

**DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY
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**ALDO LEOPOLD’S LAND ETHIC
AND LESLIE MARMON SILKO’S CEREMONY**

Özgür ELÇİ

**Supervisor
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nilsen GÖKÇEN ULUK**

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JÜRİ ÜYELERİ

<u>Ünvanı, Adı, Soyadı</u>	<u>Üniversitesi</u>	<u>İmza</u>
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Nilsen GÖKÇEN ULUK	DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY	
Assoc.Prof.Dr.Yeşim BAŞARIR	DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY	
Assist.Prof.Dr.Zeynep Asya ALTUĞ	EGE UNIVERSITY	

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Özgür ELÇİ

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ABSTRACT
Master's Thesis
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Özgür ELÇİ

Dokuz Eylül University
Graduate Institute of Social Sciences
Department of Western Languages and Literatures
American Culture and Literature Program

American environmentalist, nature writer and philosopher Aldo Leopold's idea of "land ethic", which reminds us of the fact that we are "plain members of the biotic community", has attracted great attention since its first day and has become one of the cornerstones of environmental philosophy. This dissertation aims to analyze Leopold's philosophy as it is described in his seminal work *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) and how it is observed in the modernist Native American novel *Ceremony* (1977) by Leslie Marmon Silko. Throughout the thesis, in an ecocritical frame, I try to develop my argument that many elements of Leopold's land ethic are also present in the Native American tradition, and these elements can be observed in Silko's *Ceremony*. The study consists of two chapters, the introduction and conclusion parts. In the first chapter, Leopold's literary essay "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac* is examined closely in an attempt to understand its contribution to environmental ethics. The second chapter focuses on Leslie Marmon Silko's famous novel *Ceremony*. I begin this chapter with looking at Silko's own life; then I try to bring together concepts from Leopold's land ethic and view of nature and ethic in Native American culture. I analyze the novel by looking at the language, characters and events closely to find out and highlight the parallels with Leopold's land ethic.

Keywords: Land Ethic, Aldo Leopold, *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko, Environment.

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Aldo Leopold'un Toprak Etiği ve Leslie Marmon Silko'nun Ceremony Romanı

Özgür ELÇİ

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Programı

Amerikalı ünlü çevre korumacı, doğa yazarı ve filozof Aldo Leopold'un bize "biyotik topluluğun sade bir üyesi" olduğumuzu hatırlatan "toprak etiği" fikri, ilk günden beri büyük ilgi görmüş ve zamanla çevre felsefesinin temel taşlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Bu tez, Leopold'un *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) adlı eserinde yer alan toprak etiği kavramını ve bu kavramın Leslie Marmon Silko'nun bir modern Amerikan Kızılderili romanı olan *Ceremony* (1977) adlı eserinde nasıl gözlemlendiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmamda, ekoeleştirel çerçevede, Leopold'un toprak etiğinde bahsettiği bir çok unsurun yerli Amerikan geleneğinde de bulunduğunu ve bu unsurların Silko'nun romanında gözlemlenebileceğini savunacağım. Çalışma giriş, iki ana bölüm ve sonuç olmak üzere dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölümde, Leopold'un *A Sand County Almanac (Bir Kum Yöresi Almanağı)* adlı eserindeki "The Land Ethic" (Toprak Etiği) adlı makalesi, çevre etiğine olan katkısını anlamak amacıyla yakından incelendi. İkinci bölüm Leslie Marmon Silko'nun ünlü romanı *Ceremony*'ye ayrıldı. Bu bölüme, Silko'nun yaşamına bakılarak başlandı. Daha sonra Leopold'un toprak etiği ve yerli geleneğinden kavramlar bir araya getirilerek, Silko'nun *Ceremony* adlı romanı örneğinde, dil, karakterler ve olaylar incelendi ve Amerikan yerlilerinin doğaya bakışının Leopold'un toprak etiğiyle olan benzerlikleri gösterilmeye çalışıldı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toprak Etiği, Aldo Leopold, *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko, Çevre.

**ALDO LEOPOLD’S LAND ETHIC AND LESLIE MARMON SILKO'S
CEREMONY**

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INTRODUCTION

Few people would deny that the Earth is in grip of a major environmental crisis. The destructive effects of global warming like climate change, hurricanes, melting of glaciers, rising sea levels are becoming more apparent every day. Air pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, soil erosion, desertification and loss of species and biodiversity are namely some of the issues that already began to cause serious problems across the globe. When other social and environmental problems caused by never ending political conflicts and wars are added to all these, we realize how humanity is being dragged into a much worse predicament every single day. American social theorist and philosopher, who is famous for his theory of social ecology, Murray Bookchin, outlines our current situation at the very beginning of his book *Social Ecology and Communalism*:

We are standing at a crucial crossroads. Not only does the age old "social question" concerning the exploitation of human labor remain unresolved, but the plundering of natural resources has reached a point where humanity is also forced to politically deal with an "ecological question." Today, we have to make conscious choices about what direction society should take, to properly meet these challenges. (2007: 2)

At this "crossroads", we are lucky to have writers and thinkers like Aldo Leopold who will help us choose the right path, and perhaps, guide us out of an environmental catastrophe. In a piece of writing, scientists look for facts and figures while philosophers care about more detailed arguments. However, while studying his work and contemplating on his ideas, we should bear in mind that Leopold's target audience was neither of these, but mostly ordinary people with genuine environmental concerns. Leopold's opening sentence in his foreword to *A Sand County Almanac (SCA)*, in a sense, summarizes to whom he is addressing in his work and to whom he is not: "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot" (1968: ix). I also consider myself as someone who cannot live without wild things, and in this study, I take the chance to elaborate on the meaning of Leopold's land ethic and its representation in Native American culture and literature in the example of Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony*.

In my study, I have made use of two types of source material. Primary sources are Leopold's essay "The Land Ethic" and his other essays in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) and Silko's novel *Ceremony* (1977). Secondary sources are the contemporary research and works of key writers and critics on Leopold's land ethic idea and Silko's novel. Among many scholars and philosophers who have studied Leopold's life and works, Curt Meine, as his biographer, Susan Flader and J. Baird Callicott stand out with their elaborate and extensive studies in the philosophical arena. I will turn to works of these scholars whenever needed.

The first chapter of this work is about Aldo Leopold's concept of land ethic and how it was born. I begin with providing some background information on early examples of nature writing in America and write briefly about Captain John Smith, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and John Muir in succession. I focus on how they viewed nature and how they reflected, influenced and changed the values of their time, for it is a well-established fact that, foundations of our contemporary environmental philosophy lie in the works of these prolific figures. Then I discuss Leopold's life and career which will hopefully show where his theory of land ethic rests on. Following that, I try to summarize some of the key elements of Leopold's perspective in environmental ethics such as ecocentrism and land health.

Ecocentrism is an extension of environmental ethics which holds a nature-centered view which recognizes the inherent value of all forms of life and values nature for its own sake. Anthropocentrism on the other hand, tries to convince us that only human beings have intrinsic value and all the other natural beings have merely instrumental value. The anthropocentric view argues that, things are valuable as long as they serve to humanity, which reduces nature to a subservient position.

Leopold's philosophy of land ethic can be summarized as enlarging the boundaries of ethics to include both animate and inanimate beings. The man is not the center of universe or a conqueror anymore but "a plain member of the land community" (Leopold, 1968: 220). I believe his theory of land ethic is a lyrical manifesto of our kinship with Mother Nature. It is still valid, inspiring and revolutionary even with the 21st century standards.

In the second chapter, I will be looking at Silko's groundbreaking novel *Ceremony* with an Ecocritical lens and try to identify the parallels between the Native

culture, its views on nature and Leopold's land ethic. I begin this chapter by looking at Silko's own life in search of the Native American values that would guide us through the chapter. Then I will be looking at Silko's novel *Ceremony* in detail and elaborate on different themes like holism, alienation and change.

Circular design and holism are two fundamental aspects of Native American culture and life. They go hand in hand in shaping the sense of unity and an original mode of living in the Native American environment. Circular design rejects the Western perception of a linear time and suggests that time and events flow in all directions rather than following a straight line. Manifestations of this line of thought can be observed in every aspect of Indian life from architecture to religious ceremonies. In Native American culture, the oral tradition of storytelling is a major agent of continuity, transferring culture and human experience from one generation to the other. Stories also reflect this deep awareness of circularity. They are usually told in a fashion that follow a circular pattern where time and setting often remain anonymous as reflected in the term “in the time immemorial”, which is often used when beginning a story. This enables stories to apply to all people, all times and all places and establishes a sense of universality.

This sense of circularity is a direct manifestation of the holistic view maintained by the Natives towards nature. According to this view, everything is connected to one another. Life is considered a giant spider's web where every single thread is valued as it contributes to the pattern and supports the whole. That is what Leopold calls “intrinsic value” or “inherent value”. As all things, animate or inanimate, bear this intrinsic value, they should be respected. This sense of reverence toward nature is reflected in ceremonies and rituals of the Natives. Echoing Leopold's view of a “biotic community”, nature is perceived as a living entity that consists of equally valuable parts. Thus, in the eyes of an Indian, human life is not necessarily more valuable than a deer's. A deer, which is considered one of the most sacred animals in Native American mythology, is not simply killed by a hunter, but deliberately offers its life to the hunter and enables him to survive. Thus, the animal becomes an active and functioning agent in nature rather than being a passive prey or game to be hunted for recreational purposes, as in the Western World. Native American people explain their relationship with animals in terms of kinship. Animals are an indispensable part

of their mythology and the source of wisdom. Hogan et al. explain how animals are envisioned in Native American thinking:

*For us, the animals are understood to be **our equals**. They are still our teachers. They are our helpers and healers. They are all guardians and we have been theirs...we have deep obligations to them. Without the other animals, we are made less. Indeed, for most indigenous peoples the traditional relationship between humans and animals exist within a kinship context so I will end with indigenous ways of life relied upon intricate knowledge and respect for the animal inhabitants who shared the land, and this remains true today. (Hogan et al., 1998: 12; emphasis added)*

Most critics agree that, due to its unique circular structure borrowed from Native oral tradition, *Ceremony* is one of the most “difficult to read” but also most enjoyable and satisfying works of Native American literature. With its myths, character types and themes borrowed from this rich heritage, the novel can be considered as a traditional Laguna Pueblo story, adapted to a changing world and retold in a modern fashion. In the novel, Tayo, Silko’s protagonist, returns from World War II in a desperate situation with a post war trauma caused by a deep sense of guilt. Silko tells the story of this alienated young Native American reclaiming his true identity through indigenous teaching and ceremonies like the scalp ceremony, which turns out to be an epic story of healing and survival.

By many critics, *Ceremony* is considered as the first full length novel written by a Native American woman novelist. In an interview, Silko says it is true and it is hard to believe that it took so long, as the book was first published in 1977. A considerable amount of literature has been published on the novel since its first publication. These studies include criticism on social issues, nuclearization, expansionism, militarism etc. Without attempting a full discussion of all these issues, which lies beyond the scope of this study, I will be addressing some of these topics in proportion to their relevance to Leopold’s land ethic and the indigenous understanding of nature as reflected in *Ceremony*.

CHAPTER ONE

ALDO LEOPOLD AND THE LAND ETHIC

“There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot.”

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

1.1. HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

1.1.1. Early Examples of Ecological Consciousness in America

The beginning of colonialism marked a turning point in American ecological thinking. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the stories about the riches of the “New World” and voyages of exploration opened the way to a new wave of permanent colonies in America. For the British explorers, the land was something to be conquered and used for the purposes of cultural expansion and economic prosperity. Captain John Smith's *A Description of New England*, which depicts the abundant natural resources of the new world, is a great example of writing reflecting how those early settlers perceived the land, or the nature in a wider sense, during that period. As Captain Smith states:

He is a very bad fisher, cannot kill in one day with his hook and line, one, two, or three hundred Cods: which dressed and dried, if they be sould [sic] there for ten shillings the hundred, though in England they will giue [sic] more then twentie [sic] ... Heer [sic] nature and liberty affords us that freely, which in England we want, or it costeth [sic] us dearely[sic]. (Smith, 2019)

For Smith, exploring and settling in America was a heroic deed which served for the spreading of Christian belief and fighting ignorance as well as honoring the king of England as he explains with his following words: “What so truly suites with honor and honestie [sic], as the discovering things unknowne [sic]? erecting Townes [sic], peopling Countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things, teaching virtue; and gaine [sic] to our native mother-countrie [sic] a kingdom to attend her” (Smith, 2019: 1).

Most of these early writings are now categorized as travel writing and more of a means of propaganda or advertising for investors in Europe and potential settlers, rather than being some serious literature. In his article on Smith and New England, Matthew H. Edney states that, “Almost every paragraph of the book [*A Description of New England*] was crafted to loosen the purse strings of the avaricious and excite the imaginations of the adventurous” (2010: 3).

