

Ritualism as a Means of Healthcare, Cultural Revival and Leadership Uprighting in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

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Received: 9 April 2015 Accepted: 2 May 2015 Published: 15 May 2015

Abstract

World War II has brought many ethnic groups together through migrations inherent in the said war. This is the case of white Mexicans and Indians who have formed a hybrid American society. Has this creation been desired for better results? This article highlights the profitability of the cultural differences between the two peoples in the novel *Ceremony* (1977) by Marmon Silko. The emphasis is on the use of a bastard to confirm his identity and the Indian contribution to the national culture of the United States. The failure of American and Vietnamese medicine has led to the promotion of traditional Indian methods and the empowerment of Indian subjects.

Index terms— rituals, civilization, Native Americans, hybridity, ceremony, stories, culture, religious beliefs.

1 I. Introduction

torytelling is not only worth the literary regards in American literature but also one of the ritual practices for the survival of Native Americans. Due in large part to the increased contact between communities instigated by the demographic shifts caused by World War II, and to the Harlem Renaissance and then the equal rights movements of the 1960s, the coming together of Indians with the white community brings at odds the life conception of the one with the civilization of the other. Inasmuch as life in the reservation deserves attention from the US power holders (Affirmative Action), the threat to annihilate the cultural features weighs heavy on life peculiarities of Native Americans. And if the Native cultural heritage is faced with frustration, how could this ethnic group contribute to the US national culture which can never be purely white? This article argues that thewestern cultureis a threat to the sacrament and beliefs of Native Americans and the natural constraints on the cultural home rule, which creates a multicultural American nation.

In effect, the birth of the protagonist of *Ceremony* (Tayo) ensued from the conflicting lessons his mother (Laura) received from school and at home. Unable to negotiate that confusion Laura became victim of alcoholism and was impregnated by a Mexican whom Tayo never knew. Though the protagonist was abandoned by his mother at the age of four years, he was raised in the reservation by his grand mother in the middle of tribal rituals and attended a white-run school to join later the US Army. His taking part in the Vietnam War resulted in his emotional traumas that could not have medical solace in the Veterans' hospital. Not only does Tayo go through a healing process in the Native spirituality but also look for his self-identity and wisdom. Through his commentary on the narrative of *Ceremony*, Andrew Wiget testifies that "Leslie Silko deliberately draws upon tribal mythology as a mode of interpreting contemporary events." 1 This way of writing cannot be bypassed if we come to argue that the peculiarity of a way of writing is inherent in the author's cultural/historical background. This implicates the tribal circle that inspires him/her. "Indeed, the special significance of a true work of art resides in the fact that it has escaped from the limitations of the personal and has soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator." 2 Ortiz cares for all things in a natural religious regard, unscaffolded with theology or a monotheistic deity. This poet's religion calls upon a sense of the world as greater than man, multitudinous, spiritually alive, if Indian people ritually prepare and conduct themselves in a sacred manner. But "sacred" here infuses the "common"

3 MOONEYARGUES THAT,

44 world, so that this world, the ordinary things now, come forward speaking of significances related to, yet apart
45 from, man. The Indian world is reciprocal with people.

46 In the same way, the storytelling which is a literary genre is boasted mostly by naturalists who view nature as
47 replete with ways and means that almost always come to the rescue of human race. Kenneth Lincoln, in: "The
48 Now Day Indi's" describes how the Native American Simon Ortiz's poetry is built upon the traditions of his
49 people and how it looks to the future of these traditions: 3 together through migrations inherent in the said war.
50 This is the case of white Mexicans and Indians who have formed a hybrid American society. Has this creation
51 been desired for better results? This article highlights the profitability of the cultural differences between the two
52 peoples in the novel Ceremony (1977) by Marmon Silko. The emphasis is on the use of a bastard to confirm his
53 identity and the Indian contribution to the national culture of the United States. The failure of American and
54 Vietnamese medicine has led to the promotion of traditional Indian methods and the empowerment of Indian
55 subjects.

