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From Delirium to Coherence: Shamanism and Medicine Plants in Silko's *Ceremony*

THOMAS F. WESO

A nondescript rock shelter in Texas provides unexpected evidence for shamanism in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*. There, archaeologists found clearly identifiable images of antlered human figures and entheogenic plant substances, including datura (jimson weed), peyote, and ephedra (Indian or Mormon tea), items associated with shamanistic practices.¹ From a more recent site in Bandolier, New Mexico, datura seeds "in perfect condition" were found in the community house, occupied from 1383 to 1466.² These could be interpreted as evidence of shamanism in the Southwest, long before Silko makes use of some of the same animal and plant elements. Motifs of antlered animals and ceremonial medicine plants occur throughout the novel.

Ceremony has a dualistic plot structure, which alternates between the embedded traditional verse and the prose narrative. Additional strands of meaning are woven throughout these structures, including the language of animal and medicine plants. A deer is one of the central animals associated with Tayo, as well as the hybrid spotted cattle. Plants are present in a deliberate order, corresponding to the book's four ceremonies. These entheogenic plants—Indian tea (*ephedra*), tobacco, morning glory, and datura—effect healing changes in Tayo's consciousness. Most important is the ancient plant datura, the final ceremonial medicine and the one associated with Tayo himself.

Four healers, each associated with the plants, conduct the book's ceremonies: the traditional Laguna medicine man Ku'oosh; the nonorthodox mixed-blood Diné (Navajo) healer Betonie; the mystical spirit-woman Ts'eh, whose name resembles the Keres Pueblo word for Mount Taylor; and finally Tayo himself. By the end of the novel, Tayo learns the stories, the songs, the

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plants, and the ritual actions of a healer. Betonie sets Tayo on the path to become an active participant in healing by telling Tayo that he must find autumn stars, the spotted cattle, the mountain, and the woman Ts'eh (152). After Tayo experiences these, under the tutelage of Ts'eh, he finds a cliff drawing of an elk (230). This deer-like animal also signifies Tayo's assumption of the role of ceremonial leader, or *cheani*.

ANTLERED BEINGS: DEER, CATTLE, AND ELK

Tayo begins the novel in a state of confusion, but at the end, he realigns not only himself, but also the balance of earth and his people. Silko describes Tayo's state of mental disarray at the beginning of the book, along with the one image, a deer, that suggests stability:

So Tayo had to sweat through those nights when thoughts became entangled; he had to sweat to think of something that wasn't unraveled or tied in knots to the past—something that existed by itself, standing alone like a deer. And if he could hold that image of the deer in his mind long enough, his stomach might shiver less and let him sleep for a while. It worked as long as the deer was alone, as long as he could keep it a gray buck on an unrecognized hill; but if he did not hold it tight, it would spin away from him and become the deer he and Rocky had hunted.³

A mix of images, sensations, emotions, and compulsive memories fills Tayo's mind. He struggles to find a way to connect to his present condition, rather than something "tied in knots to the past." An image of a lone deer is the only anchor for Tayo's careening thoughts. It is a future image of Tayo himself, leading the way to meaningful interaction with the present-day landscape.

At first, the deer appears unremarkable, a familiar animal of the Laguna Pueblo area, hunted for meat. But as shape-shifting beings, deer are neither human nor plant; they are neither solely spiritual nor physical: rather, they open an intermediary space between realities. A closely related Zuni Pueblo tradition treats the deer ceremonially:

Therefore the deer is stalked ritualistically; he is enticed with sacred esoteric songs, he is killed in a prescribed manner, and when brought to the house is received as an honored guest and sent away with rich gifts to tell others of his tribe that he was well treated in his father's house.⁴

Tayo and his family follow this Pueblo ceremony, as well as the rest of the Laguna community: "All the people, even the Catholics who went to mass every Sunday, followed the ritual of the deer" (52). This included laying it out at home on a blanket and, like the Zuni people, giving it gifts of turquoise, silver, and cornmeal. The hunter who lives on Ts'eh's mountain sings a traditional hunters' song as he brings a dead deer on his shoulders. Later, the

mysterious hunter and Ts'eh follow the deer ritual as they place "pinches of cornmeal on the deer's nose, whispering to it" (208). The ceremonial treatment emphasizes the deer's liminal state between natural and supernatural. Tayo's ability to find an image of a deer in his early confusion signifies the potential for mediation between insanity and sanity, between interior vision and exterior landscape.

