

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**Woman and Environment in the Archeology of Native American Literature:  
A (P/post-) Colonial Perspective**

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**Keywords: Fusion of Binaries, post-colonial, threshold position, dialogic, syncretic, gynosophical approach, Environment, Feminism, Eco-Criticism**

**Abstract**

Multiple Native American concepts like their approach to woman and environment have their reception within the mainstream concepts of Feminism, Reader Response Theory and Eco-Criticism. My objective is to find out the syncretic solutions to all these marginalized and main stream voices. Native American Epistemology as all-inclusive with no binaries stands upon a threshold point where traditional tribal values, past and historical experiences are acclaimed not at the cost of denouncing the other, rather adopting an interactive approach, which leads to common grounds through shared world views. It is not a shifting of binaries rather dissolution and fusion of them. Post-Colonial Native American stance ceases to be fixed and rigid rather prone to

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elasticity and flexibility. Post-Colonialism provides a room for marginal voices. Such frontier position is very challenging because it raises multiple questions about speaking on behalf of people, while standing on a slippery position.

## **Selected Works**

*Black Elk Speaks, Mad Bear, Rolling Thunder, Ceremony, House Made of Dawn*

### **1. Introduction**

With five hundred years of colonial history, Native American situation cannot be justified as any common post-colonial experience. Howard Zinn (1994) in his book *A People's History of United States* gives a detailed account of the atrocities committed by Spaniards and all the migrated people afterwards. He gives a detailed account of Columbus' diary, which exposes the reality of civilizing mission. "With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want" (p. 5). Zinn goes on narrating the brutal history of genocide:

Trying to put together an army of resistance, the Arawaks faced Spaniards who had armor, muskets, swords, horses. When the Spaniards took prisoners they hanged them or burned them to death. Among the Arawaks, mass suicides began, with cassava poison. Infants were killed to save them from the Spaniards. In two years, through murder, mutilation, or suicide, half of the 250,000 Indians on Haiti were dead. (1994, p. 5)

According to him, a reader/researcher needs to interpret history from the below rather than from the master's eyes. History of America is not the history of Generals. It is the history of people who were white washed from the surface of earth:

The treatment of heroes (Columbus) and their victims, the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress is only one aspect of a certain approach to history, in which the past is told from the point of view of governments, conquerors, diplomats, and leaders. (p.7)

At one hand, the colonized is suppressed, on the other hand, he is misrepresented and stereotyped, and hence he is the victim of double subjugation and oppression.

#### **1.1.(P/post-) Colonial**

Post-colonial theory has very different implications in different scenarios. One cannot choose a philosophical discourse and paste it onto any socio-political scenario. Theory generates from lived, agonizing and traumatizing reality. Native American (P/post-) colonial experience can be discussed at multiple levels.

- i. First of all, it is important to consider whether the Native American position is still Colonial or Post-colonial, once it is decided (irrespective of the matter whether it is possible to decide, divide or categorize it or not?)
- ii. The second step would be the difference between Native American and generalized/main stream colonial experience which starts with imperial designs, colonizing a particular territory, leaving a colonizer's trace and cultural imprints on it

and later followed by a decolonizing mission, which include both geographical and cultural decolonization.

Multiple questions arise here. For example:

- i. Whether the Native American P/post and colonial situation can relate to that generalized common worldwide experience?
- ii. Is it possible to apply the traditional post-colonial condition on Native American experience?
- iii. Is it really possible to go through the process of decolonization in Native American situation?
- iv. How to keep up a balance between two extreme positions-separatist and dialogic positions of Native American and American?

Keeping all these varieties of Post-colonial experiences in view, I termed general mainstream experience as upper case “P” which is “Post-colonial” while the Native American experience is an experience with lower case ‘p’. Moreover, the contention between the arrival of ‘post’ and continual of the ‘colonial’ is expressed as hyphenated and bracketed because ironically decolonization never took place.

Deloria (1992) in his book *God is Red* gives a detailed account of the pathetic condition of Indian as “Vanishing Americans” and “Token Indians...but for most Americans, Indians had ceased to exist” (p. 1). He gives a detailed account of Indian nationalist consciousness for recognition and survival. It is a kind of frontier position he takes. Although he talks about preserving the tribal-centric approach and Indianness but he considers it very important to adopt a dialogic position in order to clear all the misrepresentations and stereotyping by the literatures, academia and media. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indians became conscious of their misrepresentations and political agenda behind it. The point I want to make clear is, if Indians want to protest and make a worth of what they are and what their differing national perspective is, then they need to adopt a borderline position. America is democratized nation. Healey (1995) in his book *Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Class* describes this “Americanization” and “Anglo-conformity” as a melting pot by which he means to say that these generalized and apparently simplistic ideals of deliberately Americanized nation are very complex indeed. There is a difference between overlooking the divergent modes of ethnicity in a democratic state and acknowledging the distinct ethnic varieties. For making this ethnicity as receptive and acceptable, American Indian needs to take a frontier position.

