



Available online at <http://jgu.garmian.edu.krd>



Journal of University of Garmian

<https://doi.org/10.24271/garmian.2024.1115>

Hybrid Culture as a Resistance Tool against Assimilation in Silko's *Ceremony*

Akam Rashid Mohammed¹, Azad Hamad Sharif²

1- English Department, College of Education, Charmo University, Kurdistan Region – Iraq

2- Language Center- Erbil Polytechnic University, Kurdistan Region – Iraq

Article Info		Abstract: Hybrid culture is the blending and fusion of elements from different cultural backgrounds, resulting in a cultural identity that reflects the diversity of a community or an individual. The study uses postcolonial approach to explore the concept of hybrid culture as a powerful tool of resistance against assimilation, with a specific focus on Leslie Marmon Silko's novel, <i>Ceremony</i> (1977). In the context of Native American cultural preservation, the study highlights the transformative capacity of blending diverse cultural elements which enables individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern world while fortifying their cultural identity. The research examines how hybridity empowers Native Americans to resist assimilation by incorporating traditional practices and beliefs alongside Western influences, fostering solidarity within their communities. Through the lens of <i>Ceremony</i> , the study stresses the enduring spirit and the invincibility of Native American communities in their ongoing struggle against cultural erasure. By showcasing the resilience of these communities, <i>Ceremony</i> exemplifies cultural resilience
Received	December, 2022	
Revised	December, 2022	
Accepted	January, 2023	
Keywords		
Hybrid Culture, Cultural Resistance, Assimilation, Colonization, Native American Identity		
Corresponding Author		
akam.rashid@charmouniversity.org drazadsharif@gmail.com		

Introduction: Colonization and Cultural Hybridization

In the realm of cultural identity preservation, the formation of hybrid culture emerges as a potent and ingenious tool of resistance against the relentless forces of assimilation. The research will explore the role of creating hybrid culture as a tool of resistance to assimilation, where the power of blending traditions, rituals, and beliefs are studied in this regard. Focusing on Silko's iconic novel *Ceremony*, this discussion will delve into the interaction between ancestral practices and modern influences, unveiling how the measured combination of diverse cultural elements can serve as a profound act of resilience, fortifying the core of one's heritage while forging a distinctive path to embrace the complexities of the modern world.

The United States' Native American population has been subjected to a long and brutal campaign of cultural assimilation. Through the years of colonialism and federal policies, various efforts such as boarding schools, forced relocation, and cultural suppression have been employed to mold Native Americans into Euro-American cultural norms. Despite these efforts, Native American cultures have survived and thrived, and hybrid cultures have emerged. It is important to study how Native Americans have created a hybrid culture as a tool of resistance. By leveraging the power of cultural mixing, Native American groups have formed unique, enduring identities that include fragments of both their own traditional ways and the new languages and beliefs they encountered from their colonizers.

Hybrid culture is the result of the fusion and the interaction of two or more distinct cultural groups. Pointing at the role of hybridity, Homi K. Bhabha believes that in case of an individual's existence within various cultures, hybridity possesses the ability to dissolve cultural conflicts while also harmonizing their coexistence (qtd. in Qi, 2020, p.22). It is the blending of various aspects of different cultures such as language, beliefs, customs, and practices, resulting in a unique culture that represents the diversity of the groups involved. Hybrid culture is the outcome of cultural hybridization, which is the process of cultural mixing. In the American context, hybrid culture frequently emerged as a result of colonization, in which colonized people mixed their native cultures with the culture of the colonizers. Fowler (2007) states that the "concept of hybridity has been widely utilized in discussions of cultural exchange between European Americans and oppressed peoples throughout the Americas" (p.65). This hybridization has been a tool of resistance by colonized people to assert their cultural identity while confronting the pressure to assimilate into the colonizer's culture.

