

Article

Cartographies of the Voice: Storying the Land as Survivance in Native American Oral Traditions

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Abstract: This article examines how Native places are made, named, and reconstructed after colonization through storytelling. Storying the land is a process whereby the land is invested with the moral and spiritual perspectives specific to Native American communities. As seen in the oral traditions and written literature of Native American storytellers and authors, the voices of indigenous people retrace and remap cartographies for the land after colonization through storytelling. This article shows that the Americas were storied by Native American communities long before colonial contact beginning in the fifteenth century and demonstrates how the land continues to be storied in the present as a method of decolonization and cultural survivance. The article examines manifestations of the oral tradition in multiple forms, including poetry, interviews, fiction, photography, and film, to demonstrate that the land itself, through storytelling, becomes a repository of the oral tradition. The article investigates oral narratives from precontact and postcolonial time periods and across numerous nations and geographical regions in the Americas, including stories from the Mayan *Popol Vuh*; Algonkian; Western Apache; Hopi; Haudenosaunee/Iroquois; and Laguna Pueblo stories; and the contemporary poetry and fiction of Joy Harjo (Mvskoke/Creek Nation) and Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo).

Keywords: Native American oral traditions; storytelling and the environment; Algonkian oral narrative; Haudenosaunee/Iroquois oral narrative; Hopi oral narrative; Joy Harjo; Leslie Marmon Silko; *Popol Vuh*; Western Apache oral narrative; decolonization

1. Introduction

In the oral traditions and written literature of Native American¹ storytellers and authors, the voices of indigenous people story the Americas, investing the land with the moral, spiritual, and cultural perspectives specific to their communities. The place-making that occurs in and through these stories enacts cartographies for indigenous communities which meld geography with native history.² The Americas were storied by Native American communities long before colonial contact beginning in the fifteenth century, as evidenced in works such as the Mayan *Popol Vuh*³. This process of storying the

¹ The terminology used to name the indigenous peoples of the Americas is a subject of ongoing discussion and debate. “Native American” and “American Indian” are the terms commonly used in academia. Native Americans use the names of their communities, such as Diné, Hopi, and Abenaki, to refer to themselves. I follow this tradition and name specific nations in this article whenever possible. The word “tribe” is also contested, as it is considered to be an anthropological term, although it appears frequently in Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) literature. The words “nation” and “community”, which are often preferred by Native American peoples and scholars, will be used in this article. For further discussion on terminology, see Lindsey Claire Smith [1].

² See Vine Deloria Jr.’s discussion of the “sacred geography” of Native American communities in [2].

³ The *Popol Vuh*, literally “Council Book” or “Book of the People”, was originally a hieroglyphic book of ancient Mayan literature. Hieroglyphic books were burned by missionaries after European contact in the 16th century. Dennis Tedlock traces the writing of the alphabetic *Popol Vuh* to between 1554–1558 [3].

land has never ceased; contrary to the myth of the “vanishing Indian”⁴, the indigenous people who live in the Americas have continually made, retraced, and adapted these stories.

In his essay, “Yeats and Decolonization”, Edward Said discusses the geographical violence of imperialism on Native places, places which were once inhabited by indigenous communities prior to contact with colonizers. Said asserts that the imagination plays a critical role in restoring indigenous “geographical identity”:

Now if there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism it is the primacy of the geographical in it. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of his or her colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss to an outsider of the local place, whose concrete geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. ([5], p. 77)

In Said’s view, the colonial subject is exiled from an indigenous landscape which is transformed by colonization. That landscape can be recreated, despite these transformations, through the “cartographic impulse”, an act of the imagination that seeks “to map, to invent, or to discover, a *third* nature, which is not pristine and prehistorical...but one that derives historically and abductively from the deprivations of the present” ([5], p. 79). Through the metaphorical space of a “third nature”⁵, writers can restore, reclaim, or recreate their native places, places which may be physically altered or physically irretrievable.

