

QUESTIONS ON DIASPORA: HYBRIDISM, IDENTITY AND BORDERS – A STUDY ON LESLIE MARMON SILKO’S CEREMONY

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- **ABSTRACT:** The diversity of migratory displacements has opened space to new views on the concept of diaspora, often associated with the Jewish dispersion. Multiple transnational movements have disclosed extensive inquiries into aspects of migratory phenomena, mainly after decolonization processes. Peoples from ex-colonies have come to their “mother land” in search for better social and economical status. Nevertheless, at their new home, they come upon a dystopia which forces them to contend against barriers to their inclusion in this new society and to face situations on which their own identity and sense of belonging are under consideration. Therefore, the concept of hybridism is investigated on this paper, aiming to discuss the positioning of these disrupted individuals on an arena of cultural tension. This paper, however, goes further on theories of dispersion to include the Native Americans as a historically diasporic group in their own homeland. Leslie Marmon Silko’s first novel *Ceremony* is the background to discuss the fundamental theories of borders, cultural encounters and hybridism, whose influences on the construction of displaced peoples’ cultural identity shed light on the reasons why a broader interpretation of the term diaspora is to be taken into account.
- **KEYWORDS:** Diáspora. Hybridism. Cultural identity.

Transnational movements during modern and post-modern times have demanded, and opened space for, a new definition of the concept of diaspora. The origin of this premise has its roots on the movement of the Jewish people away from ancient palestine, but theorists have reinterpreted, “enlarged” or still “reinvented” the term diaspora to encounter more recent migratory communities that also share diasporic elements. James Clifford states that “we should be able to recognize the strong entailment of Jewish history on the language of diaspora without making that history a definitive model”. Clifford mentions Safran to describe his definition of diasporas based on six basic steps², but he contests the necessity for grouping

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² Safran (1991, p.83-84) defines diasporas as expatriate minority communities 1. that are dispersed

to cover all Safran's steps to be considered a diasporic body. For instance, Clifford discards the need for a real or symbolic homeland through which diasporas are articulated and he states that "[...] a shared, ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation, or resistance may be as important as the projection of a specific origin [...]" (CLIFFORD, 1997, p.250). Therefore we can understand that diasporas are more strongly linked to a dramatic changing in a people's life: people that for some reason lost their homes and have to negotiate their space someplace else. The fundamental approach is that there is always a sense of community inscribed on a diaspora and this community travels and establishes its roots elsewhere.

In this precise sense, Avtar Brah (1996, p.182) points out that "[...] at the heart of the notion of diaspora is the image of a journey. [...] diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'". Considering that the idea of space seems to be the strongest notions on those definitions, some peculiarities of the Native American dispersion is to be taken into account before it seems so paradoxical an idea of diaspora linked to such communities. Indigenous people have not been expelled from their land to live elsewhere. Actually they have been annihilated by European settlers or have been confined to tiny land portions of their very same, once vast, territory, called reservations. It is a history of loss, suffering and displacement somehow, which are characteristics of a diaspora but it sure has its specifics. As already stated, Native American people have been subjugated by diasporic communities from European countries. They lost their sovereignty, their freedom, and they had no rights within this new community that took their land. So, by analogy, we may think of a "historical diaspora" as Native Americans were put aside of this new, dominant society who did not consider them as historical elements but savages living in a mythical time. Furthermore, the land around the native people is now a "subverted" land as it is different from what it used to be. White people build their houses and fences around it to keep the natives off. Dwelling a diverse land from their ancestors' and leading alternative ways of life with people that share opposite views on nature, spirituality, sense of community and tradition made Native Americans into peoples struggling for survival in a transformed landscape. On this account Clifford observes that,

[...] united by similar claims to "firstness" on the land and by common histories of decimation and marginality, these alliances often deploy diasporist visions of return to an original place – a land commonly articulated in visions of nature, divinity, mother earth and the ancestors. (CLIFFORD, 1997, p. 253).

from an original "center" to at least two "peripheral" places; 2. that maintain a "memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland"; 3. that "believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host country"; 4. that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return, when the time is right; 5. that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and 6. whose consciousness and solidarity as a group are "importantly defined" by this continuing relationship with the homeland.

