

## Chapter I

### Ritual Performances in *Ceremony* and *Mundhum*

This research study would focus on the ritual performances for healing the illnesses and maintaining the harmony in community as reflected in the novel *Ceremony* by Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko and the ancient religious scripture of the Limbu community known as *Mundhum*. *Ceremony* contains about thirty mythic stories that juxtapose Tayo's own experience, the protagonist of the novel. As these mythic prototypes relate with Tayo's own experience, they help Tayo to associate himself in the wider cultural context which ultimately proves crucial to Tayo's healing process. *Mundhum*, interwoven with the narratives of life-like stories based on the various myths and legends, symbolically stands as a link of present with ancestors. Through the performance of various rituals based on the mythic narratives from the past, *Mundhum* places greater importance in social unity and harmony. In this regard, both texts will be analyzed through the theoretical framework of performance theories of rituals and their performativity. Both *Ceremony* and *Mundhum* represent shamanistic ritual performances based on the narratives of memory and myth that are intended for healing and harmony through the psychological treatment of individual and of the whole community.

#### *Ceremony*: A Brief Synopsis

*Ceremony*, a novel by Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko, is based upon the oral traditions and ceremonial practices of the Native American culture. First published in 1977, the novel presents the psychological struggles of a half-Pueblo, half-white Laguna Pueblo man named Tayo to restore mental health and his identity in his community. Though the novel is set just after World War II in the Laguna Reservation in the Southwest of the

United States, the ceremonial rituals in the novel frequently revisit the mythical past, mythical land and the Philippines where Tayo had fought in the World War II.

Tayo, the protagonist of the *Ceremony*, is a wounded soldier who had fought in the World War II against Japanese army in the Philippines. He has not been feeling very well ever since he returned back the Laguna Pueblo reservation from war. Tayo suffers from nausea, weakness, and feelings of severe depression and alienation after his return. His mental anguish is the result of his sense of detachment, feeling of 'other' in his community. Throughout his childhood, he had a feeling that he did not belong in his family or in his community. "Tayo's self-awareness that he differs from his own community as well as from the white community in many aspects, where not only his physical appearance but also his way of thinking are in contrast to the others" (Scigulinska 346). Tayo's mixed race origin depicted by his hazel eyes constantly reminds him of his white father. This difference makes him different from his Native American Pueblo Laguna community which results into his psychological trauma.

Equally, his disoriented psychological problems have been the result of haunted memories of his dead uncle Josiah whom he thinks that he had seen his (uncle Josiah's) face among a crowd of Japanese soldiers he was ordered to shoot and of his cousin Rocky with whom he had fought together in the American campaign against the Japanese. But Rocky had been captured by the Japanese and executed. Tayo always feels guilty of not saving Rocky. It makes him unable to sleep well and forces him to spend restless nights in his community's reservation. Any time Tayo remembers the war or Rocky or Josiah, he is forced to cry and vomit because of the pain he feels. When he returns home, he vomits constantly, unable to

digest whatever he eats and too weak to stand up on his own. He feels that if he does not find treatment for him, he would die.

The army doctors describe Tayo's condition as "battle fatigue" which is somewhat similar to post-traumatic stress disorder in modern medical term. As a result of such mental problem, Tayo is confused and disoriented. He cannot think in a straight line that is reflected in the narrative structure of the novel itself. He frequently jumps back and forth in the story. The impacts of these events are so intense that they drove Tayo out of his mind. He can only be cured by Betonie (the medicine man and shaman) who listens Tayo's story and advises that they must invent and complete a new ceremony. Finally, Tayo's mental illness is cured by the ceremonies carried out by Betonie and his assistant named Shush.

#### *Mundhum*: An Introduction

*Mundhum* is the ancient religious scripture and folk literature of the Limbu community chiefly inhabiting in the eastern part of Nepal. It mostly comprises of the stories recited by the shamans while performing the certain rituals. According to Kirat historian Iman Singh Chemjong, "Mundhum means the power of great strength and the Kirat people of eastern Nepal take it to be a true, holy and a powerful scripture" (18). It provides bases for the worldview of Limbu community. Mundhum has been preserved through the oral recitation by Limbu shamans. It consists of customs, rituals, traditions and myths passed down from the ancestors. Limbu culture and religious values have been shaped and guided by Mundhum from the ancient time.

Mundhum covers many aspects of the Limbu culture, customs and traditions. It is an accumulation of religious narrative text that consists of myths, stories and legends that makes it very long and complex. The text of Mundhum has been transferred orally from generations

to generations. Hence it is known as 'Thungsap' or 'Thuthure Vedas' which means 'the story told by mouth'. Researcher Ramesh Kumar Limbu writes, “They [Limbus] have a long tradition of narrating or reciting Mundhums and performing certain rituals and ceremonies in their own distinctive ways. . . into a narrative oral poetry” (121). Recently most of the various parts of the Mundhum have been written and transcribed by various scholars and enthusiasts.

As a religious and ritual text of Limbu community, Mundhum narrates the beginning of universe and earth and other terrestrial and extraterrestrial beings. It relates the beginning of human beings and other creatures in the earth and it also guides how to live peacefully in the society. It has not only guided the moral and ethical values in Limbu community but it has also been “a foundation of indigenous jurisprudence” in the community as “Their [Limbus’] norms, values, visions and customary laws are guided by Mundhum, which they have been retaining through ages” (Chemjonget al. 10).

Ash Bahadur Subba describes the highly poetic and metaphorical aspect of Mundhum and its narratives. According to Subba, Mundhum contains varieties of modern genre of literature such as dramas, stories, poems and even comedy and tragedy. He writes:

Since Mundhum is classical oral literature, it is always melodious and rhythmic, narrative and rhetorical in nature. It contains metaphors in word as well as in meaning. There is a use of frequent off-beats in each verse of Mundhum . . . The epic contains numbers of mythological dramas, stories, poems etc. which can be further classified into comedy and tragedy. (52)

Limbus’ customs, ideologies, moral values and life rituals are guided by Mundhum. Even though it is not in the written form, it is recited by Limbu shamans during the performance of various rituals. Mundhum is recited, chanted and narrated along with music of

bells, drums, brass plates etc. during the performances of rituals. In Limbu community, it is regarded as a very sacred epic with “divine language found in poetic form” (Subba 50).

Mundhum is such a vital document in Limbu community without it no rituals can be performed. Limbu shamans commonly known as Phedangma, Samba, Yeba, and Yema have been reciting this scripture Mundhum from the time of immemorial during the performance of the various rituals. Thus it has helped to preserve the unique cultural and social rituals of Limbu community.

#### ThungsapMundhum and PeysapMundhum

Kirat historian Iman Singh Chemjong has divided the Mundhum into two parts as “ThungsapMundhum” and “PeysapMundhum” (19). According to his distinction, “the ThungsapMundhum is the original one and came from the very words of mouth till the art of writing was introduced and was referred to as the oral Mundhum in books. It was an epic recited in songs by the learned Sambas or poets”. Shamans in Limbu community are popularly known as Sambas.

According to Chemjong, “PeysapMundhum is a written book about religion”. He further divides PeysapMundhum into four parts as SoksokMundhum, YehangMundhum, SapjiMundhum and Sap Mundhum. The SoksokMundhum contains the stories of creation of the universe and the beginning of mankind; the second YehangMundhum contains the story of the first leader of mankind who made laws for the sake of improvement of human beings that are required to uplift humans from the stage of animal life to the enlightened life. This Mundhum focuses how the leader has made rules for marriage, purification and religion and other social customs. The SapjiMundhum narrates the stories of superhuman beings in the form of good spirits and bad spirits. It is also known as the spiritual Mundhum. The Sap

Mundhum includes the legends on the origins of the different clans. It contains counsels and preaching by the legends and rulers.

### Limbu Shamans

For the performance of Mundhum based rituals, there are special Limbu shamans who believe themselves that they are the assigned people by god for this duty. There are mostly four kinds of Limbu shamans/priests in Limbu community who are regarded as the sources and authorities of Mundhum rites and rituals. They are known as Phedangma (male); Samba (male); Yeba (male) or Yema (female); and Yuma (female).

These four shamans differ in many ways according to their duties, practices and costumes. Their roles and duties in Limbu community are widely contested as who is rightful to conduct certain rituals of Mundhum. These shamans perform rituals of Mundhum through singing, dancing, beating drums and brass plates. Also accompanied by their assistants, they wear special type of costumes and others bodily decorations. In such performance, they not only recite the poetic verses and narrate the stories based on myths and legends, but they also personify themselves into various roles and characters.

In this regard, this research would make comparative study of *Ceremony* and *Mundhum* to analyze the purpose of ritual performances in the given contexts. The main proposition for the study is that both texts represent shamanistic ritual performances aimed for healing and harmony are based on the narratives of memory and myth from the past. Such ritual ceremonies are intended for psychological treatment and safety of individual and of the whole community. Although, there are many rituals in Limbu community that are based on *Mundhum*, this research would focus mainly on the *TongsingTakmar* ritual and some other sub-rituals to make comparative study with Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* to consider the

performative roles of shamans and identical dimensions of performative characteristics of ritual ceremonies.

### Performance and Rituals

The word performance refers to the act of doing something such as musical, dramatic, and other forms of entertainment performed to achieve certain goals. Performance, in its broadest sense, refers not only formal theatrical realms, but also incorporates the various other disciplines from socio-cultural aspects to ritual and ceremonial performances carried out by shamans. Thus, it has become an inherently human activity which refers to the act of performing a ceremony, play or piece of music. In fact the word performance cannot be limited to some particular meaning as it covers both formal performance activities like dance, play, music etc. to our very informal everyday activities in various field like talking with friends, writing etc.

The theoretical concepts of performance are widely being contested in modern literature. To put it in simple terms, performance can be said to be an art form in which a performer 'does' instead of describing something. Performance does not intend to describe or report something. Most of the scholars of this field argue that we neither can check its validity, truth or falsity nor can we restrict the meaning of the term in particular context of particular culture. Critic Rose Lee Goldberg in *Performance Arts* views its multiplicity of meanings. She writes:

By its very nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists. Any stricter definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself. For it draws freely on any number of disciplines and media – literature, poetry, theater, music, dance, architecture and

painting, as well as video, film, slides and narrative – for material, deploying them in any combination, Indeed no other artistic form of expression has such a boundless manifesto, since each performer makes his or her own definition in the very process and manner of execution. (49)

Although Goldberg focuses on the multiplicity of meaning of performance in different genres, anthropologist Victor Turner traces the patterns of universality in performance. His model of performance of social drama includes the four phases as “breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism” (9). He asserts that in the first stage of ‘breach’ a person or subgroup breaks away the rules of society deliberately or by inward compulsion, in a public setting. Breach follows the stage of ‘crisis’ that brings forth conflicts between individuals or the groups within the society that involves the clashes of characters or interests within. This crisis is resolved by redressive public action that is undertaken by the elders or guardians. This redressive action can be either political, or judicial or ritual. Ritual redress includes different rites that are supposed to carry out for the welfare of society. Redressive actions aims for restoration of peace and normal state of the participants and the community.

