

## THE SOCIAL DISORDER IN LESLIE SILKO'S *CEREMONY*

Dr Kilanko Adièle ZANNOU  
Nangui Abrogoua University  
Abidjan, ABOBO-ADJAME

**Abstract:** Today the American society is a melting-pot, kaleidoscope of various cultures. Nevertheless, Native Americans were the first to meet the colonizer. This encounter has created many upheavals inside the Native American community. In our analysis of the social disorder in Leslie Silko's *Ceremony*, we will make reference to postcolonial theories, stylistics and semiotics.

**Keywords:** Crisis, Conflict, generation gap, reservation, colonizer.

**Résumé:** La société américaine est un melting-pot, un kaléidoscope de diverses cultures. Néanmoins, les Amérindiens ont été les premiers à rencontrer le colonisateur. Cette rencontre a créé de nombreux bouleversements au sein de la communauté amérindienne. Dans notre analyse du désordre social dans *Ceremony* de Leslie Silko, nous ferons référence aux théories postcoloniales, à la stylistique et à la sémiotique.

**Mots-clés:** crise, conflit, fossé des générations, réservation, colonisateur.

### Introduction

A society shares generally, some cultural aspects such as language used for communication, dress, rules and regulations directing people's behavior. The basic cell of all society, family as is organized according to a particular pattern. There other social institutions such as the religion group, the tribe, the kingship, etc. Nevertheless is that the case for the Native American's community?

How were they organized socially? How this organization was disturbed by colonization? We will show how Leslie Silko demonstrates in *Ceremony* that before the arrival of the White Americans in their land, there was a social organization inside the Native American's community and that social order has been disrupted. As a matter of fact, the postcolonial theories will help us to analyze the role of the White Americans' ideologies create and promote the social disorder observed among the Native Americans. The stylistics and semiotics will also give us the tools needed to denote the way colonial ideologies are expressed and how they oppose to the Native American's pre-existing social order.

# I-THE DISTURBANCE OF THE NATIVE AMERICANS' FAMILY ORGANIZATION

## I-1 The Native Americans Family's Organization

According to sociologists, family is an essential part of human social organization. For example, A. Robert Foley observes: "Individuals in communities would retain notions of relationship and membership despite spatial location." (*American Journal of Physical*, 2001:3). In fact, humans are able to retain notion of relationships and memberships because the family is the foundation of any community. The Native American community is not an exception for the narrator in M. Leslie Silko reports:

When Josiah or old Grandma or Robert was there, the agreement was suspended, and she pretended to treat him the same as she treated Rocky, but they both knew it was only temporary when she was alone with the boys, she kept Rocky close to her (...). She was careful that Rocky did not share these things with Tayo, that they kept a distance between themselves and him (...). She wanted him also enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them (*Ceremony*, 67).

Here, we have a prototype of what a Native American family looks like in Tayo's own. We don't have the western family which is made only of a father, a mother and few children. We rather have an extended family like the typical African one made of Tayo's uncle (Josiah), Tayo's auntie, Tayo's nephew (Rocky). The notion of family is so extended, that the clan is considered too as a family. In fact, the same way marrying a woman from the same family is viewed as an incest, marrying someone from the same clan is also an incest. Susan Stebbins admits: "When our politicians talk about family values, they are referring to nuclear families. But for most of human history, and still in many societies, people live in extended families that include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins and two—sometimes more—generations. Societies usually have expectations about how residence patterns are established, and anthropologists have terms for them." (*Native Peoples of North America*, 2013:59)

Nevertheless, with so many people living together, one may wonder if it is economically sustainable. Can the needs of everyone in terms of food, dressing, and education be properly satisfied? Life with extended families that include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins is far from being not troublesome. In *Ceremony* for instance, the constraints make it difficult for Tayo's auntie to love Tayo as she loves his son. In the metaphor "When Josiah or old Grandma or Robert was there, the agreement was suspended", the agreement is used to refer to the loving relationship that is supposed to exist between members of the same tribe. This agreement is not a written one, but it is based on kinship. The omniscient narrator says that it is suspended as ridicule to make fun of the way some "civilized" Native Americans like Tayo's auntie forsake their traditions by finding difficult to live with other members of their extended family or pretending hypocritically to do so. In the amplification "She wanted him also enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them", the idea of separation between members of the same tribe or family is stressed to show how far Tayo's Auntie attitude can lead to divisions and disorders inside the tribe.

