

**NATIVE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF EASTERINE KIRE,
MAMANG DAI, NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY AND JAMES WELCH: A
CRITICAL STUDY**

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award
of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English)

By

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NATIVE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF EASTERINE KIRE, MAMANG DAI, NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY AND JAMES WELCH: A CRITICAL STUDY

Abstract

The thesis entitled “Native Representations in the Select Novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch: A Critical Study” focus on the native or indigenous people of the Northeast Indians and Native Americans. The select authors were pioneers in the literary establishment of their respective community and region and their writings added a great boost to their body of literatures. Literary works and history have been written about their communities but they failed to capture the reality of their cultures and experiences. These writers write from the experience of their own culture and they rewrite the history and deconstruct the false representations made by historians and non-native writers. The subjects of the select novels mainly deal with similar themes like pre-colonial period, colonialism, post-colonialism, environmental issues, and socio-cultural concerns. On one hand, they looked at the pre-colonial space and time of their land which is marked by autonomy, freedom, and communal harmony and on the other hand, they decried and condemned the evils of colonialism that destroyed the authenticity of their culture and misrepresented them. The writers find ways to reconstruct their culture and restore their traditions which got deteriorated and misrepresented in the hands of the colonizers.

In chapter 1 titled, “Introduction: Mapping Northeast Indian and Native American Literatures” will give a background study to the literatures of Northeast India and Native Americans with reference to the select authors. Northeast Indian literature and Native American literature have resemblance with each other in themes, forms, subjects, and styles. Their literatures originate from oral literary traditions and their contemporary literatures are a continuation of the oral thread. In their writings, an amalgamation of oral forms with the western forms is clearly evident. They are natural storytellers who made extensive use of their myths, legends, songs, proverbs, jokes, and other folklore elements. The colonial experience occupied a major place in their literatures. They resist against colonialism in their land but also gets integrated to foreign culture with the changing times and situations. The pre-settler period is evident in their literatures and they stand in total contrast with the colonial period. Their literatures exemplify the indigenous or native voices which were being suppressed for a long time. The historical events are remembered and re-narrated in some of

the select novels. They write in their own nativised English language which indicates a form of independence from the colonial language. The select novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch taken for this study portrayed the traditions and cultures of the Northeast Indians and the Native Americans. Nevertheless, they also take an interest in depicting universal themes of peace, unity, protection of nature, resisting domination etc. They have emerged out from the colonial bondage of writings and they rewrite and counter narrate the earlier writings of the colonialists. The select novels besides sharing some similarities also bring out the distinctive features that each tribe and community has. They will be studied along with the theory of nativism, ecocriticism, and postcolonialism. Their literatures advocated for a return to indigenous cultures, traditions, practices, and lifestyles. Also the rich ecology and natural resources of their lands are foremost interests in their writings. The process of colonialism added a huge depletion to their ecology. These were condemned in the literatures. Northeast Indians and Native Americans practiced a rich ecological tradition where respect is given to nonhuman nature as well. They also share certain similar beliefs like, taking the sky as their father and the earth as their mother. This is seen among the Angami-Nagas, the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Kiowas of the Native Americans. A deviation from colonial literature and its models is reflected in their literary works by the use of indigenous models, forms, and themes. This is a post-colonial attitude. The select works give an insightful view into the history, culture, and traditions and serve as a voice for the people of Northeast Indian and Native Americans.

Chapter 2 is titled as “Nativised Narrative in Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don’t Run, My Love*.” Kire’s select novels are located in pre-colonial time and space and they demonstrate the rich culture, traditions, and mysterious beliefs of the Angami-Nagas. The various cultural and folklore concepts like miracle, native ecological ethics, the position of traditional women, the presence of evil, were-tiger culture, stories, and the spiritual world and its powers will be taken into account. *Son of the Thundercloud* is a tale full of mysteries and miracles. Kire has employed myth and fantasy in weaving the plot of the story. The miraculous birth of Son of the Thundercloud was prophesied years ago and it was transmitted to people from generation to generation through the form of oral storytelling. The birth was miraculous as a widow conceived a child, when a single raindrop fell on her. In her village, she was called as the tiger-widow because a tiger had killed her husband and seven sons. When her child was born, the destiny of the woman was changed forever. Along with the birth, regeneration of life started on earth. People could cultivate their fields again and the

land was ready and eager to bear fruits for the hungry folks. The river also came back to life and people were elated by this because their mother who had died long ago came back to feed them. The taboos and rituals were maintained and observed in traditional Angami-Naga society to ensure longevity, prosperous life, preservation of food, environment, and so on. By obeying the taboo of abstaining from eating seed grain, people get another opportunity to cultivate their lands again. Proper respect and reverence is given to nature and animal, especially, the tiger. The traditional Angami-Nagas believed man and tiger to be brothers and the tiger ritual is observed when a tiger is killed. There are women in the novel who suffered under the authority of men and the society. They were isolated from the rest of the society for no definite reason. Their sufferings were paired with the sufferings of nature as both of them were dominated, exploited, and rendered voiceless under the domain of patriarchy. Just as a woman gives birth to a child, the earth also gives birth to trees and rocks. Being an oral society which invests in stories and dreams, they occupied a central place in the novel. The belief in the stories keeps the hope of people alive. Hope is the sustenance of life for people who are living in the midst of famine. It also included the hope to meet loved ones in the afterlife. *Son of the Thundercloud* is tragic when the people accepted the evil and denied the good. But through the sacrifice made by a pure heart, the people will learn the truth and they will love one another. *Don't Run, My Love* narrative makes use of oral traditions, cultures, beliefs, and expressions of the people. Set in an ancient village of the Angamis, it tells the story of simple folks who struggled in their daily life, and at the same time living a fruitful life by observing the taboos and rituals. The closely knitted community life of the Angami-Nagas is depicted in the novella. Since, the community lives in close quarter, the individual wishes cannot thrive and he or she has to submit to the will of the community. The narrative gives a depiction of a rural Angami village that is undergoing through the busiest work of the year. Then it move on to include the taboos and rituals associated with the harvest and its festival. Besides these themes, social institution, like, the *thehou* and their importances are highlighted. They trained the young people to become responsible members in the society. The were-tiger or *tekhumevi* culture was discussed in the novella. It has special powers attached to it and this prompts men to consult the were-tigers. Dwelling on this topic, the novella explains how the gift is transferred or acquired by the people. Another subject is the love relationship of Atuonuo and Kevi. Through their story, the novelist cautioned young people to choose their partner wisely because love can turn out to be dangerous. To live the life of a virtuous woman is appreciated by all. This is an important value in traditional Angami-Naga society. Women were expected to live a modest life and set examples in the

society. Visenuo and Atuonuo lived by the expectations of the society and were careful not to be criticized by the people. The right age for marriage, value of a woman are emphasized by the elders in the community. Another concept is the depiction of the Angami-Naga worldview which is seen through the various beliefs and the co-existence of the physical and the supernatural world. The natural world seeks the help of the spiritual world in all its problems. *Don't Run, My Love* made the Angami-Naga culture the centre of its narrative. Through a simple love story, the author portrayed the Angami-Naga society in all its simplicity and complexity.

Chapter 3 is presented as “Recounting Tribal Cultural History in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill*.” This chapter will focus on the tribal and cultural history of the Adi and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh and their contact with the *migluns*, that is, the Britishers. History is narrated from the experience and perspective of the tribal people. Other features like the land, folklore, language, presence of evil, status of women, and resistance to foreign rule will be deliberated. *The Legends of Pensam* presented the life of the Adi people from the primordial to the modern age. Traces of the pre-colonial period and its practices were prevalent, then it progresses towards colonial and post-colonial period. The society was also marked by practicing the old traditions and its resistance against the *migluns*. However, with the changing times, it also integrated some aspects of foreign culture into its own culture. But, what remained remarkable was the rural life and culture of the Adi people that continued to survive in different phases. The Adi people presented in the book were mostly common people, and their occupation, beliefs, and behaviours faithfully represent their culture in general. Besides the indigenous Adi people, the *migluns* also participated in the stories as well. They influence each other in their associations. The pristine forest and the vast ecology of the Adis were the localities in which the stories were set. While the majority of the whites remained insensitive to the rich ecology of the Adis destroying the evergreen forests and trees, the native people were concerned and enraged over these activities. The large forest covers act as a shelter for the native people against the *migluns*. Dai never distanced herself from the folklore of her people in writing *The Legends of Pensam*. The folklores employed in the book are a window to understand the Adi culture and their tradition. They also indicated that nothing can be neglected and leave out carelessly, in fact, life is to be religiously lived by observing proper customs, behaviours, and taboos. Though Dai writes in English, her narration, language usage, and expressions are her own and they are based on indigenous English. The characters in the book use local language,

expressions, and some words are retained in Adi language. Despite of colonization and tragedies that had befallen on people, the simple folks continue to respect and cherish their native land and their people. On one side, the people fought hard to resist colonialism, but their resistance is followed by integration with the changing times and modernization. This is an irresistible force and they adapted some of the foreign traits and practiced them. *The Black Hill* looks at the Abor and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh and their relation with the *migluns*. The study is concentrated on the tribal people, their land and rich ecology, resistance against colonialism, the status of women, and their folk life. The theme of protecting the land remained as one of the most important subjects in the book. This is one of the oldest values of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. For the tribal people of the Abor and Mishmee, land is not only a space that gives them the basis for survival; it serves as an identity and gives power and recognition to the people who owned it. But the uglier side of land results in bloodshed and tribal unrest. On the other hand, the *migluns* see the native land as an empty space that is occupied by uncivilized people that needs to be civilized. The natural objects like the forests, trees, rivers, sky, and moon are treated with respect by the people because they are believe to be interrelated. Under the colonialists' rule, the tribal people were divided among themselves, while some of them worked hard to overthrow colonial power, some support British colonialism. Thus, battles like the Suddya attack in 1839 were launched against the *migluns* and the tribal people who supported the British invaders. The colonialists further their hegemony in the tribal land by means of education, Christianity, use of medicine and others. These were the indirect ways to win the hearts of the tribal people. In a traditional society, women generally remained in the background of social, religious, and political spheres. The same applied to the Abor and Mishmee women. Women characters like Chommu and Yenjee were dominated by men whom they could not resist, because they were depending on them. Whereas, there are some characters like Gimur, Moi, and Auli who rise above the stereotypes and fight against the injustices and the biasness towards them. *The Black Hill* gives importance to the folk life of the tribal people. The tribal people were religious and god-fearing people who conducted their lives carefully. They live a rich folk life marked by respect for tradition, practicing rituals, guided by dreams, observing taboos, and love for each other.

In chapter 4, Momaday's novels will be studied. It is titled as "Recovering the Lost Identity in Navarre Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child*." The contemporary Native Americans suffer from alienation and estrangement from their land.

Momaday takes this issue as a central theme in his novels and it will be studied in this chapter. It will concentrate on other concepts like the sacredness of the land, the relation between the Native and the whites, the bear tradition, literary styles and so on. *House Made of Dawn* is studied mainly under the topic of recovering the lost identity of the protagonist Abel. The root of his problem comes from his estrangement with his Indian culture. However, it is a fact that Abel suffered from isolation before joining the army. His father was an outsider to the Kiowa, thus, he too remained as an outsider. The pain and the sufferings that he had gone through in his life were not only caused by the whites but by the Indians as well. His journey of rebirth was possible because of his supportive friends and the undying spirit of his grandfather Francisco. The land and the landscape played an important role in bringing healing to the Native people as well as the non-native. The land is sacred to the native people and it consists of their identity. The Euro-American world is surrounded by war and other sophisticated technology but it could not heal Abel's ailments. Only when Abel returns to Walatowa and spends time in nature, he gets his self back. The novel cannot be appreciated without understanding the oral traditions of the Native Americans. The songs, prayers, chants, and ceremonies are vital for the story. It helps the Native people especially the younger generations to recognize that their oral tradition is capable of harmonizing their fragmented lives. The feast of Santiago, chicken-pull, dawn running, corn dance, peyote ritual and others presented a deeper meaning of the Native American world. The practices and rituals were significant for the healing, growth, and restoration of the individual and the community. The bear is another important symbol of the Kiowa culture which helped in the healing of Abel. It is associated with healing. Momaday also creates mediation between the Native American and the Euro-American cultures through the trickster figure and by combating against the evils threatening their harmony. As the first novel of Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*, touched on critical problems and important cultural traditions of the Kiowa and Jemez people. It talks about the problems but it also offers solution to the problems faced by the modern Indians through a return to the rich traditions and culture. *The Ancient Child* is inspired by the myth of Tsoai, which is popular in Kiowa culture. The novel is centered in the life of Set Lockman, a Kiowa, who was alienated from his culture. The problem of Set lies with his identity. He was destined to be a bear but when he refused to accept the bear identity it caused degradation to him both physically and spiritually. With the help of his grandmother Kope'mah and Grey, Set returns back to his tradition and accept his identity. Besides the life of Set, women too played an important role in the narrative. Two of them stand out. They are Grey and Kope'mah. Their relationship is that of a storyteller and the listener, a mother and

her daughter, and a medicine-woman and her apprentice. Through the lifestory of Kope'mah, the rituals, ceremonies, and the history of the Kiowa people were brought to life. She is a transmitter of knowledge to the younger generation. Grey is one of the most interesting female characters of Momaday's fictions. She is independent, bold, and clever and she can be both traditional and modern. Her role as a medicine-woman shows her traditional side and her interest of reading and writing shows her modern side. With the instructions of Kope'mah, Grey brought Set to his roots where he was healed of his ailments. Momaday's writings were particularly distinguishable for the use of nature and landscape. It is very close to the life of the Native Americans. They believe it to be sacred and they derive inspiration, peace, and comfort from it. *The Ancient Child* is a remarkable novel for its styles and techniques. It is woven with the elements of oral tradition and it also makes use of western literary forms. The myth of Tsoai and the legend of Billy the Kid move alongside the story time of the novel. Momaday also use humour in the creation of his characters. This added uniqueness to his style. *The Ancient Child* at its heart is concerned with the culture and tradition of the Native Americans because the Native people who isolated themselves from them get destroyed by the foreign culture. Thus, it emphasizes on the need for the Native Americans to return back to their own culture for survival and to recover their lost identity.

Chapter 5 will be studied under the title "Alienation and Survivance in James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and *Fools Crow*." In both the select novels, elders, chiefs, and leaders helped the people to reconnect with their culture, values, and history. From them, alienated souls were guided back to their culture and a sense of survival is obtained. The community life and its interesting traditions like war coup, smoking, belief in dreams, and the inter-relation of the natural world will form other subjects in the chapter. *Winter in the Blood* is studied under four main themes all connected to the theme of alienation, searching for ancestors, and survivance from it. The nameless protagonist, a modern, and directionless man, was able to achieve his lost identity with the recovery of his tribal history. The structure of the novel, like its unnamed protagonist and his disoriented life, has no definite structure as it moves from past, present, to the future. Within the narrative, elements of native humour, oral tradition, and beliefs make the narrative richer. The distance felt by the protagonist originates from him. Since he has a problem of distance with himself, his distant relation with others is obvious. The healing process or the overcoming was not possible by himself, but it was carried out under the guidance of the elders, and his association with the animals and nature. His problem was a common problem in contemporary Native American society and

his recovery or revival paved way for other people's healings as well. The healing pattern of the Native American falls under the concept of "all are related." This brought the narrator back to the ecology. The animals provided healing pattern to the narrator and leads him back to the mythology of his culture. Tribal history is an important component in people's lives. It is crucial for the people and for the individual to know their history because it contained the knowledge, wisdom, truth, perseverance, and bravery essential for the survival of the people. The wholeness of the narrator's life is achieved when he discovered the history of the Blackfeet people who had suffered tremendously but they survived nonetheless. The story comes into full circle towards the end of the narrative only when the protagonist makes an effort to learn his cultural history. *Fools Crow* gives a detail portrayal about the Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians. The novel gives a close view of the traditional and cultural lifestyle of the Pikunis. Centered on White Man's Dog who later became Fools Crow, it talks about the humility, and the sacrifices made by the leader for his people. Unlike the western hero, Fools Crow has his weaknesses but he admitted them and move on with life. Fools Crow has lived his life through the Blackfeet Indian values and it gained him a slow but steady reputation in his society for his trustworthiness, reliability, and humility. The worldview of the Pikunis made no distinction between the supernatural and the real. They shared a close relation with the supernatural world and supernatural beings. Their dreams and visions guided their life decisions and their community. They take the help of the supernatural beings for their life problems and they also obeyed their biddings for blessings and success in life. The spiritual dimension is fluid, thus, it is possible for men to pursue their quest in their realm. Fools Crow visits to its realm brought knowledge and wisdom to his people. Another landmark of *Fools Crow* lies in Welch's method of rewriting history from the Pikunis perspective. The Pikunis were not bloodthirsty people but they desired for peace above everything else in their lodges. The Pikunis remained firm to protect their land and their children from the intruders. The Blackfeet Indians in general were crippled by the smallpox called the white scabs disease and the Marias Massacre of the 1870. The smallpox disease was imported to their lodges by the Napikwans and this was a weapon to minimize the Native populations. In addition, the massacre of the innocent Blackfeet Indians was condemned by Welch in his book. This event shows the inhuman and heartless action of the Napikwans. On their part, the Pikunis lived a humble life and they were against the behaviours and lifestyles that threaten the harmony of their community life. They condemned people who brought dishonor to their society. The cultural life of the Pikunis point out to the bravery, courage, superstitious belief, and etiquettes of the society. The Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians were not uncivilized but they

were principled people who organized their life democratically and equally for the common welfare of all people. By remaining firm to the cultural values and ethics of their forefathers, they were able to survive and live life despite of the various problems and threats that they experienced in their personal lives and their community living.

The final chapter i.e., chapter 6 will give a summation of the whole study. The select writers and their works belonged to post-colonial writing. In post-colonial discourse, environmental studies and aspects of nativism like, the resistance against colonialism, to recover indigenous cultures and practices, and the pre-colonial spaces are central to it. This connects the three theories together. The native or indigenous people like the Native Americans and the Northeast Indians make efforts to deconstruct the images created about them and make ways to go back to their own cultures and traditions. These are portrayed in the select novels of the study. The basis of indigenous worldview, traditions, cultures, and beliefs are retained by the native people in the process of colonization. Nonetheless, the Native Americans and the Northeast Indian cultures do not remain static, as they also move towards change because it is inevitable. This also reflects the dynamicism and hybridity of their cultures. The select novels of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch are set in their native soil and the writers write with firsthand knowledge and experience about their cultures and histories. They are representations of native or indigenous people and their cultural life through various phases of history and generations. In their representation of natives, we see varied approaches. Kire's creative imagination turns more to ancestral and pre-colonial times, bringing the past alive and breathing life into the rural folk characters. Dai attempts to represent the history and culture of her people, from pre-colonial times to colonial and post-colonial modern societies, and from nativist resistance of colonialism to adaptation of some foreign culture. While Momaday and Welch's approach is from alienation to the recovery of identity or self of the protagonists in the contemporary world. The protagonists return back to their native culture and re-inhabit their land and traditions. In the select novels of Momaday and Welch, Native American culture is represented as the means of survival and healing for the characters who were suffering from the modern ailments of fragmentation, speechlessness, alcoholism, and distance. The study covers the post-colonial writings of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch who represent the native or indigenous people in different periods and spaces. They give voices, life, and meanings to the native people by writing about them from the inside of their culture.

(Kekhriengulieü Tachü)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: MAPPING NORTHEAST INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURES

1.1 An Overview of the Study

The word native indicates that a person belonged to a particular place by birth as opposed to someone who is a foreigner settled in a new location. Besides the term native people, they are called as indigenous people, aboriginal people, and first people in different countries. Bill Ashcroft and others opine that in the colonialist contexts, the term native is used derogatorily to refer to people who are weaker and inferior to the colonial settlers (*Key* 158). The meaning of native is used pejoratively and it is associated with concepts like backwardness, savages, uncivilized, superstitious, and ancient by the so called civilized world. These terms expressed a Eurocentric view of native people. On the contrary, native people, irrespective of the country in which they inhabit, live a rich and meaningful life that deserved to be appreciated in its own right than to be judged by colonial European standard.

The native or indigenous people have varied distinctions of cultures from each other. Thus, a definite definition to describe them is not possible. Owing to this diversity, the UN-system body created a modern understanding of the term indigenous based on the following. They are “self-identification” as indigenous people by the individual and his acceptance by the community; “historical continuity” with pre-colonial and pre-settler societies; distinct geography and protection of natural resources, distinct language, culture, beliefs, social, political, and economic systems. Besides these identifications, they must be people who are “non-dominant groups of society” and they must continue the traditions and cultures of their ancestors, thereby, maintaining their uniqueness from others (“Who are Indigenous Peoples?”). Native or indigenous people are pushed to join the mainstream culture in the contemporary world by the dominant culture. This made them to undergo deep crisis of identity and led to the loss of their own culture and heritage.

While it is impossible for the native people to retain their status quo in the contemporary world, they are also emerging and working on their own to preserve their unique culture and propagate them in the presence of colonization and globalization. They struggle to maintain their identity, free from foreign influence because change and influences were inevitable. The indigenous or native people are roughly estimated to consist of 370

million people living across ninety countries in the world. They make up less than five per cent of the world's population, representing 5,000 different cultures ("Here's the History"). They occupy twenty two percent of the global land area. Indigenous people represent the greater part of the world's cultural diversity, and they created and speak the major share of the world's almost 7,000 languages. The United Nations observed the International day of the "Indigenous Peoples" on August 9 of every year, sensing the problems faced by the indigenous peoples in the world. The day is celebrated in commemoration of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous population held in Geneva in 1982. The need to preserve their culture, traditions, languages, and to extend support for their environmental ethics, promote health, education, and most of all their rights are some key concerns. The 2018 theme was based on "Indigenous peoples' migration and movement" where issues of indigenous territories, roots of migration, and displacement were discussed.

The theme of 2019 World Indigenous Day was "Indigenous Languages." The UN human rights experts' call for a reversal of the "historic destruction" of age old dialects, since out of ten, four are in danger of disappearing ("Four in 10" 1). It was further added that nation-building was largely responsible for the language threats against native speakers. Language is one of the most important tools for the native people because it allowed freedom of expression and conscience that are critical to their dignity, culture, and political representation. With the worldwide pandemic, the 2020 theme was "COVID-19 and Indigenous peoples' Resilience." The virtual conference reflects on the resilience of the indigenous people in the face of pandemic and also discussed on the need to promote their traditional knowledge and practices which can combat against the disease. The 2021 theme will be based on "Leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new Social Contract." Prior to COVID-19, indigenous peoples have been subjected to inequalities in the field of social, political, economy, healthcare, and so on. COVID-19 has worsened the situation for indigenous peoples, thus a new social contract aiming for the inclusion, participation, and partnership of all people is required ("International Day"). These events display the efforts of the UN at the international level working effectively to address the grievances of the native or indigenous people.

The present study will focus on Northeast Indians and Native Americans as the select novels belonged to their region or nation. In Northeast India, the Angami-Nagas from Nagaland and the Adi and Mishmee tribes of Arunachal Pradesh will be the centre of the study. For the Native Americans, the Kiowa people, the Navajos, the Pueblos, and the

Blackfeet Indians will be the main subject of the study. The study will explore the period of the pre-settler to the contemporary time. It will make use of the terms native people, tribal people, tribes, indigenous, and community interchangeably. The word Native is chosen to signify the indigenous or first people in this study. The Native Americans prefer to call themselves as “Native people” rather than aboriginal people. As for the Northeast Indians, terms like indigenous people or tribal people were commonly used to refer to them. The following sections will give a brief background of the Northeast Indians and Native Americans.

Northeast India is home to ethnic and diverse groups of people with rich literary traditions, cultures, incredible natural beauty, and resources. The word Northeast India is purely based on geographical locations, thus, the concept of homogeneity attached to them is a misconception, since Northeast India comprises of eight states. They are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. In the political imagery of India, the term Northeast remained as a region that is fascinating, mysterious, warlike, and dangerous. These states belonged to different cultural heritages and traditions. Each state of Northeast India is divided into communities, tribes, caste, and clans. Based on the physical features, cultures, food habits, some customs, and folklore, Northeast India shows a close relation with Southeast Asia than the people of mainland India. Alban Stockhausen writes that the German term “*Hinterindien*” which is translated as “Further India” or “beyond India” is found on early German maps showing the region which is the Northeast India of today (131). In these maps, the Northeast geography is shown with closer link to Southeast Asia than India of today. An understanding of this is based on the cultural similarities of the people inhabiting it. Even though Northeast India differs with each other culturally, linguistically, and religiously, Parismita Singh pointed out that they were united together by their shared history which is reflected in their experiences of insurgencies, wars, tribal uprisings, conflicts and so on (Introduction 5). Thus, once outside their own state they were drawn together by their plight in urban India. Till the 1870, Northeast region remained as an unexplored space. However, with the British administration in India, the rich resources of Assam attracted them and slowly acts were passed to take control over the region.

The Inner Line Permit (ILP), a concept of colonialism, established under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873, aimed at restricting the entry of people into certain areas to protect the people and the region. It separates the hilly regions from the plains. Northeast Indian states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram were protected

under ILP. Thus, entry into these states by foreigners' requires a special pass. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), approved by the president of India, became effective in 1958. The act is practiced in disturbed areas where there are conflicts and differences between the people on the basis of religion, language, caste, racial, and other issues. Northeast states like, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh experienced AFSPA for decades where civilian lives were crippled and affected by it. Tribes inhabiting Northeast India are geographically and socially isolated from the rest of India. They are socially and economically less developed than the other parts of India, however, they lived an independent and autonomous life over their land, resources, and have their own governing system. According to Virginuis Xaxa, tribes in India experienced "twin colonialism," one under the British rule, and one from the non-tribal Indian population ("Tribes and Social" 3). The autonomy enjoyed in various forms was lost with the onset of British imperialism and the aftermath of Indian independence.

In the post-colonial era, the various tribes in India and their issues were failed to be addressed by the nation on the ground of religious and cultural differences. This furthers the isolation of tribes in India. They were compelled to deny their own historicity and merge with the larger nation. Rimi Tadu pointed out that the tribal communities which were termed as frontiers, peripheries, or margins were now given a new identity of history, politics, legal system, and by this newer forms of colonialism began (122). Northeast India is considered as a frontier region looked with suspicion and special laws were implemented to oversee them. Frontiers are synonymous with violence and they pose a threat to the sovereign power. The various ethnic diversities in Northeast India were termed as tribes or tribal people. This name is a colonial imposition as they existed as villages, clans, or by other names. According to Pratap Digal, the spread of Christianity popularised the term tribal and subsequently, the term was imposed by the constitution of India. Tribe is considered as a colonial legacy, thus, in its place community is more acceptable (53). Northeast states like, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, used the term tribe and community interchangeably in referring to its people. The Northeast Indians were experiencing deep crisis of identity as they were caught between their own culture, western culture, and Indian culture and identity. Being called chinkies or outsiders by the people of mainland India added to the complication of identity.

Native Americans or Indians are the people living in America before the European civilization came to America. They were believed to have stayed there for more than hundred years before their colonization. However, research and discovery undertaken of their

settlement by the social scientists of the eighteenth century opined that the Native or First Americans were migrants from Northeastern Asia. Michael Crawford, a contemporary scholar, in the book *The Origins of Native Americans: Evidence from Anthropological Genetics*, assumes that the first people of Americans might have come from Siberia. The ancestors of first Americans were believed to have come to America from Asia via Beringia, a land bridge, between Siberia and Alaska. The Native American writer Vine Deloria Jr. has supported the origins of the first Americans based on the claims of the anthropologists in 1999 who suggested that the earliest North Americans were neither Indian nor Asian, but were Western Europeans who arrived around 18,000 years ago. On the contrary, prominent Native American writer, Navarre Scott Momaday, hinted on the Asian origin theory in his book, *The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages* (40). Despite the various opinions about the origin of the Native Americans, they were considered as the first people of America. Joy Porter explained it on the ground of the peoples' close relationship with the spirit of the land and the traditions and culture that were established before the contact with Western Europeans (41). This is the credit to them as the First people of America.

Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic was to find a passage to Asia, for this will lead him to the route of China and India where the riches were possible to be explored. Thus, when he arrived at the island Guanahani in the Bahamas, he called the Tainos "Indian" (Townsend 33). The word Indian then became the generic name to refer to the Native populations in America. Columbus's voyage to America in 1492 marked the beginning of colonizing project in North and South America as the knowledge of the New World spread all over Europe. The name "Native Americans" is controversial as some people disliked and rejected the term because it makes no distinction between the American Indians and other native people like the original Hawaiians, American Samoans, the Aleutes, the Micronesians and others. Native American is a generic term used by the government to describe all "the indigenous prisoners" of the United States (Means). The term "American Indian" became more popular as it cleared the confusion between Indians of America and Indians of India.

The use of the word "Indian" continued to be derogated in US history. Christina Berry stated that, the political correctness and its importance in the late 20th century erased the old ethnic terms and introduced new neutral terms, thus, the name "Native American" is born. The Pequot writer William Apess finds no reference of Indians in the Bible, therefore, he concluded that it was a word imported for the special purpose of demeaning the Native people (i). Apess believed that the proper term to refer to his nation should be "Natives" as

they are also the people who maintain the true image of the first man Adam (10). Kenneth Roemer writes that even though there are many native people in America, the capitalization 'N' suggests the primacy of the first natives in America (9). This sets the distinction of the Native Americans from other native people living in America. According to Navarre Scott Momaday, the terms "American Indian" and "Native American" are both acceptable. He used the term "American Indian" out of respect for his father and his grandfather who used that term ("N. Scott Momaday" 2). Another interesting understanding of the name is given by Kenneth Lincoln. For him, the name Indian is an "idea of oneself" and the phrase "living Indian" suggests the way things are as opposed to what they used to be (*Native American* xv). The different names and terms used in referring to the Native Americans have their own meanings and explanations associated with it.

The American Indian consists of several tribes like, Maya, Aztec, Acoma, Hopi, Creek, Ojibwa, Blackfoot, Crow, Beaver, Kiowa, Chinook, and many more. Critic Alan Velie notes that tribal identity is important for the Indians as they identify themselves as Navajo, Blackfeet, Apaches, Cherokees and others than being referred to Indians as a whole (9). With the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the colonizers were suppressing the American Indians culturally, socially, politically, and economically. They were robbed of their freedom and they lose autonomy over their land. The British defeat in 1812 was a dark period for the American Indians since they fall under the subjugation of the United States of America. E. Schusky claimed that an Act of Congress in 1924 made Indians as citizens and in addition many other rights were guaranteed to protect them (1). However, the laws and acts signed fail to provide justice to the American Indians as promised.

Indians were driven to the reservation areas where government control was limited. However, the reservation life was limited with the ongoing treaties and government took more control of their land, areas, and culture. Today, the identification of Native Americans turned out to be debatable as a singular understanding of the term was not possible. Geary Hobson in *The Remembered Earth: An Anthology of Contemporary Native American Literature*, has listed out four characteristics of an Indian. They are based on the judgments of their own tribe, the non-Indian communities, the federal government, and the individual himself or herself. Hobson also quoted Charles Hudson who pointed out three criteria essential for "Indian-ness," they are "genetic," "cultural," and "social" (8). These views and classifications are pertinent in the literatures. Today, the Native Americans faced the problem of retaining a pure native breeding because of cross cultural marriages.

Native Americans continue to suffer from the lack of concern for their welfare on the part of the US government and the nation. For many Americans, that is, individuals, minorities, and tribal communities, the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in 2018 was a hopeful promise for them. Obama has vowed to look at the negligence of federal laws and treaty organizations failed to be addressed by the previous administrations. During his presidency, Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 into law. The latter act allowed more power to tribal courts to act within the native communities. Obama's presidency created some changes, however, many native leaders complaint that his administration failed to hear the voices of the Native people. Native Americans continue to protest against the environmental damages and pollutions in their land. The Keystone Pipeline System commissioned in 2010, an oil delivery system, from Canada to Illinois was objected by the Native Americans because of the possibility of oil leakage that would damage the water and land in the reservation areas.

The Native Americans expressed their disapproval for Trump's administration as well. The laws that Obama has implemented, Trump's administration had reversed them. An example is the Obamacare which guaranteed healthcare access to Native Americans. Despite of the disagreements towards Trump's policies and administration, some people believed that Trump will lead the nation to great heights. In the 21st century, Native Americans came forward through activist positions to claim what is rightfully theirs. An example is the NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) enacted in 1990 which helped them to reclaim their sacred ancestral objects from museums, institutions, and reconstruct their tribal histories. Literary activities aiming at language retention, oral continuation, and documentation function as a vital force to revitalise their lost cultures. As they began to emerge better, stronger, and powerful in different fields, they no longer need the federal government to provide definitions of self-determination and self-government (Townsend 615). They were slowly decolonizing themselves from the strands of colonialism and paving the way for their self-determination and freedom.

The thesis titled "Native Representations in the Select Novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch: A Critical Study" will focus on the select novels of the four mentioned novelists. Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai are from Northeast India and Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch are Native American writers. The following few sections will give a brief background of the four select novelists and the importance of their works for this study.

Easterine Kire is a poet, novelist, columnist, and jazz performer from Nagaland, a state in Northeast India. Her novels, *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016) and *Don't Run, My Love* (2017) are taken for this study. *Son of the Thundercloud* won the Tata Literature Live Book of the Year Award in 2017 and the Bal Sahitya Puraskar awarded by Sahitya Academy in 2018. *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don't Run, My Love* are two latest novels of Kire and for this reason they are selected for the study even though Kire has written other fictional works. Unlike Kire's earlier novels like, *A Naga Village Remembered* (2003), *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), *Mari* (2010), and *Bitter Wormwood* (2011) which focus on political and social issues, the select novels for this study are purely located in pre-colonial times and reflect such early traditional existence. Her novel *When the River Sleeps* (2014) won the Hindu Literary Prize in 2015. This novel shares similar themes with her succeeding novels, *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don't Run, My Love*, as it deals with the mythological, magical, and supernatural world of the Angami-Nagas. The study will focus on exploring the myths, legends, and the communal life of the Angami-Nagas in the pre-colonial period. Easterine Kire is a pioneer writer of Naga literature in English; her fictions capture the nuance, the ethos, the social, and cultural concern of the Nagas. Keeping the above features in mind, her works are selected for this study.

Mamang Dai belonged to Arunachal Pradesh, a state inhabiting Northeast India. She is a novelist, poet, journalist, a former civil servant, and has worked with the World Wildlife Fund in the Eastern Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspots programme. Her novels *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) and *The Black Hill* (2014) are taken for this study. Dai has written other fictional works, prose, and poems like *River Poems* (2004), *Stupid Cupid* (2008), *The Balm of Time* (2008), *Hambreelmai's Loom* (2014), *Midsummer Survival Lyrics* (2014) and others. *The Black Hill* won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017. *The Legends of Pensam* is the first novel of Dai and it is an important text to study as it chronicles the life of the Adis, one of the largest tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, and their rich oral tradition from the primordial time to the modern age. *The Black Hill* remains as one of the finest novels written by Dai as it captures the forgotten tales and terror of history in the Abor and Mishmee hills. The two select novels of Dai cover the time and space of both the pre-colonial and the post-colonial world. By this they give a glimpse of the changing situations and atmosphere of the places which form an interesting part of the study.

Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai write with profound knowledge about their culture, history, lore, and tradition. Both writers also featured women as important characters in their

select literary works which is significant to note. However, this does not suggest the idea of prioritizing the female over the male. What Kire and Dai did was to voice out the forgotten figures of traditional women in the course of history. Also the select authors belonged to two different states and this brings out the uniqueness and diversity of their own land and culture. However, their writings also share some common grounds. They are not only distinguished writers in their own state but they also represent Northeast India in their writings. For the above reasons, Kire and Dai's select novels are taken for this study.

Navarre Scott Momaday, the dean of Native American literature, is a novelist, poet, essayist, painter, and a short story writer. *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the *Pulitzer Prize* in 1969. This novel served as an inspiration for other novelists like, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, Simon Ortiz, Paula Gunn Allen and many more. The recognition of this book brought worldwide attention to Native American literature and more importantly, it gave hope to other Native American writers to write about themselves. Momaday's novels *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and *The Ancient Child* (1989) are taken for this study. They are the only novels of Momaday, even though he has published a number of other literary works. The select novels of Momaday focused on the cultural and social life of the Kiowas, the Pueblos, and the Navajos. The novels also deal with contemporary issues of the Native Americans. They offer survival ethics to the alienated characters when they return to the native community, accepted, and acted on the stories and myths. Momaday listened closely to the story of his ancestors and tribes and has reproduced them in his works. Momaday and his novels are chosen for this study because he writes not only about his tribe but other tribes and other nation. They are known for their multi-tribal and multicultural themes.

Native American novelist and poet James Welch's novels *Winter in the Blood* (1974) and *Fools Crow* (1986) are selected for this study. *Fools Crow* received the Los Angeles Times Book prize which is an American book award, and the Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Award. *Winter in the Blood* is the first novel of James Welch, and Velie called it as a "comic fiction" (92). Contrary to a protest novel, it depicts the life of an unnamed protagonist who narrates his hopeless story but eventually finds meaning in his life. The study will focus on the unconventional art of Welch, the overcoming of distance, the relation of all things, and the unearthing of history. *Fools Crow* gives a closest portrayal of the traditional Blackfeet culture. It has incorporate important traditions of the Blackfeet people like dreams, war, naming, honour, masculine power, status of women, the coming of age, the reality of the supernatural realm, the history of survival and others. They will be taken into account.

Momaday and Welch write from their own experience and knowledge about their culture, thus their novels are a true reflection of their communities. Besides other prominent Native American writers, Momaday and Welch are chosen for varied reasons. They write about their own culture and other tribes and communities as well. Another distinction is that unlike the stereotypical assumption of Native American literatures as political works, their writings are apolitical as they are more interested in historical, cultural, and social affairs of their people. The select novelists are male figures, however, they write with passion, knowledge, and sympathy for women characters. Traditional and modern women, their status, and their contribution to the society are mentioned in their narratives. Overall, Momaday and Welch share similar literary themes and style as they both derive inspiration from their oral tradition and western literary tradition. For the above reasons, Momaday and Welch and their select novels are chosen for this study.

Through the select novels, the following chapters will look at the native representations of the Northeast Indians and Native Americans. The word representation is describe as the fact of including different types of people in various areas like, films, politics, sports, education and others where “different groups” are represented (*Cambridge Dictionary*). In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall, Hall has mentioned three forms of representations. The first is the reflective, which simply reflects what exists out there; the second is the intentional, which is limited to the intention of the author; and the third is the constructionist, which is more meaningful than reflective and intentional. In this representation, the social actors use and construct meaning of their own culture and they communicate their world meaningfully to others (25). The social actors in this representation can be taken to refer the native writers who have deep experience and knowledge of their culture. They write from their communal or tribal perspective as opposed to the non-native writers who represent the native society and culture in a narrow, shallow, and imagery way.

The select texts from Northeast India and Native American faithfully represent their cultures, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyles. They debunked and critiqued the earlier projections of their communities and cultures by re-writing the history of their communities through constructionist representations. Jace Weaver refers to historian Larzer Ziff, in *Writing in the New Nation*, who claimed that the literary annihilation of the Indians would be curbed when they represent their own culture. As Native American literatures were controlled by the metanarrative of Western imperialism, it served their interests rather than the rich diversities

of tribal and postindian literature (*That the People* 22). The literary representations of the Native Americans and the Northeast Indians in the contemporary period help in reconstructing their respective literature. The works of Northeast Indians and Native American writers were different from non-native writers because they write about their own people from what Weaver has called it as “inside” (*Other Words* 5). This is writing from a perspective that helps the native readers to imagine and reimagine themselves from the inside as opposed to the description given by the dominant culture. In the select literary texts, native people or indigenous people are represented as subjects and characters with voices. The literatures of Northeast India and Native Americans are not of recent developments but they existed much earlier in the form of oral traditions. The contemporary literatures of Northeast India and Native Americans are inspired by the oral traditions and they are a continuation of the oral thread.

1.2 Organization of the Thesis

In chapter 1 titled, “Introduction: Mapping Northeast Indian and Native American Literatures” will give a background study to the literatures of Northeast India and Native Americans with reference to the select authors. A glimpse of the Northeast Indians and the Native Americans will be included in it. The literary themes and concepts in the select novels will be discussed in brief. Moreover, an incorporation of the select theories that is, Nativism, Ecocriticism, and Postcolonialism will be highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 2 is titled as “Nativised Narrative in Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don’t Run, My Love*.” Kire’s select novels are located in pre-colonial time and space and they demonstrate the rich culture, traditions, and mysterious beliefs of the Angami-Nagas. The various cultural and folklore concepts like miracle, native ecological ethics, the position of traditional women, the presence of evil, were-tiger culture, stories, and the spiritual world and its powers will be taken into account.

Chapter 3 is presented as “Recounting Tribal Cultural History in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill*.” This chapter will focus on the tribal and cultural history of the Adi and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh and their contact with the *migluns*, that is, the Britishers. History is narrated from the experience and perspective of the tribal people. Other features like the land, folklore, language, presence of evil, status of women, and resistance to foreign rule will be deliberated.

In chapter 4, Momaday's novels will be studied. It is titled as "Recovering the Lost Identity in Navarre Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child*." The contemporary Native Americans suffer from alienation and estrangement from their land. Momaday takes this issue as a central theme in his novels and it will be studied in this chapter. It will concentrate on other concepts like the sacredness of the land, the relation between the Native and the whites, the bear tradition, literary styles and so on.

Chapter 5 will be studied under the title "Alienation and Survivance in James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and *Fools Crow*." In both the select novels, elders, chiefs, and leaders helped the people to reconnect with their culture, values, and history. From them, alienated souls were guided back to their culture and a sense of survival is obtained. The community life and its interesting traditions like war coup, smoking, belief in dreams, and the inter-relation of the natural world will form other subjects in the chapter.

The final chapter i.e., chapter 6 will give a summation of the whole study. The conclusion, the findings or the contributions made by the study, and recommended topics will constitute this chapter.

1.3 Northeast Indian Literature and Native American Literature

The following sections will analyze some of the major literary themes of Northeast Indian literature and Native American literature with reference to the select novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday, and James Welch. The select authors are pioneers and tall literary figures in their own land and their works are known and acclaimed internationally as well. Their literary works serve as models and inspirations for other writers and they boost their respective body of literatures.

1.3.1 Northeast Indian Literature: Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai

Most Northeast Indian literature came into existence in written form only after the adoption of the Roman script. The Manipuris and the Bengalis of Tripura have their own distinct script and their written literature can be traced back to the fifteenth century or earlier. Similarly, vernacular Assamese literature was in existence before the adoption of the Roman script. Before the written development, oral literature existed in the various regions of Northeast India (Das, *Matrix* vii). Writings in English and in vernacular languages slowly evolved in Northeast India with the spread of Christianity and the introduction of printing press. The literary legacy of Northeast India propounded by the missionaries is assumed to be

two-sided. Robin Ngangom and Kynpham Nongkynrih argued that, while they bestowed the tribes with a common literary heritage, they also robbed the people to acknowledge the existence of their own literatures, that is, the oral literatures (x). Hem Barua's, *The Red River and the Blue Hill*, published in 1954, is the first book written in English from Northeast India. The book gives a historical account of Assam and refers to other Northeast Indian states. The Northeast Indian literature as a distinctive body was not inaugurated until the year 1997. They formed a union which came to be known as the North East Writers' Forum. The forum exists as a platform for writers from Northeast India to share their creative writings and to interact with others in a wider arena. Their other aim lies in encouraging the translation of works into English to target a larger audience. Not all of the writings in this region flourished in English, they were produced in regional languages as well. In conversation with Preeti Gill, notable Naga writer, Easterine Kire, acknowledged the existence of the body of Northeast writing. She confesses that many writers and people were unhappy about the clubbing, but that has to be done at the initial stage until the body of work grows more and separately into Naga writing, Assamese writing, and so on ("The Rain-Maiden"). At present, they are growing but to homogenize Northeast India writing is a mistake since they consist of diverse writings.