This model of performance is more or less similar to many cultures operating throughout the world. Breach in Limbu community refers to natural disasters, misfortunes and sickness too so that it is not necessary that a person must break away the social rules. Limbus’ rituals are performed to address conflicts and problems prevalent in the society. NahenLakma ritual is performed to avoid the effect of jealousy of others so that society can run smoothly in its normal course. Tongsing is carried out to make life peaceful and prosperous. In this way, Limbu rituals are inclined to bringing the society into its normal



course preventing it from problems and chaos. This can be described as the redressive effect of such rituals.

Defining performances as actions, Richard Schechner points out four facets of performance studies as a discipline. “First behavior is the ‘object of study’ of performance studies” which focuses on the performance of various plays, operas and ballets by certain actors. “Second, artistic practice is a big part of the performance studies project” which describes how scholars involved in the performance studies are also practicing performing arts. According to Schechner, “the relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral”. Thirdly, performance study offers the opportunity for fieldwork in which “participant observation is a much-prized method adapted from anthropology and put to new uses” allowing the practitioner to learn about others’ cultures. Fourth, “performance studies is actively involved in social practices and advocacies” which focuses on “becoming aware of one’s own stances in relation to the positions of others – and then take steps to maintain or change positions” (1-2).

Schechner’s concept of performance is broad and inclusive. For him, performance studies ranges from everyday life to rituals and art including theatrical performance as well. For him, “Performances can be either “make-belief” or “make-believe”. In *Performance Studies*, Schechner differentiates those two aspects of performance as social realities and pretended social realities. In “make-belief” performances, the actors are real in real time while in “make-believe” performances the actors are representing the characters:

The many performances in everyday life such as professional roles, gender and race roles, and shaping one’s identity are not make-believe actions (as playing a role on stage or in a film most probably is). The performances of everyday life “make belief”

– create the very social realities they enact. In “make-believe” performances, the distinction between what’s real and what’s pretended is kept clear. Children playing “doctor” or “dress-up” know that they are pretending. On stage, various conventions – the stage itself as a distinct domain, opening and closing a curtain or dimming the lights, the curtain call, etc. – mark the boundaries between pretending and “being real.” People watching a movie or a play know that the social and personal worlds enacted are not those of the actors but those of the characters. (42-43)

Rituals are religious and social practices that consist of a series of actions performed in a predetermined order. In other words, it is a sequence of activities involving various gestures along with dances and movements that are performed in fixed place. The word ‘ritual’ has been described variously in the different context. It also refers to some repetitive actions as ritualistic behaviours. Social rituals are important part of community as they constitute the identity of those who practise them. In many cultures, they are carried out to mark the certain events like birth, marriage of a particular person, death. Catherine Bell terms them as ‘Rites of Passage’ which are ceremonies that dramatize “major events as birth, coming-of-age initiations for boys and girls, marriage, and death. Sometimes called “life-crisis” or “life-cycle” rites, they culturally mark a person’s transition from one stage of social life to another” (94).

Rituals are also carried out to mark the passing of the seasons, good harvest etc. as in the case of Kirat community celebrating Udhauli (Movement towards lowlands) and Ubhauli (Movement towards highlands) festivals. Udhauli festival is marked in the month of Mangsir (November/December) that symbolically represents the migration phase of human, birds and animals towards the low-altitude regions to avoid chilling winter. Similarly, Ubhauli festival

is observed in the month of Baisakh (April-May) that represents the migration phase of human, birds and animals upwards towards the hilly regions to avoid scorching heat of low lands when the summer season arrives. These festivals are marked by ritual dances and worshipping to the Mother Nature for good harvest and protection from natural calamities.

Most of the rituals are based of certain beliefs and myths. M. H. Abrams views that “most myths are related to the social rituals - set forms and procedures in sacred ceremonies” (170). As form and substance of the rituals are inseparable, rituals are inseparable from the myths, certain memory and history. In the act of ritual performances, it is common to utter or recite those myths and memory by the performers and participants.

There are various rituals in different society. Birth is a ritual marked in different ways in the different parts of the world when a new member arrives in a community. In Christian ceremonies a baby’s head is dipped in or touched withwater. In western countries, some people receive a key on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday as a symbol of their entry into adulthood. In marriage, a man and a woman make a formal commitment to spend their life together; they agree to share their property and set up a new household. Similarly death is also marked by ritual in most societies. It is obvious that society and culture are closely associated to the performance of rituals. So rituals are very crucial to our understanding of society and culture.

According to Lisa Schirch, “Ritual has three specific characteristics. First, it occurs in a unique social space, set apart from everyday life. Second, communication operates through symbols and emotions rather than relying primarily on words or rational thought. . . Third, ritual confirms and transforms people's worldviews, identities, and relationships with others” (Maiese).Rituals are linked to ceremony and religious devotion which includes prayer, expressions of faith, sacrifice of food, crops, animals, or other goods. Arts like music, dance,

song and painting are other important aspects of ritual. The rituals mark the various occasions of birth, coming of age in a community, death etc. They try to clarify the relationships between people, animals, the natural world, the divine, etc. In some cases, people also seek for some kind of divine intervention or assistance.

How rituals are performed in a society depends on many factors and are different in different cultures. It is noteworthy that access to certain rituals may be restricted to certain members of the community. For examples, in many cultures women and children are not allowed to take part in burial ceremonies. However, some festive events like carnivals and beginning of the New Year are inclusive rituals that are open to all, even allowing participation from the tourists. Such ritual celebrations vary from small informal gatherings to large-scale social celebrations.

Ritual performances observe a course of procession in which “the event moves along a prescribed path, spectators gather along the route, and at appointed places the procession halts and performances are played” (Schechner 135). Procession is very important in Limbu culture. In the performance of death rites, the course of procession is very crucial. The procession is accompanied by the family members, relatives, villagers and the assigned priest i.e. Phedangma. The dead body is placed into the *chethap* i.e. a special makeshift bed like structure and carried to the spot chosen as a grave. After the body has been buried, the Phedangma addresses the dead with a one rupee coin in his hand: 'This is the money with which we purchased this land'. After the actual burial is over, the priest and all guests and friends will go to the home of deceased, where a feast is provided for them. Other ritual processions are carried out in a symbolic way because of space and time constraints.

It must be noteworthy that ritual performances are not random performances. Each ritual follows certain pattern of behaviours by the performers and participants. These patterns are to be thoroughly abided by the participants and breaching of such modes of established pattern is considered disrespect to the tradition. Anthropologist Roy A. Rappaport asserts that “form and substance are inseparable in any performance of any ritual” (30). Distinguishing the form and content of the ritual, Rappaport writes:

The ordering and the pattern of presentation of the ritual language, physical gestures, and manipulation of substances is the form of the ritual: form is the arrangement of contents . . . The formalization of acts and utterances, themselves meaningful, and the organization of those formalized acts and utterances into more or less invariant sequences, imposes ritual form on the substance of those acts and utterances. At one and the same time such formalization constitutes the specific forms of particular rituals and, reciprocally, realizes the general ritual form in specific and substantial instances. (29)

While Victor Turner attempts to draw the inherent patterns of universality in performance of social rituals that includes four phases as breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism, Catherine Bell discontents on such “attempts to define ritual proceed by formulating the universal qualities of an autonomous phenomenon” (69). Bell conceptualizes rituals going beyond such formal and distinctive universal formulations as:

Such [universal] definitions inevitably come to function as a set of criteria for judging whether some specific activities can be deemed ritual. As a result, these definitions of ritual are not complete when they set up a single universal construct; additional categories are needed account for all the data that do not fit neatly into the domain of

the original term. Definitions of ritual must go on to suggest, explicitly or implicitly, the nature and relation of non-ritual activity and various degrees of nearly-but-not-quite-ritual behavior. Hence, a good deal of writing about ritual involves extensive exercises in cleaning up all the data and terms that are not included in the main definition. (69)

A ritual cannot be limited to a discipline as a concept and field of study. It includes myths, legends, religion, nature, ceremonies, service, formal procedure, custom, habit, practice, tradition, belief system, ideology, culture, worldview and much more. They are formal and they are informal. It is a way of behaving or a series of actions which people regularly carry out in a particular situation. In general understanding, ritual is a ceremony performed by a particular group of people often for religious purposes.

According to Victor Turner, multifaceted system of rituals “embraces the images of cosmos and chaos . . . the intertwining of dance, body languages of many kinds, songs, chant, incense, burnt offering, ritualized feasting and drinking, painting and body painting . . .” (12). His idea of ritual can be better linked with the Limbu rituals. The life philosophy of the Limbu community is based on Mundhum which contains cosmology, mythology, stories and history of Limbu people. Limbu rituals are full of the images of cosmos and chaos that includes the dances, songs and chanting of many kinds. In different occasions of different rituals they offer animal sacrifice, feasting and drinking.

Ritual is a performance as it is performed in the way any other social drama takes place. It follows the pattern of gathering, performance and dispersing as an especially theatrical pattern proposed by Schechner. In every ritual performance, there is gathering, performance and dispersing. Every ritual performance has a certain aim of redressing the

conflict and crisis. It is carried out to solve the some ongoing crisis or to avoid some forthcoming crisis. People come together to mark or celebrate certain occasions or events in every society. Such ceremonies are shared events, which may involve traditional words, music, special ritual actions or costumes. Any ritual performance is closely linked to culture.

Elizabeth Bell views every culture as performing culture. To her all rites and rituals of culture themselves are performing. She argues:

Rituals and ritual like actions abound in our daily lives as a way to give meaningful and significance to experience. Memorials and tributes for example, spring up spontaneously for local victim of tragic deaths or for the episodes of violence that capture national attention. Ritual events are also marked by joy, fun, and anticipation: the Olympic Games, Halloween, birthday parties, and even the annual televised showing of *The Wizard of Oz*. (129)

Bell, furthermore gives some of the characteristics of ritual as formalization, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance and sacral symbolism. According to her, all these characteristics are manifested in and through performance. So it proves that all rituals are performed. Niomi Lawman views ritual as “a religious practice intended to maintain the relationship between believers and the supernatural and among one another. Rituals are the social acts prescribed by rules that dictate how human beings should comport themselves in the presence of the sacred” (150-151).

There are different voices in relating performance to human life. In fact, a ritual performance involves a religious or solemn ceremony involving a series of actions performed according to a set of order. Rituals are always enacted in a social theater. Schechner believes that such theaters “did not arrive late in human culture but was there from the beginning”

(174). He names the first theaters as ceremonial centers which were the part of hunting and scavenging food sources. He makes a distinction between ritual of aesthetic and social drama in relation with the effect they generate. “Some kinds of social drama such as feuds, trails and wars effect permanent change” in a society whereas some other “social and aesthetic drama – rites of passage, political ceremonies – changes in status are permanent but changes in body are either temporary or not severe” (192). Performance of rituals needs a series of actions always followed by someone without variation. So from the above examples and definitions, it is clear that performance of rituals primarily needs three factors: order, repetition, and sameness in the actual performance.

In this way, all rituals are the performances that involves actions or behavior that are performed in the same way especially as a part of a religious ceremony or something that is done regularly and always in the same way. Rituals are fixed symbolic parts of a religious service and ceremony. Ritual performances always follow the similar pattern which are carried out in a fixed, structured way rather than being spontaneous. The most indispensable aspect of ritual is that it has some intended purpose and meaning behind its performance and occasion. Performance of a ritual is a means to assert one’s identity, culture, customs and religion.



