The impact of landscape on the emotional shift in Tayo’s Character: A Study of memory and displacement in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*

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**Abstract:**  
This paper examines the decolonizing methods used by Leslie Marmon Silko in her novel *Ceremony* (1977) to heal the indigenous people from the patriarchal traditions of the white hegemony. This study aims to emphasize the vulnerable responses of the Pueblo people to the memories of the clan and to highlight Silko’s methods to sustain the history and lifestyle of the indigenous people. Therefore, Silko’s novel can be situated historically and culturally within memory-studies. To analyze the contrasting behaviors of characters, this paper projects the relationship between the collective patriarchal doctrines and that of the individual within the framework of memory studies. Theories of Jan and Aleida Assmann are used here to explore the chronicle struggle of the indigenous people and to maintain the memory and tradition of the clan. Memory studies can best describe this novel since Silko believes there is a systematic shift in dislocating the memories of the place. This cultural displacement, the Pueblo people are specifically facing, happens when the young people lose their memories of the tribe and forget their traditions. The memory-studies then establish an intersection not only between the collective and the individual but also between the white hegemony and the Indigenous culture. The paper concludes that memories of the clan can be regained through specific forms of ceremonies, narratives, or any institutional formation. Therefore, Silko’s novel has entertained the possibility of cultural and historical communication- within memory studies- that may succeed in stimulating the attention of the young generation.

**Keywords:** Assmann, Ceremony, Indigenous studies, memory theories, Laguna Indians, Leslie Marmon Silko, Pueblo people

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Introduction

Leslie Marmon Silko, in her novel *Ceremony*, suggests that salvation is attained through recognizing the spirit of the clan and memorizing the ancestor’s stories of nature and the landscape. Salvation here is granted when accepting the “cultural memory” of the Native American and the Pueblo people. In comparing the life of the Pueblo people to that of the Euro-American, Silko offers redemption through returning to the clan. This is because Silko identifies herself with nature, the traditions, and the stories of her Native American heritages and therefore, she offers her characters salvation if they are willing to accept their culture as it is. This paper argues that the character of Tayo lies at an intersection of an individual and a collective search-for-identity, especially after distinctive practices of displacement. The idea of displacement in this paper is better shown collectively through Tayo’s relation to the young generation of Native Americans veterans and individually through Tayo’s connection to his past and the landscape. Performing the ceremony and reviving the memory of the clan become then an inevitable act if Tayo seeks salvation for himself and his reservation. This paper does not intend to discuss racial or ethnic identity, it aims at highlighting the approaches used by Native Americans, as suggested by Silko, to revive their memory and consequently, attain salvation. The purpose of this paper is to underline these practices through the lens of memory studies.

Literature Review

*Capturing the Memory of the Native American*

The study of Native American literature maintains strong relations to nature and the landscape. Besides, it revives the memories of the tribe and the Indian culture, and rejects, at the same time, colonization, the cultural, and political dominance of the white people. Instead, it celebrates the Native American culture and highlights its traditions, memories and practices. Commemorating the culture in such a way is called “cultural memory” and is defined by Assmann (2008) as an institutional formation of memory in the shape of ceremonies, songs, narration, and communicative memory from one generation to another through institutionalized performances. Assmann also proposes a fluidity of the ‘transition of memory’ from an individual to the collective and vice versa.

One of the remarkable writers is Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, who influenced the development of Indigenous studies after establishing her academic journal *Wicazo Sa Review*. In this journal, she establishes a platform for, yet to come, studies and theories related to the history and sovereignty of the American Indian writings (Hernandez, 2016). One of the significant studies about the hybrid identity of Tayo is *Hybridity in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony* by NS. Essa (2021). Also, another detailed study about the relation of the three main novels of Silko is *Leslie Marmon Silko: Ceremony, Almanac of the Dead, Gardens in the Dunes* was written by David L. Moore (2021). Indigenous studies are still considered an emerging academic discipline that needs many theorization and methodology.

