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MASTER’S THESIS

**SEARCH FOR NATIVE AMERICAN SELF IN N. SCOTT
MOMADAY’S THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN, THE
NAMES, AND THE ANCIENT CHILD**

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "Searching for Native American Self in N. Scott Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain, The Names and The Ancient Child" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

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...../...../.....

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Signature

ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

Search for Native American Self in N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child*

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Momaday, who grew up within both white culture and Native American culture, explores his own cultural identity in his works *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names* and *The Ancient Child*. In this way, he tries to recover his Native American culture from near-destruction and help immortalize it by popularizing the ignored literature of Native Americans to the world. Momaday's recovery of Native American culture is accompanied with the recovery of his personal past: He also establishes the Native American self he searches in the places of interest for his family. What helps him in this search is his "blood memory," a capacity that help him imagine with his mind's eye, sights and experiences of the past although he has never actually been there. Momaday's identity as Native American does not depend on the proportion of native American blood which is inherited from his ancestors, but rather in the elements of memory, "memory in blood" and imagination in his three books. He deals with searching for his cultural identity, based on retelling of memories, memory in blood and imagination.

Through the power of language, he believes that even the little Native American blood he possesses, is enough to connect with his ancestors. He also strongly believes in the power of words engender or create. Therefore, as an author, he contributes to his Native culture and reaches his readers who may seek their connections in their blood memories.

Keywords: N. Scott Momaday, The Way to Rainy Mountain, The Names, The Ancient Child, Identity, Cultural Identity, Native American Literature.



ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

N. Scott Momaday’ın “The Way to Rainy Mountain”, “The Names”, ve “The Ancient Child” Adlı Yapıtlarında Kızılderili Benlik Arayışı

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Hem beyaz kültür hem de Kızılderili kültür içinde büyümüş olan Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names* ve *The Ancient Child* adlı yapıtları ile kendi kültürel kimliğini çözümler. Bu şekilde, tahrip edilen kültürünü hem ölümsüzleştirmeye, hem de göz ardı edilen Amerikan Yerli edebiyatını dünyaya yaygınlaştırmaya çalışır. Momaday’ın Kızılderili kültürünü aydınlığa çıkarma çabaları, kendi bireysel tarihini ve Kızılderili olarak kimliğini inşa etme çabalarıyla paralel gider: Kızılderili olarak kimliğini ailesi için önemi olan yerlerde pekiştirir. Bu arayışta ona en çok yardım eden, orada olmasa bile geçmiş olayları ve onların geçtiği yerleri gözünde yaşamış gibi canlandırmasını sağlayan “kan belleği”dir. Momaday’ın Kızılderili kimliği kanındaki Kızılderili kanının oranına değil, bellek öğelerine, “kandaki belleğe” ve hayal gücüne dayanır. Sahip olduğu kültürel kimliğini aktarılan anılarına, genlerinden gelen hafızasına ve hayal gücüne dayandırarak çözümlmeye çalışır.

Momaday, dilin gücü sayesinde, sahip olduğu biraz Amerikan Amerikan kanının bile ataları ile bağlantı kurması için yeterli olduğuna inanır. Ayrıca, birleştiren veya yaratan kelimelerin gücüne de inanır. Bu nedenle, bir yazar olarak o da kendi Yerli kültürüne katkıda bulunurken ulaştığı okurların kendi kan bellekleriyle bağlantılar kurmalarını sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: N. Scott Momaday, The Way to Rainy Mountain, The Names, The Ancient Child, Kimlik, Kültürel Kimlik, Kızılderili Edebiyatı.



**SEARCHING FOR NATİVE AMERICAN SELF IN N. SCOTT MOMADAY’S
THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN, THE NAMES, AND THE ANCIENT
CHILD**

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INTRODUCTION

There is a fallacy of whose authenticity some have been convinced for centuries. If we ask people about the history of American lands, probably most of them will start with the discovery of America by Lief Ericsson, or more importantly, Christopher Columbus in 1492, like most of the history books. But there is an important point we should not ignore: Before Christopher Columbus reached the American continent, the land had already had many indigenous human inhabitants. And contrary to stereotypes, these people were not just one “uncivilized” and homogenous group who shared the same characteristics, beliefs, traditions and language. These misconceptions were the result of the dominant “white” narrative, which emphasised the moral superiority of the whites over Native Americans. This moral imperative was as powerful as guns and bullets.

The existence of Native Americans on the continent dates back many thousands of years. As opposed to the homogenizing white narrative, there are also different nations among them, 516 at the last count. Nowadays these nations are fighting successfully for their rights, cultures, traditions and languages which were under threat of obliteration by the “white” culture. Assimilationist political strategies of the dominant white society to destroy Native American culture had led to an identity crisis in Native American society. Most of the Native Americans who underwent cultural assimilation on the reservations could not hold on to either their own cultures or adapt to European cultures.

The changes which happened in Native American culture and the abrupt halt to their traditions arose as a consequence not only because of their change of lifestyle coming onto the plains but also, mainly, because of their later exposure to an industrial society with its differing mores and exigencies. The Native Americans who were forced to live on the reservations were exposed to colonial pressures. The Native children were sent to boarding schools, in which they were taught English instead of their own language, given European names and forced to adopt European fashions. These children were educated in a way which deprived them of their own cultures, traditions and languages. In other words the European colonizers were

trying to create a new identity for these children, which would enable them to adapt to the new socio-economic realities.

Consequently, this identity crisis has led many Native American writers to attempt at the reconstruction of their own culture through literature. Although some academics have misinterpreted it, or wrongly labelled it: “Nationalism, I think, is the focus of Native American Studies as an academic discipline” (Cook-Lyn, 1999: 14), the majority of Native American literature differs from other nationalist literatures, because far from being propaganda or a means of proving a nation’s superiority, Native authors try to reclaim their cultures at the brink of loss. Indian “nations” are not nations in the modern sense of the term, and the efforts to make them into one nation have not met with success. (In *House Made of Dawn*, for example, Momaday refers to the merging tribal cultures, and we have seen how confederation was forced by circumstance and official pressure on the tribes when they came to reservations.) The Native Americans, however, do not meaningfully perceive themselves as one nation, nor have they ever been. Therefore, it is wrong to label Native American authors as if they are speaking with a nationalist agenda.

Momaday is one of the most significant Native American authors who try to recover their native roots by writing. For him, it is a never-ending personal struggle with a communal purpose: “my writing is of a piece, I have written several books but to me they are all part of the same story and I like to repeat myself ... from book to book. ... My purpose is to carry on what was begun a long ago; there is no end to it that I can see” (qtd. in Roberson, 1998: 32). His goal, though, is invariably highlighting personal identity issues rather than socio-political ones.

Momaday belongs to a group of Native authors belonging to Native American Renaissance. Native American Renaissance, a term coined by Kenneth Lincoln in his book by the same title (1983), represented a real flowering of talent among a wide range of Native Americans. Some see the rise of Native American literature as being a part of the revisionism of the post Vietnam generation.

In the 1960-1970 era, when Native American studies began its modern development, into disciplinary strategies, there was a movement across the land, a political movement—several of them. Movements that we will not be witness to again, in our lifetime. Black power, Red power, all manner of organisations, efforts, programs economic and

social up heavals led by people desperate for change. (Cook-Lynn, 1999: 19)

Momaday is also an author that flourished during this period. It was a time that their stories and the earlier inhabitants of America began to find audience not only among Americans but also in the world. This interest met with a prestigious award when N. Scott Momaday received his Pulitzer Prize in 1969.

There had, indeed, been writers before. William Apess, soon after becoming a methodist minister in Massachussettes in 1829, published his biography that same year. John Rollins Ridge (1827 – 1867), of Cherokee descent, wrote the first Native American novel. Simon Pokagon who is known as the “Red Man’s Longfellow” is a highly successful writer and advocate of native rights, but by no means a traditionalist in the Momaday mould. The Pokagon tribe were devout Roman Catholics. They formed a business committee and an elected board. Simon wrote many books and essays on a variety of topics. He appeared at the World Columbian exhibition in 1893, and met with Ulysses Grant. He sought without much success the enforcement of treaties signed by American governments. While lamenting the passing of “the Vanishing Race”, he, on the other hand, urged young Native Americans to assimilate. The writer Mourning Dove, in her books, *Cogewa* (1927), and *Coyote Tales* (1933), presages what is to come later. Cogewa, the heroine of the first novel published by a Native American woman, could easily be Grey, out of *The Ancient Child*, an assertive and competent woman. *Coyote Tales* seeks to conserve the folklore. Mourning Dove writes about the Flathead Indians on whose reservation she was raised. Her books concern individuals of mixed descent. Let us also consider John Milton Oskison, an academic grandee, who attended an Ivy League university, and who numbered among his friends such celebrities as Will Rogers, who also claimed some Cherokee ancestry. Oskison wrote four novels, but whether his stories are typical is open to doubt. To take another example, John Joseph Mathews (November 16, 1894 – June 16, 1979) became one of the Osage Nation's most important representatives and authors and served on the Tribal Board during the 1930s. He studied at the University of Oklahoma, Oxford University and the University of Geneva. Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, was a member of the Dakota Sioux. She was a successful authoress, publisher, interpreter, theatre producer, teacher, and political activist. She wrote several works describing her problems with

cultural identity and the dichotomy between the lifestyle in which she grew up and her Sioux culture. She brought some Native American stories to a new readership. Charles Eastman, D'Arcy McNickle and others likewise represented the native in literature, to a greater or lesser extent bringing the life of the typical Native American into the public view.

After 1969, though, there is generally said to be a flourishing of Native American literature, Susan Evertsen Lundquist (2004) highlights three characteristics: the reclamation of heritage—in other words, promulgating a concept of traditional culture not merely limited to war-stories; a re-evaluation of earlier authors; and a renewed anthropological interest in tribal customs and mythologies. Kenneth Lincoln explains this in terms of the writers: a generation of authors emerged who had escaped the shackles of the mission schools and gaining a good education in the mainstream high schools and universities. By the 1980s, an area of research was developing in the academy with the Native Studies Departments opening up in several universities. Periodicals concerning Native American culture began to be published, and Harper and Row began a specific publishing program. In this way, the lives of ordinary Native Americans are described.

Writers, including Momaday, sometimes write of the problems of these ordinary Native Americans. Some of the protagonists are jailbirds and drunks, such as Gerry Nanbush in *House Made of Dawn*. But, more recently, the subjects of Native authors include the lives and specific problems of more successful people like Momaday himself. For instance, *The Crown of Columbus* by Louise Erdich and Michael Dorris tell the story of affluent Americans, like Momaday, dealing with identity issues. Yet, such stories have never reached the level of the success of the stories of ordinary Native Americans. The reasons are obvious: most Natives are still poor, alcoholism is still rife, yet tribal identity is felt to be strongest in the poorer, rural communities on the still existing reservations. Despite the obvious successes of some, life for most is still a struggle.

Despite this, Navarre Scott Momaday is considered one of the most important writers among those who are trying to reconstruct their cultural identity through their works, besides reviving their cultural heritage. He has been more successful than many, gaining recognition and winning a Pulitzer Prize in 1969, with his first book,

House Made of Dawn. This is no small achievement. His success depends widely on the fact that, instead of accepting stereotypes, he gives ear to the voices of those Native Americans who, like him, are trying to show us the truths buried in ruins. That does not mean, however, Momaday and other successful Native American writers are social anthropologists. Rather, Momaday works with imagination. Thus he creates a Native American myth in the line of post-structuralism. He does away with borders that distinguish imagination, fantasy and fact, between history and story, myth, literature and reality. He makes a contrast between an idealised modern Native American who has lost his roots and a fictive fantasy of Native American identity. For example, Grey, who appears in *The Ancient Child* may strike as an unrealistic character who plays a crucial role in the development of the story.

I will interrogate Momaday's concept of the Native American self in his three works, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names* and *The Ancient Child*, as the main sources. My purpose is to point out and question the basis of the "identity" crisis in terms of culture: also, to decide whether the cultural heritage of a nation can be revived and preserved through individual pieces of literature.

As a Kiowa born in Lawton, Oklahoma, N. Scott Momaday learned English as his mother tongue instead of the Kiowa language, but it was his mother's choice for him. His parents were teaching children on the reservations. He spent his childhood on the Navajo reservation, the San Carlos Apache reservation and at Jemez Pueblo. Therefore, besides having memories from his Kiowa relatives, he also has vivid ideas about these places that he uses or shares in his works. Growing up among both the Native American and European cultures led N. Scott Momaday to reconstruct his and his nation's cultural identity through literature, a spiritual journey to the past and ancestors. While Momaday revives his own cultural heritage and traditions by means of this spiritual journey, he also illuminates, and makes people become aware of the Kiowa nation.