Creative writings in English came to occupy an important place with the turn of the 21st century. However, these emerging literatures were not being taken seriously. Kailash C. Baral condemned the attitude of terming Northeast literatures as "ethnic writing" without history and tradition (3). Northeast India has a rich literary tradition and they are derived from the oral traditions. Their literatures have moved away from the colonial projections as they found new ways to voice out their opinions through their creative writings which are based on their communities, cultures, and their rich traditions. Their narrative styles, the use of language, techniques, and subjects deviate from the mainland Indian literature. Writers from Northeast India are breaking the stereotypes imposed on them and their literatures by choosing to define themselves and their writings without following the rules imposed on them. This set another trend for Northeast Indian writers to assert their freedom over their identity and writing.

Northeast Indian literatures originate from oral traditions and oral storytelling. Tilottoma Misra commented on this that the communities of Northeast India take pride in inheriting a vibrant "storytelling tradition" (xv). This is also supported by Veio Pou who says that many of the emerging literatures from the Northeast India originate from the rich oral

traditions of the people (*Literary Cultures* 32). Oral tradition and storytelling occupy a major place in the select novels, *Son of the Thundercloud*, *Don't Run, My Love*, *The Black Hill*, and *The Legends of Pensam*. Kire and Dai are raconteurs who incorporated orality in their novels with fresh twists and new insights. The invaluable folklores of the tribes were never separated from the works of Kire and Dai. They are consisted of the oral tradition, material culture, customary lore, beliefs and so on. An example is the customary practice of paying bride-price called *a-re gelik* by the Abor men is highlighted in *The Black Hill*. *Son of the Thundercloud* closely resembles the Naga oral story of a primal woman who gave birth to three sons after being impregnated by a cloud. The taboos of cutting a weaving loom, marrying someone outside one's village, taboo to be observed in case of a hunting accident, rituals of death, and others were given importance in Dai's select novels. *Don't Run, My Love* employed the legend of *tekhumévi*, that is, weretiger, which was believed to exist in some Naga communities.

It is important to note what Naga writer, Temsula Ao, has said about Northeast Indian literature and its reliability on orality. Ao argues that if the oral tradition is used by the African writers as “modern metaphors” to deal with contemporary social and political problems, the Northeast Indian writers have used orality to talk about themselves in an environment where they find themselves “marginalized” on the side of orality against the written (“Writing Orality” 106). She further added that this element used by the Northeast writers produce a literature which is not only relevant to the people of Northeast India but universally as people can relate to it. The oral traditions are not dead, as in the introduction to the book, *The Inheritance of Words*, Mamang Dai expresses that they survived through the various forms like, festivals, epic narratives, and are carried out by shamans and rhapsodists who are revered as the guardians and custodians of a tribe's collective memory. Dai has added that much of Northeast India can be dubbed as “the land of storytellers” (2). Orality remained as one of the main techniques for literary writings among the Northeast Indian writers. On the other hand, there has been a conscious attempt on the part of Northeast Indian writers to rewrite their history which was underwritten by outsiders who depicted them as savages, ignorant, backward, and uncivilized.

The autonomous nature of the tribes and villages were taken away under the colonial rule. Colonial administration and laws replaced the ethnic customs and they failed to fit the nature and diversity of the tribal people. Through the eyes of the colonizers, the Northeast states were represented with biasness. They were treated as others different from them who

can be controlled. They were further subjugated by the colonizers through various images and knowledges composed about them. Northeast India, today, deals with the concept of otherness made by the process of colonialism. They find alternative ways to articulate and reconstruct their identity. This is a theme in their contemporary writings. The Northeast Indian areas like Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh were colonized by the British imperialism and left to be controlled by the nation India after the end of imperialism. Thus after Indian independence, Northeast regions were made part of India nation. They faced discrimination on the basis of skin colour, different histories, and tribal cultures.

Colonization and its aftermath created a huge void in the life of the Northeast people and this led to identity crisis and cultural losses as well. *The Legends of Pensam* begins with primitive period of the rural villages, where the villagers were occupied with hunting and agricultural work. With the passage of time, change was ushered in with the entry of the Britishers, also known as the *migluns*. Roads were constructed, schools were established, and radio and television were introduced. The changes were not positively accepted by all the villagers, but people like Rakut have a positive attitude towards change, he articulates change to be a wonderful thing with some rearrangement. *The Black Hill* presents some native characters like Marpa and Lamet as losing their native morality and values, as they lived as parasites depending on the *migluns* and their own people in the guise of helping and serving them. They painted a dark image of the native people to the *migluns* as lazy, unprincipled, and unethical people.

Violence is a recurrent theme in Northeast Indian literature. The region is seen as a hostile space inhabited by guerillas and insurgents or underground groups. Bhattacharya and Pachuau pointed out that the violence in the states were regularized first by the colonial power and secondly after the independence of India (12). They were a prey to the outside forces and violence is used against them on the basis of their colour, nature, and outlook. Mainstream media presented the Northeast India as a conflict zone and full of violence. This is a bias projection because even though the region has experienced much turmoil, the people lived a rich cultural life that practiced good values and ethics. The novels of Kire and Dai portrayed the violation of human rights and physical and mental traumas experienced by the people. The two select novels of Kire taken for this study are set purely before the colonial era, thus military themes are absent. The violence or conflicts seen in these two novels are between peers, villagers, and lovers. *The Legends of Pensam* recounts the story of the killing of a British political officer, Noel Williamson, by an Adi and its aftermath of the British

expedition to the Abor hills in 1912 for revenge. *The Black Hill* gives an account of the historical strife between the Mishmees and the Abor tribes against the British. The situation was aggravated by the murdered of Father Nicholas Krick and Augustin Bourry. The natives were persistent in prohibiting the entry of foreigners in their territories. As time goes by, some natives driven by greed and thirst for power helped the colonizers and guided them into their land. This created tribal disharmony and infuriated the people who remained loyal to the protection of their ancestral land.

People of Northeast India live in close affinity with nature. The Nagas and the Arunachalees were animistic whose ideas of spirits and belief were extended to nature. Their beliefs were also rooted in the forest ecology. Depending on nature is one of their main survivals, however, that does not make them an abuser of nature. Nature is portrayed in varied aspects by the writers like, the glorification of nature, the mysterious ecology, and the depletion of environment made by the forces of colonialism. Northeast India is surrounded by rich biodiversities and it co-existed with the biodiversity hotspots of the Eastern Himalayans and the Indo-Burmans. Ngangom and Nongkynrih mentioned that the literary works of Northeast India is known for writing about the subject of rootedness, like, land, the people's culture, the roots of the time, and most importantly the roots of the past (xii). Northeast Indian literatures decried and condemned the depletion of their forest and biodiversity in the name of development, colonization, and human greed.

Son of the Thundercloud depicts the lives of villagers who survive by a river that provided them with fish, frogs, and other medicinal purposes. They respect the river and call her "mother" because she performed the role of a mother providing their needs. In *The Black Hill*, the foreigners could not travel in the land of the Mishmees since it is thickly populated with trees and marked with difficult terrain. This serves as a protection for the tribal people, as it shields them from the foreign invaders. Characters in the select novels voice out their concern for their environment. An instance is seen in *Son of the Thundercloud*, where Rhalietuo, one of the major characters, enlightened his mother that they should plant more trees to fight against drought. Nature not only healed, sustained, protected the people but it also gives peace to the people. This is clearly visible in the life of Father Nicholas Krick and Gimur in *The Black Hill*. Father Krick was disturbed by tribal and colonial conflict in his journey to the land of the Mishmees, however, there is one thing that enliven his spirit, that is, the vast and mysterious beauty of the land. The silent nature eases his tiring body and soul. The land is closely related to the tribal people, thus, the elders take special responsibility in

transmitting and educating the younger people of the value of their land and their duty towards their land.

Historical events are revisited in the literatures of Northeast India from the perspective of the tribal people. The Northeast Indian writers rewrite the history written by the European colonial power and by the mainland Indian writers. Kire and Dai are two writers from Northeast India who use historical events in their works. Though the select novels of Kire for this study do not have historical references, her other novels like, *Bitter Wormwood*, *A Terrible Matriarchy*, and *A Naga Village Remembered* presented the bitter accounts of history pertaining to military conflicts, insurgency, groupings of villagers, mutilation, raping, killings etc. The voices of the ordinary people are heard in Kire's novels. Similarly Dai's novel, *The Black Hill*, fuses the mysterious disappearance of Father Krick, a French priest, in 1850 and the execution of Kajinsha, a Mishmee man, for his murder. Dai carefully wove the story and history of Father Krick and his missionary dream in Tibet. She further described the atrocities that followed between the British and the Mishmees after the execution of Kajinsha. The inclusion of history in the select novels imply that Northeast literatures are not merely fictional tales, but they go beyond and rewrite and re-tell the truths of the forgotten sections of people in the hands of their exploiters.

English is the official and second official language of some states in Northeast India. Thus, English is considered as an important language and many writers from this region are proficient in it. These writers are educated in English medium schools, thus, they write in English better than their native language. Critics and scholars have debated on the use of English language. UNESCO has recognized 900 Indian languages and 197 are considered as endangered. Within this, 80 languages are from Northeast India. Many of the Naga languages have been included in this list and recognized as weak and powerless in the face of globalization and shift in "socio-cultural-political dynamics" ("Four in 10" 1). Naga languages and dialects are believed to be undergoing through the initial stage of endangerment and some on the verge of extinction. They can be recovered by emphasizing on its usage in educational sector, administration, home, and simply by speaking the mother tongue. Misra referred to Welsh scholar, Nigel Jenkins, who has edited a collection of Khasi poems into English that, the Khasis would go back to their own language after they realize the importance of their own language, he also lamented the conditions of the young writers who were not proficient in their own language to write (xiv). This is the sad reality that pervades in the literary writings of Northeast India.

Mamang Dai and Easterine Kire write in English but they do not ignore the importance of their native language. Their novels embrace some native terms and words. In Kire's novels, *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don't Run, My Love*, Angami-Naga words like *Tekhumiaivi*, *Tekhu*, *Apuo*, *Azuo*, *Nouzie*, *Kepenuopfii* were used. Dai's novels, *The Black Hill* and *The Legends of Pensam*, used native words such as *Ponung Rutum*, *Rasheng*, *Kuserong Migom*, *Kebangs*, *Donyi-Polo* etc. These native words added a rich texture to the select novels. Other elements of Northeast Indian writings found in the select novels of Kire and Dai are the native cultural and religious markers like, dreams, omens, prophecies, ceremonies, rituals, and others pertinent to their cultures. In *The Black Hill* dreams are taken seriously by the characters. This is a part of indigenous life. Folks believe in their dreams and take it as premonition of the future. The character Gimur in *The Black Hill* blamed her husband Kajinsha for bringing bad dreams to their home. One of their twins died at childbirth and their marriage disintegrates true to Gimur's bad dreams. *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill* exemplify the observances of various elaborate rituals to restore the souls of ailing people, and to reverse a bad situation.

The belief in prophecies and consulting seers are evident in Kire's novels *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don't Run, My Love*. The power of stories and prophecies were able to restore people's life from impending dangers. When the physical world fails to provide answer for life's problems, people seek seers to ease their burdens or to know about their future. Atuonuo and her mother in *Don't Run, My Love* consult the seer to get rid of Kevi, the weretiger, who is in pursuit of Atuonuo. The various forms of evil present in men and in nature were explored in the narratives of Kire and Dai. Evil must be conquered and defeated for a prosperous and a successful life. It threatens human relationship and blinded them in doing good things. Evil is also present in nature and the ecology and it must be propitiated to avoid the harmful effects on human beings.

The writers also acknowledge native wisdom and values such as hospitality, helping the widows, respecting the elders, observances of taboo and so on in the select narratives. Besides the above mentioned characteristics, Northeast Indian writings explore other areas. While it moans the colonial past and its consequences, it also celebrates the uniqueness and triumph of the region in the literatures. Preeti Gill claimed that Northeast India has been experiencing the feeling of being different from other people in appearance, religion, culture, and language. However, this has been one of the strengths and resilience of India and it bestows them the ability to accept and change (xvi). Northeast Indians were aware of their

difference, they accept it and hold onto their roots, their rich cultures, and call for its practice and preservation.

From the above discussions it is identified that the select novels of Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai are representatives of Northeast Indian literature. Their novels can be interpreted from diverse perspectives. On one hand, they are particular because they portray the life of the tribal people, yet, on the other hand, they are universal because they affirm to universal themes of love, peace, unity, values, and so on. The narratives were spanned from the ancient times to the contemporary period. The select novels of Kire and Dai which are *Son of the Thundercloud*, *Don't Run, My Love*, *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill* give an exploration of the Northeast people, their rich cultures, complex tradition, values and wisdom. Besides these thematic features, their writing styles also have a sense of nativeness which set them apart as distinct writers. Northeast Indian writers like Kire and Dai represent the writings of the region in its subject, form, and themes. In short, their writings are in consonance with other Northeast Indian writings.

1.3.2 Native American Literature: Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch

The pre-Columbian cultures were primarily oral. However, that does not mean the native cultures were completely pre-literate. As the earliest books were not produced by European immigrants but by the Maya, whose culture was extended to Guatemala, Belize, Southern Mexico, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. Weaver refers to Robert Warrior who pointed out that the Native intellectual tradition can be roughly trace from Samson Occom's missionary writings in the 1700's (*That the People* 49). The Native American literature as an intellectual discussion took place only in the period of 1960 to 1970. Steven Otfinoski pointed out that it was only in the 1960s that Native American writers had found a way to tell stories that were derived from the rich indigenous history and traditions and it was extended to the pre-Columbian days (8). Other eminent Native American writers also share their view on the origin of their literary works. In an interview with Isernhagen, Kiowa writer, Navarre Scott Momaday, traced the origins of Native American literature to the rock paintings and termed it as the emergence of literature (55). The oral literature has a huge influence in the contemporary literature and Lincoln called contemporary Native American literature as a "renaissance" or rebirth of the oral literature of the past (*Native American* 41). By this, the durability of the oral tradition is not undermined. The Indian novelists revisit the oral storytelling, the historical events, and the winter counts to weave their stories. When the

Puritans set foot on their land, they observed their ceremonies, dances, and record it in writing. But they could not represent the Natives faithfully because they document it from their colonial perspectives. On the contrary, Native American literature is an expression of how the Natives see the world, their relationship with the natural environment, and rewriting the history of the Native people underwritten and misrepresented by the dominant culture.

Kenneth M. Roemer in addressing “What is Native American Literature?” gave two words, “immensity” and “diversity” (4). Since Native American people consist of diverse tribes and communities, their literatures too reflect this diversity in them. Thus, some of the typical labels like, American Indian literature, Native American literature, Native literature, Indigenous literature, Amerindian literature pose problems because they simplified and marginalized the variegated people and their “complex intercultural history” (9). Unlike the English speaking world which has a common literary heritage, Native American literatures are not as most of their literatures are tribal literatures that are diverse and have their own uniqueness. Speaking about Native American literature to Isernhagen, Momaday opined that it is distinguished from other literatures marked by its own experience, language, and rhythms (30). However, other cultures too have their own distinctions, thus, in approaching Native American literature, the distinctions of it should be remembered. The various tribal literatures of the Native Americans share many themes together. Their literatures explore the problem of isolation, alcoholism, to the ties with ancestral people, respect for the land and so on. The root of Native American literature is derived from their oral tradition. They are consists of the rituals, songs, rites, history, jokes, proverbs, visions, and so on. These are the artistic expressions of the Native American people. Porter clarifies that Native American oral literatures are not static as they have undergone repeated birth and rebirth in the American soil (42). However, they continue to provide a foundational heritage for Indian literature of all kinds. From them, rich and vibrant literatures of the Native people were formed and continue to thrive till today. Many of the influential literary figures derived the base of their stories or tales from their oral tradition.

Poetry is considered to originate from Indian culture but fiction and short stories are not (Otfinoski 9). Notable Native American writers such as, N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Marmon Silko, Sherman Alexie, and Louise Erdrich were all poets and poetic writers. Momaday first conceived *House Made of Dawn* as a long poem and the novel has poetic and lyrical forms in it. Similarly, James Welch’s fictions are poetic, an example is his first novel, *Winter in the Blood*. Paula Gunn Allen, the Laguna Pueblo poet,

affirmed that there is such a thing as American Indian literature. The two major divisions are traditional and genre literature. The first are the canonical works that are widely open to audiences gathered on social occasions and the latter comprised of the contemporary works divided into poetry, fiction, and short stories. Allen called the American Indian literature which is made up of different traditional and modern form as a “hoop dance” whose varied expressions signify a tradition that is unified and consistent in its own terms (*Sacred Hoop: Recovering*). The select novels of Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch viz, *House Made of Dawn*, *The Ancient Child*, *Winter in the Blood*, and *Fools Crow* have intermixed oral elements with modern literary forms. *The Ancient Child* fuses the Kiowa myth of Tsoai with western legends. It follows the Kiowa creation story of a boy who turns into a bear while chasing his seven sisters. Locke Setman whose meaning is Walking Bear or Bear Above lives an estranged life from his native land; he must become the bear in order to gain his place and his native identity. *Fools Crow* narrates the Sun Dance Ceremony, one of the most important ceremonies of the Indians. The protagonist Fools Crow performed a ritual at the Sun Dance because of the success that he had gained against the Crows. Similarly, Heavy Shield Woman took the role of the Medicine Woman at the Sun Dance for the return of her husband, Yellow Kidney, who disappeared in the Crow’s raid.

Another oral form is the use of storytelling in written literature. Momaday and Welch use the technique of storytelling in their novels to educate their audience of their myths, legends, stories, and morals which are considered valuable for their people. The word is sacred and powerful among the Native Americans. The elders in the select novels like, Francisco, Yellow Calf, and Kope’mah are storytellers who put history and reverence for their land in the minds of the youngsters through their stories. Jace Weaver coined a neologism called “communitism” or “communitist” to refer to Indian literatures. It is formed from the combination of the words community, activism or activist. Weaver believes that literature is communitist because it is committed to Native community and the wider community (*That the People* 43). Native American writers write for the community to recover their lost cultures, values, and identity. They speak for the Indians which is contrasted to the colonizers way of looking and presenting them from a bias perspective. By this, the Indians and their real representations were retained. Literature and culture cannot be separated. Paula Gunn Allen describes literature as a facet of culture, where its significance and meanings are found in it (“Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary” 222). Lincoln echoed a similar view when he says that Native American literature is “literature and culture” in

translation (*Native American* 25). This happens when the cultural elements are reproduced in literature. For Native Americans, they understand their culture and the literature was familiar to them, however, this pose a problem for the western readers who have no knowledge about Native culture.

Many of the Native American novels are built around the theme of individual alienation caused by cultural conflict. These types of novels are said to have the characteristics of the “initiation story” (Murray 161). A young man or the protagonist of the story faces the challenge of what he believes in and in what way he has to live. Sometimes this young man is born of mixed parentage and finds it difficult to be assimilated in either of the cultures. The person is usually helped by older people to find his way back to his traditional culture. This is one way to free him from his sense of alienation. He also accepts the culture of his people and is healed emotionally, physically, and spiritually. The protagonists in the novels, *House Made of Dawn*, *The Ancient Child*, and *Winter in the Blood* went through the initiation phase. Abel and Locke Setman from *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child* suffered from identity crisis and alienation because of losing their fathers prematurely and their early contact with the western culture. Abel was frustrated with his life after returning from World War II. However, by the undying effort of his grandfather, Francisco, Abel once again reconnects with his culture and slowly evolved out of his identity crisis. Locke Setman was a successful artist living in San Francisco, however, deep within he was feeling dejected and unable to cope with life for some reasons which he could not understand. He was able to get his life back together when he returned to his ancestral home. Contemporary Native American literatures display this theme of alienation which is distinct from traditional literature. In traditional literature, there is an absence of otherness. Paula Gunn Allen justified this absence that traditional literature is directed towards wholeness of people and everything, for this is a major tribal value (“Stranger in my own Life” 3). When a person lives under the premise of his tribal wholeness, he abandons the path of alienation. Communal values and harmony are foremost in the traditional societies, thus, the individual aspirations are replaced by them.

A common problem that is found among the Native Americans is the excessive use of alcohol. The root of alcoholism is attributed to the whites who introduced alcohol in Native American land. William Apess, a Pequot writer’s autobiography, *A Son of the Forest* (1829), gives a moving account of the abuse that he had endured in the hands of his alcoholic grandparents. Alcoholism destroys life and weakens relationships among the Indians.

Momaday and Welch note the abusive use of alcohol in their novels. Abel in *House Made of Dawn* is a heavy drinker. When he returns back to the reservation in Walatowa, he was dead drunk and could not stand straight. He continually uses alcohol to distance himself from the reality of his problems. Similarly, in *Winter in the Blood*, the unnamed protagonist, rely on alcohol to solve his emotional problems. His father was an alcoholic who spent his entire life in entertaining the whites and neglected his duty towards his family. The elders in the select novels, like, Francisco in *House Made of Dawn* knew very well that alcohol would not solve the problems, thus they guided the individuals to turn back to their traditional culture which is capable of healing their emotional wounds.

Native American life and culture were rapidly altered with the gradual dispossession of lands by the European settlers. When the whites first came to America, they could not comprehend the diverse language, landscape, or the environment. For example, in October 1492, Christopher Columbus confided in his journals that there were varieties of herbs and flowers in the New World and he was in total ignorance of their properties (qtd. in Gray 1). In *House Made of Dawn*, the quite scenic mountains, forests, and fields provided peaceful moment to Abel when he returned to the reservation after the brutal experience of World War II. Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and *Fools Crow* condemned the destruction done to the environment by the whites. In *Winter in the Blood*, the action of the white people dumping fish into the river and conducting test is criticized by the author. It not only pollutes the river, but threatens the existence of the Native people. The Lone Eaters in *Fools Crow* depended on the environment and especially on the animals for survival. However, they know the value of the animals and consume them in a sustainable manner. When the Napikwans, that is, the whites encroached upon their lands, animals were killed for games and this enraged the Pikunis because they have taken their food and sacred things for granted. Native American literatures, like other indigenous writings, give special emphasis to the environment. It looks at the exploitation of natural resources by the forces of colonization, industrialization, and globalization, where the weaker sections of the people and their environmental rights were suppressed by the dominant group.

Dreams and visions are given highest care and importance among the Native Americans. The image, symbols, feelings, events and happenings that a person perceives during his or her sleep is called as dream. Native Americans considered dream as an important source for both practical and spiritual guidance. Dreaming was a survival tool for them. If a dream is particularly obscure, a strong dreamer is consulted for its meaning. An

important symbol of dream is the dreaming of fox. Those who dream of the fox will become strong leaders, as fox is known to bestow men cunningness. Welch's *Fools Crow* is significant for the powerful dreams. Among the dreams, Fast Horse and White Man's Dog dreams were the most important dreams in the novel. Their dreams were significant for the Crows raid and one of the dreams also refers to the future of the Pikunis.

The histories of the Native Americans are interlinked in their fictional writings. This feature added the element of reality in creative writings. *Fools Crow* culminates with the history of the Marias Massacre of 1870 when a band of Blackfeet Indians were mistakenly killed by the US cavalry. The Massacre took place on January 23, 1870 in Montana territory. Nearly two hundred Indians were killed and most of them were children, women, and elderly people. The novel emphasizes on the inhuman cruelty done to the Heavy Runner's Band by the soldiers. Their houses were burned, their leader was killed, and the people were killed mercilessly. The few survivors were mostly children, women, and elderly people who were badly injured. This historical event was being condemned by the writer in his novel. *House Made of Dawn* is set against the background of World War II. The protagonist, Abel, experienced the horror of war through various images like, the piling of dead bodies, the depletion of the environment, and the destruction of the hills by the machines, the constant gunfire, and explosions were some of the bitter agonies of war. After the war, the American Indian soldiers were forgotten and their sacrifices were not taken into account. This also left a deep trauma in the minds of the war veterans. Native Americans have been accustomed in remembering their histories and ways of life through the process of storytelling. They depended on collective memory which maintain and transmit the cultures throughout different generations. These practices were reproduced in the select novels.

Language connects the people and is vital for social and cultural unity. A group of people also shared their rich cultural heritage through their language. Native Americans speak dissimilar languages according to their respective tribes. The adoption of English language in administration and educational curriculum during the colonial era contributed to the depletion of the Native American languages. In 2010, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) declared that Native languages are in a state of emergency. John Haworth pointed out that they are the consequences of governmental policies that enacted English as the prime language in schools and other platforms (27). Many of the Native American writers decried the use of English language in schools, and other sectors. On one side, native writers were arguing for the complete removal or decolonization of the English language as

advocated in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Language* (1986). On the other hand, some other writers used the English language to gain a wider audience and also countering the English language by using their own native English. This response is seen in Native American literary works. The chants, songs, and phrases were not translated into English. *House Made of Dawn* provided an illustration of Francisco who talked and sang in his native tongue. Welch's *Fools Crow* used many words and names of near English translations which are differed from the Standard English. They are, the white man's water, many shot-gun, many faces-man, Sun Chief, many moons, thirteen sleeps, long ago people, sand hills, and others. Indigenous proverbs and speeches were part of the select novels. They exemplify the use of English language by the Native writers in their own native style. This also shows a departure from the colonial Standard English.

Other themes important to Native American literatures are seen in the select novels. In his novels, *Fools Crow* and *Winter in the Blood*, Welch depicted the practice of polygamy among the menfolk of the Blackfeet society. Many important figures in the society like war chiefs and leaders practiced polygamy by taking more than one wife. This shows the power of the man in providing for his family and his wives. The representation of women in the novel is interesting. If a woman commits adultery, her husband has the right to cut off her nose. However, virtuous women were respected by all. There also exist a strict taboo in the direct contact between a mother-in-law and her son-in-law. Native American writers also condemned the act of illegal trading of alcohol, animal skin, and the infection of diseases brought by the colonizers. These are seen in the select novels *House Made of Dawn* and *Fools Crow*.

Native American literature has broadened its context in the contemporary period to include many more issues like race, nationhood, feminism, environmental issues, health hazards etc. Their literature is sometimes grouped as postcolonial literatures but this is not accepted by some critics as they perceived this to be too simplistic. The reason is because many of the Indians still live under the dominance of the non-Indians. Porter termed their condition as "paracolonialism" and for this it is more appropriate to put Indian literature as "resistance literature" (59). Whatever the debate may be, Native American literature is growing and expanding rapidly at present. It serves as the voice of the Native Americans in passing their opinions, rights, concerns, and suppressions. The select novels of Momaday and Welch namely, *House Made of Dawn*, *The Ancient Child*, *Winter in the Blood*, and *Fools*

Crow, are representatives of the Native American literature as they express subjects and areas central to Native American literature.

1.4 Literary Theories

The study will make use of three select literary theories. They are Nativism, Ecocriticism, and Postcolonialism. These three theories are inter-related in many ways as they advocated for a return to native tradition, its culture, language, and preservation of the ecosystem. They resisted against foreign influences that were continuously damaging and altering the native or indigenous people's culture and their literatures. The following sections will look at the select literary theories.

1.4.1 Nativism

Nativism was coined by Louis Dow Scisco at the turn of the nineteenth century. It pertains to the beliefs advocated by the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic American Party in the United States of America in the 1850's (Guia 2). The concept was popularised only in the late 1930's when it became a subject in the top universities. Nativism is perceived as the state of "protecting" and "reaffirming" native and tribal cultures in response to "acculturation" (*Collins Dictionary*). It is also understood as the state of choosing or preferring "native inhabitants" over the "immigrants" (*Merriam-Webster*). Historian, John Higham's book, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (1955), is one of the most influential works on nativism. According to Higham, nativism is understood as the opposition to foreign ideas, institutions, principles, and things that are alien to the native people (4). Nativism in American history is marked by the Indian resistance to the white's arrival. It worked closely with the idea of nationalism. Therefore, non-nationalist are a threat to it.

The concept of nativism in America is a complex ideology, US nativism is directed against the Catholics, radicals, and racialized groups during 1860 to 1925. These features formed the modern American nativism. Aitana Guia in the paper, "The Concept of Nativism and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments in Europe," puts forward different advantages of nativism. It is built on nationalist principles with the aim of maintaining the welfare of native people in mind. It is careful in handling anti-immigrant issues and it avoided from becoming racist and xenophobic. Nativism balances its policies by keeping the interest of the native people as its priority but diverted from suppressing other people or immigrants. The challenge to the freedom and sovereignty of the natives started with the arrival of the colonialist, immigrants

or group of people who settled in the native lands. The concept of nativism is often understood as ethnic nationalism, ethno-nationalism, majority ethnic nationalism, or monoculture nationalism. They are important in understanding nativism, however, they failed to capture the nature of nativism. It would be wrong to equate nativism with majority ethnic nationalism because nativism can emerge within minority nationalist sphere as well. Nativism is also differentiated from the concepts of national identity and nationhood (5). Nativism is also associated with ethnocentrism and eurocentrism, that is, the belief that one's culture is superior to other, or to interpret things from European values and experiences. These concepts are not alien to nativism because each culture wants to assert the superiority and importance of their culture. This becomes the dark side of nativism which is termed as excessive patriotism or jingoism to the group which one belonged to. Nativism is not strictly based on 'ism' or 'phobia' as that would be too narrow to understand the concept. It works for the maintenance of native cultures and fights against foreign dominance and influence.

In a conversation with Isernhagen, Momaday discussed the concept of "authenticity" as a native writer. This is a common issue faced by the native or indigenous writers. Momaday outlines the authenticity of an Indian writer by writing from experience as an Indian and showing the proof of that experience and knowledge in one's writing (49). One common problem faced by the Northeast Indian writers and Native American writers is the stereotypical assumption that they write or they should write only about themselves. While on one hand, they carried the voice of their people and culture, on the other hand, they write about other cultures and nations. This is more prominent in Native American writings. For example, both Momaday and Welch write about their tribal communities and the western world. They looked at the ways to resolve the cultural conflicts and bring unity among them. The select novels of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch are set in their native soil and the writers write with firsthand knowledge and experience about their culture and histories. Nativism is also understood as a longing to return to indigenous culture and traditions prior to the colonial contact, that the indigenous ways should be revived and restored. Ashcroft and others expressed that colonial discourse theorists such as, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, have less hope in reconstituting the native past because they were the result of ongoing colonial productions (*Key* 159). Nevertheless, efforts were taken by indigenous or native people to recover their lost traditions and cultures.

G.N. Devy's book, *After Amnesia*, describes nativism as a recent critical trend in Marathi. Its aim lies in discharging Marathi literary writings from foreign elements. By this

native language and its rules were preferred over other languages. It is postcolonial in attitude as it opposes the colonial standard of literary history and principles. The focus of nativism is to concentrate on the aspects of nativity and debunk the belief that European literature is universal or its methods were superior to others. Devy lamented that the colonial period in India introduces “amnesia” in Indian criticism which distorted the Indian literary tradition (120). He emphasizes that if cultural amnesia is the central problem of Indian criticism, it should be understood that after amnesia nativistic history should come up. This is what native writers or indigenous writers around the world were doing in the contemporary world. They have lost many rich traditions of their culture and their writings were finding ways to restore the lost ones. Native or indigenous cultures were also facing grave danger of being misused and misrepresented in the modern technologized world. Cultural products were reproduced and circulated by the means of technology. Micheal Brown called this as a violation of the traditional authority and the authority of tradition itself (93). The sacred objects and artifacts of the Native people were open to public view and display in the modern world.

The following sections will make extensive use of the book, *Nativism: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Makarand Paranjape. In his preface to the book, Paranjape described the concept of nativism as a form of “indigenism” whose principle lies in the need for “cultural self-respect” and independence (xii). Nativism focuses on the primacy of language in the production of culture. This language gives priority to the language of the masses rather than the elites or the dominant ones. Language is a vehicle which carries several meanings for the folks in a community. A literary piece evaluated from nativism point of view can be done through the presence of the cultural aspects present in that piece. Nativism, thus shift its focus to the locality of a society or culture unlike other theories which have other concerns. The cultural aspects of the Angami-Nagas, the Adis and Mishmees of Arunachal Pradesh, the Kiowas, the Navajos, the Pueblos, and the Blackfeet of the Native Americans are studied through the select novels. Some of them are superstitious beliefs, ethics, values, work culture, songs, stories, and so on.

A narrow perception of nativism can be disastrous, as some understood it as riddance of culture from non-native elements, foreign, or alien influences. It is not a battle between the native versus non-native, freedom versus slavery, selfhood versus subjection. Nativism on the other hand works to prevent cultural conquests, resist surrendering and other factors threatening its growth. The role of nativism in literature should be flexible and there should be no presupposed restrictions to it, as a native writer indulges in foreign culture and a non-

native writer may contribute to native culture as well. Nativism does not work in isolation, it alliances with the subordinate, marginalized, regional, and supports broader, wider ideas of nationalism against foreign domination. Keeping this in mind, nativism maintains its balance in approaching different authorities and it asserts its own freedom over the others. Paranjape notes that nativism is a world-wide phenomenon of “cultural nationalism” and “self-assertion” in which the colonized native people dismantle the universalist claims of the colonial literary heritage (xvi). Nativism is a broad subject and wherever it is placed, it advocates for the promotion, preservation, and reviving the cultural, social values, and beliefs of the native people.

Literary techniques of contemporary India used an amalgamation of traditional and modern styles. Nativism reflects this, as it does not confine to traditional methods alone, it also borrowed from western literary styles. It challenges the notion of Eurocentric modernism and internationalism which makes a point to compare most literary text with the standard of Euro-American text. The term *Desivad* or nativism cannot control the foreign influences in Indian culture, Indra Choudhuri emphasizes that it only wants to develop and maintain a “sense of Indianness” and Indianness is a “consciousness” of “compositeness of thought” (3). Nativism cannot remain static to outside influences. It is important to channelize nativism in the proper direction lest it becomes chauvinistic. In his Keynote Address, G. N Devy cautioned that nativism should be closely guarded from becoming a “militant” and “closed ideology” (“*Desivad* ” 13). The core of nativism lies in the native or the local, indigenous, aboriginal, and ethnic people’s culture. This calls for pluralism of culture and tradition because a native land does not exist with a singular culture or even literature. This is a foremost feature in Northeast Indian literature and Native American literature. They lacked a uniform literary tradition as they consist of diverse tribes and communities.

Nativism must carefully avoid the exclusion of the plurality of cultures, as societies whether of pre or post-colonial are composed of diverse groups of people. Thus, nativism is pluralistic in nature and this is a positive and progressive aspect of it. K. Satchidanandan states that nativism must be a celebration as well as interrogation and an exploration. The canons of literature must be re-evaluated as they excluded native or indigenous literatures (14). Inclusion of the various literary forms can give a true picture of nativism against homogeneity of literature. An example of this is the continuity of oral tradition and its forms seen in the works of native and indigenous writers like, Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday, and James Welch. To view and approach literature as a monologue or being

singular is a dangerous attitude because literature is polyphonic and made up of many voices from different backgrounds. The homogeneity of culture or literature would make the local, the ethnic to lose their voices. It will lead a nation or a region to lose its rich heterogeneity. Nativism does not follow a narrow tradition of studying literature, however, it maintains the study of literature by recognizing and appreciating the several voices in literature.

Nativism is said to be progressive and growing when it supports the plurality of cultures exist within a nation; it is said to be destructive if it only advocates for the growth of a singular culture. It is also important to note that everything that is native cannot be considered as good, valuable, or the truth because besides the positive attributes, nativism has some negative attributes like, being patriarchial, having extreme superstitious beliefs, the inferior position of women, and so on. The select writers from Northeast India and Native Americans for this study condemned the social evils of their community. They portray strong women characters like Gimur, Nenem, Grey and others who love their community and men but who also battled for what is right and just. Nativism could degenerate if it is not channelized through the proper way, that is, through an awareness of egalitarian values, democratic values, and equality. The theory of nativism does not center on a unified language. It has multicultural aspects. Satchidanandan quoted Aijaz Ahmed *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, that “multilingualism” is the very stuff of Indian nationalism (22). Many of the writers from Northeast India write in their native languages beside English in which they are fluent in.

Nativism does not narrow down literatures for the sake of language. As seen in the context of Indian literature, nativism is striving to maintain plurality of culture, multiculturalism, multilinguism, polyphony, heteroglossia, intertextuality and a balance between tradition and modernity. This makes nativism more of a postmodern theory for it is open in its approach. In his paper, “Nativism: The Intellectual Background,” R. B Patankar claimed that Nativism or *Desivad* consists of two parts held together in a dialectical relationship. They are the self and the other. The self is the whole with which a *desi*, that is, an Indian identifies himself or herself with. The religion, social, moral, belief system, language are taken as form of life. The other stands for the things which are different from the self. They exist in peaceful co-existence, but their relation is ascribed to be a “power-relation” (29). Many literatures of the world, sculptures, paintings, art and music are related to their environment, period, and place. The literary techniques, styles, forms, and principles have a connection with their native land. At times such techniques are being questioned for

not conforming to the universal styles. This puts a curb to the growth of nativism. Regional literatures were termed as inferior and sometimes they are not included in the mainstream literature, however, this is a blunder since they are part of nativism and its literature. Bhalchandra Nemade in his paper, "Nativism in Literature," defines "Nativeness" as the "natural state" of maintaining things as they are (236). It is the will to stay as one is. Nativism looks beyond the past, because even though it responds to the people of the past, it also focuses on the future. It is one of the strongest weapons of the oppressed culture to throw out the hegemonic influences and control of the colonizers in the native systems. It is important to inculcate and revive the native traditions in literature and in other forms because it gives a sense of one's own self and power and creativity to one's artistic traditions.

1.4.2 Ecocriticism

Environmental study was planted in the mid-eighties and it began to grow in the early nineties. Through the publication of books and journals on environment, the study and theory of ecocriticism began to evolve. William Howarth explains the meaning of ecocriticism that eco and critic are derived from Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*, and they indicate "house judge." The word *oikos* is "nature" and *kritos* is an "arbiter" who desires to keep the house in good order without disordering the "original decor" (69). Cheryll Glotfelty, in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, defines ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the "physical environment" and argued that it takes an "earth-centered" approach and importance to literary studies (xviii). The term ecocriticism was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay, "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." The application of ecological concepts to the study of literature is understood as ecocriticism (107). Ecocritics also analyze the history of concepts such as nature in an attempt to understand the "cultural developments" that have led to the present global ecological crisis. Some of the main interests of ecocritics are based on the environmental damage done by men, the political struggle, and the daily affairs of life which has environmental consequences (Kerridge 530). Other terms like ecopoetics, environmental literary criticism, and green cultural studies are used in parallel with ecocriticism. There is a distinctive use of the term ecocriticism in USA and UK. In USA, the term ecocriticism is used. It takes its literary bearings from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau who belonged to the nineteenth-century. Their works celebrate nature, the life force, and the wilderness as manifested in America. By contrast, UK used the term green studies. The literary bearings of ecocriticism started from the British Romanticism of the 1790s rather

than the American transcendentalism of the 1840. Peter Barry writes that the American nature writing is celebratory, whereas, the British tends to be more ominous, as it warns the environmental threats resulting from industrial, commercial, governmental, and neo-colonial forces (242). Ecocritics around the world also focuses on indigenous people who have less industrial sites and have rich natural resources. However, colonial invasion shattered the rich biodiversity of the native peoples' lands.

Many of the indigenous literary writers lamented the depletion of their environment, resources, and animals in their works. Native American writers, Leslie Marmon Silko and Linda Hogan's novels, *Ceremony* (1977) and *Solar Storms* (1995), depicted the environmental values of the Native Americans as contrary to the industrial capitalism of the whites. Ecocritics vow to protect and serve the interest of the poorer sections in their environmental issues because sometimes their voices were not heard. James Welch, Navarre Scott Momaday, Mamang Dai, and Easterine Kire employed nature as a central character in their select novels. They bring out the worldview of their tribal communities which placed nature at its centre. The "environmental justice movement" is a collective term for the efforts of the poor communities, prohibiting the dumping of chemical waste into their land by governments and corporations as it pollutes their air, food, water, and lead to the loss of their lands and livelihoods (Kerridge 531). The arrival of the Europeans in America changed the rich and natural landscape and ecology of the Native Americans in the name of progress and development to nothingness and polluted sites.

The Native Americans do not owned the land, nor see it as a property, but it is a "community" for them, held common by all (Weaver, *Other Words* 302). Colonization does not damage the economic system of the indigenous population alone, it alters the whole life system, the beliefs, and the universe of the native people. Their rich ecological lifestyles were defiled and broken by the process of colonization. Ecocritism has a broad scope and consist of various types, however, all of them share the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by its consequences. Many of the ecocritics and their ecocritical works in the contemporary world share the same thought that humans have reached the age of environmental limits and they are suffering from the consequences of their actions. Thus, they should change their way of life, their lifestyles, their habits, and most importantly their ethical systems to prevent global catastrophe. When it comes to environmental issues and concerns, the natives or indigenous people of the world cannot be excluded. The Native Americans have a close relation with nature. An example is

seen through the Pueblo's belief about the earth and the sky. The earth and the sky are sisters and as long as this family relation is maintained, the Sky will continue to bless her sister, the earth, and rain will be poured on it. Moreover, the native people identified themselves with the mesas and the great mountains which give them peace and healing. Abel, the protagonist of Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968), experienced this from the landscape.

Christopher Manes in his essay, "Nature and Silence," points out that in the animistic cultures, people see the natural world as "inspired" such as animals, plants, stones, rivers are perceived with voices and at times "intelligible subjects" (15). They are bestowed with life and language. Besides the human language, there is the language of the birds, the wind, earthworms, wolves, and waterfalls which humans fail to recognize them. Thus, nature and its inhabitants like the living and non-living things were silenced by the actions or the indifference of human beings. The voice of nature has been silenced for a long time. To restore the voice requires man to change his attitude towards nature. Environmental ethics should be developed and practiced by men to restore the environment. Northeast Indians and Native Americans have rich cultural traditions based on the preservation of their forests and ecology and this is reflected in their literatures as well. For example, some trees were older than the oldest grandfathers in Dai's select novel and this is possible because of the conservation ethic of the community.

Ecology is a large field and it is made up of various types. Radical ecology is one such which arises because of the crisis facing in the industrialized world. It takes on a new direction that the domination and exploitation of nature also refers to the human beings along the lines of race, class, and gender. Radical ecology is against the misconception that people are free to exploit nature for their use. It is vocal in calling human beings to change their environmental ethics and to nurture nature and nurture the people (Merchant, *Radical* 1). Social ecology on the other hand examines the various political and social institutions that people use in relationship to nature and its resources. Radical ecology pressed social and ecological systems to new forms of production, reproduction, and "consciousness" that will benefit human lives and the environment (8). It aims to provide quality of life for people irrespective of class, race, and gender and worked towards the removal of environmental degradation. Radical ecology keeps the welfare of man along with the environment.

Deep ecology is another form of ecology which takes its name from the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess' conference paper titled, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long – Range

Ecology Movement,” presented in Bucharest in 1972. Deep ecologists attacked the reform environmentalism of the 1970s and 1980s because that they dealt with problems of legal and institutional fixes for pollution and resource depletion rather than fundamental changes in human relations with nonhuman nature. Merchant refers to Devall who states that the main objective of deep ecology is placing humans in nature and not above it (92). A new philosophy is required, this calls for oneness of man with the planet. Deep ecology encourages for the lifestyle of the hunter gatherers and it advocates for an ecocentric living rather than a homocentric ethic. Spiritual ecology focuses on the alteration of religious and spiritual “consciousness” (118). This ecology promotes partnership with nature and is opposed to the domination of nature.