The geographical violence Said describes is, in the case of the Americas, inextricably bound with linguistic violence. The journal of Christopher Columbus from his voyage to the Americas in 1492 and his letter to Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon in 1493 show how his intention to claim ownership of the land of the Americas for Spain was enacted through renaming the lands he encountered.⁶ In a journal entry from 19 October, Columbus writes:

After less than three hours’ sailing we sighted an island to the E. We braced up and headed for it, and the three vessels reached it before noon at its northern point, where there is an islet and a reef running off it to the N, and another between it and the island proper. The men from San Salvador whom I have on board told me that its name is Samoet; I have named it Isabela [sic]. The wind was northerly, and the islet I mentioned is on course for the island of Fernandina, on a line E-W of my departure point from there. From the islet the coast ran westward for twelve and a half leagues to a headland. I have called the cape here at the western end Cabo Hermoso, and it is indeed beautiful, round and with plenty of depth of water, with no shoals. [6]

It is clear from Columbus’ journal that he was aware that the lands he saw were already named by the indigenous people who inhabited them. Columbus renames Samoet, the name the Taíno people had given to the land on which they lived, as if the new name would give Spain the right to ownership. In his 1493 letter to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Columbus later recalls,

I named the first of these islands San Salvador, thus bestowing upon it the name of our holy Saviour, under whose protection I made the discovery. The Indians call it Guanahanyn [Taíno for “iguana”]. I gave also a new name to the others, calling the second Santa Maria de la Concepcion, the third Fernandina, the fourth Isabella, the fifth Juana. In the same manner I named the rest. [7]

⁴ For discussion of this myth and the continuance of Native American peoples and presence in New England, see Lisa Brooks [4].

⁵ In speaking of a “third nature”, Said builds on the concept of a “second nature” proposed by the geographer Neil Smith, who defines the term as a landscape transformed by the commodification of space under capitalism and imperialism.

⁶ Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon were married in 1469. Their policy of joint rule resulted in the unification of the Spanish monarchy.

Naming for Columbus entails taking possession: it is method of remapping indigenous geography into Spanish territory.

Storying the land by the indigenous peoples of the Americas works against the geographical and linguistic violence that began with Columbus. This practice traverses the precolonial past and the present and enables what Indira Karamcheti calls a “linguistic reoccupation of the land” [8]. This article examines the process of storying the land to show how Native places are made, named, and reconstructed after colonization through storytelling. It demonstrates that this cultural practice began prior to colonial contact and has since become a method of Native American decolonization and survivance. Building on Anishinaabeg scholar Gerald Vizenor’s concept [9], this article shows how survivance occurs through the continuing voices of Native American storytellers and authors who retrace and remap cartographies of the Americas after colonization.

Storytelling abounds in various artistic media in contemporary Native America, going beyond oral narrative and written literature to include genres such as film and photography. In readings of oral stories recorded in poems, fiction, interviews, film, and photography, this article will demonstrate that, across Native American nations in widespread geographical regions, the land itself becomes a repository of oral traditions through storytelling.

Because each Native American nation has a specific relationship with the land with which it is associated, this article investigates the diversity of those relationships while identifying common themes and concerns through analysis of oral narratives across precontact and postcolonial time periods and from numerous nations across the Americas. Although it is not possible to represent all Native American communities here, the article will examine stories from the Mayan *Popol Vuh* (Mesoamerica)⁷, Algonkian (New England, Canada, and Great Lakes Region)⁸, Western Apache (East-Central Arizona), Hopi (Northeastern Arizona), Haudenosaunee/Iroquois (Northeastern Woodlands, New York)⁹, and Laguna Pueblo (Central New Mexico) stories, and the contemporary poetry and fiction of Joy Harjo (Mvskoke/Creek Nation, b. 1951)¹⁰ and Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo, b. 1948). In responding to the specific local relationships between the land and the culture of individual Native American peoples while looking across national boundaries toward commonalities in Native perspectives on the land, this article is in accord with Craig Womack’s [10,11] call for a literary criticism that is rooted in nation-specific realities while affirming international Native concerns.

2. Inscribing the Land with the Voice: Storytelling as Place-Making

In Native American oral traditions, words are accorded generative power and are capable of bringing the world (literally “sky-earth, or *kajulew*” in Quiché) into being. As seen in the Mayan *Popol Vuh* (alphabetic version recorded in the mid-16th century): “And then the earth arose because of [the gods], it was simply their word that brought it forth. For the forming of the earth they said ‘Earth’. It arose suddenly, just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming, unfolding” ([3], pp. 59, 65). Out of their breath, their imaginative saying, the Mayan gods create the land and the world.