In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names* and *The Ancient Child*, likewise, N. Scott Momaday goes on a spiritual journey back to his past, and he constructs and completes his sense of self while reconstructing his Kiowa heritage. The turning points of Native American history can be found in his reclamation of cultural heritage and the reconstruction of cultural identity through literature with the

beginning of the Native American Renaissance. As Native American cultures are based upon oral tradition, the Native American myths, legends and stories shed light on them. Since this individual journey is also a journey into the Kiowa culture and heritage, an introduction into the Kiowa history and culture and the Kiowa people's confrontation with the white man and their adaptation to American culture are part of the following pages.

As Native American cultures are based upon oral tradition, the Native American myths and legends help us understand Native American's perspective. Culture is a fuzzy concept, but by analysing Momaday's oeuvre, we are able to work on his understanding of it. Defined by Matsumoto as "...the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next" (qtd. in Spencer-Oatey, 2012: 2), culture and identity are the two intermingled foci of Momaday's works. That is, though we can see Kiowa's general cultural elements in Momaday's works, we can also see his individualistic and subjective perception of Kiowa culture as he harmonizes his cultural background with his own imagination. Somehow he uses his own way to convey Kiowa culture to the next generations.

The writer's biography, interviews, essays and other works shed light on *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child*. Each work is based on his past experience within his Kiowa culture. As he likes admittedly repeating himself in his works, they give us an idea about his past and experiences. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* a kind of memoir, is the beginning of Momaday's quest in order to reconstruct his identity. In this work, identity is focused on the themes of land, myth and storytelling because each of them has a very important place in the book. The novel demonstrates Momaday's reconnection with his past and homeland as he undertakes the telling of his journey and his discovery of roots. In *The Names*, Momaday partially writes his autobiography. It's a book composed of both myth and recollection, recounting, as it does, Momaday's real family history. It is an important source for tracing Native American beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies as well as language. Using this semi-autobiographical work, I am going to dwell on the importance of story-telling and subjective recording of perceived history that Momaday applies to reconstruct his culture and traditions. Though his last novel, *The*

Ancient Child is fictional, the setting, story and protagonist have parallels with Momaday's real life. The theme of identity conflict and alienation—a very common theme for the Native American writers—is reflected in Momaday's quest for identity, his evolution and inner serenity. The purpose of these chapters is to find and trace the the general values of the Native American self as exemplified in Momaday's actual and spiritual quest.

In order to shed some light on Momaday's quest for his Native self and identity, the first chapter of this thesis will focus on the concepts of identity and culture. Since humans are cultural products as well as, even more than, the products of nature, cultures shape humans in ways that define their relationships with other selves and with nature. Culture informs our ways of thinking about ourselves and about significant others, friends or foes. Since Momaday's culture is suspended between his white education and his Native roots, I will also focus on the Kiowa culture that he sets out to discover. The Kiowa myths and legends carry this culture to Momaday, who reemploys them in his novels imaginatively. I will thus look into the Kiowa elements in Momaday's cultural identity as they are revealed in his personal history and his (semi-) autobiographical works.

In the next chapter my focus will be on *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday's first novel. In this work, Momaday ventures a journey to the Rainy Mountain, which is considered in the Kiowa myths as the center of the world. Momaday's journey to the center of the world connects him to the beginning of things. Kiowa myths of origin come to life as he begins the construction of his new self and retells these stories by working them in his imagination.

The third chapter of this thesis will deal with the issues of land, memory and imagination as they are revealed in the previously mentioned *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as well as *The Names*. In Native American cultures land and memory are inseparable. The Kiowa sacred lands are overflowing with memories of the past; in them the past and present become intermingled, and Momaday feels the presence of a memory called "blood memory" of events that he never personally experienced.

The last chapter of the thesis will discuss the role of language, religion and ceremonies in evoking cultural identity in the previous novels as well as *The Ancient Child*. Momaday's fresh language is a bonding device between him and his roots. He

believes that by means of language he turns the past, the imaginary into the present and into reality. Language thus has magical powers to bring life to seemingly dead past. A similar function exists in the religious rituals and ceremonies of the Kiowa culture. These rituals connect past and present and the dead with the living. They cross the boundaries of time and space.

In order to understand better Momaday's perspective on his Kiowa roots and culture, an inquiry into the concepts of culture, identity and how they appear in Momaday's life and works is required.



CHAPTER ONE
CULTURE AND IDENTITY, KIOWA AS A SURVIVING CULTURE,
NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY AS A KIOWA

1.1. CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Human beings have always been in need of close relationships with other humans and being members of a more or less homogenous group. They have tended to get close to the people most like them or those who have features in common with them. In this way, they have created societies which have been producing many different kinds of values, behaviour patterns and common feelings. They have transferred these to the next generations throughout history. The accumulation of all these materials and features are called culture. “Culture is the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2005: 302). There are no written rules for a culture; it is learned through experience and transmission through the generations. Culture tends to be both stable and dynamic, for cultures change and evolve in time, but culture itself remains as an inseparable entity in human life. Moreover, while some portions of culture are prone to change faster as the socio-economic conditions alter, some other portions continue from generation to generation with little or no change. Although every culture persists in its customs, morals, belief or values, these, nonetheless, tend to evolve over time.

The way of life and thinking of a society could be understood with the help of culture. It consists of special and different kinds of values grounding social relationships in a society. The culture of every society shapes the way the people think, feel and believe. Between culture and individual a balanced mix of conformity and freedom is aimed. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the individual as an individual varies according to the structures of dominance and conformity within that society. Thus, a society’s freedoms and expectations of conformity, values, and beliefs differ from those of other societies.

Culture is a term mostly used only with respect to humanity. It is the point at which people are distinguished from other living things. Communal life has been

an inevitable and indispensable condition of humanity. Communities have different kinds of life-styles and living standards, attitudes and behaviours, education and ways of thinking. The nations and communities of the world compose a very colourful mosaic, thanks to the varieties of cultural structures. Even though its characteristic feature differentiates a society from other societies, culture has the power to harmonize individuals with each other in the same society. At the core of a society, an individual creates and gives a shape to the values of the culture by means of their personality and behaviours. When individuals decide to live together, they form a communal life, as a result of which, some common rules emerge. As a result of these mutual behaviours and relationships between individuals, common values emerge and, indeed, become common patterns of behaviours: so called social relationships. Even though it is at the core of society, culture is not determined by one person; instead, it is formed by common behaviours and attitudes among the group in question. Harmony and compatibility in a community is provided by these commonly accepted behaviour patterns and attitudes.

In order to survive, we need to change and adapt. This is a need that we can see in every phase of life. Most nations believe that they can preserve their culture by isolating themselves from other nations because they see “change” as a danger. However, as William Raymond asserts in his essay, “Culture is Ordinary,” culture is both traditional and creative. That is, it is both stable and dynamic. In the words of Hartwig Isernhagen, it has notions of stability and notions of change. This change can also happen in the event of cultural interactions and interchanges among different nations. The Kiowa nation including both stability and change in itself is one of the most impressive examples of a nation that managed to keep its culture alive until today. Today’s stable characteristics of the nation have been achieved thanks to their dynamic lifestyle. They have managed to be both traditional and creative, and their land, memories, language, stories, myths and rituals are the best examples managing to reach us today.

Cultural studies emerged in Britain during the 1950s. In general, seven themes were identified, namely, intergenerational stresses, cultural disconnection, pan-tribal identity, stereotyping, cultural pride, risk, and relationships with mainstream culture (Brown et al, 2017). As a discipline, Cultural Studies finds a

fertile area of research in colonial and/or postcolonial cultures, because these cultures have faced domination and stereotyping, expropriation of and removal from native lands, loss of languages and rituals, thus cultural memory.

Native American cultures have experienced separations from shared land, memories, language, stories, myths and rituals that constitute cultural identity. They have been exposed to a variety of assimilationist practices, which have created different results for those that have been subjected to them. Therefore, a distinction needs to be made between the culture of Native Americans who remain on the reservation in poverty, those involved in business on the reservations—casinos ... etc.—and those living in the cities.

Once the Kiowa and other Plains Tribes were disarmed, a rupture existed between the traditional warrior culture of the plains and what was left for them in the reservations. Gradually, the work of assimilation began, the admission of Kiowa children into boarding schools and the attempted repression of traditions left the remaining Indians with a dilemma. Should they try for success as white Americans, or cling to their old ways. A recent study has shown that certain problems still confront these communities, especially the youth (Brown et al, 2017). One phenomenon is certainly higher rates of substance abuse (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues, 2014). Among 8th graders studied, 18.5 % more indulged in binge drinking near reservations than in urban centres (Stanley, Harness, Swain and Beauvais, 2014: 156-163). Death rates from alcoholism are higher (Roeber et al, 2014); in some cases this was related to historic wrongs. Thus, interviewees mentioned forced removal from native lands, incarceration in boarding schools, breaking of treaties. Out of this, people identified poverty and poor mental health as results (Brave Heart, 2003:7-13, Evans-Campbell, 2008: 316-338, James, 1992).

One of the recent events that brought traumatic effects on Indian cultures was brought by the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which moved Indians from native lands to urban centres. This may be seen in the same light as the desegregation of high schools under the Eisenhower administration. Today, seventy per cent of young native Americans live in urban centres (Norris, Vines, Hoeffel, 2012). According to another study by Duran and Duran this change has led to homelessness, unemployment, poverty and poor mental health (1995: 124). Responses to this,

however, have not always been negative. Some individuals have rejected their ethnicity outright, while others have managed to maintain a multi-ethnic balance.

Attempts to revive Native American identities have met with mixed results. Some have noted the shock at the contrast between the tales of past glory and the current poverty. Others talked about the breakdown of the reactionary stereotypes after the sixties and the pleasure at seeing role models on television and even at seeing Natives identified as an affinity market group by insurance companies. (Brown et al, 2017). The most well-known Indian ritual, the Sundance has gone from being a religious ritual to being the name of an intertribal support group trying to help users stop the drug habit. Some mentioned how positive the emergence of an intertribal community was. Getting to know the tradition of other tribes was also seen as a very positive thing. Disappearance of specific tribal identity, though, was sometimes seen as a mixed blessing by those with a greater historical awareness. Many of those interviewed stressed the importance of Native American tribal centres and intertribal pow-wows which are accepted as secular dances “based on ceremonial patterns of the Plains” (Kracht, 1994: 258). Feelings though, are mixed about preferred location. One interviewee said, “On the rez, everything was ‘in tune’. Another relates, “I think it all depends on their experiences...(on the reservation)... (mine) was negative. They would say, ‘You’re not an Indian’, and stuff like that, so I did not identify myself as an Indian for a long time” (Brown et al, 2017). A point of interest is that of ‘historical trauma’ and ‘vicarious trauma’. One interviewee reported that “...there was all this negativity ... there was all this sadness ... they were doing drugs and drink to kind of suppress the anger, so it was like they all just clumped together and they were just all very angry all the time”. Sometimes there were cultural clashes experienced by the subjects but not as many as might be expected. One reported a problem about dissecting frogs in a biology class. Another mentioned about the continuing fear among Native Americans of the dead. Keeping up graves is not done—they are abandoned once the body is buried.

The changes which have affected Native Americans since the end of the Indian wars have prompted diverse responses. There are those who stay on the reservations quite happily. They maintain their Native American identity, and sometimes enjoy new business opportunities. There are others who suffer from

poverty and drug and alcohol abuse. Likewise, those who have moved to the city, have responded in various ways. Some are happy. They are succeeding socially and economically. Some are those rejecting all remaining Native American identity. Others maintain a balance by visiting reservations. However, there are those who are alienated because of typical inner-city problems, namely, racism, gang culture, drugs, and unemployment, poor housing and inadequate health cover. Their problems are not unique to their community. Some have affirmed their Native American identity and developed institutions in response.

1.2. KIOWA AS A SURVIVING CULTURE

Kiowa culture has undergone quite many changes from the past to the present. Since the Kiowa embrace changes as part of their principle of life, they have found ways to adapt themselves to contemporary political, social and economic changes. Today the Kiowa have their own government, like a small country. But even though they have their own laws, police and services, they have to obey American law as they are also US citizens. They choose a council member among all the tribal members and that chosen member governs them.

Their housing has gone through changes. In the past, their houses were made of wooden frames and buffalo hide. Its shape was like a cone tent. It was called a teepee in their language. It is practical and useful in view of its quick construction and dismantling. Today the Kiowa people, like most of other Native Americans, live in modern houses and set up a teepee for fun or to have ancestral connection.