However, life in the New World was not always as rich and comfortable as described in the writings of Smith. Colonies were frequently devastated by epidemics like smallpox and measles, and hundreds of settlers lost their lives because of drought and famine caused by extreme weather conditions. Thomas Purvis describes some of the difficulties experienced by colonists as follows:

About half of the winters from 1630 to 1650 brought either heavy snowfalls that blocked transportation between towns or else bitterly frigid temperatures. The winter of 1641– 42 was probably that century’s second coldest... This phase of the Little Ice Age peaked in the winter 1697 – 98, the century’s worst, which kept New England in a deep freeze from December 24 to mid-March. (1949: 1)

European settlers' desire to explore and exploit the land, gradually changed the physical and cultural landscape. With the early 18th century, as forests were cut down, soils eroded, rivers were drained; wildlife and the indigenous peoples of America began to disappear at a fast pace. Carolyn Merchant explains the massive transformation in ecology and environmental degradation caused by the European colonization and its timber trade economy which gained great momentum at the time:

Hundreds of acres of timber had been cut, creating climatic change. The air was less moist, the hillsides drier, and there was the potential for more wind, especially for hurricanes that came up the coast. The colonists had not only created possibilities for more runoff and erosion, but they had depleted many of the animals and birds that were integral parts of evolved ecosystems. They radically reduced the numbers of beavers, otters, bears, foxes, and deer. They killed blackbirds, woodpeckers, and crows as pests (which the Indians had refused to kill because they were the sacred bearers of corn). The native wildflowers were sharply diminished, and English flowers and weeds had been introduced. Many of the marshes and beaver ponds had been drained, and fish stocks in the rivers depleted. The forest was a vastly different place than that occupied one hundred years earlier by Indians. (2012: 31)

Another important element which marked the political, social and literary atmosphere in the 18th century America, was the war against Europe. This was a time

of another great awakening, during which the colonial bodies revolted against the unjust, oppressive and restrictive policies inflicted upon them by the British government and fought their way into an independent and democratic nation.

In America and Europe, the 18th century also represents an era, known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason, where major transformations in science, philosophy and art took place. The scientific revolution, which had begun a century earlier, changed the way of thinking radically. The established belief was based on explaining the world and social order on the basis of religious (Christian) belief, which claimed that all events are controlled by divinity, and truth can only be acquired when divine revelation is properly understood. This was transformed into the idea that the world is a rational place which can be perceived through rational thinking. In Europe, the Enlightenment was embodied in the works of philosophers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau. On the other side of the Atlantic, the immediate effects of this new era were seen in the fields of literature and politics. Thomas Paine, one of the most influential voices of the American Revolution, summarized his understanding of the era in *The Age of Reason*: “The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall” (Paine, 1794: 1). Today, scholars agree that Enlightenment thinking was the driving force behind Jefferson's Declaration of Independence in 1776, which enabled America to take its place on the world stage as a sovereign state.

Nevertheless, it is not until the mid-nineteenth century, the time of Emerson, Thoreau and Muir, when we really begin to discover the historical roots of American idealism and see the early signs of ecological philosophy. With the 18th century, the thinkers and authors of the time began to redefine wilderness and emphasize the value of it in relation with the proper place of human beings in nature. The Puritan view that “nature was the home of Satan” was abandoned and a more ecofriendly view in writing, which advocated celebrating the beauty of forests and waters and preserving wildlife for their scenic and inherent values, began to flourish in the writings of authors like Emerson and Thoreau.

Transcendentalism is an important philosophical and literary movement of this era, which helped lay the foundations of a more holistic environmental philosophy in America. The new perspective brought about a new type of relationship with nature.

In his introduction to *Nature*, Emerson wrote that “The foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face; we - through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?” (Emerson, 1950: 3). According to transcendentalists, nature itself is a manifestation of God, and the divine spirit is present in every single piece of creation. In the following quote from “Nature”, through the image of the child, Emerson wonderfully portrays the transcendentalism thinking and its understanding of human-nature relationship:

The sun illuminates only the eye of the man but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. (1950: 6)

As illustrated above, contrary to the prevailing Christian teaching, man was not the center of the universe anymore but, in Emerson's words, just “a part and particle of it”. He says, “Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God” (1950: 6).

Another defining concept in Transcendentalism is the “over-soul”. It is what connects each of us to other human beings, to nature and other living things in the universe. Nature itself is a manifestation of God which we perceive through revelation. The idea implies that every individual is a part of the big picture. In his essay entitled “The Over-Soul” Emerson explains the idea as follows:

That great nature in which we rest...that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE [sic]. (1950: 262)

Emerson and his transcendentalism had a huge impact on Thoreau and his writing. Most critics would agree that Thoreau's most famous work *Walden* is where American tradition of nature writing grew out of. Here he describes the two years he

lived in a small cabin in the woods, an isolated place near Walden Pond, in Massachusetts. Thoreau uses a vivid language to tell us about the walks he takes in the woods and all the different animals and plants he encounters. He basically writes about simple living and he discusses the meaning of living in harmony with nature. He explains his escape to the pond as follows:

*I went to the woods because I wished to **live deliberately**, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. (1962: 90; emphasis added)*

Thoreau questioned society and its values; and suggested avoiding the so-called progress and the distractions it offered. He believed we should turn to nature instead and appreciate the beauty and spiritual significance of rivers, forests and lakes, and realize their role in the ecosystem. He believed that we could best understand ourselves as a part of nature. We should see ourselves as “nature looking into nature” rather than a Master of It. In his essay “Walking”, he speaks of man as an inhabitant of nature rather than a member of society. He says, “I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute Freedom and Wilderness, as contrasted with a Freedom and Culture merely civil, - to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society” (2017: 59). Here, Thoreau’s line of thought is parallel with Leopold’s in that, they both perceive human beings as, in Leopold’s words, “a plain member” of nature, not the master.

In his essay “Huckleberries”, Thoreau celebrates this wild fruit as a gift of nature. He writes in detail how to collect them and cook them and how Indians make better use of them. Thoreau still holds an anthropocentric view in his perception of the land as he describes how to best utilize the resources available. Nevertheless, his writing informs a progress in environmental consciousness as he reminds us our responsibility to respect and to protect nature. He says,

Man, at length stands in such a relation to Nature as the animals which pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Diet-drinks, cordials, wines of all kinds and qualities are bottled up in the skins of countless berries for their refreshment, and they quaff them at every turn... Slight and

innocent savors which relate us to Nature, make usher guests, and entitle us to her regard and protection. (2017: 188)

In his article titled “Environmental Virtue Ethics”, Philip Cafaro states that, “with his emphasis on the connection between attentive appreciation of nature and human excellence and flourishing, Henry David Thoreau’s life and writings provide a coherent and inspiring environmental ethics” (2019: 5).

John Muir (1838-1914), also known as “John of the Mountains” and “Father of the National Parks”, stands out as another important figure among the transcendentalist thinkers who paved the way for Leopold to build up his land ethic. Muir was a mountaineer, a conservationist, an ecological thinker and a writer. In his Romantic prose style, strongly influenced by the works of Emerson and Thoreau, he celebrates the beauty of wilderness. He literally immerses himself in nature and his description of the natural delights is absorbing. Muir believes that since nature is God’s creation, we can see the sublime in it. When a dam was planned to be built on Hetch Hetchy Valley, he described those planners as “temple destroyers” since he saw nature as a reflection of God:

These temple-destroyers, devotees of ravaging commercialism, seem to have a perfect contempt for Nature, and instead of lifting their eyes to the God of the mountains, lift them to the Almighty Dollar. Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man. (Muir, 1901: 57)

Muir was raised by an oppressive Calvinist father. Later in life, partly as a response to this pressure, he refused the anthropocentric Christian view that man dominates nature. Leopold and Muir shared a common view that everything that exists in nature is interconnected and is part of a one large family. Muir asserts that “when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. One fancies a heart like our own must be beating in every crystal and cell, and we feel like stopping to speak to the plants and animals as friendly fellow mountaineers” (1901: 106). With his writings and his activism for the preservation of wild areas which led to the founding of the Yosemite national park, Muir changed the way Americans looked at nature.

The last important figure that I will mention, who influenced Leopold in terms of environmental thinking, is Gifford Pinchot. He is known as “the father of the Forest

service”. He was born in Connecticut, in 1865. With his father’s encouragement, Pinchot studied and pursued a career in forestry. Pinchot was a pragmatist. His utilitarian approach to conservation can be summarized in the maxim “the use of natural resources for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time” or “wise-use” which correspond roughly to the more modern term “sustainability”. From the emphasis on “longest time”, we understand that the welfare of future generations is also taken into consideration. Pinchot says that, “The public lands must continue to be protected for reasons of economy and ethics... The forest is not alone useful for the timber we get from it; there are the streams, recreation grounds, shade and comfort, and fertile soil” (qtd. in Miller, 2013: 215).

Leopold studied Forestry at Yale Forestry School, which was founded by the Pinchot family. Thus, in the beginning of his career, as a young forester, Leopold followed Pinchot’s concept of “wise use” in his conservation activities where he tried to reconcile protection and utilization. His active role in the American Forest Service and the experience he gained during his trips abroad, strengthened his idea that a more holistic and ecocentric understanding of nature was needed to protect the “beauty, stability and integrity” of nature. This would eventually give birth to the land ethic, a groundbreaking approach in environmental ethics at the time.

1.1.2. Emergence of Contemporary Environmental Ethics

Relatively new terms and concepts such as ecocentrism or biocentrism are often used in scholarly writing when discussing the ideas of Leopold but at the time he wrote *A Sand County Almanac*, such theories have not emerged yet. Therefore, in order to understand how Leopold fits into this new language and terminology, I believe it would be appropriate to explain some of these terms and concepts within the context of the development of environmental ethics.

Anthropocentric and Ecocentric approaches have been two basic perspectives that determined our relationship with nature. The anthropocentric viewpoint puts the human in the center and takes nature as a source to fulfill his / her needs. Ecocentric view on the other hand, takes nature as a functioning organism and recognizes the intrinsic value of the land with all its living and nonliving inhabitants.

In American literature, nature-oriented perspective can be traced back to early American writings, some of which we have mentioned earlier. Carl Leopold notes that “writers of Natural History who preceded Leopold such as Henry David Thoreau, George Mash and John Muir, perceived nature in its complexity and suffering damage from human exploitation, but it reminded for Aldo Leopold to develop the concept of people having an ethical responsibility toward nature” (2004: 149).

Another term “Ethics”, with its various lexical forms and uses, usually creates confusion. John Deigh describes “Ethics” as:

[T]he philosophical study of morality. It is a study of what are good and bad ends to pursue in life and what it is right and wrong to do in the conduct of life. It is therefore, above all, a practical discipline. Its primary aim is to determine how one ought to live and what actions one ought to do in the conduct of one's life. (7)

“Ethics” is also used like an umbrella term to cover the myriad forms of ethic. It is possible to speak of a specific kind of ethic attributed to a philosopher, like “Kant’s ethics”, or a certain kind of ethic concerning a specific profession or a specific field of study like “Business ethics” or “Medical ethics”, all of which are classified as forms of applied ethics.

In “The Land Ethic”, Leopold distinguishes between an ecology-oriented ethic and a philosophical one, and makes his own definition: “An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct. These are two definitions of one thing” (218). Philip Cafaro, in his article named “Environmental Virtue Ethics”, also makes a clear distinction between what he calls “virtue ethics” and environmental ethics. According to him, while the former focuses on human flourishing and deals with the fundamental questions of ethics like “What is the best life for a person?” and “What is a good society and how can we achieve these?”, the latter concentrates on human’s rights and responsibilities towards the environment, and judges our actions on whether they violate or fulfil their moral duty (Cafaro, 2019: 1-22).

Taking all these definitions and various uses of the term “ethic” into consideration, where are we going to place Leopold's land ethic, or “Leopoldian ethic” as it is often called? Are we going to consider it as a form of applied ethics dealing

with specific area of interest, or in a much wider sense? Callicott states that, Leopold uses the term “land ethic” as a substitute to address a broader form of environmental ethics (1993: 2). Here Callicott’s view sounds valid because a comprehensive theory like the land ethic, which brings a whole new way of looking into nature and urges a new mode of living, cannot be explained and understood within the narrow limits of an applied ethics theory.

Now that we have settled with the proper use of some terminology, we can look at what Leopold offers in his land ethic and how critics respond. In order to provide the readers with a starting point, Leopold gives an account of Odysseus returning from war and killing all his slaves at the very beginning of his essay:

When god-like Odysseus returned from the wars in Troy, he hanged all on one rope a dozen slave-girls of his household whom he suspected of misbehavior during his absence. This hanging involved no question of propriety. The girls were property. The disposal of property was then, as now, a matter of expediency, not of right and wrong. (217)

Odysseus’s brutal act represents an age in ancient Greece, where even lives of some men and women did not mean much in the eyes of their “owners”, let alone those of animals, trees, rivers or lakes. Some human beings were seen as mere property and the killing was more a matter of property than a matter of ethics. With this striking introduction, Leopold raises a question on human nature and ethics, so that we can better perceive how our understanding of ethics evolved in time. Leopold notes that, “During the 3000 years which have since elapsed, ethical criteria have been extended too many fields of conduct” (217).

In his *Rights of Nature*, which is accepted as a reference book in environmental studies, Frazier Nash states that environmental ethics is all about the “evolution of ethics from the natural rights of a limited group of humans, or their gods, to a concern for animals, plants, rocks, and even nature or the environment in general” (2004: 5). Perhaps this is best illustrated in a chart Nash uses in his book.

In the chart, evolution of ethics is divided into four main phases, namely the pre-ethical past, ethical past, present and the future. The first phase, in which we cannot talk about existence of any ethical thought, points to the most primitive period when mankind's sole concern was nothing but his own survival. The second phase, ethical past, is probably the one that corresponds with the time of Odysseus and his ill-fated

maids mentioned above. This is a period in which human common sense and intelligence developed just well enough to bring his own family, tribe and region into the ethical circle. As of present time, nations, races and most humans seem to have secured their places in today's ethical environment, but apart from some lucky cats, the condition of the animals is still uncertain. This third phase is where we stand at the moment. Finally, the fourth phase that looks into the future, places the whole creation, all things living and non-living into the ethical framework, and this is where we find Aldo Leopold and his land ethic. In summary, according to Nash, the development of environmental ethics is an evolutionary process which proceeds in parallel with the progress and development of the society (Nash, 2004: 7).