## Chapter II

### Performativity of Shamanistic Rituals in *Ceremony* and *Mundhum*

Performativity is a concept that is related to speech act theory, to the pragmatics of language, and to the work of John L. Austin. The concept of performativity has also been used widely in various fields even in science and technology. Other uses of the notion of performativity in the social sciences include the daily behavior or performance of individuals based on social norms or habits.

Performance studies look back to J. L. Austin's term 'performative'. For Austin every saying is doing in itself. So performativity is doing activities instead of reporting or narrating them. When somebody uses a performative word or expression, for e.g. 'I promise' or 'I apologize' they are also doing something like promising or apologizing etc. Austin, in his masterpiece *How to Do Things with Words*, makes a basic distinction between three kinds of acts: the *locutionary* act, the *illocutionary* act, and the *perlocutionary* act.

For Austin, every utterance is a locution, the noise of an utterance, a phrase or expression when saying something. A locutionary act can be classified by the meaning and linguistic content of the utterance. It refers to the meaning of the utterance itself. The illocution or illocutionary act is the effect intended in saying something. It is contextual function of the locution, aim of a speaker in making an utterance as opposed to the meaning of the terms used in locution. Austin further elaborates the concept of language usage to achieve the perlocutionary function in which "Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or

purpose of producing them” (101). In short, perlocutionary act of the utterances focuses on the results of the act upon the listener.

For Austin, every performative utterance creates events or certain effects in the world. To clarify the performative aspects of language usage, Austin simplifies his concept of locution, illocution and perlocution as:

Act (A) or Locution - He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot' shoot and referring by 'her' to her.

Act (B) or Illocution – He urged (or advised, ordered) me to shoot her.

Act (C. a) or Perlocution - He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C. b) He got me to (or made me) shoot her. (101-102)

Elizabeth Bell, one of the most prominent Performance Studies theorists, refers to Austin’s opinion of saying makes doing things happen “if the performatives are uttered within certain condition, in the proper circumstances before the proper authorities with sincere intentions” (188). Austin believes that every utterance has the power to serve their purpose rather than merely reporting things and events. But for the utterances to make things happen, they must fit with the contexts. Otherwise they merely become non-functional and meaningless utterances with no result.

Jacques Derrida later criticized Austin’s view about language and claimed that “all language is citational: All language can be lifted from its original context and “quoted” in a different context. All language is an *iteration*, or a repetition, with no link to an original version” (Bell 188). Elizabeth Bell claims both Austin’s and Derrida’s views on language played an important role in performativity and performance theory. Bell, in *Theories of Performance* writes:

Austin's speech act theory and Derrida's critique, then, are very important to performativity: Performances of identity are iterations-repetitions of sedimented historical conventions. All performances are citations-enacted references to ways of doing gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and ability that are bound by constraints that are legal, medical, religious, and always political. (188)

Performativity is not merely confined within a stage as theatre rather it covers the broad area such as streets, social services lines, loan offices and other useful staging grounds or places. It helps us to survive the performances of our traditional ritual or day to-day life experiences. Bell says, "Performativity as a theory of identity, strategy of critique, and a political practice. Gender, race, class and abilities are all constituted in and through their performances" (176). Performativity in the context of Limbu culture and religion is a construction of Limbu ethnic identity. They continued using their mother tongue in their formal and informal communication and continued practicing their rites and rituals. This continuation of their cultural and religious performativity was not only a means of ritual performance but it was the voice of community and their assertion of distinct identity.

Every performance, though how minor and insignificant it is, has a certain purpose and meaning. Performativity is a political practice. It is the search of identity; it is demonstration and resistance against the oppressive authority. People can resist and change oppressive structures and ideologies in everyday life through ritual performances. Patric Johnson argues:

The stage, for instance, is not confined solely to the theatre, the dance club, or the concert hall. Streets, social services lines, picket lines loan offices, and emergency rooms, among others, may also serve as useful staging grounds for disidentificatory

performances. Theorizing the social context of performance sutures the gap between discourse and lived experience by examining howqueares use performance as a strategy for survival in their day to day experiences. (qtd. in Bell192)

Performativity is a means of expressing the dissatisfaction and voiceof the marginalized against the concerned authorities. Performativity opens up new possibilities for understanding identity as a claim to selfhood, with agency to work with and against dominant structures and ideologies. Performativity is also a theory of gender constitution that rejects foundational approaches to gender and argues for gender's material and historical constitution in performance. The performance can be utilized to critique the boundaries, institutions, and languages that produce it. As a political practice, the micro politics and everyday resistances, as well as grand-scale, public protests are important projects to performativity. Performativity can happen and be enforced through the law or norms of the society.

M.H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, attempts to clarify the Austin's concept of performatives further:

A number of deconstructive theorists have proposed that the use of language in fictional literature is in fact a prime instance of the performative, in that it does not refer to a pre-existing state of affairs, but brings about, or brings into being, the characters, action, and world that it describes. Language of statement and assertion, deconstructive theorists convert Austin's constative and performative distinction into an undecidable deadlock, or oscillation, of irreconcilable oppositions. (293)

For gender theorist like Judith Butler, gender is best perceived as performative, which has a social audience. According to Butler, gender is a performative repetition of acts. Most of

the social actions are witnessed, repeated and reproduced that gives them performative quality of social theatre:

The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. But neither do embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies. Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives. (526)

The performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary text. Performative text can work felicitously only to the extent that they, like theatrical performance, are reiterable, that they signify through a process of citation, utterances perform actions only when they iterate familiar verbal or behavioral regimes.

Niomi Lawman, in *Illustrated Dictionary of Sociology* argues that “performative language is meaningful utterance that alters people’s position in social relationships” (132). Performative statements, just by speaking them, carry out a certain action and exhibit a certain level of power. Examples of these types of statements are declarations of ownership, baptisms, inaugurations, and legal sentences. Something that is a key to performativity is repetition. The statements are not singular in nature or use and must be used consistently in order to exert power.

### Shamanism and Rituals for Healing

Shamanism exists, in one way or the other, in almost all culture. It is still an important part of social lives in many societies in the world. Though it is very difficult to trace out how

shamanistic practices evolved in the primitive human societies, one thing is clear that it dates back to the early days of human civilization. In the primitive societies, shamanistic performances and rituals were the inseparable part of human existence. It was practised to ward off evil spirits and appease the gods/goddesses and other divine deities so as to avoid the misfortunes, illness, draughts, epidemics and other unwanted consequences in the societies.

Shamanism and rituals have close links since the beginning of human societies. It may be said that all rituals may not require shamans to carry out them, but all shamans need to observe the rituals to perform their roles. Ceremonial rituals performed by the shamans are not only the cyclical repetition of events in the regular interval of particular time and the mere continuation of tradition from the past but they are also the means of accomplishing some definite purposes. In most of the cases, such ritual ceremonies are carried out to overcome the difficulties of life. For example, rain in the time of draught, human desire for healthy life, prosperity, peace etc. have always been central to the reasons behind such practices.

Michael Winkelman, argues that universal features of shamanism resulted from the evolutionary process of human societies during the hunting gathering age as a result “many shamanisms today are based in factors derived from the ancient phylogenetic roots of ritual as a mechanism for communication and social coordination” (459). For Winkelman, rituals not only ensured the role of shamans in human societies but they also became foundation for the origins of spirituality in societies:

[T]he strikingly similar ritual practices of hunter-gatherer societies around the world reflect biogenetic foundations. These biological foundations provide the framework for a shamanic paradigm that illustrates the foundation of humanity’s original spiritual practices. The biological bases of the universal features of shamanism derived from

the ancient phylogenetic roots of ritual as a mechanism for communication and social coordination. (462)

In this context, it is arguable that do these ceremonial rituals mainly performed by the shamans in different cultural location in different context and time serve to achieve similar purposes like healing and remedy of human problems. Though healing effect by chanting of sacred verses (mantras) and shamanistic performances based on recitation and storytelling accompanied by beating of drums or others instruments is widely contested in the modern medical science, they are still being practiced all around the world especially in the indigenous tribal communities. There is a strong belief that healing effects of shamanistic rituals are obtained by recitation of verses, storytelling, and singing. In *Shaman Songs*, Mihaly Hoppal and Janos Sipos illustrate interesting aspects of healing qualities linked to singing of a Daurshamaness belonging to Inner Mongolia as:

It is barely surprising that the power of the individual shamans was measured by the number of songs they knew. In other words, the shaman's power was in his songs and the power of the instruments was only an additional force. This is the impression I received when in February 2003 I saw a Daurshamaness who, after the healing séance, went on singing to the patient for a long time, giving instructions and advice to the young girl who, hearing the dramatic song, sobbed and received the healing song kneeling and bowing to the ground. My impression was that the healing power emanated from the singing voice. (13)

Shamanistic ritual practitioners believe that only shamans can mediate between the gods and spirits with that of the human world. It is necessary condition for healing as these spirits and divine power can heal the sick persons if they are pleased by such ritual

performances. For this to materialize, a shaman must enter into a trance-like state in which he person transcends normal consciousness. In this state, a shaman is thought to transcend this physical world and to be able to delve into the world outside this realm to communicate with the god/goddess, spirits or whatsoever. This is possible only when the shaman reaches in the state of ecstasy. Gustav Rank contends that “the ecstasy seems to be the prerequisite condition for enabling the shaman to handle different types of demons, which according to prevalent opinion can do both good and evil, though mostly evil” (17).

The principle purpose behind reaching such a trance-like state of ecstasy is to find the solutions to human problems for which a shaman is believed to employ a technique of persuading, pleading, requesting and even tricking or forcing the supernatural elements for the desirable outcome in the particular issues. Only shamans are capable of doing this. Ordinary people do not possess such qualities. “Shamans are spiritual specialists who are called upon for certain situations of spiritual crisis, or for certain rites of passage and for healing . . . A shaman is chosen by the spirits, and is not a ‘normal’ person” (Wood 29).

The primacy of healing in shamanistic recitation is also supported by the researchers like Alban von Stockhausen and Marion Wettstein. The writers in *Shamanism and Violence*, argue:

From dusk till dawn, the shaman recites and dances to the rhythms of the drum, mentally travelling through the other world. If the ritual is not successful, the same shaman may be called for a second round, or another shaman may be invited. Most shamans have a clear understanding of what they can – and cannot – cure, and are not too proud to say that they could not help a patient and that he needs another type of cure. (114)



BholaNathBanstola, in his article “Shamanism: A Common Human Heritage” illustrates how these shamanic healers are highly valued in the society if they can perform well up to the expectations of their followers and his service seekers. On the other hand, it takes no time for him to lose respects in the community if he cannot perform well as a healer and troubleshooter in the society:

It does not take long for a healer to gain respect, and it does not take long to lose that respect if the shaman loses the regard of their community. As the news of the healing wisdom of a person spreads, hundreds of people will start visiting the shaman with great expectations and hopes of resolving every obstacle of their lives. But everyone’s expectations may not be met due to many factors. If this is the case, the unsatisfied people may pass on bad rumours about the incompetency of the shaman, who previously may have had great respect as a healer. In situations like this, a healer may lose all his clientele. (36)

This shows the importance and unique place of shaman in modern society. Their performance and results are of always high expectation.

A shaman uses all his possible skills, spiritual power and energy for healing the needy. Shamanic healing can be both physical and spiritual. In many cases such healing is believed to at the spiritual level, that address the root causes of the problems or diseases. “A most important concept for Shamanistic practitioners to understand is that when a person is contacted by either the lineage deity, deities, or by universal elemental spirits, their spiritual body becomes fragile and prone to any outside spiritual attacks” (Banstola 37).