At the present moment different efforts have been made to preserve different cultures and ancestries like Hopi, Navajo, Sioux, Chippewa, Iroquois in terms of geographical, genealogical, psychological and philosophical frames of reference. The point is there is dire need to come to a dialogic forum where not only the Indians can talk about their tribal preservation matters rather they can adapt certain norms or re-adjust them to make it perceptible, dialogic and comfortably communicable but the confusion traditionalists or separatists had in their mind is that the re-adjustments are against the norms of native culture. The argument we need to make here is that the separatist should be assured that adaptation must not be done on the cost of losing ethnicity, integrity and culture.

## 2. A Literature Review

The civilizing mission and imperial designs of Europe were very different from the rest of colonial situations. The territory of Native American dwellers was not a 3<sup>rd</sup> world territory which was under-developed by Europe or left in Angst to overcome the trauma of the “Post”-colonial condition. The invaders can never leave the state; rather it is the hodge-podge of stirring pots with multitude of ethnicities. Native American is a 4<sup>th</sup> world condition which is facing crisis much more than the usual post-colonial situation. In the current scenario, there are two types of philosophical approaches:

- i. Individualistic/ Tribalistic approach which takes up a separatist position
- ii. Dialogic approach which looks for possibility of interactive approach

We will discuss both kinds of philosophical approaches in tribal and mainstream theory regarding the concept of woman and environment.

Sioux writer and critic Cook-Lynn (1993) in “Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, the third world, and First Nation Sovereignty” talks about Nativist tribal positions and preservice of sovereignty. She exposes how barren and shallow cosmopolitan goals are in a way that they do not take into account all kinds of approaches and culture. There is no representation of their tribal theory in cosmopolitanism. For Cook Lynn, the term ‘Nationalism’ is not universal rather it is very much pejorative. It is no more than a “mere political action for political gain and dangerous authoritarianism” (p. 30).

In his book *Tribal Secrets*, Warrior (1995) does not accept the notions of cultural hybridization and discursive representational modes of Western academia. He focuses on creating Native literary and theoretical paradigm. He talks about “intellectual sovereignty”, while Womack (1999) in *Red on Red* talks about “red stick approach” which is a purely traditionalist approach and it takes into consideration Creek history and oral tradition as an alternative to Western paradigm. Womack is a radical separatist and consider no possibility of dialogue. Warrior and Womack follow “tribal-centric” approach. Although these theorists claim to preserve intellectual sovereignty but they have some serious drawbacks. America has five hundred years of colonial history. In this state of transformative and adaptive climate, it is not possible to apply a thoroughly indigenous framework.

Krupat (1998) in his article “Nationalism, Indigenism, Cosmopolitanism” talks about the positive side of cosmopolitanism and the “oxymoronic” relationship it stands with in the native and western oppositional paradigms. Cosmopolitanism does not deny intellectual sovereignty. One can still be cosmopolitan without denying one’s ingenuity. It is the same concept, Appiah (1997) takes in *Cosmopolitan patriot*; similarly, in her book *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt (1992) uses the term “contact zones” for it. Krupat (1996) in *The Turn to the Native* takes the dialogic position again as he is of the view that both cultures are transforming each other hence the separatist position is untenable. “Cultural autonomy or cultural separatism in an appropriate absolute sense readily subverts themselves...” (p. 16). Gates (1993) in *Beyond the Culture Wars* is also of the same view. He says that the theory with the separatist position will stop evolving and turn out to be static. Warrior (1995) discusses the standpoints of Deloria and Matthew to support his separatist position in a way that whatever they are doing is also productive but still he will opt for separatist position because there should be one group who preserve altogether separatist tribal identity so that Indian