In that extended family, Grandma, a woman of age and experience plays an important role. She is respected and feared by all members of the family including Tayo's Auntie who doesn't dare mistreat Tayo in her presence. Grandma is pictured as an authoritative woman who does not feel like letting Josiah, the head of the family take all the decisions. Grandma acts like a feminist also by being the memory of the family or the clan. The narrator tells: "But old Grandma always used to say, "Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals

could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened” (*Ceremony*, 93). By the expression “Back in time immemorial,” Grandma makes her listeners travel to a distant past, before the arrival of the White American. In her stories, the narrator points at the fact that in many stories told by Grandma, animals are personified. She says that “the animals could talk to human beings”. Grandma gives animals the ability to communicate with human beings in order to teach younger ones of the native community that men cannot do without nature (animals) because they belong to the same web of life. Nevertheless, according to Kyoko Matsunaba as a leader of her community, Grandma uses also this mytheme as a way to “subvert the colonial forces” to impose on her community a foreign culture and promote a complete assimilation to that new civilization. (*The Japanese Journal of American Study*, 2014:73-75) Grandma is then a leader in the Native American community. Her infatuation for remembering the past heritage of the Native American’s community is an act of resistance. She is expressing in this way her refusal to be assimilated to the White American culture. This motif of the Grandma which occurs in many Native American literary works highlights her important role in the Native American community for A. Robert Foley explains:

While in Europe, Asia, and to a lesser extent Africa, kin organization became more centered around men (patrilineal), many Native American societies were matrilineal and matrifocal meaning that their kin groups were descended from women, so inheritance or usufruct rights went from mother to daughter (Chapter 2). Perhaps because of the important roles of women within kin groups and religion, they held important roles within the political systems of many Native American societies (Chapter 4). Native American women also had very important roles within the economies of their societies, both producing and distributing important resources. (*American Journal of Physical*, 2001:3).

Consequently, for Robert A. Foley, the fact that Grandma plays such a prominent role in her community without fearing the fury of men is due to the fact that Native American societies are not centered around men or patrilineal like European, Asiatic and African societies. But did the colonization change something about that social order that had been existing inside Native American societies?

## **I-2 The disturbance of the Native American Familial Organization**

The colonizer has disturbed the Native American family structure based on the clan and has made attempts to impose the European conception of the family. One way that was used to separate members of the same clan was to send some abroad, very far from their relatives to fight war for America. Many of them died and never come back to meet again their family members. In *Ceremony*, this is the case of Rocky, auntie’s son who was sent to fight war and dies during a war. Some like Tayo, Harley, Leroy, Emo are war veterans who return back from war psychologically disturbed, disabled. Tayo, for example, after his return is no longer in position to be a breadwinner but is someone to be cared for by his aunty because of his sickness. The main protagonist of the story acknowledges: “They sent me to this place after the war. Everything in that place was white. Except from me. I was invisible. But I wasn’t afraid there. I didn’t feel things sneaking up behind me. I didn’t cry for Rocky or Josiah” (*Ceremony*, 123). By the hyperbole “I was invisible”, Tayo expresses his disappointment about the marginalization, the unjust and racist way he is treated after his return. After returning back home, Tayo has the feeling that all the sacrifice made to go to the war was ~~in~~ vain. The statement: “Everything in that place was white” emphasizes Tayo’s disappointment of being counted as nothing in a world colonized and dominated only by White Americans. To deal with that

feeling of loneliness, many Native Americans war veterans indulge in alcoholism. For instance is pictured as a war veteran who strives to cope with his emotional devastation by indulging in alcoholism: “Emo rattled the Bull Duham sack. He bounced it in the palm of one hand and then the other, he took another swallows of whiskey before he’d talk.” ” (Ceremony, 55) The understatement “he took another swallows of whiskey before he’d talk” and the caricature “Emo rattled” give of Emo the caricature of a heavy drinker. Here, the narrator makes fun of his addiction to alcohol and insinuates that while some Native Americans think that alcohol will help them forget their problem, it worsens their situation. They are caught in a vicious circle for their savings are used to buy alcohol and consequently they face more economic problems. The narrator in the novel points at the responsibility of the colonizer in that situation:” They sold great amounts of liquor to Indians, and in those years when liquor was illegal for Indians, they make a lot more money because they bootlegged it” ” (Ceremony, 116). A paradox is used here by the narrator to denounce the colonizer’s hypocritical attitude which consists in making alcohol illegal and at the same time, selling great quantities of alcohol to Native Americans. The narrator makes then, the satire of the colonizer and of the trickish way he erodes Native Americans values and favors the social disorder inside the Native American community.

The western civilization has brought so many changes. Native American’s didn’t know about bars and pubs before. After hunting and farming they used most of their time in their Hogan with their clan. Native Americans were much closed to the Nature. The narrator complains about the fact that the colonization has led Native Americans to spend much more time in bars and pubs in the hyperbole: “I never saw so many bars and jukebox- all the people coming from everywhere dancing and laughing” ” (Ceremony, 41). Bars and jukebox are the colonizer’s invention and the narrator worries about the fact that many Native Americans spend a precious time that they could used to work for the community in bars, dancing and laughing. They also go there to drink and overdrink. In a study about the phenomenon of alcoholism in the Native American community. Fred Beauvais puts it this way:

Building on the work of Ferguson (1968), May (1995) proposed that at best two patterns of alcohol abuse exist within Indian groups. “Anxiety drinkers” are home heavy drinkers who exhibit a wide variety of medical, social and psychological problem (...). Early alcohol-related mortality is common among this group. In contrast, “recreational drinkers” engage in binge drinking less frequently than anxiety drinkers do, but they consume extremely high quantities when they drink (...). Theoretically, people with psychological problems use alcohol to relieve certain symptoms, such as depression, anxiety or lack of self-esteem. The socioeconomic picture for many tribes is bleak. Unemployment rates are high, school completion rates are low, and basic support systems are undeveloped. Those conditions place a great deal of stress on family and other socialization structures within the Indian communities. (*American Indians and Alcohol* 1998: 254-256) .

