

## I. Leslie Marmon Silko and Her Works

### Leslie Marmon Silko's Literary Background

Leslie Marmon Silko, an accomplished Native American contemporary writer, was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1948. She has a mix of Laguna Pueblo, Mexican and white ancestry. She was brought up in the Laguna Pueblo Reservation, where she learned traditional stories and legends from her female relatives. The influence of her mixed ancestry is clearly reflected in most of her works. *Ceremony* her most acclaimed novel also carries the theme of cultural crisis of the people of mixed ancestry. Tayo, the protagonist of the novel *Ceremony*, for an instance, has been a victim of the same sort of crisis.

Silko has been contributing to enrich Native American literature through her poetry, novels, short stories and essays. The perspective of her mixed ethnicity is prominent in many of her works. She explores ethnic identity and cultural values through her literature. She writes about Native American affinity with the land, the European suppression that altered the native way of life and the forces that threaten natives American cultures.

Silko began her literary career with the publication of her collection of poems *Laguna Woman* (1974) which draws richly upon her tribal ancestry. Her much acclaimed novel, *Ceremony*, the story of a Native American of mixed-ancestry, was published in 1977. Her miscellany *Storyteller*, drawing upon Native American myths, and combining poetry, family history, fiction and photographs, was published in 1981. *Almanac of the Dead*, her second novel, was published in 1991. *Garden of the Dunes*, published in 1999, is her most recent work.

### **The Origins of Silko's *Ceremony***

Silko's powerful novel *Ceremony* had to undergo a lot of changes within itself before it got its birth as a complete novel. The author, Silko explains the novel began as a short story that was supposed to be funny, "something light-hearted." She had heard humorous stories when she was growing up; specially, she intended to recount an amusing story of an alcoholic veteran of World War II who goes to "great lengths" for a drink, while his family, especially his mother, is equally determined to thwart him and keep him sober. Silko had not only heard many accounts of alcoholic decorated war heroes who returned from the war and were unable to function again within the Laguna community, but she had also witnessed this situation firsthand; even some of her own cousins fit the description of alcoholic war heroes.

As Silko began to write this story, she also recalled "the embarrassment and the shame" that the Laguna community experienced when they observed the alcoholism of these veterans. After about two paragraphs she realized that her story was not all that funny, and she began to wonder why some veterans were able to return to the community and function effectively again, while others were infected with "the war disease" and could not. At this point, Silko remembered that after the war, Pueblo communities welcomed home their soldiers by performing traditional ceremonies for warriors that were "purifications rituals." But clearly these rituals were not effective for all of the veterans. Silko wondered if this failure indicated the inadequacy of the community's traditional beliefs, but she also considered the possibility that these traditional rituals were not designed with twentieth-century warfare in mind and hence were ineffective for some veterans.

Silko revealed that her novel *Ceremony* had an autobiographical basis and stated that she wrote the book "to save my life." Between 1973 and 1974 while living

in Ketchikan, Alaska, and suffered from headache and nausea similar to those that afflict Tayo in *Ceremony*. The writing of this novel became for her a “ceremony” that enabled her to cope with the profound melancholy from which she suffered. Initially, the protagonist of her novel was a female, who attempts to overcome her despair, but after writing about a third of the novel with this female protagonist, Silko concluded that the work was becoming too autobiographical. At that point she abandoned the female protagonist for Tayo, a World War II veteran who survives the Bataan Death March and eventually overcomes the despair that afflicts him when he returns from the war. Despite the change to the male protagonist, Silko explained that as Tayo began to recuperate and cope with his despair, she too got better.

A short story entitled “Returning” and its untitled earlier version, reveal the psychology of despair that Silko and her protagonist Tayo were eventually able to exorcise through their “Ceremonies.” “Returning”, a story with a profoundly depressed female Indian protagonist, “was written just before I began *ceremony*”, states Silko. This unpublished story with its Ketchikan, Alaska, setting might well be regarded as containing the seed for *Ceremony* but even if that is not true, it does shed light on the central problem that is at the core of *Ceremony* and points out to the path that leads out of the darkness that threatens the sanity of her protagonist Tayo.

To conclude, Silko’s *Ceremony* seems to have emerged from various experiences of the author that she got while living a life of a mixed heritage. As a writer of mixed-blood, she has bitter experiences of identity crisis, especially the cultural identity, which she wants to restore with the writing of a novel like *Ceremony*. Hence, Silko projects her self to her protagonist Tayo, and makes a quest for her cultural identity.

## Literature Review

Silko's novel *Ceremony* is one of a few Native American works that has attracted wide spread attention of various critics. Dennis Cutchins, a renowned professor of English at Brigham Young University, has applied Nativism in his article "So That the Nations May Become Genuine Indian: Nativism and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*" as a theoretical tool to understand the intercultural and political aspects of *Ceremony*. In Cutchin's view, "though it is in some ways out-dated and problematic, Nativism provides the necessary theoretical structure" (78). "Nativism", as he mentions, may be briefly defined as the attempt to revitalize a given culture by emphasizing traditional elements of that culture, and simultaneously removing elements of foreign cultures" (78). It is exactly what Silko as a nativist does in her novel *Ceremony*.

Although it is a novel, Silko's *Ceremony* has many of the characteristics of a nativistic movement: the primary conflicts of the novel are the results of intercultural contact; the characters struggle to abolish "foreign" cultural elements and to strengthen, revive or restore some aspects of traditional Native American culture; and the true "evil" of the novel is intra-cultural witchcraft rather than any extra-cultural influence. This is not to suggest that *Ceremony* is simply a fictional account of a nativist movement. It is, rather, a fictional enactment of nativistic principles. It is, in other words, Nativism in action.

The protagonist Tayo's individual problems and sufferings, at the deeper level, can be extended to symbolize the problems of Laguna culture itself. Since his mother was Pueblo and his father was white, Tayo's very existence is the undeniable proof of the threat posed to Laguna culture by contact with whites: the ultimate absorption of Native Americans into the larger American society. Tayo has his father's green eyes

and light skin, so that his very appearance serves as a constant reminder of the potential disappearance or assimilation of the Laguna people. He is thus living evidence of the damage Nativism seeks to repair. Through Tayo's return to the traditional cultural practices for healing, Silko achieves the double goals of revitalizing the native culture and rejecting the mainstream American culture at the same time.

Focus upon stories and myths are another important element of Nativism. Stories are knowledgeable and knowledge is power over the world. Silko beautifully summarizes this perspective in *Ceremony*:

I will tell you something about stories,

[he said]

They aren't just entertainment.

Don't be fooled.

They are all we have, you see,

all we have to fight off

illness and death

You don't have anything

If you don't have the stories. (2)

For the native people, stories are not only the means of entertainment but they are tools to fight of illness and death to separate them from studies. As a counterpoint to the modern story of Tayo's life, Silko includes in *Ceremony* a traditional myth about how Hummingbird and Green Bottle Fly restored water and fertility to the world after a long drought. Silko's inclusion of this myth within the structure of the narrative reinforces the idea that the events of the novel should be placed squarely within a nativistic concept. Another indication of nativistic principles at work in *Ceremony* is

the fact that Tayo is ultimately unable to forget the stories he has learned from Josiah. Despite his teacher's active attempts to make him forget the traditional Laguna stories, he values the stories his uncle Josiah teaches him. He recalls that "he had believed in the stories for a long time, until the teachers at Indian school taught him not to believe in that kind of 'nonsense'" (19).

The most interesting nativistic aspect of *Ceremony* is its focus on witchcraft. A concern with witchcraft, so central to nineteenth-century nativistic movements, is one of the major preoccupations of *Ceremony*. It is in fact, the connection that unites all the other narrative elements in the novel. Silko finds the reader's knowledge of Native American witchcraft important enough to include a "Note on Bear People and Witches" in the novel (131). Through Betonie, Tayo learns that the real root of his problems lies not in the war, nor in the mistreatment he suffered at the hands of White schoolteachers, nor in his own mixed blood. Rather Tayo's problem is a result of Native American witchery. Pueblo witches, he learns, brought whites to the American continent, and caused the terrible destructive war he has witnessed.

Betonie warns Tayo that witches "want us to believe all evil resides with white people" (132). This, however, is not the case. We know it as he explains:

White people are only the tools that the witchery manipulates; and I tell you, we can deal with white people, with their machines and their beliefs. We can become we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place. (132)

Since the white people are the invention of the Indian witchery, they can be changed. They are not in the first place but they are made in the first place.

Thus, to analyze *Ceremony* in the light of Nativism is to deal with the cultural issue, which is one of the most dominant issues of the novel. Why Silko raised the

cultural issue so strongly in the novel is because she had some influence of Nativism on the one hand and an acute sense of loss of her native culture on the other. Silko rejects the simplistic ideal that a return to traditional beliefs is the only way Native American characters can survive. Denying both traditional and assimilationism, she proposes that the only way Native Americans characters, particularly those of mixed racial and cultural heritage, will be able to survive in the modern world is to adopt a nativistic paradigm and learn to adopt and alter ancient traditions to fit modern situations.

Regarding the novel, Sider Larson comments on the novel's theme of adaptation or change: "In addition, new blood new ways, new ceremonies are at the very heart of Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony*, especially where she writes that change is necessary for life, because 'things which don't shift and grow are dead things' (*Ceremony* 126).