56 No matter what the material world produces to the satisfaction of human needs, Leslie Marmon Silko insists
57 on the importance of some traditional rituals in overcoming some natural calamities and in the asserting of one's
58 identity. Because Native Americans have always mastered the wild world by the invention of ceremonies, it
59 becomes precarious to persuade a member of that ethnic group to put off the belief therein in the interest of a
60 more unordinary view of the world. Moreover, if the American white civilization looks for the throwing off of
61 the traditional conception of life (through the formal education channel), there is no easy way for a Native to be
62 acculturating if every minority group comes to the American Mainstream via a specific cultural line of attack.
63 And the real objective of the cultural inclusion is not a mere vulgarization of and respect to its features, rather
64 a compassionate treatment of the affiliates of that culture.

65 2 II. Substance of Stories, Rituals and

66 Ceremonies for Indian Americans

67 The whole of Indian Americans life rests on their respect for their rituals and ceremonies. Actually, the deeds,
68 actions and even the conception of things by Native Americans are dictated to them by rituals, customs, stories
69 and ceremonies. In any Indian community there is a multitude of rituals specially designed for special and various
70 events. That is why among Indian people, one may come across rituals such as the Rain ritual which is performed
71 whenever rain is missing, healing ceremonies, burial customs or the ghost dance ceremony which is performed
72 anytime the Indians feel their safety is threatened. In The Ghost-Dance: Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of
73 1890, James

74 3 Mooneyargues that,

75 The great underlying principle of the ghost dance Doctrine is that time will come when the whole Indian race,
76 living and dead will be reunited upon a regenerated earth to live a life of aboriginal happiness forever free from
77 death, disease and misery. On this foundation, each tribe has built a structure from its own mythology, and each
78 apostle and believer has filled in the details according to his own mental capacity or idea of happiness. ?? This
79 is to understand why Indians rarely react when they are offended and also rarely claim their rights whenever
80 U.S laws and institutions are cheating them. It helps us understand why instead of fighting back Europeans and
81 keeping their land, Indians surrendered large parcels of lands to them. In short it is because they believe that
82 no matter what evil befalls them, time will come when they will be free and happy, thus it is no use fighting for
83 something or claiming something else anymore. Hence we understand that the whole of the Indianlife is cadenced
84 by ceremonies, customs and rituals.

85 Native Americans frequently resort to ceremonies, under situation in which common people would go to church,
86 call for the help of a medicine person or seek for the advice of an experienced person. In other words, ceremonies,
87 customs and rituals play religious and medical roles and that of morals within the native community. In sum,
88 stories, customs, rituals and ceremonies represent absolutely everything to Indian Americans. That is why on the
89 second page of her novel Leslie Marmon Silko through a story has clearly shown the importance of ceremonies
90 and stories for her people. She wrote this: From this excerpt it follows that, stories represent more than a means
91 of entertainment to these writers. They are simply everything to them. And as she mentioned it in the story,
92 "they are all we have" 6 . The "we" in her sentence, is used for Indians. She says stories are all they possess
93 and that they are the only weapon she and her people use to fight off sickness and diseases but also enemies.
94 And this is illustrated in the sick person of Tayo the protagonist about whom the narrator says, "He wanted to
95 believe old Betonie. He wanted to keep the feeling of his words alive inside him so that he could believe that he
96 might get well." 7 Moreover the fact that Leslie Marmon Silko wrote this very story on the second page of the
97 novel helps the reader understand the novel. In deed, Ceremony, as the title itself suggests is about ceremonies,
98 rituals and the importance they have in the Thus words from the medicine man constitute the major part of his
99 healing process.

100 4 Ceremony I will tell you something about stories

101 They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, All we have to fight off Illness
102 and death. You don't have anything if you don't have the stories their evil is mighty but it can't stand up our
103 stories. So they try to destroy the stories Let the stories be confused and forgotten.

104 They would like that. They would be happy Because we would be defenseless then. 5 lives of Native Americans.
105 Consequently, the presence of this story right at the beginning of the novel is crucial in the understanding of
106 the latter because it guides readers in their attempt to generate meaning to this novel. In fact, right at the
107 beginning of the novel, readers are informed about the way they should consider stories that Leslie Marmon Silko
108 has embedded here and there in her novel. Right from there they are taught a new way of reading stories and
109 considering them. They are told to see them the way Indians themselves see them, because it is the only way
110 they can get the meaning of the novel.

