mystical insight are necessarily inaccurate and incomplete." They are inaccurate and incomplete because we attempt to explain what we see as real as opposed to what is apparently real. There are realities which are more than mere appearance, but we know nothing of them. All our knowledge is strictly limited to appearances or structured observations. In other words reality is based in concepts of appearance versus what our cultures have proven within their boundaries to be true. When one is faced with data that insists that what one has learned to be real is indeed not, one is thrown into confusion and disillusionment. What we experience then, is not external reality but our interaction with it.

213 Capra, Tao of Physics 41.
214 Taylor, Elements 10.
The terms reality and non-reality, derived from Western concepts of "what is," seem inadequate to describe "what is" in Native American cultures. Native American boundaries of reality are formed by belief systems, epistemologies, and orientation toward technology and the Natural world. The concepts of "what is" in Western society is defined by science, rational thinking as opposed to intuition, and the idea that man is superior to animals, and Christianity which excludes the natural world as an interactive part of Man's world. Native American cultures ideas of "what is real", on the other hand, are guided by intuition, spiritual and Natural phenomenon and various religions which combine all of these things within a social and political world view that encompasses the "unreal" with the "real". For example, Euro-Americans or Westerns tend to consider Man to be above animals in intellect, social and spiritual advancement, while many Native American traditions would see Man as a kin to the animal world and dependent on it. Animals are not portrayed as inferior intellectually, biologically or socially. On the contrary, many tribal creation stories speak of the animals creating the world and living on it with Man and often marrying into the human race.

These fundamentally different world views may seem to stem from outward cultural forces, however, they also are influenced by and effect a culture's orientation toward the mind and the powers of the mind in relation to other powers. For instance, as we have seen Western psychology tends to divide the mind into the conscious and the subconscious. The subconscious is often placed into a category with unanswerable questions about man's primal past because the subconscious is considered to house the visions, Archetypes, and religious paraphernalia left over from when Man was primitive and non-
rational. One needs only to read Campbell and Jung to notice that the concepts behind the collective subconscious are based on the idea that each human retains and stores deep in the recesses of his untouchable subconscious the remnants of what we were before we became civilized, rational humans. All this may seem a bit ethnocentric and derogatory and it is because what it creates is a boundary between what we see as logical, the conscious mind, and what we see as illogical, the subconscious. The boundaries between the two seem to stem from the fact that the conscious mind in Western society has been trained only to record and "see" what it can understand rationally. Those visions or unexplainable things that we see out of the corner of our eyes or in dreams are termed hallucination, religious miracle, or imaginary. As was seen in Chapters Two and Three, many Native American cultures have not made such huge distinctions between the conscious and the subconscious minds. Rather the two work together to define reality in the world around one. Dreams, visions, and the unimaginable (perhaps the Sacred) are accepted as existent and are incorporated into the fundamental structures of cultural perception. The outcome is a cultural view of reality that does not elevate itself so far from the natural and the supernatural world that the three can not exist as one.

All cultures seem to define and accept the "subconscious" as part of the human mind, however each culture creates its own equilibrium between the conscious and the subconscious. These equilibrious definitions contribute to the fundamental understandings and the amount of importance a culture places on a phenomenon or concept. What all of this comes down to is the creation by a culture of definitions, boundaries and criteria for what that
culture can understand and explain within its own contexts. Scientific oriented cultures will have more trouble explaining or accepting the metamorphic reality of Man and Time then would a less scientifically and more holistically oriented culture.215

Cultural definitions of reality stem from many different concepts and experiences held by a group of people. These experiences become defined through stories and language which in turn define and explain the concepts behind and within the experience. The link between words and meaning, the power of word, and what the word implies and creates in Native American tradition is vastly different from Western concepts of the word. The attitude toward language and the symbolizing process seems to be another contributor to cultural defining of reality.