Silko uses traditional Laguna Stories bases for her novel *Ceremony* which explores the evolution of her protagonist Tayo as a Laguna hero. In her novel the 'Myths are Laguna stories of the origins of draughts and of good harvest, the 'witchery' that created white people, and other stories of spider women, Humming bird and Fly, Buzzard, Bearboy, Arrowboy and Sun Man. Paula Gum Allen defines myth in "Teaching American Indian Women's Literature" as a 'controlling metaphor' for ones cultural identity:

In a sense, one might say that myth is culture; it is the roots of the people, their coherence, their significance, and their map for living . . . Myth is perhaps central to a person's and a people's sense of reality. It helps one know who one is, why one is, and what one is to express in one's life. Myth is, in literary terms, the controlling metaphor, from

which all meanings are derived, and all experience is assimilated and understood. (136)

Silko conscientiously tells the Laguna stories that relate to her protagonist, Tayo's life and from which his story emerges. When she tells of Hummingbird's and Fly's endeavors to set the world right and bring the rain back, she establishes the ways that individuals may act for the people and work transformations through correctly ordered actions and perseverance. And when she tells of Sun Man's confrontation with the Evil Gambler, Kaup'a'ta, she provides the template for Tayo's narrative. The traditional Laguna stories about Sun Man and Hummingbird and Fly are the myths which explain the Laguna past and tell Tayo how to act in the present.

Tayo haunted by the violence of World War II and the memories of his brother who died there, suffers from the post-traumatic stress disorder. His cause of illness is "the result of separation from the land, his people and American Indians ceremonies" (*The Sacred Hoop* 119). Excluded from the traditional clan societies, Tayo absorbs some of the old ways and stories from his uncle Josiah but even this experience is confused by his Indian school education where he learns the facts and logic that label these beliefs as superstitions.

Tayo gradually brings the unconscious to consciousness, recovering the repressed memories of this childhood and the war which have been "tangled with the present [. . .] like coloured threads from old grandma's wicker swing basket" (*Ceremony* 7) and reintegrating them into his psyche. Regarding the healing of Tayo Paula Gunn Allen argues in her seminal essay "The Feminine Landscape of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*":

The healing of Tayo and the land results from the reunification of land and person. Tayo is healed when he understands, in magical (mystical)



and loving ways that his being is within and without him, that it includes his mother, Night Swan, Ts'ch, Josiah, the spotted cattle, winter, hope, love and story universe of Betonie's ceremony. (128)

Tayo's unifications with Laguna people help his entry into the ancient story of Laguna people that prove his identity.

Joseph Campbell, a renowned American mythologist, shows in his much acclaimed book, *The Hero with a Thousands Faces*, that the myths of the world offer only a limited number of responses to the riddle of life despite their variety of incident, setting, and costume. In Campbell's view from behind a thousand faces the single hero looks out, archetype of all human myth. In this book, he presents a tripartite outline of the archetypal hero journey: "the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation- initiation-return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (30). Almost in the same fashion, Campbell writes, in *The Power of Myth*, that the hero adventure is cyclical, it involves a going and a return:

The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there's something lacking in the normal experiences available or permitted to the members of his society. This person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir. It's usually a cycle, a going and return. (123)

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell shows that the archetypal hero story always begins with an Everyman just living his humdrum life. Suddenly and unexpectedly, either by chance or by choice, everyman is either pulled out of his

ordinary life or chooses to live his ordinary life to launch into a great adventure, whose ending he cannot know at the beginning.

The adventure, according to Campbell, then goes through several specified stages. The hero will journey into a dark world where he has to deal with. Along the way he encounters a mentor who gives him the instruction in new skills he will need to learn to successively achieve his goal. No later than this part of the journey the hero becomes consciously aware of what that very specific goal is.

Striving for his goal, the hero is challenged to his limit, reaching a peak culminating experience, what Campbell calls a 'supreme ordeal'. The result is that the hero gains his reward and is forever changed by the experience. He often gains some new powers and sets off with them. Eventually, the hero re-emerges to his society with these new abilities bringing a boon to his society which somehow restores that society.

My assumption in the present study is that *Ceremony's* protagonist Tayo is one of the thousand faces of the same archetypal hero who undertakes the tripartite journey as mentioned by Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. He displays the attributes normally assigned to the culture. Hero as a mythic archetype: he disregards prohibitions by cursing the rain; he is rejected by his family –both by Auntie and his mother Laura; the supernaturals come to rescue him from further harm. They restore him by ritual treatment and from contact with them he acquires ceremonial knowledge and power; in the final events, the hero returns to his own people with a boon to restore the society he belongs to. With the completion of his adventure he restores his identity and completes his quest journey.

In this regard, the researcher wants to carry out the broad research on the issue of cultural identity exploring Tayo's journey, which starts with his acute sense of

cultural alienation and strongly felt sense of dislocation, and ends in the retrieval of his cultural position. The second chapter will provide the analyses of methodological tools useful for this research. The third chapter will seek Tayo's cultural location and will establish a connection between Tayo's sense of cultural dislocation and his physical problems; and it will also discuss on the various stages of his quest process. Finally, the last chapter will give a synopsis of the overall study.

## II. Culture and Cultural Identity

### General Introduction to Culture and Cultural Studies

Etymologically, the word 'culture' in English is derived from the Latin word 'cultura' which means a process connected to growing crops, that is, cultivation. Later the term has been applied to refer to the entire way of life of a particular group of people, including its customs, religions, inventions, art, literature, music, and behavioral preferences that make up people's life-style and approach to the activities of everyday life. Culture, thus, belongs to "the realization of broader human consciousness that is both developed and shaped by society, religion, history and geography" (Saraswathi, 223). Very surprisingly, the culture gives identity to an individual. Therefore people like to identify themselves in relation to their culture. There arises a problem of identity crisis when one fails to associate himself/herself to any of the cultural groups. Tayo, the protagonist in Silko's *Ceremony*, for an instance, bears the same sort of crisis of his cultural identity, whereby he can associate himself neither to the Native American culture nor to the main-stream white American culture.

Since culture is linked to the human world, it varies according to the variation in human history that took place with the changing time, different geography, and the transformation in socio-political scenario and lifestyle according. Thus, the cultural field, now covers not merely intellectual and artistic products of a particular group of people, rather it is the common phenomenon to all. It avoids any exclusive all the aspects of life- food, taste, habits, dress up, sports, music and entertainment, religious, rites and rituals etc. Culture, thus, is the accumulated knowledge of the social, literary, artistic and collective activity that is passed over from generation to generation. The study of art and literature forms parts of an analysis of cultural production. And there

cultural products both in their mode of production as well as in their dissemination, help us to define groups of people, societies or nations.

The totality of culture as a frame of reference shapes and controls man's view of the world around him/her. The late Eighteenth century emerged the idea of culture as "a whole way of life" of a social group or whole society. Until the mid-twentieth century, culture had been a field of anthropologists and evolutionary theory only and the environmentalism were in vogue in cultural studies. It was confined within description and comparison of various cultures and only advancing cultures were considered significant for the process of civilization. Less developed tribal cultures used to be ignored as an appropriate subject for history and were usually termed savagism.

Evolutionary theory generally focused on the process of the evolution of different societies. Its objective was to explore the history and development of a group of people but not to examine how and why these groups act and live differently. These evolutionists only proclaimed that all societies evolved through fixed sequences. They also suggested that diffusion between cultures, not psychic unity or evolution, accounted for cultural similarities.

This unilineal assumption of evolutionists came under attack by Franz Boas in 1965 and he brought about a new conception of culture. Before the 60's culture had been synonymous with civilization and therefore could not be possessed by so called primitive peoples because anthropologists were of the view that only a civilized or fully developed group of people could be their subject of study. Boas rejected his singular view of culture and the moral authority upon which it rested and substituted the concept of cultural pluralism, that is, he reasserted that all people possessed culture. This new definition of culture acknowledged the diversity and pluralism

inherent in human society. This made the contemporary anthropologists think that culture has a wider meaning than the culture of history and literature because it meant a total life way of people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group.

By 'culture' anthropology means the very part of the environment that is the creation of man. In ordinary speech a man of culture is a man who is familiar with history, literature, philosophy, fine arts or whose actions and behaviors are controlled and guided by wisdom and judgment. To the anthropologists, however, to be human is to be cultured. There are numerous cultures in the world and the people observing these cultures have their own distinct design for living. Clyde Kluckhohn, in his "Mirror for Man" writes:

A good deal of human behavior can be understood, and indeed predicted, if we know a people's design for living. We cannot explain acts solely in terms of people's biological properties, their individual past experience and the immediate situation. The experience of other men in the form of culture enters into almost every event. Each specific culture constitutes a kind of blueprint for all of life's activities.

(2)

Gradually, the definition of culture went on changing and the different critics began to apply different approaches to make cultural studies. The emergence of post colonial criticism and the post colonial theory made culture a most contested space. Culture by now borrowed the terminologies of other fields of criticism. Often cited terminologies these days in the studies of culture are Foucauldian notion of 'power' and 'discourse' and Gramsci's concept of 'Hegemony'. Post colonial perspectives emerged from the colonial testimony of third world countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical division of east and west, north and south. They

formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the 'rationalization' of modernity. About post colonial criticism, Homi K. Bhaba writes, it forces us to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, production in the act of social survival. Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure.

Another notable post colonial cultural critic Edward Said also puts some ideas about the general relationship between culture and empire. So, for him, 'The scope of Orientalism' matches with 'The Scope of Empire.' At the same time, he also sees the culture representing as well as functioning as a form of hegemony. Said in the connection finds Mathew Arnold as using culture as a powerful means of differentiation. Culture is an ideal for Arnold, but for Said, "culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate, to legitimate and validate: in short i.e. the power of culture to be an agent of and perhaps the main agency of powerful differentiation within its domain and beyond it too (*The World*, 9).

According to Ferdous, culture is not indispensable alone but also a multiaccented one openly exposed to the history with all experiences of complexities. Culture has been the notion to refer to intellectual practices and artistic works, the individual characteristics and lifestyles, the tradition of any particular social group and a historical movement that shape a human society.

Similarly, a British cultural critic Raymond Williams takes culture as "the whole way of life of a social group or whole society [. . .], it is a signifying system through which necessarily a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced

and explored" (55). Williams, here, focuses on the need of some kind of common culture as a unifying force in society. He basically seems to be interested in working class culture. In response to Williams, E. P. Thompson, a Marxist historian presents an alternative definition of culture as "the whole way of struggle" (10) in the place of as "the whole way of life."