*The Landscape as a Therapy*

Silko is one of the most important indigenous writers who reinforces the importance of rituals and the need to go back to Native American heritage. The eighties of the previous century featured a prolific publication of Native American fiction and non-fiction writings to the extent that this
period was called by Kenneth (1986) Native American Renaissance which in return created the need to establish theories about the Indigenous people. Despite this fact, Champagne (2007) suggests that the heritage of Indigenous people lacks the appropriate theoretical ideology that may organize it as an ‘academic discipline’. He attributes the absence of their literature in the literary canon to political and organizational approaches besides a conflict of power. Therefore, indigenous studies become interdisciplinary because it is a fragmented literature that is mainly related to ethnic and racial studies. Silko is considered one of the first wave of writers who defended the voices of the Native Americans and the legacy of the ancestors. Her books reflect upon the idea of coping and healing. Therefore, her writings feature a wide reception and are included in many university syllabi (Weaver, 2008).

In her novel, Leslie Marmon Silko concentrates on the rhizomatic relationship between humans and landscape, represented by flora and fauna. In her book, Yellow Woman and A Beauty of the Spirit, Silko (1996) displays the Laguna Pueblo people's perspective, who believe the earth is the Mother Creator and everything, animate or inanimate, has a spirit initiated by the land. Everything to the Pueblo people is connected spiritually, "the landscape resonates the spiritual, or mythic, dimension of the Pueblo world" (p. 36). Silko translates this idea into a fictional theme in her novel Ceremony to describe Tayo, the protagonist who has been disconnected from his Mother Nature. His identity is lost because of assimilating to the white culture, a culture that could not provide salvation when needed. Like most of his fellow Indian American young generation, Tayo is a victim of colonization, white culture orientation, and Americanization. His method to recuperate and get salvation initiates a journey to return to his clan’s traditions and revive their memories through performing a particular ceremony that could save his spirit.

This paper traces the decolonizing methods to heal the indigenous people from the control of the white hegemony. The writer suggests that salvation comes from recognizing the spirit of the clan and memorizing the ancestor’s stories of nature and the landscape. Thus, the novel begins with three poems by the three witches summarizing the global spiritual connection and celebrating the doctrine of the ancestors and those who respect the landscape. In one of these poems, the witches state the aim of the writer: “The only cure I know is a good ceremony” (p. 23). From the beginning, Silko offers the cure for the lost generation; in fact, what the ceremony delivers, as Silko suggests, is repairing the damages inflicted by cultural acculturation and white hegemony. As a result, the character of Tayo gets salvation after she acquires the old identity of the tribe. However, Tayo mirrors the sufferings of his generation and the drought of his reservation in a way that leads Betonie, a medicine man living on the reservation, to believe that the ceremony will save not only Tayo but also the Pueblo people. Performing the ceremony and reviving the memory of the clan become then an inevitable act if Tayo seeks salvation for himself and his reservation. Thus, the author argues that the character of Tayo lies at an intersection of an individual and collective victimhood of various forms of displacement. The idea of displacement in this paper is better shown collectively through Tayo’s relation to his fellow, the young generation of Native Americans, and individually through Tayo’s connection to the landscape. This cultural displacement happens when the young people lose their memories of the tribe and forget their traditions; hence need cultural communication to trigger their memory of the ancestor and consequently be saved from the influence of the white culture. This is called cultural memory and
Assmann (2008) declares that “Cultural memory reaches back into the past only so far as the past can be reclaimed as ‘ours’” (p. 113). Assmann (2013) also explained cultural memory further:

It exists in forms of narratives, songs, dances, rituals, masks and symbols, specialists such as narrators, bards, mask-carvers and others are organized in guilds and have to undergo long periods of initiation, instruction and examination. Moreover, it requires for its actualization certain occasions when the community comes together for some celebration or other (p.38).

