The key is in remembering, in what is chosen for the dream. 
In the silence of recovery we hold 
the rituals of the dawn, 
now as then.

Paula Gunn Allen, in “The Trick is Consciousness”

Blessed
are those who listen
when no one is left to speak

Linda Hogan, in “Blessing”

CHAPTER 3

THE NATIVE AMERICAN MULTIETHNIC
NARRATIVE - N. SCOTT MOMADAY’S NARRATIVES
OF REMEMBRANCES

3. 1. Myth, Memory and Rememoration in N. Scott
Momaday’s Narratives

The past of the community, or the group, or the ethnie in question, is not something that is distanced and different from the experience of the individual. What the ethnie experiences as a whole is also experienced by the individual, if not in its entirety but at least in partial form, though the converse of that correlation might not always be true. The
rememoration of the past on the level of a collective ethnic identity is pre-figured or recalled with a sense of participation, a sense of shared-ness, whereby the past(s) of the community or ethnic group in question are configured, or re-constructed in the present on both the collective level (through community rituals, or social commemorative practices) as well as on the individual level (how the individual agent identifies with these on a personal level). The cultural memory of an ethnic group therefore is shaped, performed and represented in acts of memory (in artistic, cultural or literary production or performance) through an interaction of the individual’s sense of the ethnic past(s) and their own individual past(s) with the ‘shared past’ of a collective.

In a literary narrative that is such a memory production (a memory text, or a memory narrative), for example, the author’s privilege of fictionality, through emplotment, through rhetorical structuring and formation, reflects this schema of cultural-personal negotiation on many strata of embedded signification and meaning. As an illustration, one may consider the following lines from Paula Gunn Allen’s poem “The Trick is Consciousness” quoted at the beginning of this chapter where Gunn Allen says: “The key is in remembering, in what is chosen for the dream. / In the silence of recovery we hold/ the rituals of the dawn, / now as then.” (Allen 1984: 18) The poem, originally published in Gunn Allen’s second volume of poetry titled Coyote’s Daylight Trip, narrates
the reminiscences of Coyote in traversals through personal memories and historical pasts. The ‘we’ that Gunn Allen speaks of signifies a collective reference; the community that shares its memories of the past. The rememoration that is indicated in these lines is one that is facilitated in a ‘remembering’ that is associative with the ‘dream’. Whereas the dream here signifies an intermediate stage between the individual’s mental processes and the cultural paradigms that figure on the collective level, the ‘remembering’ is a manifestation of the reconstruction of the past in the present through a mediation of memory, personal and cultural. The “rituals of the dawn” that Gunn Allen mentions are again references to community ritual practices, though, on a poetic level, they may as well connote a negotiation on the personal, individual level between personal remembrance and a necessary commemoration of cultural memory, which leads to a ‘recovery’ of the past as remembrance and a retelling of that past in the present. This recovery of the past through remembrance (which undergoes a ‘re-construction in the present’ through commemoration), as Walter Benjamin puts it, is not merely a reiteration of the past, or a cognition of a mnemonic possibility. It is more than that an archaeology of the past, a ‘digging’ into the past. As Howard Eiland says in the foreword to his translation of Benjamin’s Berliner Kindheit um 1900 (Eng: Berlin Childhood around 1900):

> What is called remembrance is for Benjamin a matter of the actualization of a vanished moment in its manifold depth. As he says in his 1929 essay “On the Image of Proust,” “A
remembered event is infinite, because it is merely a key to everything that happened before it and after it.” The recollection of childhood days is thus an excavation of deeply buried strata…”Memory is not an instrument for surveying the past but its theater. It is the medium of past experience [Medium des Erlebten], just as the earth is the medium in which dead cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging.” What is unearthed in the operations of remembrance, as it delves to “ever-deeper layers” of the past, is a treasure-trove of images.” (Eiland 2006: xii)

What is unearthed through remembrance is stabilised through rememoration, on both personal and collective levels. That which undergoes a rememoration is negotiated with in the present and is reconstructed in the present with commemoration (ritual, practice or poetic) attesting to the presence of an ancient past, or the cultural memory of that ancient past in the present. In case of ethnic literary production so far as Native Americans of the United States are concerned, this seems especially relevant, seeing as how the desire for the realisation of an ethnic identity against the backdrop of a steadily proposed ‘monocultural’ America (along with a steadily growing understanding of the shared past of the native American ethnies in the United States) and its formation and perpetuation (after Vine Deloria Jr.’s formative attempts at defining a ‘Red Power’, a native American ethnic identity) has confirmed the literary production of Native American ethnic writers in the United States since some of its earliest examples in the 1960s. Why the word ‘ethnies’ is being used in this case instead of a singular ‘ethnie’ needs to be clarified briefly here. While it is
true that the Red Power Movement and similar ethnic revivalist efforts do recognise the Indian in their element as the first inhabitants of the Americas as a whole, it is really not that easy to subsume all the native ‘nations’ (Like the Kiowa, the Muscogee, et cetera.) within a selected identity of one ‘ethnie’. It is more proper, I feel, to consider these varied communities, ‘nations’ as they call themselves, as distinct ethnic groups, with each proceeding on its own trajectory of ethnic reformation and configuration.

These native ‘nations’ can, however, be referred to as a summation of ethnies, a conglomeration of many ethnies. The Native Americans are therefore, truly ‘multi-ethnic’ peoples, as one can see it. The question might arise in the same way for the cases of other ethnies in the United States who also subscribe to such varied orders of cultural affiliation. However, one has to realise that the way in which all the native nations of the United States are distinct from each other, with different languages, different religions, widely differing mythologies and different ancestries, does not really hold good for most of the other ethnic groups in America for whom the diversification of ethnic identity occurs primarily through the identification of displacement; for the ethnic African Americans from the other ‘land’ Africa which lies across the Atlantic, and for Asian Americans a home from where they have long since migrated. The ancient and diverse located-ness, as I see it, of the
Native American ethnies is not shared, at least not in the same way, by the other ethnies which have been examined in the present study.

This aforementioned desire and the subsequent formulation of a complexly structured ethnic voice that seeks to refute racial identities and to re-symbolise ethnicity in the multi-ethnic literatures of America is not again a new thing, or something unique to the Native American ethnies. However, the desire to recover the past(s) of a pre-Columbian epoch, one that identifies the native nations of the Americas as the primary inhabitants of the country, even before European contact happened, long before the colonies even existed, and to reify that past as ethnic reality in the present is something that is particularly true of Native American ethnic literary production. In this case, one of the primary names that comes to mind, and whose selected work this present chapter shall read and examine, is the Kiowa novelist and poet, N. Scott Momaday.

This present chapter shall use the concepts and notions of cultural memory and its intersection with literary studies to examine a selection of inter-connected narratives, all of them by N. Scott Momaday, and to trace the presence of cultural memory, and memory cultures (as the case may be) in them by analyzing the elements of intertextuality, mnemonic configuration of sites which are ‘historically’ remembered (as in The
Way to Rainy Mountain) and which are also located in oral narratives of the past (as in The Journey of Tai-me) as well as in personal reminiscences. The narratives that have been chosen for this study are N. Scott Momaday’s The Journey of Tai-me (cited hereafter as TJTM and published in 1967), House Made of Dawn (cited hereafter as HMOD and published in 1968) and The Way to Rainy Mountain (cited hereafter as TWRM and published in 1969). Significantly, the second of the three, House Made of Dawn, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, and was one of the foremost works by Native American writers which led Kenneth Lincoln to propose the formulation of the phrase “Native American Renaissance” in his book of the same name.

Momaday, as Kenneth Lincoln says, writes by “adapting older Kiowa ways to written forms of literature” (Lincoln 1985: 84). His other two texts (TJTM and TWRM) attest to that directly, at least. And he even says so in his 2009 preface to The Journey of Tai-me that the book “is an example of oral tradition, a tradition that is highly developed and in which the extraordinary possibilities of language are realized.” (Momaday 2009: viii)

Not only in his renditions of Kiowa cultural myths, but even in his fiction, in House Made of Dawn, Momaday uses this narrative category of the oral narration through different voices, both from the past and from the present in order to plot his narrative trajectory (one which, in
the context of the novel in question, is cyclical in its basic structure, evincing a deeply embedded interplay of the past and the present within itself). An example of this can be seen in the narrative of *House Made of Dawn* when we encounter Father Olguin reading the journals of Fray Nicolás where the story of Francisco and his brother finds mention. Or for example, the voice of the Rev. J. B. B. Tosamah, who narrates both the Gospel according to St. John and the story of Tai-me in conjunction with a hearty commentary of the Gospel and a sharply delineated personal account of the past(s) of the Kiowa. Tosamah’s voice is not only an individual’s voice but the voice of a collective past as it is. We shall return to this aspect of Momaday’s narrative style in conjunction with other aspects of his work across this present study.