All the major assumptions of British cultural studies are Marxists. This is not to say that all practitioners of cultural studies are Marxists, but the cultural studies are grounded in Marxism. Marxism informs cultural studies in two basic ways. First, to understand the meaning of culture we must analyze it in relation to the social structure and its history. Although it is constituted by a particular social structure with a specific history, it is not studied as a reflection of this structure and history. On the contrary, cultural studies argues that culture's importance derives from the fact that it helps to constitute the structure and shape the history. Second, cultural study assumes that capitalist industrial societies are societies unequally along, for example, ethnic, gender and class lines. It is argued that culture is one of the principal sites where these divisions are established: culture is a terrain on which there takes place a continual struggle for meaning (5). Tony Bennett opines, "Cultural studies is committed to examine cultural practices from the point of view of their interaction with, and within, relation of power" (39).

Ideology is the central concept in cultural studies because it means the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought and the system of representation- which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way the society works. If we look at culture from this perspective, Karl Marx's views on this subject bear much



significance. Marx opines: "We make culture and we are made by culture; there is agency and there is structure" (10).

The twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of more precise definitions on culture and theories on culturalism and literature. With the publication of works on culture and culturalism by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E. P. Thomson, and Stuart Hall, the scope and function of culture has gained extension. Eventually culturalism has become an approach that insists that by analyzing the culture of a society, the textual forms and documented practices of a culture, it is possible to reconstitute the patterned behaviour and constellations of ideas shared by the men and women who produce and consume the texts and practices of that society. Williams defines culture by distinguishing between three ways of thinking about it:

First there is the 'ideal' in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values. Second, there is the documentary record; the recorded texts and practices of culture, third, there is the social definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. (58)

A large number of thinkers and critics have begun to judge and analyze literature from cultural point of view, for they have realized that language, the means of expression, is a social element and it does express certain meanings, institutions and values of a particular society. As human activities can be regarded as more or less the reflection of their culture, literary creation serves a genuine gallery that reflects creator's mind and opinions that are generally shaped by culture. In one way or the other, our past and culture runs through our flesh and blood. Our expression is always

connected to and conditioned by context and art can be seen as an expression of certain elements in the society. Thus, meaning turns out to be a social production, a practice.

Culture, thus, being an inalienable element of human society, achieves a pertinent position in literary criticism. One significant development in this field is postcolonial criticism. It, unlike liberal humanist criticism, does not claim that great literature has a timeless and universal significance. By doing so it advocates that we demote or disregard cultural, social, regional, and national differences in experience and outlook. At this respect, it is important to have a cultural criticism of a text to bring out an authentic meaning. The question of identity of a person remains unanswered until the study is made putting the person in his/her cultural context. Culture has been a terminology to define the characteristic of individuals and their life styles, traditions along with a social and historical movement. It has influenced all human experiences, ideas, and attitudes. It is distinct from one race to another, one moment of gender, occupation, and ethnicity to another moment. Thus, culture has become the source of identity.

### **Issue of Identity**

Identity has been the central question for human beings in their effort to make sense of the world. Only after knowing oneself can one think of knowing others. Central to providing a meaningful answer to the question of identity is a reference to one's cultural part. Also pivotal is a people's alignment to ancestry and land of the ancestors if ever they are to give meaning to their existence. A single person may have various types of identities depending upon the different contexts. For example, a man named Mahesh Tharu can identify himself as a Dangali, as a Tharu, as a student or as a male, etc. etc. Among the various types of identities, the cultural identity is the

most crucial one. Every human being has a tendency to associate himself/herself to one or the other ethnic or cultural group. Thus, the identity achieved on the basis of culture or ethnicity is generally known as cultural identity.

From the remote past, human race has been divided into a number of identical groups of people. The human communities have been brought up differently from each other in different geographical and cultural spaces. Each group of people claims that they have a distinct identity and character because of their distinct cultural heritage. Identity becomes an issue when something previously assumed to be fixed and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty. People express their identity. They question it if they find the difficulty of belonging. They even seek their relation to the source culture, and thereby try to establish their identity. Identity as such has been a topical issue in the study of culture, and the scholars like Koben Mercer say that the concept of identity is in crisis almost everywhere. People say that this crisis is caused by globalization, with the experience of migrancy, altering relations between Western and other cultures and the sense of identity of individuals across the nation. The globalization in its long run has caused the interfusing of identities which can be termed as “the hybridity of cultural identities.” The notion of hybridity suggests that it has the relation to ‘racial’ and ‘ethnic’ identities. Moreover, these identities are not pure but are the product of mixing, fusion and creolization, following the mixing and movements of cultures. Specifically, from the slave trade to mass media, there lies the great shape of modern identities.

Cultural identity along with the points of similarity also has the critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute “what we really are” or rather “what we have become.” He/she cannot speak for very long, with any exactness about “one experience, one identity,” without acknowledging its other side. Stuart Hall

observed the scene with the people creating their new but constructed and emergent subject. Hall believes that cultural identity exists only in the representation. So, on this concept, he argues:

It is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think, perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the cultural practices then represent, we should think identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the terms.’ Cultural identity lays claims (“Cultural Identity”, 110).

Hall’s idea of identity is that it has no fixed archeology but has become a “retelling of the past” (112). Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. Indian experience, Indianness of the Africanness, and other such identities are constituted out of the traumatic character of the colonial experience. Hall says:

The inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms . . .  
They produce without horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels. Nevertheless, this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of cultural identity. (113)

Hall, after all, comes to conclude the fact that cultural identity “is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture” (113). Hall gives emphasis to the dynamics of cultural identity. His idea that cultural identity is “always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” can be taken as his great contribution to the thinking that there is the relation existing between cultural identity and expression. This is the case, by narrating the stories of their self torture and self

actualization in the world of cultural confusion; many post colonial writers have been trying to create themselves to establish their identity through varying ways of expressions.

After the mid-twentieth century, there appears a growing debate on and finally a tendency that identity comes at the fore if multiculturalism is to be considered as an accepted field academics. The role played by the cultural identity in culture has become a focal point in cultural studies. It is because every ethnic people claim that they do have certain distinct identity– both historical and cultural – which make them peculiar from other people. Thus, cultural identity appears to be a collection of traits, of objective-structures (the social and historical) and as a process or principle of subjectivation (the lived experiences, conscious or unconscious individuality).

The question of identity, at least for the last two centuries, has implied an attempt to define identity either psychologically, or logically, or historically. But once we want to combine these different pertinencies or once we no longer want to sacrifice any of them, we come to realize that identity should be designated precisely a ‘cultural’ or that culture should be designated as the most general element in which we identify ‘identity.’ With this very sentiment, Etienne Balibar writes in his article “Culture and Identity”:

Cultural identity is described as being what expresses the singularity of groups, people or societies, what forbids conflating them in a uniformity of thought and practice or purely and simply erasing the borders that separate them and that translate at least the tendential correlation between linguistic facts, religious facts, facts of kinship aesthetic facts in the broad sense (for there are styles of life just as there are musical or literary style) and political facts. (15)

Some anthropologists and thinkers compare to and conflate it with national identity. Thus, we constantly speak of 'French Culture' 'Italian Culture', 'American Culture', 'Indian Culture', 'Chinese Culture' and so on. However, cultural identity versus national identity, and ethnicity versus nationality. We should not reduce cultural identity to a 'national character' for national character may include too many diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Nevertheless, culture could be the name given to the 'essential nation' because it designates the pure difference between the nation as national state and the 'other' state. History of humankind and civilization process has shown us that culture depends on state to gain its identity whereas a nation depends on its cultural identity to enter civilization.

Thus, philosophers and anthropologists, not all but almost of them, have agreed on the new hypothesis that 'all identity has had to be founded in a past cultural origin.' Although identity cannot be described as 'culture' since it is problematic to do so, culture, to a great extent, determines identity because when we perceive culture as a field of experience, identities can be recognized.

There are a number of elements or institutions that determine ones identity and cultural diversity in the world. Religion, socio-political infrastructure, topography, climate and languages are the tools that collectively shape cultures and identity. Among them, language is the most powerful factor because it forms not only systems but also universe. Bablibar Etienne opines, "A language – institution of institutions – is what determines an individual as belonging to this culture (he is 'chosen' by it more than he chooses it). "Mastery, of the language promises mastery of culture" (25).

Identity is never a peaceful acquisition because it is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by 'another identity', a foreign identity or by a 'erasing of identities, a depersonalization.' It would be more precise to

say that identity is a discourse of tradition. And one of the privileged names of tradition, in contemporary society, is precisely 'culture.'

After 1990s, the theme of search for identity, especially cultural identity is rapidly rising among people. Since the values, norms, institutions, customs, structures and modes of thinking in culture provided a space to people, people create culture and vice versa. Mikko Lehtonen, regarding human beings as cultural beings asserts:

“Cultural symbols are omnipresent precisely for the reason that they are essential for our survival. Culture is the ‘survival kit’ of humankind. Being biologically defective, human must resort to their reflective resources for survival” (5).

Lehtonen, in the above phrase, puts his logic on that one must secure individual existence to be a human being, and it is the cultural pattern that shapes one's individual characteristics. The ungovernable and directionless acts, thoughts and sentiments of an individual find their appropriate route only because of culture, which indeed is a life saving mechanism, the 'integrated whole' or 'totality.' It is an 'integrated whole' or 'totality' that has its own configuration though there exists different levels and sublevels. Thus, if we consider Lehtonen's idea, we can accept that every individual in that cultural configuration carries the characteristics of that culture and behaves according to that pattern. An individual becomes an integrated member of one's own concerned cultural community by acquiring its rules and instructions. Now, it is more explicit to say that an individual is better understood within the specific cultural system, as history of each culture is characterized by a set of values, beliefs and practices which are responsible for the individual behavior. Lehtonen's remark, “we do produce meaning, but as products of meanings [. . .]” (10) seems to support Heidegger's regard on human being as a being thrust upon an alien world.