For the rituals performed by shamans, healing attempts must need to tread through the spiritual level invoking the related deity of spirits. It requires honouring and invoking the

spirits with pure heart and mind by the shaman and sometimes even by the needy person himself. It is also believed that a person must be willing to accept the healing process performed by the shaman to cure or find remedy of his problems. Such healing cannot substitute modern medicine, instead they are positive forces to drive for the psychological strengths for the patients which are essential for the sick person to get cured. Positive psychological strength and hope to get cured are desirable for the one to get cured not only in shamanistic ritual practices but also for the modern medical science.

The study of shamanic performance has been dominated by the imagery of good versus evil, life versus death in which a shaman is the centre of hope for the community who possess the knowledge and power capable of avoiding and even countering the evil, death and other negative consequences in the life of an individual or community as a whole. In such performances, the main shaman is accompanied by his assistant if required. Focusing on the healing aspects of shamanistic rituals, Schechner elaborates:

Shamanic narratives most often center on a life-and-death struggle against powerful opponents: placating the keepers of the dead, fighting a disease, exorcising a demon, overcoming a spell that is threatening an individual or an entire community . . . In shamanic healing, the one afflicted by disease is passive, sometimes body of the patient. But the bad demons may emerge into the performance space and the site of the battle may expand across a wide arena. This titanic struggle is played out by the shaman, who enacts, tells, dances, and sings what is happening, drawing the audience deeper and deeper into the reality of the performance. (201-202)

From the above illustration of Schechner, it is obvious that shamanic healing rituals are not general performance of theatre artists in a stage. They are deeply embedded with the

concept of spirituality. While formal theatrical performances of professional artists mainly centre on the purpose of entertainment and imparting certain message to the general audience, shamanic ritual performances focus on the bringing certain changes in the status quo in the given context like healing the sick, avoiding the befalling misfortunes in the community etc. The boundary of theatrical stage performance to the ritual performance can be further drawn in the level of audience as well. While the audience in the ordinary theatrical performance can be everyone regardless of class and geography, ritual performances are mainly carried for the benefits of particular group of audience in the given context.

For Richard Bauman, performance of shaman is obligatory to fulfill the demands of his role while conducting such rituals. He asserts that “in curing rituals, a special knower (shaman) speaks the particular curing chant for which he is a specialist and which is called for by the ailment from which the patient is suffering” (300).

The ceremonies linked to birth, marriage and death often have a symbolic meaning; they mark the different phases in an individual’s status in society. Manner and dress of the performers plays an important part in the performance of rituals. There are special codes of dress that are assigned to the performers. In this regard, Richard Schechner quotes Eliade, “The shamanistic costume tends to give the shaman a new, magical body is animal look. The three types are that of bird, the reindeer (stag) and the bear – but especially the bird ... Feathers are mentioned more or less everywhere in the description of shamanistic costumes” (201). In fact, shaman's costume is different in different culture, and they are also different from the common costume in the community. It is customary to wear such costume in the ritual performances.

As Schechner argues, Limbu shamans also use bird's feathers on their head in the performance of rituals like Tongsing. But this shamanistic costume of feathers is not intended to give the Limbu shaman an animal look; instead it relates Limbu ritual practices with nature and natural objects. So there are unique features of Limbu rituals which is guiding their thoughts and shaping their beliefs. Despite the elements of universality in Limbu rituals, they are also different from rituals of other religion and race in many ways.

### Healing by Recitation and Storytelling

Role of a shaman differs from tribe to tribe but there are many common roles that are shared by every shaman in many societies around the world. A shaman plays the role of a healer of illness, a communicator with supernatural and a forecaster who can predict fortunes or misfortunes. While playing such roles, a shaman must rely on the practice of recitation and storytelling which help him to establish a link between himself and the supernatural realm to serve his purpose. In *Flying Tiger: Women Shamans and Storytellers of the Amur*, Kira Van Deusen speaks about importance of storytelling in shamanistic performances drawing the examples of the female shamans of the Amur, inhabiting in the Russian Far East as:

Magic tales and legends preserved in the oral tradition are records of shamanic history, philosophy, and art – showing us new ways of looking at the world. But they are also important to shamanic practice in another way – through the power of words and sounds, stories and songs act directly on the listener to bring about healing and spiritual growth. (xii)

For Deusen, the process of telling story is more important than its content – the ways a shaman chooses to tell the story, by removing and adding certain details with his own tone. All such effects make storytelling a spiritual act. Storytelling has naturally been an

indispensable part of shamanistic performances. It is the shamans who decide and “controls when the séance takes place, where it takes place and whether it is for the purpose of healing an individual or for the community as a whole ” (Berman 4). In such performance, shamans not only depend on storytelling alone, but they frequently employ a technique of recitation, which mostly comprises of myths, characters, texts or chants.

Recitation as an instrument of shamanistic performance has been widely used in almost all cultures, from Siberia to Korea; from Latin America to Europe. In *Shaman Songs*, MihalyHoppal and Janos Sipos draw the example of Nepalese shamans stating that how recitation has been an integral part of their performance:

In Himalayan shamanic practices, among the Magar shamans, one may distinguish between several kinds of shamanic speech or discourse, applied during the curative séances. The first and most prominent kind of shamanic speech consist of narrative origin myths in metric verse, recited in the course of a séance by the leading shaman.

(23)

Mostly such recitation and storytelling are accompanied by the certain kinds of instruments like drums, brass plates rattles etc. Although shamans dance and sing beating such instruments during the performances, such ritual performance is not musical performance in the normal sense, rather it is the music directed more to supernatural world than to an common audience that is believed to help him establish the link with the gods and other supernatural beings to serve the purpose of such performances. The shaman uses such instruments to summon and communicate with deities. Such instruments are highly symbolic. According to Thomas A. DuBois “shamans sometimes represent the cosmos on their drums or other items of paraphernalia ... include depictions of cosmic features and spirit guides or

deities on the drum head, making the drum a cosmic map for the use of the knowing shaman” (70).

Recitation, in shamanistic performances, is the aloud repetition of myths, characters, texts or chants from memory of shamans before an audience. Such recitation is not concerned with whether the audience understands it or not, is audible or inaudible for the audience. Instead, it is the instrument with which the shamans can communicate with the supernatural world to find the solutions for human problems like illness. In such case, shamans are also referred as faith healers in many societies as they heal by faith. Shamanistic faith healing practice is deeply rooted in the belief that the diseases and other kinds of mental and physical problems can be healed by the faith through the shaman’s prayer and chanting of sacred verses and observing shamanistic healing rituals in which the shamans can stimulate a divine presence and divine intervention through his unique power.

In *Shamanism in Northern and Southern Eurasia*, Michael Witzel focuses on the importance of the recitation process for shamans to achieve the state of ecstasy and serve the purpose of finding the answers to human problems:

The shaman employs trance-inducing techniques to incite visionary ecstasy and to go on ‘vision quests’. This is achieved by music (drumming), dancing, recitation of certain texts, mantras, etc. The shaman’s spirit can leave the body to enter the supernatural world to search for answers. He evokes animal images as spirit guides, omens, and message-bearers. He can treat sickness caused by evil spirits. (2)

Recitation and storytelling have played a vital role in Native American ceremony and rituals too. Native American shamans rely on recitation and storytelling to promote the harmony between human and nature by bridging the natural and spiritual world. C. Rybak and

A. Decker-Fittsin "Theory and Practice: Understanding Native American Healing Practices" argue that "there are a number of common Native American healing practices that tend to be practiced by many tribes ... These practices include powwow, music, smudging, storytelling, sweat lodge, pipe ceremony, and use of herbs" (336). The writers further illustrate, "Indigenous stories of healing are as valid as any of modern western medical science and offer means to understand the uniqueness of the experience of the healing process for the individual. Such stories can offer faith and hope in the healing process to those suffering and the stories themselves serve as medicine and contribute to healing" (337) to highlight the importance of storytelling in the Native American cultural context as the storytelling not only helps us to understand the mythical events and context but it also paves the way to healing.

#### Rituals for Healing and Harmony in *Ceremony* and *Mundhum*

Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* presents the connection between "curing" and "ceremony" from the beginning of the novel as illustrated, "The only cure I know is a good ceremony, that's what she said" (3). It presents the psychological trauma of the protagonist Tayo who thinks that he had seen his uncle Josiah's face among a crowd of Japanese soldiers he was ordered to shoot, and then of watching his cousin Rocky's death. The impact of these events are so intense that they drove Tayo out of his mind. He can be only cured by the tribal shaman Betonie who listens Tayo's story and advises that they must invent and complete a new ceremony. Betonie provides Tayo with the faith Tayo needs in order to complete the ceremony. After the ceremony is over, Tayo gradually restores his psychological perfection. This shows how healing rituals and spiritual ceremonies represent a crucial part of the Native American culture and their everyday life. In "Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*: Story as a Means of Healing", Jana Scigulinska argues, "Ceremony reflects a historical experience of the

Native Americans, a power of traditional storytelling, a quest in order to restore the healing balance in an individual and a whole community, as it carefully interweaves the old traditional stories and Tayo's personal story together" (344).

*Ceremony* begins with a poem invoking the constructive power of stories. The opening poem speaks of the mythological figure Thought-Woman who creates universe and other things as she thinks about them:

“Ts’its’stsi’nako, Thought-Woman,  
 is sitting in her room,  
 and whatever she thinks about  
 appears  
 She thought of her sisters,  
 Nau’ts’ity’i and I’tets’ity’i,  
 and together they created the Universe  
 this world  
 and the four worlds below. (1)

Silko's description of the creation is quite powerful and mixed with personal emotion as she says, “I'm telling you the story she is thinking” (1). Thought Woman is responsible for creating the story of the novel, just like she thought up and created the entire universe.

This poetic description of the beginning and creation of the universe and other beings are similar to the beginning of the Tongsing ritual, which also begins with the Mundhum that describes of the origin of universe. The beginning of this Mundhum is also highly poetic as the very first stanza goes this way:

A      tho      -      Tagerama a, Ningwaphuma a



Tuttusesepro, Tumyangsesepro

Yaklasesepro, Suhangmasesepro

Midhungpogiro, Mirakpogiro

AngsukPogiro, Yukmipogiro! (Kaila 35)

Which means: Oh! Almighty god *TageraNingwaphuma!*

To worship for the protection of gentlemen and ladies

Let's be fire and the flames of fire

Let's be fire that catches the forest!

As stated earlier, Mundhum contains the stories of creation of the universe and the beginning of mankind, this poetic recitation further describes the creation of universe and other beings as - There was just a void and nothing as before the beginning of the universe. Then almighty god *TageraNingwaphuma* appeared by his own will. He was the creator, omnipresent and the source of the all knowledge. He created the sun, the moon, the blue sky in the void. Then he brought stars and galaxies from Makhetembe, the place of origin of the stars. And he created earth, water, air. The sea was formed by his sweat. In the beginning the earth was full of water. Then the world of *MujingnaKheyongna* (The First Woman) was created. The mountains like Everest, Kumbhakarna etc. were made. Small hillocks and hills were made from which rivers and rivulets began to flow. These rivers brought big and small stones and sand then the caves were made. The earth slowly began to get dried but was still muddy. Slowly the grasses and earthworm began to hold the earth tightly. Then he created *PorokmibaYambhamiba* to make this earth even more beautiful. He ordered him to make jungle but *PorokmibaYambhamiba* had no ideas to make jungles. So he went to god

Tagera Ningwaphuma to get knowledge and seeds of the plants. The god gave him the idea and he returned back. The first plant that sprouted was a nettle plant and so on.