may distinguish the pure from the transformed and assimilated. Deloria and Matthew are opening up a path for native critical studies through more writers. They make an argument that Native Americans have their own intellectual traditional heritage, but Warrior is also aware of his “overly separatist position” while Deloria and Matthew consider globalized and cosmopolitan approach as well. Matthew is more a cosmopolitan while Deloria is less cosmopolitan than Matthew. Hence Warrior is condemned for his essentialist and parochializing strategies which he himself accepts in his book *Tribal Secrets* as hybrid culture cannot be parochialized. To strengthen his position, Warrior talks about Fanon how much necessary it is to recall past and tradition which will eventually help in re-building broken and split for uniting the national spirit. Fanon (1963) writes in *Wretched of the Earth* that it is necessary to recall past for undoing colonialism, “when people undertakes an armed struggle or even political struggle against a relentless colonialism, the significance of tradition changes” (p. 224). Matthew also talks about difference between impractical idealism and essentialism. Pure idealism is losing in past while breaking contact with present while essentialism is recalling past while revitalizing it according to present. Hence pure traditional values cannot be claimed and overly separatist position will lead to the same binary opposition against which they are struggling. Warrior himself accepts that the scholars holding this separatist position have not achieved much as compared to cosmopolitanized but still he talks about Indianness in terms of sovereignty. Now the question is how can we relate sovereignty with the issue of Indianness? For Deloria, Indianness and sovereignty related to it is not the thing of past rather much more about the lived experience. For Deloria processed activity is the sovereignty. For Matthew, the material reality is the sovereignty. It is a political term which has much to do with the current political state rather than old and past traditional values hence different theorists have different take on sovereignty. While Womack’s approach is more clear than Warrior. He tries to reduce the gap between orality and literacy.

### 3. Conceptual Framework

Gill Jerry (1999) in his article “Knowledge, Power and Freedom” talks about explicit and tacit dimensions of cognitive activity. Although both epistemologies seem to be incommensurable but there is a dire need to find out a common stand point to provide both with dialogic necessity. For this purpose, Jerry uses Michael Polanyi’s model of cognitive activity, which leads to the synthesis of tacit and articulated knowledge. Polanyi talks about “Focal Awareness” and “Subsidiary Awareness”. Focal awareness is articulated knowledge while “subsidiary Awareness” is tacit knowledge but Polanyi makes a point here to develop a synthetic approach. He says the articulated knowledge has its generating point at the core of tacit knowledge, rather it is the very part of it. The “identifiable” framework is contrary to “unidentifiable” in a way that unidentifiable is subjective while identifiable is objective. We cannot live up to either subjective or objective approach rather the more realistic view is inter-subjectivity which leads towards synthetic approach. Polanyi talks about “cult of objectivity”. Jerry says that “his point is not that objectivity is not valuable consideration but that it has been allowed a degree of epistemic hegemony far beyond what is warranted” (p. 10). Polanyi uses the term “participatory indwelling” which comes from tacit knowledge because participatory activity is cognitive. Polanyi gives the concept of “Integrative acts” which moves epistemology from separate knowledge systems to integrated and whole. Polanyi then talks about “Inferential Process”, which is a participatory cognitive activity while “cognitive interaction” is different from “participatory activity” because it does not involve “inferential process” only, because in ‘inference’, we move from data premises to conclusion. Inferential process is different from integrative acts. Inferential process is western while integrative

acts are Native American. Inferential process is inductive and deductive while Native perspective is Indwelling and Integrative. Polanyi's book *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-critical Philosophy* (2015) is radically relativist and deconstructionist. He says knowledge is equal to reality in addition to who constructs it. Truth is relative. He then makes a point that truth is not radically relative rather it should not be. In this way synthetic approach would be impossible, rather we need to develop relative and universal approach at the same time which he calls "universal intent". Knowledge is culture bound as it comes through discourse. The purpose of both explicit and implicit knowledge is betterment of humanity. He talks about "fiduciary framework" and for him knowledge is not doubt based on belief and trust since without beliefs, even doubts are unreasonable. Authority plays a great role in making of knowledge and "what" and "how" in the making of truth are very important as they bring episteme and method at cross-roads by rendering authority in Native Americans to elders. Knowledge of data is contrary to knowledge of experiences. Human experience should be dealt differently from objectifying realities of the world. Structure of power is very different in both NA and Westerns as Westerns have power not only over people but also over nature and environment while NA believes in power of liberation rather than power of domination.