French feminist, Francoise d'Eaubonne, set up Ecologie-Féminisme (Ecology-Feminism) center in Paris in 1972. Then in 1974, she used the term “ecofeminisme” in her book, *Feminism or Death*. Karen Warren echoed the ecological feminists claim that there are important connections or relations between the “unjustified dominations” of women, people of colour, children, and the poor people, and the unjustified domination of “nature” (1). The unjustified domination of the nonhuman nature is viewed as a feminist issue because both can be linked with the dominations of women and other subordinated groups of humans. In the select literary texts for this study, instances were seen where women and nature were controlled and suppressed by the male dominated society and its powers. Women and weaker sections of people also suffered from the consequences of environmental destruction made by men. Ecologists, environmentalist, and world leaders are working towards the environmental ethics to reduce the crisis and provide alternative solutions to the problem.

Among them the egocentric, homocentric, and ecocentric, multicultural ethics, partnership ethics are some which represent the interest of various groups and individuals in relation to environmental ethics. Egocentric ethic privileges the individual well-being over the social good because it claims that what is good for the individual will benefit the society as well. This often reflects the Protestant ethic that an individual is responsible for his or her own actions through good deeds. The Protestant ethic in the seventeenth century dovetailed with the Judeo-Christian mandate of Genesis 1: 28 “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” The historian Lynn White Jr. argues this from an environmental perspective that the Judeo-Christian is considered to be the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen because of its dominion over nature (1205). Homocentric ethic or anthropocentric is grounded in society. Its foremost interest is for the wellbeing of the society

and it looks at the environmental policies that will ensure protection for human health. Humans are stewards and caretakers of the natural world.

Scholars and ecologist René Dubos and philosophers John Passmore and Robin Attfield have pointed out that there are other passages in the Bible that contravene Genesis 1: 28 where God created man not to be the master over nature but to be the steward over it. Merchant also pointed out that there are other theologians who referred to the stewardship of man by referring to Matthew 25:14 and Luke 16:2 (*Radical* 73). The basis of ecocentric is found in the cosmos. The whole environment which included the trees, rocks, valleys, minerals, animate plants, and animals are attributed with intrinsic value. The primary importance is the survival of all living and non-living things as components of a healthy ecosystem. Non-sentients like rocks and plants are represented with equal importance and value. Multicultural ethics have move beyond ecocentric ethics to include environmental justice and cultural diversity and respond to globalization.

Different from the above ethics is partnership ethic which resides in the idea of relationship between the human and non-human and their mutual interdependence. The contemporary world is continuously being crashed by the effects of environmental problems. One avenue to bring change and maintain a sustainable society and a socially and just world is through green politics. Douglas Torgerson explains the meaning of green politics as “what means to be *green*” (1). The green image comes from ecology. Green movement theorist Brain Tokar envision the development of community-based institutions and greens in local government to popularize the concept “think globally; act locally” (116). The fulfilment of a green future starts at the grass-roots level with individual empowerment, coalition building, and living within the means of bioregion. It is based on four pillars: ecology, grass-roots democracy, social justice, and nonviolence. Since ecological problems are multitudinous, a singular solution is not possible. Many ecologists agree that in order to minimize the harm of natural community, human communities must find ways to eradicate the causes of environmental destruction. William Rueckert refers to the ecologists who call this attitude as the “self-destructive” or “suicidal motive” that is inherent in human’s attitude towards nature (106). Thus, there should exist a way for human beings and nature to coexist, cooperate, and flourish together in the environment. Humans must amend their harmful attitude towards the ecology for a better and sustainable living.

1.4.3 Postcolonialism

In the early 1980s postcolonialism has developed as a body of writing shifting the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed. Postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct category only in the 1990s. According to M.H Abrams, postcolonial studies involve the critical study undertaken in various modes of discourses like, history, politics, religion, culture, social, literature, and others pertaining to the former colonies of European imperial power (236). The countries that came under postcolonial studies are India, Sri Lanka, South America, Caribbean, Africa etc. Postcolonial criticism gained its importance through books like, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) *Orientalism* (1978), *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989), *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987), *Nation and Narration* (1990) and many more. Robert Young argues that the term postcolonial theory involves a “conceptual reorientation” towards the notions or ideas of knowledge and needs existed outside the west (6). It is not a new theory altogether, but it is a combination of related set of perspectives and involves issues that are predominant in other disciplines and activities like, the status of women, ecological concerns, social justice, immigration etc.

Postcolonialism seeks to change the way people think, behave, in order to produce a just and equitable relation between peoples of the world irrespective of class, gender, race, and community. A broader definition of the term post-colonial is given by Ashcroft and colleagues in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. It is extended to include the cultures affected by the colonial power from its inception and continued till today. The definition is not confined to the countries which gain political independence like, India, Sri Lanka, Canada, Pakistan, and Singapore alone. It included other countries for the fact that they evolved from the experience of colonization and declared themselves as distinct from the imperial authority (2). This status makes them post-colonial.

Weaver writes that Native Americans are not post-colonial people because till today they remain colonized and their condition is better known as “internal colonialism.” He also refers to Vizenor who calls this phenomenon as “paracolonialism” (*That the People* 10). The term internal colonialism was first coined to refer to the subordination of the Welsh and the Scots by the English. Anthropologist Robert Thomas, a Cherokee, applied the term to the situation of the American indigenes. Ashcroft and others pointed out that in postcolonial discourse, internal colonialism is often referred to as “settler colonialism.” In settler colonies, native lands were forcefully occupied and the colonists seize political power and retain their own language (*Empire* 24). The phrase “resistance literature” was developed by Palestinian

writer Ghassan Kanafani to describe Palestinian literature. This form of resistance is initiated by a group of people or a community which share commonness of identity, land, or common cause on the basis of which differentiation between the two modes of historical and political existence created “occupation” and “exile” (qtd. in Harlow 2). Harlow also refers to Ghassan Kanafani who pointed out that resistance literature in referring to Palestinian literature is writing within a specific historical context and that context possibly be most immediately situated within the “contemporary national liberation struggles” and “resistance movements” directed against Western imperialist domination of Africa, Central and South Africa, and the Middle and Far East (4). Resistance literature can be applied in evaluating Native American literature. Weaver supports this because American Indians have been “subjugated” and “exiled” from their lands that were sacred to them and that formed their identity (*That the People* 11). This is another way to read Native American literature.

There is another reason why Native American literature can be put under postcolonial literature because resistance has been a part of their literature and it is a postcolonial condition as well. In USA, the settler should be excluded from postcolonialism because they control the American academia over knowledge and theory, thereby, suppressing the native voices. Jyotirmaya Tripathy argued that native voice should become the “authentic” postcolonial (45). William Apess, a Pequot writer’s writing in the 1820s and 1830s is viewed as resistance literature. This is because he repeatedly employed “indirection” and “signification” to state Indian cultural and political identity over the dominant European culture (qtd. in Weaver, *Other Words* 297). One key example of Apess’s use of signification is his use of the contention that America’s indigenes are the ten lost tribes of Israel. Even in styles, the Native American literatures break away from western literary forms. This is a post colonial attitude. The traditional form of linear narrative is abandoned and the Native American writers incorporate the circular narrative that joins the beginning and the end together. Time turned out to be fluid, the plots non-linear, with events occurring out of sequence. Moreover, there is a thin division between dreams, visions, and reality. These forms are derived from their oral culture and their worldview. Northeast Indian writers also share some similarities, like the co-existence of the physical and spiritual world, and the non-linearity of time in their literatures.

Postcolonial literatures are developed through the various stages. During the imperial rule, writings were produced to glorify the imperial power by the educated elite. Despite of the detailed portrayal of the landscape, custom, language, tradition of the colonies, the

writings privilege the centre, emphasizing the home over the native, the metropolitan over the provincial or the colonial. The second production of literature is written under “imperial license” by the natives (Ashcroft et al., *Empire* 5). Their literatures were an image and commodity of imperial power and representation, since the writers were unable to give genuine expressions of suppression, hegemony, domination and so on. One of the main problems of postcolonial literature lies in the use of English language in writing. The education system of the imperial power set up a standard version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all “variants” as impurities. This was difficult for the colonies as language becomes the medium through which “hierarchical structure” of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of truth, order, and reality are established (7). Imperialism also resulted in the profound linguistic alienation and loss of native languages. The postcolonial writers took a reverse stand on the Standard English and they started to write in their own English, that is, Indian English, African English, Maoris English and many more.

Postcolonial writers seized the language of the center and replacing it with a discourse that suits the culture and style of the colonized. Ashcroft and colleagues in *Empire* list out three types of linguistic groups within the postcolonial discourse. “Monoglossic” groups are single-language societies using English as their native tongue which correspond generally to settled colonies. Their English however differs from the Standard English. “Diglossic” societies are made up of people who speak two or more languages, for example, India, Africa, the South Pacific etc. “Polyglossic” or “poly-dialectical” societies speak multiple dialects as seen among the Caribbean. Postcolonial literatures are not monotonic. They represent the many voices that are the polyphonic voices and expressions of the postcolonial cultures and societies. Another distinctive quality of the postcolonial work is the technique of using “selective lexical fidelity” that refrains from translating some words in the text to indicate the cultural distinctiveness (63). All of these combine in making postcolonial literatures rich, unique, and distinctive from colonial writings.

A major interest of postcolonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. This represents the symptom of identity crisis among the indigenous people. The identity of a person is robbed away by the process of “*dislocation*” as exemplified through the practices of enslavement, transportation, or “voluntary” removal for indentured labour. Another factor is attributed to the “*cultural denigration*” carried by the dominant culture that consciously or unconsciously silent the indigenous personality and culture (9).

Postcolonial criticism and literature objects the universalist claim that, literary representations whether themes or styles of the western countries are universal and taken to judge other literatures. This ignores the social, political, cultural, and national differences of different countries. This mode of universalism is rejected by the postcolonial criticism as it carries the objectives of Eurocentric norms and practices that dominate and suppress the marginal sections of the society.

Postcolonial theory has divorced from universalist claim since it does not adequately represent their reality. Instead indigenous theories and models were developed to accommodate different cultural traditions and also to describe the comparative features shared across those traditions. This is collaborated with the rejection of the master-narrative in which the colonial cultures made a counter-narrative to the established texts. In the eyes of the colonizers, the natives were insensitive to values or lacked values. Since, there is an absence of value in the native, Frantz Fanon notes that he is considered as the “absolute evil.” The native is projected as a destroyer of beauty, of morality, of imbalance, and one who possessed harmful powers (41). Moreover, the course of history in settler colonies is written by the settlers. The settler makes history and he is conscious of this process. Thus, the character and behavior of the native people were represented wrongly.

Postcolonialism is broad as it deals with many theoretical concepts. They are recurrent in most of the postcolonial texts. Colonialist ideology is one of the first ideologies that operated in culture, religion, and politics. The colonizers were civilized, whereas, the colonized were savages. One of the clearest symptoms of colonialist ideology is the practice of “othering,” that is, judging those who are different from them as inferior and less than human. The colonizers sees themselves as the proper embodiment of human being called the “self,” on the other hand, the people they conquered are the other or the them (Tyson 248). The other becomes an object of study and it is defined as passive, non-participating, non-active, non-autonomous, and non-sovereign (Said, *Orientalism* 97). Subaltern is another concept in postcolonial studies, it refers to the colonized people and their inferior position. They are classified by racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and religious discrimination. The subalterns accepted the colonial belief that they are inferior to the colonizers. Thus, Tyson remarked that they become “*colonial subjects*” and possessed “*colonized consciousness*” (249). For example, the women believe that they were less intelligent than men; the blacks believe that they were less attractive and unworthy than the whites.

The colonial subjects usually practice mimicry which is an imitation of the dress, speech, behavior, and lifestyle of the dominant culture. They take themselves to be less inferior than the colonizers, thus they imitate them. Imperialism and colonialism worked hand in hand. The former signifies the practice, the theory, and the act of controlling a distant territory by a superior culture, whereas, the latter is the result or consequences of imperialism which is the practice of establishing colonies in the distant territories. Edward Said opines that imperialism and colonialism are largely possible because of the ideologies that presuppose that certain areas or people “*require*” domination, and the forms of knowledge and the vocabularies too supported this domination (*Culture* 9). The indigenous or native people were colonized by the colonizers in various forms. It is important for them to reclaim their pre-colonial life, past, and denied the various ideologies imposed on them, to become their self again.

The native lives under the hostile atmosphere of the colonial authority, however, he is envious of the settler, thus, he substitutes himself for the settler (Fanon 52). Many of the colonised people experience “unhomeliness,” which is the feeling or experience of having unstable cultural identity or lacking a real home in any culture (Tyson 250). Abel in *House Made of Dawn*, Locke Setman in *The Ancient Child*, and the unnamed protagonist in *Winter in the Blood*, suffered from unhomeliness. The above forms of ideologies were battled by the postcolonial people in literature through the development of indigenous models, forms, and most importantly reclaiming their traditional cultures. Even on the psychological level, attempts were made to erode the superiority of the colonials from the minds of the colonized. Besides these efforts, military resistance, raising voices against the colonial abuse at the world level, freeing and rescuing the freedom fighters against the colonialist were being carried out by the colonized.

As the postcolonial texts were growing more popular, there arises the need to develop adequate models to account for them. Ashcroft and colleagues highlighted the emergence of four major models. First, national or regional models, this emphasized on the distinctive features of a particular national or regional culture. The United States of America is the first postcolonial society to develop a national literature. These writings developed new concepts and styles in the late eighteenth century instead of imitating the British tradition. Second, “race-based” models, this identify race as a major idea in political, social, and economic discrimination. An example is the racial inheritance in literature of the African diaspora addressed by the “Black writing” model. Third, the comparative models, which seek to

account for particular linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more postcolonial cultures. Fourth, features of hybridity and syncreticity constitute important elements in postcolonial literatures (*Empire* 14). Postcolonial writings draw its inspiration from pre-colonial models. For example, many of the colonized nations used orality as a medium to communicate their myths, legends, tales, proverbs, songs, and so on. This takes an important place in the contemporary literatures. It is referred and mentioned in the postcolonial literatures of the Africans, Northeast Indians, some parts of America, and others.

The environment is a key concern in postcolonialism. The destruction of environment and its rich natural resources is a dark action of colonialism. Postcolonial societies have taken up the civilizing benefits of modernity only to discover the barbaric factors of environmental damage. The period of colonization has affected almost every aspect of the colonial lives from politics, social, culture, tradition, language, education, environment, health system, and many more. Postcolonial studies investigate these issues and find ways to reconstruct them. It is important to note that while the roots of contemporary environmental crisis lies in the colonial damage of the colonies, neocolonism has often in association with the colonial past continue to produce clashes between the West and the Rest (213). Postcolonialism approaches to environmentalism should be broad to deal with deeply problematic issues and conflicting interests from the past and present, western and non western ideals. It is true that colonialism and its legacies, nationalism and globalization, have broken the patterns of indigenous living and environment that are precious to them. Efforts were made to reconcile the natives to their lands and environment after colonialism. Discourse on environmental protection and ethics were in the process in the contemporary world. Postcolonialism is also interlinked with many other theories like, postmodernism, ecocriticism, feminism, poststructuralism, and others. Its interest lies in deconstructing and counteracting the literary concepts, the ideologies, the policies, and other aspects of western imperialism.

1.5 Conclusion

Northeast Indian literature and Native American literature have resemblance with each other in themes, forms, subjects, and styles. Their literatures originate from oral literary traditions and their contemporary literatures are a continuation of the oral thread. In their writings, an amalgamation of oral forms with the western forms is clearly evident. They are natural storytellers who made extensive use of their myths, legends, songs, proverbs, jokes, and other folklore elements. The colonial experience occupied a major place in their

literatures. They resist against colonialism in their land but also gets integrated to foreign culture with the changing times and situations. The pre-settler period is evident in their literatures and they stand in total contrast with the colonial period. It is marked by a co-existence of the physical and supernatural worlds and its powers. Their literatures exemplify the indigenous or native voices which were being suppressed for a long time. The historical events are remembered and re-narrated in some of the select novels. They are significant for narrating the history from the native or indigenous peoples' perspectives. They write in their own nativised English language which indicates a form of independence from the colonial language. The use of native words, phrases, and expressions are some examples. The select novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch taken for this study portrayed the traditions and cultures of the Northeast Indians and the Native Americans. Nevertheless, they also take an interest in depicting universal themes of peace, unity, protection of nature, resisting domination etc. They have emerged out from the colonial bondage of writings and they rewrite and counter narrate the earlier writings of the colonialists. The select novels besides sharing some similarities also bring out the distinctive features that each tribe and community has. They will be studied along with the theory of nativism, ecocriticism, and postcolonialism. Their literatures advocated for a return to indigenous cultures, traditions, practices, and lifestyles. One of the major concerns lies in reclaiming their past traditions and values which were devalued in the process of colonization and modernization. Also the rich ecology and natural resources of their lands are foremost interests in their writings. The process of colonialism added a huge depletion to their ecology. These were condemned in the literatures. The Northeast Indians and Native Americans practiced a rich ecological tradition where respect is given to nonhuman nature as well. They also share certain similar beliefs like, taking the sky as their father and the earth as their mother. This is seen among the Angami-Nagas, the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Kiowas of the Native Americans. A deviation from colonial literature and its models is reflected in their literary works by the use of indigenous models, forms, and themes. This is a post-colonial attitude. The select works give an insightful view into the history, culture, and traditions and serve as a voice for the people of Northeast Indian and Native Americans. They will be critically studied and analysed along with the select literary theories in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

NATIVISED NARRATIVE IN EASTERINE KIRE'S *SON OF THE THUNDERCLOUD* AND *DON'T RUN, MY LOVE*

2.1 *Son of the Thundercloud*

Set against the backdrop of a terrible famine, Easterine Kire's *Son of the Thundercloud* is a remarkable story of miracle, love, and hope. Published in 2016, Kire called the novel as an allegory and stated that the purpose of an allegory is to let the readers find out the meaning by themselves ("Son of the Thundercloud"). *Son of the Thundercloud* refers to a boy name Rhaliutuo who was conceived by Mesanuo, a widow, by a single drop of rain. The novel makes an allusion with the biblical story of Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin woman. *Son of the Thundercloud*'s story parallels with the story of Jesus Christ as both were born of virgin women and the purpose of their birth is to save or redeem people from the sins and evils of the world. It also resembles the Naga oral tale of a primal woman who was impregnated by a cloud and gave birth to three sons, namely, tiger, man, and spirit. Kire has drawn inspiration of *Son of the Thundercloud* from the biblical story of Jesus Christ and the Naga folklore of the primal woman. She has added her own imagination in weaving the story by creating a seemingly ordinary boy whose birth and whose death will change the land and the human relations forever.

Kire has a strong connection with her roots. *Son of the Thundercloud* speaks volume about the culture, traditions, the magical, and miracle, which are part of the Angami-Naga and Naga folklore in general. The Outlook reviewed the book as rich in symbolism, containing folklore elements, and reflecting her connection with her roots by talking about the hills, trees, rocks, and other things. Hope and love are two prime aspects of *Son of the Thundercloud*. Reviewer, KB Veio Pou, called the novel as an allegory of love and hope ("An Allegory"). Allegory is a figure of speech that represents abstract ideas and principles in terms of characters, figures, and events (*Literary Devices*). *Son of the Thundercloud* presents a bleak picture of life because of the famine, drought, and the absence of love among the people. However, not all the people in the novel live a barren life in terms of hope and love. Some people, like, Kethonuo and Siedze, managed to live a good life because of their faith and hope to see *Son of the Thundercloud* who will regenerate their lives and their land. The Tribune reviewing the book stated that it teaches men to choose love over fear, hope over despair, and establish believe in the miraculous rather than what is merely plausible.

The prologue of the novel narrates the story of an old woman whose husband and seven sons were killed by a tiger. The woman's sorrow was healed when a raindrop impregnates her and she gave birth to a son, who grew up and avenged his father and brothers by killing the tiger. This story is significant because *Son of the Thundercloud* retells the folktale. The plot of the novel also centers around the character, Pelevotso, commonly referred to as Pele. After a famine that completely destroyed his family and village, Pele left his ancestral village, Nialhuo, without a fixed destination to reach. Pele started off as a hopeless traveller because of the tragedies that he had faced back at home.

As he continues his journey, he met people like Mesanuo, Rhaliotuo, Siedze, and Kethonuo, his spirit was uplifted once again. In a land where generations were suffering from famine for seven hundred years, there was still hope that kept some of the inhabitants alive for more than hundreds of years. The famine was widespread and the old, young, and infants died because of the shortage of food. In the midst of famine, the prophecy about Son of the Thundercloud was fulfilled. With the birth of Son of the Thundercloud, new life on earth began to grow. The earth once again flourished with animals, trees, grains, rocks and so on. It also brought joy and forgiveness among the people who live an estranged life from one another. *Son of the Thundercloud* is significant for the miracles and mysteries that occurred throughout the span of the novel. The following sections will study *Son of the Thundercloud* under different sub-headings.

2.1.1 The Miraculous Birthings

Miracle is defined as a “surprising” and “welcome event” that is not understandable by “natural” or “scientific laws” and it is attributed to be the work of a “divine agency” (*Oxford Reference*). In an interview with Souradeep Roy, Kire articulates that the miraculous is related to folklore and orality and this becomes a core in achieving the suspension of disbelief in fiction (Indian Cultural Forum). In *Son of the Thundercloud*, two forms of miraculous birthings are evident, the first is the miraculous birth of Son of the Thundercloud from a virgin woman, and the second is the re-birth of nature which happened as a result of the first birthing. They are inter-connected as their birth and re-birth restore and reconnected the people together, as well as the people with their land. The use of miracle is a part of folklore and it is a key concept in Christianity. In the Naga mindset, there is no separation between traditional religion and Christianity as they have “nativised Christianity” (“The Rain-Maiden”). Christianity is not objected because it fits into the Naga culture. This is

echoed in the words of the character, Sato, in *A Naga Village Remembered*, that there has been a marriage between Christianity and Naga culture.

Agriculture is the major occupation of the traditional Angami-Nagas. Rainwater remained as one of the greatest sources for sustaining agricultural crops. Failed rains can create drought which, in turn, can lead to famine. *Son of the Thundercloud* presents a picture of different villages that depended on agriculture for survival. But once drought came to their lands, famine swept all over their homes. The villages and the people were affected by famine and many people travelled to other distance for food and water. In Nialhuo, children died first followed by women and others when there is no food. The famine did not spare anyone, whether children, women, old or young. The loss of dear ones in the famine was unbearable for Pele. He left his village only to be greeted by horrible sights caused by drought. The soil no longer looked like soil and the brown colour of the soil was changed into “death-grey” (Kire 17). Nothing could grow or survive in the death earth that the traveller had described. The seven hundred years famine had drastically changed the green, busy, and diligent nature of the people into a hopeless life.

Son of the Thundercloud’s birth was prophesied years ago and the story was retold to many generations, and Pelevotso, one of the prominent characters, heard it from his grandmother. The prophecy and the story narrated about the miraculous birth will change the hopeless land and mind of the people. Nounu village too, once a prosperous village, was terribly destroyed by famine. Those who survived did so because of the hope that the birth of Son of the Thundercloud will alter the tragedy, loss, and hunger of the people. The ancient sisters, that is, Kethonuo and Siedze, remembered the words of the elders who used to say that their ancient misfortune will end when Son of the Thundercloud is born. The land will be transformed and new life in plants and nature will evolve. For this reason, in spite of the deadly famine, they were kept alive. The prophecies told of Son of the Thundercloud strengthen people, like, Kethonuo, Siedze, and Mesanuo, to live on in spite of the famine that hit their lives. Not everyone, though, that survived believed in the prophecy of Son of the Thundercloud.

The native worldview of nature and the environment is based on regeneration. Without regeneration, life is not possible. This principle guides the native societies towards sustainability (Shiva 128). *Son of the Thundercloud* gives illustration of the regeneration of nature to sustain men. The universe, too, performed wonders as a preparation for the birth of

Son of the Thundercloud. The stars pull each other eastward in harmony like an orchestrated dance. Along with the stars, the positions of the rivers, mountains, and rocks were affected by the movement made by the stars which created a deep chasm in the earth. Prophecies about the miraculous birth were narrated over the generations to ignite hope for regeneration and renewal from their hopeless situations. The headman of the Village of Weavers too recalled the prophecy told about Son of the Thundercloud, which says that, a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son who will save his people. Along with it, signs and wonders will proclaim his birth, and the land will be rejuvenated.

True to the prophecies and the stories told, Son of the Thundercloud was conceived by Mesanuo, a widow, after a single raindrop fell on her. The pregnancy was not ordinary; it was a miracle because Mesanuo was nearly three hundred years old when she became pregnant. Her pregnancy was not only a miracle but the birth as well because she gave birth to a son the next day of her conceivment. Son of the Thundercloud was named as “Rhalietuo,” after a man came to Mesanuo in her dream, telling her to name him as Rhalietuo, because he will bring rain to the famine land and end drought and furnish the villagers. The name Rhalietuo means “the redeemer” (Kire, *Son* 51). People grew painfully thin and bony during the famine. An example is the ancient sisters Kethonuo and Siedze whose appearances were mere skeletons in tattered cloth. However, with the birth of Son of the Thundercloud, the rain came and renewed the gaunt appearances of the sisters and they looked livelier and younger. The sisters believed that this is one of the promises associated with the birth, that the rain will replenish the earth and all its creatures. Forgiveness and reconciliation among the villagers and their isolated member, Mesanuo, whom they called “the tiger-widow” was mended with the miraculous birth. The headman asked Mesanuo for forgiveness because he disbelieved the stories and failed on his part to help the widow who suffered all alone. In the eyes of the villagers, the widow changed after she gave birth, as she was not old and sad like before but they saw life and hope in place of grief and wretchedness.

Rain will change the lifeless scenery of the villages. The ancient sisters could not hold their excitement when they heard from Pele that it will rain. This sounded absurd to Pele because they have lived four hundred years and have not seen the rain. The hope of the sisters, Kethonuo and Siedze, was fulfilled when raindrops as big as fists began to fall down on the hard soil. The dry earth drank all the water and prevented flood. It appeared as though the rivers of heaven were emptying onto the earth. This was the long awaited seven-hundred-years rain. The seven-hundred-year-old rain was unexplainable. Kethonuo, Siedze, and Pele

who were kept vigilant by the rain thought that the rain must have destructed and damaged the surroundings. However, they found that it was not destruction but everything looked clean and fresh, as if the earth was newly born. The rain did create a flood but the bottomless chasm that had been made by the pulling of the stars drew the water in. Natural world and living creatures including human beings were revived by the rain. In the Village of Weavers, the miraculous stirrings of growth began after Mesanuo, the widow, gave birth to Son of the Thundercloud. The sterile dull grey land of the Village of Weavers began to turn green as young trees and plants sprouted overnight and new rocks and stones could be seen where once they firmly stood. Trees, rocks, and new saplings brightened the spirits of the villagers who had not lived in a rich natural world for many years.

The birth of Son of the Thundercloud and the rain that it brought renewed the environment and awakened the people to love each other, ask for forgiveness for wrongdoings, and return back to diligent active labour. The villagers were grateful for the rain because the long anticipation was over and life could resume with newness. The bountiful rain restored the dry river in the Village of Weavers. The sight of the mighty river became a source of wonderment for the inhabitants. The river was running with great force and it seemed to destroy the banks. The young children witnessing the river in full spate must accept its rough sound and take precaution of its dangerous side. Both the young children and the old ones should be more careful and respect the river.

There is a spiritual affiliation between nature and men in *Son of the Thundercloud*. The elders in the Village of Weavers called the river as “our mother.” Thus, when the river came back with a robust life, the elders see it as the return of their mother who came back to feed them. The elders explained it to the younger ones that the river is called as “our mother” because she gives the villagers different foods like, fish, frogs, herbs, and water and that they should respect her and call her by that name. The elders have deep respect for the river which is a part of nature. She is personified as a woman, a mother, who meets the needs of the villagers. Native people approach nature in different ways and this is one of the examples of their gratitude towards nature. George Sessions in the paper, “Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour,” commented that the hunting and gathering cultures of the primeval societies have “nature-oriented religions” that reflect an ecocentric lifestyle (140). Their worldview gives equal importance and respect to all inhabitants of nature. The Angami-Nagas have strong affiliation with nature and the inhabitants living in it. The Native Americans call this concept as *Mitakuye Oyasin*, meaning, “all are related.”

In *Son of the Thundercloud*, nature takes the characteristics of a woman. Das argued that in Kire's novels nature takes the form of "human dimensions" ("Metaphysics" 12). The earth shares biological sameness with a woman as it gives birth to newer forms of life on land. The headman could not comprehend the change in nature. Mesanuo enlightened him about the transformations calling it as birthing. The earth has birthed trees, rocks, stones, and grain, just as a mother birthed her offspring. They are the offspring or sons of the earth. In Kire's *When the River Sleeps*, the protagonist, Vilie, takes the forest to be his wife. The traditional Angami-Nagas acknowledged sky as father and earth as mother. This connotes the earth with procreation and other feminine characteristics. Similarly, the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, the Kiowa people of the Native Americans, and other indigenous tribes considered the earth as a mother. Mesanuo encouraged the headman that if the earth is given proper care, it will protect them and their children in return. The barren landscape has been transformed into a cultivable land for the villagers. The new life of the villagers is filled with long labour in the fields, singing, and an abundance of food everywhere. The hospitable nature of the people is renewed when they welcomed new visitors and settlers in their village for they have enough grain to sustain themselves and others. The Village of Weavers had ceased taking visitors with the onset of the famine because they could barely survive. This old law was broken.

The traveller Pele too participated in the fantasy and mythic world of the ancient sisters. The world had changed after his association with the ancient sisters, it had turned into a space of mystery and magic, yet, he had accepted it because it appeared real and truthful to him. Pele, the traveller, had seen many things which he could not comprehend but he also learned to expect the unusual and the miraculous wherever the raindrop son is associated. He began his journey gloomily but was revived in the process of his journey after his meeting with people, like, the ancient sisters, Mesanuo, and her son Rhaliuetuo. Pele was reborn and this was what he wanted to hold onto. *Son of the Thundercloud* birth changes the weary mind and soul of the people for new life and to love one another. Loren Eiseley pointed out that it is worthy to look at the primitive man and his relation with his world because they existed in close interdependence with each other. He respects it and had not treated it as source of materials (qtd. in Sessions 141). *Son of the Thundercloud* substantiates the above view, as the people were attuned to the land, respect it, and had not taken it for granted. Dead trees were replaced by green trees on the way to the abandoned village. Uncultivable lands became cultivable after the rain brought by the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. The once unfertile

soil had become fertile and this prompted the villagers to sow more seeds in their fields. A woman shared her unusual sowing experience that the ground simply swallowed the seeds. It became like a “live thing!” (Kire 55). This also exemplifies that nature is a being in itself despite men’s failure to treat it as a separate entity. The benevolence of nature is seen when it regenerates life once again after long years of famine.

2.1.2 Native Ecological Conservation

Northeast Indian writers write about nature in different aspects. The glorification of nature, its rich biodiversity, and condemnation of the destruction of nature are some key concerns. The ecological conservation and ethics of the Angami-Nagas are transmitted and practiced from generation to generation. Interestingly, some of the taboos, rituals, stories, and beliefs are practiced, told, and observed with an ecological mindset. They act as conservers and protectors of ecology cautioning men not to commit mistakes against it as their survival depended on it. In an interview, Kire explains to Imsong that she writes about nature because it has been a part of her ancestral culture. From the days of the headhunting, people expressed equal respect for all forms of life (174). Kire writes a lot about nature and the ecology because she believes that each person has a role to play in maintaining the balance of nature. In a conversation with Preeti Gill, Kire confesses that humans are too greedy as they behave as the sole inhabitants of the earth, demeaning the existence of other creatures. They have to remember that they are co-inhabitants of the earth. The spirit world too exists but humans destroy their habitats as the abodes of spirits are forests. Kire believes that without them life would be soulless as it consists the reality of the Naga people (“The Rain-Maiden”). Ecological concern has been shared by the Angami-Naga forefathers and it has been continued till today.

Taboos are forbidden things or prohibitions that are taken heed of in societal life. It is called as *kenyü* in Angami-Naga language. Taboos are part of the oral tradition and they are communicated and transmitted orally. In Angami-Naga context, taboo or *kenyü* is loosely used. J.H Hutton explains that taboo refers not only to the violation of social law or magico-religious observance, but it includes insignificant matter of “pure utility” (*Angami Nagas* 190). The purpose of taboo is to lead a man or a woman to live a good and righteous life without bringing shame or offending the Supreme Being called as *Ukepenuopfü*. Taboos and rituals act as preservers of traditional values and culture. They also educate people to be pre-cautious of things that can bring destruction to their lives. The Angami-Nagas observed

different types of taboos on various occasions and events like marriage, death, birthing, consumption of food, and so on. *Son of the Thundercloud* is set with the typical background of Angami homes, customs, traditions, and taboos. The taboos were told repeatedly by the elders to emphasize on their importance and the need to observe them. In the novel, one of the prominent characters, Pele, grew up from a household that heeded to the taboos and respect them. In his village Nialhuo, the elders taught and encouraged the younger to love their village because once they fail to love it, it would soon be abandoned. An abandoned village becomes taboo to live in for the belief that it will no longer be able to sustain the people (Kire 12). The taboos also formed a connection with native survival ethics related to food, land, trees and so on. They were practiced by the ancestors of the Angami-Nagas and they do not limit themselves to religious or social purposes but they were extended to ecological ethics and concern as well (Tachü, “Of Taboos” 605). *Son of the Thundercloud* gives some illustrations why people have to pay attention to the taboos.

There are stories of the two ghost villages that people were aware of. The first village, on becoming a rich village had left their harvests to rot in their fields when there were no spaces in their granaries. The villagers grew careless about the taboo of keeping aside some grains as seed-grain. Taboo of eating seed-grain has been observed so that people would not lose grain at any cost. Abundance and overflowing granaries had failed to last long as one day when the villagers returned back home from field work, field mice had swarmed all over their granaries and homes. Not a single house had been spared by it. The inhabitants need to evacuate, because it is taboo to live in a village when its food stores are wiped out by animals and insects. The failure to observe an important taboo has led to greater loss for the people.



Fig.1. Scholar's photo. "Rice Cultivation of the Angami-Nagas." 2019.

The second village had abandoned their village because a drunken brawl had ensued between the upper and lower clans which made the upper clan to kill a man from the lower clan. The murder made the two clans to kill each other and at the end of the seventh day it became taboo to reside in the village because of the bloodshed. The people had experienced the grief of losing their homes and the men felt guilty because if they had stopped the first killing, things would be controlled. The Village of Weavers suffered from terrible drought along with other villages. However, they observe the taboo of abstaining from eating seed grain even in the time of famine. Thus, when rain came, they happily cultivate their fields once again. The adherence to taboo helped them to pick up their agricultural work again. In *A Naga Village Remembered*, the narrative takes the reader to the bountiful village of Khonoma. It has an abundance of food and had not known famine. The character, Levi, observed this and he remembered the words of the elders who used to say that if people honour the spirits, they will be blessed, but if they defy them, death and other failures will occur.

A traditional Angami-Naga society followed various rituals for the benefit of the individual and the society. Ritual is characterized by a set of fixed actions, words, and practices that were performed regularly as part of a ceremony (*Cambridge English Dictionary*). The belief in ritual, rites and its practices remained as a weapon to understand the tribal communities and helped in the nature conservation (Geng et al.). Tiger killing ritual of the Angami-Nagas is an important ritual performed by men. D.Kuolie articulates that the forefathers of the Angami-Nagas equalized tiger killing with worthy deeds in war (iii). Tiger is considered as one of the strongest and fiercest animals, and its hunt is carried out by men observing rituals and consulting seers. It has a powerful aura and when it is killed, the atmosphere changed and sometimes it rained (Zhale, *Udzürieu* 18). In the Angami-Naga culture, tiger is considered as the elder brother. There are folktales based on the kinship of tiger, man, and spirit as brothers born of the same woman.

In *Son of the Thundercloud*, Rhaliotuo killed the fiercest tiger that had killed his father and seven brothers. He has to observe the tiger ritual to ensure that he does not become a victim of the other tigers who will be avenging the dead tiger. The ritual involves the use of powerful words, tricks, and reverences for the elder brother also referred to as *udzürieu*. On returning to the village after killing the tiger, Pele shouted, “*Rhaliotuo tekhu puo geilie ho!*” meaning “Rhaliotuo has killed a tiger!” (Kire 130). This was the customary way to announce the tiger killing. At the village gate, the headman forbids his entry because he had killed the

elder brother. Rhaliétuo defended himself saying, “It was not I, Apfu-o. It was the spear who killed Tiger” (131). These words spoken by Rhaliétuo were part of tradition. In this way the tiger killer put the blame on the spear or the object that he had used in killing the tiger. In traditional custom, when the tiger killer reached his house, his wife will forbid his entry saying, “You have killed the elder brother, hence, you are forbidden to enter our house” ‘*No udziürieu gei we mu n bu kinu ler lhomu*’ (my trans.; Zhale, *Tenyimia* 102). The Native Americans also observed ritual when a bear is killed. The bear killer, Francisco, in *House Made of Dawn*, remembered the day he rode back to town killing a bear. He smeared himself with the blood of bear and when he shouted, men and women came and greeted him. This event earned him to become a man.

Rhaliétuo observed the tiger killing ritual for five days known as *zhangouko* where he cooked in separate hearth and used separate pots and pans and dine alone. The dead body of the tiger is displayed in various forms to conquer the fear of the dead tiger. The strict performance of tiger ritual brings blessing, prosperity, and success to the tiger-killer, but the non-adherence to the rules bring disaster in his life. The tiger or *tekhu* is considered as “*tepfumia ri*,” meaning, men’s animal (Zhale, *Udziürieu* 11). Proper rituals and rites must be conducted and observed by a tiger killer. He puts soyabean in the dead tiger’s mouth to avoid the danger of turning mad. This explains that the tiger had consumed food before him. Tiger killing is followed by two important rituals, one is *tekhu kete*, and the other is *tekhu keze*. The former is done to strengthen the mind of the people, to bring prosperity and good names in war, and the latter is performed by the small boys for garnering courage (22). Menfolk particularly hunt less during the monsoon season because this period is marked by hectic fieldworks and also it is considered as the birthing season of the animals. This also points out the ecological consciousness, protection, and mindset of the Angami-Nagas.

Ecological ethics and concerns were not far from the minds of the people. Their views and attitude towards nature are not scientific but they are thoughtful and practical. They are ingrained with native love, and care for nature. The bioregional concept of “sustainability” calls for an ecological living without affecting or destructing it, and keeping in mind the limitations of a place and thinking for its future use (Lynch et al. 5). *Son of the Thundercloud* shared this concept by some characters who advocated for a wise approach towards the ecology. Mesanuo spoke with ecological wisdom when she enlightened the headman that the trees and rocks are sons of the earth. Adding that if men take good care of them they will take care of men. These words are simple yet they are very crucial for environmental protection

and preservation. Once mankind learns to appreciate the value of nature and its components like trees, rocks, animals, they will be able to live a good life.

The “reinhabitation” concept which aims at lessening the ecological harm and repairing the harm done by previous behavior is another key term of bioregionalism (6). Some people in the Village of Weavers understood their role to be played in the environment and they live according to it and make ways to amend the previous ruins. Rhaliuetuo, Son of the Thundercloud, has got a thoughtful mind for the ecology. He enlightened his mother that if they planted more trees, droughts can be prevented, as trees hold their hands together and retain the water. This is a child’s logic however it contains truth in it. When Pele, the traveller, was permitted to build a house in the abandoned village, Pele, being aware of the young ecology of the land had walked long distances to collect materials. He did this not to disturb the fragile ecology of the abandoned village. The protagonist, Vilie, in *When the River Sleeps*, prioritizes the forest above other things. He takes the forest as his “wife” (Kire 7). He chose the life of seclusion with the forest and nature instead of the close knitted and bustling life of a village. He was living in the forest for twenty five years. In addition, he was made the guardian of the *gwi*, the great mithun, and the Forest department entrusted him to become the official protector of the rare tragopan.

Storytelling is an important oral tradition of the Angami-Nagas. Storytelling sessions were an integral part of the *Morungs* or the dormitories. Stories were communicated orally from generations to generations. The National Storytelling Network defines storytelling as the means of employing words, images, and actions that calls for the attention of the “listener’s imagination” (“What is Storytelling?”). It is noteworthy to mention what the environmentalist researcher Alvaro Fernandez-Llamazares has said about storytelling. Llamazares has maintained that the indigenous storytelling method is an effective means to preserve the “biocultural diversity.” Stories give character to local wildlife, endowed voices to trees, and spiritual resonance to the sunrise. They engage the indigenous people in understanding their environment and guided their interactions with it (qtd. in Lanese). Another practice of bioregionalism is the “narrative reinhabitation” which is a cultural-educational practice that aims at restoring the ecological “imagination of place” by working with “placed-based stories” (Iovino 106). *Son of the Thundercloud* gives importance to storytelling and the stories were concerned with place, people, and supernatural beings. When storytellers were killed, people began to forget the good stories told to them and assume them to be myths. This resulted in drought. Stories keep the hopes of people alive.

According to Easterine Kire, story and storytelling is a “spiritual exercise” that helped in healing the “psychological wounds” of the people. Thus, its imprisonment restrained the healing process of the people and the nation (“Should Writers”). Rhalietuo’s nights were filled with stories told by his mother. In his dreams, he used to dream the stories narrated to him by his mother. His mother believes that if a person dream something strongly enough that dream will come true. There are two particular stories that he really enjoyed listening to. The first is the story of a seed that travelled many miles to plant itself in the hand of an old man whose only daughter was dying of starvation. They were blessed lavishly with more grain and the daughter was saved from death.

The other story is about a man whose house was inhabited by a water spirit. The man returns home after a gap of seven years and he cleverly seizes his house from the water spirit by sending a bee to trouble the spirit. Since the bee buzzes at the spirit incessantly, the spirit gave a chase and at that time the owner occupies his house. Then the man took the magic pebble of the spirit and wove a net around the house, thereby, prohibiting spirits to enter his house again. One of the most important stories told by Rhalietuo’s mother was the ferocious tiger that had killed a fearless man and his seven sons. His mother never repeated that story, however, Rhalietuo dreamed of killing the tiger. Rhalietuo’s mother was a storyteller. She was the daughter of storytellers, but this was kept as a secret from her and from others to save her from being killed by the dark ones. Mesanuo, the pure one, has survived the dangers and isolation to strengthen her son with stories of “hope and wonder” that will enable him to fulfill his destiny (Kire, *Son* 70). The three stories narrated by Mesanuo to her son are ecological stories. They are not directly related to ecological conservation, but through them she helped her son to see the benevolence, mysteries, and evils of nature and ecology. The stories will help him to understand the wonders of nature and take precaution against the evils inherent in nature and in men.

2.1.3 Twinning Women and Nature

In the course of history, women and nature are paired together in their sufferings, exploitations, and domination made by the power of patriarchy. This point out to a study called ecofeminism. Gaard writes that the basis of ecofeminism lies in the call to end all oppressions because the liberation of women and other oppressed groups will not be achievable without equal effort to liberate nature (1). Ecofeminism has argued that the treatment of nature and women as secondary and inferior has furthered and “naturalized” the

hierarchy of male to female, and it also creates the “inferiorization” of many other groups of humans who are more closely identified with nature (Plumwood, “Ecosocial Feminism” 211). *Son of the Thundercloud* presents three strong women characters, Mesanuo, Kethonuo, and Siedze who are rich in love, have deep wisdom, generous, kind, and have hope and faith in the renewal of nature and life. They faced criticism and isolation in the male dominated society. The three sisters in the novel have put their faith in the goodness and justice of nature. Thus, despite of famine and drought, they persevere to wait for the Son of the Thundercloud who will change their famine-stricken land and regenerate their lives.