In speaking of the ‘oral tradition’ in this case, it is important to observe how, in Momaday’s narratives that have been selected for the purpose of the present study, a primary narrative feature that stands out, even at a cursory reading, is the incorporation of what can be called the *mythic* element. This is rendered through the obvious articulation of mythic narratives by different agents, or ‘voices’ to be specific; voices which are, differently, in Momaday’s own words in his ‘Preface’ to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*,

> the voice of my father, the ancestral voice, and the voice of the Kiowa oral tradition…the voice of historical commentary…of personal reminiscence, my own voice…there is a turning and
returning of myth, history, and memoir throughout, a narrative wheel that is sacred as language itself… (Momaday 1969: ix)

The *myth* that Momaday speaks of in these lines is clearly the conglomerate of creation myths and other various cultural accounts about the Kiowa which he records in *The Journey of Tai-me*, and later in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. These accounts narrated by a set of different voices in these two texts are, at the first read, presented as experiential narratives, articulated in a mode that is seemingly pan-historical (in the way that these accounts do not locate themselves within a particularly identifiable spatial-temporal framework except for in a very vague rendition of the possibility of an *ancient past*). Most of these mythic accounts (particularly in TJTM and in TWRM) are primarily fantastic accounts of the progress of the culture of an ethnie across ages ["the Golden Age of the Kiowa Plains Culture" as Momaday calls it] and regions [from "the headwaters of the Yellowstone River in what is now western Montana to the Southern Plains, to Rainy Mountain in present southwestern Oklahoma" where "the journey ended" (Momaday 2009: vii)] with the ‘first’ narratorial voice recounting the story of an individual against the backdrop of a community, as in the myth of Quoetotai in TWRM which Momaday comments on using a historical anecdote involving the artist George Catlin. Almost all of these narrative accounts are accompanied, both in *The Journey of Tai-me* and in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, by graphic etchings of ritual objects, characters
and locations besides natural phenomena which support the narratives’
mythic as well as myth-ritual character (connectible to the ‘myth-ritual’
theory of William Robertson Smith, and James Frazer which asserts the
idea that most myths are used by communities to attest to the existence
of rituals, and to support the overall ritualistic culture of the community
in question. The ritual commemorates the myth in question, as it is, and
is therefore recognizable as a medium of cultural memory in the context
of the community). Beginning with the creation myth of the Kiowas
(recounted both in TJTM and in TWRM) down to the narratives of Ko-
sahn where she speaks of the Sun Dance’s origins, the narratives in these
two texts are strung together in a constant cycle of ethnic past(s) on a
tripartite level; the first level of narration is the recounting of the cultural
memory of the Kiowas, the second level is the voice of narratorial
commentary through historical remembering, while the third level of
narration is the voice of rememoration on the personal, individual level
with the images of the past supported in actuality by graphic renderings
of these narratives of the past (in both TJTM and TWRM).

The recounting of these myths in these two texts by Momaday are
however not to be read on the obvious level as just recorded myths.
Simplistic as these may appear to the reader, the technology of
mnemonic reconstruction that operates within these narratives of the
Kiowa cultural past is something that is not quite simple. These are
narratives of a past, the past of a culture, and of an ethnic group; these are therefore narratives that record and embody an ethnic past, or on a temporal level of narrative construction, varied ethnic pasts. Coupled with the strategic etchings that supplement each brief account, these narratives, when taken as a whole schema, represent a specific mnemonic culture that confirms the structure of the Native American ethnic voice in the present. How this is possible can be understood by considering what Momaday himself reveals about the genesis of his other novel *The Ancient Child*. In a conversation recorded with Gaetano Prampolini, Momaday says, in the context of his using Borges’ idea of myth being at the end of all literature, that

> one cannot finally escape myth. It is encompassing, all encompassing. It is at the beginning of literature; literature begins somewhere back in mythology and finally it is there at the end as well. You cannot get away from it…Myth is at the beginning and ending of all story, all literature. (Schubnell 1997: 193)

Myth, then, can also be said to be an intrinsic part of all memory, all rememoration. For rememoration has its own *narrative*, and is as much a story of the past in the present as commemoration itself is a story of *how* the past has been *memorialised*. When rememoration reconstructs the past in the present, it is through a recall of the actual past alongside the mythic nature of the past that it does so. In case of Momaday’s ‘oral’ narratives, myth becomes the interface through which a distinct ethnic identity is constructed in the present through a complex emplotment of
the narrative of memory across sites of memory (Rainy Mountain, as well as the ‘headwaters’ of Yellowstone River commemorated in the poem “Headwaters” in TWRM), acts of memory (the encounter of Tai-me with the Kiowa and its commemoration in the myths, as well as the story of the boy who turned into a bear which forms the core of the narrative of Momaday’s novel *The Ancient Child*), memory figures and memory symbols (like the fetish Tai-me, or the figure of Aho, the grandmother recounted about in all the three texts selected for this study) and in ritual memory (like the Sun Dance which becomes an important medium of cultural memory in TJTM and TWRM) in a manner that is both inter-vocal (as opposed to univocal) and intertextual (as in the use of ‘cultural texts’ as part of the existing ensemble of texts for the creation of a new text that Julia Kristeva proposes as the fundament of intertextual practice). In this context, it is also proper to differentiate between how the narratives in TJTM and TWRM are myths and therefore antecedents to the reconstruction of ethnic pasts in the present; how these narrative accounts that are fantastic in utterance and content are more myths than folklore, and how therefore the connection between them and Kiowa cultural memory is propagated and crystallised in Momaday’s narratives. As William Bascom states,

Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened to them in the remote past. They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed…Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the
narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period that are less remote...are more often secular than sacred...” (1984: 9)

What Bascom says about folklore is that such narratives are not with a consciousness of a fixed time, remote or recent. They are also more secular than sacred. Bascom’s classification of myths, folktales and legends as ‘prose’ might not be suitable to our purpose but his differentiation between them that he draws using temporal location as a parameter is obvious relatable here. Because myths primarily deal with the remote past, along with primarily non-human characters, and deal with ‘facts’ about the remote past (not historical fact but more of a remembered, cultural ‘fact’, something that is believed to be true, and original, and as the point of origin for other aspects of factuality), therefore it is obvious that the narrative segments about the Kiowa’s pasts in Momaday’s work are myths, or myth-ritual narratives since they actually conform to these parameters of differentiation between myth and folklore. Folklore would obviously suggest a more recent past, as would the word ‘legend’ do. Myth, on the other hand, as it is used by Momaday as well, would refer to an ancient past, with explications of events, and prefigured narratives about the group’s identity in conjunction with characters that are semi-divine (the myth about the seven sisters who turned into the stars of the Big Dipper, and their brother who turned into a bear, on page 19 of TJTM) or divine in nature and origin (the myth about the young man who was the sun, on page 3 of
The mnemonic configuration of these narrative segments into fiction, as Momaday does it in his novels *The Ancient Child*, and in *House Made of Dawn* is also self evident, therefore.

The constant interplay of the past and the present through diverging and deviating time frames in Momaday’s narratives is something that is very obvious in both *House Made of Dawn* and *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Whereas this interplay of the past and the present occurs on both an explicit level of narrative emplotment (the tripartite structure of the narrative in TWRM) as well as on a more combinative, subtle level of narrative shifts from the ancient past to the more recent past and from the apparent present back again to another point in that recent past (the shifting time frames inaugurating a polyphony of different narrative voices in HMOD ranging from Ben Benally to Abel himself, besides Tosamah and Fray Nicolás, or even Father Olguin). This interplay of the past and the present within the narrative structures of these texts attests and affirms the presence of rememoration and recall in them. Within this negotiation between memory and rememoration, the mythic element that Momaday favours as a narrative strategy in what he himself has called ‘myth making’ achieves a singular reification that renders these texts into representative memory texts of the Native American ethnic experience. This is best illustrated by Momaday’s use of mythic narratives and ritualistic songs or lyrics within the fictional framework of *House Made*
\textit{of Dawn}, and in the conscious narration of the act of recall, and the practice of rememoration in the other two texts. This intertextual practice of embedding the extant narrative in progress with pre-existing cultural texts (here the word ‘text’ is used to signify not only a \textit{written} or a \textit{literary} text, but \textit{any} media, or media text that within the ensemble of cultural meaning and contexts may act as a vehicle of cultural transfer) subsumes and brings together the diverse but relatable aspects of rememoration, mnemonic reconstruction and perpetuation of the cultural memory of the Kiowas, and broadly the Native American ethnie in N. Scott Momaday’s work.