### ***3.1.Feminism-White VS Chromatic***

As far as the role of Feminism is concerned, Euro-centric approach is not applicable to Native American women. The role and status of women in Red Indian tribal cultures is very different from that of White societies, hence the deprivations, social goals, points of resistance and survivalist tendencies owing to particular suppressive circumstances are also very different. A black, brown or red cannot respond to a theoretical assumption laid upon a white revolution, because the social experiences, variant degree of social taboos, degree of assault and violence and more over nature of that suppression and violence is very different from one culture to another. If theory is a tool of survival then a question arises about the kind of survival and suppression against which this survival has been used as tool. So here one comes to know that theory is not telling asking or describing. It is not what it seems to be. It is much more than sheer theorizing rather it generates from the actual practices and practical situations faced by a certain community. Hence, theory is much more about doing than telling. Anzaldua (1990) talks about the possibility of multiple "modes of consciousness...producing effects that change people and the way they perceive the world" (p. 37).

### ***3.2.Eco-criticism, Feminism (Eco-Feminism)***

The Euro-centric approach has Eco-critical theory which is very much different from Native American approach. The purpose of dialogue is to come on common terms and to communicate differing features as well. There is no survival for any nation without imagining the frontier positions at their borderlines. Krupat (1996) in his book *The Turn to the Native* also points out the "conjunction of cultural practices" characterizing the Euro-American or Native American production. He writes that "from 1492 on, neither Euro-American intellectuals nor Native American intellectuals could co-operate autonomously or uniquely, in a manner fully independent of one another, for all the differences in power relations" (p. 18).

Alvira Pulitano (2003) in her book *Towards a Native American Critical Theory* talks about the theoretical stand points of Native Americans, which can be termed as Native American theory. There is no theory which speaks of Native Americans. In the context of feministic and Eco-critical

assumptions, Native Americans have their own very clear positioning and critical stances. Alvira is of the view that feminist experience cannot be generalized as a one common main stream experience rather it is as diverse as many cultures there are. A black feministic experience can never be equal to brown or red experience. It should be better termed as the experiences of woman of color or rather better call it “mestizaje theory” in Anzaldúa (1990)’s term in *Making Face, Making Soul*. According to Native American approach, experience, narrative and story as a theory are more authentic and immediate as compared to main stream bookish and textualized experiences. It should be called “doing theory in other modes of consciousness” (p. 37).

### 3.3. Paula Gun Allen’s Gynosophy

Allen (1986) in *The Sacred Hoop* refers to “threshold identity” but she does not justify this threshold position in true sense of the word. Keating talks about the need of articulation of a new discourse. She refers to Allen’s ‘Sacred Hoop’ as a *third space*, which is a “breed experience”, while Gerald Vizenor criticizes Allen’s separatist approach. Allen goes back to woman-centred approach which she calls “re-membering” the past, “putting it back together, recovering, knowing who we are and who we have been.” Allen’s search for origins is much criticized, because it will invoke another essentialism and primitivism, rather Allen should accept the dialogic stance. Vizenor (1994) in *Manifest Manners* criticizes Allen for her perpetuation of “ersatz spiritualism” (p. 86). Allen wants Grand Mother culture back. In *The Sacred Hoop*, she says that

Traditional life styles are more often gynocratic than not, and they are never patriarchal. These features make understanding tribal cultures essential to all responsible activists who seek life affirming social change that can result in a real decrease in a human and planetary destruction and in a real increase in quality of life for all inhabitants of plant earth. (p. 2)

Allen puts forth a concept of female identity rooted in biology. It shows the creative power of woman. This concept challenges the “phallogocentric” definitions of woman (p. 110). In the mainstream culture, Judith Butler (1990) supports the idea of multiple-woman world. The gender experience cannot be located in history, “If one is a woman that is surely not all one is, the term fails to be exhaustive because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts” (p. 3).

In *The Sacred Hoop*, Allen focuses not only the biological fact rather cosmological fact as well, which is a “cosmic feminine intelligence”. It disrupts the hierarchical dichotomies which equates masculine with transcendence and spirituality (p. 29). On the other hand, in the mainstream French Feminism, Helene Cixous (1981) in *The Laugh of the Medusa* discusses “feminine” as “imaginative universal”, one that exists at the threshold of psychic and textual location “where trans-cultural identification can be made” (p. 117). Allen is of the view that we need to go back to “gyno-cosmos” and need to learn from the Grand Mother. Allen relies upon goddesses, supernatural powers of woman to attribute to her matrifocal and matrilineal perspective (p. 111). Mohanty (1995) in *Epilogue* is of the view that Allen’s approach tends to “cripple our chances of genuine cross-cultural understanding” (p. 112). Donovan (1998) in *Feminist Readings of Native American Literature* talks about the “issue of voice”, “who is entitled to speak” and what can be said? Sarris (1993) in *Keeping the Slug Woman Alive* claims that Allen’s approach is based upon generalizations as “She closes distinction with those women and texts she sets out to illuminate” (p. 126).