Through embracing hybrid cultures, Native Americans have been able to negotiate and reassert their cultural identities and heritage within a colonial context. They have combined traditional practices and customs with Western influences to protect and nurture their own communities. The creation of a hybrid culture by Native Americans as a tool of resistance to assimilation presents a powerful challenge to the efforts of dominant culture to impose its values and norms upon indigenous peoples. According to some critics, the Native Americans have been successful in creating hybridity. Vizenor (1999) examines cross-cultural interaction among American Indian communities and coins the term "postindian" to represent contemporary native individuals, signaling the departure from the colonial concept of the Indian (p.84). By creating a culture that draws from both their own traditions and those of the dominant culture, Native Americans were able to assert their unique identity and engage with the larger society on their own terms. This hybrid culture also allows for a greater degree of cultural exchange and understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, promoting greater cross-cultural awareness and tolerance.

The Concept of Hybridity in Native American Literature

Native American writers have embraced the concept of hybridity in their novels, as it offers chances for redefining both individual identity and cultural heritage. As Fowler states, the appeal of the influence of hybridity has made many Native American artists find it very alluring. It has resonated with them, and they are drawn to explore its possibilities in their art (2007, p.65). Accordingly, through their works, these writers delve into the realms of blended identities and cultural fusions, unearthing new dimensions of self-discovery and preserving their heritage while challenging conventional narratives. In fact, the issue of mixed-blood individuals has become one of the recurring themes in many modern Native American writers' works. Numerous Native American novels focus on the journeys of mixed-blood individuals as they seek to discover their identities within both Indian and white societies, while also exploring the endurance of tribal traditions (Ruoff, 1994, p.147). In doing so, they actively engage with the transformative power of hybridity. Among these writers is Leslie Marmon Silko.

Regarding the inviting nature of Silko's novel, Joseph L. Coulombe (2011) compares between Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and Silko's *Ceremony*. *House Made of Dawn* forges a modest yet robust connection between a native writer and those who are not of Native descent, but it retains its rigid and demanding nature. However, it lays the groundwork for philosophical and spiritual themes, paving the way for subsequent works by Native authors, such as Silko's *Ceremony*, to adopt a less confrontational approach and embrace inclusivity. By doing so, these works extend an invitation to all readers to immerse themselves in a native-centered world and actively contribute to its preservation (p.56).

In Silko's *Ceremony*, the power of creating a hybrid culture as a tool of resistance to assimilation is vividly portrayed. In fact, Silko deliberately presented works which combine traditional and modern aspects in order to enlarge "our understanding of narrative as a cultural force absorbing and redirecting the developmental dynamics in the daily lives of people negotiating change of all kinds" (Jahner, 1994, p.477). Through Tayo's journey of self-discovery and healing, the novel stresses the vital importance of preserving native traditions, reclaiming cultural identity, and fostering solidarity within Indigenous communities. The mixture of Native American and Western influences serves as a powerful means of resistance.

Moreover, by embracing elements of both Native and Western cultures, individuals like Tayo challenge the assimilationist agenda and reclaim control over their own identities. That is to say, in *Ceremony*, hybridity “plays an essential role in guiding Tayo in his journey to reconstruct his own identity” (Qi, 2020, p.22). The creation of a hybrid cultural identity becomes an act of resistance, enabling individuals to assert their autonomy and defy the erasure of their heritage. This blending of cultures empowers individuals to draw strength from multiple sources, challenging assimilation.

There are several examples and occasions in which the role of hybridity is emphasized by the author. To begin with, it is obvious that Tayo's struggle with his identity as a half-blood--being both Native American and white--becomes a central idea in the story.

He has a mixed origin, being born to a Native American mother and a white father, making him a person of both Native American and white descent. Throughout the story, Tayo faces feelings of disconnection and alienation, as he navigates between two cultures with distinct traditions and perspectives. He faces the challenge of finding his place within the Native American community, who often view him with suspicion due to his mixed heritage, while also feeling like an outsider among white society. He is seeking harmony and acceptance within himself and the world around him since he is rejected due to his mixed blood:

When he got back to the table he saw that Emo's glasses were sitting crookedly on his puffy face. Emo watched him walk across the room to the table. “There he is. He thinks he's something all right. Because he's part white. Don't you, half-breed?” Tayo stopped in front of them. He saw all their faces clustered around Emo's fat, sweaty head; he thought of dogs standing over something dead, crowded close together. He couldn't make out Harley or Leroy or Pinkie; all he could see was Emo's sullen face. He stood there in front of them for a long time until his eyes lost focus (Silko, 2006, p.65).

