

Ceremony, Silko and Tayo: Voices of Native American Justice

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There may be lots of discussion regarding the sociological and historical aspects and justice of Silko's *Ceremony*, however, only personal feelings about what the readers reads, sees, and how one supports from the entire novel is important fact about the novel. Initially, who does not know about the historical background of the Native American, they may feel some confusion about what issues does the book raise -- tradition issues or storytelling, technology or war or mixed blood or problems of people between their entire belief systems. In fact, all the structure and theme of this story reveals the important secrets of Silko's opinion to these issues. Therefore, in this novel, she is not only telling the story but she is trying to make reader understand something about her experience of entire journey related to her sociological and historical background. In this novel, Silko is using Tayo as voice to the Native American justice because he is mix-blooded and he may be the interpreter between these two societies

Writer Silko is a bi-racial American African writer. In this novel, we can

examine her voice to the Native American society for light of justice. *Ceremony* is a powerful to reveal the society like of Tayo's individual story where Tayo is looking for something fact and justice, something real and true. His return from war makes his mind connected with past and present. His mind and endeavor is trying to get some answer from that multi-sociological environment which somehow disturbs him or makes him little bit un-comfortable. "He made a story letting go of the blanket" (12). Silko is using Tayo also to complete the ceremony of Native American society because he made a story for all of them.

The novel attempts to tell in multi-perspectives by ways of voice, various arguments, and stylistic form. Here the story is being told with dreams, flashbacks, and myths creating a weave of narrative. The formal element of this novel is one good example and it is quite different than other because of its structures. Use of the poem, blank pages, and paragraphs pause is the typical example to visualize the situation in an interesting way and easy to explain the complicated characterization.

In her video interview she says, "As with any generation the oral tradition depends upon each person listening and remembering a portion and it is together-- all of us remembering what we have heard together-- that creates the whole story people." Here she urges her people to remember and retell the stories that have been passed along through the generations. In her view, storytelling would be the strongest weapon against the white culture in the struggle to turn away the cultural eradication of Native American. It is also an experiment with the ways of telling a story to convey a history to the coming generation to protect their cultural heritage (Silko, 1977).

"The word he chose to express "fragile" [delicate] was this certain way." (35). Here Silko describes the importance of language in the Native American society. In this culture, the only records of history are kept in oral narration. She mentions the barriers of Native American Language because the special meaning of words is losing in the translation. This loss is another example of the slow eradication of this culture. However, this is good effort to protect Native American languages.

"Ts'its'tsi'nako, she is thinking" (01). This part of the poem serves several purposes. First, it explains concept of time in Native American terms, where the past, present and future are intertwined and impossible to tell apart. Secondly, it exposes Silko's novel as a model of the human memory, where thoughts are not conceived in a systematic way but emerge from random series. In this sense, the interruption of this poem is much like the functioning of the mind, where serial but relative thoughts are emerging right in the center of another thought pattern. Silko breaks up the narrative with oral stories that do not serve to disrupt the natural pattern of the literature society.

According to the video interview, we can say that another important aspect of her novel is its' progression in a non-linear manner. Here human thoughts are often random and spontaneous in chronological or historical order. Here the novel runs with conscious thoughts of Tayo, jumping from present to the past and back to the front. This types of style clearly shows like a journey through memory more than an events and situation.

In several ways, Silko tries to show that Laguna people have different perspectives for their society by using different character arguing their point in a dialogue. Tayo and his friends believe that the whites stole everything from them. For instance, in a bar an Indian man screams at an Indian woman, "You bitch. You think you are better than a white woman? (165)". This obviously suggests that the Indian man does not believe the Indian woman to be "better" than a white woman. This class and race distinction, as well as this man's belief on the Indian woman's status in the Indian man's mind, is made clear using this simple line.

Grandma's non-linearity story telling style to Tayo seems as if she is just remembering the events for herself because she tells whatever she likes to say. "They were the same and just as persistent" (27). Which shows she is still closely connected to previous generations where the cultural traditions and beliefs were eclipsed by white culture. In addition, the unity of the culture was stronger and more resistant to change. She has a vision that is stronger than any other generation. She indirectly saves Tayo from death by placing him in the hands of Ku'oosh and Old Betonie calling

Ku'oosh and contacting old Betonie to help Tayo. Old Grandma refuses to see Auntie's or the Army doctors' reasoning for Tayo's illness. Instead she believes that the ancient herbal and plant are remedies of her people. All these sequences show that Grandma is the last remaining guard of sacred Native American tradition being the wisdom of older Native American people who still embrace the ceremonies to be the integral part of the Native American world (Matteo, 1985).

Her different type's narrative writing styles and appropriate sentences structure is finally able to capture the essence of an entire theme. Which means she is be obviously concerned with the form of the novel. Page 211 to 217 shows that she digresses from the standard format of narrative writing to include passages without punctuation or dialogue. This may be she does not want to sacrifice the Native American tradition just for the sake of conforming to the accepted way of writing. It is like a bi-product of the history of Native American society and the European movement to the world and a representative of 1940s when the whole world was in war and 1970 when Silko wrote this novel.