### 3.4. *Dualism of Matter/Spirit and Differing Feminist Experience*

In mainstream, Spivak (1988) *In Other Worlds* talks about the issue of gendered subaltern. Alvira Pulitano says “Spivak focuses more on a study of the subaltern, arguing against a continual subalternization of Third World material” (2003, p. 40). In this way, this prospect of subalterneity provides support to NA perspective. Spivak is of the view that one cannot influence the socio-political structures without speaking from the centre which Spivak calls “strategic location”. Spivak Feminist prospect is totally different main stream liberalist feminist concept of “*jouissance*” as an orgasmic pleasure. According to her, French feminist emphasis upon body pleasure is very narrow and cannot be applied to all feminist experiences. Western epistemology believes in dualism of matter and spirit, mind and body while in other case, such as Spivak quotes and in Indian perspective too this duality does not exist and this body pleasure is not a source of liberation, since “The role of Jashoda’s body as the place where the sinister knowledge of decolonization as failure of foster-mothering is figured forth produces cancer, an excess very far from the singularity of the clitoral orgasm” (p. 260). The point is, one can deviate from mainstream but one cannot altogether demolish main stream stand point. The Native American, Awaikta (1993) in *Selu: Seeking the Corn Mother’s Victim* talks about relation between atom, land and woman, “Nuclear energy is the nurturing energy. It works not by fission but fusion. Atom creates and transforms life. Women are part of this life force (p. 69)”. She rejects the Cartesian duality of mind and body as biological, mental and spiritual selves become one because the split woman in form of sexuality and spirit is unnatural.

In *Off the Reservation*, Allen (1998) talks about Clark Smith’s two sides of feminism: one is a life-force while other is the “witchery” (p. 119). Since Allen takes multiple perspectives that is why she speaks from centre and quotes D’Eaubonne (1974)’s coinage of the term “Eco-feminism” in *Le Feminisme Ou La Mort*. This mainstream strategic location brings Native American and Euramerican at cross-roads. Similarly in *The Death of Nature*, Merchant (1980)’s concept of “*organicism*” also relates to NA perspective of earth and womanhood. Allen takes up the similar position in essay *The Woman I love is a planet and planet I love is a tree*, she says, “The mortal is a tree; it is holy in whatever condition... it is sacred and profane” (*Off the Reservation*, p. 119). The Western phallogentrism denies the body when it separates body from soul. Allen terms the unity of body and soul as “thought woman”. Slicer (1998) in her essay “The Body as a Bioregion” condemns the social meaning of controlling and delimiting the woman’s experience of the bio-region that is her body. She says, “body is the sacred itself” just like a region defined by topographic includes woman’s biological body features. It relates woman with earth as Allen in *Off the Reservation* talks about Cixous and her body writings as the part of main-stream discourse while Anzaldua’s soul writings appear to develop counter-discourse (p.119). While standing on a threshold position, Allen talks about Eco-feministic discourse, which ties bond of woman with earth, calling her as Mother Earth.

### 3.5. *Orality, Grand Mother’s Tradition of Story Telling and Reader-Response Theory*

Contrary to the separatist position of Warrior and Womack, we have the dialogic approach of Sarris and Owens. Sarris (1993) in *Keeping the Slug Woman Alive* talks about dialogism and heteroglossia, which is a multi-directional approach and quite contrary to uni-directional approach of Warrior and Womack. Sarris talks about the need to see things at the cross roads. In this regard, Hymns (1981) relates structural linguistics and orality in *In Vain I tried to Tell You* as following,



If we refuse to consider and interpret the surprising facts of device, design and performance inherent in the words of the texts, the Indians who made the texts and those who preserved what they made, will have worked in vain. We will be telling the texts not to speak. We will mistake perhaps to our costs, the nature of the power of which they speak. (p. 5)

In *Mixedblood Messages*, Owens (1998) talks about “contact zones” and “frontier space” in relation to grandmother’s tradition of storytelling and Reader Response Theory. The purpose of cross-cultural reading is exposing the hidden reality. He says “things are not always what they seem...is there a way that people can read across cultures so that inter-cultural communication is opened rather than closed?” (p. 3).