In the Village of Weavers, a woman named Mesanuo, was isolated from the rest of the people when her husband and seven sons were killed by a tiger. The people put the blame of the losses on her and left her from the societal life. Widows and old people were taken special care in traditional Angami-Naga society. The Village of Weavers failed to comply this as they were blinded by their own perception about the widow. Thus, Mesanuo lived a very lonely and forgotten life before the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. A new identity was given to Mesanuo after the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. Before the miraculous birth, Mesanuo was not called by her name, instead she was referred to as the “tiger-widow.” This changed when the headman addressed Mesanuo differently, that, she is no longer the widow and Mesanuo too accepted it because the birth of her son has transformed all her shame and sorrows into joy and she reclaimed her name. However, at times, Mesanuo had to remind the headman to call her by her name instead of the tiger-widow. She objected to the name tiger-widow because her son had given her the right to be called by her own name “Mesanuo.” The forgotten widow was now acknowledged and the headman begged her and her son to stay in the village and bless them.

Women and nature shared similar characteristics. They are capable of understanding each other better than others. Thinker Charlene Spretnak made a connection between women and nature. Women’s physical experiences such as menstruation, pregnancy, birthgiving, and lactation connected women with “biologically based” and an attachment to “natural processes” and this has to be identified and given respect (qtd. in Botzler and Armstrong 469). The headman of the Village of Weavers could not comprehend the miracles of trees and rocks that took immediate growth in their land overnight. Mesanuo explained about them that the earth has birthed rocks, trees, stones, and grain just as a mother does. The trees and rocks are the sons of the earth. If mankind takes care of them, it will provide and sustain them in return. Environmental ethics rest upon one major premise, Aldo Leopold articulates this that,

man is a member of the community of interdependent parts, thus, he must cooperate in the survivance of other members as well (412). Mesanuo faithfully observed this creed. Both the earth and women are gifted with birthing. Her words are ingrained with care and concern for the ecology because if men fail to protect it, they will suffer the consequences. A simple woman whom people called a widow, a forgotten one, was the one who instructed the headman about the wonders of nature.

Nature operates in mysterious ways and it takes a person who is attuned with it to interpret it. Like the benevolence of nature, sustaining lives on earth, Mesanuo lives her life by performing act of kindness for others. For example, when Mesanuo, her son, and Pele were preparing to visit the abandoned village, Mesanuo left a sack of rice at their doorway. This is an act of kind gesture to help any stranger who might need it in her absence. Mesanuo explained this gesture to Pele that since they have enough food now, they should not think of themselves, but they should share with others. This is done to reverse any misfortune that will happen to them because of their greediness. This made Pele to appreciate women and their thoughtful actions. Not all women are kind and hospitable, but some are, like Mesanuo and her sisters. Pele also recalled the life of his late grandmother who used to graciously care and healed the animals in her remote hut.

To call women as witches is a common phenomenon in the past and continued till today. The term witch became a pejorative word around 1486 when German churchman Heinrich Kramer published *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer for Witches). It is a treatise on how to hunt witches-women whom he declared to be corrupted and debased (Quaglia). Patriarchy has erased the healing power and the knowledge of women by imposing witch hunt among them. Kire's novel, *When the River Sleeps*, gives an account of two sisters, Ate and Zote, who were ostracized from their village for they were believed to be witches. They lived in the village of *Kirhupfümia*, which is inhabited by women who possessed poisonous powers and were greatly feared by the common people (131). These women were considered as outcasts from their society. However, Ate and Zote lived in *Kirhupfümia* village with peace as the inhabitants do not fear each other. There is still some connection between *Kirhupfümia* and the people because when the people need medicine or herbs, they request *Kirhupfümia* for their help.

Similarly, in *Son of the Thundercloud*, women are called as witches by men. This is a hatred and dislike against women. The elder sisters of Mesanuo, that is, Kethonuo and

Siedze, like Mesanuo, live an isolated life from others. Their lives appeared to be strange and unusual in the eyes of others because of their physical appearances which were merely skeletons. They hosted Pele and introduced him to their sister and her son whom he will guide in his destiny. In the words of Pele, the sisters were the most charitable hostesses he had ever known. On the other hand, people like the headman demean them. The headman told Pele that people feared the sisters because of the prophecy of Son of the Thundercloud. He had a dark view about the two sisters and he referred to them as the two witches; he represents the typical patriarchal mindset that devalues women. Pele on the other hand gave an honest account of the ancient sisters to Mesanuo. For him, they were wonderful beings as opposed to what others had described them. Moreover, Pele has never met people as wise as them. From his association with them, Pele is convinced of the miraculous birth and he began to perceive life in a hopeful manner. Kethonuo and Siedze believed in the prophecy of the miraculous birth and the regeneration of the land. Thus, while people detested them for their beliefs, they cling strongly to their faith. Women were mistreated in action and in words. They were condemned when they divert from the rules of the society. Also the land had been reduced to a dead land because of the greed of mankind. In this way, men establish dominance over women and nature and exploited them in the cruelest manner.

The ancient sisters survived in the abandoned village during the famine for more than three hundred years old, surviving on hope. Looking at the lifeless land, Pele could not believe how the sisters could possibly survive in the desolate land. The younger sister, Siedze, told Pele that they have been eating hope and surviving on it, that each new morning, they wake up, eat hope and were able to live to see another day. Truly hope has kept them alive for years even if they had no dearth of food. The hope for the birth of Son of the Thundercloud and other blessings in connection with the birth became their survival strategy in the famine stricken land. When it rained in the abandoned village, the ancient sisters hurriedly travelled to the Village of Weavers to meet their sister, Mesanuo, from whom the prophecy of the miraculous birth is destined to take place. The sisters wholeheartedly believe in the prophecy that a widow will conceive a child by a single raindrop. Their hope did not die and it rewarded them with joy, love, and regeneration.

2.1.4 The Force of Evil and Evil Spirits in Man and Nature

In the mythological world of *Son of the Thundercloud*, evil exists in men and in nature. Evil is defined as “a cosmic evil force” (*Merriam Webster*). It has harmful effects on human

life as it brings death, sorrows, miseries and other losses. In the novel, evil must be conquered as it is destroying lives, environment, and the relation of the people. The traditional Angami-Nagas stick bitter wormwood behind their ears as a protection against the evil spirits (Kire, *Rain-Maiden* 13). Evil spirits are in abundance to lure the spirits of men away. For example, when forest songs, that is, the melodious songs of the forest spirits are heard, people must cover their ears and run away or else they will hallucinate men. In another story, “The Man who Lost his Spirit,” Pesuohie lost his spirit and went back to the forest to call it. He proclaimed, “I am Pesuohie! Sky is my father, Earth is my mother, I believe in *Kepenuopfü*! No one can harm me” (42), and by this proclamation, he overcame the spirits.

To call out the name of *Kepenuopfü*, the supreme deity of the Angami-Nagas, is a powerful way to save a person from the powers of evil spirits. The forest is full of evil spirits and they can take away a man’s life if he becomes inattentive on his part. Similarly, Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud*, brings out the evil that is inherent in human beings and the forces of evil in nature. It must be defeated or surpassed by the goodness, faith, hope, and love that are intrinsic to human beings. The Northeast India is considered as a “sensitive zone” of mystery. The beliefs, magic, rites, rituals, and ecology of the people formed a complex “matrix” of mystery (Chandra and Das 104). The Village of Weavers before the drought was green and lavished with food everywhere because storytellers went all over the land and tell stories to the people that filled their life with joy and hope. The stories are powerful because they released people from fear, shame, and constant desire. Without the stories, their life would be bleak and they believe that their destiny is marked with suffering. By this, they allowed the “dark ones” to enslave their minds with fear, sorrow, and despair till their death (Kire, *Son* 63). The dark ones killed the storytellers because they did not want the storytellers to transform people’s minds with their stories.

When the storytellers died, drought occurred because people began to deny the joyful stories that were taught to them and accepted the dark stories. The dark ones are evil people who are destroyers of nature and people. They want the land for themselves and were jealous of people living a harmonious life with their land and in nature. When they killed the storytellers, the hopes of the people too were killed. The storytellers were alluded to the prophets in the Bible who were persecuted and killed for spreading the good news of Christ’s birth. There is a possibility that men could create another drought if the first drought was created by men. The dark ones who killed the storytellers take pleasure on fear and greed. They build fences around them and they hoard and guard natural components like trees and

rivers to bend to their will. The novelist using Mesanuo as a mouthpiece reiterates that there is danger in greed because it brings destruction and trouble to one's own life. The evil in human continued to linger in the minds of the people even after the miraculous birth. Chapter 20 of the novel, sub-titled as "Prophecies Die in the Face of Unbelief," is referred to the people who rely on falsehood than the truth. They formed the idea that Mesanuo did not conceive by a raindrop but she had a lover. They were blinded by the evil of their own thoughts that led them to kill the goodness and love that came to restore them from their desperate lives.

Son of the Thundercloud grew up to be a distinguished person in the society and was preparing to kill the evil tiger that had killed his father and seven brothers. However, some envious people started to weave mighty story around the tiger and create obstructions to the destiny of Rhalietuo. The people believe that the tiger had kept their harvests in good shape from the hands of other animals. Thus, the tiger should be acknowledged by offering sacrifices to him. The villagers were foolish to own the evil tiger. Evil existed in various forms in Kire's works. Some are spiritual evils which resided in the forest, rivers, trees, places, and some evils originate from men. The seer in *When the River Sleeps* cautioned Vilie to use his gun sparingly because the struggle comes in the form of spiritual powers. Men must be wise, brave, and act courageously to overcome the spiritual forces. Vilie struggled to come out of the river, because it is a spirit river and it was overpowering him. He fought back bravely calling the name of *Kepenuopfü* and commanded death to stand aside as sky is his father and earth is his mother. He claimed the wealth of the river because he has the greater spirit, and the stone belonged to the greater spirit. Human is capable of doing evil things unless they control themselves. In *When the River Sleeps*, Hiesa killed Pehu out of anger when the latter told him not to drink alcohol. This is an evil act committed by Hiesa. People do foolish things when they are drunk or angry. The forest also housed ecological evils. There is also a forest called *Rarhuria*, which means "unclean forest," and it is infested by spirits where villagers avoid going there (47). However, for Vilie, the unclean forest acts as a shelter for him from the evils of human beings.

In the indigenous world, dreams are taken seriously because they foretold the future and guided the people in their daily activities. J.H Hutton in his book, *The Angami Nagas*, writes that the Angamis have almost "a science" of dreaming and this is carried by old women who charged fees for dreaming (246). Huntsmen consult the dream-women for their hunting expeditions, however, every huntsman is also his own dreamer. The forefathers of the

Angami-Nagas were great believers of their dreams, thus, they carefully meditated their dreams. They consult their dreams on matters of war, marriage, hunting, settlement in a new village etc. Siedze's dream of Son of the Thundercloud is a significant dream because it foretells the destiny of Rhalietuo. In her dream, Siedze travelled to the Village of Weavers where the warriors of the village were preparing to hunt the tiger. As they went to the hilltops, terrible cries came back to the village. The warriors were killed by the tiger one by one and Siedze cried profusely when she saw the killings. Then she beholds an unexpected sight of a little boy who dressed like a warrior fearlessly and killed the tiger with his spear. His spear went right into the tiger's heart and killed the beast.

The dream was interpreted by Kethonuo that warriors who tried to kill the tiger will all die because they had tried to kill the tiger with pride. The warriors put their trust in their spears and their abilities. Their spears and weapons are no match for the tiger because he is a "spirit tiger" (Kire, *Son* 85). Men's fights against the different forces are not conquerable with worldly weapons because they are spiritual beings and evil which must be conquered with spiritual powers. Only one person is capable of killing the tiger, and that is, Rhalietuo. Kethonuo explained that Rhalietuo will not fight for a good name but he will kill the tiger to protect the people from the evil tiger. Overall, it will be possible because he has a pure heart. This dream was accepted as a good dream. This knowledge strengthens Mesanuo and enlightens Pele as well. It prepared the adult to be ready for the things to come. The adults spoke fewer words about this in front of Rhalietuo. This is because words are important and to be considered with care. The wrong words spoken to a person will destroy him, whereas, the right words spoken judiciously will lead a person to fulfil his destiny. This is also a form of native value of speaking less and using words judiciously.

Rhalietuo was fed with words of wisdom, love, powerful stories, dreams, and prophecies that made him a brave young man and these prepared him to kill the spirit tiger. The tiger was not an ordinary tiger, and it did not need a warrior or an able bodied man to kill it, but required someone with a pure heart to kill it. Similarly, in *When the River Sleeps*, the headman, Kani, instructed Vilie in his pursuit of the heart-stone, that unless he has a good heart he will not be successful. He should have a clear conscience and should harbor no evil against any man. This will save him from being killed and tormented by the spirits guarding the sleeping river. Before the community hunt, Rhalietuo and his *Anie* Pele, went to hunt to familiarize themselves with the forest. On the thin new moon, a pair of lights shone in the distance like two small stars and both of them recognized it to be the tiger. As the tiger was

standing still, fear grew inside Rhalie, but he remembered that this was the tiger that had killed his father and brothers, thus, he puts aside his fear and boldly declared that he will wait no more as he was born to kill the tiger. The tiger too acknowledged this, and on its part it was trying to prevent Rhalietuo's destiny. A little while ago, Rhalietuo was afraid, but it changed as he moved himself into action. He perfectly timed everything in killing the tiger. When the tiger sprang towards him, he lifted his spear into the flesh of the tiger piercing its heart. The spear was especially designed for one purpose and that is to kill the spirit tiger. In killing the tiger, he has not only fulfilled the prophecies and dreams but also made the life of his mother beautiful once again. The spirit tiger whom people believe to be good was evil, and in killing it, Rhalietuo brought goodness and love to the lives of the people.

Victory over the evil was not accepted by the people of Nouné village. They blamed Rhalietuo from their hearts and some of them were planning to take his life in the community hunt. Their evil hearts made them to kill their friend in the community hunt. Mesanuo who loved her son more than anything else in the world was heartbroken and torn with grief when her son was killed by his friends. The woman who had patiently bore all the injustices of the society silently, now voices out her grief when her son was killed. She expresses her grief and anger over the people that they have killed the one that had saved them from the hands of the tiger. She decided to leave the Village of Weavers with the dead body of her son because she does not want her son to be buried among the people who hated him for no valid reason. She believed that the parents were as guilty as their sons because they did not stop their sons in believing a lie. This lie is referred to the belief of the people that the tiger is not evil. Even though she was torn with grief, she believed that her son's death will bring new change in the lives of the villagers. She was a mother to a son not from the dust of the earth, but from rain, and water is considered to be the purest form of life. This stands for the metaphor of "true love" (Kire, *Son* 141). Thus, Rhalietuo's sacrifice will teach the people to love each other. The Village of Weavers would now learn to love each other and identify their real enemy.

Some of the values that bind the community together are compassion, sympathy, and love for one another. A life lived without love is considered as dark and meaningless. The people in the Village of Weavers had been living a loveless life for long. They excluded their own member, Mesanuo, when she lost her husband and seven sons to a tiger. Mesanuo lived a lonely life for a long time because no one really cared for her. Kethonuo and Siedze too lived their lives away from the people for long. Even though they were good human beings with deep wisdom, and have immense love for their sister and her son they were not being

loved outside their own family. Thus, when Rhaliétuo told his aunt Siedze that he loved her hands, Siedze could not understand it. For her it was ugly with spidery veins. Rhalie admired the hands of his aunt Siedze and complimented them that they are strong and he wanted to have the same hands as her. This makes his aunt Siedze to feel loved because she had never known love outside her family. Rhaliétuo stands as the epitome of love in the novel. His love is not confined to the people who love him but to his enemies as well. Rhaliétuo, like Christ, is ready to sacrifice his life in order to restore the lost love to the people who had been living a life of hatred and who accepted the evil. Rhalie does not want his aunts, Kethonuo and Siedze, to grow old and die, he wants to live in their company forever. Kethonuo understands his intention but enlightened him that since both of them are old and living an active life is not possible, it will be better to die than to suffer. This pained Rhaliétuo as he does not want them to suffer, neither die.

Kethonuo pronounced one of the simplest yet powerful truths about love to Rhaliétuo that he must not be afraid of losing them because death is not forever, but love is forever. Thus, if he loves them, that love is stronger than death and even death cannot break or separate them. Hatred is the enemy of love. The Village of Weavers could not love Rhaliétuo, nor his mother, and they put their faith in the tiger whom they thought it to be protecting their fields from other animals. They assumed this tiger to be a tiger of flesh and blood and not a spirit-tiger. The villagers were blinded to distinguish between the real and the unreal. Thus, in the community hunt, Rhaliétuo, Son of the Thundercloud, was killed by Viphrü and others whom they take it as a deer. They were goaded by Viphrü to kill Rhaliétuo. He enticed them to strike the deer which was none other than Rhaliétuo. The young boys, seeing the corpse of Rhaliétuo condemned themselves for what they did. After the death of Rhaliétuo, a monstrous rainstorm came and destroyed the land, crops, and houses of the Village of Weavers. This would teach the villagers to admit their guilt for killing the pure one.

Mesanuo was finally reunited with her son and her sisters when she too passed out from the world. Pele could not contain his sorrow when his friend, Mesanuo died, but he believed that she would be with her loved ones, that is, her sisters, and the son that she loved more than life. The ancestral belief of the Angami-Nagas in the afterlife is different from the Christian concept of heaven and hell. They believe that good people turned into *themvü*, that is, star, after they died. On the night of Rhaliétuo's burial, a young star was seen hanging above the mountains on the very rim of the blue-black world. Hope brings the people together and made them to witness the birth of Son of the Thundercloud, his life, and the renewals that

his birth has brought. Their hope did not end in the world, but it is this hope that will reunite them together in the afterlife.

2.1.5 Conclusion

Son of the Thundercloud is a tale full of mysteries and miracles. Kire has employed myth and fantasy in weaving the plot of the story. The miraculous birth of Son of the Thundercloud was prophesied years ago and it was transmitted to people from generation to generation through the form of oral storytelling. The birth was miraculous as a widow conceived a child, when a single raindrop fell on her. In her village, she was called as the tiger-widow because a tiger had killed her husband and seven sons. When her child was born, the destiny of the woman was changed forever. Moreover, the birth was a fulfillment of an age old prophecy. Along with the birth, regeneration of life started on earth. To an outsider who is not familiar with the folklore of the Angami-Nagas, the story might appear unacceptable to them. However, for the native readers, this is believable and understandable, as the mysterious, magical, and miracle are part of the Naga folklore. The famine in the Village of Weavers and Nialhuo lasted for “seven hundred years.” It started with the absence of rain and when the agricultural activities could not be carried out. The forest died and the soil looked like it could never give life to plants again. The river, which the people called as “mother,” got dried and could not provide for the needs of the people. However, the weary landscape and its inhabitants were transformed into a lively land after the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. People could cultivate their fields again and the land was ready and eager to bear fruits for the hungry folks. The river also came back to life and people were elated by this because their mother who had died long ago came back to feed them. The taboos and rituals were maintained and observed in traditional Angami-Naga society to ensure longevity, prosperous life, preservation of food, environment, and so on. Some illustrations were provided in the text about villages that were ruined after they violated the taboos. By obeying the taboo of abstaining from eating seed grain, people get another opportunity to cultivate their lands again. Proper respect and reverence is given to nature and animal, especially, the tiger. The traditional Angami-Nagas believed man and tiger to be brothers and the tiger ritual is observed when a tiger is killed. There are women in the novel who suffered under the authority of men and the society. They were isolated from the rest of the society for no definite reason. Their sufferings were paired with the sufferings of nature as both of them were dominated, exploited, and rendered voiceless under the domain of patriarchy. Just as a woman gives birth to a child, the earth also gives birth to trees and rocks. As long as men

refrain from disturbing and hoarding nature, it will continue to provide for the needs of men. Being an oral society which invests in stories and dreams, they occupied a central place in the novel. The belief in the stories keeps the hope of people alive. Hope is the sustenance of life for people who are living in the midst of famine. It also included the hope to meet loved ones in the afterlife. *Son of the Thundercloud* is tragic when the people accepted the evil and denied the good. But through the sacrifice made by a pure heart, the people will learn the truth and they will love one another.

2.2 *Don't Run, My Love*

Don't Run, My Love published in 2017 was written by Easterine Kire. It tells the story of a widowed mother, Visenuo, and her daughter Atuonuo, who lived in the ancient village of the Angamis known as Kija. It is based on a Mizo folktale narrated to the author by her mother. However, the novel is infused with the culture and rural life of the Angami-Naga folks. The fieldworks, especially, harvest, take an important place in the novel. The village life is filled with the busy yet hardworking nature of the villagers. The peaceful life of Atuonuo and her mother were disturbed by the sudden appearance of a handsome man, named Kevi. During the initial stage of their association, the young man was helpful and generous to them, as he shared his hunting meat with them, but later on, he caused deep trouble for them when Atuonuo rejected his love. The handsome man, Kevi, was not an ordinary man, he was a were-tiger, and he showed the other side of his being as the novel progresses. Through his character, the belief of the Angami-Nagas in the existence of were-tigers is projected. On the whole, the novel is a gripping tale of love which turns out to be a failure between the lovers.

Kire's narration of the story is peculiar to the Angami-Naga culture and tradition. The Hindu gives a significant remark of Kire's works, that, the distinction between "magic" and "reality" disappeared, they united together and agreed to live together. *Don't Run, My Love* blended the magical and spiritual with the physical world. There exists a thin line between the spiritual and physical in the Angami-Naga worldview. There are many levels of the novella and it can be read from different perspectives. The title of the novel, "Don't Run, My Love," refers to the love story of two young lovers, Atuonuo and Kevi. Their love story is another central subject in the novella. It ended in a failure for Kevi and a horror for Atuonuo. Other themes like, traditional courtship, marriage proposals, and rituals are highlighted in the novel. The traditional status of women, their plight in conforming to traditional rules, and the works

that earned them respect in the society are given importance in the novella. The Angami-Nagas and the Nagas, in general, lived in a close knitted community. It is difficult to let an individual live his or her life without being watched by the society. Similarly, in *Don't Run, My Love*, the widow, Visenuo, and her daughter Atuonuo, were not left alone by the community in their decisions and it interfered them unceasingly. The community is coloured by the rituals, taboos, omens, and beliefs, which are inseparable with the individual. It is, at its best, a representation of life in a typical Angami village where everyone works hard to sustain their life and contributed to the welfare of the community.

Narrative signifies who a person is, his origin, his place or location, and his belief. Hastie and Dawes pointed out that study of narrative is undertaken because the everyday life, the rituals, the essential forms of life, and the various skills are stored in narrative forms (qtd. in Ritchea 99). In his book, *Narrative*, Paul Cobley identifies that the key use of narrative concerns with “identity.” Narrative serves as an “identity-formation” of the people, especially, the oral people (37). The oral narrative serves as the formation and maintenance of the self-image of people. This helped the oral communities to store their histories, cultures, values, and other things which are important to them. *Don't Run, My Love* narrative dwells in the Angami-Naga culture, the rural folk, their traditions, and their beliefs. The worldview of the Angami-Nagas, related to physical, spiritual, and were-tiger culture are other themes of the novella. As the society is purely oral, the narrative is influenced by the methods of orality. Kire writes the novella in simple prose with the incorporation of *Tenyidie* language, local expressions, and idioms. Vizovono Elizabeth claimed that Kire's writing style is simple, and the technique reveals the “fireside narrations” of the oral cultures (28). For an oral community like the Angami-Nagas, everything is performed through words of mouth in the absence of written form. Thus, narrative remained as the basis of acquiring and obtaining knowledge (Herman et al.). Walter J. Ong talked about the importance of narrative, that, it is more useful in oral societies than in others. Moreover, it binds a substantive amount of lore that can be durable as well (138). Keeping the above discussions in mind, the novel will be studied under different sub-themes.

2.2.1 The Culture of the Closely Knitted Community

The Tenyimia people of the Angami-Nagas are known for living in a well-knit community imbued with traditions, values, ethics, festivals, and beliefs. The administration of the village runs by elders and wise people hold the most important place in the community.

Individual aspirations which pose as a threat to the unity of the community have no place to thrive in the community. The community life of the Angami-Nagas is known for the taboos, rituals, and customs, which are observed by the people for their own benefit and for the community at large. They are marked by religious overtones because the people greatly feared and revered the Supreme Being called as *Ukepenuopfü* in Angami-Naga language. *Don't Run, My Love* is set in an ancient village of the Angamis known as Kija. The earlier settlers called it as Phesa, which means new village, but it was renamed to Kija, meaning the blessed house. The narrative of the novella is centered on the agricultural work of labouring, harvesting, and harvesting festival. Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo sustained their lives by depending on agriculture. This is one of the major occupations of the Angami-Nagas. The novella begins with harvesting season and included the celebration of its festival by the people. The main sustenance of the traditional Angami-Nagas was derived from agriculture and by virtue of this many of their beliefs, taboos, rituals, and festivals were connected with agricultural cycle and practices. The agricultural work of sowing and harvesting are governed by the cycle of nature. It is also believed that the names of the months, called as *thekhrü* in Angami- Naga language, are named according to the agricultural works (Zhale Personal Interview). This also marks the importance of agricultural work for the people.

The novella opens with the narrative of the harvesting season where Visenuo, and her daughter, Atuonuo, were working tirelessly to collect their paddies back to their village. The narration goes on to describe the importance, blessings, and taboos associated with harvest. The harvest in Kija village was delayed for a week because the *Liedepfü*, “the ritual initiator of the harvest,” was sick and bedridden for a week (Kire, *Don't Run* 2). According to the Angami-Naga tradition, no person is allowed to harvest his paddy before the *Liedepfü*'s initial harvest. The initial harvest is carried out ritualistically. She will harvest only two bunches of paddy, and on her return journey, she will pretend her sack to be heavy and will ask the help of *Moutshüpfü*, that is, a spirit believed to have prosperous blessings, to lift her sack (Zhale, *Tenyimia* 40). The work of *Liedepfü* is also similar to the cacique of the Native Americans who perform agricultural rituals for the people. Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo were true adherents of traditions. They were aware of the taboo to throw away grain, thus, they carried the spoiled grains home instead of leaving them carelessly in the field. Taboo also known as *kenyü* in Angami-Naga language stands as *chape*, that is, bridge, between men and spirits (Sekhose 11). Thus, violation of taboo is feared to bring trouble or loss to the violaters. The narrative of *Don't Run, My Love*, differs from western or colonial

narratives because it follows the indigenous way of narration where the oral forms and practices are significantly incorporated. Narrative does not promote cultural distinctions, Cobley pointed out that it represents cultural “difference” and “hybridity” (39). The narrative of the novel presents a diverse culture which is interesting and varied from other cultures.

Besides the numerous traditions that are religiously observed in an Angami-Naga community, there are other areas which need to be considered. The village architecture and layout serve as a meaningful purpose for the people. An Angami-Naga village is known for having *dahou*, that is, the circular sitting place, found at the entrance of the village, the *Kichiüki* or the Morung for young people, *kharu*, the village gate, and more. The novella incorporated some of these architectures in the narrative. The *dahou* is a strategic viewing point as it offered a panoramic view of the surroundings in the horizon. In the olden days, *dahou* functioned as a place of recreation and meeting place where songs and tales were narrated and disputes were settled. The *dahou* is a place where gossips and unimportant talks also take place, Kire justifies this by saying that, this happens when the community lives in close quarters with each other (*Don't Run* 26). The villagers saw the stranger, Kevi, with the two women from the sitting place, and they began to wonder what was the relation of the stranger with the two women. The whole village was abuzz with this story after it was spread out by the people from the *dahou*. From this instance, it is evident that nothing can be hidden from the people who live in a close knitted community. The gossips and rumours can break bonds between the people and they can create disunity in the society.



Fig.2. Scholar's photo. “*Dahou* of the Angami-Nagas.” 2020.

Communal house or *thehou* is the traditional educational institution for young men. Young people who were brought up from *thehou* grew adept to the culture and traditions of the village. It prepares the individual for various situations, positions, and circumstances, for example, war, leadership, and other latent functions of learning the songs, stories, and entry into marriage. Visenuo, the mother of Atuonuo, was aware of the value and importance of *thehou* and the prospect of calling a person as *thehou nuo*, meaning, child of *thehou*. When Atuonuo expresses her desire to become a *thehou nuo* in order to overcome her fear of spirits and dark places, her mother clarified that the *thehou* cannot prevent her fear, but it can make her brave. Similarly, warriors of the village have their own fears, but the *thehou* emboldened them to face the battles. For this, they are called as the bravest of the brave. The *thehou* helps in bringing up great leaders, warriors, and brave ones in the village. It not only transmits the knowledge of a culture to the young people, but it equips them physically, morally, and mentally. The Angami-Nagas even in the absence of formal education system, the *thehou* acts as a center in moulding the mind and soul of the young people. If the family teaches the individual in carrying out his or her role and responsibility, it is the *thehou* that puts the concern of social responsibility in a person. The *thehou* of the Angami-Nagas and the *meroms*, that is, the fireplaces of the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh, bear close resemblance in function. It serves as a meeting place for the community and especially for men to discuss important subjects related to the affair of the community.

Native or indigenous phrases, words, wisdoms, and sayings are interwoven in the narrative. Words in Angami-Naga language like, *liedepfu* the ritual initiator of harvest, *Azuo* mother, *Atsa* grandmother, *kichiiki* morung, *kephou* a woven band for carrying things, *thekhumevi* were-tiger, *kevakete* refrain from eating, were employed in the novel. These words give a flavor of indigeneity to the story. Kire has used these words as it is set in native soil, hence, local words cannot be separated from it. Visenuo praised her daughter for being an exceptional fire-maker. Her father used to say that the smoke of the fire strengthens the walls of a house, and when the house is abandoned, it falls apart. This symbolizes the belief of the people that “*The house was missing its owner*” (Kire, *Don’t Run* 18). This is how the good traditions and knowledge of a community are passed from generation to generation. Lyotard claimed that narration is the “quintessential form” of customary knowledge in more ways than one (19). The wisdom of the elders reverberated in the narration. The harvest is taken with great care. It is done by following the instructions of the elders who would begin the harvest before the frost. Kire also reveals the simple yet interesting details and beliefs of

the Angami-Nagas in the novella. After having the rich soup of the venison, Visenuo assumes that she will wake up with a swollen eye the following day. This is believed to occur after a nourished meal. Visenuo always narrated the beliefs, sayings, and ways of life to her daughter, Atuonuo, who was in her teenage years.

There exist traditional ways to court a girl among the Angami-Nagas. The girl is showered with gifts which points to the intention of the man in asking the girl to marry him. Visenuo and Atuonuo were gifted with good portions of meat twice in their hut by an unidentified person. Visenuo perceived the meat giver to be a suitor of Atuonuo. She told her daughter that this is what a young man does to a girl whom he likes to marry. He brings gifts to her on a regular basis and then asks for her hand. Among the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, betrothal is done with gifting red squirrel. The animal can be easily trapped in the winter season where its deep orange coat is at its glossiest. Thus, most weddings take place in winter (Dai, *Legends* 68). Similarly, among the Blackfeet Indians, proper courtesy is observed in asking a girl's hand. A man should first get the blessings of his parents, and only then a messenger is sent to speak to the girl's parents. Traditional marriages in Angami-Naga culture, Adi culture, and Native Americans were performed by exchanging gifts between the bride and the groom's family. The Angami-Nagas held the ceremony with gifts given by the groom to the bride and the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh practiced the bride price called as *a-re gelick*. The Blackfeet Indians also exchanged horses and some other possessions between the girl's father and the groom.

Festivals of different types are celebrated for different reasons. Some are based on agricultural work. Harvest Festival, as the name implies, is a festival that is celebrated during the harvest. There are certain rituals that people followed during the harvest festival. The ritualistic performances were always accompanied by proper procedures and rules to be followed. They take the form of instructions and stories narrated by elders related to the ritual. The ritual of *Kevakete* is executed during the harvest festival by the mother of the household who refrain from eating rice and she eats only boiled lentils. Every member of the family participated in the ritual because none of the family members are allowed to eat before the mother does so. The purpose of *Kevakete* is to "transfer blessings" upon one's harvest (Kire, *Don't Run* 52). Children were sent out to catch hibernating frogs for their mothers to eat, because frogs used to sleep for months without taking food. This has symbolic meaning as it suggests that food in the house would remain long. Besides this, there are other taboos associated with the harvest festival. It is taboo to eat grasshoppers and dragonflies as they are

insects that damage crops. The rituals and taboos were observed to appease the spirits and prevent any destruction to the grains that were brought to the granaries. This is an act of reverence to the spirits in relation with the harvest.

The Angami-Nagas give importance to title-taking, which uplifts the status of a person in the society. Title-taking follows a long and elaborate ritual and only people, who are industrious, hard-working, and wealthy, can perform it. It is known as Feast-of-Merit or *sha* in Angami-Naga language. Traditionally, if a man has acquired huge grain and cattle, the elders from his clan encouraged him to perform the ceremony. They advise him with the words, “*Terhuomia n khrie bate, no puo neichü morosuo*,” which means, “the spirits are favouring you, you must acknowledge them” (Kire, *Folk* 38). The feast is performed as an acknowledgement towards the Supreme Being for the riches bestowed upon the harvests and the cattle. The traditional Feast of Merit is given by rich people who host the whole village. It is one of the highest forms of title-taking by a person. The paternal grandfather of Atuonuo was considered as the wealthiest man in his village. He and his wife hosted four feasts of merit. The feasts were extended to include his friends from neighbouring villages. This shows the wealth of her grandfather. Abau, the sister of Kezharuokuo, wanted his son and wife Visenuo to host another feast of merit in order to ensure the legacy of Kezharuokuo. But Visenuo and her husband decline it because they had just started their lives and Kezharuokuo’s name was in no danger to be forgotten. This shows the practical side of the couple. The feasts given by Kezharuokuo were accompanied by four monoliths erected on the way to the fields. Stones have cultural significance in Angami-Naga culture. In an interview, Kire tells Imsong that Tenyimia people have a “megalithic” culture since the feast of merit, special events, friendship feasts were all commemorated with monoliths (172). Kire’s celebrated novel, *When the River Sleeps*, gives an adventurous and dangerous account of the protagonist, Vilie, in search of the “heart stone” which is believed to bring wealth, women, success in hunt and victory in war.

2.2.2 Were-tiger or *Tekhumevi* Culture

Don’t Run, My Love narrative is woven with the legend of were-tiger or known as *tekhumevi* in Angami-Naga language. The person who formed bond with the tiger soulfully is called as a *tekhumevi*, whereas, the tiger of the person is called as *miavi*. It is important to study the narrative of *tekhumevi* because it carries the supernatural beliefs and practices of the Angami-Nagas. This section will be devoted to the study of were-tiger or *tekhumevi*.

Robertson pointed out that therians are people who feel a deep connection with a “non-human animal” and they believe that this animal forms an inseparable part of their identity (qtd. in Herman et al.). The Native Americans also practiced the bear-tradition among its people. It is related to the were-tiger concept of the Angami-Nagas. The Kiowa people of the Native Americans considered bear as their brother, he is ferocious, but he has healing powers as well. *The Ancient Child*, a novel by Momaday, focused on bear’s power and identity. Kire’s fictions and short stories are replete with tiger stories, were-tigers, tigerman, bear- man and other supernatural stories and beings. Some of them besides *Don’t Run, My Love*, are *Son of the Thundercloud*, *When the River Sleeps*, *A Naga Village Remembered*, *The Rain-Maiden and the Bear-Man*.

In *The Golden Bough*, James Frazer mentioned the relation between human beings and animals. The animal and man depended on one another for its welfare and when one dies, the other too dies (894). The natives of Cross River valley within the provinces of Cameroons identified themselves with various animals like hippopotamus, elephants, leopards, gorillas and others which are physically strong and can hide themselves. This concealing power is an advantage for the owner to attack his enemy by stealth. Among the Indians of Guatemala and Honduras, the *nagual* or *naual* is related to man, and the weal and woe of the man depends on the fate of the *nagual* (899). Unlike the western concept of therianthropy, which involves the shapeshifting of a person into wolves, tigers, or other animals, the were-tiger of the Nagas do not shapeshift his physical body. Were-tiger or *tekhumevi* is the mythical transformation of the spirit or soul of a person into a tiger. The man will retain his physical self but his spirit will reside in the body of a tiger (Tachü, “Legend” 105). Oinas notes that lycanthropy is described by psychiatrists as a kind of “mental illness” which made the victim to act and behave like a carnivore or a predatory beast (841).

The Angami-Naga concept of *tekhumevi* may not be termed as a disease or an illness as injury to the animal affects the person too, and they have rooted belief in the existence of were-tigers which is hereditary or gifts from the older generations. The Angami-Nagas have folktales based on the kinship of tiger, man, and spirit mothered by an aged woman. Because of this familial relation, the Angami-Nagas gave due acknowledgement to *tekhu*. Thus, he is called by the name *udzürieu*, meaning, elder brother. The Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh also considered tiger as their elder brother. Thus, killing a tiger is considered as a serious crime, unless the tiger is damaging crops or threatening people’s lives (Aiyadurai 305). This traditional belief also ties it to the conservation of the tigers.

Temsula Ao, in her book, *The Ao- Naga Oral Tradition*, asserted that in the beginning there was no distinction between light and darkness; this made human beings and animals to live together and intermarry one another. This substantiates the belief that human souls can reside in other forms than the human. Thus, from the olden days men live in close relationship with the animals. Ao commented on the subject of the tiger-spirit, that, it points out to the relation of the traditional man with the supernatural world which is represented by the tiger (78). Michael Heneise asserted that the were-tiger is a “mythic figure” with both tragic and heroic qualities. It is a symbol that signifies the “nature/culture continuum,” representing oneness of the Nagas and their ancestral land that supports the Naga “nationalist narratives” and “political assertions” (92). Anthropologist J.H Hutton remarked that the Angami-Nagas belief in the existence of lycanthropy, but they do not practiced it (*Angami Nagas* 243). The Ao Nagas believe that the tiger of the man shows no difference with other tigers in appearance, except, for the closeness that he will show towards the man whom he is connected with.

People who have tiger-souls are different from ordinary people in the village, because they possess supernatural powers that can cure illness and also enjoyed high reputation in the society. They also have the ability to avenge an enemy by chasing him in his tiger form, or by destroying his crops or domestic animals (Ao, “Ao-Naga” 73). Lycanthropists of the Sumi Nagas confirm some symptoms during their transformations. The person experienced severe pains and swellings in his knees, elbows, and his back during the period of transformation and consequent of the possession. These pains resulted from the activity of the tiger and his adventure in the forest. The soul of the man is believed to enter the leopard body during sleep and returns to the human body with daylight, but sometimes it remained in the leopard body for several days which made the man lethargic (Hutton, *Sema Nagas* 202). The possession of the tiger-soul by a person is possible with the close association with a were-tiger or a lycanthropist, like, sleeping together, or eating the same dish with him for nearly two months. People are precautious to eat the leftover food of a lycanthropist because of the fear of acquiring its nature.

Don't run, My Love is a simple tale of love which turns out to be a disaster because Kevi, the lover of Atuonuo, turns out to be a *tekhumevi*. Through his character, the narrative digs deeper into the tiger culture of the Angami-Nagas. The novel opens with an unusual description of the man as a “beautiful creature” (Kire 1). Kevi appeared abruptly in the field of Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo, and assists them when they were struggling with a

heavy load of paddy. He introduced himself as a trapper and a hunter to them, and graciously helped the two women in carrying their paddies and shared good portions of meat with them from time to time. Kevi as a person could not be disliked because he is handsome and is a kind man. The narrative withholds the identity of Kevi as a *tekhumēvi* when he first appeared in the life of the two women. Only when Kevi told the unusual story of his father's deceased to Visenuo, Atuonuo, and Krucha, the native readers were informed of something peculiar. Moreover, Kevi's amusing reaction to the profession of Keyo as a woodcutter creates a doubt in the mind of Atuonuo and in the readers. The narrator artistically crafts these tiny details to inform the readers of an impending situation. Complication arises in the marriage proposal of Kevi. This made the dejected Kevi to show the other side of his personality which terrorized Atuonuo. The two lovers reconciled, but the union could not last long as Atuonuo discovered the other side of Kevi, that is, a *tekhumēvi*. Atuonuo ran away from Kevi and disclosed what she saw in the hut to her mother. She pleaded her mother that they have to go to a powerful village to get help.

Speaking about the were-tiger culture, Kire commented that not everyone accepted it, some take it as a curse and some deny it, but it is passed on to them through their lineage ("Don't Run"). A person becomes a *tekhumēvi* by *hievi* or *hieshie*, that is, either by consent, luck, or by mistake. It is transmitted or acquired through generations, by taking bath together, eating chicken liver together, and by using some herbal medicines (Zhale, *Udzürieu* 64). In case of Kevi, one can only assume that he possessed the *tekhumēvi* from his father, Krucha, who was also a *tekhumēvi*. Similarly, in the story, "The Weretigerman," Tsaricho became a were-tigerman through the lineage of his father and grandfather who were both tigersmen (Kire, *Rain-Maiden* 66). The narration of Pfenuo in the Village of Seers about *tekhumēvimia* enlightens Atuonuo, her mother, and the readers about the inheritance power of *tekhumēvi*. Kire not only educates her local readers about the were-tiger culture, but she also interprets it for the non-native readers by delving deep into the subject. Pfenuo explains *tekhumēvi* inheritance to the two women, that, those who willfully seek to become a *tekhumēvi*, it is a gift. Some men receive it from their fathers but if they fight against it, it becomes a curse for them. The willful acceptance of the gift added to more power. The were-tiger legacy of Krucha, that is, the father of Kevi, was passed down to his son. Kevi's father instructed him about the behaviour of *tekhumēvimia* while he was still alive. This is illustrated in the scene when tigers surrounded Kevi and Atuonuo in the field. Kevi handled the situation by growling back loudly with his mouth wide open, his teeth long and pointed, and scolded the

tigers. He told Atuonuo that he did what his father had taught him, that is, to speak to tigers in their own language. This also signifies that as the man becomes a *tekhumēvi*, he also acquired its language and animality (Tachü, “Legend” 110). Later, when they lay asleep in the hut, Atuonuo saw that Kevi’s face was covered with hair and he looked completely different.

The tiger and the man league with each other to threaten the enemies of the man. The story, “A Were-tiger comes to Town,” written by Kezhakelie Whiso, gives an incident about the tiger of the prisoner, who terrorized the people that threatened the tigerman (20). Referring to the tigers of the Ao-Nagas, Panger Imchen states that the tigers used to communicate in an unusual language of their own (70). The tiger and the man have separate bodies but they have a peculiar connection with each other. For example, the man experienced “corresponding wounds” in his body when the tiger gets wounded (Hutton, “Leopard-Men” 44). Krucha, the father of Kevi, had not been out for some days, but when he died, they found a wound on his back which was caused by a spear. This sums up the Angami-Naga belief that the man will have the same *rüzapfü* or wounds as the tiger. When the man’s tiger called as *khuu* died, the man also died (Sorhie 116). *Tekhu kete* and *tekhu keze* is performed by the Angami-Nagas with the dead body of the tiger. Similarly, the wives of the bear slayers in Sami culture are blindfolded and they shoot the stump with arrows which is covered in bear’s skin. The women and children were carefully guided from the attack of the dead bear’s spirit. The women shoot the carcass to conquer their fear over the bear’s spirit. The kinship with the bear among the Sami culture is derived from the anthropomorphication habits of the bear standing on its two legs, and its human-like appearance with its skinned carcass (Bledsoe). Kire’s story, “The Rain-Maiden and the Bear-Man,” narrates the tale of a man who turned into bear after he failed to return home for two years. Bear-Man was half-man and half-bear. Part of him understood the world of men and the other part the animal world.