Before Tayo can find spiritual health, though, he identifies himself in the midst of shifting settings. In chasing the spotted cattle, he chases himself. The long-horned cattle can be considered a different kind of deer being; the cattle rustler in Silko's short story "Yellow Woman" is an example of a hunter turning to cattle as prey rather than deer, which also takes place in the mountains.⁵ On the cattle hunt, Tayo himself becomes the Texans' prey. He becomes a deer upon ceremonially bedding down in their place: "The deer made beds in shallow niches deep within the thickets where the oaks grew tall and made canopies of limbs and branches. He lay in a shallow depression and heaped piles of dry leaves over himself until he felt warm again" (203). Finally, he takes on the sound and gestures of the deer: "He shook his head the way the deer shook snow away and yelled out 'ahooooouuh!'" (205). It is as though he performs an extended, imitative deer dance on the mountain.⁶

At the end of his time with Ts'eh, Tayo finds the painted elk on the cliff (230–31). Here he finds the image repainted by priests "each year," and they call out a similar cry, "'A'moo'oooh!'" (230). Finally, in the kiva with Ku'oosh and the other elders, he finds himself looking at the same autumn sun: "It was while he was sitting there, facing southeast, that he noticed how the four windows along the south wall of the kiva had a particular relationship to this late autumn position of the sun" (257). This is the hunting season, and he is in the position of a deer on the mountain to the northwest. Immediately after this realization of her hero, Silko inserts the traditional text, the priests' song, "A'moo'oooh, you say you have seen her / Last winter / up north / with Mountain Lion / the hunter" (257). Tayo reenters the ceremonial cycle of the Laguna people here, as a bringer of life. After this transformation into another being's world, Tayo is then able to assume the role of a hunter, a taker of life, as, in the final scene with Auntie and Grandma, he is "oiling his hunting boots" (259).

The deer in the midst of Tayo's delirium is a shamanistic image that leads him out of the maze of insanity. The process for this transformation is ingestion of certain plants, just as deer feed from flora around them.

KU'OOSH AND INDIAN TEA

As soon as Grandmother suggests Ku'oosh, the Laguna medicine man, as the first healer for Tayo, references to a connection with plants appear in the text. The Christianized aunt complains, "'Old Ku'oosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust'" (34). She discounts the herbal medicines as mere "weeds." Grandmother, however, has faith in the old medicines and continues with plans to summon Ku'oosh. When Ku'oosh arrives, he commences the book's first ceremony with words before he uses plants. He mesmerizes Tayo into a

dream state with the archaic Laguna ceremonial dialect. At first, Tayo struggles like a child to understand Ku'oosh's words, but then the words come to life: "he heard the old man describe the cave, a deep lava cave northeast of Laguna where bats flew out on summer evenings" (35). Tayo begins to experience the cave in his memories, where "in the old days [the men] took the scalps and threw them down there" (35).

Healing begins with words, and then continues with corresponding plants. Indian (Mormon) tea, or *Ephedra virida*, is the dominant medicine plant in the encounter with Ku'oosh. It is a mild, adrenaline-like stimulant.⁷ Ku'oosh concludes the ceremony by prescribing the use of plants: "He brought out a bundle of dry green stalks and a small paper bag full of blue cornmeal. He laid the bundle of Indian tea in Tayo's lap" (38). Later, Tayo finds that the tea "was mild, tasting like the air after a rainstorm, when all the grass and plants smell green and earth is damp" (39). The tea and cornmeal mush form the first meal Tayo can eat without nausea. Silko emphasizes the colors green and blue with this meal, and these are foodstuffs from the land around the Pueblo. They connect Tayo to the land and the ceremonial practices of the people.

