

Quest for Identity in Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

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Abstract

Ceremony is a wholeness of a community, and a universe when any one part or person is not integrated into that whole. Separation, alienation, and disease, Silko and the Laguna people claim, result from failing to remember the stories and one's role in them, to recognize the integral connection of all things and all people, and to acknowledge the need to maintain the balance of the world through the creation of new ceremonies. Tayo's discovery that "it took a great deal of energy to be a human being," that human beings are inextricably connected to everything around them is the focus.

In Ceremony Leslie Marmon has portrayed the quest of Tayo. Tayo is searching for his Uncle Josiah's castle and this is an integral part of the ceremony. It requires Tayo to accept help from other realms. The search leads him to believe his childhood days. He has believed that the white people never steal and only those with colored can do. After realizing the truth, Tayo is able to give up his self-doubt and focus on the importance of his search and the ceremony.

After the first experience with Ts'eh, Tayo starts his search for Josiah's cattle. When he is not sure about Betonie's accuracy, he begins to have faith in the medicine "so he had gone, not expecting to find anything more than the winter constellation in the north sky overhead; but suddenly Betonie's vision was a story he could feel happening from the stars and the woman, the mountain and the cattle would come" (186). He gets confidence and understand the purpose of life because Betonie's dream has fulfilled. Searching and finding castle is the continuation and it gives life to Josiah. Josiah helps Tayo to find out the cattle. He guides him. Tayo spots the cattle but Josiah has trouble. He thinks that they have been stolen because they are on land owned by white man. He realizes his mistake. He has started to suspect anyone, he starts to think properly. He finds it difficult to challenge the belief that the white people are superior. According to him, the white people never say lie, they never steal "He knew then he had learned the lie by heart, the lie which they had wanted him to learn: only brown, skinned people were thieves; white people didn't steal, because they always had the money to buy whatever they wanted" (191).

Tayo is taught to question anyone and mistrust his entire culture but he realizes the source of the doubt. When the story comes reality for Tayo, he seeks to express the reality of his vision. He has grown up with the Indian people, so that he could see the consequences of these actions:

The destroyers had only to set it into motion, and sit back to count the casualties. But it was more than a body count; the lies devoured white hearts, and for more than two hundred years white people had worked to fill their emptiness; they tried to glut the hollowness with patriotic wars and with great technology and the wealth is brought. And always they had been fooling themselves, and they knew it. (191)

Tayo comes to realize himself, more than that he understands the witchery act and its causes. He knows that everything and everyone is interconnected, the witchery act will destroy the world. Tayo discovers his fact, that not only the cattle but also his land is stolen. Which allows him to appreciate Betonie's words and guidance. His acceptance marks another pint in his ceremony, and he is able to continue. "he had been so intent on finding the cattle that he had forgotten all the events of the past days and years. Hunting the cattle was good for that Old Betonie was right. It was a cure for that, and may be for other things too. The spotted cattle would not be lost anymore, 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" (192).

Tayo is a prisoner, he lives with his past memories. After learning to accept the past, he realizes that he is not a prisoner to his memories. Time is not merely logical, it displaces any special formula and it is like the sun, it is spherical and emits light in all directions. Time does not have limit or boundary. This time may be connected with any after point in time.

The ride into the mountain had branched into all the directions of time. He knew then why the old timers could only speak of yesterday and tomorrow in terms of the present moment: the only certainty; and this present sense of being was qualified with bare hints of yesterday or tomorrow, ... Rocky and I are walking across the bridge in the moonlight; Josiah and Robert are waiting for us. This night is a single night; and there has never been any other. (192)

After revealing, Tayo still has doubts, he realizes the day comes to an end, he does not complete his work, his mission is incomplete, he begins to question himself, What is the importance of Betonie's vision? the mysterious Ts'eh and their importance of his life. Tayo's weariness and his interest with one specific measurement of time causes him to doubt his progress. He still has trouble; he feels that his defeat is near; In his despair and fatigue, Tayo gives himself up to the pine needles underneath a tree. Tayo is given guidance. He needs the immense grace and beauty in the form of the mountain lion, "When the mountain lion stopped in front of him, it was not hesitation, but a change for the moonlight to catch up with him. Tayo got to his knees slowly and held out his hand" (195 -196). The wild creatures brings out the beauty of nature as well as a lack of concern for the movement of time. Mountain lion passes in front of Tayo. Creatures movement are beyond time, This creature shows no fear of Tayo, of man. It comes there and then disappears but its presence known there by its paw prints. "He kept his back to the wind and poured yellow pollen from Josiah's tobacco sac into the cup of his hand. He leaned close to the earth and sprinkled pinches of yellow pollen into the four footprints" (196). Mountain lion is the hunters helper. This Mountain lion gives Tayo hope and direction and also it guides him. Tayo's senses once again become acute to the surroundings, like the mountain lions.

The search for his uncle's missing cattle is a continuation of Tayo's ceremony. He finds himself close to the land and gives it to the owner. Tayo realizes that the land, regardless of fences and barbed wire, cannot be restricted; the land that go beyond any boundaries, including time and space. The search contains Tayo's intentions towards the mountain and its belongings Mountain lion guides him. Tayo finds out his inner minds. White are superior to Indians in American culture. Tayo realizes his mistake, he mistrusted his own people. In this Tayo's ceremony, he finds out what has been done and who has done the

damage. After getting back the cattle, he is able to defeat one aspect of witchery. Now he has confident that he can defeat the entire witchery. He has enough faith, now he can face final challenge in his ceremony.

References:

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