Therefore, in a sense, those people were expelled from their land, at least the way it used to be, what makes it possible to pinpoint some diasporic aspects in Native American communities as common losses and the nostalgia for an environment of impossible coming back. Besides, different Indian cultures had to amalgamate into hybrid communities in an attempt to become stronger and fit to survive in a foe's land and, so to speak, started sharing a common history. Likewise tribal people had to leave their reservation to find work in bigger towns and cities. They may be assigned "diasporic identities" (CLIFFORD, 1997, p.255), as they had to enter a space dominated by white people away from home (even so it doesn't represent such a long spatial distance). The formation of a new community is instituted by these dispersed tribal people, which shows us another diasporic aspect on indigenous communities when their people literally leave their homes on the land assigned to them. A sad vision of their situation is given by Leslie Marmon Silko (1977, p.108-115) in her novel *Ceremony*:

They walked like survivors, with dull vacant eyes, their fists clutching the coins he'd thrown to them. They were Navajos, but he had seen Zunis and Lagunas and Hopis there too, walking alone or in twos and threes along the dusty Gallup streets. He didn't know how they got there in the first place, from the reservation to Gallup, but some must have had jobs for a while [...] where they stayed until they got laid off or fired. [...] It seemed to Tayo that they would go home, sooner or later, when they were hungry and dirty and broke; [...] But Gallup was a dangerous place, and by the time they realized what happened to them, they must have believed it was too late to get home.

We may observe that distance (the same country or even the same state) and time are intensified by the gap between the dominant culture and the natives. The losses related in the passage above has to do with dignity and cultural pride, which destroyed the subject and made coming home into an ever procrastinated dream. It is "too late" to get home because they have been destroyed, they failed.

William Safran (1991, p.92) observes that "members of diaspora communities are by turns mistreated by the host country as 'strangers within the gates'". As the white settlers in the United States deployed the native as the owners of the land, they came to be the indigenous' hosts. The reservations in which the Indians currently live, are like some kinds of gates imposed by the white, with the goal of locking the "strangers" in. Still the way these people have been mistreated is exemplified by the excerpt quoted above (the place is *dangerous*; they realized *what happened to them*). James Clifford (1997, p.253) declares that "[...] tribal people are not diasporas; their sense of rootedness in the land is precisely what diasporic people have lost." Nevertheless he also states that "we can speak of diasporic dimension of contemporary tribal life". Hence it leads to the idea of "diasporic dimensions" in tribal life after the Europeans' settlement in the United States because although

the physical territory is there it is now re-inscribed with alien words that cannot be “read” the same way. Likewise, Native American narratives may display elements linked to the diasporic condition, which involve questions on identity, border and hybridity, inherent to diaspora issue. Narratives are powerful weapons to show the “minority condition” in which a people is inscribed and their resentment at the dominant people’s outrageous practices against them. Clifford (1997, p.244-245) observes that “[...] it is not easy to avoid the slippage between diaspora as a theoretical concept, diasporic ‘discourses’ and distinct historical ‘experiences’ of diaspora [...] that is always embedded in particular maps and histories.”. This idea can be completed by the following passage on Silko’s *Ceremony*.

[...]
 I will tell you something about stories,
 [he said]
 They aren’t just entertainment.
 Don’t be fooled.
 They are all we have, you see,
 all we have to fight off
 illness and death.
 You don’t have anything
 if you don’t have the stories.
 Their evil is mighty
 but it can’t stand up to our stories.
 So they try to destroy the
 stories
 let the stories be confused
 or forgotten.
 They would like that
 They would be happy
 Because we would be defenseless then [...]
 (SILKO, 1977, p. 2).