In his essay "The Land Ethic", Baird Callicott, also gives a similar explanation for the development of ethics:

As human social groups competed with one another for resources, the larger and better organized out competed the smaller and less well organized. Hence clans, first merged into tribes, tribes next into nations, and nations eventually into republics. The emergence of each of these levels of social organizations was attended by a corresponding extension of ethics. (2007: 206)

Another factor that contributed to the development of environmental ethics is the emergence of Ecology as a new discipline, which examines the interaction of organisms with each other and their environment. The term *oecologie*, which was derived from the Greek word *oikos* meaning house, was first used by a German Darwinian Ernst Haeckel in 1866. Nash states that, due to its holistic nature, ecology provided a suitable ground for environmental ethics to flourish as "the significance shifted from the house itself to what it contained: a living community, the household" (2004: 55). In other words, with the emergence Ecology, the shift from the anthropocentric perception of nature to a more ethical one gained momentum.

1.1.3. The Environmental Movement

America had survived the Great Depression in the 30s, and the U.S. and its allies had triumphed in World War II. Now it was a time of economic growth and industrial development. People began to ask for more products and more resources had to be used to provide what they needed. In order to build houses and decorate them

with fine furniture, more trees were cut down. To provide the growing number of factories and homes with the sufficient amount of electrical power, more coal had to be mined and burned in power plants. The result of all this consumption frenzy was more pollution in the sky, on land, in the sea and more environmental degradation globally.

As Haberlain points out, in the early days of industrial revolution population density was low and pollution caused by the factories, which were very few, was ignorable, and decision makers did not have many options other than dumping wastes into the environment. However, as the technology improved, pollution has become a matter of choice rather than an indispensability. Thus, when factories polluted the environment, people knew that, rich factory owners did not want to spend money on pollution prevention investments such as air filters and water treatment plants with some economic interest behind the process of decision making, which did not prioritize environmental stability and health.

Protests began to rise as people believed that the free market economy, or capitalism, was to blame for all these problems that the earth faced. They believed that it was the government's duty to step in and make up for the mistakes they had made. However, governments were under heavy influence of big international companies and they were reluctant to take effective measures against the companies who created pollutants and dumped them into the air, the land or the sea.

In 1949, only three years after US began testing nuclear bombs in Bikini Atoll, the Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear bomb and the U.S. was no more the sole atomic power on Earth. A nuclear race between "the Reds" and the U.S. had begun. Protests over hydrogen bomb testing on Bikini Atoll, the oil spill disaster in California and the use of pesticides and other chemicals were among the specific issues in the 60s and 70s, which were widely publicized and raised widespread concern over nature, and played a leading role in shaping the environmental movement in America.

In the 60s and 70s, radical changes were taking place in the society and in the political arena. One example was the student movement. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, students and young activists across the United States marched and protested the Vietnam War, demanded equality for women and equal rights for black citizens. They believed that they could change the world for the better. They also

believed capitalism was evil because it was destroying the planet, and they had to get rid of it. The 60s and 70s was also a period in which activism over the rights of indigenous peoples gained momentum. On November 20, 1969, ninety Native Americans sailed to Alcatraz on wooden boats and occupied the island to protest the miserable conditions they lived in Indian Reservations. In their manifesto, they claimed that Alcatraz was a perfect candidate for another Indian reservation as there was no means of transportation, no fresh water, no health and education facilities etc. As Native American citizens were becoming more aware of their rights, in the literary arena, a Native American Renaissance was flourishing, which is going to be our focus in the second chapter of this study. With the 60s, ordinary people who felt trapped in a materialistic and capitalistic society began to turn to nature and Native literature and art for inspiration and relief.

Due to strong public pressure, in 1964, President Johnson signed the “Wilderness Act of 1964” creating a National Wilderness Preservation System. According to the Act, “wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (qtd. in Callicott, 1993: 42).

1.2. ALDO LEOPOLD AND THE LAND ETHIC

1.2.1. Aldo Leopold: A Man of Theory and Action

“My life is my argument”, an aphorism attributed to another iconic figure, an Alsatian-German environmentalist and philosopher Albert Schweitzer, would be, in my opinion, one of the best quotes to describe Aldo Leopold as a person. Indeed, this perfectly fits Leopold in the sense that, he was a person who found his inspiration in nature and he lived by what he argued. I maintain that it would not be possible to fully understand the mindset behind Leopold's land ethic, unless we look at his own life and career and see how some of his ethical ideas about the land evolved as a conservationist, a philosopher and an author.

Aldo Leopold was born in Burlington, Iowa in 1887. His full name was Rand Aldo Leopold, but he never used his first name. His family lived in a big house by the Mississippi river, which was a well-preserved stream at the time. Land by the river was rich in wildlife; flora and fauna were diverse and rich. During his childhood and youth, Leopold spent a lot of time playing and observing nature in this beautiful place. His father Carl was a businessman and his mother Clara came from a rich family. They were both well-educated and they enjoyed being outdoors, doing activities like walking, fishing and hunting. Leopold's grandfather also had a lot of influence on him as they spent a lot of time together. Leopold's grandparents were of German descent, so some said he had a German soul. We do not know if he was affected by any German genes he was bearing, but we know that he was affected by some European philosophers while building up his theory of land ethic.

Throughout his life, Leopold was both theoretically and practically involved in game management, conservation and forestry and published hundreds of papers and books on related topics. Leopold was not a fiction writer. When we look at his works, we immediately see that they are full of scientific and technical data like charts, maps and statistics. His voluminous book *Game Management* for example, is dedicated to providing principles and techniques to support wildlife. His collection of essays *A Sand County Almanac*, where he blends his lifelong experience with philosophic thinking, is regarded as his masterpiece. He is undoubtedly one of the most influential figures of his time and of today, in game management, conservation and environmental philosophy.

In 1947, Leopold was elected president of the Ecological Society of America, and during this service, he worked on providing new policies for several government agencies and conservation organizations, giving lectures and writing articles for various journals. He also served as a member of Wisconsin Conservation Commission and contributed to the shaping of conservation policies from 1943 until his death in 1948. His active role in conservation work strengthened his belief that a more ecology-oriented ethic is needed if we are to leave a healthy and unspoiled environment for future generations.

In the first section of *A Sand County Almanac*, which bears the same title as the book itself, Leopold describes the transformation that happens in his farm throughout

the year, in twelve segments from January to December. This section includes detailed observations and several anecdotes on how nature and the landscape change from one season to the other. The second section is about his first-hand experiences, and impressions from trips and field studies he did in different parts of the country and abroad. Finally, in the more theoretical third section, Leopold introduces his most famous essay, "The Land Ethic", which is going to be the main focus of my study.

1.2.2. The Land Ethic: From Dominance to Co-existence

Leopold's most famous and most quoted article in *A Sand County Almanac* is undoubtedly "The Land Ethic". As Curt Meine puts it, "His essay distilled a lifetime of observing, reading, writing, thinking, experimenting, blundering, and always asking the next question about the very meaning of conservation" (2007: 3-4).

In order to understand what Leopold's vision of land ethic is, the best place to start seems to be the text itself. The text is divided into seven sections. Leopold begins with "The Ethical Sequence" section where he gives us his definition of Ethic. He mentions two kinds of ethic, namely ecological and philosophical. He says that "An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic philosophically, a differentiation of social form anti-social conduct" (217).

Since ethic is a set of moral principles, in order to understand what land ethic is, it is imperative to find out what set of principles it is made up of and elaborate on each one. The principles we can draw from Leopold's works are as follows:

1. Land ethic is ecocentric.
2. Land ethic is holistic; land is a community and people are plain members.
3. Conservation is not enough. Land has intrinsic value.
4. Land health illustrated with the land pyramid is important.
5. Land ethic is (r)evolutionary.

1.2.2.1. Land Ethic is Ecocentric

Leopold's perspective is ecocentric rather than anthropocentric. In the *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, ecocentrism is described as

“an emphasis on the ecological point of view, frequently crediting ecological units of nature (rivers, species, communities, populations, ecosystems) with rights. Through metaphors like “the web of life,” the ecocentric approach tends to view ecological interactions holistically” (Callicott and Frodeman, 2009: 423). Ecocentrism suggests that all forms of life are valuable. Leopold's perspective is summed up in his most quoted words which have now become a maxim: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (240), where Leopold also establishes a clear connection between our aesthetic and ethical values.

Contrary to the Abrahamic (or Christian) point of view, according to Leopold, human beings are no longer at the center of the universe. The influence of Christianity on western philosophy is beyond dispute. Views of the Bible passed on to some of the most prominent philosophers in the western tradition. First settlers in America, who called themselves pilgrims, were actually Protestant Christians who, as the term suggests, wished to purify religion. They were seeking freedom of belief as well as economic and later political freedom. Thus, when they came to America, they brought their own set of values, own beliefs and perspectives with them. When Leopold uses the term “Abrahamic”, he refers to this mindset brought to America with the Bible. Leopold argues that: “Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us” (229).

As Leopold put it, one of the reasons why conservation efforts have failed to produce the desired result is the understanding of Abrahamic religions that place man in the center of the world. Let's look at what the bible offers in the human – nature relationship. The Book of Genesis narrates how the world and all the living and nonliving bodies in it were created in seven days. Finally, woman and man were created and psalm 26 and psalm 28 established the relationship between human and nature:

*God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of we, and let them be **masters** of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth. (Psalm 1:26, The New King James Version: emphasis added).*

*God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and **conquer** it. Be **masters** of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth. (Psalm 1:26, The New King James Version; emphasis added).*

As we can see, the Abrahamic or biblical worldview is purely anthropocentric, and it does not encourage conservation. It describes human beings as “masters” of this world and puts human beings in the center of the universe, which is fundamentally wrong and unacceptable in my opinion. This applies to other Abrahamic religions as well. On the other hand, Leopold declares a holistic and ecocentric view of the world in his following remark: “When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.... That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics” (viii-ix).

1.2.1.2. Land Ethic is Holistic

Holism is a key concept in understanding Leopold's land ethic. The term originates from a Greek word *holos* which translates as “all” or “entire”. Holism as a new term was first used by a South African statesman and philosopher Jan Smuts in his 1926 book *Holism and Evolution*. It is not easy to give a single definition for holism which may apply to all disciplines. It might be best described in comparison to another concept which is Reductionism. Reductionism is the underlying philosophy of all Western science. According to the reductionist view, true nature of things can be understood by understanding the nature of components which constitute them. In other words, reductionism assumes that, complex systems can be explained by examining the individual parts they are composed of. That is why students in biology classes keep dissecting animals all around the world or scientists in labs are searching for smaller and smaller particles of the matter, like quarks or dark matter.

Holism on the other hand assumes that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts”, as summarized by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*. Holistic thinkers believe that western worldview, which is based on reductionism, is too narrow to grasp the broader context or the big picture. When we apply this content to environmental thinking, Leopold's land ethic, which views the land as a community, stands out as a great example of holistic thinking. What Leopold means by the term “land” is not only the

soil but all the living and nonliving things over it. He explains his perspective as follows: “By land is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth...The land is one organism. Its parts, like our own parts, compete with each other and co-operate with each other” (1993: 23). Leopold expands the boundaries of ethic and describes the core of his philosophy as follows:

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.... In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such. (220)

According to Callicott, “Its holism is precisely what makes the land ethic the environmental ethic of choice among conservationists and ecologists. In short its holism is the land ethic’s principle asset” (2007: 209).

1.2.2.3. Conservation is Not Enough: Land Has Intrinsic Value

Conservation is another fundamental dimension of Leopold’s land view; but what kind of a conservation would that be? Leopold was educated as a forestry expert and throughout his career, he was involved in numerous conservation projects either as a director or a contributor. He had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the country and abroad; and observe the deterioration of natural life at first hand. Leopold was strongly critical of the conservation system which was based wholly on economic motives. He questions the assumption that “the evidence had to be economic in order to be valid” (226) and adds that, most members of the land community, however, have no economic value.

Environmental history is abundant with stories of human’s interaction with nature and his efforts to understand, change and transform it for his own benefit. As J. L. Warren points out, for Leopold “moral change was at best a long-term solution and land problems were urgent. In the meantime, other measures were needed to promote landowners to use land better” (50). Therefore, Leopold put a lot of effort in conservation activities, wildlife management and preservation of wildlife areas. Leopold lays out his definition of conservation in “The Land Ethic”:

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend: you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predator...The competitions are as much a part of the inner workings as the co-operations. You can regulate them cautiously but not abolish them. (222)

However, in time, Leopold realized that conservation efforts based on economic value would never succeed in establishing and maintaining a healthy and balanced ecosystem where the rights of species are equally represented and protected. Thus, his relationship with nature gradually shifted from holding a conservationist perspective to a more holistic one. He describes this shift in "The Land Ethic" as follows:

*A system of conservation **based solely on economic self-interest** is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and thus eventually to eliminate, many elements in the land community that lack commercial value, but that are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy functioning. It assumes, falsely, I think, that the economic parts of the biotic clock will function without the uneconomic parts. (229; emphasis added)*

Leopold advocates the idea that, land should not be regarded as mere property but as something with intrinsic value so that she could qualify for the care and protection of human beings. As Callicott points out, "intrinsic value is seen as the ticket that admits something to the moral community. More precisely, having intrinsic value is both necessary and sufficient for being an object of primary moral concern what philosophers call having moral standing or being morally considerable" (2007: 70).