Tekhumēvimia possess enormous power, that is, physically and spiritually. They acted as medicine-men by healing the sick and predicting the future of men. They can control the atmosphere by preventing rain or cause calamities. Imchen notes that on many occasions, they protect their community and fight against their enemies as well (69). This added great privilege to their position in the society. But, this does not make people to revere them or worship them. The ancestral Nagas feared and revered the Supreme Being and they owed their worship to the Supreme Being alone, even though they also acknowledged other lesser spirits. Pfenuo pronounced the power of *tekhumēvimia* to Atuonuo and Visenuo that, since

they can *themou*, that is, predict the future, warriors and young men consulted them to know about their future. People take advantage of the power of *tekhumevimia*, thus, they are reluctant to kill them. *Tekhumevimia* has a foot in both the physical world and the spiritual world, and he is both a man and a tiger. The seer in the Village of Seers puts up the belief of the village, that, they do not kill *tekhumevimia* in their village, as they bestow life and not death. They give life to whomsoever and whatsoever desires to come into being. Thus, it would be a violation of their principle to take life. However, he added that only humans will know how to kill it. This crushed the hope of Atuonuo and her mother. It was Pfenuo who told them that the seer could not kill him because Kevi is one of them. Those who become *tekhumevimia* crossed a line and that gives them access to the spiritual world and its powers.

Don't Run, My Love is a tale of love between two young lovers, Atuonuo and Kevi. Speaking about the book, Kire calls it a love story and about power. She added that both of them i.e. Atuonuo and Kevi in the story were looking for true love. Making a parallel of the novel with real life, Kire says that it is natural thing that young people at the age of eighteen and nineteen are driven to search for love, but they have to remember that appearance alone is dangerous, and they should look beneath it ("Don't Run"). One reviewer, Paromita Sengupta, opines that *Don't Run, My Love* can be read as an allegory of human relationships, as love is accompanied with danger. Atuonuo and Kevi were both in love with each other, but things went wrong when Kevi proposed to Atuonuo. She was only eighteen, young, and could not perceive the jest of Kevi's proposal. According to Atuonuo, Kevi should act and behave more like a grown-up as he treats Atuonuo not as his equal but like a young girl who amuses him. Visenuo seeing the argument between the two assured her daughter that all things happen for a good reason, and if they are not destined to be together, it is better for them to end now than to be hurt afterwards.

Atuonuo tried to forget Kevi but instead of doing so she began to love him more. To reconcile with Kevi she went to the field only to be hurt by him. Kevi nursed her back to life and the lovers got reconciled. However, this could not last long as Atuonuo discovered Kevi to be a *tekhumevi*. She ran away from Kevi only to be persuaded by fear and danger. Atuonuo does not have enough strength to fight Kevi, the were-tiger, because physically they were unmatched. Her deep wish was to forget Kevi and a distance and safe life away from him. This was granted to her when Keyo, the woodsman, killed the were-tiger who attacked Atuonuo in the forest. When the were-tiger was killed, Visenuo assured her injured daughter that it was all over and they can start life again. It would be wrong to dismiss Kevi's love for

Atuonuo in their short relationship. He loved Atuonuo more than anyone else and had really wanted to marry her. It was uncertain whether Kevi had embraced his identity of being a were-tiger or was ashamed of it, which made him to tell Atuonuo, that, she should not fear him and continue to love him as he is. The tale brings out the power of love and the danger of being in love naively. Not all human love thrives, some end in disaster for lovers. Kire's way of narrating the love story is simple, but the meaning lies in choosing one's partner wisely because love can be destructive as well. Even though the characters are rural based and traditional, their story of love and lessons are still relevant in the modern day.

2.2.3 Living the Life of a Respectable Woman in the Society

Women characters dominate the novella. It narrates their daily activities, struggles, fears, injustices, and view about life. The mother-daughter relationship gives an insight into the struggles and issues commonly faced by women. The society is patriarchal where the sole authority lies in the hands of men. However, strong, wise, and practical women win over the limitations set on them. Interestingly, it is the women who keep traditions alive by dictating the customs of the society to their own gender. In traditional Angami-Naga society, the position or the status of women is determined by the role they play, such as, mother, wife, daughter, and sister. Traditional Naga society is patrilineal and patriarchy is the form of authority in familial and societal life. However, women also enjoyed some rights and privileges. The anthropologist, J.H Hutton, observed that the position of the Angami-Naga women appeared to be low at first sight, however, when it comes to her role in the household, it is estimated that Angami women are a "very strong folk" (*Angami Nagas* 167). Traditional Naga women equally contributed to the growth of their families and society, yet, they were still denied members of the assemblies and councils. This failed to evolve in the society because it is termed as being non-adherent to the Naga culture (Kikon 115). Thus, the inclusion of women in political sphere is still acute and limited in scope.

Don't Run, My Love narrative focused mainly on women characters from traditional and cultural contexts. By this, it highlights the cultural expectations on women. It focuses especially on a widowed mother Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo. A diligent, modest, and a woman of integrity are some of the most desirable qualities that the traditional Angami-Naga society looked in a woman. It is because through hard work, women sustained the whole family and also saved the family from hunger. In the novella, Visenuo and her daughter live alone in the village after her husband's death. The duo live a very busy hard-

working life and most of their days were spent in the field and fieldworks. Visenuo and her daughter live an independent life. Without the help of a man, they single handedly cultivate their field. The novel opens with the harvest season where workers worked unceasingly to collect their harvests. In this busy season, the mother and her daughter were not expecting any help from their neighbours because everyone was busily collecting their harvests. Even though they need the help of others, they choose to work on their own. In traditional Angami-Naga society, agriculture, that is, shifting and terrace cultivation remained as the main occupations of the people. Thus, in a family, it is not only the men who worked but the women worked equally in agricultural works. The womenfolk of the pre-colonial and post-colonial remained as major contributors to the sustenance of the family. Hutton talks about the Angami-Naga women that while hunting and warfare belong to men, weaving, cooking, agriculture and trade in some degree were carried out equally by them (Hutton, *Angami Nagas* 168). A wife is considered as an equal partner in the domestic affairs.

The field of Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo is situated at the bottom most part. They struggled with their loads in going back home. During monsoon, they would sleep in their field and save time walking back and forth to the village. In this way they were able to manage their fieldworks even in the absence of a man to help them with the toughest works. Living in the village only few choices exist for the widows and their children. Keeping aside other options of selling vegetables, herbs, or selling home-brewed wine, Visenuo chose the hard, yet, noble labour of agricultural life for her and her daughter. Their hard labour is paid off with enough food and a good sleep. Widows often receive free labour in the village. Vilhou was one such man who would offer to help Visenuo and her daughter. But since his wife complaints that he is willing to help others more than his own, Visenuo used to decline his offer. As a mother, Visenuo was very careful in living and conducting her life so that she will not create a bad name for her and her daughter.

To be married at the right age is considered a vital importance for girls in traditional Angami-Naga society. Girls were not allowed to grow their hair or *tsütha* before marriage. The baldness of a woman's head suggests "*kemesa*," that is, purity, and "*kemiatho*," that is, integrity. It remained as one of the greatest desires of young girls and women to grow their hairs because it is considered as a form of great beauty and pride for them. In the book, *Zhozho*, the writer described the hair of women as "*terhu kenyitho*," meaning, something of highest worth or greatest value (Sekhose 17). The narrative of the novella has thrown light on the issue of marriage through the concern shared by elder women. Women themselves

advocate these traditions which they acquired from the patriarchal authority. At the age of eighteen, Atuonuo grew up almost as strong as her mother and she had reached the age of marriage. Her grand-aunt feared that she was in danger of crossing the marriage age as girls younger than her were married and already had children. In contrary to this principle, Atuonuo chose a different path for herself. Brought up by a single mother, Atuonuo grew up to be a good woman, taught properly by her mother about life and her culture. The ethics of life, home, agricultural works, festivals, community rules and laws were carefully implanted in Atuonuo by her mother. While Visenuo educates Atuonuo about the importance of *thehou*, she also encouraged Atuonuo that a girl can earn the title, *thehou nuo*, when people see that she knows the ways of the village. A man standing on Visenuo's place might not be able to instruct these things to his daughter. Visenuo, as a single mother, does not want to deprive her daughter of anything. Kire put all the simple details in the narrative to underscore the role of a mother and her daughter in a patriarchal society. It is also perceived that sometimes narration about the reality of women is best done in a female-authored text.

A woman is never spared by the society when she goes outside the norm and standards of the society. Some examples are illustrated in the novella. Every movement, decision, action is watched by the society. When Kevi helped in carrying the paddy of the two women back to Kija village, it arose the curiosities of the villagers who thought of him to be a suitor of Atuonuo. Visenuo's aunts, Abau and Khonuo visited her and raised concern over the stranger who came with them to Kija. Since they were not informed of anything about the affair, Abau was upset about it. Khonuo soften the harsh attitude of Abau towards Visenuo by saying that the former only wanted to make Visenuo's reputation safe. Relating to the stranger's visit, Khonuo cautioned Visenuo that a man visiting a widow is always a matter of great interest for the villagers, and it is more interesting when she has a marriageable daughter in the house. These reactions angered Visenuo and times like this made her to question the wisdom of living in a close-knit community, where a person is accountable to everyone else for his or her actions or decisions. Visenuo cleared the misconceptions to her aunts, that, the man had only offered to carry their grain to Kija since he was crossing the village. Abau sensed the hurt in Visenuo and clarified that the associations will affect Tuonuo's marriage chances.

Women who create scandal in the family were detested by the people. Thus, elder women were precautious of young girls committing this mistake. An Ao-Naga girl is permitted to admit men to her dormitory, whereas, for the Sumi-Naga girls, chastity is strictly

maintained before marriage and the bride-price is reduced to 50 per cent if a girl had an affair. As for the Angami-Nagas, they fall in between the Ao-Nagas and the Sumi-Nagas. There exist no dormitory for women, except, few villages and also they were not looked with the same jealousy as that of the Sumi-Naga girls. However, Hutton added that having a lover is ridiculed by the society and moreover a girl who takes different lovers finds it difficult for anyone to marry her (*Angami Nagas* 169). The aunts of Visenuo wanted a commitment from Kevi if he has to continue his visits in the village. It will make his visits legitimate and also protect Atuonuo's reputation in the village. Atuonuo protested against that suggestion and she told her mother that instead of telling Kevi about the commitment, they should forbid his visits. At this point, Visenuo gave a powerful answer to her daughter that their lives cannot be lived according to the dictates and wills of others. Visenuo is not unconventional but she simply wants to do what is right and just, instead of being directed by others. There are women like Abau, who are representatives of the society. Her thoughts are similar to the societal thinking about women. Unlike Abau, Visenuo believes in living her own life and wants her daughter to do the same.

The narrative did not abandon the story of Pfenuo, who helped Visenuo and Atuonuo in the Village of Seers. Pfenuo narrated her story of how she came to live in the Village of Seers. She was cared by her grandmother after the death of her parents. When her uncle was poisoned, she was sent to the Village of Seers to find an antidote to cure her dying uncle. Pfenuo was chosen to make the journey because she was a young maid, a virgin, and it is more accessible for virgins to find their way to the Village of Seers. Even though she got the cure, Pfenuo did not return back to her grandmother; she rejected the life out there even though grandmother had promised to reward her with her biggest field. She stayed in the Village of Seers because back at her grandmother's place, no one really love her and care for her. She is only a servant girl and her absence would only indicate that they have lost the errand girl. Her grandmother looked after Pfenuo as a "social obligation" because she only cared about her sons (Kire, *Don't Run* 99). However, in the Village of Seers, she lived a contended life unlike the negligence endured at her grandmother's place.

Kire has mentioned that the book can be read from different levels, while some people might study it from the abusive patterns in the story, she clarified that she did not design it in that way ("Don't Run"). In Kire's select fictions, women are the central characters, however, they are not feminist figures. They are traditional women who obeyed the customs and laws of their community and worked towards the welfare of it. Even though they suffered from the

watchful eye of the society, they are also appreciated for performing their roles in their family and in their society. Traditional women like, Visenuo, Atuonuo, and Pfenuo live in the patriarchal society and they revered the laws but they also make their own decisions about their life and corrected the faults of the society.

2.2.4 The Spiritual World

Worldview is defined as “a collection of beliefs” about life and the universe held by particular group of people (*Your Dictionary*). The Angami-Naga worldview is complex as it includes the beliefs about life, death, physical, spiritual, and the cosmos. Their worldview is derived from the Supreme Being, lesser gods, and spirits. The Angami-Naga worldview shares some similar features with the Nagas in general, but it also has some characteristics which sets them apart from others. Kire takes the material of *Don't Run, My Love* from folk and cultural domain. In an interview with Kire by Vizovono Elizabeth, Kire mentions that the supernatural elements employed in her fictions mirrored the recognition of the “spiritual world” which consist the reality of the people (32). The Angami-Nagas have strong belief in the spiritual world and its powers, they consult seers about their life, future, for ailment, or complex dreams that they had. Seers were believed to possess supernatural powers which can help men and women in solving their problems. This also points out to the co-existence of the supernatural world and the physical world.

The people living in the physical world take refuge in the spiritual world for their crisis or in search for cure. Through the narrative, the Angami-Naga worldview is brought to the forefront. The traditional concept of the natural and the unnatural world is different from the concept of heaven and hell of the Christian belief. Some folktales and myths of the Angami-Nagas referred to the spiritual world, or the less natural world. The famous sorceress, Rhalieü, of the Angami-Nagas was believed to bring dead people to life. There are tales of sky-maidens visiting the earth and mortal men who accompanied them to the sky. Such tales and stories point out to the possible access of the spiritual world by men. As the two worlds depended and interacted with each other daily or occasionally, it occupied an integral part in the people's lives.

The novella, *Don't Run, My Love*, is fashioned in a typical worldview of the Angami-Nagas. It provides an account of the Village of Seers which is a part of both the spiritual and the physical world. In the Village of Seers, ordinary men and women live with seers and spiritual beings. The village is also a representative of the spiritual world as its location and

entry is mysterious and untraceable. Among the Angami-Nagas, the village of Meriezou is considered as a legendary place. The village was considered as the seat of culture, the birthplace of many famed seers, and people were still driven to it for answers. However, the more adventurous and the needy people travelled to the Village of Seers for help (Kire 81). Atuonuo and her mother decided to travel to the Village of Seers to get help because the were-tiger will be looking for them in their village.

The journey made by the two women to the Village of Seers indicates the closeness and the unity between the world of spirits and men. The destiny to the Village of Seers was arduous as it turned out to be indifferent to a person who is a visitor. The Village of Seers location was difficult to be obtained by the people. People have different views about the location of the Village of Seers. They believe that since it holds all the answers for the problems encountered by a person, it has the authority to shift its location as it pleases. Such was the mysterious nature of the Village of Seers. Even though there exist great difficulty to find one's way to the Village of Seers, some clues are left for the people to find the passage to the Village of Seers. From the story of Visenuo and Pfenuo, it is learned that the village would open up without any trouble to a virgin. Moreover, once a person finds the great wood apple tree, it will direct him to the Village of Seers. The tree served as the only landmark for the Village of Seers, a boundary between the natural and the supernatural world. It is dangerous to pick the wood apple because one who picks it never returns back home alive.

Atuonuo and Visenuo luckily found the tree under the guidance of Visenuo who had been to the Village before. However, their journey was met with terrible frights and sounds. In the Village of Seers, human beings were able to visit the village and they can also settle in it. This example is seen through Pfenuo, a woman, who makes the Village of Seers as her home. Through the narration of the omniscient narrator, a concrete image of the Village of Seers was presented. The Village of Seers resembled any ordinary village. The tall gate was decorated with warrior figures, fertility symbols, hornbills, and headdresses which made it no different from an ordinary village. Besides their likeness in several things, the difference between a man and a spirit can be easily distinguished by the spirits. This difference can be seen even in the folklores which narrate the brotherhood of man and spirit, and the power that spirit has which made it distinct from man. Unlike men, spirits have supernatural powers which can be used for their own advantage. Pfenuo, who hosted Atuonuo and Visenuo in the Village of Seers, warned them that there are deceivers everywhere in the village. It is easy for spirits to find fresh victims because every human that comes to the village appeared fearful

and apprehensive which distinguishes human from a spirit that appears to be peaceful and unperturbed by anything around it. The Village of Seers serves as a place of solace and terror for human beings. Pfenuo cautioned Visenuo and Atuonuo not to be deceived by the sights of the disguised spirits because it is hard to save a human life when a spirit spear finds its target.

Unfortunately, Visenuo and her daughter's hope were crushed when the seer in the Village of Seer asserts that they do not kill *tekhumevimia* in their village. The seer's words disappoint the mother and her daughter, but he gave them another clue that humans are capable of killing the were-tiger, and in that case, the woodsman is the one licensed by the society to do that. With the help of the seer, the mother and the daughter were saved from the hands of the were-tiger when Keyo, the woodsman, killed the were-tiger. Even though the two worlds co-exist with each other, sometimes they clash with one another in their views on certain things. However, the spiritual world holds the immediate solutions and answers to the physical world. Thus, human beings continue to rely on its world and its powers for success, healing of ailments, and to solve their problems.

Kire employs the supernatural world and its powers in her works to a great length. This becomes a reality and the readers accept it. The supernatural is not only a thing of the past, it continued to have its impact till today. Many of the Angami-Naga villages still hold on to some supernatural beliefs of their forefathers in matters of death, marriage, day to day life activities, and so on. In Kire's select fictions, *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don't Run, My Love*, she dwells on the pre-colonial world where communal life is woven with mythical and supernatural powers. This also points out to the attitude of the post-colonial writers who goes back to the roots of their culture and mythic traditions. This kind of narrative is opposed to the colonial writers who misrepresented the native people and their cultures because of the lack of indepth knowledge or their own assumptions about the native cultures. Kire's narrative about the pre-colonial world gives an expression of the native or indigenous world which is wrongly represented by the non-native writers. It is a world where seers, were-tigers, dream-men and women, sorceress, bear-man, and spirits live together with ordinary human beings and influence their lives. Even though the pre-colonial world acknowledged the presence of supernatural beings and powers, it is also noted that Kire also used her own imaginations of supernatural powers and beings in weaving her tales, for example, a virgin woman who conceive a child by a single raindrop. Thus, it is important to remember that the base of supernaturalism in Kire's works is derived from her ancestral culture but she also used her own imaginations in weaving her stories.

2.2.5 Conclusion

Don't Run, My Love narrative makes use of oral traditions, cultures, beliefs, and expressions of the people. Set in an ancient village of the Angamis, it tells the story of simple folks who struggled in their daily life, and at the same time living a fruitful life by observing the taboos and rituals. It focuses mainly on three characters, that is, Visenuo, her daughter, Atuonuo, and Kevi. The closely knitted community life of the Angami-Nagas is depicted in the novella. Since, the community lives in close quarter, the individual wishes cannot thrive and he or she has to submit to the will of the community. The narrative gives a depiction of a rural Angami village that is undergoing through the busiest work of the year. Then it move on to include the taboos and rituals associated with the harvest and its festival. Besides these themes, social institution, like, the *thehou* and their importances are highlighted. They trained the young people to become responsible members in the society. The were-tiger or *tekhumevi* culture was discussed in the novella. It has special powers attached to it and this prompts men to consult the were-tigers. Dwelling on this topic, the novella explains how the gift is transferred or acquired by the people. Another subject is the love relationship of Atuonuo and Kevi. Through their story, the novelist cautioned young people to choose their partner wisely because love can turn out to be dangerous. To live the life of a virtuous woman is appreciated by all. This is an important value in traditional Angami-Naga society. Women were expected to live a modest life and set examples in the society. Visenuo and Atuonuo lived by the expectations of the society and were careful not to be criticized by the people. The right age for marriage, value of a woman are emphasized by the elders in the community. Another concept is the depiction of the Angami-Naga worldview which is seen through the various beliefs and the co-existence of the physical and the supernatural world. The natural world seeks the help of the spiritual world in all its problems. From the above studies, it is seen that *Don't Run, My Love* is a novella that made the Angami-Naga culture the centre of its narrative. The narrative focused on the communal life, traditions, and beliefs of the Angami-Naga people and they were deliberated in the study. Through a simple love story, the author portrayed the Angami-Naga society in all its simplicity and complexity.

CHAPTER 3

RECOUNTING TRIBAL CULTURAL HISTORY IN MAMANG DAI'S *THE LEGENDS OF PENSAM AND THE BLACK HILL*

3.1 *The Legends of Pensam*

The Legends of Pensam published in 2006 is a book of interlinked stories focusing on the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh. The book chronicles the evolution of Adi villages and people from the primordial time to the modern age. Folkloric roots undoubtedly laid the foundation of the book as Dai employed myths, legends, and history in weaving the stories. Dai wrote that in Adi language the word “pensam” means “in-between.” It stands for the “middle,” or “middle ground” between myth and reality, and it is also understood as the hidden spaces of the heart where a secret garden grows (*Legends*). The book is divided into four sections and comprised of nineteen stories. Set in the distant and greenery hills, *The Legends of Pensam* stories began with “The Boy who fell from the Sky,” a narrative about a boy who fell from the sky and became the son of a childless couple and ends with “On Stage” which presents the modern picture of the Adi community. The first section titled “A Diary of the World” concerns with the early stage of the Adi villages and includes the subjects of myth, taboos, rituals and so on. The second entitled “Songs of the Rhapsodist” focuses on remembering the ancestral stories, the British expedition, family history, and friendship developed between the Adis and the *migluns*, that is, the Britishers. The third called as “Daughters of the Village” narrates powerful tales about women and their perseverences despite tragedies, heartbreaks, and injustices in their lives. The last section titled “A Matter of Time,” reflects the transitional period of the Adi community into the modern age.

The term cultural history is understood as the concentration based on social, intellectual, and artistic features in the life of people or nation (*Merriam-Webster*). Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* carried this by articulating the culture, history, religion, traditions, and beliefs that are integral to the tribal Adi people. The book also recounts the story of ordinary rural people who live an extraordinary life and whose attitudes toward nature and the cosmos were friendly and respectable. It also fuses reality with magic and mysteries. This fusion points out to the worldview of the Adi tribe that believes in the close relation between the natural and the supernatural. Slowly, the Adi tribe began to accept and moved under the hegemony of the *migluns*. *The Legends of Pensam* is a representation of tribal people and their way of life that was once native and untouched by foreign power, and of how with time,

it changes and integrates with other culture. As the book is rooted with tribal culture, nativism will be applied in studying the novel. *The Legends of Pensam* has elements of nativism in it. The cultural values, traditions, and lifestyles were disturbed by the process of colonialism, thus, elders and leaders voice out their concern to the people to uphold their traditional lifestyle and culture. However, maintaining a pure native lifestyle and culture is not possible because the outside influences are unavoidable.

Nativism makes a clarion call for the native or indigenous people to return back to their traditional way of life and their culture which were losing under colonial culture and hegemony. American anthropologist Ralph Linton described nativism as any conscious effort undertaken by members of the society to restore and revive some selected aspects of their culture. Linton added that each society wanted to keep their culture alive and when this is threatened by outside cultures, they retaliate against it (230). In *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, Higham defines nativism “as intense opposition” towards an internal minority on the basis of its foreign associations (4). Nativism in its broadest sense is an attitude of antipathy towards foreigners, their ideas, and their power. *The Legends of Pensam* presents three phases of the Adi people. The first refers to the pre-colonial period of the Adi people, the second reflects the colonization of the Adis, and the third deals with the aftermath of colonization. Before the colonial contact, the Adi people live a pure native lifestyle marked by their cultural practices and behaviours, however, under colonialism their indigenous traditions co-exist with foreign culture. *The Legends of Pensam* also presented different lives and stories that were simply not traditional but were modernized with the changing times and situations and integration takes place. The book powerfully bespeaks the heroism and bravery of man, the resilience of women, community spirit, and development. Family histories, accidents, mystery, deaths, and rituals are some of the important themes in the book. These features will be studied in the following sections.

3.1.1 The People and the Land

The Legends of Pensam gives a representation of native life as it is set up in native soil with characters that are indigenous to the land. This section will analyze the characters and the location of *The Legends of Pensam*. Unlike a city centric novel which is located in metropolitan places, *The Legends of Pensam* is rural centric and flourished with rural life and activities. The use of the term tribe in colonial context is a derogatory as it gives an image of them as half-naked people, savages, animistic, and uncivilized. Xaxa writes that tribes in

India were formed on the basis of geographical and “social isolation” from the larger Indian society. This indicates that the various tribes were not formed with the view of their social formation but in relation to the larger Indian society (“Tribes and Social” 2). The inclusion of tribes into the larger system under the colonial rule also takes control of livelihood, basic rights, freedom, and independence. Smith opines that under the colonial rule, the indigenous people’s sacred objects, the old artifacts, dresses, potteries, and other sacred things are transported and stored in the colonizers’ museum (51). By this, the indigenous or native people were robbed of their sacred materials which were opened for public display. Their values and sacredness were lost because they were owned and supervised by people who have no sense of value about their cultural artifacts.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau sees the native as the other and its utopian image of being self-sufficient stands for the incomplete nature of human society. While the civil man obtains his identity through others, the contrary lies with the savage man who lives within himself. The social man lives his life dependent on the opinion of others and their judgement from which he derived his experience (qtd. in Chow 341). The native people lived a self-sufficient and self-reliant life that was contrary to the civilizing standards of the non-native people. Thus, to make them into civilized people, the non-native or the colonialists imposed their culture and ethics on the native people. The native people were wrongly represented in the eyes of the colonizers. They lived an independent and self-reliant life and the defiled image of being backward, uncivilized, savages, and uneducated is a bias and an underestimation. Northeast India inhabited by different tribal groups and communities suffered from the false representations and injustices of the colonial power. Baishya writes that literature from Northeast India talks about the everyday and the survival (1). This survival can be referred to the survival of the ordinary people from the various problems of life. *The Legends of Pensam* presents native people who live a simple lifestyle combined with respect and love for their land and adhering to their culture. Their contact with the *migluns*, that is, the Britishers, robbed many of their good characters and cultural values.

Ordinary people with extraordinary history and characteristics made up the characters in the book. For a distinctive character like Hoxo, his origin might be unacceptable for some people. Hoxo’s birth was unnatural as he fell down from the sky. The first thing that Hoxo saw when he opened his eyes was the colour green. A green wall of trees, bamboo, and a green waterfall greeted him. Hoxo’s story appeared as surreal to outsiders but it is natural for people living in rural villages. Dai argues that this is possible because there is only a thin veil

between myth and reality (“Finding”). Hoxo grew up in the traditional values of his culture and became a chief. He helped his community by serving the people and performing ceremonies for the sick and the troubled. Pinyar’s story is a story of tragedy, loss, strength, and survival. She first married a man named, Orka, but was abandoned by him. Later she remarried to a good man named, Lekon, but it ended after Lekon was killed in a hunting accident. Beneath all the shame and losses that she had experienced, she had never given up her hope on life. When her son Kamur committed a heinous crime, she defended him that it was not his fault alone as it has got something to do with the blood. Despite of the tragedies and sorrows in her life, she endured them and lives a contented life. The narrator assessing Pinyar’s life takes her to be strong woman with a big heart and as strong as a man. Pinyar is a representative figure of women in tribal societies who perseveres in life despite their personal struggles and tragedies.

New professions like politicians, government employees, and playwrights emerged in the Adi community. They are a product of change brought by colonization, education, and modernization. Duan is a politician who belonged to the younger generation. As a politician he has promised many new developments to the people of Pigo town. However, he is rebuked by the people for not fulfilling them. He was held accountable for the new problems brought by the construction of road like, theft and new diseases. Coming from a good orator background, he defended the government and his actions and call upon the folks to unite in order to bring progress to their village. An unnamed government employee in the tale “Old Man and Fires,” reminiscend his past struggles in getting a good education. He sacrificed everything for a change in his poverty stricken life with his mother. This man represents the dream of the younger generation who prioritize education as a means to uplift their status. Characters like Nenem, Hoxo, and Rakut’s worldview were widened by their association with the *migluns*. Thus, despite of being traditional people, they accepted the new changes and got adapted to them. Foreign characters like, Jules, Mona, Adela, and David were mentioned in the stories and some of them took active role in the lives and culture of the tribal people. This underlines the intermixing of cultures between different groups of people and race. The tribal people described above are diverse and they belonged to different walks of life. They illustrate the dynamic nature of people and their profession that they do not remain inert but they transform with the changing times.

In the author’s note in *The Legends of Pensam*, Dai asserts that Arunachal Pradesh in North East India is one of the greenest states in the country. The Siang, one of the mightiest

rivers also known as Tsangpo in Tibet, marked the territory of the Adis. The Adi people like the majority of the tribes inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh practiced animistic faith which is interwoven with forest ecology and co-existence with the natural world. Travelling into the Adi villages is difficult as there is a lack of road connectivity. This requires long distance walk in the dense forest and mountains, elephant rides, and cumbrous river crossings. For old people, the difficult terrain is not a problem, as one view of the land diminishes all the pains away (xi). Isolation remained as a barrier for travellers to explore. However, this very isolation continues to protect the pristine forests and rich bio-diversity of Arunachal Pradesh. In spite of the tourist circuits being opened since 1992, Arunachal Pradesh still upholds preservation of land through the Inner Line and Restricted Areas Permit for visitors. Bhattacharya and Pachuau explained that the Inner Line Permit separated the tribal people of Northeast India from the Plains (4). Northeast India is known for its dense forests, rivers, mountains, and presence of wild animals. However, the period of colonialism and India's independence made them to lose many of its conservation ethics, rich biodiversity, and closeness with nature. The ecology was colonized and developed by the people who do not share the same sacredness of nature with the tribal people. The colonizer sees the forests in terms of commercial expansions and benefits. This concept was prevalent and practiced even after post-independence of India.

The name Arunachal Pradesh means “the land of the rising sun” as it is the first state in India to receive the first sun rays. In “Arunachal Pradesh: The Myth of Tranquility,” Mamang Dai claimed that Arunachal Pradesh has the privilege of remaining as one of the last frontiers of the world. Here the closest form of ancestral faith and practices still survived and they were handed down to the next generations. In an interview, Dai speaks of the inter-relation of all beings and argued that everything on earth like rocks, stones, trees, rivers, and hills have life and they are sacred. This is called Donyi-Polo, Donyi meaning sun and Polo meaning moon. This is the physical manifestation of a supreme deity or what Dai called it as “world spirit” (Agarwal). The Donyi-Polo worldview gives equal importance to all creatures and it also placed ecology at its centre. Singha claimed that Adi worldview and deep ecology are related because of their emphasis on biocentrism that all life forms are to be preserved. It debunked the popular notion of human as the sole authority and ruler (3). This joined humans with animals and the wilderness. Dai claimed the land as a “living presence” (Subramaniam). Thus, unlike the colonial mindset of perceiving the land in terms of trade and resources, for the tribal Adi people, the land is sacred and has a living presence. Das called Mamang Dai as

an “eco-conscious historian” who presented real situations in the mysterious hills and mountains (Das, “Idea” 65). The ecological hazards created by the process of colonialism and its aftermath, the people’s belief in relation to the ecology, and the vast beauty of the land, were some themes in Dai’s works and other Northeast Indian writers.

The Legends of Pensam is set in the greeny hills and rural localities of the Adi villages. In these places, the tribal people live in mutual co-existence with nature and they protect and guard the ecology as a priority. The book takes the reader to the rich ecology and biodiversity of the remote regions of Arunachal Pradesh. The novel is termed as a travel account which narrates the various journeys undertaken by different characters. The prologue of the book is narrated by the narrator who is visiting her village with some companions in a helicopter. The book gives several accounts of travel journeys undertaken by the rural folks. The people travelled the road and make difficult journeys in search of deadly aconitum, to gather daily essentials, or in search of dear ones. The narrator gives a vivid and wonderful description of her homeland, the calm rivers, the dark hills, and the jungles. This is the majestic, pristine, and mysterious land where the setting of the book is located. The beautiful sights calm the weary mind of the travellers and it also has many secrets which can turn out to be dangerous. This is the dual nature of the land. In the green valleys and hills, the two friends, Hoxo and Rakut, explored nature and speak their thoughts to the trees, the cane bushes, and the sharp summer light. These were the days when they were in communion and in oneness with nature.

Rural Adi folks toil hard to sustain their livelihoods. They depended on agricultural work for their livelihood. This culture presented not only their humble lifestyle but it also brings out the scenic rural valleys and hills where the farmers used to cultivate their fields. In the story “Pinyar, the Widow,” the narrator points out the hard labour yet satisfying life of the villagers who were addictive to the valleys and their fieldworks. The native life is represented as idle, devoid of work life and culture in the colonial discourse. Smith says that this is justified on the ground of hot climate or race by which dark skin is associated with indolence (54). As opposed to this colonial view, the Adi people were diligent workers who lived in a close relation with nature. In nature, they derived not only their needs but they also appreciated and tended it. However, the rich ecology slowly eroded away as a result of colonization. The land, trees, animals, and rivers that the native or tribal people used to affiliate themselves with were destroyed and colonial models of development, new flora and fauna breeding, infrastructure, and technology replaced them. Dai on one hand depicts the

rich ecology of the pre-colonial world and on the other side portrayed the ruins of the postcolonial world.

With the rapid changes in the society, the green and untouched forests were being destroyed and sold off by some tribal people without realizing their value. This concern is shared by Jules, the husband of Mona, a French development scientist. Jules believed that the best way to enjoy nature was to become one with it. This belief of Jules goes deeper as it included the protection of nature and the need to maintain grass-root strategies for forest management. Jules was honest in critiquing the people who do not value their forests and traded them for a little sum of money. On hearing Jules' concern, Hoxo narrated an ancient tale about the land. Once upon a time, a green and virgin land had existed under a just rule. There was no enmity and no incident of robbery was known. The chiefs used to consult the spirits to do justice to men and people had no worries over food as food was sown, harvested, and distributed equally. However, people changed their good behaviours by cutting down the big trees. The spirits of the peoples' ancestors died with the trees as they lived in those trees. Suddenly, things changed and people suffered when nature's benevolence waned. When the people dismissed the benevolence of nature and disrespect it they suffered its consequences (Dai, *Legends* 42). The tribal people perceived the ecology in all its forms, whereas, the *migluns* who were strangers to the land of the Adis could not bear the mystery of the forest as it threatens them. One officer notes down the dark side of the forest in his notebook. The forest is compared to an animal that is feared by the soldiers as it could rise up against them anytime. The trees added another sinister look to the *miglun* and in the dense forest hideous traps were set down to kill the enemies by the native people. Since they were well versed with the forest, they used it in combating against their enemies.

3.1.2 Folklore of the Adis

The folkloric elements in indigenous and native novels set them apart from colonial works. They signify another form of nativism. Many of the post-colonial literatures were still bound to colonial rules, thus, a break from it can be achieved by incorporating the folklore traditions in literature. Jawaharlal Handoo has opined that folklore and the oral are much neglected in the Indian academics (qtd. in Patil 181). Patil also refers to theorist Mikhail Bakhtin who emphasized the use of folklore in literature because the novel's roots must come from folklore (201). The Adi people have innumerable folklores which were verbally transmitted and practiced from generation to generation by word of mouth. Mamang Dai

influenced by her oral roots has beautifully woven the stories in the *The Legends of Pensam* from folklore. She draws her stories from folklore because it constitutes the basis of her people. Dai combines historical events with myths, legends, and lore of the tribal Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh.

Patrick B. Mullen expanded the meaning of folklore beyond the abstract cultural worldview that they include everyday life and its practices. Indigenous beliefs appeared as superstitious to many people. Various opinions related to superstition were opined by the people. One school of thought called it as a “survival” of primitive rituals, whereas others associated it with the “peasantry” in rural environments (90). The tribal people beliefs and practices were tied to the cosmos and the supernatural and they constitute their reality. Pinyar, the wise widow, narrated the story of the supernatural beings, the *miti-mili* race, to the narrator and her friend Mona. According to Pinyar, these beings were small and quiet people who were the first to make the mysterious *si-ye*, that is, the yeast used to ferment rice into beer. Before they vanished being deranged by “strange visions,” they gave the sacred powder to mankind (Dai, *Legends* 28). This is associated with the strong belief that *si-ye* has special powers and it is to be handled with respect. This special powder has been exclusively reserved to be made by women. Pinyar herself made some of the best *si-ye* cakes. There is a darker side of the powder and they were strictly forbidden before a hunt or a journey because they make men hallucinate just like the *miti-mili* race. The *si-ye* cake is a form of physical evil as sometimes some households forgot to observe the rules and their men die in the forests. Pinyar’s story of the *si-ye* made the narrator to gain a deeper understanding of the hunting accidents that happened every year. Accidents also occur when taboos are violated.

For tribal communities like the Adis, their folklores are not only practical, meaningful, and interesting, but they are rich in visual imagery as well. One of them is beautifully described by the narrator in the story, “Small Histories recalled in the Season of Rain.” The narrator recounts what her people used to say about “rain mother.” People envisioned her sitting in the tree tops in their dreams. Rain mother silver ornaments clink as she rides the wind and brandishing her sword. When she twirls her skirt storm clouds gathered to cover her. The Adi people personified rain as a mother. Rain which is an aspect of nature is taken as a mother. Similarly the Angami-Nagas, the Kiowa, and the Blackfeet people of the Native Americans personified the earth as a mother. In *The Sky Queen*, the Kojum-Koja people and their land were destroyed by the water army. However, one of them survived. She is Nyanyi Myete. She floated into the Doni-Dongor family and her *ga-le*

became the green trees of the Doni-Dongors. The land flourished with her blessings. Mythic women figures in folklores restored the hope of the people and the land. In Duyang, it used to rain incessantly day and night and sometimes it will rain for sixty-two days. The simple folks believed that this rain is a result of the hills under a “spell of diarrhea” (Dai, *Legends* 37). Almost everything in nature has a soul and a spirit in Adi’s animistic faith. Here, the rain is personified as an ecological evil obstructing the daily activities of the people.



Fig. 3. T. Satyan, “Adi Tribe , Ponung dancers , Arunachal Pradesh , India.”

The Adi rituals are connected with the different phases of the agricultural cycle which forms the basis of their subsistence economy (Chowdhury xi). In Komsing, the narrator and her companions were introduced to the Ponung dancers and their rituals. They were led by the miri, who is also the shaman and the rhapsodist. He dress like a woman in *ga-le* and wears the dumling, which is an intricate hair ornament that swings with the rhythm of his chanting. The dancers meticulously followed the rules to travel the road. They have not slept for many nights, but they were highly alert not to close their eyes even for a minute because if their souls stray and if they miss a step the journey will be over before its time. They will return to the present with a sorrow that will haunt them to an early death. The women danced to the story softly and they would moan. The shaman sings about the beginning of the world, history of the village, his brother as these are stories and “rhapsodies of time and destiny” that he must guard (Dai, *Legends* 55). The purpose of travelling the road is to guard the old memories which should not be lost. Shamans remembered the stories and reenacted the rites

and rituals. Stories, myths, and legends carried the culture, beliefs, and history of the people. In the book, the shaman narrated the myth of Keyum to the listeners and explains the purpose of man in fulfilling his destiny. From nothingness human beings are born and the almighty Donyi-Polo remains as the invisible force that guides men.

The story “The Case of the Travelling Vessel” narrates the history of the Lotang family from the Migu clan. They owned a magnificent vessel called *danki*. The vessel was made of the strongest metal alloy and it was an object of pride and wonder. This was not an ordinary vessel as the eldest son of the family noticed the vessel being overturned in its usual place filled with damp moisture and bamboo leaves which were not found in his village. It became a blessing for the family and the Migu clan became rich in sons and their daughters were married off well. They cherished it as a gift from the gods. However, after an earthquake, the vessel was split into two and had lost its beauty and each of the two splits weighed heavier than the intact vessel. Afterwards, the two *danki* disappeared and the Migu clan became poorer in sons. With this downfall, the Migu clan decided to perform a family ritual that was needed to be performed. For this, they felled the tallest tree with a hive of wild ants. The tree stands for strength and the ants symbolized fertility and the birth of many sons. This was how the ritual of restoration for the glorious past of the Migu clan was performed.

The Adi people believe in the existence of evil which appeared in various forms. Nigamananda Das in his paper, “The Idea of Evil among the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh: A Study of Mamang Dai’s The Legends of Pensam” highlights five forms of evils with some sub-forms. They are supernatural, physical, ecological, symbolic, mysterious or magical evils (69). Many tribes in Arunachal Pradesh have taken the forest as the abode of their numerous gods and spirits which are malevolent and benevolent. Chaudhuri points out that the Adis believe the *Rotne* tree as the abode of the evil spirit *Epom*. Thus, they were precautious of felling the tree (4). The Adis believe that the natural abodes like trees, rivers, mountains, and lakes, have spirits and evil exist in numerous forms in the biodiversity. Men is powerless in itself to combat against the forces of evil, thus, supernatural powers are required to overcome them. In Adi language, a priest is called as *nyibo* or *nyibu* or *miri*. Nyori emphasized that the *nyibu* or priest is the mouthpiece of the people as he communicates the grievances of the people to the spirits and requests them for redressal (272). The *nyibu* is a conjurer as well as a diviner. Evils of different forms exist in the dense ecology and proper rituals must be done to appease and overcome them. The evils can be propitiated by performing rituals and humans must also take precaution not to anger or tease the evil spirits.

Among the Adi people, there are many superstitious stories and beliefs that governed their lives. Likewise, the story of *Biribik*, the water serpent, was known and feared among the people. *Biribik* is a serpent with a head of horns. It represents a supernatural evil whose sighting causes death and accidents. The villagers remembered the story of a fisherman who had encountered the water serpent one night and could not recover from the horrible vision of the serpent, and within a year, he died of a wasting illness. Lutor, the father of Hoxo and the famous chief of the Ida clan had the same confrontation with *Biribik* on the edge of the river. People knew what will follow afterwards and no one was surprised when Hoxo's father was killed in a hunting accident. In these hills, people have certain premonitions like, women dream dreams, babies grow up unnaturally fast like deer, lion, or cubs, and infant mortality is high. The old women braided threads of vine and pray for safe passage of men. Strange things happened in the hills, forests, and villages.

Hunting accidents were common after the arrival of firearms in the hills and villages. The victims were mistaken for animals and were being shot by their fellow hunters. Lutor and Kalen were victims of hunting accidents. The punishment for killing a man is death. However, the matter is made negotiable if the aggrieved family agreed to pardon the death sentence. The convicted man is banished to live in the forest for a whole month like an animal. His closest kin could send food to him but since there are various types of taboos about the food, he is left alone to survive. Similarly, in Angami-Naga culture, a person who accidentally killed another person in a hunt is referred to as *themou*, meaning homicide. The slayer and his family are exiled from their native village for seven years (Zhale, *Tenyimia* 70). In almost all the tribal communities taboo is commonly observed by the people. The Adis of Arunachal Pradesh observed a number of taboos. Among the Galo Adis, it is known as *arirnam*, *aryinam* by the Pailibos, and *nyonam* by the Padam-Minyongs.

Taboos are generally observed to avoid back luck, sickness, epidemic or anger of the spirits. The Adis observed three types of taboos after their ritual ceremonies. They are taboo on movement, taboo on work, and lastly taboo on eating (Nyori 281). The character, Pinyar, isolated herself in the outskirts of the village after her house was burned. No one is allowed to go and dine with her for fear of enticing the tiger spirit that causes fire and believe to follow people home. Pinyar's son Kamur was an able-bodied man who was working as a clerk in a government office in Pigo town. He has a good wife and has three children. One afternoon, Kamur had done a gruesome act by killing his baby girl and his son with a dao. This is an example of physical evil which an ordinary man has less control over it. When he came back

to his sense, Kamur begged for forgiveness saying that he was unaware of those “black moments” (Dai, *Legends* 30). People who heard Kamur’s story understood the vague division between the world of spirit and man, as man and spirit were believed to be brothers. The people also believe that there were signs about this event. Earlier, two men had acted strangely and one had killed himself. Kamur was spotted sitting under the aubergine tree, a ghostly tree, at odd hours doing nothing. The elders in the village declared that Kamur is not to be blame because it has something to with blood. There are men and women acknowledged as guardians of history who can identify this defect in the blood. It is important to marry to a right blood because the consequences of a bad blood are unbearable. Old people used to say that some blood lines were almost taboo to mention. They were visited by spirits like the *miti-mili* race which were seized by bouts of madness. On the other hand, Pinyar believed that her son had been haunted by an evil spirit because of the mistakes of their forefathers, their parents, and her faults. Thus, he can only be healed by exorcising the evil spirit. Blood occupies an important subject in the community, and this importance is a characteristic of tribal community which weighs between good and bad blood.