The second poem in the novel is entitled as "Ceremony" focuses on the power of stories as they contain rituals and 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)

Silko's emphasis upon the stories are evident as she takes them weapons for fighting off evil in the Native American Laguna Pueblo culture. They are not just for entertainment. If there are no stories, then there is nothing because the stories are the lifeblood of a culture and can effect great changes in the world. Evil force is mighty and it tries to destroy the stories and leave people defenseless. Stories can heal and stories can destroy; stories can keep them safe from the evil. Stories have unique place in Native Americans' way of explaining their worldview including the creation of this universe. Such stories passed down from generation to generation typically linked to myths are also important from the point of view of human evolution and existence.

Ambata K. Kazi-Nance makes a deeper analysis of how Native American rituals based on the narratives of the myths and memory restores the mental balance of Tayo and paves the way for his treatment. They also define how powerful the stories are in the culture:

In *Ceremony*, the redemptive model is represented in Josiah, the Night Swan, Ku'oosh, Betonie, and Ts'eh. These characters encourage active remembering of the past as necessary for Tayo to reconstruct his sense of identity in a way that can heal him and hopefully the community and help them all move forward. All of them work under the guiding spirit of "Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-Woman, the spider" who, with her two sisters, "created the Universe/ this world/ and the four worlds below" . . . They seek to heal Tayo by reconnecting him with the life-giving stories that have been circulating since "time immemorial," the stories that have the power "to fight off illness and death". (22)

As Tayo begins to give up hope for his mental health, his grandmother calls in the medicine man, Ku'oosh. He performs for Tayo 'Scalp Ceremony' a ceremony for warriors. The sixth poem in the novel explains the Scalp Ceremony; a cleansing ceremony carried out for the warriors who had killed or touched dead enemies. Such soldiers had to go through this ritual, otherwise someone named K'oo'ko would haunt their dreams and bad things like draught or misfortune would occur in the society: "in old days/long time ago/they had this/Scalp Society/for warriors/who killed/or touched/dead animals/...otherwise K'oo'ko would haunt their dreams/...everything would be endangered" (37).

This ceremony explains how the memory and narratives from the past play crucial role in the Laguna culture. The purpose of this ceremony is to remove psychological burden and guilt of having killed other people in the war by the soldiers. This ancient ritual for Tayo's

cleansing is not enough to restore Tayo's mental health. Ku'oosh tells him that old cures do not work as they used to since the white men came. This represents the loss of originality of Native American cultures originality resulted due to assimilation with the white European immigrants. Tayo is helped by this ritual but not cured totally. So Ku'oosh sends him to see another medicine man, Betonie. The importance of Betonie in the novel is not only as a medicine man who simply cures the sick, but he is a major actor who is instrumental to ascertain the Silko's portrayal of powerful transformative rituals in Pueblo Laguna culture. In this regard, it would be appropriate to quote Mikhail Bakhtin who in "Betonie the Shaman as a Chronotopic, Heterochronous Healer" writes how he can make positive changes in the Tayo's perception of himself and the world:

In Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, the encounter of the protagonist, Tayo, with the old shaman, Betonie, is arguably the most important section of the book. Besides the section's physical placement at the book's center, the Betonie section marks a major transformation in Tayo's perception of the world and marks a point of positive behavioral change—in contrast with his behavior in the book to this point. (1)

The differences in approaches of healing process carried out for Tayo by Ku'oosh and Betonie are evident as Tayo cannot fully understand when Ku'oosh speaks and performs the rituals. But Tayo immerses himself into the healing process of Betonie completely once he begins to understand what Betonie was teaching him. Here Silko focuses on the performative aspects of healing rituals. To have their healing effects, one must understand the ritual process for which Tayo spends several days with the old shaman, listening to him and being present with him. This ultimately proves beneficial for Tayo. In this regard, it is appropriate to quote

Peter Lee Parry, as he illustrates the difference between the approaches adopted by the two medicine men as:

Silko had Betonie teach Tayo how to navigate the world. The world was a very different place and Tayo was starting to see that being flexible was necessary to survive. His otherness would become an asset rather than a liability. Once Tayo began to understand what Betonie was teaching him, Tayo could immerse himself into the healing process . . . Ku'oosh's attempt to explain how everything was fragile and interconnected was clarified while being expanded. Silko positioned Tayo towards change and away from harmful ideas, which allowed Tayo to return to the community. (41)

Betonie is not only an ordinary medicine man, he is a shaman possessed with the power to bridge the real and the mythical worlds. He spends much of his time in communication with spirits and stories to which others do not have access. While performing rituals he makes special arrangements as we see "Tayo is sitting in the middle of a white corn and sand painting painted by old man, Betonie" (142), while Betonie and his helper Shush set up the ceremony around him with hoops and sand. His shamanistic ritual performances are aided by his helper who has an important part in the ceremony as "he [the helper] was grunting like a bear. He raised his head as if they were heavy for him, and he sniffed the air. He stood up and walked to Tayo" (142-143).

After the first night of the ceremony, Tayo finds differences in himself. It marks the beginning of Tayo's transformation through the healing power of ritual. When the first ritual ceremony is over, Tayo along with Betonie, and Shush sets out on horseback before dawn and head into the foothills of the mountains. It is the place where the second night of the

ceremony will take place. Reaching the mountain Tayo feels strong and happy. He feels like he used to feel before the war: “This was the highest point on the earth: he could feel it. It had nothing to do with the measurement of height. It was a special place. He was smiling. He felt strong” (139).

The *Mundhum*, basically oral scriptural text, is required to perform various rituals in Limbu community. The ceremonial rituals of Mundhum are based on recitation and storytelling. It is narrated along with the various ritual performances by Limbu shamans known as Yeba, Yema, Samba and Phedangma. Recitation and story found within the Mundhum is not only philosophical that narrates the beginning of the universe, earth and earthly affairs and life in the earth but is also a social theatrical performance that tell us how to make life peaceful and prosperous one bringing the society into its normalcy preventing it from problems and chaos. Ramesh Kumar Limbu, in *Performance in LimbuMundhum: A Study of Cultural Representation*, writes healing aspects of TongsingMundhum as:

TongsingMundhumritual has various goals and objectives, for instance, relief from diseases for easy living, desire for having children, longevity and health, desire for achieving food and drink and wealth, growth of cattle and affluence of grains, destruction of enemies and safety from those having resentment. ... [It] is recited and performed also to receive blessings of one’s ancestors, avoid mishaps affecting the family or individual members, shake off the wrath of the ghosts or dead souls and establish the dead souls in the land of the dead or to salvage by detaching them from the living people. (86)

DilliBikramEdingo traces the pragmatic aspects of Mundhum, which according to him, are collective requirements of Limbu community as:

The narration and ritual practice of Mundhum are accomplished to meet wider cultural and religious necessities of the Limbu community. These necessities provide us with an insight into understanding the common spirit of the community; understanding their rites and rituals about birth, life and death: and understanding their concept about the creation of the universe, origin of creatures and human beings, geo-spiritual history and genealogy of the Limbus etc. (4)

### Good versus Evil

*Ceremony* focuses on importance of defeating evil, for it leads to destruction.

Represented by witchery, evil can only be defeated by ceremonies. Betonie creates a story about the origin of evil and highlights prominence of rituals to ward off evils for health and prosperity of the world. In the second poem, Silko underscores the importance of stories to fight evil which is mighty and which always tries to destroy the stories and leave people defenseless. Stories can keep them safe from the evil.

Jana Scigulinska represents the importance of ceremony in Native American cultures depicting how the narratives and ceremonies are employed for fighting off the evil and personal demon of the protagonist:

In *Ceremony*, Silko integrates the oral tradition of storytelling, as a significant feature of the cultural world of the Native Americans, the Pueblo and the Navajo people. She presents enchanting and at the same time realistic interpretation of the story about the war veteran of mix-blood origin struggling to regain his place within the own world, a way to defeat personal demons as well as the demons of past torturing the people he belongs to through passing the ceremonies adjusted to the needs for existence in the contemporary world and its evils. (349)

TongsingMundhum also relates social and cultural belief of good and evil in Limbu community. During this ritual,Mundhum narrates how envy, jealousy, greed and other evil practices began along with development of the human beings and society. These rituals not only show the problems but also tell us the solutions to live away from them. After the completion of this first part, the second part of the ritual begins in the third day. During this all family members go nearby river and symbolically wash their evil thoughts within themselves and promise to keep themselves free from all kinds of evils.

#### Change of Status Quo

According to Richard Schechner, performance studies emphasizes on the social practices and advocacies that focuses on “becoming aware of one’s own stances in relation to the positions of others – and then take steps to maintain or change positions” (1-2). This is perfectly analogous to the Tayo’s situation in *Ceremony*. His mental anguish are the result of his sense of detachment, feeling of ‘other’ in his community. Tayo can not be cured until he accepts the reality of his differences with others due to his mixed ancestry. His healing process is possible when he associates himself with Native American root. In this regard, Peter L. Parry writes:“Silko wanted Tayo to start at the beginning in order to heal and rejoin the Laguna community. Silko was no going to rush Tayo into recovery . . . The environment is a very important in that it reconnects Tayo to the Laguna culture” (21-22).Tayo's acceptance of the Native American mythical world allows him to get healed from his mental sickness.

Tayo’s personality can be better attributed as “liminal personae or threshold people” as described by prominent ritual theorist Victor Turner in “Liminality and Communitas”. According to him, such personae are ambiguous and “these persons elude or slip through the



network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (95). As Tayo is from mixed ancestry, his position is betwixt and between his cultural settings. In many respects, Tayo is invisible and unable to locate his own position in his culture. Darkness and uncertainty surround him. Thus, Tayo’s condition can be “likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon” (Turner 95).

Tayo’s need of becoming aware of one’s own stances in relation to the positions of others is also supported by Michela J. Moscufo in “Reading a Politics of Location: An Ethical Mapping of Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony”. Moscufo views that Tayo must accept his home landscape for his remedy, must change himself to accept the geography of his origin:

Through a spatially-defined ceremony Tayo must embrace the geography of his homelandscape and reject the geography of war and the geography of drinking . . . In his healing ceremony, Tayo must not only recover the places and stories of his native landscape, but the places and stories that caused his sickness. Therefore his ceremony must be enacted within a much more expansive geography than traditional Native homelands. Understanding Tayo’s ceremony within his entire place world, extending past the Laguna landscape, in effect reconceptualizes his spiritual journey of healing.

(34)

So, as Richard Schechter maintains, change of position is necessary in the performance of rituals. Tayo must connect with both his white and Native American heritage in order to cure himself of his mental illness. In his journey to healing himself of his traumatic

memories, he must find and accept his identity of a biracial man. More importantly Tayo realizes that healing requires change. This realization makes him able to accept and value his “in between” position resulted by his mixed ancestry. He realizes that he has to change himself and his perception through the ceremonies.