Ironically, it is the anti-traditional aunt who makes Tayo a meal of Indian tea and blue cornmeal mush from Ku'oosh's offerings and feeds him like a baby, "spoonful by spoonful" (39).⁸ This ceremony, with Indian tea, effects a partial healing: "Some nights he even slept all night without the dreams" (39). Silko also refers to "Indian tea" in her short story, "A Geronimo Story," when Captain Pratt, the Laguna scout leader, stops regularly to imbibe on the journey to capture Geronimo.⁹ Here Indian tea is used in the context of exertion, so the mild stimulation of the tea can help men endure the rigors of physical travel. Tayo's exertion, however, is mental. This traditional medicine, along with the traditional foodstuff, is the first healing plant in *Ceremony*.

BETONIE AND TOBACCO

Betonie, a mixed-blood Diné medicine person, leads the second ceremony. He guides Tayo beyond traditional Laguna healing ceremonies. Betonie uses a multitude of plants, with tobacco as the predominant medicine. When he enters Betonie's dwelling, Tayo immediately notices Indian tea from the first ceremony: "Behind the smell of dried desert tea he smelled heavier objects: the salty cured smell of old hides sewn into boxes bound in brass; the odor of old newspapers and cardboard" (119). Plants are not the only content of the collection, but they are part of the whole, including "the antennas of dry roots and reddish willow twigs tied in neat bundles" (119). Dried sage and mountain tobacco are among the herbal plants (120). Calendars, phone books, and stories are part of the healing tools as well as plants, but tobacco is the plant most closely associated with Betonie.

Tobacco is one of the four sacred plants of the Diné corresponding to the four directions, along with corn, beans, and squash.¹⁰ Associated with the direction North, tobacco is not a food but rather a ceremonial medicine plant, with documented use among Pueblo peoples.¹¹ Again, like the interaction with Ku'oosh, words and plants together create ceremony, as Betonie

smokes tobacco during storytelling sessions. After he sizes up Tayo, he rolls a cigarette and puffs from it as he discloses his personal story (123). When he pauses, "What Tayo could feel was powerful, but there was no way to be sure what it was" (124). Tobacco accompanies this understanding of power, and, subsequently, in the cloud of tobacco smoke, Tayo can see his own story.

Later, after the sand painting ceremony, Tayo dreams and awakens to Betonie's presence. Betonie rolls a cigarette as he continues his narrative about the lineage of his powerful forbears. As he "took little puffs without inhaling the smoke," he acknowledges the eastern sky (145) in a meditative state. When he gives Tayo final instructions, he "paused and blew smoke rings up at the sky" (152). Silko shows the ceremonial importance of the plant indirectly in Betonie's uses of the medicine; she never explains tobacco's importance, but instead emphasizes it through constant presence. Tobacco is used in the novel as a catalyst, to shift consciousness during storytelling. It is an entheogenic plant affecting brain chemistry.¹² This change of consciousness allows Tayo to involve himself with Betonie's narrative and ceremony.

As Betonie ends his story, Silko embeds one of the verse sections about the need for tobacco for purification (151–52):

But there was no tobacco
so Fly and Hummingbird had to fly
all the way back down
to the fourth world below
to ask our mother where
they could get some tobacco. (151)

The quest for tobacco in the narrative corresponds to Tayo's quest for Betonie's stars, spotted cattle, mountain, and woman (152) to complete his own ceremony. Indeed, Silko embeds this "Pacayanyi" narrative throughout the entire novel.¹³ Earlier in the book, after the drought begins in the traditional verse (46–49), Hummingbird and Fly go to "our mother" and present her blue and yellow pollen, turquoise, and prayer sticks (105). She demands that Buzzard purify the town first, but when they approach him, he says, "Your offering isn't complete. Where's the tobacco?" (113). The other gifts are not sufficient. They must go to Caterpillar at "a place in the West," enter his house, and request the tobacco (180). After this journey, and at the end of the novel, they finally present tobacco to Buzzard, and he is able to cleanse the town of the witchery (255). Because of the purification of tobacco, "The storm clouds returned / the grass and plants started growing again. / There was food / and the people were happy again" (256). Tobacco is the critical substance to put the world back into balance, and in the second ceremony, Betonie uses this plant throughout long storytelling sessions with Tayo.