#### 4. Methodology

Allen talks about methodological assumptions and “methods of choice” in the form of poetry, historical narratives and myths, for example, she says,

The methods used in American Indian studies are various because it is an inter-disciplinary field. So while I employ variously the methodologies of anthropology, folklore, psychology, sociology, historiography, philosophy, cultural studies and women’s studies in these essays, my method of choice is my own understanding of American Indian life and thought. (*The Sacred Hoop*, p. 6)

Both Native American and Euro American culture deal with Myth so differently. For ethno-centric perception, myth is a fairy tale. Allen argues, “Myth is a kind of story that allows a holistic image to pervade and shape consciousness, thus providing a coherent and empowering matrix for action and relationship” (*The Sacred Hoop*, p. 105), while on the other hand,

An American Indian myth is a story that relied preeminently on symbol for its articulation. It generally relates a series of events and uses supernatural, heroic figures as the agents of both the events and the symbols. As a story, it demands the immediate direct participation of the listener. (*The Sacred Hoop*, p. 105)

Hence for Native American, myth is a social relation which involves listener and speaker. Allen compares this implication of myth with ethnographic approach in the main stream culture (*Grand Mothers of the Light*, p. 238). Allen talks about mythic thinking, “Mythic thinking generates an epistemological process that challenges western conventions and could bring about material change” (*Grandmother of the Light*, p. 28). Allen talks about Guerilla ethnography and Guerrilla theory which is adapted form of ethnography, “a written account of the lives of white people, a picture of what it means to be culturally white by one who is not (p. 240)”. Through her ethnographic form, Allen becomes the shadow “mimicking the colonizer” while “threatening the stability of white identity” (p. 240). This is what Bhabha (1994) calls “the menace of mimicry” (*Location of Culture*, p. 91). Trinh (1989) talks about deconstructivist approach in *Woman, Native, Other*. For her, in the binary us and them, ‘them’ is silenced. Blaeser (1998) in *Like Reeds through Ribs* talks about interweaving of theory and story. Stories are more about experience and theory derives from lived experiences. “The hieroglyphs of a native American system (p. 268)” can be studied using tools of Continental literary theory.

In *Off the Reservation*, Allen talks about dialogic quality of oral tradition, as she writes,

In my mind, critical essays-indeed non-fiction writing in general, is simply another way of telling a story. Each has a narrative line, a plot of you will and that line must unfold in accordance with certain familiar patterns just as any story must. An essay contains all the elements of a good plot: conflict, crisis, resolution. Concepts take the role of character, and of course the unities of time, place and action must be respected. (p. 10)

Allen assumes the strategic location similar to the one adopted by Anzaldua in “borderlands”. Anzaldua talks about ‘hybrid text’, she says “I am a border woman. I grew up between two cultures... it is not comfortable territory to live in this place of contradiction” (p. 43). Allen talks about Einstein’s theory of relativity which gives the concept of no centre and merging the borders. Einstein’s theory of relativity and Native epistemology within ritual framework is the concept given by Allen’s “*relativity strategy*”. Like Spivak, Allen displaces the centre by speaking through the centre rather than speaking through the margin (p. 148). According to Allen, our sign systems are our rituals. In Native American contexts, primary texts are “the myths and ceremonies that compress and convey all the meaning systems a particular consciousness holds” (p.168). Allen uses “heteroglossia” in NA perspective and he talks about hybridized position of oral texts of NA and metatexts, “In the beginning was Thought and she was a Grand Mother” (p. 175). Allen replaces sign-system with orality and thought because Grandmother is the Grand Consciousness. Allen makes use of Spivak’s “*strategic essentialism*”, which is contrary to academic essentialism. Hence we can move towards Native American critical theory by assuming hybridized position.

## 5. Textual Analysis

### 5.1. Ecology and Mysticism in *Black Elk Speaks*

In Introduction to *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), Deloria talks about the increased progress, less spiritualism and increased alienation with a lost sense of purpose, “and the opportunities for grasping the substance of life have faded as the pace of activity has increased” (p. i) as it depicts lost connection with environment and the cosmic truths are so contrary to industrialism. It cannot get “the spiritual frame work of pipe ceremony” in true sense of the word (p. ii) by wearing the ornament, one can see the morning star, “who sees the morning star shall see more,”(p. vii). Native American perspective relates mystical experience with Nature and this spiritual wisdom is based upon a strong horizontal relation between Nature and man.