In the hills and villages, terrifying events and strange things occur in the families. They are solved by the people themselves based on their belief system, rules, and by performing proper rituals. Living in a community, every action is measured and held accountable. Thus, it is important for men to be careful of their actions. In the hill, a couple, Togum and his wife, had a son named Kepi, who suffered from a disease that was incurable for a long time. The situation became worse as Kepi could not move and they had to carry him to many places for healing. Then someone suggested them to perform the serpent ceremony for the ailing child, in case, it was the spirit of a snake that had coiled the body of their son. Togum killed the cobra that was lying under the logs in his workplace. This was why the serpent ritual was needed to be performed. Hoxo was called to perform the ceremony. They had chanted all night and negotiated with the spirits to restore Kepi, but the spirits had moved to a place beyond recall. Hoxo exclaimed that these are the most dangerous ones, because the ones who go away never return. The fears of the people are overcome by performing rituals and dances. The Tapu dance is performed by the male members of the Adi community during the annual practice of community fencing. The dance is performed to dispel and drive away the spirit of fear that preyed on men. Men dressed in the costumes of warriors and perform mock fights to frighten the invisible enemy (183). This helps in strengthening people who are fearful of the evil spirits or are suffering from sickness.

Evil spirits and ghosts were not isolated from the lives of human beings. They can do unimaginable harm both visible and invisible to man. The Adis believe that everybody has a soul and they call it as *yalo*. The soul of a person may wander in his or her dream and it can be dragged away by the spirits known as *uyus*. The only way to restore it is done by the priest who will coax the evil spirit to release the soul of man (Nyori 284). In Dai's poem, "The River," the poet cautioned people not to stay too long by the river because it is a "wayward god" that can be changed into an elephant, a lion, a horse and even a peacock (89). In the tale, "A Homecoming," the story of a pregnant woman who was haunted by the spirits was told. The pregnant woman fell asleep on the warm stones by the river, and she woke up at sunset. This is considered as a grave error among the Adis, for women to linger by streams and river after sunset, as the night is restless with "strange dreams" and "lost spirits" (Dai, *Legends* 84). The next day, the woman suffered from a belly ache, and the old women who knew her previous day activity prepared for the rite of exorcism. A shaman was called to perform the ceremony and the situation became a bargain between the shaman and the spirits. The shaman promised to offer precious things like chicken, delicious food, and wine to the spirits and vow to observe the taboos and maintain peace. At this ceremony, people should gather and shout loudly otherwise one sense would be stolen. This is the way to invoke and offer something in exchange for the ailing body or soul of the person.

3.1.3 Language and Expression of the Adi People

To write in English language is not a welcoming idea in post-colonial discourse. However, the English language cannot be avoided since it was the widespread medium of instruction in educational curriculum. Dai adopted the English language and nativised the language to suit the mood, tones, and temperament of her native based stories. The Adis like many other Northeast communities is an oral community. The old people emphasized on the importance of words. If a person has given his word, he has to keep that. Dai observes that words cannot be dismissed easily because they are believed to be immortal ("Finding"). She also incorporates local expressions, native words, sayings, and names which were in Adi language. The title of the book "The Legends of Pensam" itself indicates the use of local language "pensam" which means "in-between" in Adi language. Satchidanandan has pointed out that language from nativism perspective projected the various dialectical variants of the people (17). Language is an important medium through which people make sense of the things and where meanings are produced and exchanged. By this, Hall mentioned that language is close to meaning and culture, and has been acknowledged as the key repository of

cultural values and meanings. The signs, languages, symbols, sounds in language represent the ideas, concepts, and feelings of the people (1). This is seen in *The Legends of Pensam* as the words and the expressions reveal something about the culture.

In the prologue, the narrator recounts her childhood life in a simple language, detailing the activities of childhood and its innocence and curiosity. The narrator described herself that she was born in the mountains where village boys kicked rocks around pretending at football. Every time a vehicle passes through their village, they would watch with curiosity. A non-native writer may discard the small details, for example, kicking rocks as football because he has no knowledge about the activities of children in rural villages. In the hands of native writers, the actions and simple behaviours of the indigenous people were recorded and given importance. This description and others are some of the ways to appreciate and distinguish native expressions, words, and speeches from others. They are also visible in the conversations and speeches of the characters. When Hoxo's father came back with a strange sighting of the water serpent and narrates the story to the people, they exclaimed, "Tah! How can it be!" (Dai, *Legends* 9). The use of "tah" is native to the people, it is a form of local expression. Other expressions like, *hai hai*, *aiee* are used by the people in expressing shock, joy, grief and so on. This is what Gerald Thomas has called it as "local color" which retains some of the local languages in written form (768). The retaining of indigenous words added richness to the work and this is another principle of nativism that calls for the use of native words and expressions in literature.

Dai also added humour in her narrative. This is a folk expression and it shows the lighter side of tribal people who used to tease and crack jokes with each other. In the story "The Road," old Luga narrated his dream to Larik and his friends in the longhouse. He dreamt of an unknown land full of rocks with big red flowers blooming on the rocks. The younger people listened attentively to him because he is an interpreter of dream. However, he did not give a serious interpretation and he simply explained that they will grow old drinking and die in a state of happiness. It ended in a humorous note for the listeners. The tale "The Words of Women" brought out the humorous side of Dumi. Dumi was frustrated with the disloyalty of her husband. In the words of Dumi, it was almost time for her husband to die since he was old, but he thinks of taking another wife. The tone of Dumi's anger is ingrained with humour here. The funeral of Dumi passed away with another humour exchanged between an old woman and the old man Pator. He was the oldest man in the village and when he came to mourn Dumi's passing, when he sat by her to mourn, his bones cracked. One of the old

women cried that he should have gone with Dumi, but Pator replied wittily that he is waiting to go with her. Rakut is another humorous character. He can speak poetry and he exaggerated things. He imitates the *migluns* and makes people laugh. These characters and their expressions also point out to the attitude of the tribal rural people in solving or approaching their daily life's problems.

The words spoken by the characters are simple and local in nature. They conversed about the daily affairs of life, the supernatural happenings, the *migluns* and so on. The use of the word *miglun* instead of the white indicates that the Adi people are in control of the narrative and venerate their own language. The *migluns*' influence over the Adi's culture and lifestyle through education, religion, progress, and other things were unstoppable. The majority of the characters in the book are Adi people and their names are in local language. They are Hoxo, Sirsiri, Togum, Kepi, Pinyar, Bodak, Lutor, and so on. Words like *miglun* referring to the whites, *Biribik* that is the water serpent, *si-ye* meaning fermented yeast, *miti-mili* a race of supernatural beings, *apong* rice beer, and more were used in the narrative. They give an indigenous flavor to the text. The native languages were fast disappearing in the contemporary times. Mamang Dai expresses her concern over the rapid loss of many indigenous languages in Arunachal Pradesh. She lamented that there exist no environment to retrieve the mother tongues because of the digitalized and technologized world. The only way to preserve mother tongue is to speak it ("Finding"). By speaking the mother tongue, it can be maintained and saved from becoming extinct.

The rituals and songs are enacted and sung with a sense of native spirit and enthusiasm. The songs are not only melody but they are narrative of the people, their stories, and they carried the feelings and expressions of the people. In the story, "Travel the Road," the Ponung dancers along with the miri performed the ritual of travelling the road and the women dancers danced to the story. The miri or shaman sings about different stories of time and creation which he should guide. The dancers sing in chorus as it is a language that never ceases. They sing because the hills are old, older than all sin and man's fascination with blood (Dai, *Legends* 55). The shamans were considered as the first poets and they continue to sing the songs and narrate the stories of their culture. The stories told by shamans were connected with rites, rituals, and beliefs of the people. For this, Dai explains that the shamans as well as the storytellers are considered as the first custodian of the word ("Finding"). The shaman functioned as the voice of "collective memory." Besides articulating the past history and beliefs of the people, he also expresses the aspirations of the community (Dai,

Introduction 6). Folk speech also included varieties of blessings and graces, prayers, and toasts, which are serious and humorous (Thomas 769). Songs of praise and teasing are sung with pride and humour by the singers. In the story, “The Road,” the young girls sing song of teasing about the young men, their brothers. It pertains to their unmarried life and its problems. In “Daughters of the Village,” Nenem listened to the ballad song sung of the warriors and about love. It made her to reflect her lost love with David, a *miglun*.

Chanted words or spoken words are inducted as oral tradition. Dai considered words as the first travellers because in chanting a word or articulating a thought, it travelled and is being perceived by another person and later on become a part of the oral tradition. This is the value of words (“Finding”). Words are believed to have magical powers and there is a restriction in using them thoughtlessly. Sirsiri, a talented singer in Gurдум talked everything to death. Her complaint about the weather is loud during the rainy season. She would curse the sky and the mountains and her frustration would grow more with the outpouring rain. She was bored with her life and had frightful imaginations. Another woman, Dumi, a hard-working woman, was struggling in her marriage. Even though she had borne him children and had been patient with him, her husband still wants to take another wife. She can no longer bear the injustices of her husband and she started cursing her husband using powerful names of father sun, brother sun, mother and sister sun, that he should be ruined and call for fire on his head. Her companions were aware of the power of words, and they silenced her because it was considered a huge thing to invoke the sun and moon. Words have magic and powerful words carry powerful magic (Dai, *Legends* 77). After Dumi’s cursing, summer brought heavy rain and when it stopped, the sun burned so hot as if it was making up for the rain. The weather seemed unfavourable to the people; their labour decayed and they prayed to the Great mother to bless them again and protect them. In oral societies, words are not taken as words alone, but they are believed to have magical powers which can bring prosperity or calamity in people’s lives.

3.1.4 Resistance and Change

The ancestors of the Adis were independent and self-reliant people who govern themselves and were not dependent on others for their livelihood. This scenario was changed after the British accession into their hills. The sovereign life of the Adi people was replaced by the governing policies and administration of the British. However, being a naturally sovereign tribe, the Adi people refused and resisted the authority of the *migluns*. Many of the

characters in *The Legends of Pensam* have expressed their love for their native land and affirm their right to live in their land as the sole owner and master. Nemade expresses that a major source of nativism lies in evoking one's closeness or attachment to a particular space or region (250). The aggression towards foreigners or strangers in one's land is another hallmark of nativism. This violence can produce harm to both the native and the non-native. Guia notes that nativism aimed at demarcating the lines between the native and the non-native, thereby, emphasizing on the native (13). Resistance as pointed out by Ashcroft is one of the foremost features of post-colonial societies (*Post-Colonial* 20). The tribal Adi people resistance against the *migluns* is central in the book.

A land that has a rich ecology with significant rivers and mountains was never free from trouble. It is not a land of paradise, in fact, it is a land where tragedies, accidents, deaths, and conflicts were common but tribal justice prevailed. For instance, in case of hunting accidents and killings, the killers observe taboo of isolation in the outskirts of the village away from their families and village. This shows the democratic law of the tribal people who deal with issues justly. In spite of the many problems and accidents that happened to the people and the villagers, they were still resilient and life goes on for them. Kalen's widow, Omum, too, liked others carried her life forward after the death of her husband from hunting accident. Weisman pointed out that the indigenous people fight for sovereignty and self-determination are other faces of nativism (199). This is carried out by the tribal people in the narrative. As the *migluns* were stealthily entering the Adi villages, conflict and tension too followed as the people were adamant to block foreigners entry into their land. In 1911, a British political officer, Noel Williamson, who was an experienced man dealing with the hilly tribes for twenty years was killed by an angry Adi in the village of Komsing. Other members of the Adi tribe participated and it turned into a massacre. What followed was a terrible nightmare for the villagers. Many armed soldiers crossed the rivers and enormous mountains in retaliation. On the other hand, people who knew the story blamed the cowardly men, guarding the officer, for mocking the poor villager that he was a "wild beast" eaten up with disease and he will not deserve any sympathy from the white officer (Dai, *Legends* 51). The tribal people were looked down with stereotypical outlook.

Dyer explains that stereotype is considered as a term of "abuse." The people defended the accused and questioned the visitors who stirred the incident. The villagers were not looking for sympathy and they cannot be bribed with gifts or promises. They are the

people of the land and they have the right to protect their land from the intrusion of the visitors. Fanon records that the colonizers perceive the native people as insensitive to ethics. They represent not only the absence but the negation of values (40). Violence is considered as a “cleansing force” for the individual. This frees the native from the inferiority complex created by the colonizers. It makes him fearless and restores his self-respect (94). The tribal people defended themselves and their dignity from the foreigners. They fought hard against the *migluns*, but they were defeated and were made to build a monument for the dead officer under coercion. Even though the village of Komsing had experienced brutality, killings, and tragedies and was termed as a “village of horror,” their village continued to grow and live on (Dai, *Legends* 55). Srikanth points out that indigenous people as the first settlers of the land, they have every right for self-determination and seek protection and preservation over their languages, cultures, and traditions through the establishment of their own government (188). This justified their resistance against the foreign power.

Nenem was a remarkable woman who was the daughter of the headman, Sogong, of Yelen village. She was one of the few women of the region to be admitted in a proper school. Being the only child, Sogong had sent her daughter to the mission school to equip her to read and write for he believed that her daughter is capable of what any son could do. However, school turns out to be a dreadful experience for Nenem as she could not cope with the textbooks, prayers, and the teachers with flowery dresses. After a year of enrollment in the school, Nenem fell ill and would not recover. She regained her health when her father took her back home where she faced the mountains and the river of her land again (Dai, *Legends* 95). Nenem recounted her frightful experience to her friends that the school might shrink her soul and she feared that she may lose the chance to see the river again. Here we see a woman who was soulfully attached to her land and the river. Nenem had remained true to her land even to the point of separating from her lover, David, who belonged to another land. She consoles herself that no person dies of love. She had loved him wholeheartedly and now she is enough on her own.

Despite the influx of foreign influences into the tribal culture and its adaptations by the people, some tribal people still have the concern to preserve their traditions and culture. In Pigo town, a cultural show was organized and Rakut’s father announced the purpose of the show that it was all about preserving their roots. The show enlightened Nenem of many things about her culture and land and she decided to honour her land above everything else. This was her land and she had chosen it over love dismissing other feelings that she had.

Nenem's love for her land remains as one of the finest example of how the Adi people respect, protect, and honour their land above everything else. *The Legends of Pensam* presents some of the finest examples of resistance against colonial power and their gradual integration with colonial culture. These two opposites are related because while the Adi people fought the *miglun's* dominance, they also could not keep their culture and people intact away from the influence of the *miglun's* culture.

Acculturation of a person does not include the whole culture of another but only some and deny rejection of some other traits (Cunningham 12). Nemade highlighted on the flexibility of culture that it does not remain inert but absorb other influences and convert them into the process of nativization (243). The means of adopting from other cultures and behaviours are frequent with minority or less privileged group of people who are economically and politically subordinate to the dominant culture. When the Stillwell road construction was started by the *migluns*, the assistance of the tribal people was needed and they were called to work. The *migluns* defying the land heritage of the tribal people carved the road in the evergreen forest. The young men resented the proposal. However, in the end, Rakut's father and Hoxo's father represented their village to help the *migluns*. In their mind and their speech they hated the *migluns*, however, they were compelled to obey the orders of the *migluns* when they were left with no choice. Rakut's father adopted some of the cultures of the *migluns* when he returned back to his village. He was wearing a hunting boot and a camouflage outfit, and shouted "A! B! C!" when he arrived in his village. Even years later, he would recount his past experience and the glorious power of the *migluns*.

Politics revolutionize the old lifestyle of the Adi people. In Pigo, the people were promised a new road by their politician, Duan. The folks were elated and they imagined themselves with a road, vehicles, rows of electric poles, and new schools for children. However, Larik, son of Togla, did not believe in the promises made by Duan. He criticizes the development projects taken up by government because it has done more bad than good by bringing outsiders, thieves, and new diseases (Dai, *Legends* 156). Their forefathers had surrendered their ancestral lands to the government and the latter had used their lands to construct road, and now it came to steal their identity like a thief creeping into their villages and fields. The young people headed by Larik were strong in their decision that they will not support the government and its projects. They do not welcome strangers to their land and unlike some people who wanted the fortune of the *migluns*, they detest the idea. Their only demand is to live with their own identity and an independent life. The bridge in their village

was slowly crumbling away and for Larik, it is the bridge that stands between the noted people in government services and the people from rural areas. As people in the bureaucratic fields were distancing themselves from their village and its customs, their connection with their people was also weakening. The new developments ushered in by the *migluns* were robbing the property and materials of the tribal people. By this, they violated the sacred things of the tribal people as well.

Studies of acculturation pointed out that the single most important fact to emerge from acculturation is inescapable and fluid and it is also “highly creative” (Cunningham 12). At the beginning sections of the book, a primitive and rural picture of life was given. However, as the novel progresses, the rural places and people began to be transformed by the new developments like roads, schools, offices, halls, to modern equipments like, telephone, television, electricity, binoculars and others. In the final two sections, “The Golden Chance” and “On Stage,” present a picture of the villages and the towns opening to new avenues. The narrator’s friend Mona asked her in making a film about Duyang and other villages. She encouraged her that it will be a golden opportunity since the person who is interested in making the film is a famous documentary film-maker. The film will cover the history, the legends, and myths of the people. Another person, Dabo, a playwright, from the town of Gurдум was releasing his new play called *Sepek, Sepek*. The word implies the sound of a beating stick. The play was about guarding food. The playwright’s stories were inspired from the daily lives of the people. It is important to tell the stories of the people in new form as the old rhapsodists and storytellers were dying. The narrator realizes this importance that the stories should be now recorded in new mediums that is through films, plays, books etc. The narrator pondered about the golden chance and believed that it is all about making the best use of the opportunities given to one.

With the changing times, many new things were introduced to the Adi society. However, the change was not smooth as it produced clashes between the old ways and the new forms. An example is seen in the field of entertainment. A celebration in Pigo town called distinguished musicians like Sirsiri, Menga X, and other notable people to perform. Menga X, the legendary performer of yesteryear experience at present was important. He was frightened by the new machines, the microphone, the wires, and the enormous crowd. He wanted the old days back, when he was poor, unknown, but himself, and he sang from his heart. He longed for his old gift and wanted his soul back. Menga X’s situation speaks about the condition of the people who could not comprehend the new trends. The narrator too

witnessed the changes that happened in her village, the towns, and other villages. While some people termed them as alien and backward, the people there were accepting and adapting to the changes. In the words of Rakut, they were just peripheral people living their own lives. They should not be afraid of change and embrace it because change is a wonderful thing. Change is simply a “rearrangement” that can lead to moment of great possibilities (Dai, *Legends* 191). Thus, we see a society that first opposes to colonialism and its influences but integrate with some of its culture and lifestyles. Tradition and modernity mingled and exist side by side at the end of the book and this is reflected through the festival programs held in Pigo town. However, the basis of their culture and tradition were retained and they remained close to their roots and their identity in the midst of integrating some practices into their culture.

3.1.5 Conclusion

The Legends of Pensam presented the life of the Adi people from the primordial to the modern age. Traces of the pre-colonial period and its practices were prevalent, then it progresses towards colonial and post-colonial period. The society was also marked by practicing the old traditions and its resistance against the *migluns*. However, with the changing times, it also integrated some aspects of foreign culture into its own culture. But, what remained remarkable was the rural life and culture of the Adi people that continued to survive in different phases. Nativism emphasizes on the importance of indigenous culture and tradition and they are against the interference of the colonialists in the native lands. The concept has expanded to include the flexibility of culture and at the same time practicing and valuing one’s own culture. The Adi people presented in the book were mostly common people, and their occupation, beliefs, and behaviours faithfully represent their culture in general. Besides the indigenous Adi people, the *migluns* also participated in the stories as well. They influence each other in their associations. The tribal people were receptive to the changes and developments and they also ventured beyond their own land to acquire new professions. The pristine forest and the vast ecology of the Adis were the localities in which the stories were set. While the majority of the whites remained insensitive to the rich ecology of the Adis destroying the evergreen forests and trees, the native people were concerned and enraged over these activities. The large forest covers act as a shelter for the native people against the *migluns*. Dai never distanced herself from the folklore of her people in writing *The Legends of Pensam*. The folklores employed in the book are a window to understand the

Adi culture and their tradition. They also indicated that nothing can be neglected and leave out carelessly, in fact, life is to be religiously lived by observing proper customs, behaviours, and taboos. Though Dai writes in English, her narration, language usage, and expressions are her own and they are based on indigenous English. The characters in the book use local language, expressions, and some words are retained in Adi language. All of these usages are the local colour of the book. Even though the *migluns* have colonized the Adis and transformed their culture, the Adi people still hold on to their tribal values and remain firmly in love with their ancestral land. Despite of colonization and tragedies that had befallen on people, the simple folks continue to respect and cherish their native land and their people. On one side, the people fought hard to resist colonialism, but their resistance is followed by integration with the changing times and modernization. This is an irresistible force and they adapted some of the foreign traits and practiced them. Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* is a book that focuses on the cultural history of the Adi people, giving importance to the cultural and social ways of the people. The narrative remained as a gateway to understand the tribal Adi people and their culture.

3.2 *The Black Hill*

The Black Hill, one of the finest novels of Mamang Dai, was published in 2014, and received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017. Set in 1840 and 1850 in the state of Arunachal Pradesh inhabiting Northeast India, it focused on the historical contact between the British and some tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The book combines the history of the people with fiction. The Abor and Mishmee tribes of Arunachal Pradesh occupied a major place in the story. The term Abor is the old name of the Adi tribe. The novel presents a poignant love story, tragedy, death, and triumph of life through the characters Gimur and Kajinsha. It also portrayed a French priest named, Father Nicholas Krick, who had a persistent aim to reach Tibet and do missionary work.

The three characters, that is, Gimur, Kajinsha, and Father Krick belonged to different regions, culture, and religion, but they were brought together in their destiny. In crossing each other's path, they try to understand one another but it turned out to be a failure. All of them wanted to do good in different ways that is, protecting their native land from foreign invaders, to spread the good news of the gospel, and to live life to the fullest. They were successful in their mission and dreams up to some extent but untimely death and tragedies crashed their lives. The ordinary lives of the tribal people were disrupted by the expedition of

the soldiers in the hilly regions. As the tribal people like the Mishmee and Abor lived an independent life, they protested against the invasion of foreigners in their land. However, their attitude of resistance towards the *migluns* or whites differs from clan to clan. While some fought against their own brothers as British sepoys, for instance, in the Suddya battle, other chiefs like, Kajinsha's father, Kajinsha, and Zumsha were stern in forbidding *miglun's* entry into their land. In spite of the efforts made by some chiefs and clans in combating against the *migluns*, it remained largely unsuccessful as some of the leaders, like, Marpa and Lamet, conspired against their own people with the *migluns* which, in turn, stirs inter-tribal conflict.

Missionary work and education in hilly lands were often viewed as forces of colonialism and they further subjugate the native people. The coming of the French priest, Father Nicholas Krick, into the land of the Mishmee was faced with strong oppositions from the people because they knew, by experience, that once an upliftment is made in certain field, the *miglun* will occupy their lands and other domains as well. Thus, Father Krick could not accomplish his aim of spreading the gospel in Tibet, since the only route available for him to reach Tibet can be made through the Mishmee hills. His dream was thwarted many times by the tribal people who were suspicious of his mission. However, not everything ended in vain as he was able to heal and influence some tribal Mishmee people who applauded his good works.

Besides, the colonial theme other aspects significant are the rich ecology of the land, colorful traditions, cultures, beliefs, and the status of women in the family and the society. *The Black Hill*, too, like other post-colonial writings revolutionizes the literary techniques and styles of colonialism. As the post colonial writers invented their own styles, methods, and ways to tell their own stories, they also control their own narratives and narrate their history and unique culture in their writings. By this, they make use of native expressions, metaphor, symbols, and speeches which give a sense of post-colonial writings. The present novel combines both native and western literary styles in presenting the cultural history of the Abor and Mishmee tribes and their relation with the *miglun*. The novel will be studied under four different sub-sections to be followed by a concluding summary.

3.2.1 The Land they called Home

Northeast India consists of various tribes and clans that maintained a symbiotic or co-existing relationship with nature. There is a strong "rootedness" in the literatures of Northeast

India. This is depicted through the roots of the beloved or native land, the roots of the people and culture (Ngangom and Nongkynrih xii). Land is considered as a precious asset, sacred, and revered among the tribal people of Northeast India. The land is simply not a surface but it is the home and pride of the people as seen among the Abor and the Mishmee tribes in *The Black Hill*. Land is a tall issue among the tribal people. Even before the period of colonization, different tribes were at war with each other because of land inheritance, fishing, and hunting. The love for their native land which they called home is the first thing the people protected when the *migluns* tried to take possession of their land. In the colonial justifications, the indigenous lands were perceived as unused, underused, or empty-areas of rational deficit. Plumwood pointed out that the ideology of colonization is coupled with the concept of anthropocentrism. The colonizers dominate the non-human nature by introducing their own ideas and renovations over the indigenous lands (“Decolonizing” 504). The tribal people and their close bond with the land through their beliefs and practices were either prevented or no longer practiced with the process of colonization. The indigenous lands were taken away by the colonizers for the purpose of farming, industrialization, and construction of recreational places. New concepts and terms alien to indigenous people like, private property, and desacralisation, replaced the indigenous concept of land (Featherstone 202). This dispossessed the indigenous people of their lands and their land rights. This is also one of the reasons why land and place are important subjects in post-colonial discourse. It remained as one of the most difficult issues to resolve during the period of colonialism and continued after the end of colonial rule.

Crosby notes that the success of European imperialism is attributed to biological and ecological reasons (7). The dominance of the ecology by the colonialists weakened the indigenous people beliefs and reverence for nature in some ways. As the sacred things like the trees, forests, mountains, and others were taken away from them from which they derived their beliefs and survival from them. The western understanding of space includes architectural space, physical space, psychological space and theoretical space. These concepts have altered the indigenous worldview and its space. The indigenous space was devalued and the colonizers saw it as something that can be dominated or controlled. For example, land which was taken as a living being by the tribal people was perceived by the colonizers as something that can be tamed and beautified. These acts changed the original and natural landscape which the tribal people and the native people derived their legends, myths, and beliefs from it. The tribal communities had independence and autonomy over their lands,

resources, and political life. However, these were altered under the British rule and further continued with the post-independence of India. With the passage of time, the colonizers carried out many activities to control the tribal people. Xaxa stated that with an aim to demarcate the line between the plains and the hill, the Dafla and the Abor people, the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873 was implemented (“Tribes and Indian” 120). In this act, direct administration was absent. This makes a separation between the hills from the plains and helped the former to protect their own land.

Bioregion was formed to address the issues of nature-culture dichotomy and to re-establish man’s relationship with other entities in the ecosystem. The bioregionalist thinkers and practitioners help human beings to reconnect themselves with the land and places because they are part of them and without them survival is not possible (Manoharan 165). In the novel, together with the tribal people, the forest too unwelcomes the *migluns* expedition into the tribal people’s land. The British troops could not reach Mebo because the bend in the river system prevented people coming by boat from reaching the village. The difficult terrain served as a hindrance for the *migluns*, however, this is a blessing for the tribal people as it prevents the influx of foreigners into their land. In Mebo village, strong talks were going on among the people in the *meroms*, that is, the fireplaces where they sit around, that they will not yield their land to the *migluns*. They kept alive the tradition of their forefathers to protect their land at all cost. The phrase “a fire draws people together” literally and metaphorically describes the people who were drawn together in the *meroms* out of their love for their native land (Dai, *Black* 25). The communications in the *meroms* are vital because they always put the integrity of their land and community above other things.

The tribal people prioritize their ecology, and they reflect this in their speech, activities, and in their daily life. The natural ecosystem is also a habitat of their rites and rituals. For example, in performing a rite, they used certain trees, plants, and other objects to carry out the act. The earth is sacred to the native people. Hughes and Swan explain that the term “sacred space” is a place where men find a “manifestation” of divine power in which they feel closely connected to the universe (163). This is shared by the Adi people with their land. Similarly, the Native Americans too share this sacredness of space. A land can keep the people together, but it can also make them to shed blood for it. However, not all the people of the Abor and Mishmee tribes shared the same goal of keeping their land intact, some self-centered people were ready to open the way of their land to the white men. This resulted in a

long enmity between chief Lamet and Kajinsha's clan. As Gimur was climbing through the steep hills to settle down with Kajinsha in the black hill, she could not comprehend the meaning and value of land which different people had spoken about over and over again. Men claimed land as a possession and owned the stream, the jungle, the rocks, the big trees, the mountains, and the rivers. The other side of ownership was ugly and dangerous as men fought and killed each other for land. Brothers became enemies over land. Gimur perceived the dual existence of love and ferocity that people have for land and this perplexed her because she saw no meaning in it. The shaman explained the meaning of land that it belonged to the people and it carried the soul of their ancestors. Thus, without it people will not be able to survive on their own. Later on, Gimur perceived the value of land like her mother who used to say that the land was everything (Dai, *Black* 70). The land and herself could not be separated because they are one. This identification with the land answered her life's question.

The title of the novel "The Black Hill" refers to the black hill, the abode of Kajinsha and Gimur, which lies close to border of the Zayul valley of Tibet. Their new house, a thatched bamboo longhouse was surrounded by wooden slopes of trees and a small stream. It was scenic, peaceful, and secluded from other huts. This territory was unexplored by the *migluns*. The black hill connotes seclusion, isolation, and protection but it is also ominous, hideous, and mysterious. Many of the important and horrific events in the novel played out in this place. Land ownership and resolving land conflicts are two toughest challenges a chief has to oversee. The Mishmee people of Kajinsha and his clans fought with the nomadic Brokpa herdsmen in the black hill for land ownership.

A great chief who prioritizes his native land above other things is none other than Kajinsha's father. He was a peace loving man who desired peace in his land, but this was thwarted by the invasion of the *migluns*. Some clans showed the way of their land to the *migluns*, and this enraged Kajinsha's father and his clans. In order to retaliate against the *migluns* and the tribal people who helped the former, Kajinsha's father and his clans took the help of their neighbour, the Tibetans. In return for the Tibetans' help, the uncle of Kajinsha promised to protect and guard the land of the Tibetans so that no stranger would be allowed to cross Tibet via the Mishmee hills. This pact was upheld till the days of Kajinsha. Kajinsha, like Gimur, could not understand the value of land. His father, a wise and peaceful chief, explained the meaning of land to him that it symbolizes "ownership" and "rest" (112). From the land, the man will derive his needs and it will secure his life and his children's life for generations.

While land gives ownership and rest, the irony lies in the fact that land never provides peace to the people, including Kajinsha's father, a man of peace. This prompts Kajinsha to think that it was impossible to defend it because the land exists on its own. It has a heart and a language that beckoned men from different parts of the world to it. The concept of the "organic female earth" is central to native outlook and this belief marked them distinctly from the people of the technologized societies. While the native communities viewed nature as a "being," the technologized world considered it as a "resource" (Mander 214). In an encounter with Father Krick, Kajinsha gave a powerful insight as to the belief of his people with regard to the land. They "read the land" because it is their "book," and everything on the hill is a living being and the voices of rain, thunder, and lightning are the voices of spirits speaking to them (Dai, *Black* 140). From them, the people learnt the good and the bad. They have been living in this manner for hundreds of year. Nature and the ecology are treated with a voice and life. The anthropocentric behavior was discarded and it calls for an equal balance of men and nature. The Angami-Nagas also considered sky, that is, *tei*, as their father, and earth, that is, *kijü*, as their mother. The native worldview of nature is not anthropocentric. In fact, the people believe in the affinity of men, nature, and the celestial beings. Kajinsha also related a story told to him by his father to the priest, that everything on earth and sky is connected since they are born from the same mother. Human beings belong to the land and the land is a good mother. They respect the land and take what they only need. Animals and trees offer themselves to men. In short, human beings and the land help each other to survive. By this, men do not act as superior to the animals or trees but they co-exist with each other.

Colonialism not only imposed its ideology upon the colonized, it does the most damaging by depriving the natives of their basic land rights as well. Place becomes a complex issue in the colonial discourse. Ashcroft and colleagues argue that colonialism separates space from place (*Key* 177). Before the period of colonialism, even though tribes like, the Abor and Mishmee fought within themselves for land possessions, the reasons were different from the colonizers who possess land for economic and political benefits. Thus, the period of colonial rule engulfed the land strife in native geographies. Kajinsha and Gimur were true patriots of their land. Their "unspoken pact" was to defend their land in the hands of the enemies and to give their life for the cause of it (Dai, *Black* 262). Kajinsha's last unfulfilled wish was to start his life again in the black hill, his home, as the same person. In his land, he has everything that he required and he derived his belief and survival from it. He was called as a savage for his belief and love shown towards his land. His stay in the prison

denies his contact with the open space. However, on the day of his trial, he was brought out from the prison and was made to stand under the open sky. This made him numb to the beatings and the cursing of men towards him. Kajinsha has great love for his land and called it as home. He was a man with many names, a sinner, shaman, priest, lama, and legend which mingled into one. Kajinsha loathed violence like his father and he longed for peace and wanted to be loved. However, the *migluns* failed to understand him and his love for his land. There is nothing wrong in dreaming and desiring to stay at one's own hill, one's abode, but this was considered as a crime when Kajinsha was wrongly convicted of murder and was hanged.

As Dai points out, the ecological predicament of place that refers to the need for traditions and rituals which require certain trees, place, and other materials are needed to be preserved ("Finding"). This emphasizes that if certain trees, rivers, animals, and places that are sacred to the people are lost, it will not only threaten the ecology but the rites and rituals that were derived from them will be lost. What was once the untouched and virgin forest was exploited and polluted by the colonialists who do not cultivate a culture of reverence for nature. While the native people treated nature with mystery and respect, the *migluns* see it only in terms of prospect. Plumwood indicates that the human colonizer treats nature as "radically other," and humans as "emphatically" separated from nature and animals ("Decolonizing" 504). Even though the native people were termed as savages and illiterate, they have better wisdom and knowledge in preserving their environment than the *migluns*. In Mebo village, people use to say that some of the trees in the village were older than the "oldest grandfathers" (Dai, *Black* 28). The longevity of trees is possible because the people do not disturb the growth of the trees. The tribal people were soulfully attached to their land and the things inhabiting it whether living or non-living beings, thus, they emphasized on their protection and preservation. They derived strength, beauty, peace, and survival from their land and the ecology.

3.2.2 A Call for Non-Interference in the Native Land

The heart of native or tribal resistance against the *migluns* or the Britishers lies in the desire to live an autonomous life without outside interference. In short, the Abor and Mishmee people were sovereign people who strongly opposed the presence of *migluns* in their land. Rimi Tadu has mentioned that Arunachal Pradesh functioned as "Zomia," meaning where the inhabitants were remote and independent from colonizing forces (120). Before the

British intervention, the various communities and tribes in India lived as “self-contained.” Thus, they were not a part of India and were outside the jurisdiction of India. British colonialism clubbed the tribes together within the larger India and they were ruled by the same political and administrative structure (Xaxa, “Tribes and Indian” 44). This clubbing denied the tribal people of their freedom and autonomy. Young says that colonial culture became the basis or the legitimate form in all aspects of life, for example, government, literature, law, religion, education and so on (3). These are resisted and deconstructed by the post-colonial people and cultures. Tribal or indigenous people were misrepresented in history. They in the observation of Smith worked hard to rewrite and re-right history as falsely documented by the dominant group (28). Tribal resistance against the colonial power or hegemony is interlinked with independence, land protection, environmental preservation, cultural integrity, and so on.

At the beginning of the novel, the author introduced the ongoing tensions between the Mebo people of the Abor tribe and the *migluns* for the latter’s unlawful encroachment and demands made against the Abor. The Abor able bodied men who appeared like gods, armored with their spears, shields, and war helmets returned to their village with the news of the *migluns* expedition into their hills. The matter with the *migluns* was not confined to the men alone, it has been shared by the womenfolk as well. The *migluns* laid out two propositions to the villagers. Firstly, they wanted to set up a trading post in the hill of Mebo, and secondly, they wanted to protect the fisherman and gold washers who had once worked for the Mebo people but fled away to Assam. Like the elders in the village who do not trust the strangers, Lendem’s father, a chief, decided that they will talk to the strangers but they will not show them the way to their village. This is one of the attitudes of anticolonial resistance of the tribal folks.

The Adis had a long history of conflict with the English people which lasted for 64 years till the Abor War of 1911-1914. The Adis had controlled the fish, gold, and river rights of the hills over the Miris and Beheahs or the fishermen. By this, the Adis received gifts and their superiority was acknowledged. However, under the British rule the former relations were changed as the fishermen became their own masters and some of them and the Miris distanced themselves in location from the Adis (Nyori 88). Srikanth writes that the plain people used to pay *posa*, that is, a kind of ransom or blackmail, every year to the hill tribes in the form of food, clothes, ornaments, slaves, materials, and others. These were discontinued by them (67). Thus, old laws and rules were altered under the colonial rule.

In the novel, Vetch's mission was to inspect the restless tribes inhabiting the hills and protect British interest. He was confident in the superiority of the British as the Abor could be easily suppressed by them. Among the tribal people, some clans supported the British and this angered their own people. This people had traded their birthplace with the *migluns* for insignificant objects. Postcolonialism as a political philosophy indicates that the first and foremost cause is the right to "autonomous self-government" for the people who were living under the hegemony of foreign authority (Young 113). People like Kajinsha's father and his clan strongly condemned this betrayal, and they vowed that even if other rival clans league with the *migluns* by eating their salt and carrying their foods and clothes, they will never allow the *migluns* to pass through their territory.

Many clans and chiefs fall prey to the *migluns* because of the gifts of salt, tobacco, opium, and iron. In 1836, Kajinsha's father and his uncle with a group of Tibetan neighbours met the Mishmee chief of Ghalum asking their help to forbid strangers entry into their land. The meeting turned bitter and Kajinsha's uncle believed it to be the work of evil spirits. The alliance with the Tibetans was being spurned by their own Mishmee brothers of Ghalum and it created disunity among the Mishmees. However, in 1839, an opportunity to retaliate against the Britishers arose and Kajinsha's father and his clans, in alliance with the Khampti clans of Suddya, attacked the British political agent, Colonel Adam White, and his troops. Nearly eighty men were butchered and all but two sepoy lines burned to the ground. The violence depicted in literature of the tribal people re-inscribes them as barbaric or savages. However, such stereotyping overlooks the fact that they have their own right to defend their land existence and freedom.

Edward Said who quoted D.K Fieldhouse that the core of imperial authority lies in the "mental attitude" of the colonist. Natives' subordination either by assent or dissent makes the empire durable (*Culture* 11). Under the colonial dominance, the tribal people were at war with each other. In the *maan-mimak* war, the first Anglo-Burmese War that broke out in 1824, the British enlisted the help of the hills only to capture Assam from the hands of the Burmese invaders. Lendem's uncle along with some Abor men helped the British in the war. At that time, there was no enmity between the Abor and the British and Lendem's uncle and his wife, Moi, settled in Suddya which was a residence of the *migluns*. They were well received by the *migluns* in Suddya. However, their stay was short, as in 1839, a group of Khampti rebels of the Suddya Khawa Gohain in alliance with the Singpho and Mishmee tribes attacked the British stockade. What was more disheartening to learn was that Moi did

not know that her husband was fighting against his own brothers and got killed because he aided the *migluns*. It was only years later that Lendem and Kajinsha's generation from Abor and Mishmee tribes, respectively, would unite together to overthrow the British power. Lendem speaks for the tribal people that none of them want the British in their hills. They were persistent in this effort and if the *migluns* dare to use force the tribal people were ready to face them.

Spread of Christianity, western education, healthcares, and others led to the growth of colonialism. The European colonizers used the Bible as a weapon to inculcate European manners to the native people (Sugirtharajah 63). Along with it comes the introduction of European values, ethics, and principles which were propagated under the guise of biblicization. The missionaries proclaimed their own culture, devalued the native culture, falsify them, and uproot them from their roots. The native people have to discontinue their old traditions and follow the teachings of the new doctrines. Charles Alexis Renou was one of the best missionaries sent by Directors of Paris to study the situation in Tibet. In his letter, he wrote that the whole of Tibet was under the scourge of a "terrible disease," that is, the small pox, feared even by the monks (Dai, *Black* 38). Thus, to control the disease, knowledge of medicine and vaccines would not only help the tribal people but also usher the spread of the gospel among the indigenous population. This is the indirect way to share the gospel in rural areas who openly rebuked the *migluns*.

The missionary zeal of Father Nicholas Krick, a French Jesuit priest, had transformed the quiet rural life of many people in the Abor and Mishmee territories. His motive was less colonial because he was passionate to share the gospel to the people. On the other hand, the tribal people saw him as an agent of coloniser who wanted to exploit them. The people were not willing to guide the priest into Tibet since the way is dangerous, and also for people like Kajinsha and Chowsa, they had made an agreement with the Zayul people of Tibet that they will protect them and let no foreigners pass their land. The *migluns* employed various tricks and tactics to convince the tribal people to guide Father Krick into Tibet. They incite Chowsa to do the job by baiting his son who is studying under the *migluns* in Debrooghur. Vetch sent a letter to Chowsa that they will look after his son while he travels with the priest. After much deliberation, Chowsa decided to accompany the priest by himself because if the matter is taken by other men, they would lead him to the abode of Kajinsha. Colonialism moves beyond the imposition of western authority over indigenous land and its people to the indigenous knowledge, languages, and cultures. These impositions are perceived by the

indigenous people as “colonial education” (Smith 63). The colonial schooling also produced indigenous elites who accepted the ideologies of the whites. Father Krick’s missionary enthusiasm was unachievable because the tribal people distrust the *migluns* and their strategies. The priest sensing the reluctance on Chowsa’s side clarified his mission that he came with no soldiers and no guns. His only wish is to travel to Tibet. Therefore, he promised not to disturb anyone on his way. These words changed the perception of Chowsa towards the priest and he thought to himself that even though the priest has the same appearance as the Britishers, he sounded different and genuine unlike them (Dai, *Black* 91). Father Krick faced oppression, robbery, and got disheartened on his way to Tibet, but he was determined not to give up because death was nothing to him. He remained faithful to his mission till his last breath. Missionary work faced objections among the tribal people because it is coupled with the aim of colonialism.

Under the veil of missionary work, the Britishers breathed disunity, jealousy, and contempt among the chiefs and clans. While some people like Chowsa, Kajinsha, and Zumsha wanted to grant the priest’s wish, and escort him to Tibet, others like Lamet and Marpa in the guise of helping the priest, badly mistreated him. They plan to kill him and it was staged successfully. In his mission, Krick was not able to make a direct conversion of the people to his faith, however, he was slowly winning hearts of the tribal people for his abilities to heal the sick. At first, Chief Zumsha was rude and determined that the priest should not cross the Mishmee hill to enter Tibet. However, his perceptions changed when the priest healed a badly wounded man in his house. Zumsha accepted him thereafter, and complimented him that he is a brave man and refer to him as friend. Krick too reminiscence about the success of his mission in Mebo that tending to the sick is the only way to gain the trust of the people. Medicine and music remained as the secret of winning hearts and minds.

Colonial fantasy, mimicry, and desire for colonial products existed among the tribal people. In the missionary journey of Father Krick, porters accompanied him and even chiefs guided him. Krick paid them money, clothes, rice, tobacco, and other things. They carried his belongings to be paid by him. However, when Krick was stripped of everything, he was deserted by his companions on his way back to Assam. They failed on their part to make a safe passage for him since their ulterior motive lies in gaining riches for themselves. The sly Lamet asked Krick for more gifts to the point where Krick had to cut his blanket and gave one half to him. They threatened to keep him as a prisoner until he shares his belongings with them. While he was stripped of everything, he heard voices of men and women crying to him

to bring them more money and blue cloth the next time he returned. The tribal people who had once lived a self-reliant life had lost that value and were driven to the materialism of the *migluns*. Chief Chowsa, who was an observer of the whites and his people, described the changed behavior of the tribal people that they were acting like beggars rushing towards the goods brought by the *migluns*.