\section*{3. 2. Rainy Mountain to Tai-me: Configuring Cultural Memory}

As we consider the two narratives \textit{The Journey of Tai-me}, and \textit{The Way to Rainy Mountain} in the present study, it might be necessary to point out the unique relationship that these two texts share with each other. While the first is, very simply speaking, a collection of mythic, semi-mythic and intergenerational narratives ‘recorded’, as Momaday notes in the ‘Preface’, using familial sources, the second text is, again as Momaday notes, a narrative that is formulated using the first text as its core in the manner of “a device consisting of separate but intrinsically related voices, a wheel of languages as it were, rolling from myth to history, to
reminiscence, through three voices…” (Momaday 1969: ix) These ‘three voices’, as mentioned before, form a tripartite narrative structure which ranges from an obviously intertextual edification of the narration of the ‘ancestral’ voice, or “the voice of the Kiowa oral tradition” (Momaday 1969: ix) articulated singularly in TJTM (without commentary) to a somewhat fragmentary locating of these narrative segments in historical memory and still further, to a reflected, often poetic rememoration of the memory of these myth-ritual narratives¹⁰, or mythic narratives in other cases. Why I use the word ‘intertextual’ in this case should be explained here in passing. Considering our prior deliberations about the inherent connection between the literary text, intertextuality and cultural memory, it can be concluded that any text is made intelligible through its intrinsic quality of being an intertext (Barthes calls any text ‘an intertext’ in his The Theory of the Text), through the insinuation of a general interdiscursivity within the reader’s space of interaction with the written text, something that elicits an intersection of extant textual spaces. This intersection, in this context, is primarily in the form of a connexiō, using an idea akin to Dietrich Harth’s imagery of the co-nexio in her account of the invention of cultural memory (Harth 2010: 85) where the correlation between ‘texture’ and ‘text’ is described using craft analogies of the net and the fabric on different levels; from a verbalis [Latin verbum (“word”)] level to a realis level [Latin reālis (“actual”), from rēs (“matter, thing”)]. The ancestral voice that articulates the mythic
narrative segments has its own rhetoric of declamation which in turn confirms the voice of historical commentary. The *connexio* is embellished, again, by the presence of extant cultural texts\(^\text{11}\) from the Kiowa past in the form of graphic productions that accompany the narrated myths. Using the word in its obvious historical connotation as a primary designation in manuals of classical rhetoric, *connexio* would here suggest the idea of a linkage, a networking between tropes, ideates, syntactical pre-figurations and metaphors in the context of classical Latin rhetorical practice, particularly in case of Ciceronian prose. There was also, it would seem, a difference between *connexio realis* and *connexio verbalis*. Whereas *connexio verbalis* would generally connote a linkage of externalities, *connexio realis* would suggest a linkage of ideates, of visualisations of the real through acts of the imagination. The *connexio* I suggest here, developing Harth’s statement, is relatable to both these usages, though it is not intended to supplement or confirm the notion of the Barthes-ian intertext and its insertion in this part of the study.

The identification of a text’s intertextual aspects is not merely the study of references or allusions or even textual resources within the ambit of the text in question, but is more the recognising of the ways in which the textual schema under observation is constructed using prior schemas and codes (many of which may well be anonymous, their origins having been lost in the mists of time, but their memory being as visibly extant as
those which are not anonymous) of previously produced ‘cultural texts’.
In the light of this observation, it is important to understand that
Momaday’s intertextual practice within the mentioned text duo (or trio
for that matter, if *House Made of Dawn* is also considered part of this
connexion) is not merely allusive or reiterative on the level of *verbalis*,
but is also restorative and reversionary (or revisionary) on the level of
*realis* through a specific, multi-tiered reconstruction of Kiowa narrative
practices with the reflection of traditional generic convention, and
empplotment in the modern twentieth century narrative structure that
Momaday also incorporates (in case of HMOD and TWRM). The
tripartite narrative of TWRM thus represents a deeply complex structure
which it’s apparently simple, seemingly obvious presentation may
appear to belie, the purpose behind it being a mnemonic reconstruction
of Momaday’s own ethnic past within the narrative that actually reports
and recalls that past. The whole schema of the narrative is therefore
deeply commemorative in a way that is not easily discernable except
through a conscious reading of the texts under observation as *memory
texts*, or mediums of commemoration of an ethnic identity by the
realisation of an ethnic past, or more particularly, a remote past that is
part of a particular level of ethnic identity configuration.

The *connexiō* that these three aspects of the narrative of TWRM embody
can be examined and explained using, again, Harth’s description of Jan
and Aleida Assmann’s formulation of the difference between communicative memory, and the Cultural Memory. Harth says:

The “connective structure” which Jan Assmann discusses in the introduction to his principal work on cultural theory (Das kulturelle Gedächtnis 16f.) uses the metaphor of connection, which, in a sort of homologous reflection, connects the descriptive language to the inner form of that being described. To put it more simply, Assmann argues that every culture connects every one of its individual subjects on the basis of shared norms (rules) and stories (memories; Erinnerungen) to the experience of a commonly inhabited meaningful world. It is only because of this experience that individuals are able to frame their personal identity through the orientating symbols of identity of their social world, symbols which are embodied in the objectified forms of a commonly shared cultural tradition. In the term “connectivity” the two types of memory which are decisive for this theory meet: “kommunikatives Gedächtnis,” active on the level of simultaneity, which connects the present and the most recent past (Verknüpfung); and “kulturelles Gedächtnis,” which, like a large storehouse filled with traditional “memory figures” (Erinnerungsfiguren), offers various possibilities to link the present to an ancient past (Anknüpfung). (2010: 85)

Using this idea of the ‘connective structure’, the connexiō between the three narrative voices in TWRM may be observed, then, from the perspective of cultural memory. The connexiō evinced by the narrative structure of TWRM and TJTM has been described previously, of course. That the purpose of this connexion is not merely narrative emplotment or narrative construction, but more a ‘re-construction’ of Kiowa narrative conventions from the past within the extant narratives has also been outlined. Momaday’s intent is obviously, then, to institute a commemoration, through narration, of not only Kiowa mythography, but
also the ways in which that cultural knowledge has achieved transfer
down the generations, through his father and ancestors down to the
published editions of TJTM and TWRM. This is also attested further by
Momaday’s declaration in the prefaces of both texts of these narratives
being examples of ‘oral tradition’ and ‘verbal tradition’. Momaday says,in the ‘Prologue’ to TWRM:

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…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 1969: 4)

These fragments of an ancient past, as Momaday says, have been
preserved by ‘verbal tradition’ (Momaday uses an analogy of a
performance of Shakespeare’s Hamlet vis-à-vis a reading of the text of
Hamlet in order to illustrate this in his ‘Preface’ to TJTM). The remnants
of that ancient past do not only constitute fragmentary narratives of myth
and myth-ritual, but also rememorative presences of what Harth
identifies as ‘memory figures’ in the preceding quotation. These memory
figures are symbolic embodiments of a previous culture (the Kiowa
cultural past) which may incorporate landscapes, objects, personages,
and characters from the past which are referred to and recalled in the
present. And their occurrence in the present, as Assmann says, is in the
form of an emergence through an “interplay between concepts and
experiences…characterized by three special features: a concrete relationship to time and place, a concrete relationship to a group, and an independent capacity for reconstruction.” (J. Assmann 2011b: 24) These ‘concepts’ are, of course, concepts that are formulated through multiple notions of identity located within spaces of cultural transfer and perpetuation which lead to the generation, and transmogrification of ethnic identity, generation after generation. The ‘interplay’ that Assmann suggests is not merely an interplay of concepts and experiences as the quotation may well seem to suggest in isolation. It is rather the interplay of concepts of the past, and about the past, formulated and confirmed by experiences in the present and a reconstruction of the experiences of the past. The ‘relationship’ that is, then, suggested here is a relationship, on a preliminary level, between the past and the present, and on a deeper level of significance, between the ideas and forms of the past that are made available in the present and the cultural necessity of their reiteration, or re-structuring with regard to how these may actually supplement the text of the present, or the text in the present time, as the case may be.

Memory figures\textsuperscript{12}, as the phrase may suggest independently, could then connote any such formation, (image, character, or icon) that would have a specific mnemonic purpose: that of anchoring a specific set of mnemonic acts, and possibilities, to a particular time and a particular space, or place, since memory relies on a framed spatiality, a defined
spatial formulation for its reconstruction in the present. In this context, it is necessary to understand what ‘memory figure’ would imply in case of Momaday’s texts. Since the word ‘figure’ would denote both the idea of a shape, and its gradual formation (figuration) within cultural spaces, it would be relevant to consider, given Jan Assmann’s and Halbwachs’ ideas on the subject that these ‘memory figures’ can be referred to as representations of a culture, and its remembrance of its own pasts. In other words, these are symbols that function as the medium of cultural memory. Within a literary narrative, these symbols, or memory figures would naturally then perform a specific role as markers of ethnicity, or of a symbolic ethnicity, for that matter. And then again, since the word ‘figure’ would also signify a character, real or imaginary, which may function as an aid in the mnemonic reconstruction of the past through personal remembrance or cultural recall, therefore these memory figures may also include characters within the literary narrative, remembered or actually present. In Momaday’s text duo (TWRM and TJTM), the connected narratives include many such important memory figures such as Aho, the author’s grandmother, and Mammedaty which are familial memory figures occurring in the reconstruction of the cultural myths of the Kiowas through a portrayal of the act of transfer that these characters participated in with the author. However, most important among these memory figures occurring in these two texts is the fetish Tai-me, a
‘powerful medicine’ of the Kiowas whose first contact with the Kiowas is narrated in TJTM as follows:

The journey of Tai-me began one day long ago on the edge of the Northern Plains. It was carried on over a course of many generations and many hundreds of miles; in the end there were many things to remember, to dwell upon and talk about…Tai-me came to the Kiowas in a vision born of suffering and despair. “Take me with you,” Tai-me said, “and I will give you whatever you want.” And it was so. (Momaday 2009: xi)

It is necessary to equate this preliminary description of the medicinal bundle Tai-me and its ‘journey’ which occurred “over a course of many generations and many hundreds of miles” with what Assmann says about ‘memory figures’, that a memory figure is a ‘culturally formed, socially binding’ mnemonic image as well, besides being an embodiment of the group in question. Jan Assmann makes reference to this in a footnote in his book Cultural Memory and Early Civilization (2011a: 24).