It is the story of all life that is Holy and is good to tell, and of us two-legged sharing in it with the four-legged and the wings of the air and all green things; for these are children of one mother and their father is one spirit. (p.1)

Buffalo Bison Hide and the Offering of the pipe are natural ways to approach Nature and Great Spirit. Their rituals show their harmony with nature. Thunder being gets visions through Heyoka ceremony. Sense of sacred in nature is very important. Tepee is a sacred place which is the centre of whole nation. “In a sacred manner I am walking/With visible tracks I am walking (p. 4). “These are sacred/These are sacred/They have said/They have said/These are sacred” (p. 191). “In a sacred manner, they have sent voices” (p. 192). “They have given you the sacred stick” (p. 31). They have no hierarchies. Although they are fighting against Wasichus but they don’t kill their dog, “they had a dog with them... he was the only one left” (p. 12).

For them, there are no objects, all are beings, “Behold him, the being with the four legs” (p. 23). Water is life and power, “it is the power to make live and it is yours” (p. 26).

They use the word “nation” even for animals “The white geese nation is appearing, Behold!” (p. 27). The red colour was spiritual for them as they admired red color, “the color of good and of plenty” (p. 28). Their depiction of Nature is not symbolic. Whatever they say, they mean it. They become one with the nature, “And I myself was a spotted eagle soaring over them.” (p. 37), for them, wind has a double character, “I could hear the winds at war like wild beasts fighting” (p. 37). Horse has a healing and mystical power, “I could hear the people yonder calling..A-hey” (p. 40) they believe in dance as a source of mystical power. They dance in circles, “the virgins dance and al the circles horses,” (p. 42) when they dance, the each limb dance, the whole universe dance. Universe is a being,” for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all the things in the spirit and the shapes of all shapes as they must live together like one being,” (p. 43) thundering vibration from the sky is a mystical experience, as thunder storm is coming to visit, “I felt happy as some body was coming to visit me,” (p. 62), every single particle has a soul and the part of the soul. Matter is an illusion. Everything is a spirit, “everything were made of spirit, nothing was hard” (p. 85). Horses fight with the men, “men and horses were all mixed up and fighting in the water,” (p.111). Black Elk creates harmony with nature through visions. He receives messages and communicates with nature. He gets mystical power from nature. Earth is holy, “Father, paint the earth on me...A two-legged nation I will make holy” (p. 164).

### ***5.2. Ecological Imperialism and De-mothering of Nature (Mad Bear)***

The personality of Mad Bear is like a bear which shows their kinship with nature, “he seemed to walk like a bear,” (p.18). Mad Bear is of the view that “all living creatures are the extensions of the Great Spirit” (p. 21). He refers to ecological imperialism and all killing cutting and chaining practices, which in his view is our denial to Mother Earth. He says, “there is a difference when you refer to the earth, you say mother earth but when you refer to mother you say earth mother” (p. 24). He laments over dead trees. Mad bear talks about six directions which include referring to mother and father as well: “To the East where the sun rises. To the North where the cold comes from. To the South where the light comes from. To the west, where the sun sets. To the father sun, to the mother Earth” (p. 63).

Mad Bear is of the view that one should not be hostile to nature. Mother earth cleanses herself through Earthquakes and Volcano eruptions, “now paid for earthquakes...the earth cleansed and a new world ushered in” (p. 135). He talks about progress and adulteration of environment, “through our very recent progress, have we so adulterated our environment” (p. 145). Capitalism, economy and disrespectful attitude towards Mother Earth by using it as a resource is highly condemned by Mad Bear. He says that there must be someone who should speak on behalf of these four, six and eight-legged beings. Nature has a supra-linguistic frequency, which is not physical rather ether-like. Killing Earth is synonymous to killing one’s own self because spirit is one. There is a difference between owning and belonging.

### ***5.3. Harmony VS Control (Rolling Thunder)***

Rolling Thunder says that it is a “law of karma... that all wrongs must be righted” (p. 8) whatever we are doing to nature, one day we will pay its price. One needs to give offerings before taking anything from Nature. One should seek permission. We call the herbs and they appear.