As Fred Beauvais observed, the colonization has caused unemployment rates to raise. Not prepared to acquire a new form of education taught at school, school completion rates are low, inside the Native American community and basic support systems are undeveloped. Those conditions place a great deal of stress on family and other socialization structures within the Indian communities. After igniting the “fire” so to speak inside the Native American community, the White American act as wrong firemen by producing for them large quantities of distilled spirits containing high degree of alcohol that they sell to Native Americans in their bars and pubs. Since there is no clear legal regulation of alcohol abuse, faced to the bleak socioeconomic situation, “Anxiety drinkers” who exhibit a wide variety of medical, social and

psychological problem become home heavy drinkers to relieve certain symptoms, such as depression, anxiety or lack of self-esteem. In the fiction, Tayo, Leroy, Emo and other war veterans become “Anxiety drinkers”. The devastating effects of alcohol on these war veterans is shown through the narrator’s description:

Emo was getting drunk on whiskey; his face was flushed and his forehead sweaty. Tayo watched Haley and Leroy flip quarters to see who was buying next round, and he swallowed the beer in big mouthfuls like medicine. He could feel something boom up inside (...). Liquor was medicine for the anger that made them hurt, for the pain of the loss, medicine for tight bellies and chocked-up throats; (...) he crawled inside and watched the storm swirling on the outside and he was safe there; the minds of rage could not touch him. (*Ceremony*, 40)

The simile: “he swallowed the beer in big mouthfuls like medicine” and the metaphor: “Liquor was medicine for the anger that made them hurt” make fun of the fact that many “Anxiety drinkers” and war veterans such as Emo, have the feeling that they can relieve, anxiety or lack of self-esteem depression by drinking large amount of alcoholic beverages. The narrator finds it funny because they believe in an illusion. The emptiness that they are trying to fill by drinking is always eluding them and they are still trying to fill it again by drinking greater amount of alcohol. They seem to be trapped in a vicious circle. Consequently, they feel frustrated, a feeling well grasped and conveyed by the omniscient narrator in the euphemistic statement: “He could feel something boom up inside.” That thing which is booming up inside refers to the frustration that is growing inside Native Americans and become bitterness then hatred against White Americans which in turn is like a bomb ready to explode. The hatred comes the fact that Native Americans realize that they have been abused, deceive to the point of risking their life during wars fought in the name of America, and then have been thrown away like mere garbage. Upon their return from war, they have become able-bodied men unproductive, losers, useless for their families. The link between the inner psychological disorder that this situation causes and the social disorder observed inside the Native American community is established through the metaphoric expression: “he crawled inside and watched the storm swirling on the outside and he was safe there; the minds of rage could not touch him.” Here, while “inside” refers to the inner trouble faced by the anxiety drinker, the social upheaval that is caused by the colonization of the Native American is compared to a “storm swirling on the outside.” that bring a lot of disorders, causalities, death in its way.

That “storm” or social upheaval does not only transform some family able-bodied members into drinkers and useless people, but also tears apart the drinkers’ family members. The narrator witnesses:

Robert and Tayo stopped on the bridge and looked into the riverbed. It had been dry a long time, and there were paths in the sand where the people walked. They were beginning to move. All along the sandy clay bawls there were people, mostly men, stretched out, sleeping, some of them face down where they fell, and few rolled over on their backs or on the side, sleeping with their heads on their arms (...). They could see them [flies] buzzing around the face of a man under the bridge, smelling the sweetness of the wine or maybe the vomit down the front of the man’s shirt (...). From the doorway of a second-hand store he could see feet, toes, poking through holes in the socks. Someone sleeping of the night before, but without his boots none, because somebody had taken them to trade for a bottle of cheap wine. The guy had his heart against the door; his face was peaceful and he was snoring loudly. (*Ceremony*, 107,114)

The narrator gives –a realistic picture of the bad effects of alcoholism on Native American families. In the enumeration : “All along the sandy clay bawls there were people, mostly men, stretched out, sleeping, some of them face down where they fell,” the process of family dislocation is gradual. The men start bawling, then stretch out leg outside an euphemism used to show that they become unfaithful to their wives and finally sleep outside with women. The narrator also highlights the fact that alcoholism also impoverish drinkers’ families in the ridicule: “Someone sleeping of the night before, but without his boots none, because somebody had taken them to trade for a bottle of cheap wine.” One can notice here the repetition of the negation in the expressions “without” and “none” to stress the fact that alcoholism leads Native American into deep financial loss and poverty. The imagery: “They could see them [flies] buzzing around the face of a man under the bridge, smelling the sweetness of the wine or maybe the vomit down the front of the man’s shirt”, creates appeals to the reader’s feeling by drawing him through his senses to notice the drunkard’s pitiful condition.