TS'EH AND MORNING GLORY VINE

In the encounters with Ts'eh, the most recurring medicine plant is the morning glory. In the opening part of this section, mountain sage, corn, chili

peppers, sunflowers, and other plants do appear, but the continuous presence of the morning glory, and its effect, make the blue-flowered vine the most important plant associated with Ts'eh.

The embedded traditional narrative of the "Kaupa-t'a" story describes the setting, "open country below the mesas," and then the presence of the morning glory vine: "There, in a sandy place by a blue flower vine, / Spiderwoman was waiting for him" (173). Ts'eh here is also a manifestation of Spider Woman, and the blue flower is morning glory. The place where this entheogenic vine grows is where the interaction of human and supernatural occurs. Morning glory is a powerful psychotropic natural substance.¹⁴ The visionary properties of the medicine plant, as well as the symbolic blue color, foreshadow Tayo's exchange with Ts'eh.¹⁵

Ts'eh is a complex character, associated with Mount Taylor and the other three sacred mountains of the Diné people, the mountain lion, and sexuality, as well as Blue Corn Maiden and Yellow Corn Maiden:

She is a mountain spirit, like her brothers and sisters—sacred mountains all. Though she and Tayo are lovers . . . her sexuality extends far beyond the act of intercourse—she is healer, nurturer, plotter, planter, and she schemes for the good of people and plants and animals.¹⁶

Shades of blue and yellow appear throughout the passage. Tayo notes the adobe of the house, and the sunflowers "still blooming among dry corn stalks" (183). And besides the "orange" of sunflowers, a shade of yellow, Tayo notices:

Somebody had planted blue morning-glories below each of the four wide windows, and the vines of the blue flowers were climbing cotton strings that had been nailed to the window frames. The morning glories were open wide, themselves the color of the sky, with thin white clouds spreading from the center of the blossoms into the bright blue. (183)

The vine is a reflection of the sky-world, the rain, the west, and the mountains.

Ts'eh's role as Tayo's instructor in ceremony is seen in her actions after their first night together. Ts'eh openly prepares plants and pairs them with corresponding rocks, allowing Tayo to observe, and learn from, this process:

She reached into a flour sack by her feet and brought out bundles of freshly gathered plants. She sniffed them and blew on them before she matched the plants with the stones, putting a sprig of blue-gray mountain sage with the blue stone. The dark yellow plant from the rocky mesa top smelled like wet tobacco; she laid it beside the ocher sandstone. And then she pulled out a long vine covered with tiny white flowers with six sharp petals like fallen stars. (184)

Ts'eh, a spirit of the mountain, selects medicine objects from the surrounding environment. Sage and tobacco occur again, as seen in the previous ceremonies. Here, the green sage is substituted for Indian tea, which is also green. The vine with star blossoms is one of a variety of datura vine or jimson weed known as "*Datura intoxia*, known also as *D. meteloides*, a coarser climbing annual native to Mexico and southwestern United States."¹⁷ Ts'eh is not only a teacher of medicine knowledge, but she herself is the medicine, in this case the morning glory plant. She is the fourth plant in this scene, among sage, tobacco, and white-petaled datura vine. The four ceremonies are represented in this scene.

Morning glories coincide with Ts'eh's appearance in the novel, but no references to their ritual use are part of the narration. Neither she nor Tayo ingest them. Rather, as Tayo becomes more involved with Ts'eh, he enters a new vision, in which realities intermingle, as he comes under the influence of a morning glory-like state of sexuality and intoxication. His new consciousness is not the "entangled" agony he experiences at the beginning of the book, but rather his dreams have more coherence as they unite him with Ts'eh:

He dreamed with her, dreams that lasted all night, dreams full of warm deep caressing and lingering desire which left him sleeping peacefully until dawn, when he would wake up at the first dim light with her presence and the feeling that she had been with him all night. (215)

These night dreams leave him in a prayerful state, and he greets the morning sun with the prayer "sunrise, sunrise." The dreams continue through the season, and his longing for her, and yet he is content, as he knows "he would find her again" (216).