The Kiowa relations to nature are multifold. Because they were nomadic hunters and gatherers in the past, Kiowa did not grow crops or plants. They had a nature-based belief system and, therefore, a great respect for nature. Dogs and horses were important for their transportation, and buffalos were important for their sacred religious Sun Dance ceremony as well as a staple dietary item. Their religion is based on sacred power. According to their belief system that sacred power which is called 'dwdw' in their language is spread all over the world and it could be found in special spirits, objects, places or natural phenomena. There is a distinctive hierarchical classification for the availability of that spiritual power. For example the predators

are more powerful than their prey and the spiritual powers from above, such as the sun, are stronger than the earthly animals. And the human beings can get that spiritual power through the vision quest.

In Kiowa belief system, there are different kinds of ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance, the Ten Sacred Medicine Bundles, the vision quest, and peyote meetings inter alia. “Ritual has a place, so have good and evil, and there is an ineffable intimacy, nothing is unnatural and there is no question of right and wrong. There is merely a moment in the rite of passage, the irresistible accumulation of experience” (Momaday, 1990: 43-44). The vision quest is usually done only by men in a special place, wearing special clothes specific to their traditional features. The conductor of the ceremony is a seeker and carries a black stone pipe. The seekers fast, smoke and pray for four days in order to get a vision. The ten sacred medicine bundles are very important for Kiowa in terms of their functions. The bundle has healing power. Anyone in the tribe can give away any gifts they afford and in return, the people used to pray for success in war. The most important and distinctive ceremony is Sun Dance or Taime. It is a kind of religious dance around a pole held to be sacred. The dance demonstrates the participants’ bodily endurance and spiritual connectedness to the sacred powers.

The medicine bundle is placed at the western side of the dance lodge and symbolizes the spiritual power of the sun, which mediates between the people and spiritual powers. According to a story, a Kiowa warrior was separated from his war party and a red wolf granted him a spiritual power. In remembrance of this warrior, the Kiowa people made the Gourd Dance and honoured the battles of their warriors during their migration from the Northern Plains to the Southern Plains. The Gourd Dance has maintained its importance to the present. Unlike the Gourd Dance, the Sun Dance ended, however, in 1887. It is

a yearly dance that recognizes and enforces the regenerative aspects of the Sun Dance meetings...that strengthens the sense of identity and underscores the common bonds that exists between the various Kiowa bands...(it) has done much to restore the state of well being of harmony that the Kiowa has always derived from their dancing (Ellis: 2018).

Each of these cultural practices has made it possible for the younger members of the Kiowa nation to remain connected to their past and ancestors. Even after the loss of much of the native lands, languages and practices, Momaday can excavate

from what has remained of them a rich culture that speaks to him, one that he transmits to his readers.

1.3. NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY AS A KIOWA

Navarre Scott Momaday was born on February 27, 1934 at Lawton, Oklahoma. He is 7/8 degree Indian blood. His father is Alfred Mammedaty who is a “full-blood” Kiowa. His mother is Natachee Scott Momaday who is 7/8 degree English and 1/8 degree Cherokee blood. His mother who embraced her 1/8 degree Indian blood called herself ‘Little Moon’. Yet, while extolling his notion of the Kiowan culture, Momaday is very much a product of his place and above all, his time. He is a Pulitzer prize-winning academic. While his father was a painter and his mother was an author who wrote children’s books, they also became teachers on the Navajo reservation, the San Carlos Apache reservation, and at Jemez Pueblo. Until he was one year old, they stayed at his grandparents’ house on the Kiowa reservation. Then, due to his parents’ job, they started to live together in Arizona. When he was twelve years old, they moved to Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico. In 1952, Momaday began to study political science at the University of New Mexico. He graduated in 1958. In 1960, he finished his MA in English at Stanford University and continued his doctoral research there. In 1963, he received his PhD in English literature. He worked as a professor of literature and writing at the University of California, Stanford University and New Mexico University. Also, he worked at the University of Moscow and University of Regensburg in Germany for a while as a visiting professor. In 1981, Momaday started to work at the University of Arizona till he retired in 2006. He worked as Regents’ Professor of English, which is the top position of the university.

In 1962, he wrote the poem called “The Bear” for which he was awarded the Academy of American Poets Prize. Four years later, *The Journey of Tai-me* about Kiowa folklore, was published. The following year, in 1969, his father drew some illustrations for this book, and the book was published again with the name of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. In 1974, he compiled his poetry in a book called *Angle of Geese and Other Poems*. In 1976, both *The Gourd Dancer* and *The Names* were

published. In 1989, he wrote *The Ancient Child*, which is about a painter who is a lost soul searching for his true self. The compendium of poetry and stories, *In The Presence of the Sun* and the play 'The Indolent Boys' were published in 1992 and 1993 respectively. Lastly, his poetry compilation, *Again the Far Morning: New and Selected Poems* was published.

Respectively, in Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child*, we witness how Momaday reconstructs his cultural identity step by step. Coming from a Native American family, Momaday spent his childhood among his Native American society on reservations. But later in his life, because he had to live away from the land, language, and tradition that he belonged to, he remained divorced from his cultural identity, too. In a way, despite this, his culture remains of paramount importance to Momaday, and he longs to regain what he perceives as his true self. He is well aware that writing is the most permanent and effective way to achieve this, by documenting and recreating it. Each word he uses is a brick of the building that he seeks to construct. These three books show us the stages of Momaday's own path to find his true self.

The Way to Rainy Mountain is a kind of reunion of the writer with his Kiowa identity. It is initiated with the loss of his grandmother. "I returned to Rainy Mountain in July. My grandmother had died in the spring and I wanted to be at her grave" (Momaday, 1991: 5). He starts his "pilgrimage" consciously and he is aware of that the spiritual journey he will begin by remembering and retelling the stories will change him. "Yes, I thought, 'Now I see the earth as it really is; never again will I see things as I saw them yesterday or the day before'" (Momaday, 1991: 17). Therefore, he uses the healing power of retelling for his Kiowa nation and himself, too.

While *The Way to Rainy Mountain* serves as a point of departure for Momaday, *The Names*, which is accepted as a semi-autobiographical novel, is the embodiment of Momaday's memories and imagination, both. He states: "notions of the past and future are essentially notions of the present. In the same way, an idea of one's ancestry and posterity is really an idea of the self" (Momaday, 1976: 97). Bringing together past, present and future, and memories and imagination he is able to travel back in time and connect with his infant self, other people in his family and

in his tribal history. For example he remembers a day in the past when he was too young to remember as a baby in his cradle:

... I am in the arbor. It is an August day in 1934. My mother and father watch over me, swing me in a little hammock, hum to me a lullaby. My grand mother Aho is there, too, and my Uncles James, Lester, Ralph. I have no notion of time; the moment does not exist for me as time, but it exists only as pain or puzzlement, perhaps a sound or a word (Momaday, 1976: 97).

This is a reality created in his imagination and made real for the reader by the power of words.

The Ancient Child is a novel, which reveals Momaday's inner journey to recreate and internalise his cultural identity in a fictional way. By writing about his family and his childhood, he emphasises his Kiowa identity. By reviewing his three works, one can realize that there is always an effort to prove his Kiowa identity. He was given a document certifying that he is of seven eighths Indian blood which means that nobody can refute this except himself. Yet, Native American culture is not carried automatically with Native American genes. He feels he has to make an effort to be spiritually and culturally connected with his native heritage, just like his ancestors did in the Sweat Lodges, Sun Dance ceremonies and in sacred lands. Thus, if he feels a gap deep inside him about his identity, nobody can fill this except himself. That is why, in his novels, he tries to fit in every Kiowa myth and story into his own life and memories.

The memories Momaday recalls in the imagination gain an undeniable reality in the words he writes down. Although he creates works of fiction, he uses his own cultural background that gives us clues about himself. The novel is a kind of proof that Momaday had managed to find his native self. Now we can clearly see that he is in peace with himself.

Momaday restores his cultural identity through his writing. First, he recalls his memories by thinking about them. Then he pictures them in his imagination or in his mind's eye and he re-experiences them with the regenerative powers of his imagination. Everything he sees in his mind's eye becomes tangible when he conveys them to us through words. Momaday acts like a painter in his works, one who draws images with a pencil and by means of words. Writing for him is at once subjective, psychological and semiotic. While it answers his needs as an individual by providing for him an anchorage in a meaningful past, it is also his way of creating

meaning through language out of personal and collective memories. Merging his native heritage with his personal stories in his fiction, Momaday provides healing and wholeness to himself and his broken native past.



CHAPTER TWO

SEARCHING FOR THE SELF THROUGH STORYTELLING IN THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN

2.1.THE HEALING POWER OF RETELLING

While traditional anthropology had regarded myth as unscientific and the societies which are explained by myths, rituals, songs and stories are stigmatised “uncivilized,” “primitive,” or “savage,” since the revival of postcolonial social anthropology, this denigration is no longer accepted. Momaday depends on these for the creation of his narratives (Claviez, 2006: 523). *The Way to Rainy Mountain* is the beginning of Momaday’s inner journey to find and re-construct his self and identity as a Native American. It lacks a true narrative structure and is episodic and impressionistic. Much of it is reminiscences of the author: He writes about what he remembers without trying to string the stories into a comprehensive whole. He divides the book into three parts: “The Setting Out,” “The Going On,” and “The Closing In.” Each of these parts is also divided into three sections as paragraphs without any title, but while reading the book, we realize that the first section tells us a myth of the Kiowas, while the second gives us historical information. The third section is about Momaday’s own memory. That is, these three sections are separated from each other as myth, history and memory.

Each Kiowa myth with which he starts each section holds an explanation for the ways of the Kiowas. Each memory he tells is related to myth and history. Somehow he finds a way to fit the myth and history with his memories. For example, he gives one of the apparent examples of this at the beginning of the book. After telling the origin myth of the Kiowas, he gives information in the history section that “they called themselves Kwuda and later Tepda, both of which mean ‘coming out’” (Momaday, 1991: 17). In the memory part, intentionally he uses the “coming out” phrase to begin his quest: “I remember coming out upon the northern Great plains in the late spring. There were meadows of blue and yellow wildflowers on the slopes, I could see the still, sunlit plain below, reaching away out of sight” (Momaday, 1991: 17).

One myth explains how an old woman sabotages her own kitchen to immolate her enemies (Momaday, 1991: 44). After the myth, Momaday continues with some related historical and geographical truths that belong to his society. A teepee was destroyed by fire in 1872 (Momaday, 1991: 45). And lastly, in the memory section, he tells about what he remembers about his family, childhood, places from his childhood or stories he listened from his father (Momaday, 1991: 45). “Memory begins to qualify the imagination, to give it another formation, one that is peculiar to the self. I remember isolated, yet fragmented and confused—images, shifting, enlarging, is the word, rather than moments or events—which are mine alone and which are especially vivid to me” (Momaday, 1976: 61).

Momaday, who has spend his life within white and native culture, is well aware of his and his nation’s fragmented self. Therefore, he has undertaken the storyteller mission in order to prevent the loss of his cultural heritage. He seeks the culture and literature of Native Americans hidden in their oral tradition. “The oral tradition is that process by which the myths, legends, tales, and lore of people are formulated, communicated, and preserved in language by word of mouth, as opposed to writing” (Momaday, 1997: 87). Momaday transmits the oral tradition of his nation into the written texts without changing their import or significance. By doing so, he immortalizes the culture and literature of his nation. Stories, myths, legends, tales and history of a nation are the crucial elements that help people understand their lives, therefore, themselves. Every individual needs to know where they belong so as to create meaning in their life because creating meaning in life is possible by means of understanding the culture that we belong to. The oral Native American culture was in danger of being lost. Since the literary productions of a nation, including its myths, legends, stories, function as cornerstones that help build a nation’s culture, if they are lost, it means that the culture of the nation is lost, too. John Scenters-Zapico explains their relationship with these words:

The verbal tradition, deeply rooted in close-knit cultural interaction, is what keeps a culture’s myths, legends, etc., alive in the community and within the individual. These cultural notions are the important premises that traditionally serve to unite the society. As they are lost, so are the seams that unite the Native American cultures (Scenters-Zapico, 1997:504).

The Way to Rainy Mountain is a “meaning-making” process for Momaday himself and the Kiowas because it merges the myths and history of Kiowas. Every myth in the book is connected to the way of life of the Kiowas. In each myth or story, we can find answers to why some things such as dogs, horses, buffalos, peyote ... etc. have importance for the Kiowas. For example, in the setting out part, there is a myth which explains the importance of dogs for them. We can see the origin of friendship between dogs and people. The friendship between them dates back to a long time ago when there were no horses. According to the myth, there was a man who was living, camping and hunting alone, one day he spent his last arrow by shooting a bear for food, but he couldn't kill it, and the injured bear ran away. While the man was wondering about what to do, a dog came and warned him about the enemies who were coming close. The man was in despair of thinking that there is no way to escape. But, the dog proposed to show him a way to escape on the condition that the man would take care of the dog's puppies. Thus, the bond between the dogs and the Kiowas was forged (Momaday, 1991: 20).