Words are believed to carry the power to make things happen, ritualized in song, sacred story, and prayer. This natural force is at once common as daily speech and people's names.216

Leslie Silko's Thought Woman creates by thinking, "Thought-Woman, the spider, named things and as she named them they appeared."217 Thoughts give form and substance to ideas which in turn become manifest through speech. Words actualize what is by determining reality through the ordering

215Holistic, here, represents a culture which incorporates the Sacred, the Supernatural, religion, Nature, and Man's rationality into a working definition of reality as opposed to a culture which separates religion from science and rationality.
217Silko, Ceremony 1.
of chaos and restoring harmony. Words bring boundaries to what we are otherwise unable to bind -- concepts such as the Supernatural or the Sacred-- become comprehensible. Man is a part of these things through words and this allows humans to survive as a people. Words are the storage and creators of sacred histories and stories. They evoke reality because they form reality visually, mentally, and spiritually. Stories and the language that creates them determine the understanding of the world around one. If stories are considered reality, if the dream level of life is consistent and parallel to the non-dream level then what is fiction and what is reality? According to Paula Gunn Allen, the way of the imagination is the way of continuity, circularity, completeness and the way of the intellect is the way of segmentation, discontinuity, and linearity.218 Imagination and what is seen within the imagination is a part of daily reality.

From the Western perspective of reality, the world of spirits and imagination, dreams and visions is the world of the psychotic. It is the world as seen by Lola Bourne's psychiatrist Dr. Terriman. We have categorized and named these things as non-real in order to combat the strain of recognizing these powers as realities of Nature and the Supernatural. In turn, recognizing the Supernatural and Nature as entities with power subjugates and weakens Man in the environment. He no longer controls Nature but is within it. One must keep in mind that many Native American tribes feel conflict in their need for killing animals which were their kin. As Howard L. Harrod and Ake

Hulzkranz explain, this dilemma is rectified by praying to the spirit of the animal before and after killing and through ritual renewal ceremonies which cleans the soul of both the killer and the killed.\textsuperscript{219}

...there exist in different cultures fundamentally distinct systems of interpreting existential reality; and the challenge is for the system by which we perceive and understand to penetrate and interact with that of the Other.\textsuperscript{220}

What takes the place of "non" reality, in the area of differentiating the states of forms of reality? In other words what happens to those things which are defined by one culture as real when they are addressed by another culture that sees them as not real? What are termed vision and dream are just as fundamental to Man's being as that which is part of daily life. The union of Natural and Supernatural into one is as much a given as is the fact that Bear Child exists today as he did in the past. The answer seems to be that those things which are defined as either real or not continue to exist as both real and "non" real and are simply termed in the manner appropriate to the individual or group. However when something is defined as "non" real by one group and real by another a power dichotomy arises. There is a fundamental opposition to an entire cultural orientation by labeling something in a manner which contradicts what it is seen as by that culture. The term mythic for example, under the tutelage of Western usage, has become a derogatory term for the realities of sacred history, spiritual, and metaphysical reality.


\textsuperscript{220}Diaz, \textit{Radical Self} 13.
Like oral tradition and the process of naming, the 'mythic' dimension of experience is the "psychospiritual ordering of non-ordinary knowledge - is an experience that all peoples past, present, and to come, have in common." However, the Western concept of myth creates a fallacy around the event within the myth. As was illustrated in this thesis many cultures understand and respect their myths as real, existing parts of their cultural heritage. The myths play a large role in the continued existence, the sense of place, the understanding of that culture's role in the world.

An excellent example of the accuracy and reality of myths was given by Greg Sarris, a Pomo from California, to a graduate Native American literature class at the University of Arizona in the Spring of 1992. According to Sarris, the Northern Pomo of California have a "myth" which describes a period of time, a long time ago, when the waters of the ocean rose and a whale lived in an inland harbor. The Pomo describe this as taking place about the time of the Pliocene Era when the waters rose so high that they were forced to go and live up in the cliffs. When the waters receded the whale was trapped in the harbor. She became a part of the Pomo oral tradition. Ethnographers classified this story as a myth, as an unreality. Recently, however, geologists, curious about this inland harbor went to the area described by the Pomo. They were very surprised to find the remains of an inland harbor and the prehistoric bones of a whale dating to the Pliocene Period. Further, they climbed the surrounding cliffs and found evidence of human inhabitancy in the caves dating to the same period. Because carbon dating is considered scientifically accurate the "myth" was proven to be true. Whose myth is this?