Blood Moon (Xkik’), a moon goddess and daughter of the Xibablban lord, demonstrates how her relationship with the land can be storied to transmit knowledge about the land. Pregnant with the twins of One Hunahpu, Blood Moon is put to a test by her mother-in-law, Xmucane, to prove she is the

⁷ The Mayan civilization lived in Mesoamerica, including present-day Guatemala, Southern Mexico, Belize, and portions of El Salvador and Honduras.

⁸ The term Algonkian includes the Native communities who speak an Algonquian language. Geographically, Algonkian communities encompass all of the Native Nations of New England, most of Canada, and the Great Lakes region.

⁹ The Haudenosaunee/Iroquois Confederacy was originally comprised of five nations: the Mohawk, Seneca, Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga. The Tuscarora nation later joined the confederation in 1722. Collectively they are called the Six Nations.

¹⁰ The Mvskoke/Creek Nation is originally from the southeastern Woodlands area (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Southern Tennessee, and Mississippi). The Mvskoke/Creek Nation was forced to relocate to Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma, in the 1830s following the Indian Removal Act in 1830. Joy Harjo was born in Oklahoma and currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

mother of the twins. Although Blood Moon finds only one clump of corn plants in the garden, Blood Moon calls on all four names of Xtoj, the “guardian of the food”, to rise up and aid her in her task to gather a netful of corn from the garden cultivated by One Monkey and One Artisan. After calling out to Thunder Woman, Yellow Woman, Cacao Woman, and Cornmeal Woman, Blood Moon’s prayers are answered when the corn cooperates with her: “And then she took hold of the silk, the bunch of silk at the top of the ear. She pulled it straight out, she didn’t pick the ear, and the ear reproduced itself to make food from the net. It filled the big net” ([3], p. 103). In speaking the names of the guardian goddess, she activates the powers those names contain as they relate to the natural world. Blood Moon entreats both the goddess and the land, and the self-generating corn is evidence of their collaboration.

When the corn responds to Blood Moon’s request to help her prove her identity, the story shows how the process of “silking” is critical for the method by which corn plants actually reproduce. Like the storying of the multiplication and giving of corn in the *Popol Vuh*, ancient events such as climate change, glaciation, and evolution are encoded in Algonkian “deep time” stories, especially in a body of Native oral traditions Abenaki anthropologist and storyteller Margaret Bruhac calls “Earthshaper” or “Transformer” stories. Bruhac observes:

The Algonkian stories that have survived resonate with, and record, historical presence, and provide the background, frame, stage, and context for the material world. Some of the oldest oral traditions describe how ancient beings left physical traces, by marking the landscape with their footprints, reshaping natural earth formations, carving out rivers, doing battle with superhuman elementals and molding giant megafauna down to their present size. ([12], pp. 57–58)

Whereas the European scientific tradition may describe topographical change through the term “glacier”, for example, Bruhac argues that an “Earthshaper” from the Native American oral tradition is no less meaningful as a historical record. One such precontact Algonkian Earthshaper story tells of the Great Beaver who dammed the Connecticut River Valley and caused it to flood, creating the built environment. The oral tradition is significantly older and more voluminous than the scientific tradition, as Bruhac notes: “The archaeological evidence of pre-glacial human habitation has been destroyed by glacial scouring of the land, but the oral tradition suggests that human witnesses may have observed glacial events, and encoded them in a memorable narrative form” ([12], p. 66), events accessible through the Earthshaper stories that continue to be told in the Algonkian tradition. Bruhac emphasizes the similarities in the oral and scientific narrative frameworks in their description of topological change, suggesting that human history in relation to the earth is impoverished when the oral tradition is dismissed.