Up until this point in the novel, Tayo has been a patient seeking healing from medicine persons—Ku'oosh and Betonie, and then Ts'eh. With Ts'eh, though, Tayo shifts into a role of a healer-practitioner, first as her student. During one of their encounters, Ts'eh had filled her blue silk shawl with "freshly dug roots and leaves from many different plants" (222), and Tayo watches as she examines them carefully. On the next trip, Tayo participates as an apprentice: "He went with her to learn about the roots and plants she had gathered" (224). Ts'eh next asks him to take an active role in collecting the last plant she needs, "a tall dark green plant with round pointed leaves, deep veined like fossil shells," a datura plant (227). Their union is more than mortal; it reflects the union of human and land: "Their days together had a gravity emanating from the mesas and arroyos, and it replaced the rhythm that had been interrupted so long ago" (227).

When she leaves Tayo, Ts'eh carefully rolls her plant medicines into her clothing: "She tucked the pouches of seeds and the small smooth stones between the folded clothes, and she rolled bundles of cattail reeds and willow twigs in a skirt" (234). She gives him knowledge of the plant beings of the mountain and the mesa; she heals him with erotic union; she leads him to the pregnant elk painted onto "yellow sandrock"; she foretells the dangers ahead

with the last part of his own ceremony. As they part for the last time in the novel, she advises him, “Remember everything,” encouraging him to remember knowledge of the plants, and she reassures him, “I’ll see you” (235). At the end of this ceremony, Tayo is no longer a troubled war veteran who can barely digest mush and tea. He now is armed with abilities to stand up against all the destructive forces of war’s aftermath—and of witchery.

TAYO AND NIGHT-BLOOMING DATURA

In the last section, Silko associates Tayo with the datura plant, also known as jimson weed or locoweed, a plant with the capacity to detoxify radiation-contaminated soil. This is the plant found in association with shamanistic deer images at the Texas site¹⁸ and at the Bandolier site.¹⁹ In historic times, the plant “is the property of the rain priests and the directors of the Little Fire and Cimex fraternities,”²⁰ and Silko confirms this identity in her short prose work *Sacred Water: Narratives and Pictures*:

Only the night-blooming datura, jimson weed, sacred plant of the Pueblo priests, mighty hallucinogen and deadly poison, only the datura has the power to purify plutonium contamination. Datura not only thrives in soil contaminated by plutonium, the datura actually removes the plutonium from the soil so that the soil is purified and only the datura plant itself is radioactive. The datura metabolizes “heavy water,” contaminated with plutonium, because, for the datura, all water is sacred.²¹

Misuse of the toxic plant can lead to a mental state similar to Tayo’s at the beginning of the novel. Symptoms of datura poisoning include vertigo, stupor, hallucinations, melancholia, nausea, and thrashing.²² At the beginning of the narrative, Tayo “tossed in the old iron bed, and the coiled springs kept squeaking even after he lay still again” (5). Other effects of the plant pertain to Tayo’s situation: “In the Southwest it was most often taken individually and for a number of reasons: to bring success on a deer hunt.”²³ The association with a deer hunt underscores the connection between Tayo and deer.

Silko associates Tayo with the datura plant in the preceding section, in his encounters with Ts’eh, as she teaches him plant medicine. After their next-to-last sexual union, Tayo found Ts’eh “sitting on the edge of a sandy bank beside a big moonflower [datura] plant” (222). She does not collect it, but later, after they climb up the mesa together (223), she returns to the “direction of the gunny sacks full of roots and plants,” next to the datura plant (226). She transfers responsibility to him as a fellow practitioner when she tells him, “maybe you can gather [datura] for me, in case I have to go before it’s ready” (227). He assures her he will, but he cannot complete this final step of the ceremony until he resolves the witchery. Witchery, the central source of conflict in *Ceremony*, taints the uranium mine site, physically and spiritually; Tayo’s challenge is to cleanse toxins within land, water, and spirit.