111 Seen from the perspective of both Julian Rice and Elizabeth N. Evasdaughter, every custom of the Indian
112 tribes turns around stories and story telling. Julian Rice sustains that "The story's existence as a complex
113 literary expression of a highly developed mythology implies the effectiveness of traditional education." 8 In this
114 regard, Elizabeth N. Evasdaughter observes that "The ceremony Silko narrates is that of a Navajo sing, but one
115 not sung exactly as it would have been done before whites arrived in New Mexico, nor sung by a pure-blood
116 Indian, nor sung on behalf of a pure-blood Indian." 9 As we previously mentioned, under any situation Indians
117 frequently resorted to ceremonies and to each problem there is always a ritual or a ceremony that is specially
118 designed. In the novel, when Tayo was in need of additional care because the care he received at the Los Angeles
119 Veterans' Hospital did not really help him much, his grandmother decided to call for a Indeed, oral tradition
120 is an important part of Indian culture. For long, Indians used oral tradition to pass on tribal knowledge. The
121 whole of Indian people's history, customs and cultural patrimony is contained in Indian communal stories that
122 they often tell during the performance of rituals, ceremonies or communal festivals. When we move a step back
123 to the passage above, we see that the word "ceremony" in the passage seems to be used as the title of the story.
124 We also noticed that instead of dealing with ceremonies as the story's title mentions, it deals with stories. That
125 is because the basic elements of rituals and ceremonies are stories. In fact in those stories, new generations are
126 told how to perform ceremonies, that is when and for which purpose they should perform them. This, once
127 again, shows the importance of stories for the Indian community and the reason why Leslie Marmon Silko lays
128 so much emphasis on stories in her novel. 8 Julian Rice, "Ella (Cara) Deloria." Native American Writers of the
129 United States. traditional medicine man to perform a ceremony for him. Despite the relatively pertinent reasons
130 that Auntie had mentioned to dissuade her mother from calling for traditional medicine, she couldn't make old
131 Grandma change her mind. In fact as an Indian woman, Grandma was convinced that only a ceremony could
132 help Tayo recover from his sickness. Grandma was Christian, and frequently went to church; meanwhile, she
133 never stopped trusting the power of traditional Indian rituals and ceremonies.

134 Moreover, Tayo had already gone to hospital and western medicine could do nothing for him. So for Grandma,
135 it was clear that a ceremony was the ultimate solution for them if they truly wanted Tayo to recover from his
136 mental sickness. Consequently, Ku'oosh, an Indian traditional medicine man was called upon to look after Tayo.
137 Ku'oosh came and as expected, started the performance of a ceremony. He started, by saying some sentences and
138 in the way he pronounced them, it was clear that they did not belong to him, in fact, those sentences were stories,
139 containing explanations of their origins. These sentences had been told long before Ku'oosh and were handed
140 down to him through oral tradition. This means that the ceremony he was about to perform was nothing new.
141 The ceremony he was going to perform to Tayo was the ceremony that his Laguna ancestors used to perform
142 to warriors who have killed during battles. It was a healing ceremony and the particularity of it was that, it
143 was performed only for warriors such as Tayo, Pinkie and Emo. Through this, we understand that if Tayo had
144 suffered another sickness, his ceremony would have been assuredly different.

145 In addition to this, Leslie Marmon Silko uses in her novel another story of her people retelling them why their
146 ancestors used to perform the scalp ceremony for the warriors who have killed in battles and how the ceremony
147 should be done. The following passage is the story that shows the importance of the Laguna Indian warriors'
148 ceremony:

149 The way I heard it was in the old days long time ago they had this Scalp Society for warriors who killed or
150 touched dead enemies. They had things they must do otherwise K'oo'ko would haunt their dream with the great
151 fangs and everything would be endangered.