We may perceive the term “stories”, which are narratives, as a way of establishing otherness. The author employs “their” and “they” in opposition to “our” and “we”. In a similar way, Gloria Anzaldúa mentions the “cuentos” (stories) as a way of showing the energy and power the words have. She states that history builds identity and she emphasizes the xamanistic power of the writer as he or she has the supernatural power to cause change (it refers to the term “shape changer”³). It is possible to build up borders through narratives and also to construct an identity, express cultural values and tell historical accounts. At this point it is important to

³ Gloria Anzaldúa (2000) “[...] in the sense of a shaman—healing through words, using words as a medium for expressing the flights of the soul, communing with the spirit, having access to these other realities or worlds.”

quote Jan Mohamed and David Lloyd (1990, p.3) and their discussion on minority discourse:

[...] when Europeans come together to discuss their various national literatures, they are seen as being able to communicate coherently across linguistic barriers [...] in contrast, when ethnic minorities and third world peoples want to have similar discussions, their dialogue is represented [...] as incoherent Babble [...] Western humanists find it inconceivable that Native-Americans, Africans and others who have been brutalized by Euro-American imperialism and marginalized by its hegemony can have anything relevant to say to each other.

Therefore narratives, as stated before, are resistance means against the hegemonic power to show that there is much to be said, better still, there is much that must be said. Minority discourse arises as a method of endurance and assertion.

Avtar Brah (1996, p.198) declares: “Inscribed within the idea of diaspora is the notion of border”, and she continues, “Borders: arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic; territories to be patrolled against those whom they construct as outsiders, aliens, the others”. Nevertheless borders can be both material and psychological constructions and so Avtar Brah (1996, p.198) mentions Gloria Anzaldúa’s words to show these multiple forms of borders. She invokes the concept of the border also as a metaphor for

[...] psychological, sexual, spiritual, cultural, class and racialised boundaries [...] Borders are arbitrary constructions. Hence, in a sense they are always metaphors. But far from being mere abstractions of a concrete reality, metaphors are part of the discursive materiality of power relations.

Leslie Marmon Silko on her essay “Fences Against Freedom” shows us examples of boundaries by telling us her bad experiences on the Border Patrols established on the United States. She clearly shows the violence imposed by border patrols’ agents: “In fact, they stop people with indio-hispanic characteristics, and they target cars in which white people travel with brown people.” (1999, p.1). We can also find examples of both “physical” and “metaphorical” borders on Silko’s *ceremony*:

First time you walked down the street in Gallup or Albuquerque, you knew. Don’t lie. You knew right way. The war was over. The uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she’s real careful not to touch your hand when she counts ou your change [...] (SILKO, 1977, p.42).

The extract above is a declaration given by the protagonist Tayo, a Second World War Indian veteran, of the difference in treatment from white people towards

Native American during and after the war. In the course of the war Native American people were treated as well as any other American official. Nevertheless, after the war, without their uniforms, boundaries were raised again against the Native Americans as they were back to their “ordinary status” and were not at service of the United States anymore. Thus, those represent psychological borders, metaphors used by the white to show the Indians they are the white’s others, their “aliens”; these are artifices to keep Indians apart from them: nothing but a border. Again, through the character Tayo, Silko (1977, p.187-188) shows us an example of boundary construction, not so metaphorical this time:

He [Tayo] rode miles across dry lake flats and over rocky *cerros* until he came to a high fence of heavy-gauge steel mesh with three strands of barbed wire across the top. It was a fence that could hold the spotted cattle. The white man, Floyd Lee, called it a wolf-proof fence; but he had poisoned and shot all the wolves in the hills, and the people knew what the fence was for: a thousand dollars a mile to keep Indians and Mexicans out; a thousand dollars a mile to lock the mountain in steel wire, to make the land his.