These lines make the readers feel Tayo's distress as he is being rejected by his Native American friends. They call him hurtful names like "half-breed" because of his mixed background. It is apparent that Tayo feels like an outsider among them, and when he faces their insults, it seems that they are treating him with no respect. As Tayo stands before them, he perceives their clustered faces as resembling dogs over something dead, conveying their hostility and contempt. This makes Tayo sad and confused, and he stands there for a long time, feeling lost and hurt. The scene shows the difficulties Tayo faces in accepting his mixed heritage while dealing with rejection from his friends.

Qi (2020) believes that the protagonist's origin has caused an identity loss for him at the beginning of his appearance in the story (p.22). Additionally, there are other times in which Tayo appears as a foreigner among his surroundings. The following quotation from the novel portrays one of his Indian friend's, Emo's, perspective towards him:

Emo had hated him since the time they had been in grade school together, and the only reason for this hate was that Tayo was part white. But Tayo was used to it by now. 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 who were building the new highway through Laguna had pointed at him. They had elbowed each other and winked. He never forgot that. (Silko, 2006, p.66)

Here, it is apparent that Emo's hatred towards Tayo stems from his mixed heritage, and this prejudice has persisted since their time in school. Tayo has grown accustomed to facing such discrimination due to his background, and it is reflected in the shame which the character of Auntie feels for Tayo and his mother, as she had had a physical relationship with a white man, Tayo's father. Moreover, the memory of white men pointing at him and making gestures while building the highway through Laguna is a lasting reminder of the racial prejudice he has encountered. The above lines highlight the burden of Tayo's mixed heritage, as he constantly faces rejection and discrimination from his peers and strangers alike, making him feel like an outsider in his own community.

Consequently, resolving those enduring problems through hybridity becomes Tayo's mission as creating a hybrid cultural identity not only empowers individuals but also fosters solidarity within his community. The narrator describes Tayo's mind, thus: “he recognized why the Japanese voices had merged with Laguna voices, with Josiah's voice and Rocky's voice” (Silko, 2006, p.214). By embracing elements of both Native and Western cultures, individuals find a sense of belonging and build connections with others who share similar experiences. This solidarity creates spaces for collective resistance, challenging the oppressive systems perpetuated by assimilationist agendas. In this regard, Porter (2005) discusses that the most effective approach employed by Native Americans to resist

Anglo-American conquest was their migration to the secluded Great Plains region in the heartland of North America. By approximately 1700, this migration led to the formation of a hybrid culture as more than thirty tribes settled in the Plains, uniting with existing tribes such as the Plains Apaches, Wichitas, and Pawnees (p.49). Accordingly, different tribes with different cultures coexisted together.

Cultural Diversity as a Healing Source

Throughout the novel, traditional ceremonies emerge as transformative spaces for healing, connection, and cultural revitalization. Tayo's participation in ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge and the Night Swan ceremony, allows him to access ancestral knowledge and bridge the gap between past and present. These ceremonies become powerful tools of resistance, enabling individuals to resist assimilation by embracing and reconnecting with their old cultural practices. Silko's vivid descriptions of these ceremonies highlight their capacity to restore balance, harmony, and a sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to the preservation and revitalization of native identity.

Nevertheless, it is important to address the fact that the protagonist of the novel is incapable of finding cure for his physical and mental problems merely through Native American traditional rituals. Qi argues that the conventional Indian ceremony proves inadequate in aiding Tayo, who is deeply afflicted by battle fatigue and marginalization. Consequently, a new integrated form of ceremony emerges to heal Tayo, blending elements of traditional Native American culture with the influences of modern culture introduced by white settlers. This innovative approach highlights the significance of developing new Native American ceremonies that can effectively address the complexities of Tayo's situation (2020, p.22).

During the course of the events of the novel, Tayo visits Ku'oosh in order to find a cure for his troubled mind. Ku'oosh, a respected elder, and a traditional healer within the Laguna Pueblo community. Apparently, he possesses deep knowledge of traditional healing practices and ceremonies, which are essential for the well-being and spiritual health of the community members. He represents the preservation of traditional Native American culture and customs, including their healing rituals. Nevertheless, Chavkin argues that the ceremony performed by Ku'oosh is not enough to cure Tayo completely (p.106). This fact appears in Tayo's disappointment with the medicine man's response as he states: "there are some things we can't cure like we used to [...] not since the white people came. The others who had the Scalp Ceremony, some of them are not better either" (Silko, 2006, p. 51).