152 The above quoted story does not only tell how to do the ceremony but it also tells what will happen to the
153 warrior and to the entire Indian community if ever the ceremony is not performed. Based on its content, the
154 ceremony is very important because otherwise as stated in the story, "everything would be endangered" 11 . And
155 another very important thing is that it is specified in the story that "maybe rain wouldn't come." ??2 Healing
156 ceremonies are only a very small part of the range of ceremonies and rituals that do exist among Indians, and the
157 ceremony that was performed for Tayo is a healing ceremony among many that exist within the Laguna Indians
158 community. We have to mention that each Indian tribe has got its own conception of illness and heal that differ
159 from the modern conception and scientific conception of diseases and sicknesses. Hence, healing ceremonies may
160 vary according to tribes. In the case of Laguna Indians that is Tayo's tribe, as we previously mentioned, they see
161 "illness not as the result of some biochemical, physiological, or psychological malady, but as a sign of disorder
162 in society or the world, which is then reflected in the illness of an individual" Indeed, in the novel we see that

163 drought persisted until Tayo completed his ceremony which not only brought him recovery, but also caused the
164 rain to fall. After a long time of sickness and the care he received at the Veterans' Hospital, Tayo recovered
165 thanks to a ceremony. Finally, only the ceremony could help him recover his mental abilities, and it is the same
166 ceremony that brought happiness back to his people. In short, ceremonies are very important because, as we
167 see in the context of our novel a single ceremony could not only help Tayo recover from a sickness that hospital
168 could not cure, but it also put an end to a six long years of drought.

169 5 13

170 . "Diagnosis thus consists of discerning the status of the community or the world. Healing requires
171 repairing or restructuring these environmental concerns." 14 10 Ibid. p. 37. 11 Ibid. 12 Ibid. ??3
172 Bonniebutterfield.com/indian-art.htm. 12/08/2013. ??4 Ibid.

173 In contrast, in the Navajo tribe they believe that "healing is based on the premise that a person's illness
174 is caused by the individual's being out of harmony with life, and sprinkling a person with corn pollen helps
175 reestablish that harmony. In their ceremonies, corn pollen is said to be pure and immaculate. As such, this
176 substance has the power to drive off the forces that produce disharmony". ??5 III. The Influence of American
177 Culture on Indian Americans

178 In sum ceremonies, rituals and the conception Indian people have of some notion of life may vary from a tribe
179 to another.

180 The practice of ceremonies and rituals, in brief ritualism is an important part of native Indian life.

181 Through the reading and the study of Ceremony we see that according to Leslie Marmon Silko it will be very
182 difficult for an Indian to be without ceremonies. We have seen this with old Grandma. She is a Christian yet
183 she is not ready to depart from her traditional Indian ways. She often goes to church yet in front of the first
184 difficulty she comes across, she quickly runs back to her Indian tradition.

185 We also learn through the study of this novel that ritualism constitutes an important part of Native Americans
186 life. As such we can say that it occupies a crucial place in the welfare of Native Americans. Indeed as we noticed
187 through the plot of Ceremony, Rituals and Indians customs succeeded where science met failure. In fact if Tayo
188 could recover mental wellness it was thanks to the rituals that Ku'oosh and Betonie performed to him. Actually
189 the care of the Los Angeles Veterans Hospital did not do much good to him. Moreover, those same rituals could
190 put an end to the drought, reestablishing thus the natural order. All this is to show that rituals occupy an
191 important place in the Indian life and that they are worth being practiced.

192 Most definitely, it is worth acknowledging that the essence of Native Americans life is closely related to their
193 performing rituals and ceremonies. In other words, through Ceremony Leslie Marmon Silko has made it clear
194 that an Indian is bound to remember his tradition, his rituals and ceremonies if he truly wants to survive.

195 The contact between native and white had affected the Indian community in all domains. It affected their way
196 of life, their territory, their culture and themselves. What threatened much the Indian culture was the creation of
197 the Bureau of Indians Affairs by the Federal Government. Through this institution, Indian students were taken
198 in a different type of boarding schools where they are taught European American ways and culture. At the same
199 time, they are forbidden to practice Indian rituals and also to speak their mother tongue. In Ceremony, the
200 character of Rocky perfectly illustrates the kind of Indian the U.S government wanted ??5 Ibid.