Alcoholism favors also domestic violence which scatters Native American families and creates an unwholesome climate that disturbs the normal development of children. The narrator reveals: “They found their own places to sleep because the men stayed until dawn. Before they knew how to walk, the children learned how to avoid fists and feet.” (*Ceremony*, 107,114). Here the synecdoche “fists and feet” refers to the drunkards’ use of violence in their relationships with their family. Alcoholism make family members change roles. In a good family, it does not belong to children to find a house to sleep. Nevertheless, in the family in disorder, dislocated by alcoholism, it is up to children to look for house to sleep and their fathers become homeless. The narrator makes then fun of the irresponsibility of drunkards in the sarcasm: “They [the children] found their own places to sleep because the men stayed until dawn” . The irony: “Before they knew how to walk” suggests that it is at an early age that Native American children learn about domestic violence. Deprived from fatherly love, these children learn how to be violent and the conditions are set for them as they grow, to –reproduce also the pattern of family in disorder inside the Native American community.

Alcoholism is not the only causes of family dislocation. Facing economic hardships in reservations, some Native Americans feel obliged to leave their family behind and go abroad to make a living. The narrator explains: “She took the money she had saved – and she stopped by Emma’s to tell them good-bye. (... ) So she left without seeing her little sisters, because she planned to come back on the bus, every weekend, to visit, and to bring money to help them out.” (*Ceremony*, 161). The assonance in “e” echoes the pain caused by the sudden separation of the Native American girl pictured here from her beloved ones. In order to make a living elsewhere. The separation is so brutal that she does not have time to say goodbye to her little sisters. . She leaves her family because poverty does not give her any other option. Her poverty can be noticed through the statement: “She took the money she had saved”. All what she possesses financially can only pay a ticket bus to reach her destination. She has just saved enough money to travel to make money. Her probability to return to visit and support her family is only linked to the option of finding a job somewhere else for the narrator adds in the foreshadowing: “she planned to come back on the bus, every weekend, to visit, and to bring money to help them out.”

Sometimes, poverty coupled to the erosion of value inside the Native American community lead some Native American women even to resort to prostitution and abandon their children. The narrator says:

He got used to her leaving the bar with men, giving somebody a dollar to buy the boy food while she was out. After he ate, he slept under the tables and waited for her to come back. The first time she did not come back, the man who swept floors found him. (...) He slept alone while his mother was with men-the white men with necks and faces bright red from summertime, Mexican men who came from the section-gang boxcars at railroad, looking for the women who waited around the bridge-the ones who would go down for a half bottle of wine. (*Ceremony*, 161).

The expression “He slept alone while his mother was with men” is an euphemism to make reference to the fact that the boy’s mother pictured here shamefully prostitute herself the whole night while her son sleep under the tables of a bar waiting for her to return. This euphemism which is also an understatement is used to make fun of this shameful act which consists in selling one’s body for money. The foreshadowing: “looking for the women who waited around the bridge-the ones who would go down for a half bottle of wine”, highlights the uselessness of this practice by adding that all that these women gain from their prostitution is only a bottle of wine. They sell themselves so cheap and abandon their children for pleasure sake out of selfishness and lack of moral value. But the Native American women are not the only responsible of such situation. The omniscient narrator also points the accusative finger in direction of the White American who he ridicules in the caricature: “his mother was with men-the white men with necks and faces bright red from summertime”. Here the White American are pictured in an ugly way. They look like clowns with mixed colors. The rest of the body is white, while the necks and faces are colored red.

The erosion of moral values has pervaded the whole Native American community to the extent that even minor children prostitute themselves. The narrator testifies: “After all she was only twelve or thirteen, and she would bring a good price.” In this metaphor, the little girl is compared to a merchandise for sale at a “good price”. (*Ceremony*, 147). The irony “good price” makes fun of the idea according to which faced with dire poverty, parents should sell their little girl in order to survive. It insinuates that a human being is so precious that it should not be priced. Nevertheless, the narrator acknowledges again that those Native American children that prostitute and their parents that let them do so are not only responsible:

It might have been possible if the girl had not been ashamed of herself. Shamed by what they taught her in school about the deplorable ways of the Indian people; holy missionary white people who wanted only good for the Indians, white people who dedicated their lives to helping the Indians, these people urged her to break away from her home. She was excited to see that despite the fact she was an Indian, the white men smiled at her from their cars as she walked from the bus stop in Albuquerque back to the Indian school. She smiled and waved; she looked at her own reflection, in windows of houses she passed; her dress, lipstick, her hair-it was all done perfectly, the way home-teacher taught them, exactly like the white girls. (...) The feelings of shame, at her own people and at the white people, grew inside her, side by side monstrous twins that would have to be left in the hills to die. (...) But after she had been with them, she could feel the truth in their fists and in their greedy feeble love-making; but it was a truth which she had no English words for. She hated the people at home when white people talked about their peculiarities; but she always hated herself more because she still thought about them, she knew their pain at what she was doing with her life (...)

what happened to the girl did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them. (*Ceremony*, 68-69).