Tai-me, as Momaday himself says, became a constant, revered companion of the Kiowas over a number of centuries, and many generations until the United States government took steps to quell and abolish the Sun Dance and other religious practices of the Native Americans. The abolition of the Sun Dance around 1890 is vividly portrayed by Thomas Fall in his novel The Ordeal of Running Standing. Fall writes: ‘The Ten Grandmothers were custodians of the Kiowas’ right to tribal existence and the cleansing had always been the climactic
ritual of the annual Sun Dance - until recently, when the cavalry from Fort Sill descended upon the Sun Dance encampment and forbade the ceremony…” (Fall 1993: 23) In TWRM, Momaday uses a citation from the ethnographer James Mooney in order to describe the distinct historical presence of the Tai-me bundle. Mooney, who lived for several years among the Cherokee, and compiled works such as *Myths of the Cherokee* (1902) and *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (1900) says:

> The great central figure of the *kado*, or Sun Dance, ceremony is the *Tai-me*. This is a small image, less than 2 feet in length, representing a human figure dressed in a robe of white feathers, with a headdress 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. The image itself is of dark-green stone, in form rudely resembling a human head and bust, probably shaped by art like the stone fetishes of the Pueblo tribes. It is preserved in a rawhide box in charge of the hereditary keeper, and is never under any circumstances exposed to view except at the annual Sun Dance, when it is fastened to a short upright stick planted within the medicine lodge, near the western side. It was last exposed in 1888 - Mooney (Momaday 1969: 37)

This is ethnographic detail indeed, and for Momaday to incorporate it within the narrative of TWRM is also significant as far as narrative emplotment may be considered. Mooney’s account has been widely quoted by later ethnographers like Leslie Spier as well. About the Sun Dance, Spier comments:
The Kiowa sun dance (k’oθdu” specifically the name for the lodge) was an annual tribal affair, in which the associated Kiowa Apache freely joined…It was danced in an effort to obtain material benefits from, or through, the medicine doll in the possession of the medicineman, who is at the same time director and principal performer. (Spier 1921: 438)

In TJTM, Momaday includes a graphic rendition of the fetish which, as the description goes, is not similar to what Mooney says about the icon. However, this image has one striking feature about it, and that is the miasmatic shadow that obscures the head in the drawing. This may connote an intentional production of the fetish’s likeness to suggest the ritualistic aspect of Tai-me being never exposed to view except for during the Sun Dance alone. (Cf. figure below). Momaday’s usage of Mooney’s account as historical voice presents a consideration of the fact that the author negotiates between history and ethnography in an intertextual strategy to formulate and configure parts of the narrative of TWRM. This is, of course, a distinct illustration of how Momaday’s text becomes, in effect, a powerful medium of Kiowa cultural memory, and thence of the formation of ethnic identity. This is particularly so since James Mooney’s, and Leslie Spier’s notes about the ritual Sun Dance are probably among the earliest ethnographic accounts of the same.

(Illustration on next page)
How Tai-me came to the Kiowas. “A creature stood before me with the feet of a deer and covered with feathers.”

(TJTM, unnumbered page)
In order that the text of TWRM may retain its authenticity as a cultural text, or as a memory text, rather, Momaday uses the ethnographer’s voice in juxtaposition with the familial voice and the cultural, collective voice. These are, also, all voices from the past, as it is. Narrative rememoration works in intricate ways, and often very complex ways in both these texts, one may feel fit to conclude. While ritual memoration in the narrative shapes the contours of the narrative ambit of TJTM across the thirty two narrative segments, it is personal reminiscence and citations from historical sources that complement and build the tiers of the narrative in TWRM.

The description of the journey of the fetish across space and time that Momaday presents in TJTM and in TWRM illustrates this aspect of the Kiowas’ past in a manner that seems simplistic apparently, but in reality, is deeply political in its mnemonic aspect. The departures, the arrivals, the severances and the combinations (meetings) within the larger framework of the journey that Momaday records in TJTM using mythic and myth-ritual narrative segments are then reflected in the later text of TWRM with its three tiers of narratorial commentary besides its three narrative divisions (or chapters). The journey that Momaday describes as “the account of a people’s quest after their destiny” (Momaday 2009: vii) is a journey not only in the sense of the term that it connotes the historic migration of the Kiowa through phases and regions with the narrative of
TWRM specifically structured into three parts that actually suggest a tripartite phase-trajectory [The narrative is divided into three segments titled separately as “The Setting Out” (suggesting the beginning of the journey), “The Going On” (suggesting the continuation and the various parts of the journey that occur during the ongoing, hence a ‘going on’) and “The Closing In” (suggesting the nearing of the journeyer to an end, a goal of the journey, and also reminiscent of a sense of an exodus, from one home to another, very specifically in the sense of the phenomenon of human migration which, it must be noted, has been a very important and significant reoccurrence in the cultural histories of the first peoples of the American continents going back even into Paleo-Indian times to when the Bering land bridge crossover is purported to have happened]. This also is a portrayal or rather, the story of a journey indeed if narrative emplotment is to be considered, a cultural journey, or the journey of a culture across geographical phases, and historical epochs.

However, besides these considerations, what actually happens throughout the narrative of TJTM is that a specific mnemonic journey of almost sinuous proportions is formulated and represented, albeit in a more subtle manner than the reported actual journey of the Kiowas across the country. This is a journey that is reconstructed in the narratives of TJTM and TWRM; the narrative of the journey of Tai-me and of the Kiowas across the years from the vicinity of the Yellowstone
River to other lands in western Oklahoma is reflected in the reconstruction of that journey in the present through the description of the presence of memory figures like the inanimate but ‘divine’ Tai-me, and human personae like Aho and Mammedaty whose appearance and reappearance across this mnemonic representation of the journey of the Kiowas become points of arrivals and departures and thereby aid in the presentation of a memory map, or the mapping of a specific set of cultural memory of the Kiowa in the mentioned texts by Momaday.

It is imperative to consider, through illustrations from both the above mentioned texts, how this happens in both the narratives of TJTM and TWRM. Let us see, then, this instance of the account that narrates the arrival of the Kiowas in the world of human beings. This is how it appears in the text of TJTM:

You know, everything had to begin, and this is how it was:
The Kiowas came one by one into the world through a hollow log. They were many more now, but not all of them got out. There was a woman whose body was swollen up with child, and she got stuck in the log. After that, no one could get through, and that is why the Kiowas are a small tribe. They looked all around and saw the world. It made them glad to see so many things. They called themselves Kwuda, “coming out”. (Momaday 2009: 1)

This is, as the structure and the mode of utterance go, a story of origins, a creation myth to be precise, a narrative that explains, as far as William Bascom’s definition is considered, an event of significance in the
‘remote past’ of the Kiowas. It explicates the reasons behind the ‘origin’ of the Kiowa clan as well the engendering of the name ‘Kiowa’ itself.

The presence of the pregnant woman who obstructs the connecting log between ‘worlds’ (if we suppose this myth as one of those Native American origin myths which deal with an exodus of a people between worlds) is also significant in that it projects a sense of limitation in that ‘ancient’ migration that is being narrated here. Momaday quotes William C. Meadows in this context:

Kiowa origins state that with the beckoning of their culture hero Séndé they emerged from the underworld through a cottonwood log or tree (á- hi, “real or original tree”) until a pregnant woman became stuck in the hole, preventing any more from exiting. This stage of their emergence is said to explain why the Kiowa have been always been relatively small in number. Although the location of this occurrence is unknown, the range of the eastern cottonwood (Populus deltoides), which is native to the front range of the Rockies eastward, may give a clue to the geographic range when this account developed, or perhaps a modification after moving into the zone of this species. (Momaday 1969: 116)

The point here of course is to illustrate how the narratives of these myths which form the core of the Tai-me and Rainy Mountain text duo are interspersed with memory figures such as the pregnant woman in this case (as the commentary from TWRM also continues) all of which are formulations that have been facilitated by a close interconnection between historical memory and cultural remembering, or rememoration through narratives, prose or otherwise, mythic, mythic-ritualistic, or fictional.
But it is also important in that the ‘arrival’ myth of the Kiowas can be interpreted from an ethnic configuration’s point of view (as Meadows points out in the quotation above) Consider how Momaday uses this mythic narrative in TWRM in accompaniment with historical commentary and personal reminiscence:

They called themselves *Kwuda* and later *Tepda*, both of which mean “coming out.” And later still they took the name *Gaigwu*, a name which can be taken to indicate something of which the two halves differ from each other in appearance. It was once a custom among Kiowa warriors that they cut their hair on the right side of the head only and on a line level with the lobe of the ear, while on the left they let the hair grow long and wore it in a thick braid wrapped in otter skin. “Kiowa” is indicated in sign language by holding the hand palm up and slightly cupped to the right side of the head and rotating it back and forth from the wrist. “Kiowa” is thought to derive from the Comanche form of *Gaigwu*. (Momaday 1969: 17)

This is the voice, as Momaday says himself, of historical commentary. Though it is primarily informative about the distinct cultural identity of the Kiowas (a ‘past’ identity, again and discernible through modes of ritual apparel and appearance as the comment goes), it is necessary to observe that the information about the Kiowa’s origins and historical location in their past(s) is more of ethnographic detail than just historical commentary, or perhaps it would be correct to call it ethno-history, a historical perspective particularly dedicated to the ethnic formations and configurations of Kiowa identity. Momaday uses this strategy of refurbished historical fact, and particularised ethnographic accounts (the
tradition, or the cultural idea that the Kiowa originally were a culled
group related to the Comanches, something which Momaday mentions
here by speaking about the connection of the origin of the name ‘Kiowa’
to the Comanche ‘Gaigwu’) in the guise of “historical voice” to
supplement the mythic narratives that are recounted (or more
particularly, recorded) within TJTM and used as core narrative segments
in TWRM. On another level of utterance within the narrative of TWRM,
Momaday embellishes this coupling of rememoration (through recounted
myth) and historical memory (through ethno-historical perspectives)
with the voice of personal reminiscence which takes on the form of
poetic deliberation, albeit, but is more aligned with a mnemonic strategy
of association and remembrance (remembering the ancient past in the
recent past through a rememoration of cultural memory texts such as the
myths transferred through memory figures such as Aho, the author’s
grandmother). Momaday says, in connection with the above quotation,
on the same page:

I remember coming out upon the Great Plains in the late
spring. There were meadows of blue and yellow wildflowers
on the slopes, and I could see the still, sunlit plain below,
reaching away out of sight. At first there is no discrimination
in the eye, nothing but the land itself, whole and impenetrable.
But then smallest things begin to stand out of the depths -
herds and rivers and groves - and each of these has perfect
being in terms of distance and of silence and of age. 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 1969: 17)
Here the voice of utterance is one to which Momaday distinctly assigns the label of ‘personal reminiscence’, and it is undoubtedly so, given the first person narration prevalent in this segment. However, what is important to discern in this section of the tripartite narrative segment is the fact that there is a sense of reclaiming, a re-envisioning of the present through a re-visualisation of the past. When the narrator speaks of the un-differentiable layout of the land ‘at first’, there is a suggestion of a cultural imposition, a political necessity that wills the American eye to see the country as a monocultural nation, undivided, non-disparate. When the pasts of the different merged cultural spaces within the American cultural mosaic are considered, however, and remembered/recalled, rather, what emerges is a gradual understanding of the fact that the nation that is purportedly monocultural, a ‘salad bowl’ of different ethnicities that have, in spite of their different pasts, a common American identity, is not actually that. It is not even a mosaic of the variety that pro-monocultural agencies would suggest. It is far from that, a multilinear ensemble of variegated ethno-cultural spaces whose pasts and histories are different from the Euro-centric, or more WASP-centric history of the American nation. The idea of the ‘smallest details’ that the narrator claims to see into and to gradually realise the intensity “of distance, of silence and of age” that confirms these small details is a reflection of how the rememoration, and re-construction of the cultural memory of the Native American ethnies in the United States is
contributory to the figuration of a contemporary Native American multi-ethnic identity. It might as well seem that this is too much of a reading into the narrative segment cited here. But it must be remembered of course that the present illustration is just one case in point, and that this sense of the contemporary Native American author laying claim to a re usable multi-ethnic past (modifying the Assmanns’ phraseology of ‘re usable’ texts) has manifested differently in most Native American writers following the proliferation of the afore-mentioned Native American Renaissance.

Memory figures abound in TWRM, as in the preceding narrative TJTM, as has been previously mentioned. There are different varieties of those as well - ritual, familial, and mythical and so on. Significant among the familial memory figures Momaday includes in TWRM is the figure of Aho, the author’s grandmother, whose presence occurs both in the historical narration, as well as in the personal remembrance narration within the text. Though these familial figures are not iconic in the sense that ritual objects like Tai-me are, it is also necessary to consider that a historical or a remembered person may well fulfill the functions of a memory figure, or ‘figure of memory’. Even an author, in the post-configuration phase of the interaction between literature and cultural memory may as well function as a ‘figure of memory’. As Jesseka Batteau says
Assmann’s choice of the term ‘figure’ (which he prefers to Halbwachs’s ‘memory images’) calls attention to the fact that figures of memory do not only have an iconic dimension, but they can also function in the formation of culturally shared narratives… it seems that collective memory can also adhere to a(n) historical figure, preserving his or her name, as well as that which he or she represents. (2009: 232)

Momaday uses the figure of Aho along with his father in the personal reminiscence narration in TWRM. He brings together two different levels of the narrative, the cultural, ancestral past and the familial, personal past at several points along the narrative trajectory. This is done with intent, as it seems, so that the personal reminiscences which feature the presence of the grandmother may come to represent the cultural transfer that takes places across generations, from grandmother to grandchild, and which is embodied in the memory figure of the grandmother herself. He writes about his first personal encounter as a child with Tai-me in the company of his grandmother:

Once I went with my father and grandmother to see the Tai-me bundle. It was suspended by means of a strip of ticking from the fork of a small ceremonial tree. I made an offering of bright red cloth, and my grandmother prayed aloud. It seemed a long time that we were there. I had never come into the presence of Tai-me before - nor have I since. There was a great holiness all about in the room, as if an old person had died there or a child had been born. (Momaday 1969: 37)

Here, the personal voice of the narrator achieves a deeper connect with the cultural past than just through the ‘connective structure’ of the narrative. The presence of the narrator’s grandmother in this childhood
encounter that is being recounted acts as a symbol of the cultural transference that is again being rendered through the ritual act of obeisance to the Tai-me bundle by the narrator. The fetish Tai-me is a symbol of the Kiowa’s past, and its presence within a ritual ambience in the present is a reconstruction of that past, in the same manner that rituals and myths tend to act as media of cultural memory within socio-cultural contexts. The presence of the grandmother who, very significantly, is engaged in praying aloud along with the narrator who, in his turn, is attempting an offering of bright red cloth in a ritual act of obeisance also symbolically juxtaposes two generations of the family within a cultural space. One of these two generations is engaged in the performance of a ritual which has been carried throughout centuries in the past in full knowledge of its significance and importance in the Kiowa’s life, while the other encounters for the first time this important ritual and the memory figure central to Kiowa cultural practices and cultural memory, the Tai-me bundle. The narrator also mentions Aho distinctly in other parts of the text, and often sometimes includes those details in the voice of historical remembering. This is unique in its appeal since the familial figure of memory may naturally be expected to be part of primarily the voice of the personal. However, in instances like the one below, the familial figure of memory becomes a historical figure as well, or more a figure of memory located against a historical backdrop. He writes:
Aho’s high moccasins are made of softest, cream-colored skins. On each instep there is a bright disc of beadwork - an eight pointed star, red and pale blue on a white field - and there are bands of beadwork at the soles and ankles. The flaps of the leggings are wide and richly ornamented with blue and red and green and white and lavender beads. (Momaday 1969: 83)

The intricate description of Aho’s high moccasins that the narrator presents here may suggest an ethnographic detailing in point, about clan costumes and apparel, ritual or otherwise. And that is most likely so, as well, but what this entails in the context of the rememoration that embellishes the text of TWRM is something else entirely. The memory figure of the grandmother that is present throughout the narrative in question is located in its historical aspect through such details that the narrator provides, even if these may not seem to be relevant in a primary reading. The ritual designs on the moccasins also attest the previously mentioned aspect of cultural transfer and memorialisation as they occur in the immediate memory of the narrator. A question however may be raised about Momaday’s ideas about history, and about how he differently uses historical documentation, historical anecdote and rememoration within his memory narration (as in the reconstruction of cultural memory within the narrative through a conscious rhetoric and emplotment of ‘acts of memory’), and how he locates ethnic identity within that equation. History, as Momaday sees it, particularly in the “Epilogue” in TWRM is mostly composed of a trajectory of events, a
journey, using his own metaphor, from point to point, from region to
region, from home to home, with the almost recurrent ruptures in
between parts of that trajectory becoming embodied as silence, and as
distance. The silence that is thus invoked by historical forces becomes
part of the space of cultural memory, with its antecedents and resultants,
before and after it, achieving embodiment through the act of recall and
transfer. The distance that is created between points of recall in the
trajectory of a historical past commingles with the essence of cultural
memory, and thus is a deep interrelation between the historical, recorded
past and the cultural, embodied past born.

Ethnicity, as Michael Fischer says, “in its contemporary form
is…neither…simply a matter of group processes (support systems), nor a
matter of transition (assimilation), nor a matter of straightforward
transmission from generation to generation (socialization)…” (1986:
198) In Momaday’s work, this is seemingly not very apparent, given the
stress he asserts on the portrayal of community, cultural traditions, and
cultural transmission (or transfer), but in spite of this apparent presence
of factors which do not address the question of ethnic identity, or
ethnicity per se, there is a very subtle but pervasive presence of what
Fischer calls “a (re)-invention and discovery of a vision, both ethical and
future oriented” (1986: 196) in Momaday’s expression of the mental
space of ‘ethnic-hood’ in his narratives. There is also a quest for
coherence throughout the narratives of TWRM and especially in HMOD (with the character of Abel being the primary vehicle of expression in this case) which belies a struggle with a sense of history as it is known, and history as event, and a negotiation of that with the re-presented, embodied spaces of cultural memory. Fischer qualifies this as follows: “Whereas the search for coherence is grounded in a connection to the past, the meaning abstracted from that past, an important criterion of coherence, is an ethic workable for the future” (1986: 196). So, the past that Momaday portrays in his work is not reiterated for the purpose of a nostalgic yearning for restitution, but is actually a coordinate of the formation of ethnic identity in the present, which in turn, will inevitably morph with the coming of the future. This can be said to be an estimate of how Momaday locates history and memory in connection with ethnic identity formation. Rememoration of myth and memory, commemoration of events and transitions, memorialisation through sites and spaces, and acts of memory in narration become perpetuators of this same connection.