Within these lines one can perceive that Ku'oosh laments how traditional healing practices have lost their effectiveness since the arrival of the white people. He acknowledges that certain ailments are no longer as easily cured as they once were and cites the declining success of the Scalp Ceremony. This quotation stresses the theme of cultural erosion and the challenges faced by Native American communities in preserving their traditional knowledge and practices amidst the influence of Western culture and colonization.

Accordingly, Tayo should seek cure in another place. He meets Betonie when he is searching for a way to heal. Betonie, a central character in *Ceremony*, embodies the complexities of some peoples' identity in the United States, reflecting his mixed heritage of Native American and Anglo-American ancestry. As a medicine man, he becomes helpful in healing the protagonist, Tayo, who grapples with the tension between his Native American roots and the dominant Anglo-American society. Betonie's unique position as a bridge between the two worlds allows him to create a new form of ceremony that combines traditional Native American knowledge with modern influences (Chavkin, 2002, p.106). Throughout the novel, he guides Tayo on a spiritual journey, emphasizing the importance of embracing cultural heritage while adapting old traditions to address the challenges faced by the contemporary Native American community.

Betonie becomes very effective in the process of helping Tayo to form a hybrid perspective and accept the new reality. He embraces the blending of different cultural elements, to form a new and adaptive healing approach. He incorporates traditional Native American rituals, ceremonies, and symbols alongside elements from Anglo-American culture, such as Christianity and modern technology. Betonie uses modern objects and technologies as part of his ceremonies. The following lines from the novel indicate Betonies life-style while Tayo pays him a visit at his Hogan:

Tayo nodded, but now his eyes were on the ceiling logs where pouches and bags dangled from wooden pegs and square-headed nails. Hard shrunken skin pouches and black leather purses trimmed with hammered silver buttons were things he could understand. They were a medicine man's paraphernalia, laid beside the painted gourd rattles and deer-hoof clackers of the ceremony. But with this old man it did not end there; under the medicine bags and

bundles of rawhide on the walls, he saw layers of old calendars, the sequences of years confused and lost as if occasionally the oldest calendars had fallen or been taken out from under the others and then had been replaced on top of the most recent years (Silko, 2006, p.120).

The lines show Tayo looking around the place and noticing various objects that represent the blending of traditional Native American life with modern influences. He sees familiar items like shrunken skin pouches, black leather purses adorned with silver buttons, and ritual gourd rattles and deer-hoof clackers, which are typical of a medicine man's tools used in ceremonies. However, what stands out to Tayo is the presence of old calendars layered on the walls, with some years appearing to be misplaced or confused. This symbolizes how Betonie has integrated elements of the modern world, such as calendars, into his traditional healing practices. The juxtaposition of old and new reflects Betonie's blending of ancient wisdom with contemporary realities to address the challenges faced by the Native Americans presently.

It is obvious that one of the methods of embracing the new ways and reality of life is through accepting changes. Betonie does not reject the contemporary world or its influence on Native American communities. Instead, he embraces the realities of modernity and recognizes that healing must happen within the context of the present-day world. He "has no doubts about his place in time and the landscape" (Chavkin, 2002, p.121). He helps Tayo reconnect with his cultural heritage and find a sense of belonging to both his Native American roots and the modern world. He shows that healing and cultural preservation can coexist with adaptability and resilience.

There are several examples from the novel which reflect Betonie's ideas towards changes occurred in the modern age:

"There are some things I have to tell you," Betonie began softly. "The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done. [...] But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the changing began, [...] you see, in many ways, the ceremonies have always been changing" (Silko, 2006, p.125).