In the expression: “holy missionary white people who wanted only good for the Indians, white people who dedicated their lives to helping the Indians”, the narrator makes the satire of colonization. He insinuates that if little Native American prostitute themselves shamefully is because they have been lured by the colonizer, the White Americans. He denounces the fact that while they were pretending to bring civilization to Native Americans out of mere philanthropy, they have destroyed actually the moral value of the whole community.

The narrator illustrates his viewpoint with some examples in the enumeration:” She smiled and waved; she looked at her own reflection, in windows of houses she passed; her dress, lipstick, her hair-it was all done perfectly, the way home-teacher taught them, exactly like the white girls.” Here he shows that through white civilization thought in school, Native American girls have been taught to leave aside their own culture and to despise it. They have learn a new way of smiling to seduce men, to groom, to speak English like white girls.

Renee Beaulieu-Banks at all tell about how Native Americans were forced to go to school and for what purpose:

As a subdivision of the Department of War in 1824, the federal government gave the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) the task of civilizing American Indians according to European American standards through education (Charbonneau-Dahlen, Lowe, & Morris, 2016). Initially, the first 307 schools operated as day schools on reservations; however, parental influence impeded assimilation. As a result, in 1876, the federal government deemed it necessary to remove all American Indian children from families to the confinement of boarding schools. Methods used to enforce mandatory boarding school attendance enforcement included restricting rations or imprisonment for those American Indian parents refusing to have children ripped away from the family (Adams, 1995). The philosophy of boarding schools, “Kill the Indian; Save the man,” was a phrase coined by Captain Pratt, who modeled the first American Indian boarding school after a prison (Pember, 2016, p. 14). A chilling example of this philosophy and the intention of the boarding schools are outlined in a speech by Lippincott stating, “You cannot become truly American citizens, industrious, intelligent, cultured, civilized until the INDIAN within you is DEAD” (as cited by Adams, 1995, p. 274). (*American Indian Perspectives on Healing from Historical Trauma: An Indigenous Inquiry*,2018 :22-23)

According to Renee Beaulieu-Banks et al everything was organized to make sure that no child among the Native American community will be left outside of the White American system. Under the Federal Government, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was given the task of civilizing American Indians according to European American standards through education. Any resistance from parents was fought and children were removed from families and put to the confinement of boarding schools The objective was to brainwash Native American children, just like cult leaders coerce recruits into new ways of thinking, with the intention to completely erase their cultural ways and identities.

The narrator complains about the fact the western civilization, by so doing, has created in younger generations of Native Americans a complex of inferiority and has eroded their moral values . He says : “The feelings of shame, at her own people and at the white people, grew

inside her, side by side monstrous twins that would have to be left in the hills to die.” In this capriciousness of Fate, the narrator shows that the complex of superiority is so entrenched that Native American women have even reached to the point where they view their own children as “monstrous twins that would have to be left in the hills to die.” For the narrator the situation of the whole Native American community has become worse because the colonizer has succeeded by his tricks to make them hate each other, to hate their culture, their moral values and even to abort their own children. The narrator also points at the fact that these Native American Women hate also the White Americans they have sex because they feel that their love is factice and based only on sexual attraction. It lasts only during the period of sexual intercourse for the narrator reveals: “But after she had been with them, she could feel the truth in their fists and in their greedy feeble love-making.” The expression “their fists” is a synecdoche. One part of the body the fists, used to make love violently form also for an oxymoron by being opposed to “their greedy feeble love-making” in order to denounce the White American’s disguised or untrue love.

The narrator who is also a persona points at the fact that education has also contributed to Western education brought by the colonizer is also one cause of the disorder pictured inside the Native American community. He admits: “She hated the people at home when white people talked about their peculiarities; but she always hated herself more because she still thought about them, she knew their pain at what she was doing with her life”. In this statement, the narrator complains about the fact that the Colonizer’s culture promoted through his education system has pictured Native Americans as fools, savages, lacking any civilization. The complex of superiority created in them has led some Native Americans like the girl pictured by the narrator as prototype to view those in their community who are not educated just as the White men as inferiors. Nevertheless by this paradox “but she always hated herself more because”, the narrator makes fun of them and highlights the fact that by downcasting themselves because they can never be exactly as white Americans and they are still part of the same Native American community.

We have seen that before the arrival of the colonizer, many Native Americans were tied to their clan. Nevertheless, the colonization have created some disorders inside the Native American community. It has favored the erosion of moral values, the separation of family members and the creation of an economic system which has brought many Native Americans into dire poverty. We will now analyze how this situation has contributed to social conflict.