Also, they have a myth that tells them how their ancestors met Tai-me, the religion of the Kiowas:

There was a man who heard his children cry from hunger, and he went out to look for food. He walked four days and became very weak. On the fourth day he came to a great canyon. Suddenly there was thunder and lightening. A voice spoke to him and said, 'Why are you following me? What do you want?' The man was afraid. The thing standing before him had the feet of a deer, and its body was covered with feathers. The man answered that the Kiowas were hungry. 'Take me with you,' the voice said, 'and I will give you whatever you whatever you want.' From that day Tai-me has belonged to the Kiowas. (Momaday, 1991: 20)

Besides understanding how and why Tai-me became the Kiowas' religion, it is also important to understand the role of Tai-me for them because it is a symbol of hope for them, that is why its story should be conveyed from generation to generation. The Kiowa can put this to practical use: “They are capable of knowing the role Tai-me might play in helping them to make meaning out of a difficult situation. Their use of a cultural tradition like Tai-me to help their understanding at a particular moment becomes enthymematic. Without legends such as Tai-me, despair takes hold, ...” (qtd. in Scenters-Zapico, 1997: 506).

In one of the sections in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, he recounts a myth which explains the origin of friendship between dogs and his people. According to the myth, a dog helps a man who hunts food to escape from his enemies. Momaday explains his myth with a story:

the principal warrior society of the Kiowas was the Ka-itsenko, 'Real Dogs', and it was made up of ten men only, the ten most brave. ... Tradition has it that the founder of the Ka-itsenko had a dream, in which he saw a band of warriors, outfitted after the fashion of the society, being led by a dog. The dog sang the song of the Ka-itsenko, then said to the dreamer: 'You are a dog; make a noise like a dog and sing a dog song.

He interweaves the myth and the story with his memory: "There were always dogs about my grandmother's house. Some of them were nameless and lived a life of their own. They belonged there in a sense that the word 'ownership' does not correspond to. The old people paid them scarcely any attention, but they should have been sad, I think, to see them go." By telling his memory at the end, he fits himself into the ancestral continuum. Also, he creates a unity of the three parts by emphasizing the friendship between the dogs and the Kiowas.

Further in *The Names*, he introduces us to the character Podh-Lohk. He is Momaday's paternal great-grandfather. Momaday uses him as a temporary narrator from his time in 1934, back through the legendary and semi-legendary history of the Kiowa, including the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1839-40. He tells the story of a Pawnee captive, escaping on the back of Guadal-seyu, the best horse in the tribe. He remembers 1883, when the Nez Perces are released from Leavenworth and returned to the reservation. He then introduces us to Keahdinekeah, and it is she who is the narrator of the story of Tsoai-tale which is the legend of the boy who turns into bear. Here Momaday recounts the legend in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* in his grandmother's voice and makes Keahdinekeah imagine the place where the legend takes place. "Tsoai loomed in her mind; nor could she have imagined it more awesome than it is, the great black igneous monolith that rises out of the Black Hills of Wyoming to a height of twelve hundred feet above the Belle Fourche River" (Momaday, 1976: 55).

Storytelling is an act which transforms both the listener and the speaker, himself. The storyteller, in the role of creator, designs a world into which he too can fit. Words are power and the storyteller holds this power in his hands to build, to

destroy, or to recreate. In his three works, besides using his cultural background, Momaday reveals his imaginative and creative power to fill the gaps in the stories and the lacunae he feels inside himself. As he observes, storytelling is “a process in which man invests and preserves himself in the context of ideas. Man tells stories in order to understand his experience, whatever it may be” (Momaday, 1997: 88). What is implied here that storytelling is not only a restoration of a culture or the listener who belongs to that culture, but it is also about restoration of the storyteller’s cultural identity. Momaday creates the story by adding his imagination on the Kiowas’ history. Through recreating the memories which are based on history, he creates his own reality by means of the power of words. His re-creation is based on weaving his imagination with his memories that belong to him or his father.

By interweaving myths, stories and memories, Momaday uses an original way to convey his cultural background in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. By conveying them in this way, he can also fit in them, too. Considering how he uses myths and stories to construct his cultural identity, he exactly acts as a storyteller who also uses his imagination to combine history and fiction.

CHAPTER THREE

SEARCHING FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN SELF THROUGH LAND, MEMORY AND IMAGINATION IN THE RAINY MOUNTAIN AND THE NAMES

3.1. LAND

Ursula K. Le Guin, the prolific American writer of fantasy fiction, states in her novel, *Dispossessed* that “to be whole is to be part; true voyage is return” (46). When we handle this quote from the perspective of identity, the word “return” symbolizes going back to the place where our story begins. It is not merely a physical return just but a spiritual one that involves memory. It requires a reconnection with the past. One of the most important elements to reconnect to the past is the land where an individual collected earliest memories and dreams. Momaday, who has suffered inwardly from growing up between two opposite cultures, reconnects with his past through memories that live on in the Kiowa land.

In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child*, land plays a significant role in reconnecting with the past and reconstructing cultural identity. In each book the land is a unifying element between the characters and their cultural history. “What is a homeland, after all, if not a people’s unique and unifying symbol of a common past and future?” asks Steven M. Schnell in his essay, “The Kiowa Homeland in Oklahoma” (173). A (home)land providing people with common history and culture consists of symbolic places which unify people as a nation. For the Kiowa nation some of these places are not only symbols, but also sites saturated with the sacred.

Rainy Mountain, which is accepted as “the center of the world,” both by the Kiowas and Momaday, comes first among the sacred places of the Kiowas’ (home)land. It is a place of origins, both national and cultural. “To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun” (*Rainy Mountain*, 1991: 5). Rainy Mountain is the literal and metaphorical place of origin where the creation was begun for the Kiowas. The

nomadic lifestyle of the Kiowas ended at the Rainy Mountain which marked the beginning of their new way of life. It is a beginning point for the creation of the Kiowa culture and for Momaday's re-creation of his self-identity through imagination. In other words, by choosing such an important place as his starting spot for creating his work, Momaday reestablishes his connections to the origins of his nation. Metaphorically, "The Way to Rainy Mountain" symbolizes the journey to create his personal cultural expression and thus, constructing his own identity as well on the identity of his Kiowa culture. Momaday begins to tell his stories while he is on the way to Rainy Mountain, the land of his ancestors.

When he reconnects with his (home)land, his memories revive as well as his inner quest for his true self. His journey to the Kiowa (home)land to visit his grandmother's cemetery turns into a self-conscious spiritual quest to reconstruct his cultural identity. He describes his journey as a pilgrimage: "I wanted to see in reality what she had seen more perfectly in the mind's eye, and traveled fifteen hundred miles to begin my pilgrimage" (Momaday, 1991: 7). In his journey Momaday aims to be like his grandmother, Aho, because though she had never been in some places, she used to tell about them as if she had seen them. According to Momaday she could see in the mind's eye and through his "pilgrimage"; Momaday likewise tries to see his Native American values in the mind's eye. Therefore, he presents to us his non-physical, in other words, a mental and spiritual journey with real places accepted as sacred by Kiowa Nation. Whether or not this is empirically valid is irrelevant in the context of Momaday narrating a tale.

Besides Rainy Mountain, Devil's Tower is also among the sacred places that constructs the Kiowas' cultural identity. The legend of Devil's Tower is one of the significant constituents that shape the cultural identity of the Kiowas. According to the legend, seven sisters and their brother were playing at the place where the current location of Devil's Tower is. Suddenly the boy transformed into a bear and he ran after his sisters. The sisters ran away until they came to the stump of a great tree. The tree spoke to the seven sisters and told them to climb upon it. When they climbed to the tree, it started to rise into the air, so they were beyond the reach of the bear. The seven sisters were borne to the sky, and they became the stars of the Big Dipper (Momaday, 1991: 8). The marks around Devil's Tower are claimed to belong to the

bear that clawed the tree while he was trying to kill his sisters. The legend of Devil's Tower connects the Kiowas with the sky, "...so long as the legend lives, the Kiowas have kinsmen in the night sky" (Momaday, 1991: 8). In order to make the legend continue, Kiowas have to protect the place because stories are remembered and imagined in the places that bring them back to them. These are known as geographical myths.

Though we cannot go back in time and live our memories again, all the memories keep living in their places. Memories are timeless like imagination, but they need places to survive. "The events of one's life take place, *take place*. How often have I used this expression, and how often have I stopped to think what it means? Events do indeed take place; they have meaning in relation to the things around them" (Momaday, 1976: 142). To keep a memory, we need to keep some things belonging to that memory and the place that memory occurs in is the most powerful way to make a memory survive. In the fourth section of *The Names*, Momaday points out the strong relationship between his memories and the places he spent his childhood. When he learns that the Jemez Day School had burned down, he feels like a part of him, his childhood, has been destroyed. The school in question was one he had attended in 1946 and where both his parents had worked. "The Day School had been my home; it was the last, best home of my childhood, and I went right away to see what was left of it." A part of him was lost and he was looking for it among the ashes: "... There was nothing but a shell, a ghost. It seemed already an ancient ruin in the pale January morning. What a strange and solemn experience it was for me, one that I can neither express or understand. I had the sense that I was looking for myself there among the ashes" (Momaday, 1976: 117).

The Kiowa nation was well aware of the connection of land and memory. From the very beginning they have known that one of the ways to preserve their cultural identity is to protect their places because "they had conceived a good idea of themselves" (Momaday, 1991: 4). Cultures are kept alive in collective memory and imagination; therefore, anything that serves to help memory, among which land or place are tantamount, is of great significance for cultures. Therefore, as long as the land is preserved, so are the memories. Preserving the land here means keeping it alive through the symbols or symbolic places that make it homeland for the people

that live on it. Homelands provide people with a shared myth, history, and memory. Cultural background is preserved in homelands. To reconnect with the land means reconnecting with mutual and individual memories. During his journey, when Momaday caught the sight of Devil's Tower which is in the Black Hills, he remembers the legend the Kiowa made up and retells it to us. Thus, he enables the story to continue, and once more he points out that Kiowa has a connection with the sky.

Momaday describes the Kiowa nation as a people of "constant change" because they were nomadic people at the very beginning. The Kiowa nation becomes plains people by radically changing their place. After a long journey, they settle on the southern plains, and they begin a new phase of life. Having no stable place before provides the Kiowas with the characteristics of adaptability; thus one of the things that constitutes the characteristics of the nation is having a positive approach to change in their life. Instead of resisting any change around them, they learned to embrace and adapt it to their own way of life.

The Kiowa nation's adaptability to different and hard conditions is the secret to their survival: the Kiowas know how to embrace every new situation no matter how different from their current one. Instead of rejecting those which do not match their culture, they adapt them to their culture. The case of the mission churches is one of the most striking examples of this. Though Christianity was introduced to the Kiowas by the Europeans, not only did they adopt it, but they adapted it to their own culture without letting the mission churches assimilate them. Momaday's grandmother, Aho, is a prime example of a Kiowa who never forgot her ancestral roots, even though she became a Christian later. "She was a Christian in her later years, but she had come a long way about, and she never forgot her birthright" (Momaday, 1991: 8). As in many cultures, individual, idiosyncratic and tribal beliefs in the power of myth and vision are syncretised with an overarching monotheistic practice. Thus, members of a Christian congregation would happily sing the hymns, say the prayers, read the texts, hear the sermons and take the eucharist on Sundays, while joining in celebrations of traditional festivals at different times of year.

Today, mission churches are among the sacred places that strengthen the Kiowas' attachment to their homeland (Schnell, 8). The Methodist and the Baptist

churches are two major churches among the Kiowas which date back to, respectively, the 1780s and 1880s. They were founded in competition with other missions' churches, such as Catholics, Quakers, Presbyterians. The Methodist mission churches are the extension of Methvin's school, whose goal was to adopt and teach the Natives white values and the English language. The Methodist church is accepted as "Mother Church of the Kiowa Methodism." While the aim of the mission churches was to assimilate the Kiowas, they became center places that separate the Kiowa people from non-Native people. Thus, the mission churches became among the sacred and symbolic places that belong to the Kiowas' homeland.