Like Assmann, Silko (2006) claims that a ceremony can revive the cultural memory of the clan and save them from any influence. Assmann’s approach to memory theories serves the aim of this paper in retaining Silko’s idea about memory and displacement. At the beginning of Silko’s story (2006), the witch also states:

their [white-people civilization] evil is mighty but it can’t stand up to our stories. So they try to destroy the stories and let the stories be confused or forgotten. They would like that. They would be happy because we would be defenseless then (p. 23).

Stories, as Silko suggests, protect the Native Americans from the harms of the white culture, stories examining their past, and stories about the universe. Stories of the ancestors here act like a bond that connects the Pueblo people with their past and the land. Therefore, she suggests that the white culture is trying to destroy the stories so the history and the reality of the Pueblo people would be ruined: “He [Tayo] knew what white people thought about the stories. In school, the science teacher had explained what superstition was and then held the science textbook up for the class to see the true source of explanations” (p. 93). Silko reclaims that this systematic paradigm of the white culture to erase the oral history of the Native Americans can be defeated through a ceremony that helps Tayo re-identify with the spirit. By the end of the ceremony, Tayo realizes the collective formation of all the souls around the globe and how all creations are connected in a way or another. Subsequently, when he condemns the rain forest in the Philippines, his reservation seems to suffer draught. He also notices that the rocks of the reservation bear toxic uranium as the rocks in a nearby nuclear site, which reminds him of the atomic bomb that blasted Japan in WWII. As a result, all elements in nature and the landscape are connected in a supernatural power. This connection resonated in the spiritual dimension of the Pueblo people, a connection which Tayo has experienced regularly after returning from war. Therefore, performing the ceremony of the ancestors is a necessity to purify Tayo’s spirit and save his soul and his reservation. In this sense, Silko proclaims that all creatures, humans and non-humans, are interconnected in one unseparated inclusive spirit. However, this spirit is damaged by the patriarchal society of white people.

In the novel, Silko (2006) criticizes the assimilation of the Indian American into the white civilization besides raising many questions of acculturation and adaptation that the Indian-American young-men face. She juxtaposes indigenous problems against white group hegemony. This is represented by Tayo’s collective and individual relations, or to put it in Assmann’s words (2008): “the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level. Identity, in its turn, is related to time” (p. 109). This synchrony of time and identity, Assmann assumes, “is effectuated by memory.” Therefore, memory becomes
the principal motive for human action. Assmann (2013) also believes that the past is a “sedimentation of relics, traces and personal memories on the one hand, and as a social construction on the other” (p.36). This idea supports Silko’s opinion about the importance of memory. Both writers concentrate on memory as a self-reclamation, as a social identity, and as a collective construction. Thus, this paper argues that Assmann’s memory theory best describes Silko’s approach to the clan’s memory and the Pueblo people.

In this novel, Silko (2006) offers reconciliation through returning to nature and celebrating the memory of the clan through reviving the stories of the ancestors. Silko projects how the young generation of the Pueblo people displaces themselves from their roots and forgets about their traditions. Tayo then functions as a transitional symbol between the social memory of his age and the need to fulfill an individual reformation away from the white civilization. He represents what Assmann adopts as the “fluid transition of memory from the individual to the collective level and vice versa” (Heinrich & Weyland, 2016, p.27). Like the young people in his generation, Tayo is lost because of colonialization and the memories of war, but, personally, because of his hybrid identity, which means he is a mixture of a Native American woman and a white man. On the same level, Assmann (1995) thinks cultural memory is “The specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture [which] is not seen to maintain itself for generations as a result of phylogenetic evolution, but rather as a result of socialization and customs”(p. 125). This revival of cultural memory through socialization is what Tayo intends to establish. The ceremony he performs re-enforces the social attitude, the custom, the past, and the tradition of his ancestors. Assmann (2013) believes that “the past conveys a kind of connective structure or diachronic identity to societies, groups, and individuals, both in the social and in the temporal dimension” (p. 36). Thus, one may think that Tayo’s memory projects the basis of the hardships of displacement and assimilation felt by his Pueblo community. His journey to salvation is a journey to the past and towards a revival of the Native American identity. As a result, Tayo’s character signifies the memory construction of his community and the rhetoric of pain that labels the sufferings of the Native American people. This is assured by emphasizing that the power of storytelling is to recuperate the identity of the self and, consequently, of the culture.