The first impression of Father Nicholas Krick about the tribal people and its place was dark as he perceives it to be a place where everyone was engaged in a war of extermination, one clan against the other. But this perception changed when he found himself in the secluded place of Zayul. He was surrounded by the patient, dreamy beauty of undisturbed life around him. Father Krick appreciates the mysterious and the vast beauty of the land. The small isolated stream looked happy as it has not been seen by the “western eyes” and the water looked happy (Dai, *Black* 243). Father Krick was awed by the beautiful and unexplored sights of nature. Here, he perceived that the religion of the tribal people, like, the Adis, were open-ended and it was never fixed in a book. Among other characteristics which distinguish Father Krick from the *migluns* is his deep love and understanding for nature. His outlook of the ecological world does not arise from colonial motive of exploiting nature, rather it was an act of pure love and respect for nature. Making a parallel between the peaceful views of the Mishmee hills with the first days of creation, Father Krick was left with nothing but joy and happiness. After the contact with the grandeur of the land in Zayul valley, Father Krick was no longer disconsolate over the failure of his missionary work in Tibet. Father Krick’s undying dream was to enter Tibet and do missionary work, however, it turned out to be a failure. He realized that he has to understand the language of the heart. This is not confined in understanding the tribal languages but it is to understand people from the heart, to be kind, compassionate, and to love one another. Among the *migluns*, Father Krick learned the most important lesson that colonialism neither religion will help in converting the tribal people, that the only thing which can transform the people lies in understanding the language of the heart and practicing it.

3.2.3 Traditional Women and their Place in the Community

The status of women in tribal societies differed from each other as they maintained their own standards pertaining to the womenfolk. The various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh followed the system of patriarchy. The father is the head of the family but the mother runs the affair of the household. The woman, like the man, provided for the needs of her family. The

hunger or poverty in the house caused by the mismanagement of the mother or the wife in handling the household affair is criticized (Nyori 209). The traditional women were less privileged than men in certain areas of social and political life, but their abuse by men is not tolerated in the society. Boehmer indicates that tribal or native women are also known as subaltern women. They are “doubly” or “triply marginalized” based on gender, race, social class, religion, caste, sexuality, and regional status (216). Dai in her talk, “Finding the Word,” shares her insight about the traditional women in tribal communities. In rural villages, it is difficult to segregate men and women because they lean on each other and they worked together through the various seasons. Tribal women are women of wisdoms and they have a clear foresight. They know what they want and they get it. They have enduring strength and they pick up their lives from failure, from sufferings, and so on. They perceived the rules and customs of their community and they acknowledged its limitation that they cannot have everything, but they are content with what they have. By this, they do not become restless over the things which they could not have. The traditional women are not feminist in the modern feminist sense. While modern feminism is rooted in equal participation of women in politics, religion, and for equal payment in works, traditional women were contended with what they have. They were skilled in agricultural works, in household works, and other chores performed by women. However, this does not mean they are at par with menfolk.



Fig.4. Pete Oxford, “Adi Gallong women carrying wood, Adi Gallong tribe, Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India, November 2014,” 2015.

The Black Hill narrates poignant tale of some strong women characters who suffered in the hands of patriarchal authority and colonial power. This revealed the dark reality of the

tribal women whose sufferings and voices were silenced. Women were doubly colonized, one by their own people, and one by the colonial power. The other side tells the story of their bravery, perseverance, and hard-work. Their strong and independent decisions inspired and awed both menfolk and the whites who were in power. Since, the novel is set in tribal localities, cultural roles and expectations of women run along with the narrative (Tachü, “Women” 23). This section will look at some of the remarkable women characters who represent the status of tribal women, and whose lives depicted the treatment of women in the community. A woman character who exemplifies a lot through her life is none other than Gimur. Her name signifies the name of the month in which she was born. Gimur was an excellent worker and exceptional in household chores, but she also behaved like a boy whistling and climbing trees and would get injured. While the menfolk supervised and protect their homeland from the *miglun*, the women run the households and were occupied with field works. After Gimur met Kajinsha, she soon developed a relationship with him and she was ready to leave her village and settle with Kajinsha in his place. She kept a secret of her affair from her mother but she could not do so in front of Lendem, his cousin, who rebuked her because Kajinsha belonged to another village and inter-village relationships were unacceptable. However, Gimur defied the cultural norms and eloped with Kajinsha when she was pregnant with Kajinsha’s child.

She was aware of the consequences of an affair from the experience of her uncle. In the past, her uncle went away to look for a woman who had run away with her lover to another village. She knew too well about the Abor pride of her uncle and relatives who were obstinate that an Abor girl should behave according to custom. Since a girl is considered as an “asset” to her family, the man who married the girl should pay the customary bride price known as *a-re gelik* (Dai, *Black* 45). Marriage within the same clan is not possible and it is common for the Adis to enquire one another about each other’s clan for the purpose of marriage (Nyori 205). Gimur pondered about the bride-price, but in her case it would not be accepted since inter-tribal relationship is considered as a betrayal to the community, and girls who married outside were spurned and become useless like mustard seed scattered to the winds.

Cultural and traditional laws exclusive to women existed to restrict women on certain areas which require them to sacrifice their personal interest for the sake of the community. Padu says of how a traditional woman is bound with many threads of tradition which she followed them obediently as the daughter of the land which owns her and she becomes its

property (109). That tribal life is totally integrated into the life of the women and they accepted it because it formed their identity. Within the family also called as the *rutum* or *rumtum* by the Adis, the works of men were different from women. But this does not encourage segregation or seclusion of women. The family is controlled by the father, but the mother is not the subordinate member in the Adi family. In fact, she runs the major domestic affairs in her family and she worked diligently in various fields for the welfare of her family. Nyori appreciates one of the distinctive works of a mother in the Adi family that she passed on the tradition of weaving to her daughters (208). Mothers and older women brought up and supervised the girl child about life, marriage, and her duties to her family and the community.

Girls sleep in the *rasheng*, the dormitory, where they were supervised or looked after by the *ponung rutum*. When Gimur was making plans to settle down with Kajinsha, her aunt, Moi, pleaded her to stay in the village and forbid her to live in another village. She went to reason with Gimur about the duty of a woman that a woman has to obey and that if she performs her role in looking after the house and feeding her husband and children properly, she will be loved. Contrary to these duties, Gimur decided to explore beyond her village and to what lies ahead. She finally achieved her dream when she fled away from her village with Kajinsha. Even though she settled in the black hill with Kajinsha and was managing the affairs of the family, she would not stop thinking about her mother and women of the tribe. The women lived a lonely life and their wishes and dreams were not reveal because women remained “anonymous,” and “forgotten” in the story of “blood lines” (Dai, *Black* 63). Gimur, unlike many of them was turned into a strong woman, by and by.

A pregnant woman and her husband observed a number of taboos. They should not eat certain types of fruit, and should not kill and eat the meat of snakes, frogs, monkey, and *ngorik*, that is, a kind of fish (Nyori 228). These are observed to forbid the birth of a child having the same appearances and characters of the animals. A pregnant woman continues to work in the field as long as she can, however, if she falls sick before the birth of her child, a priest is called and divination of egg or chicken is performed. The priest offers sacrifices to propitiate the evil spirits, such as, *nyipo-yapom*, and to appease the benevolent spirits, such as, *agam*, for the good health of the mother and the child. After the delivery, an Adi man claimed the child saying, “*ngokke! ngokke*” meaning “mine! mine” (229). It is believed that evil spirits are always on the lookout for the newborn babies, thus, men should claim before an evil eye cast on them. Similarly, the Angami-Nagas too practiced this ritual at childbirth. The husband hurriedly claim the child after his wife gives birth by pasting his saliva onto the

child's forehead saying, "I am first" '*a rie ho*' (my trans.; Zhale, *Tenyimia* 10). Similarly in Easterine Kire's first novel, *A Naga Village Remembered*, such an example of this practice is narrated, where Kovi claimed his newborn daughter by saying, "I am first" (23). It is said that many fathers could not stake the claim of the newborn and there were too many deaths in the village.

Among the Abor and the Mishmee tribes, pregnancy is looked with utmost care and taboos are to be followed. When Gimur shared the news of her pregnancy with Kajinsha, he exclaimed his happiness that God has blessed them and he proclaimed, "I worship you" (Dai, *Black* 45). Being pregnant, she was forbidden to do certain things. An example is that she could not check fish traps. Gimur gave birth to twins, and one was stillborn. The birth of twins was considered as unlucky. She understood the reactions of the Mishmee people as the same thing would have happened in her village Mebo. None of her friends would weave cloth with her for the fear of giving birth to twins. Some tribes killed twins at birth. Moreover, it was believed that the souls of children who died at birth went to a middle world under the earth. When these children joined hands and danced, it caused an earthquake. Because of these perceptions, twins' births were not welcomed in the families and it also affected the psyches of women. The birth marks the beginning of failure in the relationship between Gimur and Kajinsha. They silently blamed each other for this misfortune. However, Gimur realized that she has to regain her strength if she does not want to end up like Auli, the first wife of Kajinsha. She promised herself that she will defeat the curse that had befallen on her and that she will live despite her pitiable condition. Her surviving child, Siengbow, had a birth defect, and Gimur could understand the expectation of the people towards her. She had lived with Kajinsha in the black hill for years, but, she was still an outsider, a stranger, because Kajinsha was still bound to Auli, his first wife. Gimur meditates on the problems of her marriage and the way to restore it. The only way to seal her marital status with Kajinsha is to bear his child again, that is, a healthy boy. Society has strict rules and if there is no child then there is no acceptance. Since the society is patriarchal, if a man has no son, his life is doomed and his bloodline will end because there is no son to perform the ritual of keeping his memory alive. Thus, the desire to have a male child is like an obsession in the Adi family like in other patriarchal communities.

Gimur doubted the fidelity of Kajinsha and it led her to a fight with Kajinsha. She ended up cutting her weaving loom which symbolizes the end of their relationship. If she has to restore her marriage, she has to live there and obey the laws of the land. It is a matter of

telling Kajinsha that she believed that he had loved her more than any other women and she could abide by the laws of the land, as there is no point of questioning a man over his behavior. However, she could not live by such laws, thus, she and her son departed for Mebo but she lost her son Siengbow on her flight. She settled in her village but she was not free from her history. She had lost both her mother and Moi. This made her life harder. She was again reunited with Kajinsha in Chunpura. However, life was never the same as before. Situations worsened when Father Krick and Augustin Bourry were killed. Just when Gimur thought that life was turning well, it was snatched away when they were ambushed in their home by the white soldiers who blamed Kajinsha for the murder of the two priests. Kajinsha was taken to Debrooghur as a captive. Gimur's dying dream was to meet her husband once again. Lendem heard of this wish and had difficulty in reverting it. He knew the adamant nature of Gimur, at the same time he feared that something dangerous was about to happen. However, he was helpless to change her decision as she was already making preparations to set off.

With a meticulous plan, she went to meet Kajinsha in jail. It turned out to be futile when she killed a guard who attacked her. She was ready to do anything for the man whom she loved more than life and god. However, she relented when Kajinsha pleaded her to "Go" and "Live" for him (282). Even though she had faced many hardships, fear, and deaths, she persisted to live her life as she believed that she could not be separated from her loved one by anything. In an interview, Mamang Dai described the strong women characters, like, Gimur from *The Black Hill*, and Nenem from *The Legends of Pensam*, as not new women but as "women of the tribe" who protect the family and clan (Sarangi 5). Mamang Dai's works are replete with strong women characters both traditional and modern. The resilience of women and their love for other people made them to work hard to provide for themselves and their family. Dai's story, "The Story of Tanik-the Mythmaker," is a good example of women's resilience and success in life (194). Tanik's mother persevered despite being abandoned by her husband. She became a successful weaver and helped Tanik to become a renowned person in life.

There are exceptional women characters in the novel who surpassed the stereotypes and defeated the weak assumptions about them. Moi, the aunt of Gimur, was one such woman who would not live under the close restrictions imposed on women. She wants to see life and explore it. She accompanied her husband to Suddya in 1836 to meet the British. When Moi requested her husband to be a part of the journey, it was an unimaginable request

since it was a mission to be headed and led by men alone. But he finally consented when Moi pleaded to see how he had lived before his marriage, and since she is his wife now, his past is also her past. Moi's husband participated in the *maam-mimak* war in 1824 before his marriage with Moi. The agreement of her husband was an achievement for Moi and it turned out to be a fascination for the *migluns* since Moi was the first woman from the tribes whom they met. She was taken with great interest by a *miglun* woman who wanted her to learn writing, but Moi refused it because she had never held a pencil before. Because of her associations with the *migluns*, Moi knew what they were capable of and she reminded her people about the might of the *migluns*. Moi was once received well by the *migluns*, but times changed and she was introduced to the darker reality of the *migluns* who had burnt down their villages.

The tribal women cannot question the tribal authority. According to Padu the tribal women cannot compare themselves with other women who were allowed to speak their minds because their traditions and customs were different from others (112). Thus, they live under the tribal authority and worked for its welfare. While some women fought hard to make their own decisions, many women could not do so and they suffered silently in the hands of man. Auli married Kajinsha to seal the pact between Kajinsha's father and the people of Sommeu, whom the former promised to protect its territory. As for Kajinsha, the marriage was nothing but an act of obedience to his father for the alliance. His relation with Auli was over and he believes that he has nothing to do with her. On the other hand, Auli was badly affected by an illness after the birth of Awesa. Her illness was incurable and everyone believed it to be the work of an "evil spirit," when it took possession of her (Dai, *Black* 80). Such was the belief of the people towards her ill health.

Yet, Auli was adamant that she will outlive all of her sicknesses. Despite her illness, Auli has not stopped being kind to others. She was the one who nursed Gimur back to life and informed her of the survival of Kajinsha and Awesa when they got ambushed in the black hill. Even though her estranged husband and the people failed her, she never failed to give love and support to others. Comparing with her older sister, Chhomu's life was more difficult. She obeyed the biddings of her sister Auli and she was exploited by her uncle Marpa. Her life was not her own. After a night of passion with Kajinsha, she never saw him again and Marpa had laid his claim on her. She could not protest against the advances made by her uncle as he provided for her and her child which was all that mattered to her. In Dai's poem, "The Sorrow of Women," the difference of concern between a woman and

man is articulated by the speaker. Whereas men are concerned with war, survival, and riches, women have different issues and the speaker concludes that if men fail to understand the “sorrow of women,” it is useless (91). The society and men sometimes dismissed the sorrow of women.

Women and men were not given the same liberty in marriage, as men were permitted to practice polygamy, which is considered as a matter of pride. Chief Zumsha had many wives who had borne him many children, sons, and daughters. This enhanced his name throughout the land as the owner of land, cattle, and father of many sons (Dai, *Black* 73). Such was the pride and power of Chief Zumsha that was derived from his wives and children. Lamet was another character who kept two wives. His two wives were both stocky and maternal-looking women who bore many sons and daughters to him. They were hardworking women whose burnt skins reflect their outdoor work. Yenjee, a Burmese slave girl, like Gimur, was an outsider and even though she is also the wife of Lamet, she is more of a kept woman, a concubine, who wielded great influence over him. In the Adi society, slavery was considered as a heritage from the past. They acquired slaves for agricultural work, from war, and sometimes slaves were given as bride-price or dowry to the bridegroom or to the bride’s parents (Nyori 211). In Krick’s observation, Yenjee was a woman who does not do equal work as compared with other women who used to carry heavy loads. She was exempted from childbearing and household work and she lacked respect for Lamet’s older wives. Yet, Yenjee was also held under the bondage of Lamet. She does things at his biddings but her works were not recognized and appreciated in the family.

The traditional women in the novel do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men, but some of them still managed to excel through their hard-work, determination, and resilience. However, some suffered silently because they were weak economically and they put the interest of other people above their own. Even though they were subordinate to men, that would not prevent them from playing their roles and execute their duties.

3.2.4 The Oral Folk Life of the People

The Black Hill dwells deep in the culture, traditions, beliefs, and language of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. The novel serves as an example of indigenous or native writing for employing local language, expressions, beliefs, taboos, and omens. It has included narrative of superstitious beliefs, evil spirits, rituals, and dreams of the characters. It is a postcolonial text which focuses on the tribal people and their culture. It counteracts with the

colonisers model of writing and it opted for an indigenous form of writing. In this book, the oral and the written exist side by side enriching each other. This also points out to the hybridity of post colonial texts which amalgamate with various trends and forms. Ashcroft and others pointed out that post-colonialism is influenced by the interrelationship between orality and literacy (Key 165). Orality is not a thing of the past, it continues to have its impact in the modern times. Oral literature and oral storytelling are powerful “political expressions” (Wisker 130). It serves as a powerful tool for the colonized people and women to express themselves. Oral literary form makes use of repetitions, local words, expressions, proverbs, sayings, and various beliefs of the people. They offer richer forms and make writing more dynamic.

Language is a contentious subject in postcolonial literature. The fact that the colonized people write in colonial language, English, has been criticized. One side has supported the use of English language as it has reshaped and fashioned into one’s own in the hands of indigenous writers. There are two major keywords in post-colonial usage of language. The first is “abrogation” which is the denial of giving privilege to English language. The second is “appropriation” which is the “reconstitution” and the restructuring or reshaping of the language into new usages (Ashcroft et al., *Empire* 37). *The Black Hill* incorporates native words and expressions in the narrative. Native words like *miglun* meaning white man, *manthang* which is traditionally reserved for guests, *tzu* meaning beer, *kisiro* meaning my friend, *kla kamphlung* which is white stranger, *uyus* meaning evil spirits, *kuserong migom* which is a great healer, *a-re gelick* meaning bride price, *ponung rutum* the supervisor of the girls’ dormitory, *rasheng* dormitory, *eso* mithun, *dzonpon* governor, *tei-nyal* agricultural land, *kebang* village council, *menil* an outsider, etc were employed in the story. These vernacular words of the Adi and the Mishmee tribes added uniqueness to the novel. In some of Dai’s poem and works, she provided notes because they were related to customary practice and belief of the tribal people. Since Adi is a non-script language, even if Dai writes in Adi she will have to use the Roman Script. Also Arunachal Pradesh has twenty six tribes with more than 100 sub-clans, thus, English or Hindi becomes the lingua franca and for writing purpose (Agarwal). Dai also believes that giving much information about a subject made it academic and sometimes one should leave the words or information as it is. This will protect the integrity of tribal languages and information which should remain exclusive to them (“Finding”). This is done intentionally by post-colonial writers to protect their own culture from degradation.

The belief in dreams, omens, and other superstitions were common among the tribal people. They are significant and people take special care not to violate them because repercussions follow. They are symbolic and have cultural and traditional meanings. Dreams are considered with utmost care and belief by the Adi and the Mishmee people. The Adi people give importance to dreams and their interpretations. It is believed that the soul which is called as *yalo* or *ayit* in sleep formed connection with the spiritual world. The movement of the soul in the spiritual life is interpreted as a dream, that is, *yuma*. If the spiritual life of a person is facing crisis, it is reflected in his physical life (Nyori 276). Thus, the Adi people considered dreams seriously as they foretell the people of the impending events in life. For example, the dream of felling a big tree indicates the death of an important man in the village. Also the dream of a house being burnt and firing a gun are suggestive of good weather.

Kajinsha had a dream about a river, bird, and Gimur, when Gimur returned back to the black hill. He was apprehensive about it and this surprised Gimur because he was a believer of signs and omens. Sometimes he would not go out because of a bad dream. His dream about Gimur floating away by the river distressed him because he knew that something bad would happen. This dream referred to their unhappy marriage and Gimur's twins birth. Later on, Gimur would accuse Kajinsha for bringing bad dreams to their house, remembering his earlier dream about the bird. Gimur has violated the taboo of crossing the river by pregnant woman, marrying an outsider, cutting her weaving loom, and more. One night, Gimur dreamed of a river covered with a flock of white birds that flew straight past her, and she understood that someone close to her had passed away in her village. This dream refers to the death of her dear mother in Mebo. Nago's dream of a tree splintered into pieces foreshadowed the death of Moi.

Stories and myths took the shape of ancient religion and they were transformed and developed into "parables" and a set of beliefs whereby certain concepts were sanctioned to become the basis of the rituals, taboos, and obligations of a community (Dai, "On Creation Myths" 6). Different types of rituals were performed at different occasions for varied reasons. They are performed to restore health, peace, and a good life for the individual. According to the tradition of Kajinsha, Kajinsha and Gimur observed wedding rituals in Kmaan style. The wedding rituals of the Kmaan were complicated and difficult. In the absence of Gimur's relatives, all the details were not observed, however, that would not exempt Kajinsha from doing his part. He reciprocates all the gifts brought to him by chief Zumsha and his relatives by killing a pig and honouring his guests with rice beer. This act was called the flow of the

“commodity basket” where the groom seeks the help of his relatives and his relatives seek the help of other relatives to engage in the wedding (Dai, *Black* 77). It includes delivery and payback which sometimes end up being costly.

In Sommeu, the lama was called to perform the house-ritual for Awesa’s ailing mother. In another instance, Kajinsha felt the need to clean his household after the death of the two priests. In his desperate state, he called on benevolent spirits, loving mother, and sky father to protect him and his family from the bad spirits and the revenge of the priests who had been killed. In Mebo, Gimur’s village, her cousin, chief Lamet, invited the *miri* to perform rituals for Gimur so that she would not lose her soul in the land of sorrow after Gimur had run away from her husband, her son died, and the news of her mother’s death grieved her. Mutsang, a powerful *miri*, was sent to perform a ritual for a sick man in Mebo. The *miri* cut a chicken with his sword and ordered the spirits to move out from the house. After the conclusion of the ritual, the dead chicken would be offered as an appeasement to the spirits that have been driven out from the ailing person’s body. Father Krick had witnessed this ritual and he thought that a priest in another part would do the same by holding the cross, light a candle, and dispel the darkness. All rituals have their roots in tradition. Death can occur anytime in a person’s life, thus Lendem cautioned that the jealous spirits must be kept busy. The Abor people believed that everything that happened to a man was controlled by good and evil spirits. Thus, it was man’s obligation to pay heed and respect the unknown and unseen. Father Krick perceived this as no different from the Christian believers who fear and respect God. By this, reason and faith were close to each other.

Superstitious beliefs were held common from an individual to a larger community. To laugh thoughtlessly is a bad omen. On their way to Mebo, Awesa laughed when Siengbow kicked his legs. This made Gimur to shush Awesa because it was unlucky to laugh loudly as evil spirits might hear it and become jealous. In Mebo, a house was burned to ashes during the stay of Father Krick. What terrified the priest was that a group of armed men with long spears were leaping up and down around the house as an act of chasing away the fire demon. The people perceived the fire as a demon, thus they cursed it with screams and threats while splashing water over it. Even after the fire had died down, fear had grown among the people. The fire for them represents a bad sign, and after the deliberation with the *Kebang*, the priest was directed to evacuate from Mebo. The *Kebang* is represented by a council of elders who exercise the highest legal and judiciary powers. All the social and political affairs of the village rest with the *Kebang* (U. Singh, *Arunachal Pradesh* 37). The superstitious beliefs

constitute an important part in the life of the oral tribal people. They live their life religiously and carefully by practicing the taboos, holding onto the beliefs, and adhering to the rituals.

3.2.5 Conclusion

The Black Hill looks at the Abor and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh and their relation with the *migluns*. The study is concentrated on the tribal people, their land and rich ecology, resistance against colonialism, the status of women, and their folk life. The invasion of the *migluns* has made the tribal people to lose many of their good values, traditions, and lands. Thus, they vowed to protect their rich culture at all cost and resist colonialism because they were able to govern themselves. The theme of protecting the land remained as one of the most important subjects in the book. This is one of the oldest values of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. Under this, we see two contrasting views, one from the tribal people and the other from the *migluns*. For the tribal people of the Abor and Mishmee, land is not only a space that gives them the basis for survival; it serves as an identity and gives power and recognition to the people who owned it. But the uglier side of land results in bloodshed and tribal unrest. On the other hand, the *migluns* see the native land as an empty space that is occupied by uncivilized people that need to be civilized. The natural objects like the forests, trees, rivers, sky, and moon are treated with respect by the people because they believe to be interrelated. In nature, they were healed of their sicknesses and worries. Father Krick, a Jesuit priest, unlike the *migluns* who were insensitive to nature, fully appreciates the beauty and the healing power of nature. Under the colonialists' rule, the tribal people were divided among themselves, while some of them worked hard to overthrow colonial power, some support British colonialism. Thus, battles like the Suddya attack in 1839 were launched against the *migluns* and the tribal people who supported the British invaders. The colonialists further their hegemony in the tribal land by means of education, Christianity, use of medicine and others. These were the indirect ways to win the hearts of the tribal people. One character of the *migluns* who differed from them is Father Krick. His sole aim was to do missionary work in Tibet, however it was disrupted by the conflicts and unrest going on between the tribals and the *migluns*. Nevertheless, the medicines, prayers, and healings that he used in his mission appeared as colonial strategies to some tribal people. Some of the tribal people began to hover around the *migluns* for goods and other commodities. They lose their good tradition of hard work and diligence when they desire the riches of the colonials. In a traditional society, women generally remained in the background of social, religious, and political spheres. The same applied to the Abor and Mishmee women. Women characters like

Chommu and Yenjee were dominated by men whom they could not resist, because they were depending on them. Whereas, there are some characters like Gimur, Moi, and Auli who rise above the stereotypes and fight against the injustices and the biasness towards them. *The Black Hill* gives importance to the folk life of the tribal people. The tribal people were religious and god-fearing people who conducted their lives carefully. They live a rich folk life marked by respect for tradition, practicing rituals, guided by dreams, observing taboos, and love for each other.

CHAPTER 4

RECOVERING THE LOST IDENTITY IN NAVARRE SCOTT MOMADAY'S *HOUSE MADE OF DAWN AND THE ANCIENT CHILD*

4.1 *House Made of Dawn*

House Made of Dawn, published in 1968, is a breakthrough novel as it brings worldwide recognition to Native American literature. It also serves as a model for many Native American writers. The novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1969, one of the highest literary prizes in America. Steven Otfinoski referred to one jury member of the Pulitzer Prize who articulated the selection of the book on the basis of artistry, subject matter, and the relevance of its theme (26). The novel portrayed a fragmented modern world torn by violence, hatred, isolation, alienation, and racism. However, it also presented multiple solutions to the problems through traditional methods and shared values. *House Made of Dawn* focuses on a central character named Abel. He stands as a representative figure of the Native Americans who had lost their identity in the midst of two conflicting worlds, that is, their own world, and the Euro-American world. To recover the lost identity, Abel has to return back to his native culture and tradition. Abel had been away from his birth place and culture for a long time because of his service in World War II as an army, and another seven years of imprisonment for killing an albino. When he returned, he could not reconcile with his culture because he was corrupted by Euro-American culture and influences.

The title of the novel, “House Made of Dawn” is taken from the Night Chant, a restoration ritual, bestowed to the Dreamer and the Stricken Twins by the *Diyin Dine’e’* (holy people) during the Navajo genesis. Momaday’s novel centers on two brothers, that is, Abel and Vidal who suffered in life considerably, however, like the Stricken Twins they were able to recover and finally return back to their culture with more knowledge for their own benefit and to help others. In an interview, Momaday articulated his literary themes to Bruchac. They are focused on man’s relationship to the land or earth, man’s relationship to himself, his past and heritage, and the memories of his blood (“Magic of Words” 182). These themes are also found in *House Made of Dawn* and they will be studied. For the Indians, the elders still practice the age old traditions of ceremonies, rituals, and other observances to uphold their culture. The younger generations were disinterested in them and they got distanced from their culture. The cultural loss is clearly evident in the novel, but efforts were given to recover it. The traditional ceremonies, games, songs, stories were some means to restore the lost culture.

Through the efforts of Francisco, Ben, Milly and other people, Abel was healed of his physical and spiritual sickness. In his deep crisis, Abel revisits the beautiful landscape of Walatowa, remembered the songs, chants, and prayers of his culture. They revive his spirit and his healing journey started from them. Momaday has incorporated variety of elements in weaving *House Made of Dawn*. Oral materials added uniqueness to the novel. Native American proverbs, stories, myths, and legends were some of them. However, Momaday also used elements from western literary traditions and techniques in writing the novel. The novel is at once particular for focusing on Native American culture but it is also universal for exploring topics of alienation, isolation, violence, and healing which permeates in other cultures as well.

There are many interesting aspects in *House Made of Dawn*. The various chapters of the novel are titled with sequences of dates and this suggests the importance of time in the book. The novel starts with July 20 which corresponds with the history of the Kiowa people who attempted to hold the Sun Dance for the last time in 1890. Besides this, Abel's life is related with many important events of the Kiowa people. The shape or the design of the novel is inspired by Native American oral traditions. Thus, it is difficult to understand the novel without understanding the oral traditions of the Native Americans. Momaday has also invested a lot in the creation of his characters. One of his most interesting characters is Tosamah or John Big Bluff, also known as the Priest of the Sun. Tosamah functions as trickster and his character is both comic and tragic. He also preaches several sermons parallel with Indian history and persecution. Another concern of the novel is the problem of alcoholism among the Indians, especially, the younger generations, who were frustrated with their own lives. When Abel returned to New Mexico after the Second World War, he arrived dead drunk. When the young Indians were caught off in difficult situations, they resorted to alcohol to ease their problems.

Momaday always emphasized on the importance of the land and landscape and the relation of the Indians with them. *House Made of Dawn* has explored this theme. The rural life is contrasted to the city life and the rural landscape provided a sense of belonging and healing to the people. His novel challenges the stereotypical representation of the Indians and their culture. It is dynamic, vibrant, and gives a fresh representation of the Indian world and its reality. Momaday not only writes about his own tribe, the Kiowas, but he writes on other Indian tribes, like the Navajo and Jemez Pueblo tribes. His works convey multicultural themes for they draw from the Native Americans and the Euro-Americans. The following

sections will study the novel keeping in mind the above discussions and the theme of recovering the lost identity.

4.1.1 The Sacredness of the Land

In *House Made of Dawn*, the sacredness of the land and the people's attachment to it is seen throughout the novel. The natural surroundings, the valleys, the canyons, the rivers, the animals, the sunrise, and others are part of the land and they will be taken into account when the subject of the land is discussed. Native Americans respect and valued their land with their whole being, as it serves as a means of survival in terms of their needs and for their spiritual wellbeing. It is not simply a space, it contains everything in it. Momaday articulates that the bond with the land had been long established from the time of their forefathers. They held the belief that the "earth" is their "mother" and the "sky" is their "father" (*Man* 33). Native American's strong sense of kinship is extended to nature and the cosmos. The age-old bond between the Native Americans and their land is to be continued and practiced by the younger generation. In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Momaday talks about the landscape and the sense of place in Native American oral tradition. He calls it as a long process of "appropriation," whereby, the Native Americans who had been living in their land for thousands of years developed close relation with the land and derived their sense of identity and belonging from it ("N. Scott Momaday" 158). The land is close to the Native Americans and this has been passed on to them by their ancestors.

Landscape in the recent Native American fictions appears not only as settings but also as characters (Nelson). Momaday described the landscape, the valley, and the canyons of Walatowa with vigour and immeasurable beauty. In the prologue of the book, the first words describe the beautiful landscape, the hills, and the animals. The land was "very old and everlasting" (Momaday 1). Even if the material world fails to offer joy and peace to man, the natural world of the landscapes and the mountains never do so. The protagonist Abel was completely broken by the western world but he returned back to Walatowa and ran the race of the dead. He was not only running but when dawn appears the land became clearer, and he could see the horses in the field and the river below. These sights were unknown to him in the city of Los Angeles, but they became apparent to him when he returned to his own place, Walatowa. He was beginning to accept the mystery, vastness, and beauty of the land once again and this provided healing to his ailing soul. Weaver points out that Native American religion is closely and intimately tied to the land and for this they considered land as sacred

and indispensable (*Other Words* 179). Their beliefs are connected to the land and these sustained them and helped in healing their ailments.

Bioregionalism is a school of thought that located primarily in North America. Their motive was to approach the environmental issues through a politics derived from a “local sense of place” (Lynch et al. 2). Three key terms are pertinent in bioregionalism. They are dwelling, sustainability, and reinhabitation. The characters in the novel dwell in their land with a sense of peace and understanding for their land. At the opening of the novel, the narration went on directly to describe the landscape of Walatowa, the home town of Abel. Even though the story focuses mainly on Abel’s life and the journey of his recovery, the narrative gives importance to the landscape because it is necessary for the healing and survival of Abel and other characters whether Native or non-native. The townsmen worked diligently and enjoyed the fruit of their labour. The land was a good mother to them and they harvested alfafa, corn, chillies, melons, grapes, orchards, and others in abundance. Speaking about place to Coltelli, Simon Ortiz makes a stance that place and identity of a person are inseparable because place is the source of who a person is, and it is the language which a person is born into, and had come to use it (“Simon Ortiz” 105). For the indigenous people, the earth rather than the nation is the source of values. The indigenous people all over the world derived their tenets, beliefs, values, and ethics from the special relationship shared with the land (Krupat, *Red Matters* 11). In an interview with Joseph Bruchac, Navarre Scott Momaday praised the attitude of the Indian Southwest, the Pueblo, and the Navajo people towards the land, that, they do not live “on” the land, but they live “in” it, and that is in a real sense (“Magic of Words” 179). Momaday appreciates and value this belief and he incorporates it in his novel.

The grandfather of Abel, Francisco, was out in the open space driven by a team of roan mares. Francisco witnessed the beauty and experienced the quite peace of the surrounding in his trip. In San Ysidro, the sight and sound completely changed. The strange sound that Francisco heard was the sound of the bus that carried Abel home. In this way, the environmental sound of nature paired with calmness and peace is contrasted to the alien sound of machine of the western world. At the outset, Abel’s departure from his home marks the beginning of his dissociation with the landscape, as he entered into an alien world known for its sophisticated technology and other advancements. He was excited about the new journey, but it also made him lonely as he was separating from the place, the valleys, and the hills which were a part of his being. It was Abel’s first ride in the motorcar and he was

completely lost. On his return from World War II, Abel arrived home drunk and he had slept day and night at his grandfather's place. He did not exchange a word with his grandfather, but he was driven to the landscape of his homeland. The cure for the disease of alienation among the Native Americans lies in the reconnection with their landscape and land (Nelson). In the first light of dawn, Abel awoke and passed through the town to a high place where he could get a panoramic view of the valley and the mountain. Here, the land lay peacefully with the limitless sky as its background. He revisited the Valle Grande, a great volcanic crater, situated on the western slope of the range. This valley holds a special place in his heart. The eye alone could not comprehend its vastness, majesty, or beauty. The Indian land ethic supersedes the vague understanding of the land by the whites. Momaday articulates their principle that an Indian "use" of the land is not the first truth, as he loves the land, perceives its beauty, and feels "alive" in it (*Man* 40). The Native Americans not only use the land for survival but they revere it and take great delight in it.

Paula Gunn Allen writes that the Native Americans believed that they are the land and this has been a fundamental idea incorporated in their cultures. The earth is more than remembered by the Native Americans as it constitutes the mind of the people and the mind of the people is the earth. Unlike popular beliefs of treating the land as a resource or a physical setting that helps people to survive, the land is an integrated aspect of the people as the people are of her being. This is connected with their identity ("Iyani" 191). They are critical in understanding one's identity. Momaday gives importance to the land, but he does not necessarily project the Indians as environmentalist, for example, Francisco who wasted the animals. The land is not an empty space for the Native American people. It transcends beyond as it contained the languages, the stories, and the histories of the people. It gives sustenance by providing water, air, shelter, and food.

Thomas King opines that the land participates in the ceremonies and songs of the people, and, above all, it is home to them (*Inconvenient* ch.9). The chant of "House Made of Dawn" refers to the inhabitants of the land and to the cosmos as well. Wise people acted with knowledge and wisdom towards the land and things living on it because every wrong action is held accountable. Deloria shows how the Native Americans believe that human beings are creators or co-creators with the higher powers, and that their actions have immediate importance to the universe and that extends to the cosmos, the higher and lower planes of existence and of spiritual activities (*Spirit* 47). Thus, they were precautionous of their attitude towards other existences which have equal importance as them.

The western conception of place is artificial, materialistic, and lacked spiritual values. The landscapes were altered by the process of colonization, sacred places were transformed to serve as sites under the imperial power. Progress made in the name of science is ugly and hazardous. It replaces nature by the created artificial technologies which provided a comfortable living for the affluent (Deloria, *We Talk* 186). The Second World War created a dark image of the western world. It not only destroyed countless lives but it also harmed the environment and the landscape. Here, the western world with its machines, dead bodies, wounded soldiers, and erosion of forest and landscape lies in total contrast with the vastness of the Native world. To the eyes of Abel, who participated in the war, the western environment was horrendous. Dead bodies were spread everywhere and the limbs of men lay unattended. The machine that he saw stood apart from the land. With its great iron hull, it crashed the grading land (Momaday, *House* 21). Unlike the gloomy picture of war and the western environment, Abel's homeland was calm and it rejuvenates him. The Native people, like Francisco, read the land and depended on it for survival. After his return from the war, Abel sat down at the base of the red mesa and watched his grandfather and other people working in the farmland. They brought a sense of wellbeing to him. The breeze carried the scent of the earth and the grain up to him and they assure him that everything is all right and from them, he knows that he is at home.

The destruction of the environment is also done by the destruction done to the animals. In particular in 1873, more than 1.25 million buffalo hides were shipped to the east. This creates a huge problem among the Indian bands since the buffalo provided them with food, shelter, clothing, and tools. An old woman, known as Lady Horse, from Kiowas recalled that everything that the Kiowas owned came from the buffalo (Townsend 329). For this the Kiowas prized the animal. For people who live in a developed world, they lacked the peace and healing of nature and the landscape. This is because their forests and ecosystem were polluted and destroyed because of greed, exploitative development, and so on. In the novel, a woman named, Angela St. John, was on a visit to Los Ojos in New Mexico to receive a natural treatment for the soreness on her back. Her husband, a doctor, suggested her to try the mineral baths and this was why she came from California. During the course of her stay, Angela came face to face with the Native world, its culture, traditions, and the mystery of the land and nature. Angela emerged as a wiser and more knowledgeable person after her association with the Native people. The land played a huge part in her personal development and her healing.

4.1.2 The Death-Rebirth Journey

Abel's problem is rather complex. He belonged to a mixed heritage, his mother is a Kiowa, and his father is probably of Navajo descent. Alienation also originates from one's sense of breeding. Allen points out that the consciousness of being an outsider or being different from other people breeds alienation in a person's life ("Stranger in my own Life" 5). From a young age, Abel's life was never easy since he does not know his father, and both his brother Vidal and his mother had died prematurely. Abel suffered from identity-crisis from a young age because of his unknown parentage. Others still viewed him as an outsider because his father was not a Kiowa. This made the whole family appear "foreign" and "strange" in front of others (Momaday, *House* 11). Thus, Abel already suffers from alienation before joining the army. However, his experience in Second World War and post-war deepens his alienation. The spiritual decay of Abel started with his departure from home and continued with his continual stay in Los Angeles as a prisoner. Another issue lies in the distance between him and his culture that needs to be restored, since it is vital for his rebirth or regeneration. To have a rebirth, Abel needs to return back to his oral tradition and his people that can heal his ailments. Susan Scarberry- Garcia quoted critic Richard Ohmann that *House Made of Dawn* is a narrative of "illness" and a narrative of "healing" (*Landmarks* 1). Momaday mentioned that the name Abel happened to be a man from the reservation who blew out his brains. Abel also suffers from the ideologies and the discrimination of the whites. He must undergo through some important phases to become his self once again. Smith has mentioned some of the methods of decolonization. They are the decolonization of the minds, to recover oneself, and to claim a space to develop a sense of "authentic humanity" (23). Abel must follow a similar path to experience rebirth.

Eagles are considered as sacred among the Native Americans. The people fix prayer plumes on its leg and release them. When San Juanito captured an aged male eagle, the hunters assembled around the old eagle and spoke to it about their good will and sorrows. Abel had the privilege of hunting with the Eagle Watchers Society when he relates the story of an eagle clutching upon a snake to old Patiestewa. It stirred a profound feeling in Abel as it was "awful" and "holy sight," with full of "magic" and "meaning" (Momaday, *House* 14). He caught an eagle in the hunt, but he had strangled it when the eagle could not fly. Thus, he violates the sacred ceremony of his people which furthers his estrangement. Abel's problem is so wide and complex that it becomes difficult for readers to understand them all. Many things remain unknown to the non-native readers and this is a technique of Momaday who

thinks that Native culture should have its own privacy and secrets remain unknown to the outsiders.

Abel's problem of fragmentation, alienation, and isolation are not his own problem alone. It also comes from his society and the Euro-American world. Soldiers who returned from the deadly war suffered from post traumatic stress disorder as a result of the effects of war. Many of the Indians registered for military services in World War I. The exact number of the Indians entering the military was not specified as some of them were registered as whites and others as Indians. Townsend states that besides the military aid, the SAI (Selective Service System) believed that Indians' entry into the military service would further their assimilation and acculturation with American culture. That many of the Indians enlisted in war for various reasons. Some of the reasons are, the vested interest of the office of Indian Affairs in war, the commitment to provide wartime service to war veterans, escape from poverty, and the civilizing effort carried out among the Indians through western education pushed them towards military services (399). Another reason is said to lie in the warrior tradition of the Native Americans where menfolk defended their land, people, and resources against the enemies, which is one of the highest duties of a man towards his community. It has been noted that in the First World War, the Choctaw Indians acted as the "code talkers" for the Americans against their enemy Germans when the latter tapped the former's telephone lines and that remained as one of the most distinguished contributions of the Native Americans in war.

The Indians experience of the Second World War was reproduced by Momaday in *House Made of Dawn*. The only glimpse of Abel's combat in the war was when Abel stood up, whooped, danced, and sang before the enemy tank showing his finger. This gesture was not a heroic act for his fellow soldiers. It serves as a rough equivalent to the custom of counting coups among the traditional Plains Indians. Velie records that the Plains warriors considered touching an armed enemy harmlessly with a coupstick to be more glorious than to shoot him from a distance (55). Abel is a representative figure of the war veterans who lived an unhappy and aimless life after the war. Their life after the war was met with various problems like alcoholism, car crashes, murder, and violent deaths. Many of the war veterans returned home crippled, mentally, and physically. They could not contribute to their families and community, and the horror of war and their own participation in it continue to haunt them. For this they seek momentary solace in alcohol and drugs. One veteran also commented that the transportation of the young people to the city life was too disturbing.

Townsend mentions of how anthropologist John Adair in 1946 surveyed the reservation area of Arizona and talked with the war veterans. The hundred war veterans shared their experience of inclusion with the white soldiers during the war, but also commented that after the war they were dumped back to civilian and racial discrimination life (517). Tayo in Silko's *Ceremony* suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after his return from World War II. He also spends a great deal of his time in the bars and used to land in fights with others. He became a civilian after his service was no longer needed by the Americans. Temple and Velie refers to Native American poet, Joy Harjo, that alcoholism is a plague among the native people, and part of the healing can be derived from addressing the evils of alcoholism (8). Momaday has done the same in his novel to confront the evils of alcoholism among the Indians and this is best represented through Abel's life. Only when Abel returns to his oral tradition and establish a close relation with the land, develop his people's work culture, he will be able to distance himself from the problem of alcoholism.