201 Maybe the rain wouldn't come or the deer would go away. That's why they had things they must do The
202 flute and dancing blue cornmeal and hair-washing. All these things they have to do. 10 to have. Rocky has
203 been totally transformed by the teachings he had been getting at school, thus he became skeptical vis-à-vis the
204 ways and tradition of his people. He started giving no importance to the practices of the old time. He even
205 called them superstitions. "He knew what white people thought about the stories. In school the science teacher
206 had explained what superstition was, and then held the science textbook up for the class to see the true source
207 of explanation. He had studied those books, and he had no reasons to believe the stories any more." ??6 The
208 following passage, portrays the new person Rocky had become, it portrays Rocky's new perception of the Indian
209 world: "After their first year at boarding school in Albuquerque, Tayo saw how Rocky deliberately avoided the
210 old-time ways. Old Grandma shook her head at him, but he called it superstition, and he opened his textbooks
211 to show her."

212 Rocky was more Indian than Tayo was, that is, he was full blooded Indian and it was not the case of Tayo.
213 Mean while, Tayo believed the tradition more than Rocky did. He never since he started going to school regarded
214 the tradition of Indians with interest until he died in Vietnam. 17 However, this was not the case with Auntie.
215 As an Indian woman, instead of being shocked at Rocky's behavior, auntie was pleased. She was pleased that
216 Rocky was a good student and trusted his books much This perfectly illustrates, the point to which Rocky has
217 been transformed and led astray of his culture. In fact Rocky does not only mistrust the rituals and tradition,
218 but he even taxes them of being superstitions. Right from the moment he started going to school the only things
219 that have got any importance before his eyes were those that could be explained scientifically. That is why when
220 his grandmother shook her head at him as sign of disapproval with him and his new way of considering things,
221 he simply opened his book to try to show and explain to her. In fact according to Rocky book truths are the
222 only things worth being regarded with interest.

223 Without any doubt, Rocky has profoundly been transformed by the knowledge he has acquired at school. He
224 is the character of Ceremony whose transformation was radical, yet he is not the only one. His mother, Auntie

225 too, has been favorable to transformation. Her mentality has shifted from that of an Indian traditional mother
226 to the one that a white American woman may be expected to have. In deed, a real traditional Indian woman, in
227 the presence of a boy like Rocky would exactly feel the same as old Grandma. In other words, any Indian woman
228 that knows the value of rituals respects them and knows they are worth being taken care of would be deceived
229 by Rocky because of his scorn toward the Indian patrimony. more than he trusted Indian customs. That means
230 she shares Rocky's ideas.

231 This is what the novel seems to say about Auntie: "But Auntie never scolded him, and she never let Robert
232 and Josiah talk to him either. She wanted him to be a success. She could see what White people wanted in an
233 Indian and she believed this way was his only chance." 18 18 Ibid. This passage of the novel shows that Auntie
234 knew that Rocky did not behave the way an Indian young man was expected to do. Meanwhile, she was proud
235 of him. She was proud that her Rocky be the way white people wanted him, not the way Indians would like him
236 to. And so she avoided Josiah or Robert talking to Rocky to bring him back to the right way and help him find
237 back the Indian spirit that schooling has been killing in him.

238 If we analyze the above paragraph carefully and especially the information it gives about Auntie, we shall
239 figure out that Auntie, in some way, agrees more with the white American community than she does with her
240 own community. Because through the reading of this passage, we understand that Auntie trusted the sayings of
241 White people than her people. In fact, on the one hand, this passage shows us that Auntie is aware of the fact
242 that Rocky has been transformed by the teachings he has got at school. And on the other hand, her indifference
243 towards Rocky and her refusal to let Robert or Josiah talk to Rocky proves that, in some way, she also has
244 been transformed by the contact of Indians with the White American world. This actually is the reason why
245 she accepts Rocky the way he has become; otherwise she would never have condoned the new behavior of Rocky
246 after his first year at the boarding school.

247 Rocky and Auntie are only two cases among many. In the novel, Rocky is the character whose transformation
248 is very flagrant. Through Rocky's mentality, we can thus denote an influence of the white American culture
249 on the Indian society. But there is also Tayo. Actually Tayo knows more about Indian traditions than Rocky.
250 Yet the point here is not on Tayo's mentality but it is Tayo, himself. Indeed Tayo is the human consequence of
251 the contact between Indians and white people. Because as we know already, he is not fullblooded, actually, his
252 mother is Indian and his father is an unknown white person. In other words, the fact that Tayo exists is a sign of
253 transformation brought among Indians by the contact between them and White people. In fact, how else could
254 Tayo exist if Indian never met White people?