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold describes "conservation" as "a state of harmony between man and land" and asserts that "despite nearly a century of propaganda" its development is really slow (222). He says that the answer to the problem is not only to do more conservation but a change in the content of conservation is needed as well. He is against the established view that voting, joining some organizations and practicing some daily conservation activities and letting the rest into the hands of the government will suffice (223). He asserts that such an easy formula which "defines no right or wrong, assigns no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, implies no change in the current philosophy of values" will not achieve anything significant in the realm of conservation (223). Leopold says this kind of approach could be merely some "enlightened self-interest" which will not go much further.

1.2.2.4. Land Health and the Land Pyramid

In the section entitled “Land Health and the A-B Cleavage” Leopold explains briefly what he implies by saying “land health”. Taking the land as “a biotic community” leads us to the idea that, land can be healthy or run down just like a living organism. Land health may be disturbed by various agents. Natural phenomena or human intervention can disrupt the balance of nature. However, if the land is healthy it can recover and restore its “beauty, stability and integrity”. In his “Land Ethic Today”, Baird Callicott suggests five indicators of land health, which are “biological productivity, local species diversity, global species diversity, genetic variability within populations and ecological function” (1993: 48). Leopold himself sums up the idea as follows: “Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal” (236).

Although Leopold points out conservation as a way of maintaining this capacity, he also thinks that conservation practices of the time were only measures to save the day which would not yield any serious success. He says, “The art of land doctoring is being practiced with vigor, but the science of land health is yet to be born” (251). After discussing different views in forestry, wildlife and agriculture, he goes on to say that the survival of species depends on healthy ecosystems and as a member of the biotic community, survival of human beings also depends on a healthy ecosystem. Leopold believes that land health depends on biotic integrity and stability which could be achieved through the proper functioning of each element of the biotic community represented in the land pyramid (238).

In “The Land Pyramid” section, Leopold draws our attention to the fact that conservation education at the time emphasized the “balance of nature” which he finds insufficient to describe the land mechanism. He argues that “the biotic pyramid” represents a truer image of this complicated mechanism in ecology. This concept basically asserts that there is an energy flow through a circuit called the biota, which can also be represented as a pyramid. Leopold explains the process as follows:

Plants absorb energy from the sun. This energy flows through a circuit called the biota, which may be represented by a pyramid consisting of layers. The bottom layer is the soil. A plant layer rests on the soil, an insect layer on the plants, a bird and rodent layer on the insects, and so on up through various animal groups to the apex layer, which consists of the larger carnivores. (230)

Leopold believes that, as illustrated with the concept of the biotic pyramid, environmental mechanisms are far more complicated than we think. Therefore, when humans try to manage the land and inflict changes, they should be very careful because this may backfire in most unexpected ways. In his terms, before we intervene with nature's delicate design, we have to learn how to "think like a mountain". Leopold suggests caution as he believes that, "man's invention of tools has enabled him to make changes of unprecedented violence, rapidity, and scope" (232). After a specific project on predator population control, Leopold describes how deliberate killing of wolves in order to reduce their number harmed the ecosystem as follows:

I have watched the face of many newly wolfless mountain, and see the South facing slopes wrinkled with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anaemic desuetude and then to death... In the end the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers. (130-32)

He continues giving some examples of these man induced changes. One such change, he says, is artificial pooling of plants and animals. Another change is induced by over farming. Leopold counts waters as a part of this energy circuit too. Finally, he talks about "transportation" as a means of providing this energy flow. Transportation from the countryside to the city, from rivers to the seas all add to this circuit idea (233).

Leopold goes beyond the "balance of nature" cliché and underlines the fact that nature is alive and therefore change in nature is inevitable. This is the forerunner of an important paradigm shift. As Callicott notes, this paradigm shift from "balance of nature" to "dynamism of nature" does not undermine the land ethic but supports it (1993: 103).

1.2.2.5. Land Ethic is (R)evolutionary

Leopold is aware of the fact that social issues such as the acquisition of environmental awareness, which require a serious change in the way of thinking in society, are not things that can happen in a day or so. Thus, he says, "The case for a land ethic would appear hopeless but for a minority which is in obvious revolt against

these modern trends” (224). And towards the end of “The Land Ethic” he says, “I have purposely presented the land ethic as a product of social evolution because nothing is so important as an ethic is ever written...The evolution of a land ethic is an intellectual as well as an emotional process” (241). In his article “The Land Ethic” Callicott points out that Leopold deliberate use of such words like “evolution” shows that Leopold has read Darwin and he was affected by his thoughts when building up the land ethic idea (2007: 205).

Leopold elaborates on his own idea of change as follows: “When a change occurs in one point of the circuit, many other parts must adjust themselves to it. Change does not necessarily abstract or divert the flow of energy. Evolution is a long series of self-induced changes the net result of which has been to elaborate the floor mechanism an to lengthen the circuit” (1949: 216-217). Leopold believes that man-made changes in nature are too rapid, violent and they happen at a larger scale, yet he does not consider the natural world as something static. His land ethic idea is dynamic in the sense that it accepts evolution as an inevitable phenomenon. As Rolston points out,

*Leopold does not mean to deep freeze the present ecosystem...Despite his preservationist vocabulary, his care for the bio-systemic welfare allows for alteration, management, and use. It enjoins domestication, for part of the natural richness is its potential in human life support. ...[He]recognizes man's creativity, **development**, openness, and **dynamism**. (1975: 106; emphasis added)*

As Rodrick Nash puts it, “From the perspective of intellectual history, environmental ethics is revolutionary; it is arguably the most dramatic expansion of morality in the course of human thought” (2004: 7). In this respect, when we consider its contribution to environmental philosophy, land ethic is undoubtedly revolutionary as it brought about a brand-new perspective on human-nature relationship, which can be summarized as a shift from dominance to co-existence. As Shilling explains, “[Land ethic] breaks with what Descartes, Bacon, and other earlier philosophers believed about the human-nature relationship, what Manifest Destiny sanctioned, what Pinchot's utilitarianism endorsed, or what many of Leopold's contemporaries felt the Book of Genesis decreed” (2009: 319). Callicott , a keen advocate of Leopold's philosophy, also believes that what Leopold triggered with the land ethic idea was an “evolutionary ecological worldview revolution” (2007: 210). He goes further and puts

this revolution in the same league with Copernican shift in astronomy or the Kantian philosophical revolution.

However, Leopold's land ethic is not the only place where one can find the ways of establishing an ethical and sustainable relationship with nature. Native American literature is abundant with songs, stories, poems and novels, which makes it a great source of inspiration for a life to be lived "deliberately", feeling that we are home when we are in nature because we are a part of it. In the second chapter of this study, we will be looking closely at one such work, namely the *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko.

CHAPTER TWO

LAND ETHIC IN SILKO'S *CEREMONY*

“You don’t have anything if you don't have the stories.”

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

2.1. SILKO AS A NATIVE AMERICAN WRITER: THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

2.1.1. Leslie Marmon Silko: The Portrait of a Native American Writer

Culture - literature relation is a mutual one as they shape each other. It is almost impossible to think of a literary work in isolation from the values of the culture from which it originates. Literature is a product of culture and it is not possible to understand and appreciate it fully if one is not familiar with the social and cultural context in question. As Michael Dorris states,

Without some knowledge of language of history of inflection of the position of the storyteller within the group without a hint of the social roles played by males and females within within the culture without a sense of the societies humor or priorities without such knowledge how can we as reader or listener penetrate to the core of meaning in the expression of literary art. (1979: 150)

Thus, in the following section, I look at Silko’s life and some aspects of the social and cultural environment she lived in and highlight some important elements that will help us interpret her work better.

During the period that started in the 60s and continued into the 70s, which was later called the Native American Renaissance, there was a considerable increase in the works of Native American writers. In 1969, N. Scott Momaday, a Kiowan professor of English literature, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his novel, *House Made of Dawn*, which highly encouraged other writers of Native descent to create new and original works. *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, by Momaday again, was published the same year. *Riding the Earthboy* 40 (1971) and *Winter in The Blood* (1974) by James

Welch are some of other examples. Most of the work produced in this era are about tribal identity or finding one's place in the Native community.

Arnold Krupat, in his article entitled "Native American Literature and Canon", bases his argument on the etymology of the term "literature", which translates roughly as the "culture of letters", and adds that "the man of letters, European or your American, was the man of culture. Indians were children of nature precisely because they were not men of letters" (1983: 1).

In his 1979 article "Native American Literature in an Ethnohistorical Context" Michael Dorris states that, literature produced about the Native American people until that time, did not go deep into the indigenous culture, nor understand it properly, and was abundant with stereotypical or exaggerated figures, often portraying Natives as happy mindless children living in harmony in the "garden of Eden" (1979: 155). These works mostly appealed to an Anglo-American audience who liked to romanticize the indigenous way of life and think that all Indians are the same. Dorris goes on to say that this was not true but just an illusion in some "myopic minds" for Hopis were Hopis and Mohawks were Mohawks. Dorris, later in his article, announces the emergence of a new era of Native American literature. He describes this new wave as follows:

The prose and poetry of such major young writers as James Welch, Leslie Silko and Simon Ortiz demonstrate the complexity and richness of this emerging category of Native American writing. Their works fall squarely within the traditions of historical ethnic communities and so they tend to expand the scope of English language composition and criticism. Their creations exhibit qualities rarely found in fictional English language. Indians humor, irony, intelligence and stamina. Their characters are good and bad in ordinary human rather than spectacularly exotic ways and they share complicated and changing relationships with each other and the world. (1979: 156)

With her unique style and deep insight into the rich indigenous heritage, Leslie Marmon Silko, for sure, is one of the defining authors of the Native American Renaissance and the contemporary Native American literature. She was born in 1948 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is of mixed Laguna Pueblo, Mexican and white descent, which deeply affected her writing style and the topics she chose in her works, and in a way, enabled her to speak for the both sides. After studying primary school at the Laguna Pueblo Reservation, she continued her education at the Catholic school in Albuquerque. She graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1969. Throughout

her writing career, she has received many awards including the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities “Living Cultural Treasure” Award in 1988. She is famous for her novels such as *Almanac of The Dead* where she retells the discovery story of the American continent from an indigenous point of view, and *Ceremony*, where she tells the story of a half-breed like herself, who, through Native ceremony, reestablishes his connection with his community and nature and finds peace. *Storyteller*, *Gardens in The Dunes* and *The Turquoise Ledge* are some of her other works.

As Silko explains in her Preface to *Ceremony*: “The title of the novel *Ceremony* refers to the healing ceremonies based on the Dine and Pueblo people” (xv). In the *Native Americans: An Encyclopedia of History*, the word “Pueblo” is described as follows:

Pueblo is from the Spanish for village. It refers both to a certain style of Southwest Indian architecture, characterized by multistory buildings made of stone and adobe, and to the people themselves. The Rio Grande pueblos are known as eastern Pueblos; Zuni, Hopi, and sometimes Acoma and Laguna are known as western Pueblos... [I]nter-marriage and regular exchange between Hispanic villages and Pueblo Indians created a new Mexican culture, neither strictly Spanish nor Indian, but rather somewhat of a blend between the two. (Pritzker, 1999:7)

In an interview, Silko tells us how and why she wrote *Ceremony*. She moved from North Arizona to Ketchikan, Alaska with her young child and her husband John Silko, who worked for the justice system and provided assistance to Native people on land rights. This new place, which was actually her husband’s hometown, had a totally different landscape and climate. With thick clouds all the time, little sunshine and a lot of rain, she says she had a very difficult time adjusting herself to the climate and she felt sick. She says that her protagonist Tayo’s healing was also her own healing in a new landscape. Her father and many of her cousins were war veterans and most of them suffered from serious psychological problems and alcoholism. She says she wanted to voice their problems from a Native perspective. Thus, a project which started out as a short story, with the addition of several other characters and detailed descriptions of the landscape that she missed so much, turned into a novel, *Ceremony*, which received the American Book Award in 1980 .

Silko's protagonist in *Ceremony* is Tayo, an alienated Native American who is suffering from serious mental and physical disorders after returning from the white man's war. The novel is essentially about adjustment difficulties faced by this young World War II veteran and his healing journey through a Native ceremony, which could be considered a "purification ritual" performed by Pueblo communities for the returning soldiers. However, as we progress through the story, we realize that it has many undertones as well, and the book is not only about a Native person or his community but the whole humanity. As Tayo questions his own identity and faces his problems and tries to find solutions through the ceremony, his story becomes inseparable from the story of his community and the land.

Alienation, alcoholism, post war trauma are the most common themes in the works of American Indian authors as these are still unresolved and ongoing issues among the indigenous community. "The Warrior", a poem by Laguna poet Paula Gunn Allen, demonstrates how similar the content could be, as the following lines look like the story of Tayo and his friends told in verse:

*And the long march back into years until the next marches
to the Pacific, to the Philippines
to crest after crest of blood drenched hills
to the top of one to raise the conquerors' triumph skyward
and the march back home
to dying, shrinking fields and scorching skies and no water
at all; and the march through hero's speeches,
through relocation centers,
through drunk midnight streets,
through broken resolutions,
through rehabilitation centers
through mindless unreflected stone drunk afternoons: (Allen, 1988a: 428)*

Tayo knew why the veterans drank all the time. He knew that, "Liquor was the medicine for the anger that made them hurt, for the pain of the loss, medicine for tight bellies and choked up throats" (37). Alcohol was, in some way, a pseudo-medicine to soothe the pain felt after the destruction of the Native land and the beloved ones, something the old people did not understand. We learn from Barry Pritzker that excessive alcohol use and related health issues are still common in the Native American community in the USA. He writes, "problems, including alcoholism and

drug use, continue to plague the Pueblos. Indian Health Service hospitals often cooperate with Native healers” (1999: 63).