As seen in the precontact stories in the Mayan *Popol Vuh* and in the Algonkian oral tradition, storying the land enables a conduit for the continued transmission of cultural knowledge. When the land is storied, it acquires the cultural value of a place. Because the place-names¹¹ of the Western Apache of Cibecue, Arizona are invested with the breath and story of ancestral storytellers, the names are traces of their presence; places, in being called their given names, remember their namers. As Keith Basso, an anthropologist who worked with the Western Apache community, notes,

the past is a well-worn ‘path’ or ‘trail’ (*intin*) which was traveled first by the people’s founding ancestors and which subsequent generations of Apaches have traveled ever since. Beyond the memories of living persons, this path is no longer visible—the past has disappeared—and thus it is unavailable for direct consultation and study. For this reason, the past must be constructed—which is to say, imagined—with the aid of historical

¹¹ This compound noun appears both with and without a hyphen in scholarship. I follow Keith Basso’s use of the hyphen, which I interpret as a reflection of his finding that names, with their storied meanings, are culturally fused to places in Western Apache culture.

materials, sometimes called ‘footprints’ or ‘tracks’ (*bike’ goz’aa*), that have survived into the present. ([13], p. 31)

The breath of storytellers continually construct the past, making verbal marks on the land that define it as a place. These place-names are a form of “footprints” or “tracks” that invest the land with Western Apache history and culture, creating a kind of map that renders the “path” of the past visible in the postcolonial present.

As the land is storied, it accumulates the speech of its storytellers. Basso discovers the living nature of this speech when he continually mispronounces a Western Apache place-name in the presence of his guide. His failure to pronounce the name correctly is seen as disrespectful because he is misquoting the speech of the guide’s ancestors ([13], p. 10). In mispronouncing the place-name, Basso unwittingly commits a speech act that dishonors both the place he is referring to and the memory of the guide’s early ancestors who named the place. The place-name carries the speech of the Western Apache ancestors which was passed down through generations and is believed to live on in the community: Basso is receiving an inheritance in learning the place-name, both activating the speech of those ancestors and adding to their speech with his own voice.

Through the activity of place-making, the physical land surrounding the Western Apache becomes an extension of the identity of its people. This belief that the land is a part of the people is shared across numerous Native American nations. As Vernon Masayesva, a Hopi Tribal chairman from 1990 to 1994 states, “As a Hopi, when you look out into the landscape, you have to remind yourself that’s where you came from, and in Hopi religion and culture, that’s where you go back to” [14]. As Laguna Pueblo author Leslie Marmon Silko asserts, the English word “landscape”, conventionally understood as an external place separate from the viewer, is problematic insofar as it suggests a demarcated exterior place. In her discussion of Laguna Pueblo migration stories, Silko suggests that Pueblo consciousness is deeply integrated with and therefore inextricable from the landscape:

Pueblo potters, the creators of petroglyphs and oral narratives, never conceived of removing themselves from the earth and sky. So long as the human consciousness remains within the hills, canyons, cliffs, and the plants, clouds, and sky, the term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. ‘A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view’ does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *outside* or *separate from* the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. ([15], p. 27)

Silko’s words here resonate with Mvskoke poet Joy Harjo’s search for a “land-based language” to arrive at words that articulate “the spirit of place recognized” [16]. Harjo’s belief that decolonization is possible through language, even through a reinvention of the language of the colonizer, is reflected in an anthology of contemporary Native American women’s writing she edited with Gloria Bird, titled *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language* [17]. For Silko, the word “land”, as opposed to “landscape”, includes and involves the Pueblo potters, whose being-in-the-land shapes their identity and artwork. As with the Western Apache of Cibecue, whose place-names tell a collective history, the land as viewed by the Pueblo potters is an interconnected web, of which the potters are part and with which they participate: “Even in the most sophisticated abstract form, a squash flower or a cloud or a lightning bolt became intricately connected with a complex system of relationships that the ancient Pueblo people maintained with each other and with the populous natural world they lived within” ([15], p. 28). The Pueblo artists’ pottery are expressions of the potters’ integrated consciousness with the land as they continue to retrace a map of the past through new works of art in the present.

3. Land as Interlocutor in Joy Harjo’s Poetry: Tracing the Route of Emergence

In the Native American oral narratives examined above, the land is seen as an active and dynamic force, a storyteller itself. In Joy Harjo’s poetry, the dialogic relationship between human beings and

the land is made explicit. In Harjo's poem, "For Alva Benson, and For Those Who Have Learned to Speak" ([18], pp. 33–34), both the speaker and the land respond to each others' voices:

And the ground spoke when she was born.
Her mother heard it. In Navajo she answered
as she squatted down against the earth
to give birth. It was now when it happened,
now giving birth to itself again and again
between the legs of women. (1–6)