255 Moreover, throughout the novel, the way people look at Tayo and treat him emphasizes the fact that Tayo
256 is a different type of Indian. In fact, Auntie and Emo hated him for the person he was and white rail men too
257 looked strangely at him for the same reason.

258 Another sign of changing that could also be noted within the Indian community is in the field of religious belief.
259 Before the Indians came into contact with white people and their culture, their belief was concentrated essentially
260 on their traditions, customs and performance of rituals. Thus we construe that their customs, traditions, rituals
261 and stories served them as religion, since most of time they turn to performance of rituals and ceremonies
262 whenever they are faced with a problem they cannot handle easily. In deed in the novel, before Tayo had left
263 for War with Rocky, he and Josiah performed a ceremony because the rain was not falling and as a consequence
264 grass and trees were drying up and cattle couldn't feed themselves. It was a ceremony, of which the intent was to
265 bring back rain. It was actually a ceremony, yet we may simply refer to it as a prayer for rain.

266 Moreover, in the way the Bible tells about the creation of the world, Indian customs also do have their stories
267 about the beginning of the world. In the Bible, in deed it is written that:

268 In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The ranging ocean that
269 covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the spirit of God was moving over the water. Then God
270 commanded, "let there be light" and light appeared. God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated
271 the light from the darkness, and he named light "Day" and the darkness "Night". Evening passed and morning
272 came, that was the first day. ??9 This passage, taken from the genesis of the Bible suggests that Christians
273 believe that there is one God and he created the world starting by night and day. In other words, Christians
274 believe that it all originated from God. Indians have a completely different opinion on the creation of the world.
275 And the opinion they have on it too has been taught by a story. In fact Leslie Marmon Silko started her novel
276 by a story, and that very story is actually the one that justifies Indians' idea about the conception of the world
277 among Laguna Indians. The following passage of the novel is a part of the story and it shall help us discover
278 Indians' idea about God and about the creation of the world.

279 Based on this excerpt, it is obvious that to Indians stories are holy documents and they use them just as
280 Muslims may use the holy Koran and Christians, their holy Bible. Secondly, we also discover that Indians do
281 not believe in a single God. In addition to that, they have the belief that God is a female being. Indians believe
282 that they owe their living to three Goddesses. In fact the story refers to them as Thought woman and her
283 sisters: Corn woman and Reed woman. For Indians, their lives and welfare, the equilibrium of the nature and the
284 abundance depend on the frame of mind of those three goddesses. Finally, the third information we get from the
285 contents of this story is that Indians believe that the Universe is composed of five worlds, including the one we
286 are living in and that those five worlds have been created by Thought Woman, Corn woman and Reed woman,
287 the three goddesses.

288 In sum, before Indians and white people came in contact with one another, Indians trusted only their stories
289 and their rituals.

290 They resorted essentially to teachings of their stories, customs and rituals under situations before which white
291 people would go for a prayer, ask for advice to a pastor for example or even for a thanksgiving service. But
292 with the influence of white culture, Native Indians learned about Christianity and started going to church but
293 they did not completely abandon Indian traditional practices. However, they offer up much of their time to
294 church and several things around them have changed as the consequence of the presence of Christianity in their
295 community. This backs up the fact that in the novel, most of the characters' names sounds more Christian than
296 Indian. In fact, among all the characters of Ceremony only Tayo and Ku'oosh, the medicine men bear typically
297 Indian names. Most of the other characters bear Christian names such as Robert, Leroy and Josiah.

298 Added to this, as we said previously, Indians have acquired some new habits and life around them has changed
299 because of Christianity. Indeed, in Tayo's family, Auntie and Grandma regularly went to church. They were
300 even there the day Tayo had been brought to the reservation by his mother. Moreover, Auntie had special shoes
301 and dressing for church. Even though Christianity could not completely take the place of ritualism in the Indian
302 community, we must acknowledge that it had a great impact on Indians and on their living.

303 Throughout the novel, the way Leslie Marmon Silko names characters and places denounces a white American
304 tint within the Indian world. In fact right at the beginning of the novel, we see that Leslie Silko finds no problem
305 in using typically Indian names, though they are often not easy to be written and spelt in English. As such we
306 may infer that, was it not because Indians have learnt about the culture of white people and have copied their
307 language for instance and many their ways, Tayo and Rocky would have referred to their grand mother not by
308 and the four worlds below.