Additionally, he believes that new diseases require new ways of curing. Addressing Tayo regarding the seriousness of his problems, Betonie says: "In the old days it was simple. A medicine person could get by without all these things" (ibid, p.120). Chavkin discusses that one of the primary themes explored in *Ceremony* is the necessity for ceremonies and stories to adapt and evolve to match the shifting circumstances experienced by the people (2002, p.79). Once more, Betonie addresses the significance of change and accepting other worldviews in dealing with problems in various occasions saying:

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

He reasoned that because it was set loose by witchery of all the world, and brought to them by the whites, the ceremony against it must be the same. [...] 'It cannot be done alone. We must have power from everywhere. Even the power we can get from the whites.' (Silko, 2006, p.144)

Here, the narrator is reflecting on the impact of the arrival of white people on traditional Native American ceremonies. It suggests that the ceremonies that were once sufficient for the world before the arrival of white people are no longer effective. The changing world necessitates the creation of new ceremonies to address the shifting elements. Later, it emphasizes the need for adaptation and growth in ceremonies. The protagonist recognizes the mistrust that people may have towards changes in rituals, but he argues that this adaptation is crucial to maintaining the strength of the ceremonies in the face of new challenges brought by the white people.

Cultural Coexistence

Throughout history, Native American communities have endured a remarkable journey marked by their strength, adaptability, and efforts to preserve their cultural heritage. Their identity has been shaped by a variety of challenges they have faced, especially after European colonization. Embracing cultural coexistence has emerged as a powerful means for Native Indian communities to reclaim their distinct identity, bridging the gap between their rich history and the ever-changing present. By fostering mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation for diverse worldviews,

this paradigm shift opens the way for a harmonious future where Native traditions and heritage can flourish once again, enriched by the exchange of ideas and the celebration of shared human experiences.

Nevertheless, one of the primary challenges of creating hybrid culture is preserving traditional culture while simultaneously incorporating new elements during the time of change. Native American communities have faced this challenge since European contact and colonization. There has always been tension between preserving cultural practices and adapting to the changing world. As Native Americans navigate the complicated reality of modernity, they consider how to balance the need to retain the fundamental elements of their traditional culture with the desire to incorporate new practices and ideas. “[T]he central theme of Silko's novel—the essential need for change and adaptation and the place of both within the traditional Indian world” (Chavkin, 2002, p.107).

Silko's novel, *Ceremony*, offers a profound exploration of cultural coexistence as a powerful means of reclaiming Native American identity. Defining the term, coexistence is “the ability of humankind to accept diversity by rejecting their cultural, religious, and other prejudices, opposing interests and to live in harmony” (Aziz, 2014). The novel delves into the complexities of identity in a changing world and emphasizes the importance of embracing diverse cultural influences. Accordingly, delving deeper into the concept of cultural coexistence as a catalyst for reclaiming Native American identity, examining key events, characters, and themes in *Ceremony* to illustrate the transformative power of embracing cultural diversity is significant to this study. That is to say, for instance, the character of Betonie employs a blend of medicinal tools such as sand paintings, magazines, and narratives from both Native American and Anglo-American traditions to cure Tayo of his compulsion to expel the burdens forced upon him by the war and white culture (Babcock and Cox, 1994, p.98).

Many Native American communities have reached the coexistence by creating hybrid cultural practices that combine traditional values with Western practices. “It is very peaceful with the bears; the people say that’s the reason human beings seldom return. It is a matter of transitions, you see; the changing, the becoming must be cared for closely” (Silko, 2006, p.129). Moreover, Chavkin believes that Silko has created a society in which hybridity and diversity fight against discrimination and locality (2002, p.74). The items which help Tayo cure his mental troubles are not merely from Native American origin. The cattle that Tayo saves hold significant importance as it contributes to his healing. These cattle are of Mexican origin, just like the crucial Mexican woman who plays a vital role in Tayo's personal growth.

Additionally, Betonie has mixed ancestry, with a Mexican grandmother influencing his heritage (ibid, p.73). Besides, Betonie uses storytelling as a powerful tool for healing and connection. He weaves together stories from various cultural traditions, drawing from both Native American oral storytelling and written Anglo-American literature. Through these stories, he helps Tayo understand his own narrative and find meaning in his experiences. Finally, Betonie is praised by Tayo’s grandmother saying: “So old Betonie did some good after all” (Silko, 2006, p.201).

