

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Land as the Site for Identity Formation in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and
L M Silko's *Ceremony*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in English

By

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Letter of Recommendation

The thesis entitled “Land as the Site for Identity Formation in Chinua Achebe’s *Things fall Apart* and L M Silko’s *Ceremony*” has been prepared under my supervision by Pratima Bhattarai. She carried out the research from June 2016 to April 2017. I recommend it for evaluation to the research committee.

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(Supervisor)

Date:

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This thesis titled “Land as the Site for Identity Formation in Chinua Achebe’s *Things fall Apart* and L M Silko’s *Ceremony*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Pratima Bhattarai has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* and Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* revolve around the issue of identity, particularly, in relation with emotional and physical displacement caused by colonialism. With the historical context of late nineteenth century, *Things Fall Apart* dramatizes the complications and struggles of Ibos to search and establish their identity in Nigeria. Through the story of its protagonist; Okonkwo, it shows how an individual's identity is determined by its land and society. It highlights the connection with native land and culture since they provide meaning for individual's social identity. Christian missionaries, here, is seen violating Ibos' strong bond with their culture and land. Due to which many Nigerian youths swept away from their original native values and social code of ethics that directly affect in their identity making process. Ultimately, Christianity makes all the things fall apart which used to unite all the Nigerians making them stripped and undignified. Similarly, presenting the story of Tayo; a representative of Pueblo people living nearby Laguna reservation, *Ceremony* also brings forth the issue of identity in relation with one's native land and culture. Due to the physical and spiritual contamination and displacement brought by the Whites, he feels uprooted, un-homed and lost. Two contrary attitudes about land, animal and nature of Laguna people and White make him confused, alienated and helpless. Even the experiences of World War II heighten his psychological trauma related with identity. But later, when Tayo realizes the connectivity of 'wholeness' of the land through the re-enactment of ancient mythic stories, chants, rituals and ceremonies with the help of Betonie, he feels 'complete'. He becomes able to locate his identity in his land and among his people.

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