Silko first introduces the datura plant as a witch's tool used by Pa'caya'nyi at the beginning of *Ceremony*. When the witch arrives from Reedleaf town, from the north, "He made an altar / with cactus spines / and purple locoweed flowers" (47). He practices magic, and drought ensues. The traditional narrative continues, in interrupted, sequential fragments, throughout the novel's text. Not until the end of the novel, the section that is Tayo's own ceremony, does this narrative conclude with Buzzard's purification of the Laguna town, "'Okay,' Buzzard said, / 'Go back and tell them / I'll purify the town'" (255). Among this novel's use of multiple associations and tropes, Tayo appears to become Buzzard and cleanse his town.

The purification involves physical and spiritual dimensions. Nelson describes the "Jackpile Mine" site as "ground that has too long been held in the service of the Gunnadeyahs and their design, scarred so completely and violated so thoroughly that the land itself seems irredeemable, irrecoverable, lost forever."²⁴ Convergence of interior and exterior landscape occurs at this forlorn place. When Tayo drinks water at the mine, he notices that it tastes "bitter," and he wonders if "the uranium made the water taste that way" (244–5). Tayo's healing is no longer an individual crisis, but now includes the community's water supply: "Tayo is not a single shell-shocked veteran suffering from flashbacks but a figure at the geographic and spiritual center of a cosmic illness."²⁵ Like the deer image at the beginning of the book, Tayo becomes a shamanistic figure associated with the powerful but dangerous datura plant, embroiled in a life-or-death situation.

As Tayo hikes toward the setting of the mine—and the climactic meeting with Leroy, Pinkie, Harley, and Emo—he sees the "violet-colored weed that killed the mule," and is reminded that plants can be destructive (237). The death of this mule corresponds to the beginning of this drought cycle. The poisonous lavender-flowered plant also references the datura's dangers: a plant that can thrive on a radioactive site has risks.²⁶

After Tayo successfully resolves the witchery at the uranium mine, his thoughts immediately turn to datura and its cleansing properties:

He would go back there now, where she had shown him the plant. He would gather the seeds for her and plant them with great care in places near sandy hills. The rainwater would seep down gently and the delicate membranes would not be crushed or broken before the emergence of tiny fingers, roots, and leaves pressing out in all directions. The plants would grow there like the story, strong and translucent as the stars. (254)

This is reclamation of the polluted land in a literal sense. Significantly, Tayo's thoughts turn to plants at the culmination of the plot. He thinks of how he relates to the land and how to care for it.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the novel, the use of dominant plants for each of the four ceremonies is one thread of Silko's interwoven "bundle" of stories.²⁷ Tayo overcomes his inner torment and the violence of his fellow veterans. He becomes an herbalist; he participates in healing ceremonies; he captures the spotted cattle; he loves Ts'eh; and finally he becomes a shaman figure, like the antlered figure in prehistoric rock art. The toxic manifestation of the plant—delirium—passes away, and Tayo can then use the plant medicine for detoxification of his community. The rain priest's shamanistic datura plant has a part in his own healing. He overturns the unnatural violations, or witchery, of uranium miners.

Tayo learns to understand the meanings of the plants, and he further develops reverence for their place within a sacred landscape. He also gains the knowledge of a deer hunter. The complexity of his role resembles that of Ts'eh, a being not easily reduced to one element, or one signifier. As the interpolated verse in the novel parallels the dramatic action, the plants signify yet another submerged text. This internalized homecoming requires Tayo to interact with an interior world of memory, intuition, cognition, and dreams; thus the fifth ceremony, the center of the circle, is with the readers as they follow Tayo's mental process through the words of the novel.²⁸ Readers do not ingest the plant medicines in the texts, but they participate in the simulated healing effects through the re-creation of them in Silko's rephrasings of ancient, sacred knowledge—that which surrounds us.

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NOTES

1. Carolyn E. Boyd and J. Philip Dering, "Medicinal and Hallucinogenic Plants Identified in the Sediments and Pictographs of the Lower Pecos, Texas Archaic," *Antiquity* 7 (1996): 256–75.

2. Wilfred Robbins, John Harrington, and Barbara Freire-Mareco, "Ethnobotany of the Tewa Indians," *55th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1916), 55.

3. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977; New York: Penguin, 1986), 7. All quotations from *Ceremony*, hereafter referred to by parenthetical page numbers in the text, are from this Penguin edition.