The main benefit of hybrid culture for Native Americans is its ability to resist assimilation. By incorporating elements of other cultures into their own traditions, they adapt to changing circumstances while honoring their heritage and celebrating diversity. This dynamic hybrid culture allows Native Americans to share their customs through art, music, dance, and storytelling, bridging the gap between their history and the modern world. Ultimately, hybrid culture empowers Native Americans to protect their own culture from the hegemony of the colonizer’s dominant culture. There are places in the novel where Native Americans are depicted sharing aspects of their culture with the other nations in America. This act is done during the Gallup Ceremonial event:

The Gallup Ceremonial had been an annual event for a long time. It was good for the tourist business coming through in the summertime on Highway 66. They liked to see Indians and Indian dances; they wanted a chance to buy Indian jewelry and Navajo rugs. Every year it was organized by the white men there, Turpen, Foutz, Kennedy, and the mayor. Dance groups from the Pueblos were paid to come; they got Plains hoop dancers, and flying-pole dancers from northern Mexico (Silko, 2006, p.116).

Obviously, the author portrays the Gallup Ceremonial as an annual event that has become intertwined with the tourist industry. The occasion attracts tourists passing through the region. These visitors are eager to experience the culture of Native Americans, witness their traditional dances, and purchase authentic Indian jewelry and Navajo rugs. The organization of the event is primarily done by white men like Turpen, Foutz, Kennedy, and the mayor. Performers from different regions, such as Plains hoop dancers and flying-pole dancers from northern Mexico, are

invited to enrich the event. Accordingly, the complex interactions between native traditions and commercial interests are focused on while others attend the festival. These events have a transformative power “working together for life in a healing way” (Nelson, 2005, p.245).

Thus, cultural coexistence with the Whites does not mean abandoning or forsaking Native American identity. Instead, it presents an opportunity for Native Americans to share their cultural heritage, traditions, and values with non-Native communities. In the process of coexisting, the boundaries between the two groups become blurred, and both can benefit from this relationship. Therefore, it is essential for Native Americans to reclaim their identity while acknowledging the importance of cultural coexistence with Whites. As a result, Native Americans can promote understanding, tolerance, and respect for their heritage while breaking the cycle of cultural assimilation and erasure that has oppressed them for centuries.

As such, focusing on mixing Native rituals with English culture and language is significant for their preservation as it invites more spectators to join those events. Cobb (2000) argues that hybrid language practices, combining Native languages with English, emerge as a means of asserting native peoples’ identity and challenging linguistic hegemony. This linguistic hybridity serves as a powerful tool in preserving and revitalizing original languages, safeguarding cultural heritage in the face of assimilationist pressures (p.63).

By embracing diverse cultural influences, individuals like Tayo find a sense of belonging and build connections with others who share similar experiences. This solidarity creates spaces for collective resistance, challenging the systems perpetuated by cultural erasure. In Native American belief systems, the creation of the world is often attributed to powerful deities or supernatural entities. Among these cosmogonic narratives, one captivating tale is that of the Three Sisters: Ts’its’tsi’nako, Nau’ts’ity’i, and l’tcts’ity’i. Originating from various tribes, this narrative draws attention to the reverence for natural elements and the interconnectivity between human existence and the environment. This idea is recorded at the beginning of the novel as the narrator states:

Ts’its’tsi’nako, Thought-Woman, is sitting in her room and whatever she thinks about appears.

She thought of her sisters, Nau’ts’ity’i and l’tcts’ity’i, and together they created the Universe this world and the four worlds below.

Thought-Woman, the spider, named things and as she named them they appeared (Silko, 2006, p.22).

These lines introduce a mythic and creative narrative about the origins of the universe and the role of a powerful, creative entity named Thought-Woman. The text highlights the idea that thoughts and words have the power to shape reality and bring things into existence. The significance of this idea is that according to most Native Americans, all human beings are created through that magical process by the three sisters and they all come from the same origin. This can be perceived as a chance for the harmonious living of the world’s various nations.

The idea of original oneness and collective living can be seen in another place within Silko’s work when the narrator gives an account of the ways people used to coexist together in the past:

people shared a single clan name and they told each other who they were; they recounted the actions and words each of their clan had taken, and would take; from before they were born and long after they died, the people shared the same consciousness. The people had known, with the simple certainty of the world they saw, how everything should be (Silko, 2006, p.75).