309 Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-woman, is sitting in her room and whatever she thinks about appears.

310 She thought of her sisters, Nau'ts'ity'I and I'tctsity'I, and together they created the Universe This world the
311 appellation grandma but by the Indian equivalent of Grandmother. Hence instead of using the appellations
312 Grandma and Auntie, Leslie Marmon Silko would have certainly used traditional Indian names such as K'oo'ko.
313 Actually, instead of using the name "K'oo'ko", she could have simply said a spirit, because according to Indians
314 K'oo'ko is the spirit that haunts the night of warriors who have killed during war. If Leslie Silko choose to say
315 K'oo'ko, it means nothing normally prevented her from using the Indian traditional equivalent of grandmother
316 or Auntie. The fact that she didn't do it proves that the Indian society has changed and that English is little by
317 little replacing the Indian traditional language among Indians.

318 Beyond all the elements we have so far been giving, based on Ceremony, to show the changing that occurred
319 within Indian community as the consequence of its contact with the white American world, there is still one very
320 important fact to study. That is the transformation of rituals and ceremonies. In the same wave length, "At one
321 time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the
322 white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I
323 have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies
324 strong...." 21 Culture can be defined as: "The total shared way of life of a given people, comprising their mode
325 of thinking, acting and feeling, which are expressed, for instance, in religion, law, language, art and custom
326 as well as in material products such as house, clothes and tools." ??2 We deduce that since Indians have been
327 transformed and that their ways, language and mode of thinking are no more the same, their culture too is
328 automatically no more the same. Thus Indians rituals and customs in order to continue being effective had to
329 undergo some transformations in line with the "new" people Indians have become." Following Vietnam, America
330 'and particularly American men' faced a 'disruption of cultural identity' amplified by the victories of the civil
331 rights and feminist movements." ??3 American men-lacking confidence in the government and the economy,
332 troubled by the changing relations between the sexes, uncertain of their identity or their

333 The phalocentric tendency to undermine women and the racial segregation around the country took other
334 directions. Gibson argues that: future-began to dream, to fantasize about the powers and features of another
335 kind of man who could retake and reorder the world. And the hero of all these dreams was the paramilitary
336 warrior. In the New War he fights the battles of Vietnam a thousand times, each time winning decisively.
337 Terrorists and drug dealers are blasted into oblivion. Illegal aliens inside the United States and the hordes of
338 non-whites in the Third World are returned by force to their proper place. Women are revealed as dangerous
339 temptresses who have to be mastered, avoided, or terminated. ??4 'There are some things I have to tell you,'
340 Betonie began softly. 'The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies
341 must be performed exactly as they have always been done, maybe because one slip-up or mistake and the whole
342 ceremony must be stopped and the sand painting destroyed. That much is true. They think that if a singer
343 tampers with any part of the ritual, great harm can be done, great harm unleashed.' He was quiet for a while,
344 looking up at the sky through the smoke hole. "That much can be also true. But long ago when the people were
345 given the ceremonies, the changing began; if only in the aging of the yellow The three different courses that
346 Tayohas followed before he is healed is a means, the author uses to show the transformation in the ceremonies
347 and the reason why they should be transformed. As we know already, before Tayo got to the reservation when
348 back from war, he spent a period of time at Los Angeles Veterans Hospital. The care he received there does not
349 heal him totally. Once at home, Grandma sent for Ku'oosh an Indian traditional medicine man, to take care
350 of him again. Ku'oosh takes care of him. He performs for Tayo the ceremony that the Laguna people used to

351 perform for warriors who killed in battle. But Ku'oosh knows things have changed and fearshis ceremony alone
352 may not heal Tayo. Tayo is then taken to another medicine man. The man is old Betonie. Old Betonie too is
353 Indian and is performing Indian medicine. But Betonie is not practicing medicine the way Ku'oosh does. Betonie
354 knows a lot about the problems incurred by the contact between Native American and white cultures and as a
355 consequence has taken time to transform the ceremonies so as to make them effective on the "new" Indians and
356 on the new sicknesses brought by the contact between whites and Indians.