That the remembered (or recorded) event (in memory or in history) becomes an important coordinate of the past’s re-construction in the present (in the narrative) is illustrated throughout TWRM in the specific myth-ritual narrative segments throughout the text accompanied by the historical voice. The “most brilliant shower of Leonid meteors” that
occurred “during the first hours after midnight on the morning of November 13, 1833”, according to Momaday’s “Epilogue” in TWRM, “seemed to image the sudden and violent disintegration of an old order.” (Momaday 1969: 85) This natural phenomenon which is, Momaday continues, “among the earliest entries in the Kiowa calendars, and it marks the beginning as it were of the historical period in the tribal mind…” (Momaday 1969: 85) is an illustration of how rememoration and narration together interact to perpetuate the intermittent connexion of history and cultural memory in Momaday’s narrative. This astronomical event is most widely known as the Leonid Meteor Shower of 1833. Even James Mooney makes mention of this event referring to it as the time “when the stars fell”. (See “How Thebol Got His Name” in Inside Dazzling Mountains: Southwest Native Verbal Arts). There is also a reference to this event in the journals of Edmund F. Ely where the narrator speaks of how “the stars were falling in every direction, like hail…(w)hether they thought that ‘the end of all things was at hand,’…the falling continued visible until after break of day…” (Schenck 2012: 49)

Accounts such as these abound in both native records as well as in narrative accounts by non-native observers. For example, Cormac McCarthy makes reference to the event in his novel Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness in the West where he portrays “the kid” (the
protagonist in the novel) as having been born on that particular date. McCarthy’s novel, interestingly enough, follows the experiences of the protagonist with the infamous Glanton Gang who were a band of outlaws responsible for the massacre of many Native Americans in the United States–Mexico borderlands from 1849 to 1850. There are other such instances in TWRM as well where the historical event remembered in cultural memory is narrated and commented upon by both the ancestral voice and the historical voice of the narrative. One such example is the tripartite narration of the disappearance of the buffalo from the Kiowa country. Momaday writes, using another of James Mooney’s accounts, about:

*Tsen-pia Kado.* “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 Elm Fork of Red River, and was so called because the buffalo had now become so scarce that the Kiowa, who had gone on their regular hunt the preceding winter, had found so few that they 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. Thenceforth the appearance of even a single animal was a rare treat. (Momaday 1969: 67)

This is again Mooney’s ethnographic narrative that Momaday cites here. Alongside this, Momaday uses the myth of the two brothers one of whom had been captured by the Ute. The myth narrates how the other brother rescues the captured one by passing a test of walking across greased buffalo skulls with his brother on his back. Immediately
accompanying both the mythic narrative and the ethno-historical account besides the personal reminiscence which follows the two is a graphic rendition of a row of buffalo skulls (See figure below).

The graphic rendition of the myth reflects the historical narration of the disappearance of the buffalo herds by transposing the mythic memorialisation of the two brothers’ ordeal across the “row of greased buffalo skulls” with the historical record of the obliteration of the buffalo herds. The drawing can however be determined as a connector between both these voices within the narrative. Similar narrative interpolations persist throughout the text where the mythic memory of an event in juxtaposition with its historical memory is supplemented by the voice of personal memory and/or an artistic, graphic reproduction of the narrative segments in question. For example, when Momaday narrates (in the ancestral voice) the story of Mammedaty, the son of Guipahgo and how he lost his temper with his horses, thereby ending up shooting one of them in the neck with an arrow, he also inserts therein the historical story of the Pawnee boy who escaped from the Kiowas’ capture in the winter of 1852-53 and fled, taking along with him a fine horse named Guadal-tseyu or “Little Red”. This he follows with a story from his own childhood which was about a box of bones, a box of bones which were purportedly from another horse named Little Red. This interconnected narrative about the author’s personal life, the story of the Pawnee boy,
and the story of Mammedaty is supplemented by another of those
graphic renditions of the story in question.

(Illustration on next page)
“a row of greased buffalo skulls”

(TWRM, 68-69)
There is a figure of the front portion, the bust, of a horse in motion which has been shot through the neck following this. The gaping eyes and frothing mouth of the horse suggest a sense of speed and lend even the arrow a sense of motion (though the arrow has already penetrated its flesh). This drawing (See figure below) narrates both the story of Mammedaty’s shooting of the horse, and the Pawnee boy’s fleeing by its signifying of an act of running by the horse. The motion suggested by the drawing is a commonality between both accounts in this narrative segment, the historical account of the Pawnee captive, as well as the mythic recounting of the story of Mammedaty.

Mammedaty, it must be remembered, is the author’s grandfather. His inclusion in the mythic, ancestral voice of the narrative suggests that an important part of cultural memory is, in fact, familial remembering, or what can be called *intergenerational remembering*. Just like the author makes reference to his own childhood experiences with Tai-me, he also refers to his father’s grandmother Keahdinekeah in the voice of personal reminiscence. This reiteration of familial rememoration in the narrative of TWRM evokes the aspect of intergenerational remembering in a manner that is more than just a mention in passing. Though familial rememoration may not immediately suggest the remoteness of the past, yet it is vastly responsible for the transference of that sense of the past into the present. And then again, it is also a relatable fact that not
chronological temporality, but a consciousness of temporality is the 
foundership of the cultural memory of a group, or a community.

Historical time, and mnemonic time are different from each other in a 
fundamental way that whereas the first relies on a definitive 
chronological record, mnemonic time relies more on the notion of 
transference and transition which may, or may not match the corpus of a 
given, linear time trajectory. What is not in the remote past, therefore, 
may as well become an intrinsic part of the re-construction of the remote 
past in the present, as Momaday’s narration about Mammedaty shows.

(Illustration on next page)
“the arrow went deep into the neck.”

(TWRM, 78-79)
Momaday’s incorporation of the drawings of cultural myths and cultural symbols in the narratives of TJTM and TWRM may well remind one of Aby Warburg’s project Mnemosyne and how he laid stress on the readopting and reusing of significant cultural images and symbols from different epochs and cultural periods of European history. Warburg used his famous art project to demonstrate how these extant cultural symbols and images are not only objects of interpretation, but are more significant because of their inherent capacity to trigger subdued memories of a culture, or, to be more specific, how cultural symbols and figures perform, through their repetition, a strategic function in developing and perpetrating the reconstructedness of cultural memory through their appropriation by succeeding generations of artists and cultural workers. The importance of these cultural symbols is not only inherent in their re-use by later generations but also in their capability to foster a sense of cultural continuity. This is evident, as well, in Momaday’s narrative of TWRM where the drawings by his father, Al Momaday, become embedded parts of the multi tiered narrative.

At this point, it is important to consider yet another aspect of Momaday’s memory narration, and that is the presence of sites, locations, and places in his texts. The bounds of the texts in question are enclosures as it were of mnemonic signification which, in turn, is perpetuated by acts of
memory within the narrative. The ‘journey’ Momaday refers to in the 
preface to TJTM is indeed the re-construction of a multi-faceted 
progression of memory from point to point, reflected in the construction 
of the narrative as a journey over time and space into the present. This 
‘journey’, like all others, is not without its own landmarks, or transition 
points, if one may use the analogy of a phase by phase journey in this 
case. Its entire structure is mapped using points or locations (where 
arrivals and departures, and returns originate and culminate). Since these 
locations become very important aids in the rememoration that precedes 
the reconstruction of cultural memory within these narratives, therefore, 
it may be relevant to refer to these as ‘sites of memory’ (using Nora’s 
term). In his essay “Between Memory and History”, Pierre Nora uses the 
term ‘sites of memory’ in order to signify those places or locations which 
become points of merger for composite memories of a national past. He 
says: “There are lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, because there are no 
longer milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory.” (Nora 1994: 
8) And then he also elaborates on the nature of these ‘sites of memory’ 
by describing the features that must exist for a site to become a site of 
memory. Erll says that these memory sites or ‘sites of memory’ may be 
observed and described primarily on the basis of three specific 
dimensions which would be material, functional and symbolic. The first 
would include not only ‘graspable’ objects but ‘past events’ too and that 
is so because even past events do exhibit a material dimension. The
second must necessarily fulfill a function on the societal level and the third, in combination to its material and social functions must also have a symbolic meaning (Erll 2011).

Whereas Nora, and Erll, consider these aspects and assign these to multifarious ‘sites’, I use the word ‘site’ in its literal connotation as ‘place’ or geographical locations which are significant and nearly of key importance as narrative topoi in these memory texts. A site of memory in this context would primarily signify a place or a location rememorated by the narrator in the narrative. Tsoai or ‘Rock-tree’ is one such site of memory in Momaday’s memory narratives, because it has both a material presence and a social, or societal one, as a figure of national identity, of multicultural America while its symbolic dimension as a mythological site is also assuredly significant. Such ‘sites of memory’ abound throughout Momaday’s narratives, as they do in the work of many Native American writers and poets. The circuit of their material, functional and symbolic dimensions in the context of cultural memory, as Erll sees it confirm their roles as signifying ‘sites of memory’. Their material presence in the cultural memory of the Kiowas is compositely structured with different sets of mnemonic signification merging in them, their functional dimensions fulfilled markedly by their important recurrence in the reconstruction of the past in the text of the present, and their symbolic dimension confirmed by their recurrence in the myth and
commemorative practices of the Kiowa as represented by Momaday in TWRM and TJTM, as well as in the fictional narrative of HMOD.