The above lines highlight a time when a community of people lived in harmony, deeply connected to each other and to their shared history. They had a profound awareness of their roles within their community and a clear vision of how life should be lived. This passage speaks about the theme of unity, interconnectedness, and a sense of cultural identity that is often associated with a more traditional way of life.

Thus, in *Ceremony*, cultural coexistence emerges as a transformative response to cultural erasure, enabling the reclamation of the peoples’ original identity. By embracing diverse cultural influences and recognizing the value of multiple traditions, individuals like Tayo challenge the assimilationist agenda and reclaim agency over their cultural identity. Cultural coexistence allows for the synthesis of Native American traditions with other cultural elements, fostering a sense of resilience and revitalization. Islam et al. (2021) discusses this matter and argues that recognizing cultural variety is seen as a fundamental requirement for upholding harmony and guaranteeing the peaceful cohabitation of communities within multi-ethnic or multi-religious societies (p.60).

Silko presents cultural coexistence as a means of transcending the contrast between tradition and assimilation. Tayo's encounters with various characters, such as Josiah and Night Swan, who embody hybrid identities, exemplify the possibilities of cultural synthesis as a means of reclaiming their identity. These characters serve as symbols of cultural resilience, highlighting the transformative potential of embracing diverse cultural influences. Through their stories, Silko emphasizes the importance of valuing and integrating multiple cultural perspectives as a means of reclaiming Native American identity.

Conclusion

Silko's *Ceremony* is a fascinating exploration of the power of creating a blended culture as a means of resisting assimilation. The narrative, through Tayo's journey, who is the protagonist of the novel, stresses the critical significance of preserving traditional practices, reclaiming cultural identity, and fostering solidarity among diverse communities. The novel emphasizes the idea that blending Native American and Western influences is not only a simple mix, but a bold act of defiance against the imminent threat of cultural erasure. It becomes a dynamic tool that allows individuals to engage with the challenges of a rapidly changing world while still maintaining a profound connection to their ancestral heritage.

Ceremony stands as a testament to the enduring spirit and resilience of Native Americans. It portrays their ongoing struggle against assimilation and serves as a rallying cry for the preservation of cultural distinctiveness. The narrative suggests that by embracing a hybrid culture, individuals can navigate the complexities of a shifting world without losing touch with their roots. In this way, *Ceremony* becomes not only a novel but a poignant commentary on the perpetual fight for cultural survival and identity.

Resource:

1. Aziz, Enizahura. A. (2014). Peaceful co-existence the right way. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/ikim-views/2014/09/16/peaceful-coexistence-the-right-way/> [Accessed 4/12/2022].
2. Babcock, Barbara and Jay Cox. (1994). The Native American Trickster. *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. Andrew Wiget, Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
3. Chavkin, Allan. (2002). *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Cobb, Amanda J. (2000). *Listening To Our Grandmothers' Stories*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
5. Coulombe, Joseph L. (2011). *Reading Native American Literature*. London: Routledge.
6. Fowler, Cynthia. (2007). "Hybridity as a Strategy For Self-Determination in Contemporary American Indian Art." *Social Justice*. 34(1 (107)). Pp. 63–79. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29768422>. [Accessed 2 March 2023].
7. Islam, M. T., Hussain, M., and Orthy, S. K. (2021). Cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence: A reflection on some selective school textbooks. *Social Science Review*, 37(2), 59–86.
8. Jahner, Elaine A. (1994). Leslie Marmon Silko. Andrew Wiget, editor. *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
9. Nelson, Robert M. (2005). Leslie Marmon Silko: storyteller. Joy Porter & Kenneth M. Roemer, editors. *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
10. Porter, Joy. (2005). Historical and cultural contexts to Native American literature. Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer, editors. *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Qi, Zhou. (2020). Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*: Hybridity In Identity Reconstruction. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(5). P.p. 21-28.
12. Ruoff, A.LaVonne Brown. (1994). Native American Writing: Beginnings to 1967. *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. Andrew Wiget, Ed. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
13. Silko, Leslie Marmon. (2006). *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin Books.
14. Vizenor, Gerald. (1999). *Postindian Conversations*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.