Schechter notion of performance for awareness of one’s position and change of the status quo, as observed in the case of Tayo, can be located in Mundhum in the performance of NahenLakma (Suppressing Envy or Jealousy) sub-ritual. In Limbu language, ‘Nahen’ means envy or jealousy and ‘Lakma’ means ‘to suppress or to block’. In this way this ritual means to suppress or block the envy or jealousy from others that stands as the hindrance in the progress. This is to become aware of the social evils like jealousy exists in the community which stands as the hindrance in the progress and prosperity. It needs to change, to discard off from our life. The steps taken to change this status quo is to perform NahenLakma ritual.

To conduct this ritual, a sacred place like garden is chosen where a bamboo pole of nearly seven foot is raised, below the pole, a flat stone is kept and on that stone another piece of stone is kept upright by the Limbu shamans. Then a bow with an arrow is tied with the pole in the direction of the sky. The sky directed bow and arrow is meant for the symbolic protection and the safety from the thunder storm and other evil things.

After all apparatus are set, the Samba starts the Mundhum of NahenLakma. His followers and all the family members should stand in front of the bamboo pole carrying weapons like khukuri, sword, spear, gun, bows etc. When NahenLakmaMundhum is recited, all those standing persons should shout along with the Samba towards right and left raising their weapons high on the air. At the same time they should lift up their legs and bang on the

earth dancing together in line. Then Samba keeps the sky and the earth as the eye witness and presses the earth with his feet as the symbol of suppressing the envy and jealousy.

For Limbus, this ritual is very symbolic and important. It teaches them to live with peace and harmony avoiding bitterness among one another. It gives the message that though there exists negative traits like hatred, envy and jealousy in human society, we must forget them to bring forth happiness and progress. So it is important to observe once in a year to caste out all the evil thoughts from all the members of society. Because there is widespread belief that Nahen (jealousy) is believed to be rooted in primitive gods, ancestors, and among common man, women and children. Ramesh Kumar Limbu interprets its significance in Mundhum as:

It is believed that such jealousy has still greater impact on their generations resulting in illness and misfortune among them. For instance, envy and jealousy between the two wives of SusubengLalabeng is subtly presented in the following when he asked some food stuff to eat for journey to meet his mother:

Ma~a-ho,	thosulungmega	Oh	[she] upward-living
	Phiyalungma re		Phiyalungma
Ma~a-ho	yosumlungmega	Oh	[she] downward-living
	Mukkumlungma re		Mukkumlungma
Ma~a-ho	chesakmebirun	Oh	given no food stuff
	Chaffanmebirun		given no materials
Ma~a-ho	tingding mu yuktu	Oh	envy was provoked
	nahen mu yuktu		jealousy was incited. (58)

From Breach and Crisis to Redress and Reintegration

Victor Turner's notion of universal pattern of social drama "breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism" can also be found in Tayo's condition in *Ceremony* and *Mundhum* ritual performance. In the beginning of the novel, Tayo is seen cursing the rain in the forests of the Philippines as he thinks that rain is responsible for his cousin Rocky's death from the hands of Japanese Soldiers, "and he started repeating 'Goddamn, Goddamn !' . . . He damned the rain until the words were a chant, and he sang it while he crawled through the mud to find the corporal and get him up before the Japanese saw them" (12). This is breach in the sense of ritual performance as Tayo contends with his guilt over that words he uttered against the rain, which he thinks is responsible for the crisis of six-year drought in his community. Josiah has warned Tayo never to curse the nature and its system which otherwise, brings punishment to the land and its people. "The old people used to say that droughts happen when people forget, when people misbehave" (46).

For this crisis of drought in the community, Tayo must find solution, a redressive action that ends drought in his community. For this ritual, Tayo is accompanied by Ts'eh, who resemble a sacred figure in Laguna cosmology. Ambata K. Kazi-Nance writes this process as:

Ts'eh teaches Tayo about the roots and plants that bring rain and restore the land. She shows him there are roots with "the color of the sky after a summer rainstorm" that can be planted in places that have not had any rain for a while, and delicate plants that, when picked at just the right moment, bring light, "the light of the stars, and the moon penetrating at night". (33)

Eventually, the drought is ended and the community restores its normal state.

In *Mundhum*, the crisis of curse is averted by Sakmura Bademma (*Avoiding the Effect of a Curse*) ritual. The main reason of this ritual is a social message of unity, understanding

and co-operation. Though, there is quarrel, fight or dispute between brothers, relatives, and neighbors within the different periods of the years, this ritual inspires them to forget such bitterness in their relation and encourage them to come with a new strength and vitality and work together for the progress of all. Though the “practice of curse is vanishing among the Limbus today, but the feeling and fear is still there and the curse to forefathers are often reminded by Phedangmas, Sambas and Yebas” (Subba172).

While observing this ritual, the Samba recites the Mundhum that narrates how the curse system originated among the first human beings. Limbus have a deep belief in curse. A separate special place traced with white flour is made in a special triangular shape. Seeds of various food grains including paddy, maize, millet, wheat, mustard, etc. are mixed together and the family members drop those mixed seeds on that traced placed and spit on them which symbolically mean they hate the curse. Then all of them shout together announcing that from today onwards there is no bitterness and hatred among them. Hatred is believed to be gone with those chanted seeds. At the end, those seeds are thrown either from the nearby rock or river. Limbus believe that they can live with a new and refreshed life from that day onwards.

Mundhum rituals like Tongsing, NahenLakma and others are carried out with the purpose of social welfare. Though it is not necessary that a person must break away the social rules, these rituals are performed to address crisis and problems prevalent in the society. Limbu shamans also use Mundhum when a person falls sick. The healing rituals requires the recitation of sacred verses invoking deities for prayer. In such occasion, “Limbu healers, who are the ethno-medicine practitioners, also recite some magical words called “mantra” during the treatment. It is considered that the use of the mantraincreases the healing power of the herbal medicine and the treatment becomes more effective.(Limbu et al. 1).

As stated above, NahenLakma ritual is performed to avoid the effect of jealousy of others so that society can run smoothly in its normal course. The crisis, in this case, is psychological one, similar to that of Tayo. Jealousy and other kinds of negative thought can damage the peace and harmony in the family as well as in the society. As Tayo goes through series of ceremonies to get cured, NahenLakma ritual must be observed to get rid of excessive jealousy and other negative feeling of a person as a redressive action get rid of it.

In a complete performance of Tongsing ritual, the shamans (also known as Phedangma, Samba or Yebas) play their respective social roles such as priest, preachers, healers, sorcerers and misfortune preventers. Limbu people are afraid of those deities and spirits which cause misfortunes, sickness, ailments and even death. During performance, Limbu shamans recite the Holy Scripture or oracle Mundhum that guides them to find the ways for making divine power and other spirits happy and satisfied to keep the community away from any evil aspects and other misfortunes.

#### Words Do, Not only Report

Ritual of performativity as based on the notion of J. L. Austin's concept of doing things by words is evident in *Ceremony* as narrative rituals based on the stories, myths and poems help Tayo to relate himself with the world surrounding him and restores his psychological balance. Just as perlocutionary act of the utterances focuses on the results of the act upon the listener, the ceremonies performed by Betonie focus on healing Tayo from his mental trauma. Words are powerful means of achieving the purpose in rituals. Performativity of rituals are based on its purpose and results. The words in fact 'do' serve their purpose in this context.

In the sub-ritual of IdhukSoghaPakma (Ritual of driving away evil spirits of unnatural deaths), Limbu shamans practise chasing the Sogha (ghosts and evil spirits) by blocking their paths to keep them away from the world of living. It is a symbolic practice of driving away the evil spirits of unnatural deaths. There is a common belief in Limbu community that those evil spirits are not visible to the common people. Only Samba or Yeba can see them. Those spirits try to disrupt the world of living causing unnatural deaths and many other misfortunes. So it is must necessary to keep them away from the society.

For the above illustrative dramatization of ritual of chasing the ghosts, Samba allegorically beats the evil spirits wildly yelling, shouting and beating the brass plate severely. They mark a symbolic boundary to cover houses and village to prevent them from entering in the village. According to Bairagi Kaila, Yebas and Sambas speak out to protect the world of living from death in the performance of this ritual as:

Let's block the path of death if it comes.

Let's open the path of life if it comes.

Let's block and stop the way of death

If it enters from elsewhere.

We Sawala Sambas and SitakYebas

Let's give our society life and manners to live. (223)

Limbus believe if they enter in the village, many evils and unnatural death would take place in the society. So, the living people must not be in contact with those spirits. The message of this ritual is the psychological strength. When the shaman declares that he has driven off the ghost and ghostly spirits away, the words have result on the listeners and

participants. After the observation of this ritual, Limbus community feel psychologically secure and they can work more freely and effectively. The words 'do' serve their purpose here as well with the feeling of safety and security from the ghosts.

### Symbolic Journey for Revisiting the Mythic Land

As an integral part of ritual performance, both *Ceremony* and *Mundhumuse* abundant symbols. Most of the rituals are highly symbolic worldwide. In this regard, it would be appropriate to quote Catherine Bell:

First, ritual was said to dramatize, enact, materialize, or perform a system of symbols.

This formulation invokes the notion that activity is a secondary, physical manifestation or expression of thought. Second, by enacting the symbolic system, ritual was said to integrate two irreducible aspects of symbols, the conceptual (worldview) and the dispositional (ethos). (31)

According to Bell, symbols in rituals are required for dramatic effect. They also help us to understand the worldview of that community and the belief system in that culture.

Tayo's recovery depends on his highly symbolic journey to the Laguna homeland. Many critics have pointed out on the symbolic significance of his native geographical landscape for Tayo's recovery. Rick Mott in his "Digitizing Leslie Silko's Laguna Landscape" summarized some of the critics' argument in importance of role of land in Tayo's healing. He quotes:

In his exhaustive study on the role of landscape in *Ceremony*, the critic Robert Nelson notes that "Tayo must re-visit the land itself in order to reestablish contact with the power of healing that he may find there" (14). The recuperative powers of the land, in fact, essentially move Tayo towards a place of vitality. Influencing a generation of



critics, Allen reinforces this connection with the landscape declaring that "Tayo's illness is a result of separation from the ancient unity of person with land, and his healing is a result of a recognition of this oneness". "Symbolically and literally," Edith Swan adds, "Tayo heals only through a reconnection with the natural world" (7).

Silko begins *Ceremony* at the point where Tayo is disconnected from all things including the land of his birth and childhood. He is found fighting against Japanese in rain soaked jungles of the Philippines. Being away from one's land itself is a symbol and source of disorientation and psychological disharmony and disconnection. As the novel proceeds further, gradual shift towards his intimate interconnection with the landscape paves the way for his symbolic journey towards health and psychological perfection. Thus Tayo's literal homecoming, his return to native land refers to his symbolic homecoming.

The use of natural landscape of mountains depicts Silko's attempts to draw close association of natural world in the Native American Culture. As the 19th poem goes:

At the Dark Mountain  
 born from the mountain  
 walked along the mountain  
 I will bring you through my hoop  
 I will bring you back.  
 Following my footprints  
 walk home  
 following my footprints  
 Come home, happily. (143)

In the above lines, Betonie's chant says he will bring Tayo back to his normal life through his hoops. Though he is born in the mountains and has walked in the mountains, Tayo is still in the Dark Mountain that refers to the danger of his psychological collapse if he is not healed by the ceremony. This poetic expression persuades Tayo to get healed and “Come home, happily” following the footprints of Betonie that refers to the path shown by him through his ritual ceremonies. Home is life and happiness.