In recent time, the psychologists like Anotovella Fave and Meli Franco show great interest in the role of culture in shaping identity of an individual. They argue, “Each culture has a codified and exhaustive set of instructions concerning psychological and behavioural issues” (14). According to these psychologists, no doubt, culture guarantees individual identity. A definite balance between individual behavioural characteristics and a community cultural pattern is possible only through a sound development of culture in which the individual belongs to. Otherwise anarchy and savagery become natural phenomenon. If an individual is thrust upon in an alien world where culture practices including customs, rituals, and beliefs are quite different, s/he would certainly meet some crisis there. "When someone is brought up in one culture and placed in another culture, s/he may face frustration, fear, curiosity, fascination, repulsion, hatred or confusion” (Saraswati, 223). Thus, the totality of culture as a frame of reference shapes and controls human idea about world in surrounding. An individual loses significant aspects of his/her culture or his/her world of experience by the time when estrangement occurs or when there is a cultural displacement.

### **Some Key Post Colonial Terms Related to Culture**

Many of the post colonial writers have raised the issue of cultural identity as one of their subject matters to write about. By narrating the stories of their self torture and self actualization in the world of cultural confusion, they have been trying to recreate themselves to establish their identity through varying ways of expressions. The most common terminologies used by post colonial writers and critics in their writing and criticism are described in brief.



### **Cultural Encounter**

The meeting of cultures is marked by contestation struggle and agonism that matches the tensional relation between absence and presence, emptiness and affirmation. Almost every educated American today is the product of the conflicts and reconciliation of two cultures, although the consciousness of this tension varies from individual to individual. Such an encounter takes place when one culture or cultural peculiarity is introduced to the culture which is different from it. Cultural encounter facilitate a pattern of mutual adjustment or reciprocal give and take by offering space enough for co-existence. But all the time it is not necessary that cultural encounter promotes blending or merging of perspectives, from this condition writer's culture initiates a moment of genuine self transformation, that is, a reassessment of prevailing patterns in the light of newly experienced insights or modes of life. This cultural conflict or synthesis, for some reason, is always assumed of a vital significant for any writer who writes about Native American culture. Cultural encounter is an umbrella term, it does not take a single mode rather it is a process and can be clarified on the basis of various modes it takes, like cultural dislocation, accumulation, assimilation, hybridity, diaspora, etc.

### **Acculturation**

Acculturation refers to the process where diverse cultural qualities and complexities are modified because of the continuous contact by making the cultures and cultural identities hybrid and the society multi-cultural. Acculturation includes those incident which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into contact for a long time, with later changes into the original cultural patterns of either one or both groups. The history of each society is characterized by a set of values, beliefs and practices, and each culture has a codified exhaustive set of

instructions concerning behavioural issues. Cultural interactions stem from sets of values, norms which can be extremely different from one another and such contacts may extend “from domestic contacts to global interactions, and between hegemonic Western cultural and developing non-western societies” (Dallmayr, 14). This can be the result of co-operation or competition between cultures. In the first case exchange and mutual support can take place. In the second, alternative is the most frequent one.

Cultural modification concerns the changes a cultural group has to introduce in collective group has to introduce in collective as well as individual behavior, in order to co-exist and interact with the norms and habits of a dominant social system. It usually applies to ethnic minorities immigrants, indigenous people exposed to colonization, refugees, which can be globally considered as acculturating groups because they are mostly forced to adopt the cultural system where they live in. Individuals originating from the acculturating group are not accepted as a member of the dominant culture. Acculturating individuals manage to acquire values and behaviors characterizing the dominant culture in which they live, at the same time preserving their own traditions and habits. It requires the creation of effective interpersonal relationships with both groups without losing personal identity.

### **Assimilation**

Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar, share the same sentiments, values and goals and whereby attitudes of many persons are united and developed into a unified group. Cultural encounters does not always entail merge or through a process of cultural borrowing. This happens when the respective cultures fact each other on a more nearly equal or roughly comparable basis. It is closely affiliated to the process of acculturation. Within the

acculturating group, individuals loose their ties with the original cultural background and acquire values, habits and behaviors from the dominant culture.

Assimilation is a continuous process characterized by the fusion and adjustment of various cultural qualities. It facilitates partial adaptation and finally assimilation. Partial adaptation, in nay case, involves a greater subtlety in self other relations. Rather than self imposition of hegemonic situation, selective borrowing requires a willingness to recognized the distinctness of other culture coupled with the desire to maintain at least some indigenous preference. That means the result of such borrowing that is assimilation, is not always motivated by the hegemonic influence, rather it may turn otherwise. Here it will be contextual to quote Fred Dallmayr:

Assimilation is not only or exclusively a policy imposed from above, that is, a process whereby a hegemonic culture is disseminated by an elite to subordinate segments of the population. Sometimes . . . , the hegemonic culture holds a powerful attraction for subordinate groups eager to gain social acceptance or recognition and thus to terminate discrimination. Where such acceptance is pursued deliberately and with some promise of success we are in the presence of acculturation through upward mobility (Dallmayr, 17).

### **Diaspora**

Diaspora is a term that was initially used to refer to the dispersal of Jewish people across the globe, but is not regularly used to describe black and other diasporas. In Slaman Rushdie's phrase, "These identities are shaped by this sense of having been born across the world, but not entirely in the West" (117). A number of critics now agree that Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul and some prominent black writers find a unique and a fertile place from where they can write about their

anguish towards the West as well as they can express a haunting search for their cultural identity. They, therefore, seek their belonging and write about that. Their writings are full of cultural expression relying on the fact that the notion of cultural identity in fact, is problematic and they struggle to adjust as well as assimilate with the new culture.

Samuel P. Huntington therefore says, "The people and countries with different cultures are coming apart," and at the same time he insists the fact that country's association and antagonism to others" (125). To find their place in culture and civilization, people ask such questions; "Who are we?", "Where do we belong? and "Who is not us?" (126).

### **Dislocation, Displacement and Alienation**

Dislocation as a phenomenon is the consequence of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location. This is a term often used to describe the experience of dislocation in Heidegger's term '*unheimlich*' or '*unheimlichkeit*.' Literally 'unhousedness' or 'not-at-houseness'– which is also sometimes translated as 'uncanny' or 'uncanniness.' It is often used to depict this unpleasant experience of dislocation. The very term dislocation is defined in *key concepts in post-colonial studies*:

Dislocation as a socio-cultural phenomenon is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion or settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to unknown location (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 73).

Historically, dislocation was developed in the intuition of slavery and the system of indentured labor. Diasporic communities formed by forced or voluntary migration

may all be affected by this process of dislocation and regeneration. Dislocation can be further extended resulting from cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status.

Dislocation is a structure which is characterized by never ending process, as the societies have no single organizing principle; rather it is constantly being dislocated by force of society with ruptures where no stable identity of individual is possible. Withstanding the instability of the identities, the dislocation and the displacement can be created with the social structure. It is caused by the decline of old identities, which stabilizes the social world so long. It gives rise to new identities and fragments modern subject. This is the crisis of identity. The experience of dislocation indeed becomes the mother of invention. The disruptive and disorienting experience of dislocation becomes a primary influence on the regenerative energies in a post colonial culture.

Place and displacement is crucial feature of post colonial discourse. By place, we do not simply mean physical landscape. Rather, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Helen see it as a term that cannot be separated from the issue of culture:

Place in post colonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment. It is characterized firstly by sense of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies or the more widespread sense of displacement from imported language, of a gap between the 'experienced' environment and descriptions the language provides, and secondly by a sense of immense investment of culture in the construction of place (Ashcroft, "Reader," 391)

A sense of displacement, of the lack of 'fit' between; language and place, may be experienced by both those who possess English as a mother language and those

who speak it as a second language. In both case, the sense of dislocation from a historical homeland is possible.

The concept of place itself may be very different in different societies and this can have quite specific political as well as literary effects in the extent of displacement. For instance, in aboriginal societies, place is traditionally not a visual construct, a measurable space or even a topographical system but a tangible location of one's own being. The idea of not owning the land but in some sense being owned by it is a way of seeing the world that is so different from the materiality and commodification of a colonizing power.

Lastly, another important term often used in the post-colonial discourse is alienation. Simply, alienation refers to the estrangement of individuals from one another or from a specific situation or process. It has now been frequently applied to refer to the cultural estrangement under which the individuals feel a loss of their cultural belonging. In this sense, the term is applied psychologically to comprise the dimension of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness and self-estrangement. Alienation is extricably related to its kin terms: displacement, dislocation, diaspora and exile. Most of the critics now readily agree that all these terms are related to homelessness." Someone who has been abandoned by tradition is a "homeless" man, who is alienated and haunted by the same" (Nixon 14-17). People often realize this fact of 'loss' when they are displaced and dislocated. The displacement and dislocation give them the sense of alienation.

Thus, these various terminologies are frequently used in criticism of post-colonial discourse. However, in the case of our protagonist Tayo, rather than cultural assimilation and acculturation, a sense of cultural dislocation, displacement and alienation seems to have been working actively. We can also trace some sense of

hybridity and diaspora in him. After all, he is a victim of the mixed-blood situation.

So, in the following chapter, Tayo's cultural location will be examined and analyzed

in term of his mixed-blood heritage.

### III. Tayo's Quest

#### Tayo's Cultural Location

Tayo, as a half-breed, has no distinct cultural location. He shares the cultural values of both the cultural groups- the white American culture and the old native culture. So, he cannot be placed in either group. He has the mix of both of them. His mixed-blood status is the cause of his cultural crisis. But before finding Tayo's cultural location, I feel compelled to talk about how mixed blood came into existence and how they have been perceived by others and by themselves since I believe this will shed considerable light on the subject at hand.