## **II-THE SOCIAL DISORDER INDUCED BY THE SOCIAL CONFLICT**

The colonizers were not at the beginning welcomed. The social conflict has led to a war of colonization. They face Native American’s resistance. But Native Americans lost the war. Renee Beaulieu-Banks et al acknowledge:

An example of such laws and legislation include the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (Cave, 2003; Fenelon, Trafzer & Trafzer, 2014; Lewis, 2011; Talbot, 2006). As the name clearly states, this law created by the United States government intended to remove Indians from native lands. As a result of this law, massive numbers of American Indians forced to relocate to foreign geographical locations (Thornton, 1987). What cannot be contained in the pages of this paper is the result of this military action causing disease, starvation, and the extreme harsh conditions that destroyed the ways of life for the American Indians, particularly the obligatory spiritual and cultural connections American Indians had for Mother Earth (...). Forced migration continued into the 20th century, as the federal government’s assimilation policies relocated around 160,000 American Indians from tribal reservations to urban environments throughout the 1950’s (The Relocation Act of 1956). (...) In addition to removal from the land, the United States

Government utilized strategies to destroy American Indian ways of life through deliberate destruction of plants and animals used for food and medicine. As Thornton (1987) elaborates, destroying crops was a strategy universally adopted by European troop commanders warring against American Indians to destroy the tribes' food supplies. The destruction of the buffalo also resulted in vast starvation and the social and cultural collapse of many Plains tribes (*American Indian Perspectives on Healing from Historical Trauma: An Indigenous Inquiry*, 2018 :15-16).

According to Renee Beaulieu-Banks et al, the war fought by White Americans has destroyed the Native Americans and the loss of their land. The military action caused the death of many Native Americans. They were also killed by the collateral effects of the war of colonization : disease, starvation, and the extreme harsh conditions. The Europeans troops destroy purposely the Native American food supplies, plants and animals that they used for food and medicine. A legal aspect was given to Native American's removal from their land with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, voted by the Congress. American Indians forced to relocate to foreign geographical locations such as reservation. Which cultural change this situation has brought ?

## II-1- The cultural changes

Far from their original lands, Native Americans feel no longer attached to the land of their ancestors and their culture. For example, picturing Rocky's eager desire to go abroad, the narrator of *Ceremony*, testifies : « He [Rocky] was planning where he would go after high school ; he was already talking about the places he would live, and the reservation wasn't one of them » (*Ceremony*, 77). In this foreshadowing the Rocky is exemplified as one of the many Native Americans who dream about flying away from the harsh conditions of living in the reservations in order to improve their social conditions. They are not attached again to their Native American culture and imitate the colonizer's mentality.

The colonizer has introduced a new culture characterized by a new way of speaking, eating, dressing. Native Americans have reacted to this cultural change in various ways. Some have assimilated those cultural changes without any opposition or conflict. This the case for instance of Ku'oosh' :

He spoke softly, using the old dialect full of sentences that were involuted with explanations of their own origins, as if nothing the old man said were his own but all had been said before and he was only there to repeat it. Tayo had to strain to catch the meaning, dense with place names he has never heard. His language was childish, interspersed with English words, and he could feel shame tightening in his heart. (*Ceremony*, 34).

Ku'oosh described here as a man in a dilemma, facing an internal conflict brought to him by white civilization. He doesn't know which language to speak. He tries to speak English which is not his mother tongue awkwardly for the narrator says: "Tayo had to strain to catch the meaning, dense with place names he has never heard." Ku'oosh appears then like a man manipulated by occult powers, whom freedom of speech is controlled in the comparison "He spoke softly, using the old dialect full of sentences that were involuted with explanations of their own origins, as if nothing the old man said were his own but all had been said before and he was only there to repeat it." Ku'oosh looks like a possessed person who is speaking not out of his own originality, but have a double-voice for he is speaking his own dialect mixed with the colonizer's language English. The narrator is making fun of the awkward way old Ku'oosh, a Native American medicine man speaks English, mixing it with his old dialect. In fact the

mixture he speaks, is a hybrid language, a parody of the colonizer's way of speaking. Colonization has a power for it has created in his unconscious the need to speak English, even if it is a broken English. In fact, there is a link between the unconscious and the language that we speak for Mary Klages acknowledges:

The unconscious, for Lacan, is constituted by signifiers, unconscious is structured like a language," describing it as endless intersecting chains of signifiers in constant circulation, where there exist no signifieds to create a stable sign or definitive meaning. The ego or self is produced when the child enters into the Symbolic realm; the ego is subordinated to the rules of language, in obedience to the stabilization of the Phallus as center, and exists then as a subject within language, subject to the rules of language. (*Key Terms in Literary Theory*, 2012: 41-42)

From Mary Klages' standpoint, we can conclude that Old Ku'oosh that internalized the colonizer as the master in his unconscious and the need to see the world around him, and the represent this world in the same way that the White American does. He finds then compulsory to be subordinated to the rules of the master' language and as the same time he views as a betrayal the fact of forgetting totally his own language. The case of Old Ku'oosh is the illustrates the internal conflict that many Native Americans who have become a kind of hybrid person, a mixed product of western and Native American civilization face. Assimilated to the western civilization, they are lost, alienated to their origins and have to deal with an identity crisis . Shrikaut B. Sawant states:

Mimicry is an important term in the post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized (...) Mimic men are not slavish. They also have proved to menace the colonizers (... It is a weapon of anti-colonial; civility, an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience. The "hybridization" is a kind of negotiation, both political and cultural, between the colonizer and the colonized (...) Hybridity being an integral part of postcolonial discourse bridges the gap between West and East. (*Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance*, 2012:312) .