221 Allen, The Sacred Hoop, 104.
then and whose reality? Further does scientific proof make it real or was it real to begin with. These are culturally powerful questions because they empower one or the other group in the manner in which they are answered.

The term myth here, illustrates the confusion we face when two systems of language are confronted. This attitude toward the written canon as opposed to the oral tradition's ideas of what constitutes reality in storytelling can be addressed in Native American texts which use the metaphor to illustrate the realities in discussing metamorphosis. The latter idea will be discussed later in this chapter, however it is important to keep in mind when speaking about language and different orientations toward language because it is the misconception of the reality of a word, the importance of language to a culture, or of the importance of storytelling that creates confusion. The meaning of a word in one language is the object or idea that is created and defined by the visualization of that word. To translate or re-evaluate the word into a different cultural perspective results in a totally new and different conception of the idea or vision originally created because the reader or translator would not have the same visualization, image, or understanding of that word. For instance, the word sacred in English tends to bring to mind religious icons: Mary, Jesus, or the Church. Something that is associated with religion, ideology or a happening not applicable to ordinary man, a miracle. One must keep in mind that the secular and the profane are very separate in Western European cultures. The Spiritual and the common are kept compartmentalized as in Church and State presumably are in the United States. Thus, the Sacred becomes a symbolic concept of a happening that occurred thousands or hundreds of years ago. Rarely does the word sacred apply to
contemporary life in an active sense as opposed to a conceptual sense. In Yaqui, the idea of Sacred is very different. There is no word for Sacred, rather, there are terms for respect or terms for something that deserves respect. The concept of Sacred is an action or a doing not a noun. One respects something because it has earned respect or it demands respect. The unknown demands respect and is termed "sacred" or deserving of respect.

When the term sacred is used interchangeably for two different cultural orientations toward an idea then perceptions of the reality that the word possess becomes very confused and misunderstood. The misunderstandings that arise often lead to the belief that one culture's idea is more correct. This has happened with the view of language and the written word. In Western society the idea that written works are more worthy of intellectual considerations, are more factual, or more believable is an idea that has been transmitted through culture through time and with it has come the idea that oral traditions and stories are more fictitious than real. This idea may stem from the fact that Western culture's scholarship and literature developed from religions centered on sacred literature -- truth delineated by a written text. Oral traditions which may lack the written text then, have no concrete proof or validity to show those who rely on the written for verification. Further, concepts that appear in stories and through oral traditions such as metamorphosis are treated as metaphoric fiction or symbolic metaphor.

Ted Mahato an Anishinabe states that the symbolizing process that Western man has become so adept at is not true to tribal languages because
tribal languages carry more feeling.²²² Mahato elaborates by explaining that modern languages have abandoned the feeling for information and fact. The visualization process that tribal languages incorporate into each word is missing from Western language. Tribal languages contain a spoken feeling of the language and the thought process is a moving image of the people who speak it. Similarly, James Flavin speaks of language as not only a means of communication through words and gestures, but also as an expression that hints at spiritual links between the earth and the Native American.²²³ Thus the metamorphosis of Man into Animal or Man through Space-Time is similar to metamorphosis of language: one creates oneself with words thus changing one's appearance. One is created by the words that are used to describe and define one.

One may see the reality of metamorphosis like a photograph which is seen and therefore, verification of the image. However, a photograph can be manipulated to appear to be what it is not. Therefore, the physical, metaphysical, psychological, and logical happenings that surround us constantly, whether we are aware of them or not, is what constitutes the reality of metamorphosis. Professor Tom Holm has described that one can watch a medicine man juggle fire in his hands, one can 'see' ghosts in one's presence, whether one chooses to believe they are there or not is another matter.²²⁴ This choice creates a dichotomy between "sanity" and "insanity" in

²²⁴Holm, Tom, personal interview, University of Arizona, Summer 1992.
Western terms. If a person sees these things but does not acknowledge them he is insane. If he acknowledges them he may be sane but considered "insane" because he believes in something other than scientific reality. The problem is not in the actuality of occurrences such as metamorphosis happening, rather, the problem lies in language and the meanings and boundaries that words have come to possess. The belief that language creates reality, that Man's ability to incorporate the realities of the conscious, the subconscious, the Supernatural and the Natural into reality are what form the boundaries that define and structure the fine line between what is real and what is not.