The Kiowa Nation has kept not only the places of which they have good memories, but the places where they had losses as a nation. Palo Duro and Fort Sill are examples of this. Although they had military defeats at both places, they accepted them as parts of their cultural identity. They are not places of mourning or hatred, but pride, resistance, and the endurance of the Kiowa nation. "Fort Sill today is a massive training center for field artillery. Alongside the fort's modern war making equipment, much of the Old Past has been preserved and is open to visitors" (Schnell, 2018: 14). In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday mentions Palo Duro Canyon and Fort Sill along with the brief information of Kiowa history: "In Palo Duro Canyon they abandoned their crucial stores to pillage and had nothing then but their lives. In order to save themselves, they surrendered to the soldiers at Fort Sill and were imprisoned in the old stone corral that now stands as a military museum" (6). For the Kiowa nation, these places and the defeats they had experienced in them were the parts of their destiny that led the Kiowa to transform themselves. Therefore, Palo Duro Canyon and Fort Sill are both unifying symbols of a common past and a part of cultural identity for the Kiowa nation.

Apart from sacred places that bind Native Americans to their homeland, arbors, which are wooden constructions, represent the Indian way of performing the same function. Arbors, in other words "Indian shades", or "Indian air conditionings", are constructed for sleeping and cooking during the summer (Schnell, 2000: 8). Though they were constructed as a need in the beginning, nowadays they are constructed as a representation of cultural identity. As Schnell states "it is a way for Kiowa to feel that they are living, at least in part, the way their ancestors did" (8).

Among the childhood memories which are unforgettable for Momaday, the arbor has importance because he explains in *The Names* that it is a place of strong magic. “My father was born on this site. Here Pohd-lohk gave me my Indian name.” (Momaday, 1976: 7). Not only does he explain the importance of the place for him but he also imagines himself with his family as mentioned above. “...I am in the arbor. It is an August day in 1934.” By placing himself in the memories that belong to the arbor in his imagination, Momaday put one of the building blocks of his culture to construct his cultural identity. Also, this quote supports that in order to imagine, time becomes irrelevant while the place is essential to revive the memory. That is, landscapes and the symbolic places on them remove the separation between past and present because both of them continue to be alive on that landscape through memories.

3.2. MEMORY AND BLOOD MEMORY

Land and memory are interconnected for the Kiowa because it is thought that a memory cannot be kept without a location, nor a sacred location without a memory. Places on the Kiowa land became sacred, thanks to the memories that the Kiowa have kept through the generations. The sacred has a meaning that can be understood and appreciated in the heart and soul; we visit the places which are sacred to us, in order to restore our souls to feel the shared history, story, or myths. In sacred places, people share their collective memories, and thus, they feel their communal identity.

In Momaday’s works, we hear the voice of his memories, which are sometimes imagined through memories in his blood. In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, the memories he shares are written in italics, in *The Names* he uses a stream of consciousness technique or tells the memories from the third person’s point of view. Most of them are told to him by his father; however there are some which are carried in blood. By means of his stories, Momaday asserts that collective memories of a mythic past can be transmitted via memory in the blood (Schiff, 2011: 2). Blood memory or racial memory is being able to tell us about people whom we have never seen and of the places where we have never been. It is about being able to see in the mind’s eye, because according to Momaday “each of us bears in his genes or his

blood or wherever, a recollection of the past. Even the very distant past” (Schiff, 2011: 3). While blood memory is not accepted generally by science and seems strange to most readers, it forms a crucial part of the narrative, ultimately enabling the principal protagonist in the last of the three books to adapt himself to his new circumstances.

In the introduction part of *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday points out blood memory by bringing together his grandmother and the Fort Sill defeat: “My grandmother was spared the humiliation of those high gray walls by eight or ten years, but she must have known from birth the affliction of defeat, the dark brooding of old warriors” (6). Also, Momaday supports his assertion with these words:

Although my grandmother lived out her long life in the shadow of Rainy Mountain, the immense landscape of the continental interior lay like memory in her blood. She could tell of the Crows, whom she had never seen, and of the Black Hills, where she had never been. I wanted to see in reality what she had seen perfectly in the mind's eye, and traveled fifteen hundred miles to begin my pilgrimage. (7)

Momaday strongly believes that her grandmother could imagine and tell about these memories thanks to the genes which were transferred to her by her ancestors.

Momaday sees his journey as a pilgrimage because it is a spiritual journey for him in several ways. First of all, he makes the journey toward his inner self to find his true identity and to complete his fragmented Kiowa memories. He knows that he has memories in his blood like his grandmother Aho, so he needs to reconnect with the Kiowa homeland to revive his memories. Next, he makes his journey to the lands which are accepted as sacred by the Kiowas, thus his journey turns into a pilgrimage in that way, too. Lastly, while Momaday complete his fragmented self through this journey, he also re-constructs the culture of the Kiowas, too, and thanks to his racial memory he functions as a bridge between past and present. As Sarah Eden Schiff claims in the essay “Power Literature and The Myth of Racial Memory”, blood memory is a way to recover communal past. “What is to be recovered is ultimately what is to be preserved; for those mythic memories are always already in the blood, yet they require narration so as to defy assimilation and have an effect in the world” (2011: 13). This is what Momaday exactly does as a duty in his works, narrating racial memory through storytelling in order to re-create a collective memory among the Kiowas. He fills every gap in his mind by memories in his blood because he is

bequeathed them by his ancestors. In the fourth section the first part of *The Names*, Momaday states that “Mammedaty was his grandfather whom he never knew, but he came to be imagined, posthumously, in the going on of the blood, having invested the shadow of his presence in an object or a word, in his name above all” (26).

Despite the fact that Momaday’s blood quantum shows his Indian identity as superior to his white identity, he clings to the idea that his blood memory is what actually makes him a Kiowa, because what enables him to imagine is his racial memory that he inherited from his grandfather, not the quantity of the Kiowa blood he has. However, he tries to identify his Native American identity in every way he can with the aim of completing his sense of self. He goes back to his starting point, that is, his birth:

At four o’clock on the morning of February 27, 1934, in the Kiowa and Comanche Indian hospital at Lawton, Oklahoma, near the old stone corral at Fort Sill, where my ancestors were imprisoned in 1873 for having fled to the last buffalo range in the Staked Plains, I was delivered into the World by an elderly Indian Service doctor.... (Momaday, 1976: 41-42)

Momaday describes how he came to the world in detail: likewise, he describes in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* how the Kiowas emerged into the world. He makes the reader feel that his birth was not an ordinary coming into the world, but had a purpose that lies in his racial memory. Throughout *The Names*, he shares his memories and the stories of his father. In some parts, when he uses his imagination, he conveys the stories from the visions of his grandfather or grandmother by placing himself into these stories, in other words, from his blood memory. By filling the gaps of the memories, he makes a connection with his own family past and cultural past. When he mentions his birth place, he points out that the hospital where he was born is near the old stone corral at Fort Sill. Momaday not only points out the place, but also the hospital and the doctor. He gives the details of the “Indian hospital” and the “Indian doctor.” By giving these details he supports the idea of the blood memory he has, because as a Kiowa he believes in destiny.

He also mentions the document that shows his blood quantum. It states that ‘this is to certify that the records of this Office Show that Novarro Scott Mammedaty was born February 27, 1934 at Lawton, Oklahoma and is 7/8 degree Indian blood, as shown on the Kiowa Indian Census roll opposite Number 2035’ (Momaday, 1976: 42). Although the quantity of Indian blood proves that he is mostly a Native

American, he does not hide behind his “Indian blood” to restore his cultural identity. On the contrary, he trusts his “blood memory” and “act of imagination.” He knows that Kiowa people had survived as a people thanks to their “idea of themselves”: “they had conceived a good idea of themselves; they had dared to imagine and determine who they were” (Momaday, 1991: 4).

Following in the footsteps of his people, Momaday has dared to imagine his idea of himself through his racial memory. Besides restoring his sense of self by act of imagination, he also restores his Kiowa heritage. “The verbal tradition by which it has been preserved has suffered a deterioration in time. What remains is fragmentary: mythology, legend, lore, and hearsay_and of course the idea itself, as crucial and complete as it ever was. That is the miracle” (Momaday, 1991: 4). By miracle, Momaday implies that the idea has successfully reached today thanks to the memory in the blood. In other words, the Kiowa people have kept the idea in their blood and transferred it down the generations. Therefore, it is the blood memory providing Momaday with his Kiowa identity starting from his birth, taking his Kiowa name Tsoai-talee, and it gets stronger with the stories he has listened to from his father. And finally, he has dared to imagine himself like his people and his mother.

3.3. IMAGINATION

Humanity maintains its existence through the act of imagination. Being able to imagine the next step provides humanity with continuous progress. Every dream that the human mind is able to imagine has the possibility to be true in the future. If you can imagine something then it is possible to make it true. Imagination is the beginning of everything in human existence. Every technological development we use in our daily life which makes our life easier today was once a dream. What made them real in our life today is the imagination of human being. As human beings, we cannot bring things into existence without imagining them in our minds before. When we manage to imagine anything we want or need in our lives, then we have already had it in our lives. Through the act of imagination, we can bring things into existence. The key point here is “daring to imagine.” First of all, we must be able to imagine in order to create. For Momaday there is no difference between the “real”

and “imagination” because both of them are experienced by man himself. That is, when you imagine, you prove your own existence, so if you exist, then the thing you imagine exists, too. Also, he claims that the imaginative experience and the history express equally the traditions of man’s reality (Momaday, 1991: 4).

The Native Americans had been portrayed in the imagination of the “white man.” Having exposed to such misrepresentations as “uncivilized,” “primitive,” “savages” or “noble savages,” the Native Americans were introduced to the rest of the world through eyes regarding them with prejudice. They were not given a chance to create their own world by means of their own imagination. However, Kiowas belonging to “the last culture to evolve in North America” had dared to imagine their own destiny and that was the turning point for them (Momaday, 1991: 6). “They had conceived a good idea of themselves; they had dared to imagine and determine who they were” (Momaday, 1991: 4). If we ask, how that makes a person Kiowa, we cannot answer this with a single word, because it must be such things as common land, language, history, myth, memory and one should carry his Kiowa ancestors’ blood in his veins. However, we may say that apart from all these main stones that make a person belong to Kiowa nation, being able to imagine his own destiny is a characteristic that separates a Kiowa from other people. It is their imagination that helps them survive through hardships. Though “they had emerged from a sunless world,” they were able to imagine a world of light. They did not limit themselves with the place they emerged from; they could see far beyond it, so they were able start their long journey that would affect their evolution which had made their survival possible over the years.

Momaday imagines himself as a Kiowa member not only by his Indian blood but by imagining his people as differently than they had existed in the white imagination. He shows them as people with deep connections with nature, to the lands that gave them their sense of self, with their adaptability and capacity for embracing change. Thus Momaday recreates and imagines Kiowas into being in his novels. In a way, this is not really different from nation-building only strengthened with a common blood tie. As “[modern] nations are never only invented once; invention is always followed by reinvention” (Storey, 13), Momaday’s Kiowa nation is invented and reinvented with acts of imagination. Just as “National identity is not

coherent and fixed, it is the result of invention and reinvention,” the Kiowa identity is never fixed but fluid. That is, just as we cannot describe a national identity just by grounding it on an ancient land, history, language, story, myth, ritual or symbol because it is also connected with present and future, the Kiowa identity moves towards a future in the stories yet to be produced. “We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. Our best destiny is to imagine, at least, completely, who and what, and *that* we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined” (Momaday, 1997: 87). Momaday’s opinions about imagination parallels with what Storey tells about national identity. Both of them lay stress on who we think we are firstly. While Momaday deals with the subject as a self consciousness of one’s cultural identity, Storey handles it as the national awareness of an individual, yet both of them stress imagining who and what we are. As Storey indicates, identity is about “who we think we are,” “where we think we came from,” and “where we are going” (13). As different from national identity, however, cultural identity especially is all about self-consciousness. Cultural identity is the product of a man’s whole committed personal and social experience, while national identity is invented. On the other hand, in order to survive, both national and cultural identity needs to be connected to past and present. They come together at this point because we consider “who we think we are”, “where we think we came from”, and “where we are going” not only in terms of our national identity but cultural, too. In addition to these common points between them, both national and cultural identities are imagined in essence. According to Anderson, nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their community (22). This is what exactly Momaday does to reconstruct his nation’s cultural identity in his works. He creates the image of his ancestors in the minds of the readers. Somehow, he triggers the racial memory of the fellow-members of his nation through imagination. He connects them to their past, so they can have self- concept clarity about themselves. Thus, their imagination helps them embrace their past, present and future.