The fence in the passage above is not a perimeter instituted by the government with border patrol agents and everything, but it is clearly an obstacle understood by ‘the people’ (Indians and Mexicans) as a fence to keep them away. Again, nothing but a border. Avtar Brah also discusses the concept of margin writing and how it is important to elucidate aspects of “border encounters”. She quotes Emily Hicks to make that clearer by saying that using the term “border writing” as a synonym for literary texts which allow the reader to enter a world of new experiences both linguistic and cross-cultural. We can experience these border writings’ practices in *Ceremony*. There are embedded texts in the shape of poetry throughout the novel, which are tales, oral stories told among Indian nations. The author presents the readers with an opportunity of getting to know these hardly spread stories, which constitute, in the book, a way of asseverating or telling in an Indian way the story being told in the novel through English language. Suffering, trials, way of living and moments of peace and joy experienced by the characters in the book, these are representations of the Indian community, reassured and confirmed through tales of Native American wisdom.

[...]
 From that time on
 they were
 so busy
 playing around with that
 Ck’o’yo magic
 they neglected the mother corn altar
 [...]

our mother
 Nau’ts’ity’i
 was very angry
 over this
 [...]
 “I’ve had enough of that.”
 She said,
 [...]
 So she took
 the plants and grass from them.
 No baby animals were born
 She took the
 rainclouds with her.
 (SILKO, 2000, p.48-49).

This extract shows the danger of letting oneself be deceived by “magic”, what can be interpreted as a metaphor to the white’s speech, when they talk about, for example, of the marvels of fighting in the war, as it is portrayed in the book, or all the advantages of “their” world (a world imposed to the Indians and sometimes aimed by some of them). There is also, in the poem, a reference to times of drought faced by the Indians as a result of destruction to nature caused by white people. White people brought their “magic” to the land, and the consequences of that could not be avoided by the Indians.⁴

[...]
 They will bring terrible diseases
 the people have known
 Entire tribes will die out
 covered with festered sores
 shitting blood
 vomiting blood.
 [...]

The verse above has a connection with the episode when smallpox was spread among Native American people through infested blankets given to the Indians under the leadership of Andrew Jackson. Therefore we can say Leslie Marmom Silko tells us an Indian story that denounces the Indigenous hard life and the condition that was imposed to them by putting into context traditional Indian stories.

⁴ “The loggers shot the bears and mountain lions for sport. And it was then the Laguna people understood that the land had been taken, because they couldn’t stop these white people from coming to destroy the animals and the land. It was then too that the holy men at Laguna and Acoma warned the people that the balance of the world had been disturbed and the people could expect droughts and harder days to come.” (SILKO, 1977, p.186).

Another issue that is brought into light when we talk about diasporas is the question of identity. Of course, it is important to re-emphasize here that Native American people do not represent an actual diaspora in a broad sense, as discussed previously on this paper, but Indian culture shares diasporic dimensions and as they occupy nowadays the position of a subjugated culture, some terms embedded in diasporas do affect Indigenous populations. Stuart Hall points out the voice of the one who speaks or writes by remarking that the writer occupies a position of enunciation, demonstrating his or her point of view. Hence the one who speaks or writes is “positioned” because what is written or spoken, is always “in context”. The author who produces in the name of a marginalized people, reunites in his/her work “common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’” (HALL, 2000, p.22). Hall also discusses a second view on cultural identity. He argues that

[...] far from being grounded in mere “recovery” of the past, which is waiting to be found, and, which when found will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (HALL, 2000, p. 23).

This definition will encounter his concepts of “being” and “becoming; the first talks about a “crystallized” past, the roots of one’s culture. The latter refers to one’s cultural identity, which is always changing, as Hall (2000, p.23) proposes “Cultural identities [...] like everything which is historical [...] undergo constant transformation”. James Clifford (1997, p.255) observes that

Like tribal assertions of sovereignty, diasporic identifications reach beyond mere ethnic status within the composite, liberal state” and he continues “this stronger difference, this sense of being a ‘people’ with historical roots and destinies outside the time/space of the host nation is not separatist (rather, separatist desires are just one of its moments).