The ground speaks, as if welcoming the new member to its society and affirming the creative work of the mother. The girl's mother is capable of hearing the land's voice and enters into conversation with it, answering in Navajo. The interconnectedness of the mother's and child's relationship to the land is evident in the way the child's birth is simultaneous with and equated to the earth's own birth: the ground "now giving birth to itself again and again/between the legs of women" (5–6). These lines suggest that the human mother's body is an extension of the land's body; like artistic works of the Pueblo potters, the mother's giving birth is an expression of her unity with the land. The mother is the immediate "Emergence Place" of the child, and through the mother's intimate relationship with the land, the earth where the child is born is an extension of that site of emergence. Because Harjo defines the mother and the land as a part of each other, they give birth together, the child's appearance an affirmation of the land's present life.

In Harjo's poem, the kinship between the mother and the earth is so durable that they are able to converse with each other even when the setting of the birth changes. Although Harjo initially presents the birth scene as occurring directly on the earth as it might have in ancient times ("she squatted down against the earth/to give birth"), in the second, she posits, "Or maybe it was the Indian Hospital in Gallup" (3–4; 7–8). Whether the birth happened "against the earth" or in a modern hospital on the Navajo Reservation is of peripheral importance, Harjo suggests; the most crucial fact was that "The ground still spoke beneath/mortar and concrete" (8–9). Even when the mother's hands are tied down, "her body went on speaking" in determined conversation with the earth (12–13). Because the mother and the land are of one body, their integrated consciousness does not require the use of words, even of the Navajo language. Although the mother's labor screams are muffled, the earth can still hear her "body...talking" throughout the process of their joint birthing (12–13).

Harjo situates the birth between worlds and times; the mythic world of the mother's ancestors is as present in the poem as the postcolonial Indian Hospital in Gallup. Her use of ambiguity regarding the exact place of the birth suggests that the mother's dialogue with the earth persists through time. In her discussion of the Emergence Place of the Laguna Pueblo people, Silko postulates that the storied land as understood in its "ritual-mythic" dimension is still meaningful today for the Laguna Pueblo who continue to traverse the route of their Emergence:

if the stories about boulders, springs, and hills are actually remnants from a ritual that retraces the Creation and Emergence of the Laguna Pueblo people as a culture, as the people they became, then continued use of that route creates a unique relationship between the ritual-mythic world and the actual, everyday world. A journey from Pagate to Laguna down the long decline of Pagate Hill retraces the original journey from the Emergence Place, which is located slightly north of the Pagate village. Thus, the landscape between Pagate and Laguna takes on a deeper significance: the landscape resonates the spiritual, or mythic, dimension of the Pueblo world even today. ([15], pp. 35–36)

The Laguna Pueblos' relationship with their Emergence Place has remained intact, Silko contends, through the perpetuation of the story and the continued use of the route of their creation. In "For Alva Benson, and For Those Who Have Learned to Speak", Harjo simultaneously depicts the postcolonial

reality of giving birth on the Navajo Reservation while asserting that the child's birth is a renewal of the covenant with the Emergence Place: "It is the ground murmuring, and Mount Saint Helens/erupts as the harmonic motion of a child turning/inside her mother's belly waiting to be born to begin another time" (30–33). Harjo's poem supports Silko's view that the land's longstanding relationship and dialogue with Native American people continues in the postcolonial present.

The relationship Harjo describes is a symbiotic one. The land is accorded the agency to speak, but the speaker acknowledges that the land's voice can become obscured amid the din of the city. The child grows up speaking both Navajo and English, and watches

...the earth around her shift and change
with the people in the towns and in the cities
learning not to hear the ground as it spun around
beneath them. She learned to speak for the ground,
the voice coming through her like roots that
have long hungered for water. (16–22)

The child inherits her mother's relationship to the land and also becomes an extension of the land's body. Her voice becomes a conduit for the land's voice, which comes "through her like roots that/have long hungered for water" (21–22). The girl's speaking for the ground is not a form of ventriloquism because her body is part of the land and vice versa. In an articulation of mutual reciprocity, the ground in the poem turns to the girl's voice for life-giving water. She is the life-sustainer for the earth, learning "to speak for the ground" even as others in the city learn "not to hear the ground" (19,18). This is the voice that the girl's mother heard and that she hears herself when she becomes a mother: "a voice like water, like the gods weaving/against sundown in a scarlet light" (26–27). Here, the land is an interlocutor and a vehicle of continuing orality: it depends on the girl to speak for it and to carry that voice on to the next generation.