Sarah Eden Schiff also claims in her essay that “racial memory automatically preserves narratives of communal past but requires activation through the act of

storytelling” (2011: 14). Herein the imagination comes into play because the imagination that Momaday proposes is the activation of memories in blood. As Momaday implies in his works, what matters in being a Native American is not the quantity of the blood one has. It is the blood memory rising to prominence through “the act of imagination.” Therefore, according to Momaday, everybody has racial memory, but what makes it visible is the activation of these memories. Transforming the racial memories into stories is made possible with imagination because the memories at issue are those which are not experienced in reality. They are like dreams or visions concealed in people’s communal past. The Kiowas, who have a strong idea of themselves, in Momaday’s words, dared to imagine themselves, thanks to their memory in their blood. This makes their survival not a lucky fluke, but the victory of their endeavour.

Catherine Rainwater states that there is a clear message emerging from Momaday’s work overall: “for Native American people (and especially for Momaday himself), mental, emotional, and spiritual phenomena occur in connection with powerful visual phenomena, including external objects and internal pictures in the mind’s eye” (1995: 377). The power of the external objects mentioned is greater if they refer to sacred images like Rainy Mountain or the Devil’s Tower. The internal pictures are the ones appearing through “racial memory” like dreams, visions or imaginations. Rainwater also suggests that Momaday’s recollection of external reality is rather “emblematic recollection” than “linear explanation.” That is, instead of applying to written history, he prefers pictorial calendars. The main reason for this is the “Indian mode of perception of the world”. As Rainwater emphasizes, Momaday’s mode of memory is visual-perceptual (1995: 377). Therefore, while Momaday aims to reconstruct his cultural history through writing, he depends on descriptions that bring the visual perceptions to the fore. In other words, he writes as if he is drawing mental pictures for his readers. He makes his stories visual in his reader’s mind, so the readers also join “the act of imagination” throughout the book they are reading.

Because, most of the memories that Momaday shares with the reader are the products of his “act of imagination,” Momaday recreates the Kiowa stories by activating his racial memory. He creates a complex narration through mixing both his

personal and racial memories. He identifies the memories for the reader in different narrative methods. In *The Way To Rainy Mountain*, he shares his memories, changing the typography into italics. In *The Names*, besides changing the typography into italics, he changes the narration and the point of view. For example, Momaday starts the first section of the first part of *The Way To Rainy Mountain* by telling the origin myth of the Kiowas. He explains how the Kiowas emerged into the world through myth, and then he explains the history of their nation's name. Lastly, he shares the beginning of his own journey to the Great Plains. While the myth and history parts are written in the same typography, the personal memory part is written in italic style. The same pattern is preserved throughout the whole book. However, in *The Names*, we come across a more complex narration because the book as a whole consists of Momaday's memories. Yet, the memories he shares with readers differ in terms of being his own memories—one he personally which he experienced before, the memories he has in blood, and the memories he heard from his father. In the beginning, it is difficult to see the difference between them, but progressing through the book, we realize that Momaday shares the memories he has not experienced personally as a stream of consciousness narrative technique. These memories are his "racial memories" activated by his act of imagination. Others that he collected from his father are conveyed to the reader in the third person point of view.

For imagining oneself into being as a self-aware person, Momaday takes his mother as a role model. She is an important figure for him because she imagined who she was. Despite being, to a large extent, white in blood, she chose and adopted American Indian identity and called herself "Little Moon." As a person who imagined and then created her own identity, she is admired by Momaday for her strong character. He describes her in *The Names* with these words:

She moved gracefully and directly with certain confidence. Above all, she expected the world to be interesting; She would not stand to be bored. Her cousins, who were plain, called her the Queen of Sheba, which pleased her mightily. But she was more particularly Natachee, or 'Little Moon,' as she sometimes said... (25)

Momaday always makes us question who we are in his essays and books. In his essay "The Man Made of Words," he says that while he was writing *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, he imagined Ko-Sahn whom he remembers from his childhood in Oklahoma. He even talked with her image of in his mind. In this conversation we can

witness Momaday's inner conflict as to what is real. It is as if Momaday were trying to prove the power of imagination to himself first. Therefore, he gave the voice of his inner world to one-eyed ancient woman Ko-sahn. "You have imagined me well, and so I am. You have imagined that I dream, and so I do. I have seen the falling stars." When Momaday had conflict between what is real and not real by rejecting the imagination of Ko-sahn, he actually rejects one part of his own because if he rejects the existence of Ko-sahn in that room, then it means that he rejects his own existence, too. Momaday reflects his own opinions on the reality of imagination through her wordsk:

You imagine that I am here in this room, do you not? That is worth something you see I have existence, whole being, in your imagination. It is but one kind of being, to be sure, but it is perhaps the best of all kinds. If I am not here in this room, grandson, then surely neither are you (Momaday, 1997: 3).

Accordingly, then, a person exists as long as s/he imagines or is imagined by others; that is, existence depends on mental processes because identity and imagination have an inseparable connection with each other.

Momaday tries to keep his nation with its culture alive in his mind by imagining their special traits and characteristics. Through imagination he revives an object or a person such as Ko-sahn above and depicts this person with all her characteristic features he can remember. Whether he has ever seen that person or not does not make much difference in this process. That he has heard something about that person is enough for him to imagine her. Then he emphasizes her particular connection with the Kiowa culture and history: "There were very few Kiowas left who could remember the Sun Dance; Ko-Sahn was one of them; she was a grown woman when my grandparents came into the world" (Momaday, 1991: 86). It had been a long time since Momaday had seen this woman, but adding to what he remembers the last time he saw her, he imagines her figure: "Her body was twisted and her face deeply lined with age. Her thin white hair was held in place by cap of black netting, wore braid as well, and she had but one eye" (Momaday, 1991: 86). Momaday's imagined characters are not stock Indian types; rather they are individuals that are both themselves and share the cultural traits of Kiowa people having partaken in their history. Therefore, they help him revive and preserve his knowledge about his cultural values and verbal tradition.

For example, that imagined woman Ko-sahn speaks of the Sun Dance and explains to him the details of that ritual by telling him her and her sister's the story. Although he had heard of the Sun Dance and knows it, Momaday's putting down of his character's memories in writing prevents this information from disappearing:

My sister and I were very young; that was a long time ago. Early one morning they came to wake us up. They had brought a great buffalo in from the plain. Everyone went out to see to pray. We heard a great many voices. One man said that the lodge was almost ready. We were told to go there, and someone gave me a piece of cloth. It was very beautiful. Then I asked what I ought do with it, and they said that I must tie it to the Tai-me tree. There were other pieces of clothes on the tree, and so I put mine as well. When the lodge frame was finished, a woman-sometimes a man - began to sing (Momaday, 1991: 86).

Imagination comes to life in places of significance and it becomes memory. Here Momaday's imagination comes to life due to Rainy Mountain. By fusing his imagination into the landscape, he recreates memories that would be realities of his nation and himself. The "Creation that begun on Rainy Mountain" once, repeats itself through Momaday's imagination. "To look upon that landscape in the early morning, with the sun at your back, is to lose the sense of proportion. Your imagination comes to life, and this, you think, is where Creation was begun" (Momaday, 1991: 5). (Home)lands and such significant places, in which memories are hidden, trigger one's imagination to uncover those buried memories. Therefore, the memories repeat themselves in our minds.

The journey herein recalled continues to be made a new each time the miracle comes to mind, for that is peculiarly the right and responsibility of the imagination. It is a whole journey, intricate with motion and meaning; and it is made with the whole memory, that experience of the mind which is legendary as well as historical, personal as well as cultural (Momaday, 1991: 4).

Clearly, Momaday claims that it is the responsibility of individuals—especially authors'—to imagine and keep memories alive. As long as we can imagine, we make possible the continuation of our journey without losing contact with our past because being able to stay in contact with our past is possible with our ability to imagine. Therefore, we need to reconnect with the triggers such as (home)land, places, things, people.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEARCHING FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN SELF THROUGH LANGUAGE, RELIGION, AND CEREMONY IN THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN AND THE ANCIENT CHILD

4.1. LANGUAGE

Language is the main component of culture. Actually it is the most important instrument that creates all human concepts. It is a kind of communal treasure saving shared memories, personal feelings, spiritual values, all inventions and creations. Coming together, these features make up a community. Language creates a common meaning between members of a community. It weaves the patterns of society and, as a result, the culture. It allows continuity. In view of this, it acts like a cultural vector. Language transmits motivating emotions and drives among the individuals.

Maintaining a community's existence, connecting the individuals, organizing and continuing social life are some of the significant roles of language. It raises a community's consciousness. Almost each of the other elements that compose the culture is a derivative product of language. From this point of view, it can be said that language provides the framework of the formation of cultural space. It helps cultural elements maintain their existence by forming, recording and transmitting them. Thus, the cultural items spread all over the world, going beyond both the geographical and social boundaries temporal ones. Being an element of culture, language constantly undergoes change. The cultural changes of society, the geography, life style, beliefs and contacts with other communities effect alteration to vocabulary, semiotics and nuance if not syntax (Eco, 1976).

Language and culture are so intimately interconnected that they make up an inseparable and meaningful whole. They cannot be disassociated from each other. They are the most important common features and cornerstones of a community and society. In order to communicate, individuals need language. Thus, language acts as a means of bringing together people as a society; moreover, it carries the past to the present by functioning as a bridge between the past and the present. Yet probably the most important function of language is its capacity to design the future.

Whether society produces the language or the language produces the society is a matter for socio-linguistics, not literary criticism. It is a matter of considerable academic debate, too arcane to consider here. Momaday, seeking a renewal of his concept of the Native American community, sees words as full of potential:

“A word has power in and of itself. It comes from nothing into sound and meaning; it gives origin to all things. By means of words a man can deal with the world on equal terms” (Momaday, 1991: 33). According to Momaday, words are potent symbols to create meanings and construct reality; it is the writer’s responsibility to use this potentiality or power to construct reality by attaching different and new meanings to things. He is obviously aware of a word’s power of creating and destroying. Therefore, he uses this power to recreate a different reality of Native Americans in opposition to the negative images or stereotypical representations created by the white man concerning them as “uncivilized,” “primitive,” “savage,” “noble savage.” Because only a word can break a word, countering these misconceptions created by white culture through words, Momaday thinks, “There were no limits to the power of words” (1976: 186). In his three works, Momaday conveys to us the Kiowa way of life from the very beginning. He makes the Kiowa myths, legends, and memories real and everlasting. Momaday strongly believes in the power of words, so he uses this power to reconstruct his cultural identity. Only words can bring their past back and make it for them immortal.

Momaday’s belief in the power of words comes from Kiowa myths. Like language, myths are a culture’s symbolic stock of values. Giving voice to them, albeit in a different language, is a way of keeping alive the values of the culture that lived by them. Momaday revisits Kiowa myths and demonstrates through them the magic power of words to affect and change reality, a power that he finds vital for him as a Kiowa writer. In one of their myths, the crucial importance of words is emphasized. In this myth there was a couple who never let their only beautiful daughter go out. But one day, this little girl is taken out by a friend and is left in a tree which grew upon into the sky. She was transformed into a woman there, and was loved and kept as a wife by a young man, who was the sun. After many years, while she was trying to escape from him, back to her own people on the ground, with her baby, she was killed by a ring that was thrown by the angry husband.

Since that day, the boy was raised by a grandmother spider, and she had kept the ring: this later split the boy in two when it fell down on him. The subsequently two boys, who were now twins, each of whom had a ring themselves, did not listen to the spider's advice: in order to be able to save their lives, they would have to repeat the word "thain-mom." They threw the rings into the air, contrary to the spider's edict, and, thus, they ended up in a cave, where a giant couple lived. As the couple did not like people, they tried to kill the twins with the smoke of a great fire that they made. At that moment, the twins remembered the spider's words about getting caught by giants in a cave. When they said the word "thain-mom" again and again, the smoke did not affect them. Having witnessed that the boys survived without any harm, the giants were scared and released them.

In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday stresses the power of a word: "A word has power in and of itself. It comes from nothing into sound and meaning; it gives origin to all things. By means of words, a man can deal with the world on equal terms" (33). The things we imagine are intangible, and the way we can make them tangible is uttering them through words. That is, words bring reality to thoughts and imagination. It possesses sacred power because its power is the ability to create.

In *The Ancient Child*, the main character, Locke Setman remembers the legend his father, Cate, told him when he was a very young. According to the legend, a little boy came to a Piegan camp at night. The camp people, who didn't perceive him as a child, aimed their arrows at him, but when they recognized him, they were baffled. The little boy was not afraid of them: on the contrary, he smiled and greeted them. He spoke to them, but in a language that they could not understand. While some of them were fascinated by the little boy, others were afraid of him. In the morning, he disappeared inexplicably, just as he had appeared. The Piegan people were saddened by this at first. A wise old man, however, suggested forgetting about the little boy as if he had never come to the camp, because they didn't know anything about him. Most importantly, they did not even know his name. Something or somebody not represented in language with a name that define them is nothing or nobody. Names have a power of their own, and not to tell your companions your name makes you a figure of suspicion. Thus, the Piegan people preferred to forget everything about the boy (Momaday, 1976: 120-21). The legend clearly emphasizes

that words create the reality. If the boy had spoken their language or his name to them, then they could not have denied his presence in the camp. However, instead of believing what they saw, they strongly trusted the power of words.