Native American bonds are reinforced by the facts that not only their land, but also the way they view the universe itself, was stolen from them, and on this basis they construct their cultural identity. Although we cannot define tribal people as diasporas we can find some diasporic features inside their society as they constitute, as most diasporic societies, a minority inside a more powerful nation. And recognizing roots and destinies which refers to the articulation of difference within a dominant culture and to the construction of a people’s identity has nothing to do with separatism; it is just a way of asserting difference because a dominated nation has divergent political and social articulations within the dominant culture.

In *Ceremony*, Silko depicts historical roots and cultural bonds shared by the Pueblos. In her book she shows how the Native American are “narrated” by the dominant white culture and how they build up their own identity. The voice of

the White comes in direct and indirect speech or still can be notice through the characters’ speech or the narration itself. It is always a voice that narrates Indians as an ignorant people, “back in time”. They criticize Indians’ customs, traditions and beliefs. Rocky is an Indian character in the book who is fond of sports and studies. His teachers used to tell him “Nothing can stop you now except one thing: don’t let the people at home hold you back.” And the narrative continues “Rocky understood what he had to do to win in the white outside world” (SILKO, 1977, p.51). We can infer from the passage that what the teachers mean by “hold back” is that Indian culture can “trap” an intelligent Indian boy in their “backward” culture. “You know what the Army doctor said: ‘No Indian medicine’. Old Ku’oosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust. The doctor won’t like it” (SILKO, 1977, p.34). This excerpt refers to the episode when Tayo, who is ill, is not getting any better. He left the veterans’ hospital but still feels sick at home although his aunt would rather follow the doctors’ instructions “Shamed by what they taught her in school about the deplorable ways of the Indian people.” (SILKO, 1977, p.68).

From all these passages we can realize how Indians’ identity is shaped through white discourse: deplorable, losers, ignorant people. On Euro-centred account Native American identity is constant, linear, frozen as a truth that only the White may hold. Nonetheless, we may perceive each character in the book with much more elaboration than a flat structure. Initially, Rocky, referred above, is an Indian boy who wants to ‘win’ in the White’s world. He believes entirely on scientific books written by white people, he does not follow Indian rituals after slaughtering a deer and he is the one who decides to fight in the war, as it is for him a way of leaving reservation and getting to know new places among white people. Auntie does not deny openly Indian values to people at home, but she goes to Christian church and is much concerned about the way both Native and white people view her family. She wants her son Rocky to be successful in the White’s world under the White’s values. We can say that these two characters refer to Frantz Fanon’s first moment in the search for an identity, when the “native claims he is equal of the settler” (FANON, 1963, p.44). Next, Emo is also a Second World war Indian veteran. He wants “revenge” on white people. He is worked up about was made of the Native American who fought in the war when it was over. Treated as “first class citizens” and going out with blonde American girls during the war, he rebels against the difference of treatment when they are no longer wearing official uniforms “They took our land, they took everything; so let’s get our hands on white women!” (SILKO, 1977, p.55). These are Emo’s words and they exemplify the way he negotiates his identity, which alludes to Fanon’s second moment: Emo wants to strike back to the white as a way of occupying the dominant position (“[...] he (the Native) is ready to fight to be more than the settler”, (SILKO, 1977, p.44)). Finally, Tayo is the protagonist and he is nor miming nor fighting, otherwise negotiating

his space and identity in the world. In the beginning of the story he expresses his “invisibility”, a metaphor for the lack of identity he feels while he is being narrated by others, as if he were “white smoke”. Something so amorphous wouldn’t have the need to think or fight for anything else in the world, not even his identity. When he leaves hospital and gets into actual contact with people again, he realizes it would be difficult to go on as “white smoke”, so his invisibility started opening space for the construction of his “self”. It is worth to reproduce Gloria Anzaldua’s words: “I am visible – see this Indian face – yet I am visible. [...] They’d like to think I have melted in the pot . But I haven’t, we haven’t”. (ANZALDÚA, 1987, p.86). Tayo knows by this time he is not invisible, but his visibility turns out to be a profound search for his and his people’s place in the world. Anyway Tayo’s identity is inherent in the question of hybridism, which will start being discussed from now on.