It is one's inability to accept the self-contradictory as real which first leads to the drawing of a distinction between the real and the merely apparent. As A.E. Taylor explains, one proceeds on the assumption that, if things as one finds them are self-contradictory, one is not yet in possession of the truth about them. This is often apparent when we look at literature written about shamanism or tribal belief systems in such things as metamorphosis or dreaming as reality. Shamanic traveling or dream reality to Westerners is often defined as not possible or merely an aberration, a trick produced by the shaman or the dreamer. However, in shamanic journeying or in metamorphic situations the person is not imagining the event or seeing it differently. Rather, the person is doing these things and they are happening to that person. For example, Daniel Merkur describes the journey of an Inuit shaman to the dwelling of the Sea Woman. The Sea Woman is a sacred personage who aids the Inuit in hunting. She is also known to withhold food and good weather if taboos have been broken. It is the shamans job to go to her and

\[225\] Taylor, Elements 19.
pacify her. During his seance both the shaman and the Sea Woman are present in the tribal off shore feast house. They are also present in the Sea Woman's underwater house. The shaman recognizes his existence in both places at the same time and it is accepted. The people of the village also believe in the shaman's journey and the presence of the Sea Woman. The language that is used to translate these happenings to someone from outside the situation creates an image due to the words chosen which determine how the outsider understands and accepts it. Thus, the validity of the happening does not change in the eyes of the Inuit but it may in the eyes of the outsider.

In Western culture, metamorphosis, metaphysics, and the Sacred, are concepts not realities because they focus on philosophical issues rather than on scientific ones. Western societies have sanctioned specific types and areas of reality as "real" and given the term "non real" to others. In these situations the term metaphor explains the action of metamorphosis and religion is used to define sacred beliefs in medicine men and mythic figures. Often Native American literature is described as being metaphoric in style and full of symbols. This analysis, though accurate on many levels ignores the fact that "symbols in Native American systems are not symbolic in the usual sense of the term. The words articulate reality -- not 'psychological' or imagined reality, not emotive reality captured metaphorically in an attempt to fuse thought and feeling." Rather, they are reality where thought and feeling,

227Allen, The Sacred Hoop 185.
where objective and subjective, where the speaker and the listener, and where sound and sense are one.

As the discussion in both Chapters Two and Three have shown, there is a fundamental difference in perceiving reality from one culture to another. Where one culture perceives dreams to be live entities, where the spirits of the dead are as real in their ability to cause mischief as the living, where a man can posses the power and being of a bear another believes these things to be hallucinations, imagination, or fantasy.228 The acts of metamorphosis in Native American literature utilize the power of the word to relate a given concept to the reader who may or may not be able to comprehend the reality of what they are reading. The fact that it is the written word gives leeway to the idea that what is being discussed could be a metaphor or "fiction," but it could also be reality or a description of reality.

You will know
when you walk
in bear country...
The problem is
you will never want to return.
Their beauty will overcome your memory...
And you will remain with them
locked forever inside yourself
you eyes will see you
dark shaggy and thick...
Where you stopped to look back
and saw only bear tracks
behind you.229

228The Comanche society believe that the spirits of the dead are to be avoided because of the problems that they cause to living humans. This suggests that the spirits are on a realm of communication with the living and that they act and therefore are apart of the living realm. Galen Buller, "Comanche and Coyote, the Culture Maker," Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature, ed. Brian Swan (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983) 249.

Dream, imagination, altered states of reality, are all parts of what constitutes our world. They are simply terms used to define sections of our world that often can not quite be accepted as concrete because of cultural orientations to such things. Dreams, imagination, metamorphosis, Man into bear, Man into Nature, and the ability for Man to transcend planes of existence to reach illumination or knowledge are all realities co-existing within the structures of a world whose only limitations are those barriers that are placed by culture itself through language and conceptualization.