There is also a Kiowa legend, which stresses the importance of language and words in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. According to this legend, there was a couple sitting in their tipi alone and the man was making an arrow, by the light of the fire. Although he noticed someone hiding and spying on them outside, he told his wife not to worry and went on with his work. In order to find out if the man outside was a Kiowa or not, after finishing his job, he nocked the arrow on the bow and aimed at the man both to check it and to warn him. He spoke Kiowa language. If the man outside were a Kiowa, he would understand him and speak his name but he did not, and consequently, the arrow that the Kiowa man fired went straight to the enemy's heart (46).

In this myth, there are some points to be emphasized: The myth demonstrates the language as a tie that bonds all members of the Kiowa tribe whether they meet in person or not. Speaking the Kiowa language is a requirement and a sign of belonging to the Kiowa culture. Moreover, being wordless or languageless is a sign of ill-will. If the person had responded to the call, he could have avoided being shot. In this myth, the Kiowa realize the existence of their language and the power that it has in itself.

They have also a myth in which they emphasize the controlling power of the words. According to the myth, the Kiowas created a horse out of clay, but the horse went out of control. It created a storm that uprooted the trees and destroyed everything around it. So, even today when the Kiowas see the storm clouds, they know that it is the furious horse which creates the chaos in the sky. However, by speaking to it the words "Pass over me," they can overcome it and escape. By this way they have learnt not to be scared of it.

As Momaday stresses, we humans are made of words. We think, describe or explain through words. We try to explain our inner world and outer world through words. The words we use define us and others. In every language we may come across special words for certain circumstances. For example in the Turkish language there is "maşallah" for keeping away bad energy. When you see a beautiful baby or

something amazingly beautiful, you should say this word not to spoil or give any harm with the energy you send.

Momaday relates a memory about Aho, his grandmother, one that emphasizes the sacred power of a word: “When Aho saw or heard or thought of something bad, she said the word *zei-dl-bei*, ‘frightful.’ It was the one word with which she confronted evil and the incomprehensible” (Momaday, 1991: 33). Momaday recounts his memory about this word in *The Ancient Child* by using it at the beginning of the myth of Tsoai Talee:

From the opening of her tipi, from the highest point in the camp, the old woman Koi-ehm-toya saw the children moving across the wrinkles of a meadow toward the trees. Zeid-le-bei! she thought; a bad business, dangerous. It was well past noon, and the light had begun to deepen. [...] Oh, they were at play, she decided, running around and wasting their time, as children will do, giving not a thought to their safety. She clicked her tongue and set a mask upon her face, a perfect scowl. And in the very way of an old woman, she wondered aloud what was to become of the people, they had grown so careless. She scolded the children under her breath, but she could no longer see them. They had already entered into the trees, into the darkness that seemed to Koi-ehm-toya absolute. Zeid-le-bei! Well, after all, someone had to worry. She sighed. [...] (8).

This story is given in italic typefont as the beginning of the legend of Tsoai-talee’s. While the story is continued in *The Ancient Child*, Momaday intersperses some stories belonging to the Kiowas like Tsoai-talee throughout the book. The reason he tells these stories is because they function as the blood memories of the main character, Set Lockman. They are the stories of Set’s ancestors, so they make us understand the relationship between Set and Tsoai-talee easily. At the end of the story, we see that Set reunites with his bear self which is a part of Tsoai-talee, too.

Language as a whole and some words in particular, if used in proper places and times, have sacred or magical powers. Language as a whole helps people dream or imagine things, which become tangible by means of words. Being aware of the sacred power of words and language, Momaday re-creates his cultural identity, employing each word as a brick to construct collective consciousness. Therefore, thanks to the stories he tells, Momaday bonds Kiowa people together.

4.2. RELIGION AND CEREMONIES

Durkheim describes religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (Durkheim, 2001: 18). Every religion has its own specific principles and moral prescriptions, which can seldom be changed, and consequently, emerge as dogmas. All these principles and prescriptions are based on the words of a putative “God-figure” While some are written, others can only be oral. These written prescriptions have been compiled and accepted as sacred books by believers of those religions in almost all societies throughout history. Even though every sacred book refers to a unique creator, the belief systems of these books may differentiate from one to another. “That is the greatness of the holy scriptures. They are that way because they were created by holy prophet who experiences truth” (Satchidananda, 1990: 81)

The Kiowa religion was neither monotheistic nor based on sacred books. Natural phenomena like the sun, earth, moon, sky, planets, stars, plants and animals, and geographical features of the land like mountains and rivers have special and religious meanings for the members of the Kiowa community, who are, in essence, animists. “The Kiowa believed that [natural] entities possessed souls, or spirits, manifested through natural phenomena like thunder, lightning, whirlwinds, and tornados: or they assumed bird or animal guises” (Kracht, 1997: 16). All these entities and formations have a spirit force or power called *dwdw* spreading to the universe (16). While the believers of other religions pray to their unique God, the Kiowa community prays to multiple spirit powers.

The multiplicity of these spirit powers led to the hierarchial scheme. Certain entities are superior to others in terms of power. “All spirits possessed *dwdw* according to a hierarchical scheme: predators were more powerful than their prey, and ‘powers from above’ had stronger *dwdw* than earthly animals; it follows that Sun was stronger than the eagle which was stronger than the buffalo” (Kracht, 1997: 16). Besides, each natural entity has a special meaning and importance by the way it embodies the divine power. It also enshrines the cultural habits and life style of that community. “On a spiritual level, the Sun, the life-giving power of the universe, possessed the strongest *dwdw*, symbolizing life itself. The Sun gave power directly

to the buffalo, on which the Kiowa depended, so that he was the father of the Buffalo and the Kiowa” (Kracht, 1997: 18-19).

Both hierarchically and symbolically, the sun has a great significance in the religious context. It represents the power of giving life. Because buffalo herds were real and ritualistic/symbolic importance for the Kiowa community, the Sun as a life giving force to the buffalo and, directly and indirectly—through the buffalo, to humans gains the biggest importance.

Ceremonies and rituals are clearly important parts of religious practices. Ceremonies are social and religious performances which are often fixed and occur during traditionally important occasions. “A ceremony is designed to exert in order to restore the loss of an equilibrium, however, has perpetually to be reapplied, as balance can only be temporarily achieved” (Claviez, 2006: 527). Using the ceremonies, the people who share the same senses, feelings, thoughts and goals, related to the common religion, come together and celebrate a socially important event. These are carried out at certain times that have particular significance and meaning for them. These periods are related to their survival sometimes as a whole community, sometimes as individuals living in this particular community. “For a society to be healthy, people must significantly mark the milestones in life through ceremony and ritual” (Jung, qtd. in Stevens, 2001: 54). All members of that common religion in a given society come together and strengthen the relationship with each other. Through the ceremonies, the believers demand and try to placate their great creator. They pay their respects to the creator and aim to mollify him. They believe that they will have the chance to maintain peace and be granted abundance.

On the other hand, “Rituals are sets of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly especially as part of a ceremony (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2005: 1098).” Rituals include symbolic items, meaningful places, and religious practices related to the belief system. They are either in the form of words accepted to have magical powers or meaningfully and systematically repeated actions. They carry and reflect some cultural details about the habits of that community. Rituals provide spiritual healing with the repeated actions or words. Apart from healing, they are carried out in order to celebrate an event and they help the practitioners feel spiritually satisfied. In Frazer’s words, “Religion consists of two elements, a

theoretical and a practical, namely, a belief in powers higher than man and attempts to propitiate or please them” (Frazer, 1890: 28). By pleasing the powers, the Kiowa solve their problems and affirm their identity. With the help of symbols and the meaning ascribed to them, rituals and ceremonies guide the community thorough life. They strengthen the communal ties and community identity.

The ceremonies and rituals are very important for the Kiowa community. They rely upon them. They give great importance to them. They believe that they can get thorough even the worst situations by praying and committing themselves to the ceremonies and rituals. The Kiowa’s religion is rich in terms of ceremonies and rituals. They depend on the power of these all the aspects related to the geographical features, and incomprehensible natural phenomena led the people to create meaningful and repeatedly carried out ceremonies and rituals.

Sun gave the Kiowa war power, affiliated with Taime, the Sun Dance effigy. The Kiowa Sun Dance, then, was replete with Buffalo, sun, and Taime, symbolism. The sun Dance was a renewal ceremony where people prayed for the spiritual and physical well-being of their families. Importantly, the men who endured the fasting and dancing ordeal of the four-day dance ensured that their pitiful condition strenghtened their prayers, thereby bringing good fortune in the future (Kracht, 1997: 19).

The Sun Dance is a renewal ceremony for the Kiowa. People pray in order to be healthy both physically and spiritually. They create a correlation between their well-being and ceremonies. They think that they can please the creator, who has a great power, with what they do. As a regularly practiced event, the Dance is accompanied by *Taime*, the Sun Dance effigy, and buffalos as significant iconic objects of this ceremony; in addition, the praying, fasting and dancing ordeal of the four-day event are important repeated actions for this ceremony.

“The Sun Dance, the most important Kiowa dance, unified the tribe socially and spiritually” (Kracht, 1997: 18). The Kiowa accepted the Sun as the father of both the buffalos and their own. So, buffalos took their place as both a representation and sacrificial victims of the sun during the Sun Dance ceremony. The Sun Dance was composed of a set of refreshing rituals in which the Kiowa people prayed for their families. While the buffalo was the animal representation of the Sun, Tai-me, too, was a symbol placed to the Sun Dance lodge (Kracht, 1997: 18).

The great central figure of the kado, or Sun Dance, ceremony is the taime. This is a small image, less than 2 feet in lenght, representing a human figure dressed

in a robe of white feathers, with a headress consisting of a single upright feather and pendants of ermine skin, with numerous strands of blue beads around its neck, and painted upon the face, breast, and back with designs symbolic of the sun and moon (Momaday, 1991: 37).

“*Taime*, the Sun Dance icon, became the focal point of traditional Kiowa religious beliefs during the Sun Dance. This icon, placed at the western side of the Sun Dance lodge, symbolized Sun, and mediated between the people and Sun power. During the Sun Dance, *Taime*, bestowed the Kiowa people with good fortune” (Scott, 1911:351).

The Sun, Buffalo and Tai-me were the main symbols of the Sun Dance. In order to carry out the rituals, a buffalo was needed to be sacrificed. Having difficulty in finding a buffalo, the Kiowa were not able to maintain the ceremony after 1887. However, the Kiowa who had managed to bring their culture through generations by means of their adaptability, continued to look for alternative ways to carry out this ceremony.

The sacred Sun Dance ceremony has gone through many difficult periods. To be performed, it needs buffalo primarily which makes it dependent on the buffalo herds and their quantity in number. When they were scarce in number, consequently, it was difficult to act the Sun Dance out. ‘The Buffalo was the animal representation of the Sun, the essential and sacrificial victim of the Sun Dance. When the wild herds were destroyed, so too was the will of the Kiowa people; there was nothing to sustain them in spirit.’ (Momaday, 1991: 3)

When they could not find buffalo, a group of old men set out to find one in order to perform the Sun Dance ceremony. They failed. As on later occasions, they tried to make some substitution such as horse, which is another important animal for Kiowas. This became known as ‘Tsen-pia Kado, the ‘horse-eating sun dance.’ It is indicated on the Set-tan calendar by the figure of a horse’s head above the medicine lodge. This dance was held on the Elm fork of Red River. Thereafter, because the buffalo had become so scarce, the Kiowa, were obliged to kill and eat their ponies during the summer to save themselves from starving. This may be recorded as the date of the disappearance of the buffalo from the Kiowa country. Henceforth, the appearance of even a single animal was a rare event (Momaday, 1991: 67).

A medicine bundle is a religious and ritualistic wrapped hide, in which there are sacred objects that are kept for the ceremonies and rituals. J. Gilbert McAllister

mentions three main medicine bundles in his essay “The Four Quartz Rocks Medicine Bundle of the Kiowa-Apache”. The first medicine bundle he mentions is the tribal bundle. These kinds of bundles have one or more sacred objects in them and the object(s) is/are accepted as sacred by the whole tribe.