4. Ruth Bunzel, "Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism," *47th Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1929–30), 489–90.

5. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Storyteller* (New York: Seaver, 1981).

6. Tayo's directional movements on the mountain might also be related to dance.

7. Maya Strunk, "Medicinal Plants of the Southwest: Ephedra viridas," <http://medplant.nmsu.edu/ephedra.html> (accessed 30 July 2003): "Ephedrine dilates the bronchial muscles, contracts the nasal mucosa, raises blood pressure, and is a cardiac

stimulant. Studies confirm that it contains the adrenaline-like substances ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which stimulate the sympathetic nervous system. Effects are elevated blood pressure and heart beat. Ephedrine's action is similar to that of adrenaline."

8. Robert Nelson, "Laguna Sisters," unpublished paper presented 3 March 2001 Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association Conference, Albuquerque, 4–6. Nelson notes that Thelma, the Christianized aunt, represents an aspect of the earth-centered Corn Woman of the family, while Tayo's mother Laura represents an aspect of water-centered Reed Woman. The recovery of Laura/Reed Woman and rainfall is the crux of the community and individual healing. Thelma plays a crucial role in this recovery: "Regardless of how impossible her acquired Christianity makes it for Auntie as an individual to effect the recovery of her little sister, her older Keresan self still knows that the missing sister must be recovered." The spoon-feeding of Tayo by Auntie seems out of character after her earlier dismissal of Ku'oosh, but in the context of the characters' alignment with traditional beings, the action is consistent.

9. Leslie Marmon Silko, "A Geronimo Story," in *The Man To Send Rain Clouds*, ed. Kenneth Rosen (New York: Viking, 1974), 128–44.

10 Tobacco is associated with the North in sand painting motifs, according to Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton in *The Navajo* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 215. In John Neihardt's version of "The Night Chant," in *Four Masterworks of American Indian Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), translated by Washington Matthews, native tobacco and tobacco-filled reeds are critical elements of text and ceremony (291–347). Available online through Karen Strom's site is a discussion of the plants in the context of ceremony: "On the body ['ats'íís] of Mother Earth [Nahasdzáán Shimá] are seen the four [d] sacred plants [nanise'], corn [naad'], rising toward the head ['atsii'] of Mother Earth [Nahasdzáán Shimá], five [ashdla'] bean [naa'of] plants [nanise'] rising toward the south [shádi'ááh], the black [izhin] squash [naayízi] plant with yellow [itso] squash [naayízi] toward the west ['e'e'aah], and five [ashdla'] blue [dootish] stems of tobacco to the north [náhooks], all radiating from the central lake, representing the place of emergence of the Navajo into this the Fourth World," www.hanksville.org/voyage/navajo/sandpaintings.php (retrieved 24 May 2004).

11. For a discussion of tobacco and Pueblo ceremonial practices, see Matilda Coxe Stevenson, "Ethnobotany of the Zuni Indians," *30th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1908–9), 96; Robbins, Harrington, and Freire-Marreco, "Ethno-Botany," 70; Franz Boas, *Keresan Texts* (Washington: Publications of the American Ethnological Society, 1928).

12. Marlene Dobkin de Rios, *Hallucinogens: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Bridport: Prism Press, 1990), 40. "Previous work with harmine by Davis et al. (1969, 1970) indicates that relatively small doses of this substance cross the blood-brain barrier and change neural transmission in the visual system. . . . It has been found that nicotine may affect the concentration of biogenic amines in the brain, particularly serotonin, whose chemical structure is similar to that of LSD. This chemical may [*sic*] predispose a person to changes in consciousness."

13. Robert Nelson examines the interrelationship between Silko's novel and the embedded text in three published articles: "The Kaupata Motive in Silko's *Ceremony*: A Study of Literary Homology," *Studies in American Indian Literature*, Series 2, 11.3 (Fall 1999): 2–21; "He Said / She Said: Writing Oral Tradition in John Gunn's 'Kopot Kanat' and Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 5.1 (1993):

31–50; and “Rewriting Ethnography: Embedded Texts in Leslie Silko’s *Ceremony*,” in *Telling the Stories: Essays on American Indian Literatures and Cultures*, eds. Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson and Malcolm Nelson (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 47–58.