Silko (2006) depicts all of the men of the young Native American generation as WW II veterans. The shock of war affects those young men so they “share a collective memory and an identity that is socially demonstrated” (Hadla, 2021, p. 21). On returning to their reservation, they suffer war fatigue and resort to liquor as a means either to forget about the war or to show off what they had done during the war. Silko (2006) says: "reports note that since the Second World War a pattern of drinking and violence, not previously seen before, is emerging among Indian veterans" (p. 60). This decline is deeply rooted in this generation because they feel the rupture of their identity. To those young men, it is crucial to integrate with the white civilization since, as those young men believe, assimilation grants power even at the expense of forgetting about their traditions. During the war, the uniform of the army empowers these young men. When this uniform was taken from them after being released, they were psychologically lost and thus resorted to drinking. Consequently, choosing to be within the restrictions of the white-people-culture means abandoning the traditions of the Pueblo people. This cultural acculturation is especially shown when Rocky refuses the reservation and mocks the rituals, made by Tayo, after killing the deer.
Rocky prefers to leave for war than to stay at home. He is encouraged to leave the reservation by everyone, even his mother, who "wanted him to be a success" (p. 51). Thus, she inspires her son to play football to get out of the reservation; otherwise, staying home entails no success which means, he might lose his chance of assimilating to the white hegemony: "She could see what white people wanted in an Indian, and she believed this was his only chance" (p. 51), but his failure to get in one of the football teams makes him this of war as a suitable place just to leave the reservation. Chavkin (2006) supposes that the only thing with which the Indian Americans are left, after the war, is 'despair,' which is the general notion of the whole generation since they face the dilemma of reviving the memory and identity of their people or simply seeking the approval of the white civilization.

The Native Americans dignify nature and the Landscape, while the white culture treats nature as inferior. The Pueblo group assumes an equal relationship between humans and the landscape, believing that everything has a spirit. This connection creates an egalitarian relationship connecting all humans and non-humans. While the white culture, in contrast, celebrates the dominance of humans over the landscape. They assume that humans are at the top of a hierarchy and that all other creatures serve humans’ needs (Stein, 2002). The new generation senses this inferiority and knows deep inside that only the uniform of the army helps them blend in with the influential white culture: "The dilemma of identity here is the disparity between...[their] external uniform and the interior figure" (Hadla, 2021, p.54). Once they lose the uniform, they attempt to accommodate through drinking and violence:

Here they were, trying to bring back that old feeling, that feeling they belonged to America the way they felt during the war. They blamed themselves for losing the new feeling; they never talked about it, but they blamed themselves just like they blamed themselves for losing the Land the white people took. (Silko, 2006 p. 43)

Living on the margin of tribal Laguna life and the white civilization compromises their identity and challenges their sense of belonging, "belonging was drinking and laughing with the platoon" (p. 43). Though Tayo drinks as much as they do, Tayo senses the problem his generation faces and thus bursts out into crying one day, "They go on with their old times. Tayo starts crying. They think maybe he's crying about what the Jap did to Rocky...they don't know he is crying for them" (p. 43). The difference between Tayo and his fellows enables him to refuse their illusions of the faked victories. The story suggests that Tayo discovers the false culture of the white civilization because
it is a culture of “dead objects: the plastic and neon, the concrete and steel. Hollow and lifeless as a witchery clay figure” (p. 181). Except for Tayo, the young generation of the Native Americans seems to have lost their identity and thus cannot be saved. Tayo hates his hybridity because it takes away his sense of belonging. Because these old veterans seek no remedy, they end up miserable. Emo kills his friend, Pinkie, and runs away from the reservation. Leroy and Harley are found dead in their truck. Silko describes their crushed car as ironically sealed coffins. She labels their vehicle as "the shiny metal coffin the Veterans office bought for each of them. In that way, it was not much different than if they died at Wake Island or Iwo Jima" (p. 224). In this image, Silko is ridiculing the dreams of those men that they would be respected and treated like white soldiers. Their memory dimension is shifted from nature, the land, and the ancestors’ stories to stories about war and the uniform. They are torn between the culture of the clan and the culture of the white people because they could not develop their communicative and cultural memory. This disorientation in identity makes Tayo reject the community of the young Native veterans and saves his soul. He also takes a personal responsibility to save the reservation from the drought. The dramatic sphere of unsuccessful endings of these young men is deliberate since they never accepted their Laguna tradition which is why they are wasted as they have already wasted their Land.