There was a time in so-called Early American History when inter-marriage between whites and Indians was advocated as a means of achieving a "bloodless" conquest, one that could be arrived not by the spilling of blood, but by mixing of it. Thomas Jefferson expressed these sentiments in 1803:

In truth, the ultimate point of rest and happiness for them is to let our settlement and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix, and to become one people . . . and it will be better to promote than retard it.  
(Bieder 1980, 19)

Missionaries seeking to convert and civilize Indians also held a similar stance, believing the mixed blood was more malleable and would "espouse the interests of civilization and Christianity" (Bieder 1980, 19). A common observation of the time was that mixed bloods were "the first to take on 'white ways': to start farming and acquire an education, "as well as serve the quite useful purpose of interpreting (19-20). In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville held that "the half-blood forms the natural link between civilization and barbarism" (20). The idea of the mixed blood as a bridge between cultures may have had its roots in this period.



However, by the middle of the 1800s these beliefs began to deteriorate as reports came in that the mixed blood had failed to live up to white expectations. Mixed bloods quickly became marked as "faulty stock." Since they often chose tribal life over a white one. "Like the Indian, the mixed-blood was viewed as headed for extinction" (Bieder, 27).

There is no definition for mixed blood according to *Webster's Encyclopedic Version of the New Lexicon Dictionary*; however, the definition of the pejorative term half-blood reads as follows "n. someone of mixed breeding, esp. of mixed White and American Indian parentage" (434). While this clinical definition may satisfy the question of the genetic "what" it gives no real insight of any instance.

In the Lakota language, the word used to describe a mixed blood is *iyeska*; however, its meaning does not end there. According too Orval Looking Horse, keeper of the sacred pipe of the Lakota people, the term *iyeska* embodies the concept of one who not only interprets between the red and the white worlds, but between the world of spirits and of human beings as well. I believe this definition makes clear that a mixed blood is always between the two worlds. Here we can apply this definition to the case of Tayo. Tayo as a mixed-blood character always stands between the two cultural worlds, and this cultural location of Tayo itself is a cause of Tayo's psychological illness.

Tayo is undoubtedly the victim of the confrontation of two worlds: the tribal world and the white world. These two worlds differ enormously in their value system. Peter Nabokov cites in *Native American Testimony* a prophetic story that exemplifies how profound the differences in these two value systems can be:

At the time of creation, the Cherokee says, the white man was given a stone, and the Indian a piece of silver. Despising the stone, the white

man threw it away. Finding the silver equally worthless, the Indian discarded it. Later the white man pocketed the silver as a source of martial power; the Indian revered the stone as a source of sacred power. (32)

The incident in Silko's *Ceremony* that best illustrates the contradictory views of these two cultures is that of Laura running away with white men and Mexicans. The two cultures view this incident in two diverse ways, as Silko writes, "The catholic priest shook his finger at the drunkenness and lust but the people felt something deeper: they were losing part of themselves" (68).

The white Christian Society gives emphasis on individual identity whereas the Indian world believes in tribal identity. Tayo is torn between these two contradictory points of view. According to the Native American point of view, Tayo's "sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything" (126). In contrast, the army doctors in the mental hospital tell Tayo to think only of himself and not about the others, that he would never get well as long as he used words like 'we' and 'us'" (125).

It is the white men's policy of assimilation that separates an Indian from his/her tribe. To quote Brewton Berry and Henry L. Tischler, "The animalist philosophy assumes that the primary social unit is the individual. Individuals must be free to define themselves as separate from their ancestors and must be allowed to gain recognition apart from their ethnic background" (293). Peter Nabokov quotes a Commissioner of Indian Affairs as saying, "[the Indian] must be imbued with the exalting egotism of American civilization so that he will say 'I' instead of 'we', and 'This is mine' instead or 'This is our'" (233).

In line with the tribal thought, however, an individual alone has no meaning. A free individual without context or ethnic background is utterly lost, as William Bevis describes, ". . . 'identity', for Native American is not a matter of finding 'one's self', but of finding a 'self' that is transpersonal and includes a society, a past, and a place. To be separated from that transpersonal time and space is to lose identity" (19).

Reminiscent of Bevis, Duane Niatum write in "Autobiographical Sketch" how vital group identity is to an Indian ". . . I am most alive and a part of a community when living as one with the people, animals, fish, and birds" (131). Therefore, Tayo, a tribal being cannot think of his identity in isolation as suggested by the Army doctors, and if he is compelled to do so, he cannot remain emotionally a healthy being.

Tayo's dilemma is one that Native Americans have faced since white contact: how does an Indian like Tayo remain whole while accepting the supernatural and ritual practices of the tribe and simultaneously assimilating white Christian attitudes required by white presence and white colonization? Tayo's distorted self, his alcoholism, and his disillusioned mentality lead him to the path of violence. He fights with Emo. The fight is, in fact, a response to his dilemma, a response that characterizes him as a psychologically disturbed among people who do not accept interpersonal violence as a means of resolving difficulties, however arcane those difficulties might be.

Tayo is culturally distracted as result of his white education. Tayo, has a dilemma "which stories are to be believed- the mystical, mythical, and spiritual stories that order experience along empathetic lines, or the linear, scientific, and historical facts that keep the world divided" (Lipsitz 221). He can neither despise his textbook knowledge nor can he forget the tribal stories. Despite all he learnt at reservation school, he still feels the tribal stories his grandmother told are true:

The science books explained the causes and effects. But old Grandma always used to say, "Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened." He never lost the feeling he had in his chest when she spoke those words, as she did each time she told them the stories and he still felt it was true, despite all they had taught him in school . . . that long ago things had been different. (*Ceremony*, 99)

Tayo's distress and, therefore, his sickness is the outcome of his cultural clash with the white ways represented by his school textbooks. The flies episode in *Ceremony* exemplifies one such clash. Tayo learns from Uncle Josiah that flies are sacred for it is some species of flies that served as the messenger to their mother "Nau'ts'ity' i", "It was the green bottle fly who went to her, asking forgiveness for the people. Since that time the people have been grateful for what the fly did for us" (101). To the white people, however, flies are carriers of diseases and so there is no harm in killing them.

Similarly, one more example of cultural clash can be just illustrated with the two different perspectives of looking at frogs. The elders tell the Laguna Pueblo children that frogs "were the rain's children" (95) and warn "the kids not to kill frogs, because the frogs would get angry and send so much rain that there would be floods" (194-95). This Indian belief, nevertheless, contradicts the science textbooks Tayo studied at reservation school. To the white people, the frogs are the objects of scientific research and experiment. Tayo recalls how the science teacher once despised tribal understanding of frogs, "look at these frogs, do you think they could do anything? Where are all the floods? We dissect them in this class every year" (195). Thus contradicts the Indian Opinion with that of the whites.

Tayo, as a half-breed, becomes the victim of cultural clash of the two different cultures. Because he is a half-breed, he is not fully accepted by either set of relatives. To the Anglo-American, he is a Native American, and to the full-blood Native Americans, he is part-white. His predicament is such that he is "unable to be Indian, unable not to be Indian" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 134):

The breed (whether by percentage or acculturation to non-Indian society) is an Indian who is not an Indian. That is, breeds are a bit of both worlds, and the consciousness of this makes them seem alien to traditional Indians while making them feel alien among whites. Breeds commonly feel alien to themselves above all. (129)

Tayo's experience as a half-breed is, in fact, similar to that of the Pauite Indian Peter Nabokov cites in *Native American Testimony*, "I AM A HALF-BREED. That means, I live on the fringes of two races. My white friends think I am just a plain old Pauite, while the Indian say I think I am better than they because my father was a white man" (205). In *Ceremony*, Emo, a full-blood Indian, humiliates Tayo on the ground that he is part-white, "There he is. He thinks he's something all right. Because he's part white. Don't you half-breed?" (57).

Thus, Tayo's half-breed status provides him no distinct cultural location. He always swings between the two cultures and lives in dilemma. When Tayo realizes his own cultural position of nowhere, he has a severe psychological pain which leads him to mental trauma. I, therefore, would like to analyze in the following chapter the different events and situations that caused Tayo to have this painful realization of his pendulum-like cultural position which ultimately becomes the cause of his mental illness.

### **Tayo's Sense of Cultural Dislocation, Loss and Discrimination**

Tayo culturally dislocated as a mixed blood character begins to realize his dislocated position and discriminated condition from his very childhood. At his aunt's home, he is treated as outsider. He always holds a desire to attain his position and for this he tries his best. But, the more attempts he makes the greater sense of isolation and discrimination he has. This sense goes on increasing and reaches to the extreme that he ultimately falls the victim of his own desire. I therefore, would like to analyze in this chapter the various events and situations which caused Tayo to have a strong sense of dislocation, loss and discrimination.

Since the day his mother left him in Auntie's home, Tayo begins to feel the lack of motherly love. The Aunties mistreatment adds to his pain of losing his mother. In the family, she treats Tayo as an outsider because he is "her dead sister's half-blood child" (*Ceremony* 30). Toni Flores argues that Tayo is "wounded by his family's grudging acceptance of him and in particular by his mother's sister's insistence on the stigma he both bears and inflicts (116). Sinder Larson, likewise, holds "the protagonist Tayo, suffers discrimination from his own family as a result of his identity, his status as the product of his mother and 'that white man'" (109). Apparently Auntie has her prejudice against Tayo's half-breed inheritance, as she would say when other people mistakenly called Rocky and Tayo brothers, "they're not brothers, that's Laura's boy" (*Ceremony* 65). This is what Paula Gunn hints at when she writes, "Tayo's suffering is caused by his status as a half-breed in a tribe that does not approve of mixed-blood" (*Sacred Hoop*).

Tayo is thus, abandoned by his mother and also by his mother's family. Here, he began to have the feelings of orphanage, othered and discriminated. Practicia Riley argues that the mixed-bloods are rendered orphans as they are abandoned by both the

parent's cultures, "all of the mixed-blood characters in *Ceremony* are orphans of one sort or another or in some ways associated with abandonment" (329).