4. Storying the Land as a Method of Survivance

As seen in Harjo's poetry, listening to the land and articulating the stories with which it has been embedded is a method of physical and cultural survivance. A Native American story incorporating the landscape can serve as practical a function as a physical map, as Silko relates: "hunting stories were not merely after-dinner entertainment. These accounts contained information of critical importance about the behavior and migration patterns of mule deer. Hunting stories carefully described key landmarks and locations of fresh water. Thus, a deer-hunt story might also serve as a map" ([15], p. 32). The physical survival of Pueblo hunters and their families depended on careful listening and memorization of stories. Landmarks which were storied by these hunting tales could serve as mnemonic devices for the encoded knowledge that would help hunters find sustenance.

Storying the land entails more than physical survival, however. For Vizenor, "Native survivance" means "more than mere survival, more than endurance...Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of native stories, not just a reaction, however pertinent, or the mere right of a survivable name" ([9], pp. 12–13). Inherent in the continuance of Native American culture through storying the land and place-making is the perpetuation of the moral ethos with which places are imbued. As the land remembers its storytellers and their worldviews through their place-names and associated stories, it simultaneously relays the embedded moral dimension of those stories.

A Haudenosaunee story, "How the Bear Clan Became Healers", demonstrates how the storied land can be a guide for perpetuating cultural and moral values while ensuring the physical survival of a people. In the story, an elderly man arrives at a Haudenosaunee village, begging for food. Clan after clan refuse to help him, and finally a young woman from the Bear Clan named Little Light takes the man in and feeds him. The old man suddenly falls ill and undergoes a series of successive illnesses,

which he teaches Little Light how to cure with medicines gathered from the environment. The choice of Little Light as a healer is not made lightly; the power of healing is entrusted to her because her heart is worthy of the gift. Little Light is characterized as a morally sound person: she has “the goodness of heart to relieve suffering” ([19], p. 84). Like the mothers in Harjo’s poem, Little Light is taught to be in conversation with the land, learning not only what to gather but also how to gather it. Before taking the herb for a stomach ache, for example, “she was to make an offering of tobacco and say a prayer of thanks to the plant” ([19], p. 80). In addition to relaying which medicines are effective for specific illnesses, the Haudenosaunee story also conveys how to honor and to be in conversation with the land.

The storied land is a moral force that reminds people of their responsibility to it and to each other. In an interview with Annie Peaches, an elderly Western Apache woman from Cibecue, Basso records her conviction that “The land is always stalking people. The land makes people live right. The land looks after us. The land looks after people” ([13], p. 38). Because the land is physically present in Peaches’ life and in the life of her community, the stories with which it has become inextricably linked over time accord the land the moral agency to make people “live right”. Nick Thompson, an Apache horseman, singer and medicine man, shares Peaches’ view, relating that even if the person who told the story dies, “It’s like that person is still alive... The names of all these places are good. They make you remember how to live right, so you want to replace yourself again” ([13], p. 59). Thompson emphasizes that living near storied places allows for the moral values intertwined with the land to be continually imprinted upon the mind of the viewer. If one strays from the Apache moral code, a member of the community can “shoot” the offender with a story that will continue to “stalk” her; the story-arrow is intended to correct her ways. Thompson indicates that an Apache in need of moral correction does not merely seek a superficial change in behavior, but rather a radical replacement of the current self with the “right” self as suggested by the land. Becoming this replacement entails looking to the storied land for direction, a realignment of self as part of and in accord with the land as it has been named.

If the physical presence of the places that are named by the community increase the efficacy of moral correction, what happens when members of the community relocate? In Thompson’s view, the storyteller still “lives” through the story arrow, and place-names outlast their storytellers. Distance does not diminish the power of the land’s voice: A place-name, though disembodied, endures in the memory and continues to work in the life of its rememberer. The place-name is a form of oral technology, ensuring the memorability of the Western Apache way of life: the place created through the storying of the land remains fused to the place-name, thus becoming a “portable” reminder of Western Apache culture and morality. Not all Western Apaches share this positive outlook, however, insisting on the importance of the lived nearness to the physical land itself to maintain the culture of the community. Western Apache children are regarded as “losing the land” when they act contrary to the tribe’s social norms, and it is believed that the source of their troublesome behavior lies in their ignorance of place-names and the stories associated with the land.