With this understanding of time Tayo is able to establish his identity and his purpose in his search to find the lost cattle. "The ride into the mountainmountain tomorrow" (192). It helps him to find the essence of his culture and he finds himself. The form of the novel combines traditional native storytelling with the western form to symbolize as a healing of ceremony itself. "He could feel even more" (7). Another visualization of this novel is the tension inherent between traditional and technological belief system, and the issue of US companies mining taking over Indian land. This novel shows the metrical society where women do everything or women does whatever man does. Advantage and disadvantage of Marxist or capitalist theory is also the issues of this novel where white people are working and praying for money. Industrialization, new school system and the modern development activities are the important factor that is disturbing the classic society of this novel.

One of the good example of Silko's skill is to show the behaviors of new generation towards the new modernization. Rocky's function in Ceremony is symbolic, he is in a middle

part of the two cultures. "Nothing can She [Auntie] wanted him [Rocky] Against them any more" (51). "Auntie had been listening come part of it" (76). It shows that Rocky is the special individual who has attempted to quit from one culture to live in another. In this part of the novel, Rocky deliberately does exercise to get rid of traditional methods and old ways belongs with the Native American culture, beliefs and traditions. Rocky represents the younger generation of Native Americans whose bonds to their culture are growing less strong as they come to absorb white culture. It is one of the big problem that exists between younger and older generations. Rocky is trying to penetrable white world and he is also encouraged by his mother to enjoy it. Rocky has little chance to achieve what he aspires for. "Rocky looked at Tayo as if he wanted to ask him something..... ' And my brother, 'Rocky said, nodding at Tayo. 'If we both sign up, can we stay together?' It was the first time in all the years that Tayo had lived with him the Rocky had ever called him 'brother'" (65). This message also shows that the view of fraternal relationships play vital roles in Silko's Ceremony. These relationships, between either Tayo or his older brother

Rocky. Ironically, it is Rocky's embracing of the white world, his buying into their system that leads to his death. In means such kind of individual may exists over the Native Americans of today.

The people believe that if they maintain pure lineage and do not mix Indian blood with other races they will be able to preserve their culture. Thus, individuals like Tayo are seen as symbols of the dismantling of that culture. Part of Tayo's struggle throughout Ceremony is his lack of personal identity. As a Native American and mixed he is marginalized by these two cultures, he is lost without any firm ground underneath. He is always reminded by Auntie that he does not entirely belong to one of them. As part Mexican, he is rendered an even lower status in the Native American culture. "Mexican eyes, ... They are afraid, ... happened inside themselves" (99). People are threatened by the change that has transformed Native American society into a weak and vulnerable culture on the edge of death.

Another most significant situation of this novel is the war in Japan. When Tayo [an Indian] is faced with having to execute Japanese soldiers. He does not want to take the position of the white

people because he can realize that the Japanese are being subordinated to him as he is subordinated to the whites people. So that he could not kill the Japanese because he can also feel that the Japanese are all human beings like everybody else. On the other hand, Tayo is dying by their hands, the hands of the white culture which repeatedly tries to silence him, to inject him with "medicine" that will make him forget, repress, deny. Here the Army doctors are disturbing the flow of storytelling because white people's medicine could be the poison for Tayo. It is the another way that the Native American Story is being erased, wiped away and replaced with lost souls like Tayo. He becomes invisible, like his people. Survival of people like Tayo is most important to keep telling the story and to continue the circulation of narrations and words that make up the past, present and future of Native American culture.

Time is like a ring, a never-ending circle. Tayo and his family can be found anywhere along this circle. In this sense it is an attempt to recount the cultures that have been hidden by the white culture. The stories of Ceremony also look like the events of African slaves because both

stories attempts to tell the cultural eradication by white culture. Therefore her work also depicts a historical event of America. In the beginning of the novel we encounter a weak and fragile Tayo, unable to prevent the flood of memories that rush into his mind with every turn despite his efforts to block them out. By the close of this novel he understands that the memory of his history and the history of his people will heal him accessing to the knowledge and understanding about the truth. Tayo must retain those memories, he must open them up, lay them out and he must examine them. Each member of this culture is a storyteller and possesses the power to keep the culture and people alive through his/her stories.

Ceremony is not only the story of Tayo, rather a deep and basic experience of the writer Silko herself in a manner of different writing styles and structures. It is a also combined study of a multi-cultural or multi-sociological events related to the Native American and white people. As a usual this novel is also concerned about the good and evil, and positive and negative impact of the human society to make appropriate changes based on "so called"

modernization destroying the original traditional and cultural heritage, completely.

Silko takes us along on Tayo's journey to find herself. We travel back and forth through time and space until we learn everything what Tayo learns. The novel itself is one of the strengths of the Native American culture through the best narrative technique for Native American Justice. The written mode of this storytelling may be the new and only way to sustain the original Native American cultures. The successful part of this novel is the truth remains comprehensible keeping a beautiful patterns and a beautiful linearity of Seiko's own writing style. It is logic to hope that the success of this book may also help to generate better understanding about sociological, ethical, cultural and human aspects of Native American civilization. Silko's Ceremony helps to find out what the inter-relationship between Native American and White American ought to be to share the common human values, basic human norms and essential human justice. Each story is a part of another. Story within story, and the idea that one story is only the beginning of other stories reveals that the time and stories, history and life are

all tied together in Native American society and the immediate justice is essential.