It was not his Auntie alone who humiliated Tayo, but were other white people who did the same to Tayo on the ground that he was a half-breed. Tayo recalls a humiliating experience while being with the whites, "He remembered how the white men who were building the new highway through Laguna had pointed at him. They had elbowed each other and winked" (*Ceremony*, 57). Even the Army recruiter doubts the fact that Tayo is Rocky's half-brother, "you guys are brothers?" (72). It is however, ridicules that the white men humiliated Tayo on the ground that he is a half-breed for it is same white man who is responsible for Tayo's half-breed status.

Apart from his family, the war gives Tayo an acute sense of discrimination. He joins the war with the hope that he would get equality and have good time there. He takes the war as an escape from his reservation life of discrimination, injustice and poverty. The Army promises Tayo and other warriors the opportunity to see the world and to be accepted into mainstream America. Tayo and Rocky believe they have finally found access to the white world when the Army recruiter tells them, "Anyone can fight for America, even you boys. In a time of need, anyone can fight for her" (*Ceremony*, 64). The idea of war quickly attracts rocky and begins to dream of his hopeful future, he tells Tayo, "We can do real good, Tayo. Go all over the world. See different places and different people. Look at the guy, the recruiter; he's got his own government car to drive, too" (72).

It is, however, paradoxical that the Army recruiter invites Tayo and Rocky to fight for a country that has treated them as second-class citizens and for the one that has discriminated them of their tribal land. Jessica M. Vianes is critical of this American paradox, as she writes, "native Americans were drafted to fight for the

country that stole their land, yet they were expected to be patriotic, loyal, and willing to die for America" (152).

Tayo and other Indians do not feel any sense of discrimination as long as the war lasts: These Indians got treated as anyone: Wake Island, Iwo Jima. They got the same medals for bravery, the same flag over the coffin" (*Ceremony*, 42). But, this sense of equality does not last long. As soon as the war is over, the discrimination begins." The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she's real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change" (*Ceremony*, 92). Helen Jean, herself a victim of the white world like Tayo's mother Laura, understands the paradoxical nature of America's relationship with the Indian veterans:

She looks at these Laguna guys. They had been treated first class once, with their uniforms. As long as there had been a war and the white people were afraid of the Japs and Hitler. But these Indians got fooled when they thought it would last. She was tired of pretending with them, tired of making believe it had lasted. (165-66)

After returning from the war, Tayo finds his condition in reservation as bleak as ever. He can die in a foreign land fighting to Japanese who are not his enemies but his reputation in a foreign battle bears little relation to his status in America. As racial discrimination and white injustice repeat in post-war America, the Indian veterans come to realize their good times had been momentary. As Peter Nabokov says, "Discrimination was something they (the Indian veterans) fought overseas but they had forgotten their second class citizenship at home" (333).



Tayo, who had joined the war with the hope of getting equality and identity, ultimately gets a sickness termed as a 'post traumatic disorder'. Rocky and the white soldiers term his sickness a "battle fatigue." Actually, it was not the "battle fatigue" but the psychological disorder caused due to his haunting sense of loss of his identity. Commenting upon Tayo's illness, Clinton Macchan writes, "The horrors of the war against the Japanese in the Philippine jungles have led him to the brink of insanity and the mental ward of a veteran's hospital" (751). Though he was not in complete harmony with his world even before he went to the war, the war compounds his problem and worsens his condition.

Even after Tayo returns home from the war, his Auntie misbehaves and humiliates him. She does not like to call a medicine man to cure him. When Tayo's grandmother asks her to call a medicine man, she says:

Oh, I don't know, Mama. You know how they are. You know what people will say if we ask for a medicine man to help him. Someone will say it's not right. They'll say, don't do it. He's not full blood anyway. (33)

Here, Tayo's Auntie puts salt on his wound. She shows an inhuman behavior by rejecting to all upon the doctor. This inhuman behavior of Auntie reminds Tayo again of his discriminated position.

Upon returning from the war, Tayo's sense of loss becomes more intense. He realizes that all the promises the white people made to Rocky, to Betonie and to other Indians were false: "this was where the white people and their promises had left the Indians. All the promises they made to you, Rocky they weren't any difference than the other promises they made" (*Ceremony*, 127). Tayo understands that the white people disinherited Betonie in the way they disinherited them. Betonie's sole

belongings, Tayo observed, consisted of “the leftover things the whites didn’t want” and to him, "all of it seemed pitiful and small compared to the world he knew the white people had" (127).

Like Tayo's Auntie, Emo, one of Tayo's friends, causes Tayo to have the sense of discrimination and loss of his identity. Emo has hated Tayo since the time they have been in grade school together, and the only reason for his hate is that Tayo is part white. Among other friends in restaurant, Emo humiliates Tayo by saying "There he is. He thinks he's something all right. Because he's part white. Don't you, half-breed?" (*Ceremony*, 57).

Tayo, thus being humiliated many times in many different situations by many different persons, has an acute sense of his discriminated condition, and dislocated position. This realization of his vague identity and vulnerable cultural position worsens his problem. He however, does not give up his hope of attaining his cultural identity, so he makes a very long and difficult quest journey. In the chapters to come the steps of his quest journey shall be researched and analyzed.

### **Steps of Tayo's Quest Journey**

Tayo's painful realization of his cultural position, tortures him deep inside his psyche and causes him to take up a journey, which begins from the leaving of his home and ends in homing in. Tayo, culturally dislocated man, comes back finally with the retrieval of his cultural identity. During his quest journey he meets many ups and downs. He, however, succeeds in his quest mission at last and proves himself to be a cultural hero. Regarding my research over this long journey made by Tayo, I would like to divide it into three steps- the first step from home to the war, the second step from the war to home back and the final step further ahead from home to the destination.

### **The First Step of His Journey: From Home to the War**

Being abandoned by his mother at the age of four, Tayo gets deprived of his motherly affection, which sows in him the seeds of alienation. His Auntie's behaviours at home provide proper atmosphere for the germination of those seeds. Auntie always others Tayo at home; she humiliates him as a "half-breed" and the cause of family scandal. She always discriminates between Tayo and her own son Rocky. "Auntie had always been careful that Rocky didn't call Tayo "brother," and when other people mistakenly called them brothers, she was quick to correct the error" (65). She gives a hurting remark:

"They're not brothers" she would say, "that's Laura's boy. You know the one." She had a way of saying it, a tone of voice which bitterly told the story, and the disgrace she and the family had suffered. The things Laura had done weren't easily forgotten by the people, but she could maintain a distance between Rocky, who was her pride, and this other, unwanted child. If nobody else ever knew about this distance, she and Tayo did. (*Ceremony*, 65)

This discrimination of Auntie hurts Tayo to the extent that he is made to think about his own origin and identity. Had Auntie not treated him that way, Tayo would not perhaps question his own identity and would be living happily in the family. Thus, auntie made Tayo conscious of his root and identity.

Emo, one of Tayo's school friends, is another cause of Tayo's tension. Like Auntie, he also mistreats Tayo at school. And the only cause of his mistreatment is Tayo's mixed heritage, "Emo had hated him since the time they had been in grade school together, and the only reason for this hate was that Tayo was part white" (57). Wherever Tayo goes, whether at home or at school, he gets humiliation. He realizes

that the cause of this humiliation is the lack of his cultural position and identity. Why is he hated by his own Auntie and his own friends? The answer is obvious that he does not have a fixed belongingness, i.e., he cannot associate himself culturally to any group. This lack of belongingness gives him a sense of estrangement.

As Tayo grows older, the desire of attaining his cultural location goes on increasing parallelly. He is quite sure that he cannot have his identity at home. At this context, joining the war comes as the best options for Tayo and to have his own position and dignity. Thus, being guided by his desire of attaining his cultural location and identity, Tayo starts his quest journey leaving his home to join the war.

Tayo, a young Pueblo boy leaves his home; joins the American Army with his cousin Rocky; and then joins the white people's big war-the World War Second. The Army promises them the opportunity to see the world, and tells them, "Anyone can fight for America, even you boys. In a time of need anyone can fight for her" (4). The absence of Tayo from his own clan, society and culture is followed by the interdiction when the idea of the war quickly attracts Rocky and he begins to dream of his hopeful future. He persuades Tayo, "we can do real good Tayo "Go all over the world see different places and different people. Look at that guy, the recruiter. He's got his own government car to drive, too" (72). This suggestion by Rocky comes as an interdiction that enforces Tayo to join the white people's war.

Whatever might be the causes at the surface level, for Tayo's leaving home and joining the war, there lies a quest motive at the core. To relieve himself from the haunting sense of estrangement, Tayo eagerly joins the war. Tayo's leaving home is like Buddha's leaving home. At the heart of both cases, there lies a quest motive. The difference is that Buddha leaves home for human being's salvation, whereas Tayo leaves home for the salvation of his own self.

As the proverb goes “A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step,” Tayo’s first step of journey provides the necessary background for the two huge steps of his quest journey. The first step of his quest journey is very short and easy in comparison to other two steps.

### **The Second Step of His Journey: From the War to Home Back**

The second step remains the most adverse step in Tayo's quest journey. The early phase of this step becomes good and enjoyable but the later phase comes out to be more difficult- the further Tayo moves, the more complicated his problem becomes. His problem becomes so complicated at last that he gets a psychological illness and requires a healing. From this step of his journey, Tayo achieves nothing but lack and trauma.

The second step of his journey begins with his joining of the World War Second. His beginning days in the war remain very good. He enjoys the real falvour of life drinking wine and beer with his friends and mixing up with the white ladies. He has no sense of loss and discrimination:

You know Los Angeles was the biggest city I ever saw. All those streets and tall buildings. Lights at night everywhere. I never saw so many bars and jukes boxes- all the people coming from everywhere, dancing and laughing. They never asked me if I was Indian; sold me as much beer as I could drink. I was a big splendor then. Had my military pay. Double starch in my uniform and my boot shining so good. I mean those white women fought over me. Yeah, they did really! I went home with a blonde one time. She had a big ‘38 Brick. Good car. She let me drive it all the way. (*Ceremony*, 41)

These good times, however, were very temporary for Tayo. Tayo was in illusion for some days, but later he realizes that it is his uniform not Tayo what they praised. Tayo says, "white women never looked at me until I put on that uniform" (40). As the war ends, he loses everything he got during the war. "The war was over, the uniform was gone" (43).