The narrative of TWRM is divided, as it has been mentioned before, into parts of a journey. In this progression of movement (or displacement as it is commemorated in the narrative segments throughout), the memory narration divulges an inclination towards the rememoration not only of cultural pasts associated with rituals, generations and myths, but also by closely associating places, and actual geographical locations with the act of recall. What is being recalled through the act of rememoration is of course a networked schema of memories of a cultural past but the manner in which the act of recall is perpetrated differs from point to point in the narrative. Whereas at some points it is a ritual from the past that triggers the re-appearance of the past in the present, at others it is a place, a location which, in its association with the past and other memory figures, becomes a physical place of memory, a site of memory so to speak of. An illustration of how this happens may be mentioned here as a case in point. The narrative of TWRM begins and ends with two commemorative poems titled “Headwaters” and “Rainy Mountain Cemetery”. While “Headwaters” commemorates a beginning at a ‘source’ (the title itself is suggestive of a sense of beginning), “Rainy Mountain Cemetery” commemorates a ‘cold, black density of stone’ (the title of this poem being suggestive of a fixity engraved in stone, a
memorial of death and the past). The two poems placed at two ends of
the narrative seem to embody, if not directly, a sense of origin and a
sense of entombment respectively, both of which also reflect the
mechanism of memory which must have a source of origin and, in order
that it be preserved, must have a memorial so that succeeding epochs and
cultures can revert to it for a re-construction of the past. Momaday
writes:

**HEADWATERS**

Noon in the intermountain plain:

There is scant telling of the marsh -

A log, hollow and weather stained,

an insect at the mouth, and moss -

Yet waters rise against the roots,

Stand brimming to the stalks. What moves?

What moves on this archaic force

Was wild and welling at the source.

(Momaday 1969: 2)

The poem recounts the past of the Kiowa in a strikingly symbolic
manner. The “log, hollow and weather stained” with moss at its mouth
recalls the origin myth of the Kiowas which Momaday recounts in the
very first narrative segment of both TWRM and TJTM. The presence of
the pregnant woman who got stuck at the mouth of that primordial log is
signified in the poem by the moss which obstructs the mouth of the log.
The very title of the poem (‘headwaters’ means the source of a river) connotes the cultural memory of the Kiowas about their origin at the headwaters of the Yellowstone River in what is now Western Montana as Momaday narrates it in the preface to TJTM. Thus, the ‘headwaters’ from where the Kiowas first began their ‘journey’ across the country (and across the centuries) becomes a site of memory with narrative rememoration using a structured, symbolic rhetoric to commemorate the mythic origins of the Kiowas. The question “What moves?” is succeeded by an answer in the next line where the identity of the ‘moving’ agent is determined by its origin and its past - “What moves … was wild and welling at the source…” (Momaday 1969: 2) suggests a reference to the past of the Kiowas when they were buffalo hunters and tamers of horses, traversing the wide open countryside to reach newer pastures.

A similar strategy is reflected in the closing poem “Rainy Mountain Cemetery” where the mountain itself is addressed and rendered into an embodiment of long entombed memories of a series of pasts, pasts which are recent in time, as well as pasts which are remotely placed. The text is as follows:

**RAINY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY**

Most is your name the name of this dark stone

Deranged in death, the mind to be inheres

Forever in the nominal unknown,
The wake of nothing audible he hears
Who listens here and now to hear your name.
The early sun, red as a hunter’s moon,
Runs in the plain. The mountain burns and shines;
And silence is the long approach to noon
Upon the shadow that your name defines -
And death this cold, black density of stone.

(Momaday 1969: 89)

The act of running suggested in the poem connects immediately to the running of the horses of which stories are told by the Kiowas (as Momaday tells in TWRM). It may also connect inter-textually to the twin related scenes of Abel’s running through the countryside after the death of his grandfather (at the beginning and at the end of the narrative) in HMOD. The name of the mountain becomes in itself a memory figure, being rememorated constantly by the author (the narrator) throughout the text in different voices - the voice of personal reminiscence, for instance, which talks about the close association of Aho and Rainy Mountain in the narrator’s memory. And the dark stone in the poem is symbolic of the entombment of centuries and generations of Kiowas ancestors among which the narrator’s grandmother takes her place (in her grave among other older ones) at the end of a long (‘and legendary’ as Momaday says) journey through life, and decades of cultural change. This is especially
observable in the last paragraph of the “Introduction” where Momaday says about the mourning that followed his grandmother’s death:

The next morning I awoke at dawn and went out in the dirt road to Rainy Mountain…the long yellow grass on the mountain shone in the bright light…There, where it ought to be, at the end of a long and legendary way, was my grandmother’s grave. Here and there on the dark stones were ancestral names. Looking back once, I saw the mountain and came away. (Momaday 1969:12)

These are examples of the use of places as sites of memory in the narrative of TWRM, as well as in TJTM. There are other instances as well where the mythic narrative and the narrative of personal reminiscence coalesce to create a more literal introduction to the more involved sites within the narrative. The mention of the Devils Tower in the “Introduction” to TWRM in a personal reminiscence by the author is one such instance. The Devil’s Tower (Tsoai, literally “Rock-tree”) occupies a central place in many Native American cosmogonies with several among the native nations laying claim to its prevalence in their mythology and cultural legends. The Arapaho, the Kiowa, the Shoshone and the Lakota, besides others, revere the igneous rock formation as sacred. The Devils Tower, known variously as Matȟó Thípila (Lakota for "Bear Lodge") or Ptehé Ği (Lakota for "Brown Buffalo Horn") is a laccolith in the Black Hills near Hulett and Sundance in Crook County, Wyoming, USA just above the Belle Fourche River. It is also the United States’ first declared National Monument. The first usage of the name
occurred in 1875 when Colonel Richard Dodge of the USGS applied the name to the rock formation. In violation of the treaties of Fort Laramie, the US government took possession of the Black Hills area in which the Tower is located, since reports of gold veins in that area had started coming in. The occupation of the area led to the loss of its control which had been granted to the local Lakota by the aforementioned Fort Laramie treaties. This led to the outbreak of an extended war between the US troops and the natives. This war, known as the 1870s Eastern Plains war is especially famous for its vehemence and the significant but sporadically few victories of the natives over the US troops. A primary event in this war was Custer’s famous “last stand” at Little Big Horn.

Devils Tower is also well known in American popular culture for its appearance in the 1977 science fiction film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* written and directed by Steven Spielberg. In TWRM, Momaday narrates how the Kiowa tribe formed one of its most significant cultural myths using this mountain as its cynosure:

(A)s if in the birth of time the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world was begun. There are things in nature that engender an awful quiet in the heart of man; Devil’s Tower is one of them… (this is followed by a reiteration of the myth of the eight siblings seven of whom became the stars of the Big Dipper) From that moment on, and so long as the legend lives, the Kiowa have kinsmen in the night sky. (Momaday 1969: 8)

Momaday’s reminiscence is accompanied by a rough but thoroughly symbolic etching of the rock formation on the page facing the last part of
the “Introduction” in TWRM. The etching portrays a frontal view of the Tower, but is interestingly also accompanied by a distinct star map of the Big Dipper arching just over the rock formation, and signifying a composite of portrayals of both a mythic event and an actual place; a site of memory therefore. Many of these sites of memory and memory figures occurring in the text duo TWRM and TJTM also are found recurring in the fictional narrative of HMOD where Momaday uses the privilege of fictionality to plot many scenes and segments of the novel using these mnemonic elements. Many characters in the novel are ‘remembered characters’, whose presences within the narrative reflect the mnemonic aspects of the narratives of TWRM and TJTM. It would be necessary to deliberate now on the novel to examine and interrogate these aspects of Momaday’s fictional writing.

3. 3. Dypaloh to Qtsedaba: Cultural Memory and Ethnicity in House Made of Dawn

_Dypaloh_ and _Qtsedaba_ are native Jemez Pueblo narrative conventions. These are invocations used at the beginning and closing of a story that is being told in a ritualistic manner. Momaday begins and closes the narrative of _House Made of Dawn_ with these two words respectively, thereby projecting the sense of a traditional Native American manner of narration rather than a modern English (American) literary narrative.
only. Leslie Marmon Silko also uses the phrase *Dypaloh* in her novel *Ceremony* in nearly the same way as Momaday does in HMOD. This is one of the very significant ways in which the rhetoric of the past is realised in the present in the narrative of the novel HMOD. These narrative conventions being cultural signifiers of a specific narrative-performative culture are used in the narrative of HMOD (and in Silko’s novel as well) in a manner that evokes a reiteration of a past narrative tradition in a present that has been distanced from it by modernity, acculturation and colonisation but the restitution of which has been attempted by an ethnic revival that seeks to re-construct its own past as an edifice of identity. As Erll’s provisional definition of the phrase goes, cultural memory is “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts.” (Erll 2008: 2) The past which is, as Eiland says about Benjamin’s notions of remembrance, “a treasure-trove of images” (2006: xii) insinuates itself into the present with a disparate but influential signifying force, and modifies it, and reconstructs itself within the ambit of the present in ways that are sometimes more visible, more commemorative, or less visible, and more rememorative. Erll also analyses Jan Assmann’s definition of the ‘Cultural Memory’ in order to isolate what she calls “a cluster of central characteristics” primary among which, as Erll says, is the concretion of identity - “Concretion of identity means that social groups constitute a Cultural Memory, from which they derive their collective identity” (Erll 2011: 29). In the context of ethnic
identity formation and ethnic cultural memory, this particular aspect of cultural memory has been discussed in the previous chapters. To avoid repetition and yet maintain the commentary, however, it can be briefly said that the cultural memory of an ethnic community or an ethnie is undoubtedly the key factor in the crystallisation of ethnic pasts and their reconstruction through the ‘symbolic ethnicity’ in the present. It is this aspect of the intersection between ethnic identity formation and cultural memory reflected in N. Scott Momaday’s fictional narrative *House Made of Dawn* (HMOD) that must be examined in order to represent a detailed analysis of the novel as a memory narrative, as a medium of cultural memory. In order to do that, it would be necessary to deliberate briefly on the majorly significant mnemonic aspects of the novel including the intertextual elements which Momaday incorporates in it, besides the inclusion of memory figures like Tai-me and Aho and sites of memory like Tsoai and Rainy Mountain.