The use of symbols, animals and symbolic painting, typical of shamanic ritual dramas abound *Ceremony*. 21st Poem in the novel begins with a story poem about a man who is taken by Coyote, a small and cowardly prairie wolf found in North America. In Native American myths and legends, the coyote commonly stands as a trickster spirit and symbolizes selfishness, deceit and greed. The man taken by Coyote symbolically stands for Tayo himself as Tayo is also lost in anguish over his sense of detachment from his own community and traumatic memories of his uncle Josiah and cousin Rocky. When the four men go searching for the lost man, they find him sleeping beneath the wild rose bush. The man can no longer talk; he can only make a coyote whine. “The man tried to speak/ but only a coyote sound was heard” (140). The lost man’s inability to speak to his fellowmen is highly symbolic to Tayo’s inability to communicate and integrate with his own culture and community.

Bringing the man taken and tricked by the coyote to the human world needs a ceremony to perform. The four Bear People who “have the power to restore the mind” (141), perform the ceremony taking twigs from the four trees the man slept under, as well as making hoops and four bundles from other plants. It also involves crossed rainbows and paintings made with white corn and pollen. When the poem ends, we find Tayo sitting in the middle of a white corn and sand painting with rainbows crossed same as in the myth of the lost man in

the poem. As the four Bear People perform ceremony for the lost man to get him back to the human world, Betonie and his helper Shush set up the ceremony around Tayo with hoops and sand to take him back to his normal condition. In this context, Betonie, a wise old shaman and healer, who possess the knowledge of ceremonies, symbolically stands as the four Bear People.

Tayo's symbolic homecoming is analogous to the homecoming of the clouds as symbolized in 22nd poem of the novel. This poem narrates a myth of the Ck'o'yo magician Kaup'a'ta, or the Gambler who captures the storm clouds and locks them up in four rooms of his house. As a result, there is drought for three years. Then the father of the storm clouds, the Sun, goes looking for them. As he knows nothing about where the clouds are, he asks his grandmother, Spiderwoman, who is wise enough to inform him about what has happened to the storm clouds. She informs the Sun that the clouds are imprisoned by the Gambler and teaches him on how to defeat the Gambler who is very cunning and treacherous. Initially the Sun is tricked by the Gambler but later the Sun manages to defeat the Gambler and he cuts out the Gambler's eyes and throws them into the sky, where they become stars. Then he releases the clouds and tells them to come home:

Then he opened the door of the four rooms

and he called to the storm clouds:

“My children,” he said

I have found you!

Come on out. Come home again.

Your mother, the earth is crying for you.

Come home, children, come home”. (176)

Tayo's symbolic journey within himself is essential for his healing which requires his close integration to Laguna community and culture. For this purpose, Silko depends on recitation of symbolic stories, in poetic form, that juxtapose the Tayo's own experience with mythic characters in wider symbolic context. Ami M. Regier in "Leslie Marmon Silko: Mapping Radical Histories and Futures" writes:

The ancient story functions as a ceremony in which the larger novel then comes to take part, through Tayo, a veteran returning from World War II who tries to reintegrate into a Laguna family and culture, and needs healing—as does his home culture and the postwar world. The novel enacts healing by moving from ceremonial storytelling to narratives of psychic, communal, and environmental trauma from war, showing that many postwar concerns can be addressed by recognizing the contemporary world as a manifestation of an ongoing utterance and enactment of creation and healing.(5)

Silko, while intertwining the plot of protagonist in the novel, Tayo, has remarkably employed the parallel story of myths from Laguna culture. To understand the Tayo's journey to recovery, we must understand this parallel story of myths which symbolically relates Tayo's separation from his community and his crisis in identity to his recovery. Tayo is healed from his feelings of identity crisis and separation. All the mythic stories in the poems are related to Tayo's healing process. Symbolic Connection with nature and his land and culture, established by the poetic myths throughout the novel, are key to his therapy. Nature and culture, thus play a very important role in establishing his sound personality. This narrative structure where myth is parallel to the protagonist's own situation is well described

by Allan Chavkin in *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*. Chavkin quotes the words of Elaine Jahner as:

[T]here are two types of narratives that shape the events- the contemporary narratives of Tayo's struggles (presented in prose) and the myth narrative (presented in poetry). The two are inextricably connected and influence each other, and the reader and Tayo, as they move from even to event, must attempt to understand the relationship between the contemporary action and the mythic prototype. (8-9)

*Mundhum*, alive in Limbu community from ancient time in the form of oral tradition, is not only highly poetic but it is highly symbolic as well. "The portrayal of various symbols, images, language, gestures, etc. make such ritual performances livelier. Hence, most of them are highly performative - physically, linguistically, mentally as well as representationally" (Limbu52). *Mundhum* becomes poetic and highly symbolic in the performance of Tongsing ritual.

It would better to explore some more ideas about Tongsing ritual before analyzing the symbolic aspects of its *Mundhum*. There are many sub-rituals which Shambas must complete in Tongsing. Those rituals must not be left out. These rituals show that Tongsing is not only religious practice to please some sort of supernatural powers, but also a social practice that gives a message of unity and solidarity with practical skills. The main rituals performed during Tongsing are YagrangsingPhongma (*Mundhum* of Raising Yagrangsing), IdhukSoghaPakma (Driving away the Evil Spirits of Unnatural Deaths), PhungwaChangma (Ritual of Life and Prosperity), PoklungLepma (Throwing of Stones), NahenLakma (Suppressing Envy or Jealousy), and SakmuraBademma (Avoiding the Effect of a Curse) etc.

In such rituals, symbols have high importance as they can be observed only through symbolic journey.

During Tongsing, a new bamboo pole (Kesing) is planted in the courtyard and an altar is constructed at the top. This ritual is known as the ritual of YagrangsingPhongma.

Yagrangsing means a long bamboo pole that is raised in the middle of the courtyard. A big bamboo basket with leaves and branches, and chyabbrung (a special drum) is hung on the pole. Tongsings are sticks representing various souls and other sacred objects planted in small bamboo baskets filled with soil. They are placed at the bottom of the pole. In the beginning of the ritual, Samba makes the introductory remarks in course of his Mundhum recitation by mentioning that the creator god sent various Sambas, Phedangma and Yebas in the earth to save mankind. Then he invokes his master spirits and the mythical and the symbolic journey begins.

This ritual is important not only for recitation and performance of Sambas or Yebas but it is also important for the symbolic and mythical journey the performers take us in course of its observation. ChaitanyaSubba, in *The Culture and Religion of Limbus* describes this symbolic journey of Sambas and Yebas as:

The journey starts from the Tongsings. They move towards Kesing climbing the several steps there and then descend to the floor or courtyard. They enter the house and reach the main pillar where Akwanama stays and move towards the hearth. Then they proceed towards the hooks and small bamboo baskets hung on top of a hearth and to the sooty beams. They climb the upper storey of the house and reach to the axle of the roof. From the ridge of the roof, Samba watches the village in the light of the

moon and stars and tells what he has seen, whether good or bad signs, in the village.

(197-198)

According to Subba, in course of its performance, sometime Sambas have to go through the shining path covered by Sellobung (*Thysanlolaena maxima*), and sometime through the sunny path shaded by Chestnut tree. They must be careful as there are spear grasses on the way. They also find Hangangse trees covered by black fruits, even making the path dark and they must proceed cautiously as evil spirits stay or rest on those trees. They even find a place on the way covered by the flowers ChuwatPhung (*chrysanthemum*), the flowers of dead persons, and they are supposed to take good care of all the souls not to miss or lose any. While moving ahead on their track, they reach to a place where the white flowers of Kokphekla (*magnolia tree*) and colorful flowers of Thokphekla (*rhododendron*) make the surrounding pleasant. They also find pine trees and places covered by mist and cloud in their ascending journey and they have to protect TuttuTongsings (men's Tongsings) and SuhangmaTongsing (women's Tongsings) from the wind and rain. Various kinds of birds and beasts can be seen on the way. While moving further towards the highland, there comes a place full of springs where there are fountains in row. They are the fountains of supreme goddess TageraNinwaphuma, and fountains of TuttuTumyahang (gentlemen i.e. respected laymen), YaklaSuhangma (ladies), SawalaYechchham (reverend souls), SiphakYemi (shamans) etc. These are the sources of clean water and the deep sanctuary of snake and tortoise divinities. There are also the villages of players of musical instruments, wood cutters and carpenters, bamboo-crafters, herders, potters and fair dames looking after poultry, piggery and weaving clothes. The team members of the journey should be careful with the broken pieces of earthen wares because the evil spirits may hide in those broken pieces. After

crossing the beautiful land of fountains, they pass through the marshy land. There is a log just like a see-saw, placed on the track to cross the marshy land. They have to jump through it.

The rites of IdhukSoghaPakma are observed in the first night of Tongsing. The main objective of performing this ritual is to drive away the evil spirits of unnatural deaths and groping and destroying the ominous tree where evil spirits take shelter. Limbus have common faith in ghosts and other evil spirits. They believe that if these evil spirits haunt nearby homes, they can make anyone sick which can even cause his/her death too. So these rituals are the most important ones. ChaitanyaSubbaillustrates how the ritual of driving away the evil spirits (soghas) is carried out symbolically:

[...] Yeba casts a spell on Soghas and calls them to come to the thread and accept their food. When these evil spirits start to take their foods, Yeba throws arrows from his bow pointing to the leaves and they fall down in a broken earthen pot where Neghekpa (nicker bean), Khesik (walnut) and small pieces of white crystallized silica are kept. They hide there and Yeba beats them wildly. Yeba acts in trance, beat the brass plates rapidly and drive away following them around the house to the crossroads and a little away to the west direction. (161)

There is a common belief in Limbu community that Samba never kills Soghas (ghosts) but just blocks their way to be near to the house and courtyard. “The Yeba/Yema perform this ritual of driving away of evil spirits instead of killing them because they have a belief that if they once kill the evil spirits that would bring an end to their ritual vocation in the community” (Limbu 55). To block the path of the Soghas, Sambas chant special Mundhums in the course of ritual performance in night. The dramatization of the myth and its performance overwhelms the spectators. The Sambas show many skills in symbolic chasing of these



ghosts. He shouts, yells and shrieks here and there in the dark and all the family members and spectators have to follow him yelling, shouting and throwing stone chips and sand. He recites as:

Bright place due to the moon

Bright Place due to the sun

Where

If our age is being less

If the death bell is being rung

I stop this death bell

And toss this coin with power of sacred chanting

I foil the path of death

I stop death. (Kaila318)

The ritual of PhungwaChangma (Ritual of Life and Prosperity) is performed for the prosperity, good luck and power acquisition of Limbu youths. This ritual is especially for the youths. In this ritual all Limbu youths from the house stand carrying a brass plate filled with a kalash (sacred pot with water) and a small lamp decorated with Sekmuri (celery) flower and other flowers. “Sekmuri flower has a very important place and meaning in Limbu community. It is a flower that symbolically stands for the human life” (Lawoti52).

While observing this ritual, the youths must make a circle to the Tongsing pole in the middle of the courtyard chanting certain words together along with the Samba. The Samba, then recites special Mundhum to carry out this ritual. There is a separate brass plate for each Limbu youths. That is specially designed to them. Each youth should carry their own plate and place on their shoulder according to the signs and symbols of the Samba. The boys must

make four complete rounds of the Tongsing pole while the girls must make three complete rounds and dance with the Samba once in the morning and once in the evening of that appointed day in Tongsing. Then the Samba chants the special words and sprays the special water of the sacred pot with the help of the very Sekmuri flower of each person respectively.