The war further strikes Tayo by separating him from his beloved uncle Josiah and cousin Rocky. Tayo sees them to have been killed in the war, and this scene often haunts Tayo very severely. It was not only Tayo who suffered the war and its consequences but there were other veterans too. Tayo's case is the most complicated and Tayo is the greatest sufferer. It is because others are never conscious "that it was the white people who gave them that feeling and it was white people who took it away when the war was over" (43). But Tayo is always conscious of his identity. Moreover, unlike others, Tayo is a mixed-blood.

Quite contrary to Tayo's expectation that war will provide him such a position where there will be no discrimination, it further alienates him making him far from his Pueblo people, his land and traditional customs. In course of fulfilling a lack, Tayo meets a greater lack in his life. This lack deals with the strong desires to return to his own land. He becomes ill when his desires remain unfulfilled and joins the army hospital at Los Angeles. The cause of Tayo's illness is that he feels the profound sense of loss. He lies there "with the feeling that there was no place for him; he would find no place in that house where the silence and emptiness echoed the loss" (32). But the white doctors term his sickness a "battle fatigue", and he is suggested to take rest. The villainy of the white people spoils Tayo's life. This is not only Tayo's individual problem but the communal problem for the Pueblo tribe. The arrival of the Whites in

Pueblo society has already created troubles in their life, which they describe in folktales:

Long time ago  
 In the beginning  
 There were no whites in this world . . .  
 This world was already complete  
 Even without white people . . .  
 Then it happened  
 These witch people got together . . .  
 The world is dead thing for them.  
 The trees and rivers are not alive . . .  
 They see no life. (132-35)

The whites were so much materialistic that they never saw their own origin in nature. To them, nature is a dead thing, whereas to the natives the nature is the mother and the source of their origin. Due to this contradictory view, the white's arrival in the land of the natives caused a problem to the natives and created a lack in them. So, Tayo's problem, in the present context, is not personal or individual lack or strong desire to get unfulfilled things, but it is a form of collective desire of natives who want to be free from the whites' authority.

The white way of life and their culture which Tayo witnessed and experienced during the war put him in a greater dilemma because they contradict with uncle Josiah's view. It was Josiah who had given Tayo a vision to look at the nature: "This is where we come from, see. This land, this stone, these trees, the vines, all the wild flowers. This earth keeps us going" (45). But Tayo sees the whites regardlessly destroying the nature during the war. Now, Tayo remembers his uncle Josiah's view

and wished then they had taught him more about the clouds and the sky, about the way the priest called the storm clouds to bring the rain" (*Ceremony*, 49).

The doctors at the veteran's hospital at Los Angeles fail to cure Tayo's illness because the white doctors have not understood the root cause of illness. They are mistaken to term his illness as "battle fatigue." It is a great irony that who are the cause of his illness are engaged in curing him. Tayo realizes that his cure is not possible there so he moves forward in his journey. Now, he realizes that he can locate his identity not in the world of whites but in the native world to which he is more closely associated. To locate his identity, the only thing he needs to do is to perform a certain ceremony that is new and different from the traditional one. The traditional ceremony does not work in the present context because the old scenario has been changed completely since the arrival of the whites. The whites have already polluted the environment. Moreover, Tayo's case is different from the case of other war veterans. The traditional ceremony could work for the other pure blood native heroes but not for Tayo because he was a mixed-blood war hero.

Tayo, who had joined the war for locating his identity equal position to others, got nothing other than lack, hollowness, frustration and trauma in the white culture. How could Tayo a man having an inclination to the native culture locate his identity in the white culture of alcoholism and materialism? Actually, joining the war for Tayo was not an adventure rather it turned out to be a misadventure. As a result, his problem became more complicated than before. Finally Tayo sees no solution of his problem in the white culture and he decides to back home from the veterans' hospital.

Thus, as a seeker Tayo leaves from the witchery camp of the white and comes back to his own society. The complexity for him is how to be free from the psychological burden of the whites at one level. On the another level, the half-breed



consciousness always haunts him when Auntie Susie condemns him saying, "That's Laura's boy. You know the one" (65). He can neither forget his enrollment with whites witchery nor accept the manner of Auntie. Thus, the position of Tayo becomes more complicated and most distorted.

Now, totally frustrated and traumatized Tayo backs his journey to home. But his being back home is not the end of his quest journey but it can be taken as the start of his big project. After being back home he drives his journey further ahead where he suffers a lot and ultimately succeeds to find out what he was in search of.

### **The Final Step of this Journey: Further Ahead from Home**

Mentally crippled and traumatized, Tayo comes back home from the veterans' hospital fully determined to establish his identity in the native culture. As he backs home, he gets warm love from his grandma but the Auntie's behaviors are not changed yet. She still humiliates Tayo even in his pathetic condition caused by his psychological illness. However, with the help of his grandma, he forwards his journey. In his extended journey he meets two native medicine men one after the other. The first healer Ku'oosh helps Tayo somehow to improve his condition but he cannot cure Tayo completely. So, he refers Tayo to meet another medicine man named Betony who cures Tayo completely by helping him to perform a certain ceremony. During the ceremony, Tayo makes a grand quest for his cultural identity by reconciling himself with land and spirits, meeting night swan and Ts'eh, recovering Josiah's cattle in Mount Taylor and finally coming to village Kiva safely escaping the Jackpile mine. Thus, by performing the ceremony as suggested by old Betonie, Tayo retrieves his lost cultural identity in native culture.

Wherever Tayo goes in his quest journey, he meets only hardships and humiliations. In the veterans' hospital, the doctors denied his identity. There he was

like "white smoke" without identity and consciousness. The doctors saw his outline but they did not realize "it was hollow inside" (15). One day a doctor said commenting upon Tayo's condition, "He can't talk to you. He is invisible. His words are formed with an invisible tongue, they have no sound" (*Ceremony*, 15). Similarly, Tayo becomes a subject of shame and humiliation for Auntie. She has the same unchanged attitudes towards Tayo even after he returns home from the war. When he gets off the train at New Laguna and arrives home, his Auntie "started at him the way she always had, reaching inside him with her eyes, calling up the past as if it were his future too, as if things would always be the same for him" (*Ceremony* 29). At one time when Tayo was crying and calling for help "Auntie did not come" (31). She came later and "pulled him from the bed, her face light with anger" (31).

After Josiah's death, Grandma is the only person left at home to love Tayo tenderly. Only she could understand his real problems, so she knew that the white doctors could not cure Tayo's illness and wished to call an Indian medicine man. She said, "Those white doctors have not helped you at all. May be we had better send for someone else" (*Ceremony*, 33). She does not care what other people comment about Tayo:

He's my grandson. If I send for old Ku'oosh, he'll come. Let them talk if they want. Why do you care what they want. Why do you care what they say? Let them talk. By planting time, they'll forget. (*Ceremony* 33-34).

Thus, regardless to what other people say, the old grandma calls for Ku'oosh, a traditional Laguna healer. At home, the Laguna medicine man, Ku'oosh is certain of one thing that Tayo's healing is "important to all of us. Not only for your sake, but for this fragile world" (*Ceremony* 36). He, however, is not sure that his ceremony can

cure Tayo completely. So, he suggests that Tayo seek help from the Navajo medicine man, old Betonie.

As per Ku'oosh's suggestion, Tayo meets Old Betonie, who can be assumed as Tayo's most authentic donor. Donor is a person who rescues hero from the danger or trickery of villain. Betonie proves to be of a great help for Tayo because both of them- Tayo and Betonie- share circumstances that are identical: both are mixed-blood Indians disinherited by the whites. Betonie's story reveals to Tayo that he is not the only one to suffer the humiliation of being a half-breed disinherited Indian. What Tayo learns from Betonie's story is what Leslie Silko implies in her seminal essay "Landscape, History and the Pueblo Imagination":

You are never the first to suffer a grave loss or profound humiliation. You are never the first, and you will understand probably not be the last to commit or be victimized by a repugnant act. Your family and clan are able to go on at length about others now passed on. Other older or more experienced than you who suffered similar losses. (892-93)

Betonie's story gives Tayo a hope and spirit to carry on his journey. His story heals Tayo by making him convinced that he is not the only person to suffer the loss of identity, there are other suffers too.

Betonie, who is a clever healer easily understands that Tayo's cure requires a new ceremony that takes such post war phenomenon directly into account. So, he sets Tayo on a real quest guiding him through his vision. Betonie is certain that his ceremonies are effective in Tayo's cure because they have been modified from time to time:

At the time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong.  
(*Ceremony*, 126)

George Liptitz also argues, in *Time Passages*, in favor of the change in Indian ceremonies. He is of the opinion that the ceremonies must change in order for the people to survive and that the culture must not become stagnant:

In addition even the Indian 'ceremonies' [Tayo] tries have lost much of their power because they have not been changed to fit new circumstances. Only a medicine man outside his own tribe can lead him to the truth, a truth which involves a critical stance toward both Indian myth and Anglo-European history. (221)

Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth* terms a medicine man like Betonie, 'a secondary hero' who can keep the ceremonies strong by changing them: "there is a kind of secondary hero to revitalize the tradition. This hero reinterprets the tradition and makes it valid as a living experience today instead of a lot of outdated clichés. This has to be done with all traditions" (141).

The effect of the Betonie's ceremony is immediate upon Tayo as he begins to have a dream of the lost cattle. Earlier, the memories of past events had observed him because he was not being able to see his purpose clearly. Now, he is determined to carry out his new task of finding lost cattle for "there would be no peace until he did" (*Ceremony*, 145).