In addressing reality and non-reality as concepts that are relative to culture one must look at how the concepts are adapted when they change contexts. For example, how are the concepts of metamorphosis accepted when they are adapted from Native American oral traditions into Euro-American literary form? The answer seems to be two fold including both how Native American and Euro-American understand it. Metamorphosis in contemporary literature is accepted by some as metaphoric fantasy and by others as literal possibility. The academic world categorizes characters like Set, Fleur and Bearheart as fictional ideals of oral traditions. This categorization implies that the oral tradition's stories are like European fairy tales or American tall tales. As we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, these writers on the other hand, view their characters as representative of cultural realities. Griever is the Anishinabe trickster, Set is the Kiowa Bear Child, and Tayo does unite with the mythic sacred world. Both analyses seem acceptable because they are accurate on different levels. These characters and their actions may be fictional, yet they are based on culturally accepted persons, ideals, and beliefs. In a sense then, readers are translators of the text because they bring to each written
word their own connotations and ideas, visuals and imaginings of what that word is, what it represents. American Indian literature is not similar to Western literature because the basic assumptions about the universe and therefore the basic reality experienced by tribal peoples and Westerners are not the same.230

What happens when one reads literature written from a different cultural orientation from one's own is a power or political evaluation of the work from the perspective of the reader. This has been problematic in the field of anthropology, ethnography and currently in literature because of the judgmental, omnipotent vantage point that the observer may take. As Renato Rosaldo points out, each culture is separate but equal to our own but in the literary world of the American cultural world, one seldom see them that way.231 Rather the Anglo-European literary world tends to be nostalgic and romanticize other culture's literature and beliefs in order to make them safer to themselves. For example, the term myth as we have seen, is often used to define tribal histories and stories. The term is seen in English as a falsehood or fable not as a living continuum in tribal Space-Time existence.

Anglo-Europeans categorize myths and other cultural beliefs subliminally as from the past or dead in order to control the consequences that would arise if they were indeed real and current. If Western culture were to admit that metamorphosis was a reality, that the ability for Man to use states of dream or altered realities to function in the world was rational and real, and that myths were in actuality real happenings then Western culture would

230 Allen, Sacred Hoop 174.
have to re-define, re-evaluate, and re-structure its entire epistemological world view.

What happens instead of accepting these ideas as valid, current, and possible is that members of racial minorities are given messages through categorization and assimilation of their works. Ethnologists, social scientists, anthropologists and literary critics tend to discuss Native American cultures and literature from the outside and in relation to their own cultures. In the literary world for example, Native American literature is placed within the canon of Western literature and it is defined and analyses under the structures that guide Western literature and literary theory. What is considered to be fiction in Western culture, Kafka's Greggor and his metamorphosis for example, is used as a guideline or a comparison for literature such as Momaday's Set. Rather than assuming that Momaday is speaking through his character about an accepted and believed phenomenon in Native cultures, Western literary analysis might describes Set's process as metaphorical. Tayo's journey to healing and his encounters with spiritual figures such as Ts'eh are considered fictional or mythical as well. Further, Anglo publishers classify Native American literature as fiction when the author speaks in a community voice or from community experience.

As was illustrated in Chapter Three, community voice and community experience plays a large part in the structure, history and continuance of a group. In literature, community voice as seen from a Native American perspective is representative of both the individual voice and the group. Often the individual speaks for or is spoken through. The storyteller, for example,
may speak individually, but her story is that of a community.\textsuperscript{232} There is a tremendous sense of social responsibility which may stem from the importance placed on the group as opposed to the individual in many Native American tribes. This emphasizes strengthens the group and aids in assuring its continuance. Native American literature is complex: most of what is written does stem in style, content, and message from strong Native American tribal traditions. Authors like Silko, Momaday, Vizenor and Erdrich are using the Western literary forms to perpetuate cultural beliefs which were previously only conveyed by oral traditions. The syncratic nature of the contemporary Native American writer allows him to empower tribal ideologies within a Western ideological framework, thus Native American culture flourishes and grows as the circle expands.