When you are in harmony with nature then even water can turn into medicine. Agents of nature communicate to external world. American culture lacks this relation. They try to control the nature. Rolling Thunder talks about ecology, power and politics:

Rolling Thunder has told us about the chaining of the forest lands. The Bureau of Land Management, under pressure from wealthy ranchers, was knocking down thousands of acres on trees on Indian treaty territory and public domain to convert the forests into grazing land. (p. 43)

#### ***5.4. Lost Contact with Nature (House Made of Dawn)***

Lost connection with nature represents uprootedness from culture and tradition. When Abel gets back from war, he cannot connect himself with ceremonies, rituals and nature. “They gave themselves upto despair and were then at the mercy of the first alien wind...he was not thinking of the eagles...” (pp. 3-4). Dying animals show lost contact with nature, “he picked one of the dead animals from the bush. It was warm and soft. Its eyes shining like porcelain full of the luster of death,” (p. 18). Age of machine also depicts the lost contact with nature, “the machine concentrated, calm, strange and terrific and it was coming” (p. 22). Dead trees actually depict the ecological violence, “the sacramental violence which has touched the wood. One of the low plateaus, now invisible above her” (p. 32). Ritual and corn dance show harmony with the nature.

#### ***5.5. Medicine man and Syncretic Approach (Ceremony)***

Two different medicine men tried to cure Tayo of his disease. Ku’oosh uses old tribal medicine practices but he is unable to cure Tayo, “You know what the army doctor said, “No Indian Medicine” old Kuoosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust” (p. 31). It gives reader an idea that tribal cultures need transformation according to the current situation. While the attitude of Betoni with updated medicine practices clarifies the validity of threshold positioning. It eventually cures Tayo. It depicts that without coming on the forefront we cannot change the situation.

#### ***5.6. Grand Mother Culture and Gyno-centric Approach of Allen (Ceremony)***

The first poem of ceremony is all about gyno-centric approach of Native American culture:

Ts' its' tsi' nako, Thought-Woman,  
is sitting in her room  
and whatever she thinks about  
appears.  
She thought of her sisters,  
Nau' ts' ity' i and I' tcs' i,  
and together they created the Universe  
this world  
and the four worlds below. (p.1)

Woman is the Creator, “Thought-Woman, the spider/named things and/as she named them/they appeared” (p. 1). For woman, thinking and doing is the same. “She is sitting in her room/thinking of a story now/I’m telling you the story/she is thinking” (p.1). Story telling is a creation and Grandmother plays her part in it, “Here put your hand on it/see it is moving/There is

life here/for the people. /and in the belly of this story/the rituals and the ceremony are still growing” (p. 2). Grandmother stands for strong bondage with tradition and past. Tayo recalls his Grandmother. This recalling gives him solace and develops a connection with past and his roots:

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. (p. 6)

### **5.7. *Curse of Corn Mother (Ceremony)***

Moreover, Tayo curses the rain which results in backfire of the curse, “And there was no more rain then/Everything dried up/all the plants/the corn/the beans/they all dried up/and started blowing away/in the wind” (p. 12). Draught years affected not only humans but animals as well, “the mule was getting bony; its hip bones looked sharp enough to push through the grey hide, the way bones tear through a carcass. Drought years shrank the hide tighter to the bones” (p. 22), while the characters like Emo do stereo-typing of Mother Earth, “Look, what is here for us. Look, here is the Indians’ mother earth! Old dried-up thing” (p.23). Draught had followed because, “they neglected the Mother Corn altar” (p. 44). Draught has come because the altar of corn mother is ignored. In Preface, Silko (1977) explains it: “Hummingbird and Green Fly, who help the people purify their town to bring back the Corn Mother. The title of the novel, *Ceremony*, refers to the healing ceremonies based on the ancient stories of the Dine’ and Pueblo people” (p. xv).

## **6. Dialogic Position – A Tool for Survival (Conclusion)**

The Native American approach to woman and environment needs to be dialogic and synthetic to find its currency and immediateness in the mainstream culture. On the other hand, it will further be stereotyped and tagged as primitive as the Native American concept of Eco-feminism can find relevance in the mainstream critical theory only through cross-comparisons with Eco-criticism and Feminism. In Native American Literature, woman and environment are inter-linked as a sign to preserve ethnic and cultural diversity and heritage of the community. While digging into archeological evidence of the cultural location of the Red Indian community, one witnesses how the matriarchal culture is so much closely integrated with the concept of environment. It brings equality of species all over the earth. There is no pyramidal hierarchy of the superiority of one specie over the other. This leveling down brings not only animals and plants equal to human beings rather shuns the gender discrimination because in matriarchy, there is no under evaluation of role of men as such. It moves beyond gender discrimination. This preservation of such a balanced culture makes it closer to the Postmodern renewed interpretations of courses of life and action.

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