For Shrikaut B. Sawant, one can also interpret Ku'oosh's awkward way of speaking English as an anti-colonial discourse intended to rebel against the colonizer's defined norms of civility and expression. Consequently, this hybrid language spoken by Ku'oosh can be considered as a subtle way to negotiate the linguistic rules set by the master and to speak freely she likes. Here+The narrator is+does not suggesting a complete assimilation or blind acceptance, neither nor a blunt rejection of the western civilization, but a caution adaption to +this foreign culture in order to claim the Native American identity and the will not to forsake it. Ku'oosh for warns about the danger of letting White Americans make Native American lose their culture (L.M.Silko.1977.p.239): "When they [the colonizers] finish, you watch yourself from a distance and you can't even cry- not even for yourself" (*Ceremony*, 239). In this metaphor: "you watch yourself from a distance", the distance is not literally in meters. It makes reference to alienation, the cultural gap that can grow between Native Americans and their community if they who are completely assimilated accept everything from the White Americans and reject as bad everything from their culture. How can assimilation reduce such distance? How can it reduce social conflicts and war with the colonizer?

## II-2- Preventing social conflicts

America is today is multicultural society with Native Americans, Hispanic, Arabs, Jews, African American again. Today the colonization period is over and Native American are considered as Americans. In this new context of post-colonization, how can Native Americans can be able to live in peace with other cultural groups and prevent social conflicts? Olena Gorelova suggests:

Arnold Krupat, nevertheless, developed a whole different theory on interpretation of Native American literature in *Ethnocriticism* and *Red Matters*. He argues that for Native anticolonial projects to succeed the position of nationalism is not enough. Cosmopolitanism needs to be added, i.e. the ability to translate between different bodies of knowledge. Lundquist supports Krupat's idea by stressing that postmodernism is based on difference not bipolarity and suggests that American Indian literature should by no means be based on oppositions, therefore, bipolarity. Lundquist states that "nationalists believe that the multiplicity of Native cultures can serve the ends of difference," and according to cosmopolitans, literature is supposed to be based on multiplicity not duality (Lundquist). (*Postmodernism, Native American Literature and Issues of Sovereignty*, P.94)

Here Olena Gorelova quotes two literature theorists. The first one Arnold Krupat, a specialist of the Native American literature argues that Native American admits that it is not much efficient alternative to be radical in their anticolonial position. The second one support the first one viewpoint by adding that the true "nationalists [among Native Americans] believe that the multiplicity of Native cultures can serve the ends of difference,". Consequently they consider the cultural differences existing between White Americans and Native Americans not as an unnecessary source of conflicts or tension, but as an asset to capitalize on. It seems that is also that option recommended by Olena Gorelova that Ku'oosh has also chosen in *Ceremony* by mixing English, a characteristic of the White American culture with the Native American language. The strategy used by Ku'oosh is called Henry Louis Gates as the "signifyin monkey." which is opposed to "signifying" promoted by the colonizer. Mary Klages explains :

Gates plays with Saussure's idea of signification, which is the association of one signifier with one signified, to talk about a specifically African (and African American) use of language called "signifying" or "signifyin." Signifyin' in this context means playing a language game, usually of ritual insults, where one person tries to dominate another by coming up with the cleverest rhymes and rhythms. Rap, Hip-hop, and "yo' mama" jokes are all examples of such signifyin'. Gates notes that this form of verbal battle belongs to groups that are otherwise disempowered, and who use language in the absence of physical force. He traces the figure of the "signifyin' monkey" in two directions: to the racist stereotype of Africans and African Americans as monkeys or apes, and to African mythology and religious beliefs. In doing the latter he argues that literary theorists need to look beyond just the Western Greco-Roman traditions of rhetoric to explore other cultures' uses of language. (*Key Terms in Literary Theory*, 2012:19;37-40)

Mary Klages observes that by mixing English spoken in a broken way with his native dialect, Ku'oosh is subverting the master's language. He is playing a language game, usually of ritual insults, trying to dominate his master by coming up with the cleverest rhymes and rhythms.

While, inviting then Native American to use peaceful strategies in dealing with the colonizer and be balanced in their approach of the white American culture, the narrator denounces ~~denounced~~ the White American's instrumentalisation of religion. For instance, she points at the fact that Native Americans who are have been ~~christianized~~~~christianized~~ are forced to change their names, often forget their Native American name. [The character of Tayo typifies this change in name imposed on the Indian](#) ~~He (L.M.Silko.1977.p.16):~~ notices:

It had been a long time since he [Tayo] had thought about having a name (...) But the fifth world had become entangled with European names, the names of rivers, the hills, the names of animals and plants- all of creation suddenly had two names: Christianity separated the people from themselves; it tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone, because Jesus Christ would save only the individual soul; Jesus Christ was not like Mother who loved and cared for them as her children as her family (*Ceremony*, 68)

In this lampoon, the narrator makes fun of the fact that being used to their christian names, many Native Americans like Tayo, as if they were suffering from a kind of amnesia, suddenly forget their Native American name, symbol of their identity. Keeping his satirical style, The narrator adds in the amplification: "But the fifth world had become entangled with European names, the names of rivers, the hills, the names of animals and plants- all of creation suddenly had two names", the narrator makes the satire who strive to establish a new civilization by replacing all that were existing before in local communities. He complains for instance about the fact new names given to humans, animals, plants, rivers, hills and all creation. It is as if all the cosmos that was existing before is recreated again by the colonizer who appears to be like the center of the Universe, a demigod.