Most critics consider *Ceremony* a modernist novel. Modernism could be roughly defined as the attitude of rejecting the traditional and shaping the new. That is exactly what Silko does while building her work out of the traditional novel style. She does not use the widely accepted three-act plot line of traditional novels, namely the set up – confrontation – resolution structure, or any chapters. Instead, she creates a unique narrative style, which resembles the indigenous art of storytelling, where the story does not have to follow a straight line, and where prose and verse, the past, present and tomorrow, dreams and reality, spirits and heroes are woven like a spiders web. In the end, they all merge into one single entity, “as if it is itself a healing ceremony” in Silko’s own words (qtd. in Chavkin, 2007: 29).

The devastating effects of the first and second world wars on people and the environment played a major role in the emergence of Modernism. Writers had to find new ways of expressing what the continent went through and what millions experienced. Modernist writers consider the human being a complex entity in terms of her emotions, thoughts and behaviors. Imagination and reality, conscious and subconscious minds are intertwined. Thus, stream of consciousness becomes a common literary device as it serves well for expressing one's depression, loneliness and the conflict between society and the self. When we look closely, we see that *Ceremony* fits perfectly into the description given above.

2.1.2. Indians or Native Americans? : A Note on Terminology

Terms such as "Indian", "American Indian", and "Native American" are frequently used in scholarly circles to refer to the indigenous peoples in North America. There are also some less common terms like "Amerindian" or "indigenous Americans" which are found inappropriate by many. In his article entitled “What We Want to Be Called”, Michael Yellow Bird, who is of Native origin himself, says that two terms "Indigenous Peoples" and "First Nations Peoples" are actually preferred by scholars of indigenous origin (1999: 1). Freya Mathews explains the undertones of the term “Native” as follows:

“Native” is currently a heavily loaded word; deeply pejorative and romantic simultaneously, it is one of the quintessential designations of otherness, connoting a state of unreason, primitiveness, and closeness to nature that sets it in definitive contrast to European man’s conception of himself as the rational master and director of nature. (2005: 57)

Slovenian Philosopher and critic Slavoj Žižek tells a funny anecdote on this:

I met some Native American university people who told me they hated they are called Native Americans. Why? Because it has this uncanny settle nature/culture, we are native and what are you then? Cultural Americans or what ? They told me “we much prefer to be called ‘Indian’ so at least our name stands as a monument to white man’s stupidity who thought they were in India when they were here in America.” (Ralberto, 2016)

Having no political or cultural baggage, I will thus use the terms “Indian” or "Native American" alternately to refer to indigenous peoples of America wherever applicable.

History tells us that Columbus originally aimed for India for its riches but “collided with America”, as Michael Dorris sarcastically puts it, and ended up in America, which was later called the “New World” (1979: 148). There is no doubt that this was one of the greatest discoveries of mankind. News of the discovery spread throughout the world and aroused great excitement, especially in Europe. When settlers from Europe came to America, they brought their own religion and their own set of beliefs, ethics and lifestyle with them. However, the land was already inhabited when they came. When the Europeans arrived, they found a much different life than theirs. In his writings, Thoreau often gives some examples from the Native American lifestyle. In his essay “Huckleberries”, he tells us how Indians make better use of wild fruits, huckleberries in this case, and makes a critical comparison between the settlers' and Indian perception of land:

Among the Indians, the earth and its productions generally were common and free to all the tribe, like the air and water; but among us, who have supplanted the Indians, the public retain only a small yard or common in the middle of the village, with perhaps a graveyard beside it, and the right of way, by sufferance, by a particular narrow route, which is annually becoming narrower, from one such yard to another. This is the way we civilized men have arranged it. (2017: 196)

As Portman and Garret explain: “American Indian traditional views concerning property accentuate the underlying belief that whatever belongs to the individual also belongs to the group and vice versa” (Portman and Garret: 288). However, European settlers’ perception of land was fundamentally different from the Native understanding. Europeans came to America to “own” the land because in Europe every piece of it was already taken up. Indians, on the other hand, did not understand this because land was simply there, and humans could freely use its resources. They also cared for it as they believed that land was the mother earth, the source of life. So, when Europeans came and tried to make treaties with them, they did not understand what was happening. Soon, when the land was surrounded by fences and barbed-wire and they were forced out of it, they felt humiliated because, in Indian tradition, the land and the people are strongly connected. Chief Seattle explains this connection in his 1855 speech:

*Every part of this earth is **sacred** to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every clearing and wood, is holy in the memory and experience of my people. Even those unspeaking stones along the shore are loud with events and memories in the life of my people. The ground beneath your feet responds more lovingly to our steps than yours, because it is the ashes of our grandfathers. Our bare feet know the kindred touch. The earth is rich with the lives of our kin. (O’Malley, 1996: 15; emphasis added)*

As the interaction increased, settlers learned more about the Indian tribes and the local culture. Native way of thinking was fundamentally different from the colonists’ in that they believed in the unity of all living and nonliving things in the universe. Perhaps, one of the best reflections of the Native view is found, again in Chief Seattle’s 1854 speech: “The Earth does not belong to man; Man belongs to the Earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself ” (O’Malley, 1996: 15).

As a matter of fact, it is not possible to speak of a single and whole Native American culture as there are variable traditions and practices spread across a huge continent. In his essay entitled “Native American Literature in Ethnohistorical Context” Michael Dorris tells us that, at the time of Columbus, when the first Europeans came to the new world “more than 300 cultures each differentiated to a

greater or lesser degree by language custom history and life way, were resident North of the Rio Grande” (1979: 147). Today, according to *Daily Herald*, “Within the U.S., there are 562 Native American tribes. The largest are Navajo, Cherokee and Sioux. More than three million people in the U.S. are Native people” (Babowice, 2011). Nonetheless, extensive studies on Native American culture has shown that, it is still possible to speak of a traditional indigenous worldview shared by the majority of these people. What we know is that, Native way of life was very much in harmony with nature and they had a lot of respect for it. They were thankful for the things they took from nature and they honored the spirit.

2.2. HUMAN / NATURE INTERACTION AND LAND ETHIC IN *CEREMONY*

2.2.1. Holism and Circular Design in *Ceremony*

As we mentioned in the first chapter of this study, which deals with Leopold’s land ethic, holism is the central notion of his theory. Extensive studies on Native American culture and literature has shown that, it is also one of the fundamental aspects of Indian way of thinking. Thus, in this section, I intend to dig into her novel *Ceremony* and highlight how holism is handled in Silko’s work.

Creation stories are the cornerstones of Indian thinking. They are very important in storytelling tradition and also determine religious practice. Origins of the sun and mankind, cycle of life and death, culture-hero, coyote the trickster, migration of mankind, transformation of humans into animals and vice versa are the most common themes in Indian creation myths. We can observe most of these themes in Silko’s work as well. The novel begins with the Laguna creation myth in verse:

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

*She thought with her sisters,
Nau’tsyity’i and I’tcity’I
and together they created the universe.
This world*

*And the
Four worlds below.*

*Thought-woman, the spider
Named things
As she named them
they appeared (1)*

Silko explains the myth as follows: “Thought Woman, by thinking of her sisters, and together with her sisters, thought of everything that is. In this way, the world was created. Everything in this world was a part of the original creation; the people at home understood that far away there were other human beings also a part of this world” (1979: 3). Talking about myths, Silko also gives some clues about the holistic philosophy of indigenous people. In fact, that's the same idea Leopold articulates in land ethic, which assumes that we are all parts of a cosmic entity. She says,

I'm talking about something much bigger than that. I'm talking about something that comes out of an experience and an understanding of that original view of creation that we are all part of a whole; we do not differentiate or fragment stories and experiences. In the beginning, Tseitsinako, Thought Woman, thought of all things, and all of these things are held together as one holds many things together in a single thought. (Silko, 1979: 3)

Circular design is another creative idea, and one of the defining characteristics of Native American culture, which adds to the feeling of “wholeness”. In *The Sacred Hoop*, Paula Gunn Allen describes the phenomenon as two distinct forms of perception:

Another difference between these two ways of perceiving reality lies in the tendency of the American Indian to view space as spherical and time as cyclical, whereas the non-Indian tends to view space as linear and time as sequential. The circular concept requires all “points” that make up the sphere of being to have a significant identity and function, while the linear model assumes that some “points” are more significant than others. (2015: 86)

Circular design is a part of Indian culture and it is possible to see its implications in daily life, in how they design their houses and their rituals etc. It is possible to see this concept in Indian storytelling tradition as well. These stories are full of what modern critics call flashbacks and flashforwards, and there are recurring events and themes all the time. As Robert Bell points out, these stories do not

necessarily begin at the beginning and end at the end (2002: 23). As a matter of fact, Silko makes use of the idea in her writing too. Throughout *Ceremony*, both at the sentence level and at semantic level, there are several examples that illustrate this idea of circularity. In the following quote for instance, we immediately notice how the linear time concept diminishes and the past, present and the future all come together in a single moment: “He took a deep breath of cold mountain air: there were no boundaries; the world below and the sand paintings inside became the same that night. The mountains from all the directions had been gathered there that night” (135).

Tayo was much closer to nature and to his own culture and much healthier in beginning. When he was younger, he used to climb Bone Mesa with Rocky and “he felt that the sky was near and that he could have touched it” (17). Silko goes on to say that,

Distances and days existed in themselves then; they all had a story. They were not barriers. If a person wanted to get to the moon, there was a way; it all depended on whether you knew the directions - exactly which way to go and what to do to get there; it depended on whether you knew the story of how others before you had gone. (17; emphasis added)

This is a small moment remembered, which adds to the sense of continuity and circularity felt throughout the novel. Through a Native ceremony Tayo, in a word, returns back to the point where he started out but this time with a deeper and better understanding of his own culture and community and a new insight on humanity in general:

*The dreams had been terror at loss, at something lost forever; but nothing was lost; **all was retained between the sky and the earth, and within himself**. He had lost nothing. The snow-covered mountain remained, without regard to titles of ownership or the white ranchers who thought they possessed it. They logged the trees, they killed the deer, bear, and mountain lions, they built their fences high; but the mountain was far greater than any or all of these things. The mountain outdistanced their destruction, just as love had outdistanced death. The mountain could not be lost to them, because it was in their bones; Josiah and Rocky were not far away. They were close; they had always been close. And he loved them then as he had always loved them, the feeling pulsing over him as strong as it had ever been. They loved him that way; he could still feel the love they had for him. The damage that had been done had never reached this feeling. This feeling was their life, vitality locked deep in blood memory, and the people were strong, and the fifth world endured, and **nothing was ever lost as long as the love remained**. (204; emphasis added)*

As Robert Bell points out “all stories, all ceremonies or rituals secular and sacred our attempts to confer totality or structure on experience objects and events that would not otherwise be related to one another or given definite connection” (2002: 34). This is very obvious in *Ceremony*. However, when we look closely this is also what Leopold does in *A Sand County Almanac* and his land ethic. He has brought together elements, “objects and events”, that were not thought to be connected with each other until that day. From this perspective, land ethic is “a story” which boldly expresses the idea that life is a whole and that all living and nonliving things that make it up are interrelated. Leopold, as Silko did in *Ceremony*, has made us look forward to a true journey into nature and into our own self. While reading *A Sand County Almanac* and moving through the chapters, we experience a ritual similar to the one that Betonie set up for Tayo. We dive into the magical world of plants and animals, feel the cycle of seasons and their effects on us, witness “the green fire” in the eyes of a dying wolf, and understand what it is like to “think like a mountain”. And finally, “The Land Ethic” section is the point where everything becomes tangible and clear for the reader. When we have finished both books, we feel that we have gained a new insight into the nature and the nature of human beings and their lives.

This Native notion of circularity and interconnectedness is a representation of holism, which is also emphasized by Leopold himself, and stands out as another common way of thinking between Leopold and the Native Americans. The concept is fundamental to Native American worldview and it is possible to see its implications in every aspect of Indian life. In the following few pages we will be looking at one of these areas, namely storytelling.

2.2.2. Importance of Story and Storytelling

Everywhere he [Tayo] looked, he saw a world made of stories, the long ago, time immemorial stories, as old Grandma called them. It was a world alive, always changing and moving; and if you knew where to look, you could see it, sometimes almost imperceptible, like the motion of the stars across the sky. (88)

Ceremony derives its fullness, optimism, and power largely from the Laguna Pueblo stories that Silko incorporates in her narrative. Silko says that these stories “aren't just entertainment” but they are “all we have to fight off illness and death” (2).

Storytelling is a way of transmitting knowledge and culture from one generation to the next and providing continuity. In the introduction to her book *Storyteller*, Silko explains that stories are usually told by the survivors of a serious event so everybody listens to them carefully with the hope that they will help them survive too. She says, “The association of power with knowledge begins here” (1979: 14). She goes on to say that “a great deal of the story is believed to be inside the listeners. The storyteller's role is to draw the story out of the listeners. The storytelling continues from generation to generation” (1979: 1). In Tayo’s case, the ceremony actually makes him aware of his true self and his true story, which was always there. He already knew that he had to turn back to his roots and the ceremony served as a means for that; to draw the story out of him.

When Tayo’s story begins, we soon realize that it is not told in a straight timeline. Often cut by mythical tales in verse and frequent flashbacks, the plot does not flow in one direction but in all directions, which is fundamental to circular design.