The structure of HMOD is nearly circuitous with divergences originating from the narrative’s centre and merging into it again. The narrative opens with the traditional phrase ‘Dypaloh’ which signals the opening of a narration in Jemez-Pueblo traditional narrative practices, and a scene where the protagonist Abel is seen “alone and running, hard at first, heavily, but then easily and well.” (Momaday 2010: 1). The first line in the novel which precedes Abel’s run describes a house that is made of
pollen, a house made of dawn. This scene occurs in the first part of the novel’s narrative (“Prologue”), and a similar scene, or rather, the same scene with Abel being portrayed as running in the dawn after his grandfather’s death is repeated at the end (“The Dawn Runner”) - “He was running, and under his breath he began to sing. There was no sound, and he had no voice; he had only the words of a song. And he went on running on the rise of the song. House made of pollen. House made of dawn. Qtsedaba.” (Momaday 2010: 185) This circuitous structure of the narrative with reiterations of similar incidents narrated from the perspective of different key characters in the novel (Ben Benally’s narration) assumes a concentric nature as well, with intertextual interpolations by way of emplotment, and thereby enclosing an intratextual interplay of the past and the present within the lives of the characters, remembered or otherwise. Also, within the text, Momaday uses very subtle parallelisms to highlight the aspect of cultural transfer which is central to the idea of rememoration and cultural memory. For example, Francisco’s run in the past [something which is recalled by the old man - “Francisco remembered the race for good hunting…and he ran on the wagon road at dawn” (Momaday 2010: 7)] is reflected in Abel’s running at the end and at the beginning of the novel.
The story of the novel, set in Walatowa, is the story of Abel, a returning soldier from World War II whose war experiences have traumatized him to an extent that he cannot participate in a normal, native life easily. Momaday portrays Abel as a man torn between two cultures, the culture of his fathers, and the culture of the new America which he has defended and fought for. Being brought up by his traditionalist grandfather Francisco, and having encountered a different culture of fast and furious living away from the pale of the ancient customs of his forefathers, for Abel, accepting either of the two is not an easy choice. He succumbs to drink and a loss of mental equilibrium (the first entry of Abel in the narrative is one where he drops drunk out of a bus, and is collected by his grandfather). It is his identity as a Native American and his identity as an American soldier of the World War that are at loggerheads with each other. Momaday uses this conflicted characterisation of Abel to serve as a portrait of the ethnic American for whom no one culture is a natural choice because of the natural diversions that the other represents. The question then for Abel is one of choice, whether to run and hence flee it all, or to run easily (with a sense of identification) with the progress of time and the memories of the past, alternating with different versions of an incongruent and somewhat traumatic past, presenting themselves in one’s life and cultural understanding. In this way, Abel’s character in the novel might as well be considered a rememoration in itself, a figure that symbolises the cultural tension and ruptured sense of
identity that historically preceded the ethnic figuration of the Native American ethnies in post-Civil Rights America, much like the character of Kishwana Browne, or even George in Gloria Naylor’s narratives. As Scarberry-Garcia says:

Abel’s world view through most of the novel reflects his separation from his people. He sees the world in terms of fragmentation and isolation. He is not even accepted by other Indians in the skid row bars of Los Angeles. Abel is ill because of his separateness; he has no social bonds…forced to wander because…alienated from his people… (1990: 91)

Abel’s physical displacement occurs when he leaves for the war, and that trauma remains embedded in his psyche, resulting in both violence and a sense of fragmentation. The violence is manifest when Abel kills the albino in anger at being shamed during a community ritual (the ritual of the horses in the Middle at St. Santiago’s feast also is a commemorative ritual that recalls the running of the horses in TWRM). This fragmentation is very obvious in the narrative when it is Abel’s life that is being narrated. However, it is only the interference of transferred memories (through his grandfather, primarily) that rescues Abel from his fit of apathy and brings him close to the country, the land of his birth, and his native roots.

Besides Abel, there are other characters in the novel whose cultural significance is not lesser than the former when it is the mnemonic aspect of the narrative that is being considered. For example, the ‘remembered’ character of Fray Nicolás whose journals are being read by Father
Olguin throughout a certain portion of the narrative signifies the aspect of cultural transfer and its role in the mnemonic signification that embellishes the text. Also, the character of Tosamah in the section titled ‘The Priest of the Sun’ is one such figure who acts as a medium of cultural memory within the narrative of the novel. Besides recalling the ancient pasts of the Native Americans, Tosamah’s sermon that continues while the trauma wracked Abel wakes up suddenly in a distant shore far from his home is a parallel discourse within the novel that again supplements the cultural and identity tension prevalent in Abel’s character throughout the narrative. While, with Abel’s presence as predominantly a bleak representation in HMOD, the obvious interpretation that may be drawn about it is that the narrative represents only the ruptured sense of ethnic identity of the Native American individual in a certain historical epoch, it is not all that narrative of HMOD represents. The significance of this very important novel (as far as Kenneth Lincoln’s idea of the Native American Renaissance is considered) cannot be limited to this obviously simplistic interpretation. It is also primarily a story of healing, of restitution. Torn between polarities of identity and affiliation, Abel’s fractured sense of individuality is restored to health by the curative presence of both tradition and ethnic formation; the first embodied by his grandfather Francisco (whose presence is embodied in the section titled ‘The Longhair’) and the second by the character of Ben Benally who, in spite
of belonging to the same generation as Abel as it would seem is referred to as and in the section of the narrative titled “The Night Chanter”.

Through the ceremonial, and commemorative, act of running that surrounds the circuitous structure of the novel from the beginning till the end, Abel drops his exhaustion and sense of rupture and begins to run easily through the open countryside while singing a song about a *house made of pollen, house made of dawn*. The circuit of Abel’s life, in spite of the many breakages and malaises that have afflicted it on familial and cultural levels, achieves a completion, and a solidity that is reflected in the circuit of the novel reaching a closure in the last lines of the narrative which, in turn, ends with Qtsedaba, the traditional phrase for a closing of a story that has been successfully narrated.

The intertextual aspects of the novel also are of great significance if the mnemonic aspect of the narrative is to be considered, and if it is at all to be read as a text that acts as a medium of cultural memory. The interpolation of ritual observances, extant rites and lyrics, and other cultural texts within the novel render its text into an assemblage of traces of cultural memory as it is. And this takes place at different levels of the narrative, of course, beginning with that part of the novel which deals with Abel’s presence down to the parts where Big Bluff Tosamah speaks. The intertextuality that is very evident in the novel takes the form of native texts incorporated in the body of the narrative [an instance
would be “the story of Tai-me, of how Tai-me came to the Kiowas” (Momaday 2010: 85) that Momaday includes, almost verbatim, in the section titled “The Priest of the Sun” as well as non-native ones (the Gospel of St. John that Tosamah narrates to his audience while casting ‘Old John’ as a ‘white man’ in his sermon). It further develops through the narrative with the incorporation of ‘cultural texts’ like the experiences of the Peyote religion and its intricate esotericism (again in this section where the peyote plant’s hallucinatory effects are narrated along with their significance in the rites) and the ritual dances (like the one that takes place at dawn at Juliano Medina’s). The presence of ‘memory figures’ like Aho and Tai-me along with the recurrence of Rainy Mountain as a site of memory also accentuates the intertextuality of HMOD. The general schema that Momaday follows in the novel is thus one of memorialisation and commemoration than a direct mechanism of rememoration which he follows in the text duo of TJTM and TWRM. Whereas in the latter he represents the act of recall as a mnemonic process leading to the perpetuation and re-construction of the ancient cultural past, in the former he uses commemoration as a narrative strategy leading onto a fragmentary structure of mnemonic signification to achieve the representation of ethnic conflict, and thence to a consolidation of Native American ethnic formation and ethnic identity using post-World War II America as a backdrop for that.
The narrative of HMOD is thus a memory narrative about the ethnic formation of the Native American ethnies in the United States post-Civil Rights movements in the country and the history of pan-Indian movements (like the Red Power Movement) referred to earlier in the “Introduction” of this dissertation. Abel, Ben Benally, Francisco, Father Olguin and Tosamah are not stereotypes, of course, of the differently located but universally ‘displaced and disenchanted Indians’ as popular interpretation may be wont to receive the novel. These characters are representations, rather, of the intergenerational metamorphosis of the ethnic identity of the Native Americans in the United States whose sense of selfhood and identity proceeds and develops differently across time and space, and continues to do so even now. Even though the earlier histories of the nation have not been particularly just to these ethnies who were, actually and historically, the first settlers of the American continents, their contemporary cultural and ethnic history does belie a deeper sense of restoration with every passing event, or historical juncture.