The concept of hybridism has its roots on biological term to define “[...] the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it, of human parents of different races, half-breed.” (YOUNG, 1995, p.6). But the concept that interests us here is that of cultural hybridism. That refers to the encounter of two or more cultures where a dialogue takes place. A certain tension occurs when the culture of the dominant meets the subjugated culture. As Homi Bhabha (1993, p.22) points out:

Hybridity becomes the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other, enabling the critic to trace complex movements of disarming alterity in the colonial text.

Robert Young explains that “Bakhtin’s intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant cultural power” (YOUNG, 1995, p.23). Cultural aspects of the dominant culture are viewed in a subverted way once they are being appropriated and translated by the ones the imperialistic power considers as its others. Young (1995, p.23) also refers to Bhabha’s third space, which he defines as

[...] the hybrid moment of political change. Here the transformational value of change lies in the re-articulation or translation of elements that are neither the one (unitary working class) *nor* the other (the politics of gender) but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both.

What is there to be said about the elements that elaborate this translation space? We can start by talking about Stuart Hall’s concept of a “familiar strange”: The individual who feels himself/herself both inside and outside the dominant and his/her own culture. The hybrid subjects will dialogue with the cultures they are subjected to and open a “third space” where this dialogism occurs. That is exemplified by Anzaldua’s “the

mestiza”: “From this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollination, an ‘alien’ consciousness is presently in the making – a new *mestiza* consciousness, una consciencia de mujer. It is a consciousness of the bordelands.” (ANZALDÚA, 1987, p.76). If we transfer the word “mujer” to “hybrid subject” we can have a broader comprehension of what Anzaldua means to transmit. She continues “The mestiza’s dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness” (ANZALDÚA, 1987, p. 77). As the hybrid element is always somewhere, “in-between” cultures, restlessness is part of this process of negotiating his or her space and of translating cultural aspects which are always in the process of acquisition.

Bakhtin defends the novel as a privileged genre to reunite the double-voice present in the hybrid individual, who is going to speak for a whole social group. Bakhtin states that “The novelistic hybrid is an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of another, the carving-out of a living image of another language.” (BAKHTIN apud YOUNG, 1995, p.22). This reunion of images of language is well situated in Silko’s *Ceremony* as it is a novel that brings a story of Native Americans written in English and besides that includes embedded texts which tells us clan stories also in English language as well as English is being used to give an account of aspects of the white culture through Indian’s eyes. A strong expression on a hybrid individual is the character Tayo who is a “half-breed”. He is of mixed ancestry: Indian mother, white (unknown) father. He is not well accepted neither in the dominant culture as this kind of ancestry could only take place through peripheral relationships among the white and Indians (which arouses sniggers among white viewers when Tayo passes by), nor in his own community, once his mother turned herself into a drunkard and had several illicit relationships with white men, which brought shame to their nation. Tayo is raised in the Indian community and believes in many aspects of this culture but he is also someone who goes to school and learns things that despise his customs. As a young man he leaves his reservation and gets to know the white culture through hard experiences he endured during the Second World war. Two people give support to Tayo at home: Rocky, his cousin, and his uncle Josiah. Rocky dies in the war and Josiah during the time he was away. Back home, he mourns these deaths, which can be interpreted as a metaphor for the loss of a stable identity he had constructed to himself over these characters. Now, Tayo has to find his ‘self’ in the middle of his ‘psychic restlessness’: thoughts on his suffering during the war, about Rocky, Josiah, his mixed ancestry, his mother and his aunt (who has always despised him). A ceremony (an Indian ritual) is proposed by his grandma to save him. But this ceremony and ‘the medicine man’ are constantly alternated between acceptance and denial by Tayo.