For the inexperienced reader, it may be somehow difficult to follow the story or figure out the time and setting since they are “accustomed to being taken from point A to point B” (Silko, 1979: 1). Silko describes this style of writing as a way of storytelling. In her essay “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” she explains the Pueblo style narrative as follows: “Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider's web with many little threads radiating from the center, crisscrossing each other. As with the web, the structure emerges as it is made and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made” (1979: 1).

In *Ceremony*, we have a blending of prose and verse. The original Native story, which covers the creation myth, the coyote transformation story and the hero quest, is told in verse and Tayo’s story which goes parallel to it, is told in prose. It seems to be a deliberate choice of Silko to do that because she tells a universal story in a native setting through a half Native half white hero; and she aims to emphasize that blending or fusion if we can say, and her Native roots through the form of her novel as well. If we accept prose or the novel form as a Western invention, it is possible to say that her work becomes a melting pot of the Western culture and the Native culture. Just like

Tayo is half white and half native; being written in half verse and half prose, Silko's novel is a half-breed as well.

Using patterns and symbols, most of which often have sacred connotations, is another fundamental way of telling a story in almost all works of art in Native American culture. They use all sorts of patterns and symbols derived from their natural habitat. Use of the sun, corn, water, deer with a heart line, lightning or zig-zag lines and the ill-fated swastika, which originally symbolized the four stages of life: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age and then used by the Nazis during the World War II, are namely some of these. This is obviously a very native and original way of conveying meaning and Silko utilizes this tradition in her writing too. Her 1981 book *Storyteller* for example, is compiled in the form of a scrapbook or more like a picture of album. She uses a special layout with this book, which includes some of her pictures on one side and some of her poetry as well as her new and old stories. When it comes to the *Ceremony*, she once more begins her novel with a special layout which recalls Native use of patterns. On the first page, we have the creation myth in verse. Then on the second page we have only one word which is "sunrise". And Tayo wakes up and the story begins on the next page. Thus, we have the "sunrise" on one page and Tayo waking up on the opposite. This is clearly a deliberate choice of Silko which adds visual power to her narrative.

Ceremony begins with "sunrise", which is a very powerful word with myriad of possible connotations; and ends with the same word. We learn from Silko that this is a traditional way of beginning and ending a story in Pueblo oral tradition (1979: 2). Another example is found Tayo's Morning Prayer he did in the dawn of the night he spent with Ts-eh: "Sunrise. He ended the prayer with 'sunrise' because he knew the Dawn people began and ended all their words with 'sunrise' " (169). This pattern obviously serves to emphasize the notion of wholeness and circularity which, as we mentioned before, is fundamental to Indian thinking.

It was all about the pattern. Tayo's problem was that he could not see the full pattern. Everything was there, the Laguna voices, the Japanese soldiers, stars, mesas and a mysterious woman but he could not put these all together and they did not make sense in the beginning. The scattered and disconnected appearance of the narrative is like a reflection of Tayo's restless soul and feelings:

*He could get no rest as long as the memories were tangled with the present, tangled up like colored threads from old Grandma's wicker sewing basket when he was a child, and he had carried them outside to play and they had spilled out of his arms into the summer weeds and **rolled away in all directions**, and then he had hurried to pick them up before Auntie found him. (6; emphasis added)*

As he progresses through the stages of the ceremony set by the medicine man Betonie, Tayo realizes that what is being told is in fact his own story, and when he has succeeded in seeing the whole story in the end, everything is resolved and clarified: "Had arrived at the convergence of patterns he could see them clearly now the stars had always been with them existing beyond memory and they were all held together" (236).

2.2.3. The Feminine Landscape

Women, as the source of constructive and creative power, have a very important place in the novel. Thought Woman (Spider Woman) appears on the first page as the creator of the universe and this is just the beginning. She thinks and everything that she thinks and then voices, people, animals, trees and stars thus came into being. Actually, *Ceremony* is like another story that the Spider Woman thinks and reaches us from Silko's pen:

*Thought woman, the spider
Named things and
As she named them
They appeared.*

*She is sitting in her room
Thinking of a story now*

*I am telling you the story
She is thinking (1)*

According to Allen, Laguna are "the last extreme mother-right people on earth" (qtd. in Swan, 1992: 309). Silko knows Laguna women, and they are everywhere in her novel as they are everywhere in the landscape they live in. In the following a few pages, I intend to look at some of her female characters in the book closely.

Ts-eh is one of the key figures in the novel. We get the feeling that she is an important character as soon as we see her with her yellow skirt, which is the most

sacred color in Laguna mythology representing warmth, love and bravery. It is the color of the West. She was standing under an apricot tree on the skirts of Mt. Taylor, which is also called Tse-pi'na. Tayo was looking for the spotted cattle in the area and as the weather turns bad, Ts-eh invites Tayo to her house. Tayo feels that there was something special about her. She was the woman Betonie told him about: "Remember these stars ... I have seen them and I've seen the spotted cattle, I have seen a mountain and and I've seen a woman" (152).

Tayo immediately falls in love with Ts-eh and that night they make love. Tayo's love making with Ts-eh is the ultimate representation of his reunification with the land: "He dreamed he made love with her there. He left the warm he felt the warm sand on his toes and knees; he felt her body, and it was warm as the sand, and he couldn't feel where her body ended and the sand began" (206). Tayo's transformation begins right after this reunification. Even his urine changes color from white to yellow. As Edith Swan puts it: "His color symbolism switches from white (father) to yellow (mother)" (1992: 310). His affection to Ts-eh helps Tayo forget about the past and soothe his troubles: "... and he smiled. Being alive was alright then: he had not breathed like that for a long time" (168).

Through the window of her house, Tayo sees the constellation of stars that Betonie had marked on the sandpainting. He follows the stars and they lead him to Mount Taylor where he comes across a mountain lion. He finds the cattle in a white man's ranch, he is arrested by government rangers, then with the help of the mountain lion he escapes. However, he falls down from his horse and gets hurt and loses the track of the cattle again. On the way back, he meets a mysterious hunter who takes him back to Ts-eh's house. Tayo finds out that Ts-eh had gathered the cattle for him. He takes them back home, but he keeps on dreaming about Ts-eh. Later Tayo and Ts-eh camp out on the mountain together for a long time where she teaches Tayo about animals and plants, seasons, and life and death. Tayo now has gained a very deep awareness that nature is something alive, the land is alive, and they never leave you, there are always around you and with you.

Tayo's intimacy with Ts-eh is a clear representation of his positive relationship with the land. For Tayo, Ts-eh becomes the primary source of happiness and love which heals him. Love he bears for her is indeed the love he bears for the land. No

wonder her name Ts-eh stands for the sacred mountain Taylor, or Tsepina. At the end of the novel, while the seniors are celebrating Tayo's affection with Ts-eh, we learn that she is in fact Amoooh, the mountain spirit, who is considered as the source of life in Laguna mythology.

Night Swan is another mysterious and powerful female figure who plays a vital role in Tayo's journey of healing. She is a former flamenco dancer, who lives in a flat above Lalo's bar in Cubero, where uncle Josiah and others often go to hang out and have a drink. Just like Ts-eh, she has the view of the sacred Mt. Taylor from her house and she seems to have some mystical powers as well. As we often see in the novel, her mysticism is represented through color imagery. Everything about Night Swan is blue. She is wearing a blue kimono, she has blue eyes and walls of her house are all blue. This blue color and the rain outside combine with her mysterious words and make us feel that Night swan is another representation of the spirits which guide Tayo throughout his journey.

The next figure I would like to talk about is the old Grandma. However, before doing that, I would like to elaborate on the present status of the elderly in American society which will hopefully enable us to compare the prevalent view on old age with the Native American's. In his 1979 book *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations*, Christopher Lasch gives us a portrait of the troubled American society and discusses various topics like family life, self-awareness politics, sports and schooling etc. In section nine entitled "The Shattered Faith in the Regeneration of Life" he writes on old age and aging. He says that people do not care about the future generations any more so what use is the accumulation of knowledge that old age brings? The older generation has nothing to teach the younger. That is also a sign of diminishing ties with the past and future which is one of the tenets of narcissistic self and society. The following full paragraph from the book gives us a clear picture of how the modern American society visualizes the elderly:

Old age inspires apprehension, moreover, not merely because it represents the beginning of death but because the condition of old people has objectively deteriorated in modern times. Our society notoriously finds little use for the elderly. It defines them as useless, forces them to retire before they have exhausted their capacity for work, and reinforces their sense of superfluity at every opportunity. By insisting, ostensibly in a spirit of respect and friendship,

that they have not lost the right to enjoy life, society reminds old people that they have nothing better to do with their time. By devaluing experience and setting great store by physical strength, dexterity, adaptability, and the ability to come up with new ideas, society defines productivity in ways that automatically exclude "senior citizens. The well-known cult of youth further weakens the social position of those no longer young. (1991: 209)

On the other hand, the Grandma figure depicted in Silko's *Ceremony*, which was published in 1977, almost the same date with Lasch's work, is very different from the useless, disregarded and excluded elderly figure that Lasch describes. Old Grandma, for sure, is one of the most influential and powerful characters in the novel. In her Preface to *Ceremony* Silko says: "I feel I was blessed, watched over, and protected by my beloved ancestors, and the old ones who told me the stories: Grandma A'mooh, Aunt Susie, and Grandpa Hank" (xix). For sure, the old Grandma in her novel is sort of a tribute to her own grandmother and the elders who are sources of wisdom. In this "fifth world", they care for their sons and daughters and granddaughters and pass "the word" on to newer generations.

Grandma was always more compassionate and loving than Auntie. She sat in her chair by the stove silently but always kept an eye on Tayo. She knew instinctively why he was sick; she shared his pain, took care of him and prayed for him:

He looked at old Grandma sitting in her place beside the stove; he couldn't tell if she was sleeping or if she was only listening to the wind with her eyes closed... He watched her get up slowly ... She sat down on the edge of the bed and she reached out for him. She held his head in her lap and she cried with him, saying "A'moo'oh, a'moo'ohh" over and over again. (30)

Auntie was not sure about calling for a medicine man because she was worried about what other people would say about that as Tayo was not a full-blood, but Grandma always had the last word: "He's my grandson. If I send for old Ku'oosh, he'll come. Let them talk if they want to. Why do you care what they say? Let them talk. By planting time they'll forget" (31). And it is not a coincidence that she has the last word at the end of the novel too.

"They were the same - the mule and old Grandma, she sitting in the corner of the room in the wintertime by the potbelly stove, or the summertime on an apple crate under the elm tree; she was as blind as the gray mule and just as *persistent*" (25; emphasis added). The word "persistent" must be a deliberate choice of Silko as it

emphasizes the sense of continuity. As Paula Gunn Allen points out, while men are good at killing and destruction, women are good at continuity (Allen, 1979b). Tayo becomes sick due to the negative effects of white man's war, and when he begins to gain traits usually identified with women such as harmony, productivity, patience and continuity, he becomes more mature, gains a new understanding of life and he recovers. Allen calls this process "Tayo's initiation into motherhood" (1979b: 12).

There are also other female figures in the novel that can be examined better from an ecofeminist perspective. At first glance, Tayo's mother, Laura, looks like a representation of women exploited like the land itself. She is another Indian that got lost in the corrupt white culture. She is a woman who has been forced to spend her life in the grip of heavy drinking and daily relationships and she is ostracized by her community. A real helping hand has never been stretched out as she has only been seen as a shame for his family. She lived a life that her community never approved of; she abandoned her child and died in a mysterious way. While Laura was abused by white men, we see that indigenous men do not think much differently about women and it is evident that, there are many other mistreated women around who are not necessarily Indian. When Emo says, "They took our land, they took everything. Now we take their women", he speaks of some kind of revenge and conquest, which shows us that, exploitation and abuse of women, like the exploitation of land, is a universal problem which goes beyond races, nationalities and gender.

As we mentioned earlier, at first glance Laura seems to be another lost soul. However, John Purdy, in his article "Tayo's Genealogy in Ceremony", puts Tayo's mother Laura to quite a different place. He states that, Tayo is predestined as a natural hero and he bases this on Auntie's story about Tayo's mother. (1986: 2) Probably to upset and abuse him a little bit more, and to remind him of where he belongs, Auntie tells Tayo that one morning she saw her mother without any clothes but just her high heel shoes on, walking under the big cottonwood tree on the sand rock near the river. That was exactly the place where Pueblo people held their ceremonies and waited for Katsina, the North Spirit, who is, in Pueblo mythology, associated with water, rain and abduction of Native women (Purdy, 1986: 63). Here, Tayo's mother is, in a word, associated with the Yellow Woman, who represents feminine sexuality, power and corn in Pueblo mythology. All this happens before Tayo's birth. That is, Tayo had

already been a part of the mysterious events narrated in sacred stories when he was born.

Women are very powerful in the Pueblo culture. The woman is the owner of the house. Thus, as Paula Allen says, seeing Laguna women plastering their house with tools in their hands is something ordinary in Pueblo culture. Everything belongs to women:

Tayo realized then that as long as Josiah and Rocky had been alive, he had never known Robert except as a quiet man in the house that belonged to old Grandma and Auntie. When Auntie and old Grandma and Josiah used to argue over how many lambs should be sold, or when Auntie and old Grandma scolded Josiah for the scandal of his Mexican girlfriend, Robert sat quietly. He had cultivated this deafness for as many years as he had been married to Auntie. His face was calm; he was patient with them because he had nothing to say. The sheep, the horses, and the fields - everything belonged to them, including the good family name. (29)

For this reason, the abduction or escape stories about the Yellow Woman, who is personified as Tayo's mom Laura in Ceremony, that are popular among the Pueblo, deal with something totally different from the escape fantasies of the oppressed and bored woman stereotype in Anglo-American literature. These Laguna stories tell about more of a sacred journey for women to accumulate more life experience and more stories to be told. They are part of a sacred myth, blessing women's freedom, femininity and strength. Yellow Woman goes away with Katsina, the North Spirit and comes back with her two sons, who later become the culture heroes or, in a word, role models for their community.