The following poem that makes the end of Betonie-Tayo interaction reveals that Tayo's healing has begun as a result of Betonie's Ceremony:

The dry skin  
 was still stuck  
 on his body.  
 But the effects  
 of the witchery  
 of the evil thing  
 began to leave  
 his body  
 The effects of the witchery  
 of the evil thing  
 in his surroundings  
 began to run away.  
 It had gone to a great distance  
 It had gone below the north. (*Ceremony*, 153)

Then, as suggested by Betonie, Tayo moves forward to reconcile with land and spirits. For the Laguna Pueblo people, the land is the fundamental feminine entity and to live without it is a kin to estrange oneself from one's mother. During the war,, he forgets the Laguna stories and prays the rain away, thereby ignoring the native landscape and the tribal traditions. His act of cursing the rain is contrary to Josiah's teaching about being and becoming one with the land. So, for Tayo to find wholeness and his identity, harmony between the people and the land must be renewed. The drought which the people and the land are experiencing indicates that the relationship between the people and the land has fallen out of balance. What is desperately needed

is a 'Cosmic Ceremony' designed to bring the people back into harmony with the land: "After Tayo Completes the first steps of the ceremony, he is ready to enter into the central rituals connected with a ceremony of cosmic significance, for only a cosmic ceremony can simultaneously heal a wounded man, a stricken landscape, and a disorganized, 'discouraged society'" (Allen 131). So, Tayo as an alienated being revisits the land itself in order to re-establish contact with the power of healing that he may find there.

Within the context of this larger pattern, we can see Tayo functioning as a representative of the people. To bring the life force of the land back into the lives of the people, Tayo goes and actively seeks out this force, aligns his own identity with it and brings his own renewed identity back to the place that needs it. On the course of his journey, he has to recover the speckled cattle, and also bring rain and snow to end the drought caused by his headless act of cursing the rain.

Tayo moves further ahead on a metaphysical quest to seek the regenerative spirit he and the people have become separated from. The Navajo medicine man, old Betonie has already provided him with an outline of a cognitive map of the ceremony that awaits his participation. It is a map which includes four important elements- stars, cattle, mountain and woman.

In course of his journey, Tayo meets Night Swan, a lady who serves as his mother substitute. She makes love with him and her love saves him from total disintegration. Herself a half-breed, she reassures Tayo about their mixed descent and offers an insightful explanation for discriminating behaviours of the full-blood Indians and the whites:

They are afraid, Tayo. They feel something happening, they can see something, something happening around them, and it scares them.

Indians or Mexicans or whites- most people are afraid of change. They think that if their children have the same color of skin, the color of eyes, that nothing is changing. They are fools. They blame us, the one who look different. The way they don't have to think about what has happened inside themselves. (*Ceremony*, 99-100)

Thus, Night Swan reveals to Tayo that change is inevitable and that half-breed is a reality in the post-contact era. Auntie and Emo are, therefore, wrong to believe that if they maintain pure lineage and do not mix Indian blood with other races, they will be able to preserve Indian culture. In complete contrast to their belief, Patricia Rieley maintains that the survival of the Laguna people depends on the mixed breeds who are able to blend the old and the new: "Tayo, and other important mixed-blood characters, Betonie and Night Swan, represent the kind of adaptation that is necessary for survival in the face of contemporary reality" (330).

As guided by Betonie's vision, Tayo heads towards Mount Taylor to look for the lost cattle and a new way of life. While looking for the cattle, he encounters, on the foot of the mountain, a woman, Ts'eh as the 'lady of the apricot tree'. Apparently, for Silko, Ts'eh is the modern incarnation of the mythical Laguna mother, Ts'its'tsi'nako or the thought woman. Later Tayo can recover the cattle and win back the rain and snow through his association with her.

Similarly, on the way up Mount Taylor, in his search for the cattle, Tayo encounters a mountain lion, a sacred animal of the Laguna people. It also helps Tayo in releasing the cattle from Floyd Lee's fence. After releasing the cattle from Floyd Lee's Fence, Tayo returns back to Ts'eh's abode at the base of the mountain. On the way, Tayo meets a hunter, another spirit helper, who is most knowledgeable in the old ways. He accompanies Tayo down the trail to safety and offers him hospitality.

Tayo, thus, reconciling himself with the land and visiting many mountain spirits in disguise of various animals, lastly comes to Jackpile Mine where his final ordeal takes place. At this phase of his journey, he confronts Emo and the evil forces he represents. The mined landscape here indicates this part of the Laguna land has too long been held in the service of the witchery. Tayo's confrontation here with the figure of Emo reflects his confrontation with his own heart's capacity for violence, for when he confronts Emo, he is perfectly capable of "Jamming the screwdriver into Emo's skull the way the witchery had wanted" (*Ceremony* 253). With the knowledge and power of the land and Ts'eh, he resists the powerfully felt impulse to bury the screwdriver in Emo's skull and completes his ceremony of self-regeneration. Through his appropriate inaction, he makes witchery turn upon itself. Tayo's action here marks his transformation from a fearful, ineffectual individual into a traditional Laguna hero capable of confronting the witchery at work in his world, and still surviving, as Patricia Rieley writes, "Tayo recognizes the witchery for what it is and moves increasingly away from the material world and into the sacred" (328).

Finally, to complete the rest of his quest, Tayo goes to the village Kiva, the spiritual centre of the Laguna village, where he is eagerly receive by the Laguna medicine man old Ku'oosh, and other Kiva elders. There Tayo narrates the old men the story of his interaction with Ts'ch, the spirit woman and he becomes the story teller. The old man inquire Tayo of the details of his interaction with the spirit woman he met in the mountains: "it took a long time to tell them the story; they stopped him frequently with questions about the location and the time of the day; they asked about the direction she had come from the colors of her eyes" (*Ceremony*, 257).

Tayo's coming to the village Kiva is his homing in. Here, homing in does not mean coming back to his private home, that is, his individual property, rather it



suggests the coming back to his tribal home where all the people are brothers and sisters. There is no discrimination between them, and everything is imbued by the traditional or cultural practice. Tayo's return refers to his re-entering into his culture from the long estrangement. The whole Pueblo society is his home "where he meets Ts'ch, Josiah and Night Swan. Similarly, Mount Taylor and surrounding mountains are the four walls of a house for Pueblo.

Thus, Tayo's quest journey which was made with the strong desire of locating his cultural position and thereby acquiring his cultural identity completes in the homing in of Tayo with the retrieval of his cultural identity. Tayo moves on in his quest journey consciously and unconsciously crossing many hurdles on the way to his goal. Now, Tayo emerges as a person with a name, with a story that brings people together a story that is inseparable from the land and Ts'ch. He not only establishes his cultural identity but also vitalizes the native culture. At this point, Tayo proves himself to be a culture hero.

#### IV. Conclusion

Leslie Marman Silko's *Ceremony*, which basically deals with the issue of cultural identity of a man of mixed-blood heritage, revitalizes the native Indian culture as the source of mixed-blood culture. Tayo, Silko's protagonist, who makes his grand quest for his cultural identity moving from one culture to another, finally locates his position in the old Laguna Pueblo culture. In course of his quest journey, he suffers a lot. *Ceremony*, as the title suggests, is a special ceremony that Tayo performs during his recovery journey. Thus, the story of ceremony revolves around Tayo's quest journey.

As the book deals with the theme of hybrid culture, its form seems to be hybridized with the mix of prose and poetry simultaneously. Even the plot structure is not chronologically arranged. However, the book is so consciously arranged that it is capable of capturing the attention of both the readers- the whites and the natives alike. Here lies the real success of Silko.

Tayo, as a representative character of all the people of mixed-heritage, faces a great problem of loss of cultural identity. Because he is a mixed-blood, he is accepted in the neither group. At home, he is subjected to his Auntie's humiliating and hurting remarks; at school, he is teased by his own friend Emo; in the war, he is othered by the whites; and in the Veteran's Hospital, he is treated as invisible, unconscious and identityless by the white doctors. Besides, his acute sense of estrangement from his own clan, custom and traditions, and land; and his traumatic experience of the war worsens his condition to the extent that he gets a psychological disease which needs a healing for his survival.

Very ironically, the whites, who are the actual cause of Tayo's illness, get engaged in his healing at Veteran's hospital but without any success. Leave aside the

cure, they even failed to diagnose his illness. They falsely termed his illness as "a battle fatigue." Thus, the author Silko subtly satirizes the whites on the one hand; and by showing Tayo's cure possible in the old native culture, she revitalizes it on the other hand.

Tayo, who had left home in search of his cultural identity and position, returns home from the war hopeless and traumatized. At home his healings begins in traditional old Laguna manner. The first healer, old Ku'oosh relieves Tayo to some extent but cannot provide him a complete cure. Ku'oosh was purely traditional man and he performed a very old traditional healing ceremony that had already been outdated since the arrival of the whites in the native land. At this context, another Navajo healer, old Betonie, who was clever enough to change his ceremony as per change in time, proves to be of great help for Tayo. Betonie is the one who cures Tayo completely by helping him to locate his cultural identity in the old Laguna Pueblo culture.

Guided by the Navajo medicine man, Betonie, Tayo forwards his quest journey to Cubero, Mount Taylor and such other native places where he encounters with spirits like Ts'eh, Night Swan, and mountain lion. Here, he reconciles with the native land and the spirits. Consequently, he is helped by those spirits in accelerating his recovery journey into the final destination. With the power and knowledge gained from those sacred spirits, Tayo succeeds to turn the witchery of the whites upon itself, and comes to the final destination of his journey Village Kiva, where he is welcomed by the old Laguna Pueblo people as a member of their culture and society, thereby giving him his cultural position and identity.

Tayo, who begins his journey as a culturally alienated individual, changes gradually along the course of his journey; and finally with the acquiring of his cultural

position he appears to be a powerful, competent representative of his people. Among the three stages of his quest journey, as I have divided in my thesis, the second stage of his journey becomes adverse in his mission of finding his cultural identity, whereas the final stage, though long and very difficult, proves to be the most useful stage in which he achieves his goal. Thus, Tayo finally gains the great achievement, which is not his individual one but rather it is for all people of mixed heritage who are suffering the similar problem of cultural identity. Hence, he becomes a culture hero.

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