Undoubtedly, Tayo faces the same historical and political marginalization and identity crisis as his generation and, just like all the young people in his reservation, he starts drinking in an attempt to find salvation. However, resorting to drinking intensifies the alienated feeling Tayo senses. Nonetheless, what distinguishes Tayo from others is his choice to leave the white civilization and go back to the Land of his ancestor. The journey he makes helps him abandon addiction. Gradually, he starts rejecting the synthetic patriarchal cultural fluctuations that are substituting the Pueblo’s tradition: "Silko underscores her assumption that traditional tribal solutions are relevant to the problems of Tayo and the other despairing veterans"(Chavkin, 2002, p.7), which means the best solution for defying the spirit of evil with which all the young generation of the Pueblo people are possessed is through returning to the motherland and the clan.

This tradition can be reserved through specific rituals that maintain the identity and memory of the ancestors, an acknowledgment that is realized through storytelling. In these stories, the image of the land is a striking element as an aside to the rituals of the Pueblo people. Silko (1996) says, "Think of the land; the earth, as the center of a spider's web. Human identity, imagination, and storytelling were inextricably linked to the Land, Mother Earth, just as the strands of the spider's web radiate from the center of the web"(p. 21). Therefore, the image of the land becomes a unifying figure in all the story’s event. The reader explores the aesthetic connectivity of humans with that of nature, a bond that is mutual in an action/ reaction behavior; for example, the wind blows rigorously when Tayo and Rocky are recruited, which reflects a bad omen, and also it blows so severely when Tayo injures Emo with a broken glass after the latter provoked him. Likewise, the sky rains heavily at the death of Rocky, covering the tears of Tayo, who becomes depressed and, therefore, curses the rain and the forest. Silko suggests this might be the reason for the drought in Tayo’s reservation thousands of miles away from him. Later, Tayo feels miserable and holds himself responsible for the lack of rain and the curse that strikes his clan.

Recovering the relation with the landscape makes Tayo appreciate all creatures, even the insects:
He [Tayo] looked down at the weeds and grass. He stepped carefully, pushing the toe of his boot into the weeds first to make sure the grasshoppers were gone before he set his foot down into the crackling leathery stalks of dead sunflowers” (Silko, 2006, 140).

This relationship of Tayo to animals is elevated after Betonie helps him discover the spiritual connection between all animate and inanimate creatures: “Tayo's respect for animals is his increasing awareness of them in the world around him... He begins to observe the world about him in terms of animal images” (Beidler, 2002, p.20). Tayo’s awareness of the world includes using his senses to observe, hear, touch and see all the colors and movements of the surrounding insects and animals like the yellow snake, the shining beetles, the green frog, the sound of bees, the buzzing of grasshopper, the gentle dead deer, the beautiful horses, and the cattle of his uncle. In fact, Tayo connects this awareness of the surrounding souls and spirits to the memory of his grandmother’s stories about the importance of animals, insects, and plants which, in previous lives, saved the world. Therefore, resisting the world of the white people and integrating with nature and the natural initiates the shift into salvation. Tayo remembers his feelings when his grandmother used to describe the old days:

[She says] ‘Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened.’ He [Tayo] never lost the feeling he had in his chest when she spoke those words, as she did each time she told them stories; and he still felt it was true, despite all they had taught him in school—that long, long ago things had been different, and human beings could understand what the animals said. (Silko, 2006, p.93)

To be conscious of the landscape and nature in the same way as his grandmother implies his acceptance to make the journey to bring back the Mexican Cattle which belonged to his deceased uncle, Josiah. The journey itself is a physical as well as a psychological journey to retrieve Tayo’s inner peace.

Tayo has negotiated his identity since childhood. He has lost what Assmann (2013) calls “connective structure both to persons and societies” (p. 36). This means that alluding to his past has always been painful to him. One day, a fight broke out where he and his mother lived, and the police came and dragged everyone to the police station, even the children. Tayo managed to hide in a tree and observed unpleasant interactions between the cops and drunken men and women:

He hid in the tamarics, breathing hard, his heart pounding, smelling the shit on his bare feet. The summer heat descended as the sun went higher in the sky, and he watched them, lying flat on his belly in the dry leaves of tamaric that began to make him itch. (p.107).

The recurrence of such violent images resides in the memory of Tayo, who carries such intolerable memories even when he becomes a grownup. He does not know his father, and his mother abandoned him as a child with her brother and therefore, Tayo has been raised up by his uncle, Josiah, who passed away while Tayo was at war. Afterward, Tayo stayed with his uncles’ wife, Auntie, and his same-age cousin, Rocky.
Tayo never appreciated the land and the clan before because he never wholly belonged to the tribe. When Laguna people discuss the clan's matters, he is never considered an insider because of his hybrid identity. Emo tells Tayo, "you drink like an Indian, and you're crazy like one too—but you aren't shit, white trash. You love Jap the way your mother loved to screw white men" (p. 67). He holds a grudge against Tayo because, he assumes, the light color of Tayo's skin allows him to mingle perfectly with the white people. Emo misses the point that as they—the Laguna veterans—treat Tayo as an outsider, the white people discriminate against him in the same way because he is not entirely white blood. Moreover, Tayo is blamed for his mother’s behaviors and is consequently reminded of her multiple affairs:

Since he could remember, he had known Auntie's shame for what his mother had done, and Auntie's shame for him. He remembered how the white men … pointed at him. They had elbowed each other and winked. He never forgot that, and finally, years later, he understood what it was about white men and Indian women: the disgrace of Indian women who went with them. (p. 57)

Tayo has always been disgraced for his mother’s actions and, accordingly, no one wants to befriend him. Nonetheless, when he grows up, Rocky becomes the only person who loves and defends him because Rocky is the only person who understands Tayo’s inner conflict. Consequently, Tayo finds his sense of stability around Rocky, especially when Rocky claims him as a brother and asks the recruiter to let them stay together in the army. To prove his strength and ability to take responsibility, Tayo makes himself and Auntie promise to bring back Rocky safely. Rocky then acts like a land, to which Tayo clings because he belongs to his brotherhood.

As a child, Tayo felt he was rejected by everyone, even his aunt: "she could maintain a distance between Rocky, who was her pride, and this other, unwanted child. If nobody else ever knew about this distance, she and Tayo did" (p. 69). When Tayo and Rocky grow up, Rocky disobeys his mother’s orders to neglect Tayo. Instead, he maintains a strong relationship with Tayo. Therefore, once Rocky decides to go to war, Tayo simply follows because Rocky acts as a cornerstone which helps Tayo overcome his estrangement and detachment from a place or a group. Rocky embraces Tayo as a brother, and thus, Tayo identifies himself with Rocky until the death of Rocky. The moment of death reminds Tayo of his mixed-race and inability to mingle or belong. He starts mistrusting his feelings and abilities to do things correctly. In addition, Tayo’s failure to keep his promise, to his aunt, of bringing Rocky home safely destabilizes Tayo’s personality even more. The moment of Rocky's death crushes Tayo physically and emotionally because he realizes he has lost his only hope to overcome his sufferings from a painful past. He suffers severe depression, and his memories wander confusedly around the battles he had:

Tayo had to sweat through those nights when thoughts became entangled; he had to sweat to think of something that wasn’t unraveled or tied in knots to the past—something that existed by itself, standing alone like a deer. And if he could hold that image of the deer in his mind long enough. (2006, p. 25)
This image goes side by side with the idea of war inside his head “That memory would unwind into the last day when they had sat together, oiling their rifles in the jungle of some nameless Pacific island (p. 25). These contrasting images explain the conflict between his mind and mental suffering “as sedimentation of relics” that stymies his mental and physical health.

It is time to find a cure to help him get through his crisis. The rituals seem the best alternatives for the medicine of the white people. The rituals of the ceremony play an essential role in his life and the clan’s prosperity. He needs them to re-identify himself through reconciling the past with the present and the future. Though people suppose, as his Auntie tells him, that the rituals will not be effective for him because "he is not full blood" (p. 33), the rituals prove to be valuable after all because Betonie succeeds in helping him recover from the painful past and recognize his mission as an achiever of the ceremony. The first thing Tayo does is to reunite with the land. Silko (1996) assumes, "The ancient Pueblos believed the Earth and the Sky were sisters…as long as food-family relations are maintained, then the Sky will continue to bless her sister, the Earth, with rain, and the Earth's children will continue to survive"(p.29). She also says, "Human identity is linked with all the elements of creation through the clan"(p.28). Being aware of this connection because of the rituals, Tayo maintains good relations with the family and the clan and consequently with the land. He reserves the memories, identity, and tradition of the Pueblo people, the memories that resonate and connect souls to the landscape. Thus, rituals become the remedy for Tayo as an individual and the Pueblo clan as a group.

The ceremony implies a way to escape the witches who are manipulating the basic structures of life, such as, controlling white culture, destroying Tayo’s reservation, and making him struggle spiritually. Betonie and Tayo head for the mountain to start the performances of the ceremony and destroy the spell of witches. During the journey, Tayo feels the unity between all the nature surrounding the hills, green trees, and all the creatures. The ceremony takes the shape of a couple of steps and procedures that need to be done. Still even after the first one, Tayo experiences a purified feeling away from the materiality of the world:

He was thinking about the ceremony the medicine man had performed over him, testing it against the old feeling, the sick hollow in his belly formed by the memories of Rocky and Josiah, and all the years of Auntie’s eyes and her teeth set hard on edge. He could feel the ceremony like the rawhide thongs of the medicine pouch, straining to hold back the voices, the dreams, faces in the jungle (Silko, 2006, p. 137)

Upon their return from the mountain, Tayo feels he is pure from the sickness of the witchery and understands the need to complete the ceremony and be fully saved. In the second step and during the ceremony, Tayo remembers the promise he has made to Josiah to bring back the Mexican strayed cattle. He keeps thinking of this promise even when he is performing his ceremony. The cattle become a point of resistance against colonization and Americanization because these animals: "are adaptable, resourceful, and survivors, much like the Native people in the area" (Rice, 2005, p. 131). Tayo integrates his drive to survivor to that of the cattle and thus, he starts tracing them without really understanding the reason. He just wants to save them:
They trust their own instinct, drift to the south, and survive by their own native an natural abilities. By the end of the novel Tayo has learned his lesson from them…Tayo survives by maintaining closer to the natural world of the Pueblo and others around him are destroyed because they are separated from that world…the cattle provides him with a symbolic model for his survival. (p. 131)

The lesson Tayo learns when bringing the cattle home is related to the performance of his ceremony. To find the cattle means Tayo has succeeded in finding his own inner peace and, for the first time, keeping his promise:

He had been so intent on finding the cattle that he had forgotten all the events of the past days and past years. Hunting the cattle was good for that. Old Betonie was right. It was cure for that, and maybe for other things too. The spotted cattle wouldn’t be lost any more, scattered through his dreams, driven by his hesitation to admit they had been stolen, that the land—all of it—had been stolen from them (p.171).