2.2.4. War and Nuclearization as Environmental Problems

In the novel "war", namely the World War II, is one of the center themes which is clearly depicted as a means of exploitation of both humans and the land. As Louis Owens, a novelist and literary critic of Cherokee and Irish - American descent, states:

With twenty-five thousand American Indians enlisting in World War II, the Indian veteran became a common sight in urban Indian gatherings and back on the reservations. Suffering the same kinds of trauma experiences by all soldiers at war, the Indian veterans had the added pains of discrimination and, more crucially, the eventual return to an Indian world where identity had been difficult for a long time. (2001: 31)

Discrimination and humiliation begin with the enlisting of Rocky and Tayo in the U.S. army as the recruiting officer says, "Anyone can fight for America, even you boys. In a time of need, anyone can fight for her" (17). The officer promises Tayo and Rocky a huge world they can discover and endless new opportunities in front of them. However, we see that war did not bring them what they dreamed of. All they get is death, sickness and humiliation. Tayo realizes that "this was where the white people and their promises had left the Indians. All the promises they made to you, Rocky, weren't any different than the other promises they made" (117).

In the novel war is depicted as a destructive force and the mother of all evil. Silko makes a deliberate connection with the war and draught years as she says, "The draught years had returned again as they had after the First World war" (9). Tayo thinks he is responsible for the draught because he cursed the rain when he was fighting against the "Japs" during the war. That was not something a Native would do but in the time of war everything was different. As Silko's narrator explains: "So he had prayed the rain away and for the sixth year it was dry; the grass turned yellow and it did not grow. Wherever he looked, Tayo could see the consequences of his praying" (13).

War conditions made Tayo hate things that he did love before; for example, the rain. Image of Rocky being carried in a rainstorm in Philippines arena, and Tayo's cursing the rain is the apparent reason behind his sense of guilt. He thought he was responsible for the drought that brought about the terrible conditions animals and humans had to endure. When he was a child, he killed a bunch of flies, but Uncle Josiah told him a story, where way back in the time immemorial, when animals and plants disappeared and no rain came for a long time, the greenbottle flies went to mother earth and asked for mankind's forgiveness. Flies were not harmful but the saviors of the mankind. However, Tayo could not stand seeing those flies anymore because he had seen them flying on Rocky's dead body. He can never forget the image of Rocky covered with them, his dead body lying on the bottom of the forest, disappearing in rain and mud, like he is being devoured by the land itself. However, Josiah, his caring uncle, tells Tayo to remember the story whenever he thinks of these flies as disgusting. Silko once again gracefully demonstrates how modern times, namely the war, drives man away from nature and how stories reunite them.

Betonie, the medicine man, describes war as “witchery raging as wide as this world” (114). This war of the white man in modern times both ruins the local people and goes beyond the pacific and damages the lives of those who live thousands of kilometers away. In the text, there are frequent demonstrations of human brutality against others, like the image of Japanese soldiers coming to crush Rocky’s head with the butt of a rifle. We encounter such atrocities, and these are scenes in which soldiers totally lose their human side. We realize that, even if this is not their authentic nature, people can do terrible things when they are deprived of their values and when they are tricked into something they did not believe. In the time of war, no matter if they are losers or winners, people often have to sacrifice from their freedom, dignity and humanity.

When war is described as witchery, Tayo asks what the local ceremonies can do against whites' weapons and bombs. Medicine man Betonie nods his head and says it is a trick of “witchery” to make them assume that all the evil originated from white people (122). It is a trick to prevent people from turning to themselves and discover the truth. Then he tells a story where all witches come together for a contest to show their powers. At this point comes another Native story in verse, which is a poetic summary of all that evil happened to Natives and whites:

*Then they grow away from the earth
then they grow away from the sun
then they grow away from the plants and animals.
They see no life
When they look
they see only objects.
The world is a dead thing for them
the trees and rivers are not alive
the mountains and stones are not alive.
The deer and bear are objects
They see no life.*

*They fear
They fear the world.
They destroy what they fear. (124-125)*

Nuclearization of the Native American land is another dimension of war. The discovery of uranium in the Laguna land was an event that radically changed the life

of the Laguna people. Fences of barbed wire were put up to keep Natives (locals) away from the nuclear sites. Apparently, they kept the people away from danger and protected them, but in fact, those fences protected the sites *from the people* and concealed the secret operations conducted there.

Grandma talks about a bright flash of light she saw through the window which was stronger and brighter than anything she had ever seen, “so big so bright” she says “even my old clouded eyes could see it. It must have filled the whole Southeast sky” (228). And she adds that she did not understand what it was at the time but later on she saw something in the newspaper about it which said it was the biggest explosion that ever happened. Grandma goes on to ask: “Why grandson, why did they make a thing like that?” (228).

The old Grandma could not understand what it was, but now we know that it was the flash of light caused by the test of an atomic bomb. Trinity nuclear test site, which is still an active missile test site for the U.S. army, is 120 miles from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and takes three to four hours to reach by car. The site is in the desert region, known as “White Sands”, and it is possible to see ground zero where the first atomic bomb was detonated on July 16, 1945. Nuclear testing at Trinity Site was a part of a larger project called the Manhattan Project led by the famous physicist and engineer J. Robert Oppenheimer, who is known as “the father of the atomic bomb”. Oppenheimer was responsible for developing the first nuclear weapon during the World War II. The people who produced the deadliest weapon ever on earth, were certainly aware of what this could lead to, and how devastating its effect could be. Years later, in an interview, Oppenheimer described his feelings about the first atomic bomb test:

We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says, “Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” I suppose we all thought that one way or another. (Oppenheimer, 2019)

It is possible to think of Oppenheimer’s words as a kind of confession. At this point, a careful reader will realize that in the second half of her book, Silko often uses

the verb “destroy” and talks about “the destroyers”. This is not a coincidence since it is clear that “the destroyers” were real, and Oppenheimer was just one of them.

When Tayo thinks about the Trinity Site, the uranium mine in his homeland and the atomic bomb which killed hundreds of thousands of people in the blink of an eye; he understands why in his dreams, the voices of Japanese soldiers and Laguna people mixed together. As Silko explains:

From that time on, human beings were one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them, for all living things; united by a circle of death that devoured people in cities twelve thousand miles away, victims who had never known these messes, who had never seen the delicate colors of the rocks which boiled up their slaughter. (228)

However, Betonie, who describes war as witchery also says that it is wrong to see the white man as the sole responsible for this destruction, since Native people themselves created the white man in the first place. He says, “This is the trickery of the witchcraft...they want us to believe all the evil resides with white people. Then we will look no further to see what is really happening. They want us to separate ourselves from white people, to be ignorant and helpless as we watch our own destruction” (122). Here Silko speaks her mind through the words of Betonie and reminds us that the Natives, or other nations, must take their own destiny into their own hands and face their own responsibility in the problems they experience. The story of Tayo, in a sense, is also the story of this universal confrontation.

The final stage of the ceremony takes place in the pit, at the now-deserted uranium mine. As Ts-eh warns Tayo about “the destroyers”, he takes caution. Tayo thinks that those who are after him are policemen and he hides himself here, but those who come are not policemen, but his so-called friends. They provoke Tayo to come out of hiding and attack Emo, but Tayo is not deceived by their evil game. Betonie had warned him and knew that they would do their best to not let the ceremony go all the way. Tayo defeats the last destructive impulse inside him and does not attack Emo. He knows very well that if he had done what they wanted and attacked Emo, or even killed him, he would look like them and that would be a victory for witchery. As the narrator explains:

The witchery had almost ended the story according to its plan; ... 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 Veterans' 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. (235)

2.2.5. Alienation: A Community in Distress

Alienation, or otherness, is one of the central themes in *Ceremony* as it is one of the most studied and written topics in American Indian literature. As Paula Gunn Allen explains:

Alienation as a theme, is more than a literary device in these works. It is an articulation of a basic experience, one that is characteristic of the life and consciousness of the half-breed. That it becomes theme, symbol, character, plot and overt structure of Native American writing that, it seeps through on every level of that writing, is testament, I think, to the depth and intensity of its pervasive presence in the writers' consciousness and lives. It is a primary experience of all bi-cultured Indians in the United States. (1979:1)

It is possible to observe this psychological and sociological phenomenon in the works of Scott Momaday, Simon J. Ortiz, and many other contemporary Native American writers as well, for the Native American rights and identity are still being debated. It is a well-established fact that there has been a conflict between the two cultures, the white and the Native since the first contact, which has not been resolved yet and Native American writers and opinion leaders are still struggling for Indian people and their culture to have its proper place in the society. Paula Allen in *Granddaughters* notes: "Like our sisters who resist in other ways, we Indian women who write have articulated and rendered the experience of being in a state of war for 500 years" (1988b: 55).

Silko uses the notion of invisibility and "white smoke" allegory to emphasize the sense of alienation in the novel. Tayo, who lost his nephew and his health in the battle of the white man, now feels like "white smoke", without a name, invisible in the room, invisible in the society. Tayo is now alienated from his own people, his own culture and even his own body. He has no consciousness. His outline, or body, was there but it was hollow. He is in such a desperate situation that, as a way of escape, he dreams about getting lost in "a gray winter fog on a distant elk mountain, where hunters

are lost indefinitely and their own bones mark the boundaries” (12). White man’s medicine “drained the memory out of his thin arms” (14). The doctor asks him if he had ever been visible. What is implied here is obviously not only something physical but also spiritual, like being visible in the community; being respected, loved and admired.

Tayo vomited again, looked up at the doctor and could hardly say: “Goddamn you... look what you have done” (15). Here Tayo is clearly addressing not only the doctor but the white politics, who sent him to war and caused all this suffering. At the train station leaving the hospital, he felt like he did not have a name. He did not have an identity either. The only thing that showed he had a name was the name tag he was holding in front of the ticket window. In the real world, outside the hospital, he felt weak. He wanted to be level with the ground. He had lost his human dignity and joy of living to the last point.

Tayo is alien to white people, which is understandable to a degree, as he is a half-breed who looks different and acts differently. However, he is alien to Native people too because he is a half-breed, again, who does not know much about his own culture. The situation surely gets more complicated when this feeling of otherness is experienced not against the white society but within a Native tribe or community. In As the Laguna poet and literary critic Paula Gunn Allen puts it:

The whole thrust of traditional narratives is toward wholeness. Kinship or relationship are major values, and who are alien are so because they come from another people. This creates no conflict, for strangers are strangers, and the rules for dealings with strangers are clear in tribal traditions. It is when the tribal person is the stranger that internal conflict and the process of alienation occurs.
(1979a: 2)

We have plenty of reasons to link the separation of Tayo from his own society, to the policies of the white man. Undoubtedly, the most important of these policies is education. There are several instances throughout the novel where we feel that Tayo wishes he had stronger connections with his own culture. On the way to Acoma with Harley to have a cold beer, Tayo looks at the horizon, searches for some clouds and contemplates: “He wished then they had taught him more about the clouds and the sky, about the way priests called the storm clouds to bring the rain” (45). Actually, Tayo and other kids did not have much opportunity to learn about their roots because they

had to attend a school run by whites; and for white teachers, Native ideas and teachings were nothing but nonsense:

He knew what white people thought about the stories. In school the science teacher had explained what superstition was, and then held the science textbook up for the class to see the true source of explanations. He had studied those books, and he had no reasons to believe the stories anymore. The science books explained the causes and effects.(87)

Tayo's cousin, Rocky, is literally a product of white man's education system. He is the stereotype of a Native young man who has been completely transformed by the white cult. He does not believe in traditions and despises them as seen in the deer hunting scene. When Josiah and Robert hunted a deer and performed a ritual to offer their gratitude because "in hunting, Indians believed the animal gave itself up to be killed so the hunter could survive" (Merchant, 2012: 12). Rocky does not understand that because such things are nonsense to him:

He was embarrassed at what they did. He knew when they took the deer home, it would be laid out on a Navajo blanket, and Old Grandma would put a string of turquoise around its neck and put silver and turquoise rings around the tips of the antlers. Josiah would prepare a little bowl of cornmeal and place it by the deer's head so that anyone who went near could leave some on the nose. Rocky tried to tell them that keeping the carcass on the floor in a warm room was bad for the meat. He wanted to hang the deer in the woodshed, where the meat would stay cold and cure properly. But he knew how they were. All the people, even the Catholics who went to mass every Sunday, followed the ritual of the deer.(46)

Rocky does not care what people in the village think about him either. When Tayo says he has to stay and help Josiah, he is already thinking about new places he will see and new people he will meet when he joins the army. Rocky is not yet aware that his indifference and selfishness towards his family, his community and his environment will drift him to a bitter end. Auntie tries to raise him like whites to remove the traces of her sister's shame, but that finally leads to Rocky's catastrophe, which only adds to the tragedy caused by the state-sponsored colonization and assimilation policies.