The bundle is opened by the tribe annually at a religious ceremony. A well preserved bundle symbolizes the welfare of that tribe, and, accordingly, the religious ceremonies that are held annually are centered on this kind of medicine bundle. The Kiowas’ medicine bundle, Taime, is one such example. Another kind of medicine bundle is the one which belongs not to the whole tribe but a smaller group of the tribe or a family. This kind of medicine bundle, too, contains sacred objects connected to origin stories. The family or the band lives near the owner of the bundle, so they can apply to him in a threatening case like illness. The last medicine bundle McAllister mentions is the small and personal one. Almost each man in the tribe has this kind of bundle. It is generally a small leather bag which includes feathers, teeth, claws dried animal skins, or an object that is accepted helpful for the owner of the bundle in his dream (1965: 211).

Eleven men owned the tribal medicine bundles, the Zaide Thali ‘Half Boy’ bundles (Ten Medicines), and the Taime Sun Dance bundle. The keepers of the Ten Medicines, doidoga (‘medicine,’ ‘taking care,’ LaBarre called them ‘priests’), were distinguished from curers in that they evoked spiritual assistance to help sick people, as opposed to the technological healing techniques of the shaman. The ten Zaide Thali keepers assembled to pray for the welfare of the tribe, and the Taimek’i (‘Taime keeper’) was the ‘high priest’ of the Sun Dance. All together, the eleven tribal bundle keepers evoked spiritual assistance for individual and tribal affairs, performing sacred rituals which maintained psychological and social stability within the Kiowa tribe (Kracht, 1997: 18).

In *The Ancient Child*, Set has such a personal medicine bundle, given to him by his grandmother via Grey. ‘When she came out, she was holding a small rolled blanket. It was red in colour, though badly faded. It appeared to be very old. It was bound by a single strip of rawhide; this strip looped the roll near either end and formed a kind of carrying strap between.’ (Momaday, 1999: 114-115). This ceremony is important for the Kiowa, because it brings them together and reinforces their social unity.

The assembly of the ten *Zaide Thali* keepers is also a kind of ceremony. And what the keepers of the Ten Medicines do is a ritual. All the objects such as Taime, the medicine bundles used during this ceremony, are iconic and have specific meanings for the believers of that community. The origins of medicine bundles are derived from a special story. A girl is kidnapped from her cradle in a tree by the Sun and subsequently, becomes the Sun's wife and subsequently has two boys who are raised by a spider. The boys do not listen to the mother spider and have different kinds of dangerous adventures. During one of their dangerous adventures, one of the twins is said to have disappeared in the waters of a lake. Thereupon, the other boy transferred himself into the portions of medicine, thereby giving of his own body in eucharistic form to the Kiowa. The ten bundles of the talyi-da-i, 'boy medicine' are like the Taime, chief objects of religious veneration (Momaday, 1991: 35).

As another kind of important ceremony, the peyote meetings are also important for the Kiowa and contain many significant rituals as well as iconic objects such as "necklace of beans, a beaded staff and rattle, an eagle-bones whistle, and a fan made from the feathers of a bird" (Momaday, 1991: 39). It is a meeting which is held inside a tipi. They have a fire and a crescent-shaped earthen altar inside the tipi. The person who runs the peyote ceremony is called 'road man' among Native Americans. These men function as priests during the ceremony. But in the Kiowa way, they are also men who pray for a person in need and their people (McRae, 1975: 225). They pray and sing all night. This ceremony takes its name from a small, green, spineless cactus containing hallucinogenic alkaloids which is accepted as divine by the Kiowa. This divine plant enables them to see religious visions. Momaday describes this ritual clearly in the setting out part in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*:

During the peyote ritual a fire is kept burning in the tipi, enclosed within a crescent-shaped altar. On top of the altar there is a single, sacred peyote. After the chief priest utters the opening prayer, four peyotes are given to each celebrant, who eats them one after another. Then, in turn, each man sings four sacred songs, and all the while there is the sound of the rattle and the drum – and the fitful, many-colored glare of the fire. The songs go on all through the night, broken only by intervals of prayer, additional distributions of peyote, and, at midnight, a peculiar baptismal ceremony (39).

In *The Ancient Child*, Momaday brings together, in a novel, all of the various anthropological elements he has been expounding in the first two books. His

narrative concerns a thoroughly Westernised, successful, cosmopolitan and affluent individual, Set, who, nonetheless is experiencing an identity crisis. This crisis is atypical. It has nothing to do with the defeated Kiowa, not the day-to-day problems of the typical low-paid, under-educated Native American. Instead, it represents a breakdown brought on by the death of his foster parent, Bent. It is further complicated by a summons from his ancestral homeland, in Oklahoma, concerning the demise of a grandmother he never knew, Kope-mah.

Set attends the old woman's funeral, but that is far from being the end of the story. Having been orphaned at seven and brought up by Bent, his foster father, Set is thrown into a crisis on the latter's death. Now to further pursue his point, Momaday has Set (significantly, 'bear' in the Kiowa language) suddenly reject his Western lifestyle in exchange for a culturally authentic one. Ceremonies and rituals play a very important role throughout *The Ancient Child*, and, thanks to them, Set feels able to connect with his true self and survive this crisis.

The rituals that Set experiences, make him stronger day by day. Feeling, at first, very weak, because of being a lost soul, Set becomes familiar with his culture and traditions. He becomes a totemic bear. Why though, is a bear significant, other than in relation to the etiological myths?

Using such a literary device, storytellers have told about the bear to help work through the tensions of female and male forces, both natural and social. Throughout Native American and Old European traditional oral literatures, the bear has borne such metaphorical possibilities for human-animal relations and transformations through the story telling process (Rekow, 1997: 149).

Thus, Momaday refers to a traditional symbol of metamorphosis. "In this way he presents the idea that common bear motifs from divergent ethnic traditions have the power to inform, perhaps even recreate, the specific myth 'Tsoai.'"

Set moves out to the ancestral lands, gives up his bourgeois lifestyle and forms a relationship with the highly desirable, and powerful, Grey, whose personality and habits represent all that is free and natural, in fact, supernatural. Peyote and other hallucinogenics are not a part of mainstream Western culture but as a medicine woman, Grey uses peyote to make tea for special purposes along with building altars for her rituals from time to time.

In order to call Set, she participates in rituals with Jessie and Milo, two of her relatives in Oklahoma. In one of her conversations with Jessie, the latter suggests Grey repeat the ritual, with the thought that it will quicken Set's coming: "Yeah, but it might take some more, you know, *medicine*. Maybe we ought to make smoke again and drink some more of that strong tea, you know? Maybe we ought to sing" (246).

Though the rituals may not be exactly as they might be performed by the Kiowas in real life, the requirements of the rituals like smoke, tea or singing are mentioned in the novel. They serve, again, to emphasise the new life Set is about to choose. When Set finally arrives, he bids his Western girlfriend goodbye, and settles down to a more authentic life with his new friends. They assist this by presenting him with a medicine bundle which is "a bag from the whole skin of a bear cub, including the head and feet...a shriveled grizzly paw with great yellow claws, pouches of tobacco and herbs, small fluorite and quartz crystals, a pipestone carved in the shape of a fish...a penis of a wolf, bits of ancient bone, a yellow scalp" (Momaday, 1990: 242). Whether or not he will be successful, we have no idea. Whereas, as in a novel, we see the main protagonist undergoing a major change, we are given no idea how it will end. As Frischkorn states: "Indeed, most clearly, we can see both Set's and Momaday's return to their Kiowa religion in the discovery of their ancestral bear nature" (Frischkorn, 1989: 23). For Momaday, then "the sacred Kiowa bear boy myth functions autobiographically as the origin of his name Tsoai. Likewise, the name 'Set' and the bear boy story function centrally in *The Ancient Child* and the novel's epilogue summarises Set's full realisation of his bear identity" (Frischkorn, 1989: 24).

Set, then, solves his personal problems through the process of healing. "Healing occurs when the characters internalize images of the land by means of the symbolic acts of singing and story telling" (Scenters-Zapico, 1997: 508). It must be a communal activity. "A ceremonial healing process, consequently does not exclusively focused on the individual and physiological body of the effected person: 'illness is not a strictly personal matter, because it is seen to be part of the larger socio-cultural environment'" (Qtd. in Claviez, 2006: 525). What is different about the Native American solution for psychological and spiritual problems is that, instead of hitting the road to find a brave, new world, troubled protagonists hit the trail back.

That is how Momaday, too, deals with his own identity crisis. Instead of move away from his root, he prefers to connect with it.



CONCLUSION

Language, land, religion, tradition, myth, legend, oral tradition are what constitute a culture, so Momaday successfully includes all these elements in his *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child* to (re)construct his cultural identity. He reclaims his cultural heritage and displays it by means of literature. Before putting cultural elements on paper, first he reconnects with them, then imagines them, and lastly writes about them. That is, he completes his quest for identity step by step. Though these three works are not written as sequences for his identity quest on purpose, when we dive into them, we realize the author's own quest is reflected in them respectively. He mirrors his identity crisis in the books and he solves his inner conflict through literature.

Going back to his homeland becomes his first step to reconnect with his past. Reconnection with the land, which keeps many memories belonging to his community, somehow activates something inside him. Therefore, returning to Rainy Mountain with the intent of visiting his grandmother's burial place becomes an induction which awakens his consciousness. Thus, his spiritual journey, which he calls a "pilgrimage", is semi-autobiographical. His homeland awakens his memories, and allows him reconnect with his past. The memories are kept in the places where they happen, and all the memories stay in that place as if no time has past since, because for the memories, time is irrelevant in their places. They exist in them altogether.

Rainy Mountain not only triggers Momaday's distant memories but also his blood memory that he inherited from his Kiowa ancestors. Blood memory which is explained as a recollection of memories in one's genes provides Momaday with manipulation of stories he tells. He mixes his memories with his blood memory through imagination. He skilfully weaves his stories by using his imagination and he conveys them through narration. He takes charge of this and contributes to the preservation of oral tradition by putting it on paper as he knows it.

Moreover, by using the power of words, Momaday offers an alternative reality, no less than reality as we know it, in his stories, for he claims that when we use words, everything gains reality. That is, Momaday somehow creates his own

reality through these three books. In each book, he repeatedly tells the same myths and legends which are about his people. By repeating the same stories he engraves them in both his own mind and reader's mind. It is just one of the ways he uses to heal both himself and his people in words.

In summary, what Momaday does in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, *The Names*, and *The Ancient Child* is reclaim his cultural identity through the instrument of reconnecting, remembering and reviving. When he reconnects with his homeland, he remembers and when he remembers, he revives the past in writing. Momaday not only revives the past, but he tries to immerse himself in it as well. In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, he introduces every myth through telling a memory about that myth or something passing in that myth. In *The Names*, he documents his memories and imagination, so he creates his autobiography. In *The Ancient Child*, he revives all the beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies which belong to his blood memory in a fictional way.

In the formation of cultural identity, the interconnectedness of the land, language, storytelling, and imagination hold centerstage. "The verbal tradition, deeply rooted in close-knit cultural interaction, is what keeps a culture's myths, legends etc. alive, in the community and within the individual. These cultural notions are the important premises that traditionally serve to unite the society as they are lost, so are the seams that unite the Native American cultures" (Scenters-Zapico, 1997: 504). The ceremonies and rituals of a religion have to take place in a location, and the common land which unifies people as a community forms a common bond. Thus, the common language produces common myths, legends and stories that give clues about the nation in question. Momaday continues this by means of his books. In his three books, it is very difficult to separate the elements of land, language, memory, and imagination from each other.

In his three-step spiritual journey, consequently, Momaday reunites with his true self and native roots. He reconciles with his Native American identity. This is his way of healing the effects of being exposed to white culture on reservations and the fragmentation it has caused to Native Americans. At the end of his quest for identity, he completes his sense of self thanks to his memory and imagination. Likewise, he conveys his quest to other people through literature. In this way, he

illuminates and makes people become aware of the Kiowa nation, not merely as an exotic, inferior, ethnographic novelty, but as an authentic nation and culture.

In hopes that this thesis will contribute a small but passionately written part to Native American studies, I would like to call attention to the importance of cultures that shape us as individuals. In the case of Native Americans, my thesis is intended to be a contribution to the cultures and traditions sinking into oblivion. Literature is an effective way to revive and preserve a culture. With imagination and literature, a nation's cultural identity not only can be kept, but also can be reconstructed. Since the Native American Renaissance, we have started to hear their voices and they have become visible to us. In this thesis, the Native Americans are reflected with their own voices in order to destroy the stereotypes which still exist among us and in literary works. Thus, my study is intended to form a bridge to be able to understand different cultures.

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