PoklungLepma(Throwing of Stones) is a prestigious game of throwing of stones which represents the adventurous endeavour of young people. It is very much like a modern game of shot-put. Sambas and Yebas perform this ritual narrating a myth that tells how this ritual practice began and why it is still important. According to Yeba Mr.

TekBahadurLingden, the myth of PoklungLepma ritual goes like this: According to its Mundhum, there was a great drought in the earth. To cause a rain, PorokmiYambhami, the creator god, threw Poklung towards the end of the earth aiming at the horizon. It struck at SakholungKhingwa, LakhonglungKhongwa and broke the earthen pot which caused rain and thus the earth was freed from draught. Before throwing the stone from IwaHata, he came in contact with KhambongbaSungbonba that he had to cross the limit set by them and the stone should not be broken. If the stone did not cross the limit, that would cause downfall and humiliation and if the stone is broken into pieces, they would turn into evil spirits causing harm to the stone thrower himself according to the condition agreed by both parties. It was also agreed that if the thrower succeeds in his attempt, that would mean a victory, progress and prosperity. The trail limits were set and PorokmiYambhami successfully crossed the limits every time, eventually breaking the earthen pot full of water. By his attempt of PoklungLepma, the earth turned into green and fertile land. Following this tradition and instruction given by the Sambas and Yebas, young men have to perform this ritual imitating the action of throwing stone to some particular distance.

Sambas say that when PorokmiYambhamiba at last threw the stones keeping the gentleman and ladies as eyewitness. He threw and threw and at last he promised and remembered the supreme god TageraNingwaphuma and threw the stone in to the great space, void. The stone went up to the Kongkonglung hill and brought a great storm and rain causing thunderstorm. Then the rain continued up to the nine days and the earth drowned in the water. Afterwards the seeds sprouted everywhere on the earth making it more beautiful than before. The stone 'Paklung' broke in to several pieces and they became gods and goddesses.

Now, this ritual is observed in symbolic way. After the recitation of PaklungChangmaMundhum, the Samba calls out the names of the concerned boys and girls one by one. He then takes his special coin as the symbol of the stone to be thrown. Then he tosses the coin reciting their names. If the 'head' of the coin turns on, it is considered to be 'good sign' and if 'tail' of the coin turns on, it is the 'bad sign'. Therefore Samba tosses the coin continuously until the 'head' of the coin comes. There must be good luck for everyone for whom the Tongsing is being performed. In this ritual, the mythic land where the God brought rain throwing the mighty stones, must be revisited by the shamans and other participants.

Mountains, rivers, rain, land, and other natural symbols are frequently used in Mundhum by the shamans. Bairagi Kaila describes natural landscape and symbolic journey of the Limbu shaman in *Mundhum* as:

Now we have arrived

On the high mountain

Walking

Let's walk in line properly

There is strong wind and storm

We might lose our way

Let's walk properly

Being very careful of oneself. (104)

Delineating the symbolic aspects associated with nature and human life represented in *Mundhum* and folktales in Limbu culture, Damber Kumari Limbu in her Master's dissertation entitled as "The Folk Tales of Limbu Community: Celebration of Nature and its Symbolic Representation" writes:

Folk stories represent human experiences through symbols and archetypes. For social symbols and codes the folktales represent limiting within socio-religious norms and values of the particular clan or society. Likewise the Limbu community of Nepal, carries their own codes and symbols to represent their culture, a natural force, plants, animals, or inanimate things are thought as the symbols, ancestors, safeguard or tutelary spirit of a society, group/clan. Nature is regarded as the power and symbol of ancestors. (22)

In *Mundhum*, there are numerous symbols are associated with the nature. Nature represents life, so they have close connection with the survival. Most of these symbols such as animals, mountains, flowers, rivers, forest etc. are taken from nature and have unique space in Limbu myths and culture. It contains symbolic representations of the knowledge and skills essential for our survival that have been preserved by our ancestors and handed down to present generations from several generations.

The function of *Mundhum* is entirely social as it always aims for social welfare. All the sub-rituals of Tongsing *Mundhum* are fully concerned with the harmony of society.

Mundhum not only treats the sick person but it also tells how to prevent the illness and diseases. With the evolution of human beings with its different races, mankind suffered from different forms of pains and distresses. The life was extremely difficult and severe in those days of beginning of human civilization. In such time, Limbu community found their answers to the questions of human suffering in Mundhum.

From above illustrations, it is clear that the basic purpose of Mundhum and its rituals are designed to ensure human existence and betterment of human life. Mundhum text but it is also a major source of knowledge in the Limbu community.

### Chapter III

#### Ceremonial Ritual Performance as a Means of Healing and Harmony

*Ceremony* and *Mundhum* both are based on the shamanistic ritual performances that are carried out for healing the illnesses and maintaining the harmony in community. *Ceremony* and *Mundhum* both are highly symbolic texts that define how shamanistic rituals based on myths and storytelling are performed in the community as a means of healing and harmony. Though located in the two opposite geography and different cultural contexts, both texts explore the rich patterns of performance of rituals constructed on the symbols of natural and mythical landscapes with the message of unity of individual within himself and with his culture and origin. While Silkointerprets how to live a meaningful life remaining connected to the community with the portrayal of Tayo as a disconnected personality in the beginning, *Mundhum*, primarily based on patterns of rules of conduct, established norms and values in the community and institutionalized practices, is a beautifully crafted instrument for ritual practices that seeks social harmony and welfare by warding off social evils and misfortunes.

As nature plays vital role in our existence and wellbeing, rituals teach us to live in harmony with nature. They encourage us finding the peace of mind by taking us in the woods, in a riverbank, in a meadow, by the ocean, in a mountain and rocks, and many more. Both texts impart us an important lesson for us that if need to live in harmony with nature, we must understand the value of nature. As we are part of nature, nature plays an important role in our existence and wellbeing. *Ceremony* gives an account of how Tayo's gradual shift towards his intimate interconnection with his native landscapes symbolically paves the way for his health and psychological perfection. Similarly, Mundhumian rituals give high importance to the Mother Nature for good harvest and protection from natural calamities which are important for social harmony and human survival. Nature represents life, so they have close connection with the survival. Nature is regarded as the power and symbol of ancestors.

Both *Ceremony* and *Mundhum* are interwoven with the narratives of life-like stories based on the various myths and legends. In course of time, they not only present the historical narrative from the memory, but also draw parallel stories to our real life teaching us life skills and inspiring us to live in harmony; in harmony with nature and in harmony with culture that are fundamental to our survival and healing from the life threatening diseases. As a means of ritual performance, Silko points out the importance the oral storytelling tradition that ultimately proves instrumental to Tayo's healing. *Mundhum*, mainly narrated from the memory of Limbu shamans, is also based on the oral narratives from past gives vital lessons to our survival.

*Ceremony* contains about thirty mythic stories that emphasize the importance of stories as means of healing. "You don't have anything/If you don't have the stories" (2). Stories are weapons for fighting off evil in the Native American Laguna Pueblo culture. They are not just

for entertainment. Tayo is confronted with his own struggle and the narratives of mythic prototypes juxtapose the Tayo's own experience with mythic characters in wider symbolic context. All the mythic stories in the poems are related to Tayo's healing process. Symbolic Connection with nature and his land and culture, established by the poetic myths throughout the novel, is key to his recovery. Through the depiction of Tayo's experiences and healing process, Silko draws wider implications of the ceremonial rituals as having power of healing ultimately contributing to the individual and social harmony and unity.

In *Ceremony*, Silko artistically presents the healing rituals that encourage the idea of community life and cultural values which nurture Tayo to reach his psychological harmony and perfection. The healing process reaches to the meaningful end only when he learns to value community and understands how important are the support of each other for the survival in the community. Tayo is supported by his close family members and friends as well as by the traditional medicine men like Ku'oosh and Betonie who play vital role in his healing. Such 'we feeling' in the community is vital to give Tayo confidence and strength to live a meaningful life.

*Mundhum* also places greater importance in social unity and harmony. *Mundhum*, takes us to the mythical and symbolic journey of historically and mythically important places. It establishes the link of the present to that of the ancestors through the symbolic journey. This symbolic journey is full of merriment. In this mythical and symbolic journey, it teaches us many social and practical skills like how to harvest corns and paddy, how to grow flowers, how to offer respect to the visitors and guest. *Mundhum* characterized by many aspects of theatrical 'make believe' performances aims to maintain peace and harmony through various mythic pedagogical narratives.

In both contexts, shamans play very important roles as not only the faith healers and medicine men, but also as the instrument to carry out healing rituals. There is a strong belief that healing effects of shamanistic rituals are obtained by recitation of verses, storytelling, and singing as performed by the shamans following the established practices and pattern. Tayo is cured by Betonie through the performance of rituals based on the storytelling and chanting. In his ceremonial ritual performance, Betonie symbolically takes Tayo to mythic land through highly symbolic illustration of natural objects. *Mundhum* also draws the similar shamanistic practices and ritual performances which involve storytelling and chanting for healing the sick persons, for driving away ghosts and evil spirits, for suppressing envy, jealousy, greed and other evil practices prevalent within us. Lumbus' shamanistic faith healing practice is deeply rooted in the belief that the diseases and other kinds of mental and physical problems can be healed by the shaman's prayer and chanting of sacred verses in the healing rituals in which the shamans can stimulate a divine presence and divine intervention through his unique power.

Most importantly, performative aspects of language and social theatre as realized in the ritual performance of both texts are always central to bring the intended outcome. For this outcome to achieve, it is necessary for us to embark on a journey within ourselves. Tayo's healing is accomplished by his journey within himself. In his highly symbolic journey to his Laguna homeland, he is able to establish his intimate interconnection with his origin and his space in his community. The realization and acceptance of reality of his origin and space ultimately proves beneficial to his healing and psychological perfection. Thus, Tayo's real combat was not with the Japanese army in the World War II but with himself and with his fragmented identity, from which he finally emerged victorious.



*Mundhum* also imparts the similar message of knowing oneself. In the highly symbolic performances of various rituals, *Mundhum* reminds us of transient human life and its vulnerability. It has to be protected from various dangers, both external and internal. *Mundhum* not only narrates how envy, jealousy, greed and other evil practices began along with development of the human beings and society, but it also makes us aware to get rid of them, which are within ourselves and with others. In such ritual performance, *Mundhum* requires that all family members go nearby river and symbolically wash their evil thoughts within themselves and promise to keep themselves free from all kinds of evils. In this way, it inspires us to revisit our inner self and cast away fears and evil thoughts for our psychological harmony and perfection.

Drawing from the above conclusion, it can be reasoned that future research studies are necessary to validate the healing effects of the ritual as presented in both texts. Apart from studying the rituals performed mainly for healing the illnesses and maintaining the harmony in community, there are a lot of issues to consider further. In this line, future research should look for changes in such ritual practices and also for changes in the level of trust in faith healing practices of such rituals in the present time. As our lifestyle, belief, everyday needs, work ethics, morality, culture and customs, modes of communication, technology etc. are rapidly changing every day, further work is certainly required to draw a new conclusion by studying them in the changed contexts.

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