The film *In The Light of Reverence* makes a strong argument for the necessity of the physical land in preserving Native American culture. In his advocacy against the gravel mining of the Woodruffe Butte in Arizona, a site sacred to the Hopi tribe, former Hopi tribal chairman Vernon Masayesva shows how the land is physically storied. Masayesva’s Hopi ancestors wrote directly onto the land, inscribing their presence and stories with petroglyphs on the rocks composing and surrounding Woodruff Butte. The inscribed land itself, Masayesva argues, is the Hopi “history book”. Masayesva shows areas where rifle shots have effaced these pictures; erasure of the land entails the erasure of Hopi history and stories. The Hopi view themselves as a part of the corpus of the land they have storied and inscribed: as Masayesva notes, “In our worldview, we are the clouds. We are the rain that comes down.” The demolition of Woodruffe Butte threatens the destruction of the Hopi culture because their sacred shrines, nine of which have been destroyed, cannot be taken out of context. For the Hopi people, land is more than a vehicle of the oral tradition or a mnemonic for cultural values; it is the repository itself. These sacred sites are not portable in the way place-names may be.

5. Adaptation and Continuance in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*: Storying the Land in Contemporary Fiction and Photography

Whether place-names in themselves, detached from the land, can serve to perpetuate the cultural universe of the Western Apache is unclear, but it is evident that these place-names keep an oral record of environmental and human-initiated changes in the land. Storied place-names such as the "Great Beaver" (Algonkian) can explain how natural phenomena came to be, and can also give voice to how the land has changed over time through dissonance with the names' original source and context. Snakes Water (*Tliish Bi Tu'e*), currently an inactive spring a few miles west of Cibecue, is an example of a place-name giving "evidence of change" in the land. Charles tells Basso the story of how his ancestors survived by relieving their thirst at the once-active spring. Standing at the site, named after a source of water, Charles states, "The names do not lie...They show what is different and what is still the same" ([13], p. 16).

Photographs now serve as contemporary place-names in that they are also mobilized to tell stories through differences between the captured image and the present state of the land. Like place-names, they signal what has changed and what has remained, making visible that which has disappeared. In the "Yellow Woman" section of her book, *Storyteller*, Silko includes a photograph taken by her father, Lee H. Marmon, to convey the human devastation of Laguna land at the site of the Anaconda company's open pit uranium mine ([20], p. 80). In the photograph, cumulus clouds hover over mesas and hills, and what appear to be shelters or dwellings appear in the foreground, along with dirt roads. The quiet scene is devoid of people, but it is evident that people are living or working on the land. Only when one turns to the back of the book, to Silko's caption, does the reader learn that this is the site of an open pit uranium mine which has inflicted massive damage to the land:

Looking east from Paguate Village at the open pit uranium mine which the Anaconda company opened on Laguna land in the early 1950's. This photograph was made in the early 1960's. The mesas and hills that appear in the background and the foreground are gone now, swallowed by the mine. In the beginning, the Laguna people did not want the mining done on their land, but then as now, military needs and energy development far outweighed the people. ([20], p. 270)

Silko's caption locates the reader in time, describing the view of the land in the photograph taken about ten years after the opening of the mine. She also notes how much the land has changed: "The mesas and hills that appear in the background and foreground are gone now." Like the girl in Harjo's poem, Silko's voice becomes a conduit for the land, speaking in concert with her father's photograph for its changes. The photograph immediately following the image of the mine is of Laguna village, showing the presence of the Laguna people on the land. Silko also speaks for her community, clarifying that the Laguna people were against the mining but could not prevent or put an end to it.

Silko uses her father's photographs of the Anaconda company's mine and the Laguna village as "place-names" to relay knowledge of the land's changes twenty years later, from the viewpoint of her generation. Silko's literary voice layers onto her father's photographic voice, and their work together allows the land to speak the story of its changes. Through visual and literary depiction, the land is able to speak more effectively than with words alone. As Bernard Hirsch notes, by using her father's photographs, Silko is not limited in her storytelling by her sphere of knowledge; she is able to transmit the cultural context of the land and its relationship with the Laguna people as it has continued from her father's generation to hers ([21], p. 155).