The strength of the cattle and the urge to resist the hardships and lack of water inspires Tayo to connect with these animals and try to imitate them. Silko implies that these animals teach Tayo a lesson of survival because they symbolize the land and nature. Being connected to the landscape just as the Pueblo people, these animals’ journey to go back home is reflected spiritually on Tayo. The dilemma is that Tayo has stolen and brought back the cattle from a farm of a white person. This white person had stolen the cattle earlier and kept them in his possession. The cut he makes into the wire to release the cattle comes after a hard decision and an inner realization of ‘the lie’ that only Native American people “were thieves; white people didn’t steal” (p.170). This lie leads Tayo to realize the truth about the influence of witches. Witches inflicted prejudice and intolerance on people separating them from each other and creating supremacies. These supremacies are created between humans and animals in the same way it is created between humans. This is obvious since the old days were marked by good relations between animate and inanimate creatures, a fact that does not exist anymore. Subsequently, freeing the cattle from the imprisonment of the whites becomes another step toward salvation.

The final step to get his salvation comes when Tayo visits the mine where the nuclear bomb has been first tested. He feels weak because of the power of witches inflicted on him to prevent him from completing the ceremony. Standing in front of the mine is crossroads between celebrating the death imposed by the whites with their atomic bomb and celebrating life offered by the Laguna people by returning to the clan’s traditions. The irony lies in the choice Tayo makes. The mine splits the Landscape and Tayo’s character into two: he must either surrender to his whiteness and accept the destruction offered by the whites or get the salvation he is seeking through connecting with the land and the spirit of his ancestor. Once again, Silko confirms the importance of interconnectedness offered by the Laguna heritage, which is finally recognized by Tayo. Consequently, the moment of weakness and collapse becomes the moment of realization, an awakening, and salvation:

He recognized why the Japanese voices had merged with the Laguna voices, with Josiah's voice and Rocky's voice; the lines of cultures and worlds were drawn in flat dark lines on fine light sand, covering in the middle of witchery's final ceremonial sand painting. From
that time on, human beings were one clan again...united by the circle of death that devoured people in cities twelve thousands miles away (p. 171).

This final recognition of the merging of spirits helps Tayo understand the connection of the Pueblo people to the land, accordingly, to all the spirits around the world. Silko (1996) says, "We have always been able to stay with the land. Our stories cannot be separated from their geographical location, from the actual physical places of the land" (p. 58). Such reuniting to the Land and to ancestor’s stories grant Tayo a spiritual wholeness and salvation. Besides this, Tayo succeeds in saving his reservation from the drought. The narrative ends with a poem explaining how Tayo successfully defends himself and the land, at least for a while: “It is dead for now.” (p. 226).

**Conclusion**

In *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko (2006) sends a message for the young generation to heal from the materiality of the white-people civilization through returning to the clan, the stories of the ancestors, and the landscape. This paper has endeavored to explain the connections governing such relations with a particular focus on the responses of the lost generation of the young American Native. Those young people lost their identity and memory because of colonization, assimilation, and acculturation. Tayo’s memories are the memories of all the Native American veterans. Thus, he represents the individual and the collective search for identity. The final outcomes indicate that Silko displays Tayo’s journey to retrieve the memories of the clan as a rational solution to the problems of those young men. Tayo’s journey towards salvation becomes a journey towards self-realization and a search for identity. His ceremony saved him and his reservation because he is placed at an intersection between his own individual need and the need to protect his land. Hereby, the novel provides a spiritual understanding of the Indigenous people culture and highlights the importance of the ‘cultural memory’, as defined by Jan and Aleida Assmann, to revive the traditions and heritage of the ancestors.

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