14. Richard Evans Shultes, *Hallucinogenic Plants* (New York: Golden Press, 1976), rpt. http://www.erowid.org/library/books_online/golden_guide/g01-10.shtml (retrieved 30 July 2003), 141–50, 121. Schultes writes, “Half a dozen of these ergoline alkaloids have been found in seeds of *Rivea corymbosa* and *Ipomoea violacea*. The main hallucinogenic constituents of both seeds are ergine (d-lysergic acid diethylamide) and isoergine, but other related [alkaloids] occur in minor amounts—chiefly chanoclavine, elymoclavine, and lysergo.”

15. De Rios, *Hallucinogens*, 13, writes: “Morning glory seeds . . . were the fourth favorite plant hallucinogen of the Aztec. Called the ‘green snake weed,’ perhaps because of its climbing properties, this vision-inducing, lentil-like seed of the vine was esteemed as a divine messenger which transported man into spiritual realms.”

16. Patricia Clark Smith with Paula Gunn Allen, “Earthy Relations, Carnal Knowledge: Southwestern American Indian Women Writers and Landscapes,” in *Yellow Woman*, ed. Melody Graulich (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1993), 141.

17. Shultes, *Hallucinogenic Plants*, 141–50.

18. Boyd and Dering, “Medicinal,” 256–75.

19. Robbins, Harrington and Freire-Marreco, “Ethnobotany of the Tewa,” 55.

20. Stevenson, “Ethnobotany of the Zuni,” 46. Silko confirms the similarities to Laguna practices in *Sacred Water: Narratives and Pictures* (Tucson: Flood Plain Press, 1993), 75. Stevenson recounts the traditional narrative of a brother and sister who have the ability to “make one sleep and see ghosts, and how they could make one walk about a little and see who had committed theft,” 46. The Divine Ones banish them from the world, and where they descended, datura plants grew and blossomed. Seeing ghosts, according to Stevenson, is preliminary to bringing rain: “A small quantity of the powdered root of *Datura meteloides* is administered by a rain priest to put one in condition to sleep and see ghosts. This procedure is for rain” (89). Tayo’s memories and hallucinations of Rocky and Josiah, in association with datura, then, can be part of a ritual to bring rain. Bunzel, “Introduction,” 489, associates datura with “sorcery.” Robbins et al., “Ethnobotany of the Tewa,” 55, describe it as a “narcotic and anesthetic.” Elsie Clew Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion* (Lincoln: Bison, 1996), 136, associates datura and rain: “Thus witches control weather, keeping the rain off or causing wind: The wind may be raised by pulling up a Jamestown weed by the roots.”

21. Silko, *Sacred Water*, 75.

22. Stevenson, “Ethnobotany of the Zuni,” 47. De Rios provides a more recent description of the symptoms: “Intoxication caused by the drug is characterized initially by effects so violent that physical restraint must be imposed until the partaker passes into a stage of sleep and hallucinations,” 114.

23. De Rios, *Hallucinogens*, 114.

24. Robert Nelson, *Place and Vision: The Function of Landscape in American Indian Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 16.

25. Smith and Allen, “Earthy Relations,” 140.

26. According to Schultes, twenty species of the *Datura* genus are part of the Nightshade family. All are somewhat poisonous and the concentration of alkaloids also renders the plant hallucinogenic: “Basically, all species of *Datura* have a similar

chemical composition. Their active principles are mainly hyoscyamine and scopolamine, which are tropane alkaloids. Scopolamine is often the major constituent. A number of minor, chemically related alkaloids may be present: atropine, norscopolamine, meteloidine," *Hallucinogenic Plants*, 141–50.

27. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*, ed. Laura Coltelli (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 141. Silko tells Coltelli, "but ultimately the whole novel is a bundle of stories."

28. "Homing," the term William Bevis uses to describe the recursive plotline of contemporary Native fiction, is relevant here. In his essay "Native American Novels: Homing In," in *Recovering the Word*, eds. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 580–620, Bevis argues that contemporary Native writers use the return to home and tribal traditions as their primary plotline.