Silko goes back further than her father's generation to tell the story of the land's changes, calling on ancient destroyer stories such as that of the giant *Estrucuyu* to contextualize modern damage to the land. Immediately following the images of the Anaconda company's open-pit uranium mine and Laguna village, Silko tells the story of a young Laguna girl, Kochininako, who meets the animal *Estrucuyu* on a hunting expedition. Silko writes, "*Estrucuyu was some kind of giant/they had back in those days*", in the italicized voice, which in juxtaposition with the standard type face seems to relay the

collective voice of Silko's storytelling ancestors. *Estrucuyu* takes all of Kochininako's rabbits, as well as her weapons and clothes, but his hunger is insatiable. The giant animal is akin to an Algonkian Transformer and is as memorable as the Great Beaver; unlike the Beaver, however, *Estrucuyu*'s actions shape the world by taking and destroying rather than building and creating. The only way for Kochininako to survive is to use her wits to hide in a cave where the giant cannot reach her. She calls on her Twin Brothers, heroes recorded in Native American literature as far back as the *Popol Vuh*, to rescue her ([20], pp. 82–88).

Silko's juxtaposition of her father's photographs with this story serves to situate contemporary destroyers such as the mine within the tradition of Native American storytelling. By doing so, Silko extends its repertory of monsters: the mine is a symbol of a postcolonial system that dislocates human beings from the land. By drawing on both her father's photographs and the Native American oral tradition, Silko articulates the "psychic dislocation" [22] that is a condition of modernity for her people and works to reorganize what N. Scott Momaday calls an "ethical idea of the land". Silko creates an implicit comparison between the mine, whose hunger for the land's resources is insatiable, with the *Estrucuyu*'s hunger, warning that unless it is stopped, it will take all. Silko identifies the mine for what it is, in a language that exposes the full force of its threat: it is a present-day destroyer, as dangerous to human survival as the *Estrucuyu*. Through Silko's use of interconnected premodern oral storytelling and contemporary fiction, the land is given voice to "stalk" its reader to bring her back into dialogic relationship with the earth.

6. Conclusions

In her poem, "A Map to the Next World", Joy Harjo writes, "When you emerge note the tracks of the monster slayers where they/entered the cities of artificial light and killed what was killing us" ([18], pp. 41–42). The storytelling in Harjo's poetry and Silko's fiction engenders "monster slayers" which hunt the contemporary *Estrucuyus* of the postcolonial Americas. Storying the land enables a means of retracing and continually remaking the cultural and physical maps which were created prior to colonial contact.

Native American oral traditions such as that of the Western Apache reveal that when the land is inscribed with the storytelling voice, it acquires the cultural value of a place and is embedded with the moral ethos of the community. In readings of Native American oral narratives, including the Mayan *Popol Vuh*, Algonkian, Western Apache, Hopi, Haudenosaunee, and Laguna Pueblo stories, and the contemporary poetry of Joy Harjo and fiction of Leslie Marmon Silko, this article examined how native places are made, named, and reconstructed after colonization through storytelling. As seen in these narratives, the land becomes a repository for the oral tradition through the process of storying the land, a process which, as seen in the Mayan *Popol Vuh*, began prior to colonial contact, and, as exemplified in Harjo's poetry and Silko's fiction, continues to this day. The "path" of the past becomes visible and audible through the storied land, and transmission of these stories and place-names is a method of physical and cultural survivance for Native American communities after colonial contact.

Native American oral narratives often articulate a dialogic relationship with the land in which communities speak of, with, and for the land. Indeed, Harjo and Silko indicate that for the Mvskoke and the Laguna Pueblo, the land is not considered to be an external entity from their people. Storytelling enables the Laguna Pueblo to continue traveling the route of their emergence in the postcolonial present and to remain cognizant of their integrated consciousness with the land. Once stories about the land and the people are heard and understood, they are internalized; the place is carried inside the listener, and the land speaks from within. The Hopi oral and pictorial tradition insist, however, that the importance of maintaining a direct relationship with the land is paramount when the land itself is physically inscribed as a repository for the oral tradition. As Harjo and Silko illustrate, in the absence of such a relationship because of physical removal or destruction of the land, Native geographical identity and places can be reclaimed in the spaces created by storytelling.

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