He wanted to believe old Betonie. He wanted to keep the feeling of his words alive inside himself so that he could believe that he might get well. But when

the old man left, he was suddenly aware of the old hogan: the red sand floor had been swept unevenly; the boxes were spilling out rags; the trunks were full of the junk and trash an old man saves – notebooks and whisker hair. The shopping bags were torn, and the weeds and twigs stuck out of rips in the brown paper. The calendar Betonie got for free and the phone books that he picked up in his travels – all of it seemed suddenly so pitiful and small compared to the world he knew the white people had – a world of comfort in the sprawling houses he'd seen in California [...] What kind of healing power was in this? (SILKO, 1977, p.127).

Another example of hybridism found in the book lies in old Betonie's (medicine man) words: "They think ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done [...] But long ago when the people were given these ceremonies, the change began [...] You see, in many, the ceremonies have always been changing." (SILKO, 1977, p.126). The character believes in the *change* of ceremonies not to succumb to "their power". Tayo neither has found comfort at home, nor outside of it. The white doctors told him he would never get well as long as he used words like "we" and "us". (SILKO, 1977, p.125). "We" and "us" expresses the collective Indian's view of their society, which is different from the individualist Christian perspective. And so, Tayo starts a journey to carry out the ceremony. During the trip he has moments of doubts and beliefs in these rituals. He finds in his way the fulfilment of Betonie's prophecy: Josiah's cattle, the woman, aspects of landscape. The outcome happens when he is in a situation of confront with his enemy Emo. As he sees Emo killing a friend of his, he feels the urge to kill him, but he controls himself.

The witchery had almost ended the story according to its plan; Tayo had almost jammed the screwdriver into Emo's skull the way the witchery had wanted, savoring the yielding bone and membrane as the steel ruptured the brain. Their deadly ritual would have been completed by him. He would have been another victim, a drunk Indian war veteran settling an old feud; and the Army doctors would say that the indications of this end had been there all along since his release from the mental ward at the Veteran's Hospital in Los Angeles. The white people would shake their heads, more proud than sad that it took a white man to survive in their world and that these Indians couldn't seem to make it. (SILKO, 1977, p.253).

So it was his belief in the Indian ceremony and his experience in the white world that made Tayo overcome his desire to kill. Hybridism was the way Tayo found to make a right decision. When Tayo accepts and lives out his hybridity he overthrows his restlessness and is ready to come back home. As Robert Young (1995, p.4) points out "Fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and change". Silko represents through Tayo hybridism as a way of surviving, of

subverting the white's power using elements of their own culture. Peace of mind is achieved when one finds a way of living in this "third space", being a "conscious" hybrid element, proud of his roots but aware of outside items that one has to deal with to survive.

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■ **RESUMO:** *A diversidade dos movimentos migratórios permite ampliar a noção do termo diáspora, normalmente associado à dispersão dos judeus. Mobilizações transnacionais geraram investigações no campo do ir e vir, principalmente após as dinâmicas de descolonização. Buscando estabilidade sócio-econômica, os povos das ex-colônias partiram para a "pátria mãe" e depararam-se com uma distopia configurada por barreiras segregacionistas. Confinados à margem de uma "terra prometida" idealizada, os povos deslocados enfrentam situações nas quais sua identidade e seu senso de pertencimento são constantemente interpelados. Sob essa luz, esse trabalho investiga a noção de hibridismo a partir de personagens vivendo em uma arena de tensão cultural, que põe em xeque a significação de sua identidade. Outrossim, amplia-se o escopo da noção de dispersão ao incluir os Native American como um grupo diaspórico, levando em conta uma dimensão histórica e não o espaço territorial. Ceremony, o primeiro romance da autora Leslie Marmon Silko, perfaz o cenário para discutir teorias fundamentais sobre fronteiras, encontros culturais e hibridismo, cujas influências na construção da identidade dos povos deslocados oferecem elementos para entender as razões pelas quais se faz necessária uma teoria mais abrangente sobre o termo diáspora.*

■ **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Diáspora. Hibridismo. Identidade cultural.*

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