Undoubtedly, the most powerful agent of these assimilation policies is religion. In her book, echoing Leopold, who complains about the "Abrahamic way of thinking" and its devastating effects on nature; Silko raises a criticism against the Christian teaching and its effects on Native American people and culture:

*But the fifth world had become entangled with European names: the names of the rivers, the hills, the names of the animals and plants - all of creation suddenly had two names: an Indian name and a white name. **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 the Mother who loved and cared for them as her children, as her family. (62; emphasis added)*

Auntie has adopted the colonial belief. Now she is a Christian Native woman who loves to be seen in church every Sunday and does not let down the gospel. She had attached all her hope to her son Rocky. She had always wanted him to grow up in the white man's schools according to the white man's values and culture. This was very important for those who wanted to have a good place in the world of whites. Native customs, ceremonies after hunting an animal were meaningless to Rocky. What the elderly said or what society thought was of no interest to him. However, the tragic death of Rocky during the Bataan Death March at the Philippine front, destroyed Auntie's dreams.

Auntie does not take anyone with her to church partly as she does not want to share this "dignity" with anyone. As "a devout Christian and not immoral or pagan like the rest of the family" she also knows that each person will go to Christ individually and will be saved through his sacrifice individually but not collectively, which sounds quite "American".

Taking children into the church and government run residential schools was a part of the assimilation policy adopted by the government. As these children were educated by white teachers according to the white culture, they were manipulated, and they did not have the opportunity to learn about their own values. The elderly were not valued anymore, and their teachings were not important. Native people believe that that is what lies behind all the problems they face today. When a person has nowhere to go and no real past that he can rely on, he gets drunk and breaks the law and finds himself in such desperate situations. That is what happens in Silko's *Ceremony* as well: "Then old Grandma straightened up in her chair. 'Church' she said, wiping her eyes with a Kleenex from her apron pocket. 'Ah Thelma, do you have to go there again?' " (71).

2.2.6. Being a Community: Reclaiming Identity and Healing

For Tayo, the only way to overcome this sense of otherness, which we discussed above, was to turn to nature, prove himself through the challenging paths of the ceremony, reclaim his true identity and to embrace and reintegrate with his community. Thus, importance of being a community is often emphasized in *Ceremony*. When his mother abandoned Tayo, she left him with Aunty. He was in the family, in the community but he was never really a part of it. Prostitution was a severe problem in the reservation community, and Tayo's mother was among the young Native women who fell into this trap. Tayo was an unwanted child and he always felt like he was the cause of all the shame that fell upon the family. Aunty took care of him, but she kept him at a distance: "She wants him to be close enough to feel excluded" (61). Silko's words in fact summarize the position of American Indian people in the American Society at the time. They are in the society, but they are not really a part of it. They are together in a reservation camp; however, they are separated from their roots and from each other.

Tayo felt like he was "white smoke", which had no consciousness. His outline, his body was there, but it was hollow. He was invisible, invisible in the room, invisible in the society (13). When Tayo came together with his veteran friends like Emo and Harley they drank alcohol and talked about the good old days and the white women they slept with. They were wasting their time like a cat trying to catch flies (156). They had no expectations from life as they lost all their hope. Still, Tayo felt better when he was with others. Tayo liked to join them in the beginning because those gatherings provided a sense of community. To be among other people who have experienced similar problems gave Tayo some inner peace.

When medicine man asks "what if this ceremony does not work on you and on others" he implies that this feeling of alienation, is not just Tayo's problem but the community's, and this is something which can only be resolved when the community owns it.

The land also plays an important role in creating a sense of community. The landscape not only holds waters trees and rocks together but holds the people together as well. In *Ceremony*, nature and landscape is a very important and fundamental

element too. Arid and barren red soils, six years of drought, hot air and dust storms set the tone and atmosphere of the novel from the very beginning. Animals are at the very core of the novel. In almost every single scene or setting, there is an interaction with an animal, either cattle, a mule or a mountain lion because animals are an indispensable part of Native American life, culture and myth. In the novel, we see that animals are sharing the same destiny with human beings as there are affected by the drought as humans do. Their skinny looks and their struggle with famine and drought reminds us that, we are not alone in this world and we are sharing it with other creatures.

The story of the herd of cattle purchased by Uncle Josiah is in line with the story of Tayo, the protagonist. These cattle are nothing like the pictures of Herefords seen in white man's books. However, despite being underestimated by their appearance, these animals, unlike the Herefords, are experts in finding food and water in nature and are able to survive on their own under difficult conditions. Here Silko draws an analogy between Native American peoples and Mexican cattle. As the narrator explains: "These cattle [Mexican cattle] were descendants of generations of desert cattle, born in dry sand and scrubby mesquite, where they hunted water the way desert antelope did" (68). While the white man's cattle wait for food and water in a corral, the Mexican herd of cattle can manage to survive by using their instincts, drinking water from small puddles and eating the grass and plants they can find.

The analogy between the Natives and the Mexican cattle becomes even clearer when Josiah talks about the animals he purchased: "Cattle are like any living thing. If you separate them from the land for too long, keep them in barns and corrals, they lose something. When you turn them loose again, they go running all over. They're scared because the land is unfamiliar, and they are lost... Scared animals die off easily" (68).

Tayo's story is told through these Mexican cattle, whose journey parallels with Tayo's epic journey to his own values and identity. Their struggle for survival goes hand in hand with Tayo's struggle for recovery and survival. Indeed, Tayo begins to feel much better as soon as he begins to interact with animals and nature. As Robert Nelson points out, "Tayo's encounter with the land proves to be his access to cultural tradition" (1988: 152). At the end of the novel, when Tayo finds the cattle and brings them back to where they belong, he also finds out what has happened to himself, his land and his people.

In this respect, Silko holds a parallel view with what we have seen in Leopold's land ethic. Obviously, the utmost importance attached to tribal values, family and community in the Native culture is a reminiscent of the importance that Leopold attaches to the "integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community" (240).

CONCLUSION

Urbanization and growing needs of the industrial society and wild consumerism resulted in the excessive and unconscious use of environmental resources and put us in the middle of today's social and environmental problems. As Curt Meine points out, “*A Sand County Almanac* emerged from economic depression, the Dust Bowl and World War II, in a time of rapid technological change scientific revolutions and widespread environmental deterioration” (1999: 15-16).

As a global superpower, the USA continues to influence all the environmental policies throughout the world. U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is considered a blow to a global environment policy by many. Nevertheless, if we still have the collective power to resist the destruction of nature, and if we have our word against those who take part in this destruction, we owe most of it to American writers and thinkers like Aldo Leopold who stood up for the rights of nature and devoted their lives to understanding and protecting it.

I picked Leopold's land ethic and Silko's *Ceremony* as my examples from two immense fields of study, namely the “environmental philosophy” and criticism, and the Native American cultural heritage and literature. It would be an impossible project for anyone to deal with every single aspect of these two topics so I focused on a specific author and philosopher from each and tried to create a sample environment, where one could make inferences and draw some conclusions about the bigger picture.

The historical roots of an environmental philosophy in American thinking, which emphasized the value of wilderness and discussed the proper place of human beings in nature, can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, to the writings of Emerson and Thoreau. In the first chapter of this study, works and philosophies of some of these American writers, that can be referred as early examples of environmental consciousness, have been examined briefly in an attempt to understand the process that led us to a more holistic and ecocentric perception of the environment we have today. Following that, the main tenets of land ethic have been discussed in accordance with the ideas of important theorists in the field.

In the first chapter, fundamental elements and aspects of Leopold's land ethic have been discussed. Actually, not all the ideas that Leopold put forward in “The Land Ethic” were very new, as some of them were discussed in his earlier work. His 1933

“Conservation Ethic” essay, for example, where he discussed cultural evolution of ethic, and his “Biotic View of Land” essay where he elaborated his concept of evolution of ecological diversity, became the basis for his most influential essay “The Land Ethic”. In this concise and illuminating article, we see how Leopold merges his long years of field experience in National Forest Service and his original and ethical view of land into a groundbreaking philosophy.

The second chapter was about the Native American author Leslie Silko’s famous novel *Ceremony*. By taking Leopold’s essay “The Land Ethic” as a guide and reading novel from an Ecocritical perspective, I tried to find out and highlight the similarities between Leopold’s view of land, and the Native perception of the land as depicted in Silko’s *Ceremony*. In her novel Silko tells the story of a young Native American, an unwanted child and a half-breed, suffering from psychological problems after his service in the Second World War, and his struggle for sanity and re-adaptation to the society he lived in. Silko's protagonist Tayo joined the white man’s war where he witnessed the death of Rocky, his cousin. Because of his traumatic experiences in a foreign war and his troubled family tree, he feels alienated from the lands that determined his identity. With the help of oral traditions and ceremonies of Pueblo culture, he goes through a mythical journey that will eventually heal him and enable him to reintegrate with his society. As he heals, the land heals with him. Tayo is identified with the legendary culture hero as he gradually recreates the myth.

At first glance, *Ceremony* seems to be dealing with the psychological problems of an individual, an alienated Native American man, which is not very rare, who suffers from post war trauma. However, the whole story is not limited to the journey of Tayo. The text in fact, is a multilayered work which tells the story of a society that has lost its ties with the land and its past under the attack of colonialism. Silko in *Ceremony* shows how white people themselves are also the victims of this problematic and corrupt order: “The lie ... the liars had fooled everyone white people and Indians alike as long as people believed the lies, they would never be able to see what had been done to them or what they were doing to each other” (177). It is in fact a novel that mirrors the common problems of the whole American society and it goes even beyond that and deals with the common problems of humanity and the only way to overcome these problems turn out to be going back to nature and going back to the roots.

In fact, Silko's *Ceremony* is all about what Leopold claims from the very beginning: We are all one, the land, the oceans, the animals, plants, Natives, whites, the Japanese and the Americans. We all share the same world and we are all part of the same story that the Thought Woman thought, just a thin thread in the spider's web or "a plain citizen of the biotic community". And if we want to live a healthy and fulfilling life, we as humans, should learn to live in harmony with our fellow creatures, whether they are human or non-human. If we lose our connection with nature and our culture, when we begin to think that we as humans are at the center of the universe, or even worse than that, a specific group of people are at the center of the universe, the delicate web of life shatters and falls into pieces. It is then inevitable that we would encounter unimaginable troubles and destruction.

We live in a post-truth era where emotions and beliefs, with some negative connotations as well, play a more important role in shaping people's opinions than mere facts and figures. On the other hand, the lyrical style he employs in *A Sand County Almanac* shows that, Leopold in a very positive sense, realized the power of emotions in shaping public opinion so many years ago. He was a far sighted and able thinker, who could deeply analyze environmental and social issues and challenges of his time and beyond. Leopold, for sure, was ahead of his time.

Today, in the beginning of the 21st century, Leopold's ideas are still valid and inspiring. My review of literature revealed that, critical research on Leopold's land ethic is a rapidly growing area of interest in environmental studies. Throughout the world, conferences are being held on Leopold and his philosophy, and research centers are being established, which are supported by both scholars and enthusiasts from all walks of life. Some of these research centers are namely The Aldo Leopold Foundation in Wisconsin, USA, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute in Montana and Hacettepe University Land Ethic Research and Application Center in Ankara, Turkey. It seems that Leopold is once again, beginning to cross the boundaries of academic circles and meet with society.

Leopold was aware of the fact that a huge philosophical change was needed for the land ethic to be fully understood and implemented. He says, "No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis loyalties, affections, and convictions. The proof that conservation has not yet

touched these foundations of conduct lies in the fact that philosophy and religion have not yet heard of it” (225).

Leopold goes on to ask: “It is, by common consent, a good thing to get back to nature. But wherein lies the goodness and what can be done to encourage its pursuit?” (165). This feeling of pursuit indeed has made the philosophers, authors, activists and also plain people who just enjoy being in nature, try to create a social atmosphere where nature is given a priority and a chance to survive. As John Stuart Mill puts it, “Every great movement must experience three stages: ridicule, discussion, adaptation” (qtd. in Nash, 2004: 8). As for the land ethic, let us be a little bit optimistic and assume that we are at the discussion stage. Undoubtedly, there is still a lot to study, a lot to learn and a long way to go. Leopold's land ethic idea is an invaluable source for inspiration for those who are interested in the ongoing development of environmental ethics and I hope this study will make a humble contribution to it.

I believe, it is more appropriate to see Leopold's land ethic as the pioneer of a new perspective that will lead us to think more about the environment, than to be a magical formula which can appeal to all existing environmental problems. Leopold was first of all a forester and a conservationist, and he kept doing what he knew best throughout his life. He never aimed to be confined in the theoretical field but tried to inspire and to mobilize people as well. Leopold believed that, producing “new kind of people” was the only way to achieve conservation. According to him, the prevailing view in the society that prioritized economy had to be changed and the human spirit had to be included in the equation.

When we think of our modern times, for the past few years, “eco-friendly” has become a popular expression to describe myriad of things from housing to commuting. On TV or social media, it is now very common to see people talking about eco-friendly design, eco-friendly cooking, or even ecofriendly clothing. The question is, does it really work, or are we doing all these things to feel better about ourselves or, as Slavoj Zizek puts it, to comfort our conscience a little bit? Our attitude towards nature will determine our future because if we cannot connect with our fellow animals, plants, rivers and mountains and love and respect them; we cannot love and respect people either. As Stacey Matrazzo points out:

In order to restore the natural and civil landscapes, humans must recognize their inter-connectivity and interdependence with the land; but they must also acknowledge the fundamental connection between land and democratic rights and responsibilities. Democracy is not something that simply happens to people; for it to truly be efficacious, it requires active participation and a willing concession toward that, which benefits all members of the land community. (2013: 5)

I would like to end my argument with Callicott's words, with the hope of a better future for all people, animals and plants, or simply "the land": "When ecological understanding and awareness become generally distributed in our culture, then the land ethic will follow as a natural and psychologically necessary consequence" (1993: 13).

"Sunrise"

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