A question arises from the idea of the power of the word and the use of language as a survival technique which asks why contemporary Native American authors addressing the subjects that they do. Roberta Hill Whiteman suggests that "language truly is how we become who we are!"\textsuperscript{233} Simon Ortiz rephrases this by explaining that oral tradition is the social consciousness of people and that reading as an extension of oral tradition and the English language facilitates the changing extension of oral tradition.\textsuperscript{234} Most Native American tribes in the United States have felt a growing pressure to speak

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\item As was discussed in Chapter One, the value of individualism differs in Native American tribal situations from Western or Anglo-European situations. The importance of the individual is subordinate to the community which is generally related through kinship.
\item Whiteman, Roberta Hill, "Poetics and Politics," Graduate Seminar in Native American Literature, University of Arizona, March 3, 1992.
\item Ortiz, Simon, "Poetics and Politics," Graduate Seminar in Native American Literature, University of Arizona, February 4, 1992.
\end{enumerate}
English and thus have had to deal with tribal language losses. The use of English as a tool to retain cultural traditions like storytelling and oral narratives, tribal beliefs and values has become a valuable resource to those tribes whose children speak little or none of the traditional language. Further, as Leslie Silko points out it is not only a survival technique, it is a defiance because it allows English to be reshaped in order to speak for the tribe.\textsuperscript{235} English becomes a tool that can be molded to fit the ideas and ways of thinking of other than Anglo-Europeans. More clearly, if the English language is a tool to extend the oral traditions of non-Anglo writers then the subjects that they create in the English language originating from the social consciousness of their peoples, are continuing stories, realities, living growing stories in Silko's manner of describing stories.

All of the authors used in this thesis have adapted the Anglo-European literary genre of fiction to conform to their ideas of storytelling. It is the idea of storytelling in which the metaphor may be both reality or metaphor depending on the reader. Silko literally uses verbal transformation to create a "reality" that Western readers can understand. At the same time she implies physical metamorphosis within the characters and metaphysical metamorphosis through Time and ritual, all of which play a distinct role in Laguna culture as was discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Vizenor utilizes the fictional genre in a way typical of Ojibway oral traditions in which the trickster figure manipulates people and Time through his visualization of Space. Griever personifies the Ojibway trickster and looks at the world from a distinctively non-Anglo perspective. Further, Vizenor's Bearheart and

\textsuperscript{235}Silko, \textit{Language and Literature} 61.
Erdrich's Nanapush both use the oral narrative tradition to give dimension and meaning to the story. Vizenor, Silko, Momaday and Erdrich all employ mythic tribal figures as living, important entities of their stories implying the status that they still hold in each culture. In using these techniques the writers perpetuate the histories, styles of narration, social and cultural attitudes toward reality while utilizing a non-oral technique. Simon Ortiz explains that this is part of an obligation that Native American writers have. They must "be responsible to the sources from which they are... the culture which determines how we see ourselves and others around us." 236

One may ask whether the use of English rather than the use of tribal languages to record these stories defeats the purpose of cultural retention. It would seem not. When the narrator adds that these objects or that animal still talks but that we have lost the ability to understand it, the reader or listener stops and ponders that statement. If this is not mere nostalgia but reality and living memory then there is cause to question whether Western cultures have lost that ability? What is this narrator or writer saying? This is a powerful tool to cause an audience to begin to re-evaluate how they see reality. Native American writers such as Silko, Erdrich, Vizenor and Momaday all come from very diverse backgrounds yet all seem to focus in their novels on the importance of land or place, the idea of storytelling, the idea of Time and Space being non-definable by Western concepts of Time, and the idea that the story is more real than the language used to tell it. The focus is on the importance of what the stories tell not on what style of telling they are in. There has been a history of colonization in the United States and this history plays as important

236Ortiz, Poetics and Politics.
a part in our understanding the literature as does the sacred histories of the writers. Many writers explain that when English was first imposed on them (on their people) in boarding schools the inapplicability of what the textbooks taught them convinced many of the importance of their own narratives and traditions. "It is the story and the feeling of the story which matters more than what language it's told in."\textsuperscript{237} Hence, the use of metaphor to re-establish reality seems to be a way of linking Native writers to Native readers as well as to Anglo readers. The metaphoric or fictional quality of the writing couches what may be reality in a cultural context for those of another culture.