Religion has also been used as powerful tools by the colonizer to make Native Americans more docile and willing to be submissive. The narrator is worrying about the fact those who have accepted this new western faith have found again difficult to love the other members of community. Formerly, what were the characteristics of the Native Americans' religion? Leslie Marmon Silko explains:

Thus Native American literature, like the life and culture of which it is a part, is centuries old, more than thirty thousand years perhaps, and its roots lie deep in the land. The ancient Pueblo people called the earth the Mother Creator of all things in this world; and along with all life on earth, we originate from its depths. So long as the human consciousness remains within the hills and canyons, the plants, and the sky, the term landscape, as it is in the English language, is misleading. (*Los Angeles Times Sunday magazine*, 1994:19)

According to Leslie Marmon Silko, for Native Americans rivers, waterfalls, mountains, humans, animals, plants, hills, in short and all creation is not casual. They are the abodes of spirits and sacred parts of their religion. Then, they are feared and worship like a god. They have been taught since childhood to consider the Earth as the Mother creator of humans and the Sky as their Father. But what does happen with the introduction of the colonizer's religion in the Native American community? They t to see other human beings, white Americans

Leslie Marmon Silko's narrator observes; "it tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone, because Jesus Christ would save only the individual soul; Jesus Christ was not like Mother who loved and cared for them as her children as her family" In this paradox contrasts the fact that the Mother Earth moves Native American to live in community, to cultivate moral value like brotherhood and love while Jesus Christ who his worshipped by the colonizer has taught him how to kill innocents ones, to be violent and to be selfish. Here the narrator makes the satire of the colonizer's religion and show its limits. For him, it is advisable that religion not be used to push people to hate and fight each other. Religion must elevate people's value and move their to love, unity and brotherhood.

Finally, we can notice that in *Ceremony*, Leslie Silko makes the satire of colonization. She is concerned about the fact White Americans has taken Native American lands, destroy the Native American family unity by separating its member, eroding their value. Nevertheless, Leslie Silko does not promote the use of violence in order to overthrow the colonizer. She advocates for the complete integration of the Native Americans in the American Nation, the recognition of their rights, identity and culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BARRY Peter, 1995, *Beginning Theory*, Manchester: UP, pp.182-194
- Bill ASHCROFT, 2003, Geneth GRIFFITHS and Helen TIFFIN. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. USA: Routledge, pp.10-20.
- Claudia EPPERT, 2016, *Rethorics of Ethical Reading and Composition*. vol 24.3, pp 729-733.
- Fred BEAUVAIS, 1998, *American Indians and Alcohol*. USA: np. Vol 22. N°4, pp 254-256.
- Gyan PRAKASH, 1994, "Sulbatern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", *American Historical Review*, pp. 1475-1490.
- Kyoko MATSUNABA, 2014, "Leslie Marmon Silko and Nuclear Dissent in the American Southwest". *The Japanese Journal of American Study*. N°25. pp. 73-75
- Leslie, Marmon SILKO, 1977, *Ceremony*, USA: Penguin Group.
- Leslie, Marmon SILKO, 1996, "Yellow Woman and a Beauty of Spirit" 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, *Los Angeles Times Sunday magazine*, P.19;35-40 .
- Mary KLAGES, 2012, *Key Terms in Literary Theory*, British Library, London, pp. 41-42.
- Olena GORELOVA, *Postmodernism, Native American Literature and Issues of Sovereignty*, USA : Montana State University, p.94.
- Panneersel VAN, 1999, "Myths and Discourse in the Structural Hermeneutics of Levi-Strauss" *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol XXVI. N°1, pp. 1-15.
- Paul, HEIKE, 2014, "The Myths That Made America". *An Introduction to American Studies*, pp.12-20.
- Renee Beaulieu-Banks , Kim Sundeen et Kyra Christopherson, 2018, *American Indian Perspectives on Healing from Historical Trauma: An Indigenous Inquiry*, USA : St. Catherine University. pp 19-23.
- Robert A. Foley, 2001, "Towards a Theory of Modern Human Origins: Geography, Demography, and Diversity In Recent Human Evolution", *American Journal of Physical*, pp.3; 189.
- Shrikaut B. SAWANT, 2012, *Postcolonial Theory: Meaning and Significance*, pp.312.
- Susan STEBBINS, 2013, *Native Peoples of North America*, USA: Open SUNY Textbooks, P.59