

Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

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Over the years, after wars and famine, peace-time and floods, few things have persisted to survive. Society, art, and other intangible objects as these are survivors of two millennia of human “progress”. Intelligent concepts and premises have also survived, as have emotions and morals. Even as these outstanding examples of humanity have survived, so have some less affirmative ideals lived on through our fore-bearers. Cultural, ideological, religious, and political supremacy are still about today, as much as they were 50, 100, and even 5,000 years ago. In a shorter context, racism, the “cockroach” of human mentality, is still alive. It is the immortal insect that will live on as long as people tell their children to stay away from strangers, and others as equally unknown and different from the norm. Actively, society attempts to do away with it, while unconsciously, and quite willingly, hand feed its mandibles ourselves. There are, however, ever so few individuals in the world, that work to illustrate these infesting notions, and bring them to light, [utilizing](#) some of the constructive assets of the psyche, mainly arts and literature. One such person is [Leslie](#) Marmon Silko, a Native American author, and a target of such racist practices. In her book [Ceremony](#), the topic of race and culture differences are dealt with thoroughly, as are the views that humanity should band together, or should accept that they are already

tied together by fate, and face the problems that face every man. She utilizes inherent prejudices to draw lines between specific character groups, such as half-breeds, full-bloods, and quite otherworldly personalities, and then turns the readers intolerances about, bring to their notice that there are all characters are important to the “web”. Quite simply, Silko re-educates the reader by displaying equality through inequality and interconnection, while carrying them across time, planes of existence, and through their own minds.

Within the structure of Ceremony prose and poetry, story and narrative, are shaped to fit the challenges of Silko’s vision of racial equality. Her world of special consciousness is, in a very special word from the book, “fragile.” The old man Ku’oosh explains the meaning of fragile to Tayo, who is seeking (almost constantly) an understanding of the implications of rit...

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...in, yet are lost when attempting to claim them. Silko reminds her readers that it may only be a ceremony, a key to consciousness, that would help us restore the fragile world with the acceptance of our interconnection.

Annotated Bibliography

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The Book deals with Female influence in contemporary Native American tradition, specifically selected for Allen’s insight into Leslie Marmon Silko’s analogy in her book *Ceremony*

Brice, Jennifer. “Earth as Mother, Earth as Other in Novels by Silko and Hogan.” *Critique*. Winter 1998 pg 127-139.

An article about the more earthlike qualities of people, and how Silko personifies the earth to show how people and the earth are related, and how people are related to each other.

Larson, Charles. *American Indian Fiction*. University of New Mexico Press. Albuquerque, NM. 1978

Insight on many Native American fiction writers and their works, specifically used for the work on *Ceremony*, and his views on racial, and internal conflict in the novel.

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