If language is a tool for survival then the ability of Native American writers to utilize the Euro-American style of storytelling combined with their own to achieve a place in the literary canon while maintaining their cultural truths is astonishing. It is a power that is to be acknowledged, accepted, and respected. Language and the recovering of language is a political strength for the creating of Native writing and language as part of the literary cannon and the accepted literary world. Ofelia Zepeda an O'odahm linguist at the University of Arizona speaks of words as power in oral tradition.\textsuperscript{238} As has been discussed, words are power because they create and they can also destroy. The power of words unites people into a homogeneous group all possessing the power to create thoughts -- poems. All are translating and seeing the world around them within their thoughts in a similar fashion. Words convey what the land means and to peoples who are strongly connected to a place as are the O'odahm or the Laguna, the Ojibway and the Chippewa, this is a powerful

\textsuperscript{237}Silko, \textit{Language and Literature} 69.
\textsuperscript{238}Zepeda, Ofelia, "Poetics and Politics," Graduate Seminar in Native American Literature, University of Arizona, February 25, 1992.
memory to be created by words. These words cause the place to remain after it is gone. That is power because that is the retention of a culture. Transferring the word from oral to written in both tribal languages and English clearly enhances the ability of Native American tribes to retain and pass on what is inherently important to their culture. This is key in light of the number of tribal children who now speak English along with or instead of their tribal languages. The actual tribal language may flounder but the concepts behind it will flourish because those concepts will be adapted in what ever language is used.

Finally the question arises as to who the audience of these literatures are. According to Roland Barthes, language is always a matter of force "to speak is to exercise a will or power; in the realm of speech there is no innocence, no safety..." If this is true then the writing of these authors, the encompassing of tribal beliefs such as metamorphosis within the literary written style addresses both the traditional Native American audience as well as the non-Native audience and the assimilated Native audience. Within the context of fiction readers of any group are being subjected to a way of seeing, thinking and visualizing that is distinctly non-Western -- a view that allows the metamorphosis if Man into animal or Man with Time to be real. In so doing the boundaries of what constitutes reality are being re-evaluated and questioned.

The literary and social paradigms of both Western and Native American writers of fiction are being breached by writers such as Leslie Silko, Scott

Momaday, Gerald Vizenor and Louis Erdrich who utilize the traditional oral story's format, mythic and sacred figures from their tribal lore, the beliefs of their tribes, and the concept of language from their tribe to create contemporary extensions which contain the same attitude of belief toward a cultural reality as the oral predecessors. These writers' perspective continue to support the idea of Man as a part of Nature in union with multi-realities. Much of this contemporary Native American literature is on some level about re-establishing beliefs that are being lost. These beliefs may include the union of Man to Nature in which man changes into animal form, talks with animals for knowledge, or transgresses Space and Time in order to re-harmonize his society or himself.

The contemporary extensions mentioned above appear to be fictional or nostalgic to those of a different culture. However, they are realities from the cultural perspective of the writer. Transformation is real to N. Scott Momaday whose novel speaks of a power within Set that Momaday feels within himself. The idea that Space-Time is circular or compressed is real to Leslie Silko who wrote *Ceremony* in an attempt to bring herself back to a sense of Laguna when she was living elsewhere. Louis Erdrich's Fluer and Nanapush stem in content, style, and function from cultural stories of the Minnesota, North Dakota Chippewa. Gerald Vizenor's Grievery, the trickster figure exists today as he did in the past. His visualization of planes of reality existing in one place comes from Vizenor's belief which stems from Ojibway

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orientations to the trickster, world view, and ideas of time. The subjects of these contemporary novels may be fictitious to the literary world but their underlying messages about the metamorphosis of Man, the metamorphic properties of Space-Time, and of metamorphic reality are not at all fictional. Rather, they are stories -- truths -- told that have been told before and will be told again.

Now the deer and I are trying to figure out a song to get them back, to get all of us back, because if it works I'm going with them.

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243 Harjo, *In Mad Love* 29.
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