357 Indeed, when Tayo arrived at Betonie's place, the latter took time to explain to him why he was there and why
358 he had transformed the Old ceremonies into something new and different. In the following passage of Ceremony
359 Betonie is talking to Tayo and giving him the reasons for his transforming the ceremonies. ??4 Cited by Philip
360 K. Jason, *Ibid*.

361 gourd rattle or the shrinking of the skin around the eagle's claw, if only in the different voices from generation
362 to generation, singing chants. You see in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing.' Tayo nodded;
363 he looked at the medicine pouches hanging from the ceiling and tried to imagine the objects they contained.
364 "At one time, the ceremonies alone as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then.
365 But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new
366 ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the
367 ceremonies strong. ??5

368 6 IV. Conclusion

369 Based on this passage we understand that, Betonie did not decide to transform the ceremonies for the sake of
370 transforming them, but he was compelled to. The society had changed and ceremonies too had to change. In
371 fact, there were new diseases and sicknesses; there were also "new" Indians as it is the case of Tayo in the novel
372 or of Leslie Marmon Silko in factual life. We call them "new" Indians because they are not totally Indian, they
373 are particular and because, before white people came to America and by the time most of the rituals have been
374 created, people like Tayo and the author of Ceremony did not exist among Indians. Hence, it is not amazing
375 Ku'oosh and Betonie doubt that rituals of before the arrival of White people may not have full effect on those
376 diseases and on the range of "new" Indians Tayo and Leslie Marmon Silko are part of. That is why Betonie
377 has changed his rituals and has adapted them to the new realities surrounding them so as to make them totally
378 effectives on people like Leslie Marmon Silko and in cases like modern battle fatigue.

379 This article has discussed the cultural dynamism after World War II that saw, on the one hand, the coming
380 together of the western civilization and the Native Americans. The study has shown that the impact of the US
381 participation and failure in Vietnam, on the other hand has been a hallmark in the Cultural Revolution that
382 concretized the American Mainstream multiculturalism.

383 This study firstly saw to the substanceof stories, rituals and ceremonies for Indian Americans. Here we found
384 that the recourse of Native Americans has always been to oral traditions and performances inherent in stories.
385 These stories that are of the Indian origin belong to their custom and are considered more than one can consider
386 a story. The author's use of these stories teaches us that a Native American in trouble or sickness ??5 Ceremony,
387 p. 126. cannot find a solution without the traditional use of these stories full of rituals and ceremonies.

388 The second step presented the impact of the Federal Affirmative Action that makes vivid the influence of
389 American culture on Indian Americans. Firstly the protagonist's birth which is from a white father and an Indian
390 mother denotes the consequence of this coming together. Other characters from the same cultural background
391 like Tayo, or even more authentic than him have shown a different behavior just because they have started
392 getting some diverse cultural features from public schools. Rocky -Auntie's son and Auntie herself are radically
393 transformed by their contact with white Mexican. This transformation is negatively elaborated on by the author
394 through the disapproval of Grandma vis-à-vis Rocky and his mother's conducts.

395 Tayo, a mixed blood character in this novel stands in the cultural liminality to affirm his identity as an Indian
396 and at the same time use the Indian cultural features in his contribution to the American culture. Despite
397 the fact that he is not full blood Indian, Tayo stands on the side of his Grandma to submit himself to Indian
398 traditional healing to the sickness he got from the US participation in the Vietnam War. However, postmodernism
399 is obviously at stake here not only because the protagonist lost faith to western medical treatment, but also the
400 traditional medicine men did not implement the means they used to cure full blood Indians. Instead, they created
401 a blend of traditional healings to cure the culturally hybrid patient.Tayo's position in Silko's world is to point at
the hybrid aspect of the American society which constitutes its national cultural strength. ¹ ²

[Note: 130-142.9 Elizabeth N.Evasdaughter, "Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: Healing Ethnic Hatred." *MELUS* 15.1 (Spring 1988): Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism Select*. Detroit: Gale, 2008. Literature Resource Center.83-94.]

Figure 1:

Figure 2:

¹Ceremony,p. 94. 17 Ceremony, p. 51.
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