Many of the major problems that Abel had encountered in his life happened to him in his drunken state. When Abel killed the albino, he was under the influence of alcohol. In an interview, Momaday tells Bataille that the albino is symbolic and he represents a "spiritual reality" rather than an individual man (61). Similarly, in Los Angeles, Abel and Ben Benally and some other friends were playing poker game at Tosamah's place, Abel was heavily drunk and he was insulted by Tosamah when he talked about *longhairs* and the reservation. Tosamah's words enraged him and he disappeared from his work. As a result of this event, Abel stayed drunk for two days alone in his room. He lost his job when he committed small mistakes out of his drunkenness. Before this incident, Abel and Ben would drink together to loosen up their emotions. However, after this incident it was not fun anymore to get drunk because Abel had changed. He had spent all his money on alcohol and he started to borrow money from Ben and Milly. He got job offers but lost them when he showed up drunk. Since his behavior had worsened, Ben asked him to move out from their apartment. After few days, Ben found Abel badly beaten. Ben started to bring Abel to his senses by singing songs and telling him stories. The Native American approach to the individual ailment is different from the Euro-Americans. Ben's method is a kind of therapy for Abel to ease his mind and saved him from the evils of alcohol.

The Native Americans do not celebrate the individual's ability to feel emotion because all people can do so and this suggests arrogance and it is unnecessary (P. Allen, "Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary" 223). The Native American worldview consisted of

wholeness and this is exemplified in their rituals, songs, and ceremonies. All of the inhabitants living in it are related to one another. In the midst of an illness or suffering, chants and rituals help in the restoration of wholeness, because a break or a division in wholeness causes problems. In short, beauty, health, and goodness are all based on wholeness and this wholeness is said to be reflected in language, literature, and thought. The arbitrary divisions of the universe into sacred and profane, natural and supernatural are absent in Native American culture (227). The problem of identity looms large among the Native Americans. As a result of centuries of colonial and postcolonial displacement and cultural breakdown which, Owens points out, privileges the English language over the tribal languages (4). That fragmentation, a key aspect in postmodernism finds its place in contemporary Native American literature and many of the Indian protagonists resembled the displaced modernist figures and their search for identities which ended up without finding them.

Words are crucial for Native American people. It is one person's identity and helps in forming bond with other fellow beings. Abel had lost words and he remained dumb after his return. He was dead inside and the words were lost in him. He was not whole, thus, he could not speak and imagine a future. Momaday articulates that Abel not only lost his voice as an Indian but as a man. Thus, he was estranged from the human race (Persona 119). The beginning of his homecoming was terrible but Abel was able to pick himself up slowly. The contact with the landscape played a big role in reviving his weary soul. Even though Abel had been walking around the valleys, fields, the town, and the canyon and reliving his past memory, there was still a big thing missing in his life. He had not being in touch with his people as a result of the loss of words. He failed to speak to his grandfather and he could not sing nor pray even though he wanted to. He had wished to speak a single word, like, greeting a person in his native tongue, but he could not, as he was "dumb" and remained "*inarticulate*" (Momaday, *House* 53). Like the women of Torreón who composed songs out of their colored yarn, Abel too wanted to make a song out of the colored canyon. He does not have the right words to sing his song, but when he does, he will sing a creation song. The yearning to sing creation song is a positive attitude and this will help him in his healing process.

Among the Pueblo and Navajo, the two brothers, Abel and Vidal, were mythic prototypes. Their characters were similar to the Stricken Twins who were physically ill and were social outcasts from their own society. They were healed by the Holy people and their fragmented lives were restored again. Even though Vidal had died prematurely, the memory

of Vidal, like, hunting geese together and experiencing the beauty of the landscape together restored Abel's life. Abel tells his story and his brother's story to Milly in the hospital bed, and this functioned as a source of healing for him. The act of telling the story invites the beauty of the natural world to enter his "interior landscape" (Garcia, *Landmarks* 24). The goose represents a source of beauty and source of beauty is believed to be source of healing. Abel also had a vision of the footrace while he was in a terrible situation. He could see the old men running the race after evil. Their attitude was positive and Abel was overcome with longing and loneliness as they were running after evil with recognition and with respect. Momaday acknowledged the presence of evil in *House Made of Dawn*. In the Indian world, evil exists in the form of witchcraft. Momaday tells Isernhagen that evil is anonymous and it exists in many forms and evil cannot be definitive, it is unidentifiable. It exists in the mind of the people (37). Evil must be defeated to have a harmonious living.

Abel is unable to live a life of his own. He was not given the chance to grow and get matured. While he was trying hard to change, others would not leave him alone. This is not confined to the Euro-Americans alone but to his people as well. One among them was Tosamah who considered Abel as a poor cat, who was ungrateful for the life and opportunities that were given to him by the whites. What Abel really needed was to be left alone where he could start his life again. Ben speaks about the crisis of Abel that even if he wants to go home, there would be nothing left for him and here he was never accepted. The warnings and the inquiries from the police made him to lose his patience. The fear of Ben about Abel getting all mixed up happened when Abel lost his job and was beaten up by Martinez. This scene was eliminated. Critic Garcia argues that the purpose was to throw light on Abel as a "victim" rather than the perpetrator's viciousness (*Landmarks* 87). In an interview with Isernhagen, Momaday expresses his view about the character of Martinez that it was appropriate to take a figure like Martinez who is evil and bias because that has been the experiences of the Indians for generations (37). When Abel was beaten up on the beach of Los Angeles, he began his death-rebirth journey. Just as the fishes were searching to get back to water, Abel too was making his move towards the journey of rebirth.

The most beneficial of all the animals for Abel's recuperation was the Bear. Momaday has used the bear image and stories in the novel to give an image of the physical and spiritual renewal through the contact with the wilderness. In Pueblo and Navajo cultures, bear is both a foe and a healer, a powerful "transformer of self" and of other persons, and Garcia mentions that according to Paul Shepherd, bear is considered as an "elder brother"

who stands to mediate between the human world and spirit world (*Landmarks* 46). Bear life is significant as it goes through a cycle of life. In the winter, it undergoes through the death-like hibernation and reemerges as a full one during the spring. This process of transformation and change is similar to the healing pattern. Thus, it is considered as a powerful and important animal among the Native Americans. *House Made of Dawn* tells four bear stories for the healing process of Abel. The bear stories narrated to Abel by four different people had an impact on him, it provides a sense of urgency in him and drives him to bear consciousness.

Abel makes a return back to his culture and tradition. He does not become a traditional man in the narrow sense, but he becomes one with a different understanding. In an interview, Linda Hogan talks about being a traditional person with a broader view to Bruchac, that, one needs to achieve a “health” and a kind of “independence” from the constraints of tradition (“To Take care of Life” 132). It should allow one to return to that place and deliver what needs to be done and also move outside the context to help other people. To be traditional is not easy as one has many responsibilities. Instead of cutting oneself from the white community for the sake of being traditional, that idea must be abandoned. A healthier view would be an integration of both cultures in a new way as opposed to what was done in the past.

In spite of all the criticism made against Abel, Ben believes in the recovery of Abel. Ben assured Abel with words and songs that are sacred to their culture. He sings songs and tells stories of the Beautyway and Night Chant for Abel. Ben instilled a sense of cultural urgency in the mind of Abel. Abel finally departed from Los Angeles and returned to his grandfather. This time his attitude was different as he waited and listened to the dying voice of his grandfather who was uttering unintelligible words. He finally performed the ceremony of the race of the dead by running and singing inaudibly. Francisco, his grandfather, had died, but Abel ran the race by continuing the legacy of his grandfather and finished what his grandfather had always wanted him to do. By this act, he got back his voice and his self back. In a conversation with Bataille, Momaday explains that the running is pertained to harvests and a person integrated himself with the sequence or motion of the universe by running the race (62). Abel act of running re-integrated him into the wholeness of being and his community. The ceremonies and the rituals that he performed and observed helped him to shed his ego or individualistic personality and they brought him back to his community and harmony with the universe.

4.1.3 Oral Practices

The Native Americans never take their life and their works for granted. Their beliefs and ceremonies were integrated into their daily life and activities. They observed various rites, rituals, and ceremonies for different reasons. Grandfather Francisco, had participated in the race for good hunting and harvests in Seytokwa in the past. Francisco smeared himself with soot and ran in the wagon road at dawn. He had outrun Mariano, the best-long runners. True to the blessings of the run, that year, Francisco killed seven bucks and seven does. The dawn running ritual at Jemez Pueblo was described by Momaday as an act of strong physical performance. The runners teach the viewers of going with the motion of things and the running permeates the runners to ponder “morality” and “demoralization” and about other things (*Man* 76). Abel ran the race and he experienced a sense of limitless freedom. The body pain derived from running was gone and he concentrated solely on the run. The beautiful landscape was open to him and he began to sing even though the sound was inaudible. This ritualistic act pushes him back to his communal life which holds the answer to his ailments.

Community occupied a central place in Native American culture. Jace Weaver termed literature as “communitist” (*That the People* 43). The base of literary writings lies in promoting community values and work towards the healing of the communities that were suffering from the effects of colonialism. This is what writers like Momaday and Welch do by emphasizing on their valuable traditions and cultures. The Pueblo people live their life predicted by a solar calendar and it is very close to the natural world. The cacique, the old man, observed the movement of the sun and instructed the people to plant, to harvests, and to perform the various ceremonies for their own benefit. In return, the community ploughs and sows the field of the cacique or the native chief (Momaday, *Man* 37). In the Angami-Naga culture, the *Liediepfü*, known as the ritual initiator of the harvest, carried out the first harvest for the whole village. The villagers in turn gifted her with their harvests. When Abel was young, he too participated in the plantation of the cacique field. The young Abel and Vidal were taught by their grandfather to observe the solar calendar. Thus, they were brought up with a good knowledge of their ceremonies and rituals. For non-native Americans, the dances, prayers, and rituals of the Native Americans were strange and mysterious because they have no knowledge about them.

Similarly, in the novel, Angela St. John had the same view when she witnessed the corn dance at Cochiti. She could not understand the moves neither the mood of the dancers.

They danced in a slow but deliberate manner. They were solemn in their dance and none of them had smiled. It was only days later that Angela perceived the meaning of the dance and the dancers. She came to know that the problem does not lie in them but in her. They were focused on something which she could not see. They were seeing something beyond the landscape which she could not see at all. The dancers do not fix their eyes on the physical world but they move beyond the physical realm to unite with the spiritual. The Native American worldview is not only physical but it exists beyond it. Thus, for a person like Angela the corn dance remained as an enigma. The peyote ritual was carried out by John Big Bluff Tosamah for his followers in Los Angeles. It included sermon taken from the Bible and narrative of the oral history of the Kiowa people. Hoxie further notes that Pinero and Chiwat, two Lipan teachers, were frequently identified as the early advocates of the peyote ritual which is significant for the reservation people at the turn of the century (208). Peyote button is used as a source of inspiration and it promised to restore the health of the participants by the ritual and also by the virtue of group sanctions against alcohol. Drumming and singing in native language through an entire night were part of the ritual and its aim was egalitarian as it involves communion with an unseen, but immediate spiritual world.

Momaday's knowledge and concern to preserve oral tradition can be keenly felt in his writings. Some of these oral traditions are re-enacted in the novel. The feast of Santiago is celebrated by the Pueblo people of the Native Americans annually on July 25. The feast is celebrated in relation with the legend of Santiago, a magician, who had multiplied the cultivated plants and domestic animals of the Pueblos. It is followed by the game of rooster pulling, participated by young men. The body of the rooster is buried in the sand with its head open. One by one, the horsemen will pull the rooster and the winner will choose one of the horsemen and strike him with the rooster. The act has cultural significance as Garcia noted that the rooster sacrifice is believed to renew the animal life and the agricultural practice of the people for "another cycle" and that the act shows gratitude to the powers of reproduction and transforms the Walatowa community into a prosperous one (*Landmarks* 41).

Momaday himself witnessed the chicken pull and described it as an exciting game. The game however deteriorated, as it was no longer played by men in their prime but by children alone (Momaday, *Names* 145). The blood of the rooster multiplies for more growth. After the return from World War II, Abel participated in the roosting pulling at the feast of Santiago. The rooster was being pulled by an albino named Juan Reyes. He picked Abel as a competitor and they played with the rooster. The rooster was killed in the act and its blood

was spilled on the ground. The rooster's feathers and flesh came out and people threw water to conclude the sacrifice. The feast of Santiago is an act of history.



Fig.5. Palace of the Governors, “Chicken pull in Agua Fria, New Mexico 1900.”

House Made of Dawn follows a mixed literary style of oral tradition with western models. The book is divided into four parts, preceded by a prologue. The first is titled as “The Longhair” (Walatowa, Canon de San Diego, 1945), the second as “The Priest of the Sun” (Los Angeles, 1952), the third as “The Night Chanter” (Los Angeles, 1952), and the fourth as “The Dawn Runner” (Walatowa, 1952). The use of four as an important concept in the novel has been observed. The novel is not only divided into four parts, but for the healing pattern of Abel, four characters narrate bear stories and its powers from four cultural perspectives. The use of pairs and twins is another substitute of four. Chadwick Allen shows how this four is a sacred concept in many Native American traditions and they symbolize “balance,” “completion,” and “harmony” (“N. Scott Momaday” 211). Moreover twins are represented as cultural heroes in Navajo, Pueblo, and Kiowa traditions. Pierce notes that the number four is used when new things are created, and it is used in overcoming evils as they were unsuccessful three times (67). The significance of four in the novel is derived from oral traditions and beliefs.

The book is also likened to a race. The use of repetition also runs throughout the novel. For example, Abel's relationship with Angela is picked up again with Milly, and at the end Abel retains the image of Francisco. Momaday discloses that the novel is autobiographical and it comes from his own experience added with his own imagination. The character of Abel is a composite based upon real people that Momaday knew. Tosamah's

sermon is a reflection of Momaday's grandmother, and Milly and Angela were part of his imagination. The most valuable experience for Momaday is an experience of the imagination. Momaday shares this with his interviewer, Abbott, that he has no practical experience with the war tank that Abel had faced in the war, but he invented it out of his "imagery experience" (34). This is another literary device of Momaday and it helped him to create significant scenes, like, the war tank that Abel had encountered.

The novel is colored with the various oral traditions and beliefs of the Native Americans. Momaday opens the novel with "*Dypaloh*" and ends with "*Qtsedaba*," which puts the novel in the oral tradition of the Jemez Pueblo in framing a story. The narrative follows the non-linear style where the past and the present were intermixed. Momaday has incorporated multiple narratives in the novel and borrowed from various oral sources and practices in weaving the narrative. The narrative contained many stories apart from the main narrative. These stories were italicized whereas the main narrative is not. Moreover, the journal of Fray Nicholas which Father Olguin indulges in added another narrative to the book. The presence of multiple stories, and narrative forms added richness to the novel. They were interlinked with the main story and they helped in building up the narrative of the novel. The oral traditions of the Native Americans are known for their flexibility and durability. This helped them to adapt to the changes while maintaining their own tradition. The novel's structure or basis being similar to the Navajo hero pattern has been indicated, of how Abel was isolated from his own land for a long time, and he suffered from the inequalities based on racism and his inferior status. However, Abel returned back to his native land and he was healed by the traditional rituals and ceremonies. Garcia commented on the structure of the novel that Momaday was the first Indian writer to end his novel from where it started, presenting an image of a man running at dawn ("N(avarre) Scott Momaday" 470). Later on, writers like James Welch and Leslie Marmon Silko followed the same by ending their stories from where it began.

Momaday speaks about the importance of words that when a person speaks or prays he must remember that he is dealing with higher powers. Thus, to be careless about words is a violation of "fundamental morality" (*Man* 16). Momaday believed in the equality of the oral tradition and written tradition and this is a deviation from the colonial literatures. The Native Americans do not speak necessarily to be heard. Words are considered as sacred, thus silence is considered with vital importance and power. Native people were stereotyped for their inability to speak English language. Abel had remained dumb after his return from war,

he must restore his voice to re-enter the native world and participate in the tribal life. Bartelt comments that Momaday's use of multilingual languages in his book is symbolic of the exclusive socio religious life of the Pueblo people (103). Some Native expressions, words, and songs remained untranslated in the text. This is a technique of post-colonialist writings. Francisco set up a snare in the reed and uttered "*¡Sí, bien hecho*" (Momaday, *House* 6). On the way to San Ysidro, Francisco sings in his native tongue, "*Yo heyana oh ... heyana oh ... Abelito ... tarda mucho en venir*" In the past, Francisco had outrun the best runner Mariano in the race for good hunting. When Francisco and Mariano drew nearer, Francisco saw the defeated face of Mariano and says "*Se dió por vencido*" (7). In part four, "The Dawn Runner," Francisco talked and sang to Abel in native tongue. Francisco served as the mouthpiece of the author by emphasizing the importance of native words and songs. He was dying but he knows the need to transmit the songs to Abel, thus, in his deathbed, he sang songs in his native language to his grandson. Francisco stands as the link between tradition and modernity. He was the character who articulated the most in native language. They were not translated into English and they give a sense of exclusivity to the Native people.

Momaday also employed several symbols and images in the novel which are part of the oral traditions of the Native American people. Bear is an important spirit animal among many Native American communities. The hibernating period of the bear in winter when the animal ceased collecting food fascinates the northern hunters. It is believed by some men that the bear survived in treacherous winter by sucking its own paws (Hallowell 27). The American Indians veneration for the bear goes beyond the physical as they believe that the bear is controlled by a supernatural agent. Rockwell has written extensively on the subject, of how, the Cree believed that a club, axe, or spear could kill the bear as bullets and arrows were not powerful enough to conquer the bear's spirit (ch. 3). The American Indians' perception of bears as healers stemmed from the animal behavior of gathering roots, stems, nuts, and other vegetations which has medicinal values. By this, the bear is seen as the guardian of the first medicines and transmitter of the knowledge of healing.

There are bear dreamers in some Indian tribes. They acquired the character of bear by behaving like a bear, an example is dancing like a bear and decorated their clothes and weapons with bear's fur and claws. They behaved like bears not because they wanted to be a bear, but because they thought of themselves as bears. The bear is killed for the purpose of food in times of starvation, skins, and paws for medicinal purpose. Thus some communities like the Navajos of the Indians killed bear only in exceptional situations, like, when the bear

was threatening peoples' lives and cattles, or when a Navajo singer needed bear paws for medicinal ceremony. The Pueblos abstained from eating bears flesh as they believed bears to be transformed people and eating them is likened to cannibalism (ch.4). The novel emphasizes on the story of bear for the healing purpose of Abel. One of the most important tales of bear was told by Francisco. The bear that he killed showed no fear, in fact before he killed it, they both exchange silence of understanding. After killing the bear, he performed the necessary rituals of eating the bear's liver, and smeared himself with the blood of bear. When he came to the town, he shouted, and men came to meet him with their rifles and he gave them strips of the bear's flesh. The women too came and they spoke to the bear and placed their switches to its hide. This event helped him to become a man. The oral practices are crucial for the Native Americans and even after their colonization, they still observe and maintained their traditions because from them they derived meaning, value, and their identity.

4.1.4 Mediation between two Cultures

The influence of colonialism is still strong in Native American culture, however, the Native people also make efforts to revitalize their own culture. In *House Made of Dawn*, the two worlds, that is, the Native American world and the Euro-American world exist side by side with many differences. In the frontier mythology, the white adventurer and the Indian savage are the two important figures. Stevens points out that Momaday has used them in his works and in the construction of his past (66). The Euro-Americans observed Native cultures and traditions but lacked experience. Deloria explains of how the nature of tribal society requires people to experience it from inside and if one does not do so, one becomes alienated, irritable, and lonely (*We Talk* 13). Euro-American characters, like Father Olguin and Angela St. John, tried hard to enter the Native American world, but were unsuccessful. They seemed to understand the Indian and their problems but they still behaved as observers of Indian culture rather than assimilate and experience their culture. Father Olguin's perception of the Indian world and his idea about himself is nothing but a superior attitude of the Euro-Americans. The religious priest was not free from the bias against the Indians. Thus, during the trial scene, he complicates the matter as he did not know the origin of Abel's suffering.

On the other hand, Angela St. John looks at the Indian suitable for manual work and sexual desire through her view of Abel's life. She was empty inside, hence she could not understand the Indian world which requires a person to transcend beyond the physical world and enter into the divine or the spiritual realm. Coulombe calls her as a representative of the

white world who poorly thinks of the Indians, she idealized and “fetishize” the Indians which are typical outlook of the colonizers (41). Momaday in his writing, *The Man Made of Words* has listed some of the immediate problems faced by the Indians because of colonialism. They are the silencing of Indian history, the environmental domination, and the civilizing effort carried out by the whites (60). The contact between the two cultures produce clashes and the Euro-Americans had broken and destroyed some of the Native cultures. However, the narrative of *House Made of Dawn* appreciates the durability of Native culture. He says of how the people of the town still adhere to the old tradition as they never craved for western progress neither followed its religion that they still prayed in Tanoan to the deities of the earth and sky. Their lifestyle remained unchanged as they followed the traditions of the past, carving their traditions into their “secret souls” which symbolize their “resistance” and “overcoming” of the influence of the western world (Momaday 53). This is an important thread that connects the Native people to their roots in the midst of outside influences.

Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “contact zones” where cultures meet and clash on the basis of differences, power relations, colonialism, slavery, and others also describes the conditions of the Native Americans and the Euro-Americans (4). The two cultures were unequal because one acted as superior over the other on the basis of race, culture, politics, manners, and so on. Abel and the other Indian characters suffer from the stereotype of the whites because the whites perceived them to have different skin colour and treated them with less than human. Momaday tells his interviewer Isernhagen that he uses stereotype in his novel as a form of “poetic license” (44). It is part of the truth and one has to acknowledge its existence. Momaday used stereotype or the false view and throws it back to the whites. Traditional lifestyle keeps the Indian people alive in spite of the threats and the dangers received from outsiders. For Momaday, there is hope in re-building, restoring, and reviving Native American culture because it is the only way to counter-attack the oppressive forces of the Euro-American ideas and colonialism. Native American culture has the power to combat against these forces because it is rich, practical, dynamic and is able to survive in the different situations of life.

The history of the Bahkyush migrants serves as one of the best examples of perseverance and survival. The Bahkyush people experienced great sufferings from the hands of their enemies and plague. However, they persevered through their sufferings and began to grow again when they were helped by their distant relatives. They became medicine men, rainmakers, and eagle hunters. Tosamah retold the history of the Kiowas told to him by his

grandmother Aho. The Kiowas story of migration was never static as in the course of their journey they acquired horses, Tai-Me, the sacred sun dance doll, and later on, they turned into courageous people. These experiences pushed them to the highest forms as they were no longer slaves to survival, but they were transformed into lordly and dangerous society of fighters, thieves, hunters, and priests of the sun. Their journeys exemplify the universal desire of human beings for quest. These people and their histories were never stable, they were not new to the notion of change, in fact, they survived because they adapted to the changes presented in their lives. For Momaday, the Indian culture has been experiencing change and this made their survival possible. He warned against preserving cultural heritage in the name of remaining static and becoming a museum piece (Isernhagen 41). Change is not a modern phenomenon for the Kiowa people but this was in the blood of their ancestors.

James Ruppert, author of *Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction*, labeled the contemporary Native American artists as participants in two cultural traditions whose works act as mediation. By mediation, Ruppert meant an artistic and conceptual standpoint which incorporates the “epistemological frameworks” of Native American and western literary traditions that can inform and enrich each other (3). The Native American writers do not simply critique the western society, their concern lies in improving their society by acknowledging its defects and mistakes as well. Contemporary Native American writers have the freedom to write from their Native and western cultural traditions and literary styles. An example is Momaday’s use of western legend and Native American myth in *The Ancient Child*, the use of ceremonies, rituals with stream of consciousness in *House Made of Dawn*. An intermixing of the two cultures and also a shift from one culture to the other is seen in their literary works. Through the process of mediation and multiple narratives, the text obtained what Bakhtin called the “overcoming of otherness” because it keeps the perspective of the two worlds together (qtd. in Ruppert 35). The Native Americans were keen to continue the nativistic traditions of their ancestors but foreign influences were inevitable. People like Abel in *House Made of Dawn* and Set in *The Ancient Child* received urgent calls from their elders to return back to their native land filled with their traditions and practices, but they ended up accepting their culture and some western culture because they were unavoidable.

Indigenous people must find their voice to articulate their own experience. At the trial scene, Abel remained helpless because the people presented at the court like Father Olguin and others were debating among themselves, excluding him from the discussion. The Indians

have invested a lot in their words and language but the whites do not. According to Momaday, this remained as one of the most important issue in Indian-white relations in the past five hundred years, because the core of their difference was reflected in language (*Man* 56). The Euro-Americans have less regard for word. Thus they owned the situation during the trial scene by disposing Abel of language. Native Americans speak in a simple and straightforward manner, whereas the Euro-Americans speak in a confused manner. Word has power and it is sacred. Thus, even a man's name has so much significance. The Kiowas avoid speaking the name of a person because even the dead take their names with them out of the world (Momaday, *Way* 33). There is a huge language barrier between the two. Tosamah talks about the "word inflation" of the Indian languages made by the whites. Words are worthless for the whites, whereas, the Native Americans attitude towards words is worthy and invaluable. Tosamah's sermon represents Momaday's attitude towards language. The Indians guarded their traditions with care and privacy. Angela came to Walatowa to experience the mineral bath. Many of the whites imitate the culture and traditions of the natives for experience, out of curiosity, for health, and for their own benefit. The Indians were offended by these behaviours as it misrepresented their culture.

In some situations, it becomes difficult to reunite the Native Americans and the Euro-Americans. This happened to Abel and the albino. Here, the albino symbolizes evil that needs to be defeated by Abel for his growth. Abel killed the albino, a representative of the white civilization and its evils. His cynical look, the snake-like appearance, and his violent character represents the white world. The albino's presence makes things eerie as Francisco felt something strange while he was in the field. Abel's killing of the albino is paired with the eagles killing the snake. The snake is evil whereas the eagles are considered as sacred. Good and evil are always together and they live side by side. Francisco had recognized this evil on his part and evil too knows who he is. When the albino was killed, Francisco was alone in the field again but this time it was peaceful. Coulombe described Abel's killing of the albino as an act that removed a danger which existed beyond the "racial" and "cultural categories" (49). The albino is not evil because of his skin colour or race, rather he is a symbolical representative of some wickedness that threatens the world. Abel on the other hand sees the albino as an enemy in terms of his breeding and his status as an intruder and a colonizer.

In post-colonial era, different literary techniques were used to represent the relation, mood, and resistance of the oppressed people. The use of trickster character is one that brings out the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The trickster figure remained as

a critic of the two cultures. It is a means by which difficult subjects are discussed amicably and the severe implications are silenced by it. In an interview, Gerald Vizenor tells Coltelli that the trickster character does not kill people and the wreckages done by him are symbolical. He does not seize power in a tribal culture but he disrupts the peoples' lives ("Gerald Vizenor" 163). Trickster characters are known for fluid identity, comic and tragic effects, and constantly changing personalities. Lewis Hyde, in his book, *Trickster Makes this World: Mischief, Myth and Art*, defines the trickster as a "boundary-crosser" that lacked no distinction for right and wrong, sacred and profane, and mixes everything. He is characterized as a wise figure, a fool, and a deviant (Introduction). One of the interesting characteristics of the novel is the use of trickster figure by Momaday. Cox refers to Vizenor who observes that the trickster's newest battleground is academe and trickster is a "word warrior" against the notion of colonization, popularization, and isolation from a collective tribal identity (17). Coulombe commented that the fluidity of the trickster points out to the possibility of the successful translation into written English and for this English is not confined as the "enemy's language" but it transcends that (31). In modern America, Native American writers write extensively in English, but it is not the Euro-American English, it is an English that is close to their culture and experience. Tosamah, the Priest of the Sun, served as a trickster figure in the novel, he takes advantage of the language in the situation. His sermons are a comment on the language and they indicate his intelligence. Tomasah suffers from the same problem of being uprooted from his land as Abel. But unlike Abel and others he was able to survive because he is deceptive and takes advantage of the situation. He preached the "The Gospel According to John" and he twists the story to condemn the white culture. The white man has no regard for language and it is diminishing to a point of no return. Whereas for Tosamah's grandmother, words are like medicine added with magic and they remained invisible. There is no price for words and his grandmother made the best use of them.

Tricksters are witty and cunning, while they are not evil, they can be cruel. Vizenor tells Bruchac that tribal tricksters are remarkable in displaying the "socioacupuncture" borrowed from Asian theme, which means putting the "right pressure" at the right time and place ("Follow the Trickroutes" 293). By applying the right humor and right pressure at the right moment helped in achieving something. Owens states that Tosamah's voice is a composite of Bakhtinian "hybridization," that he makes dialogue with himself, contradicts it, and challenges and mocks the authority and then tricks the people into "self-knowledge," and to understand Tosamah's character is to understand the "heterogenous" and "dialogic nature"

of Momaday's art (110). Tosamah preaches sane words to his Indian congregation about the importance of stories, history, and language. Through the sermon of Tosamah, Native Americans history and sufferings were narrated. He is in one way a cultural figure of the Native Americans. However, Tosamah has his own shortcomings. Sometimes, he plays the part of a villain. He is responsible for driving Abel into madness when he demeans Abel and calls him by degrading names like, longhairs and poor cat. Ben Benally knows Tosamah well and he knows how to deal with him. He tricked people and make fools of them unless one knows how to handle him. Azalyn Croft refers to Louis Owens who commented that the meeting place between the Natives and the non-natives is a "zone" of the trickster (17). The trickster disrupts law and order and this represents the attitude of the Native Americans who insisted upon their freedom to re-imagine themselves as they prefer it. Tosamah stands in between the culture of the Indians and the Americans. He critiqued the shallowness and the artificialities of the whites but sometimes he acts as an outsider of his own culture. This is seen when he speaks lowly of the reservation people. At other times, he acts as a preserver of Native American culture. He conducted prayer meetings and performed ceremony for the Indian people and narrated the history of Kiowa ancestors to the people.

4.1.5 Conclusion

House Made of Dawn is studied mainly under the topic of recovering the lost identity of the protagonist Abel. There are different sub-sections in studying the novel but they are connected to the topic of the novel. Abel's character and his problems had been studied at length. The root of his problem comes from his estrangement with his Indian culture. However, it is a fact that Abel suffered from isolation before joining the army. His father was an outsider to the Kiowa, thus, he too remained as an outsider. The pain and the sufferings that he had gone through in his life were not only caused by the whites but by the Indians as well. For his healing, Abel needs to revisit the landscape, mountains, and the beauty of nature in his Native land. The songs, ceremonies, stories are other dimensions of his healing. His journey of rebirth was possible because of his supportive friends and the undying spirit of his grandfather Francisco. The land and the landscape played an important role in bringing healing to the Native people as well as the non-native. Angela St. John, a white woman, came to grasp the culture and traditions of the Native Indians after her association with them. The land is sacred to the native people and it consists of their identity. The Euro-American world is surrounded by war and other sophisticated technology but it could not heal Abel's ailments. Only when Abel returns to Walatowa and spends time in nature, he gets his self

back. Momaday also emphasized on the beautiful landscape of Walatoma as it stands in total contrast with the terror of war that Abel had experienced in the Euro-American world. The novel cannot be appreciated without understanding the oral traditions of the Native Americans. The songs, prayers, chants, and ceremonies are vital for the story. It helps the Native people especially the younger generations to recognize that their oral tradition is capable of harmonizing their fragmented lives. The feast of Santiago, chicken-pull, dawn running, corn dance, peyote ritual and others presented a deeper meaning of the Native American world. The practices and rituals were significant for the healing, growth, and restoration of the individual and the community. The bear is another important symbol of the Kiowa culture which helped in the healing of Abel. It is associated with healing. The elements of oral tradition that Momaday borrowed for the novel is taken from different tribes and they convey multicultural ideas. The non-natives who gained a deeper understanding of the Native culture began to examine their life and accept the richness of the Native world. Momaday also creates mediation between the Native American and the Euro-American cultures through the trickster figure and by combating against the evils threatening their harmony. It is also noted that the Euro-Americans should participate in the culture of the Indians in order to gain a deeper understanding of it. The Native Americans were able to survive in the midst of colonization because they carve the traditions of their culture with them and practiced them. The difference of attitude between the Native Americans and the Euro-Americans is also highlighted in the novel. While the former considered words as sacred and used it judiciously, the latter has no regard for words and used it carelessly. Tosamah remained as a critic of both cultures pointing out their defects without hurting any of them. As the first novel of Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*, touched on critical problems and important cultural traditions of the Kiowa and Jemez people. It talks about the problems but it also offers solution to the problems faced by the modern Indians through a return to the rich traditions and culture.

4.2 *The Ancient Child*

The Ancient Child, the only novel to be published by Navarre Scott Momaday after his Pulitzer winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*, was inaugurated in the year 1989. The book carries many of the traditions and themes that were explored in *House Made of Dawn*. However, it also has other features of its own that were offered in the book. The novel tells the story of a Native American man named Set and his search for identity. Set was a successful painter living in San Francisco, but he was living an unsatisfied life in spite of

having a good job. The problem has to do with his roots and culture as he was living astray from them. He had lost his father and mother at a young age and he was displaced from home after his adoption by a white man, Bent Sandridge. Through Set's story, the narrative went on to deal with the myth of Tsoai, alienation, loss of identity and so on.

Set's story is paralleled with the story of Tsoai, like the mythical figure, he has to accept his bear identity and fulfilled his destiny. Grey a wild and feisty woman will help Set in his journey to go back home and guide him to find his destiny. Set returns to the land of his ancestors for his grandmother's funeral and met Grey. She transferred the medicine bundle to Set and instructed him the details and provided him strength in his destiny. Set is driven to the story of the bear-boy and it absorbs him. For this, he must discover his native culture and his own identity therein. In the course of his journey, Set faced setbacks from outsiders who could not comprehend his personality, and he himself was confused about his life and the bear's identity. Set suffered but he persevered and becomes integrated with his community and went deeper to discover the bear identity and power.

The narrative of the novel is non-linear as it alternates with events from the past and the present. The book also used historical figures, like, Billy the Kid, and his story is interwoven with the narrative. Grey fantasized the life and company of Billy the Kid and she even composed verses for him. This is Momaday's own work because he too imagined Billy the Kid to be his close friend. The fascination with Billy the Kid ceased when Grey matured as a person. With perseverance and obedience on her part, Grey becomes a medicine woman and continued the gift of her grandmother Kope'mah. The stories and the act of storytelling are vital in *The Ancient Child*. They awaken the cultural consciousness among the characters. They are also related to the characters search for identity, their dreams, passions, and visions. Thus, the employment of myths and stories are essential to the novel. The novel does not isolate itself from the western world, it admixes life and scenes both from the western world and the Native American world. The two worlds have conflicted views and cultures but they depended and influence each other.

The Ancient Child will be studied under various themes in the following sections. The theme of alienation, isolation, and the search for identity among the characters will be explored. This is commonly experienced by the American Indians who were colonized by the whites and had great difficulty in returning back to their native roots. Momaday had given special focus on this theme by looking at the roots of its causes. As a novel dealing mainly

with Native American culture, the traditions, ceremonies, and superstitious beliefs were interwoven in the story. They point out to the belief system and culture of the Native American people and the way they conduct their lives. The narrative of the novel combines the myth of Tsoai and the legend of Billy the Kid. The mythical story is crucial for Set's development and his recovery of identity. Moreover, women characters and their role occupied a central place in the narrative. The presence of wise women figures in Set's life and the unfathomable landscape and the land guided Set in recovering his identity. The land ethic and reverence were presented in the novel. They were contrasted to the urban life of the Euro-Americans. The literary styles and techniques of *The Ancient Child* are inspired by Momaday's studies of western techniques and his own oral tradition. Keeping these features in mind, the following sections will focus on them in studying the novel.

4.2.1 A Return to the Wilderness

In his book, *The Man Made of Words*, Momaday highlighted the problem of the Indians in their contact with the whites. It failed to enrich the Indians and the so called western civilization "debased" them (69). The Indians need to return to their own culture and tradition that is capable of sustaining them physically and spiritually. Staying close to one's culture and roots under the guidance of parents and elders is one way of keeping one's native identity alive. Looking at the life of Set, there are gaps in his life that clearly set for his alienation and isolation. He was made orphaned at a young age and was adopted by a white man. Set had a weak memory of his parents. His mother, Catherine Locke Setman, had died giving birth to him in 1934. He dreamt of his mother's touch, her embrace, her smell, her voice, and her breath. These are the only memories of his mother that remained with him. As of his father, Cate Setman, he had brought up Set under his care and fed him with stories. However, his father too died in a car crash in Wyoming in 1941 when he was only seven. These losses create emptiness in young Set which he could not express, as they go beyond past his memory. In a conversation with Prampolini, Momaday says that Set has to revisit the past, his heritage, and into the blood memory of his ancestry as these things hold the "primeval experience" where he can find his real identity (203). The western world could give a comfortable life to Set but not what his soul searches for, as it can be found from his heritage and culture alone.

The father-son relationship is important in Native American communities. This was hastily snatched away from Set's life. This further disintegrates his life. The story of Set-

angya, a legendary figure, who always carries the bones of his son, is another example of a traditional father-son relationship. Set's relationship with his father and his step-father is contrasted to traditional father-son relationship and it is partly his fault that he moved away to the urban Euro-American world where relationships are not valued. After losing both of his parents, Set was sent to an orphanage and thereafter he was adopted by Bent Augustus Sandridge. This is the beginning of his estrangement from his roots and culture. Set's life can be indirectly compared to the relocation program set up by the whites. It promised a good life and moral upliftment of the Native people, however, it was a failure in all of its promises. Momaday has highlighted the moral context of the whites behind the Relocation program. The Indians were displaced from the reservation with the hope of making them "second-class citizen" (*Man* 73). This was disastrous as the new environment was worse than the reservation life where they can fight for their own survival.

Higham observes that the process of Americanization, which is the spread of American culture and customs, undermine the traditions of both nativism and confidence (235). Set's ailment is also based on postcolonial displacement of place when he lives in San Francisco. Away from his native community, Set was slowly being assimilated into the melting pot of America. The immediate concern for Set was to return to the wilderness. Momaday acknowledged the existence of wilderness when he says that there exist more in one's soul than in one's sight (*Death* 69). Even though the wilderness appeared as savages to the whites or the civilized, Set has to return to it to find his identity. According to Momaday, Bear is a particular expression of the spirit of wilderness. Urset, the original bear, comes directly from the hands of God and he is an imitation of himself, a mask. If the bear is being looked closely and long enough, the mountains on the other side also becomes visible. For all these, bear is a representation of the wilderness. Momaday talks of his own experience as a bear-boy. The name "Tsoai-talee" means "Rock-tree-boy" in Kiowa, and it was conferred to him as an infant and he began to possess bear's spirit (*Bear's House* xi). Bear's eyesight is weak, but his vision goes beyond time and he watched with profound loneliness over his kinsmen in the night sky. There is a strong relation between man and bear. In the conversation between Yahweh and Urset, the latter told Yahweh that eating man's flesh is abhorrent to him. Yahweh replied that it is because he is manlike and to eat it would be cannibalistic.

After finding his passion in painting, Set became an accomplished painter and his name was well known in the whole country. It was fashionable and expensive to own his

paintings, but Set himself was on the edge of losing his soul. Success comes with a price as Set has to compromise his art and comply with the wishes of his customers. This created a rift in his personality as his desire to be his own man was thwarted by others. If Set's adoption is the beginning of his estrangement from his roots, his compromise with his work is the point of his dissatisfaction with western culture and lifestyle. His disillusionment had affected his mind and body. He grew tired and repeated the same paintings on and on even though he wanted to create a new one. His only way was now to be true to himself and that would save his soul. The telegram message of his grandmother's death was a wake up call for Set to return to his native land. Since he had lost his parents at an early age, and got displaced from home, he had no knowledge of his antecedents and relatives. Before his visit, his grandmother Kope'mah talked about him and told Grey that the bear is coming. His visit to the grave of his father awakened him to the fate and destiny to which he belonged. In Cradle Creek, Set perspective of his belonging changed as he established a connection with his native soil. He felt his relation with it even though he could not articulate it. This place belongs to "*his genesis*" (Momaday, *Ancient* 64). Before his departure to San Francisco, Grey presented the gift of Kope'mah to him. Set could not understand the gift, and this confusion about the medicine bundle will bring him back to his roots in Oklahoma.

The sense of alienation is pertinent in the writings of contemporary Native American writers like Momaday, Vizenor, and Silko. In an interview with Tom King, Momaday voices out that alienation is basic, even though he acknowledged the historical alienation of the Indians, the problem of alienation is felt by people in one way or the other ("*MELUS Interview*" 153). The crux of the story is emphasized a number of times, which is Set's search for his centrality or his identity. Billy the Kid was shot dead because he could not answer the question "¿Quién es?" meaning "who is there" or "who are you?" Thus, it is important for Set to search for his center and not to experience the same fate as Billy (Tudor 143). Set's bear identity also connects him with the belief of the Native Americans with the stars, as the seven sisters from the myth of Tsoai turned into stars called the Big Dipper. Set Lockman's bear identity was evident in his life from a young age. While he was staying in Peter and Paul Home, one evening, he broke the "Castle Rules" and ventured across the field and was stung by bee. From thereon, Sister Stella Francesca puts the notion of bee-wolves in his mind forever. The bee-wolves sister explained was the old name for bears. They are symbolic in Set's life. His knowledge about them will help him to identify himself with them. As a young boy, Set was introduced to the image of bears from his father and other people. Thus, there is

no fear for bears. Set must learn the meaning of his name. Momaday's great-grandfather Pohd-lohk gave him the name "Tsoai-talee" and enlightened him that a man's life proceeds from his name (*Names*). Similarly, Set must take up his name which means bear and live according to its meaning.

Momaday's novels *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child* critiqued the Euro-Americans for causing serious mental crisis to the characters, like, Abel and Set. For rediscovery and healing, an action based on indigenous knowledge that evolved from the stories, traditions, and rituals which were inspired by the landscape is needed. This is present in the cultures of the Kiowa, the Navajo, and the Pueblos. Krupat and Elliott refer to the "geoscapes" of the Native people that they must be raised in this environment to live the stories to be who they truly are and if they separated from it, the stories will decline as well (132). In a conversation with Prampolini, Momaday articulates that the meaning of Set in Kiowa means bear. Stories of the bear were narrated by different people to awaken Set to live it and play his role in it. Speaking about storytelling and stories to Prampolini, Momaday elucidates that there is an ancient idea pertaining to stories and this is not exclusive to the Native Americans alone. There exist in cultures stories where people dwelt in the story, live their lives in the pattern of the story, and play their part in it (210). Similarly, Set has to listen to the stories and play his part in the story.

The kinship with bear is reflected in their myths and folklores. One of the clearest examples is the tale of Tsoai. Cate Setman narrated the story of the little boy that came to the Piegan camp to his son. The little boy history was unknown to the people but they welcomed him because of his friendly appearance. He spoke to the people in an unknown language. Suddenly, he left the people without informing them and the women grieve his absence. An old man consoled the people and offered a bear in place of the boy. Then the people began to believe that it must be a bear that was with them and babbled to them. It is important for Set to remember this story as it is related to his life and his identity also rests with it. In the final chapter of the first book titled, "The bear comes forth," Set changed as the bear in him comes forth. Set was being beaten ritualistically by bear paws for the purpose of healing. Bears have medicinal significance. The Zunis considered black and white bear as the most important medicinal animal of the curing society. The bear paw is also used by shamans and medicine men. The respect and acknowledgment towards the bear is not done with blindness. The bear is believed to be guided by some supernatural being, thus, propitiation is carried for the supernatural agent and not the beast which is considered as a worldly creature (Hallowell

145). By this, the bear veneration is shifted to the supernatural controller of the bear and not the bear itself. This also sets another similarity with the Angami-Nagas who respect the tiger but does not worship it. The Indians feared bear because of its killing instinct. However, this fear has been transcended as the Indians and bears shared kinship based on its physical appearances like standing on its hind legs and its skinned carcass which looks like human (Rockwell ch.1). In an interview with Bettye Givens, Momaday articulates that bear is that part of human which is “subhuman” and “primitive” (91). The man and the bear are related and the story of the transformation of the boy into a bear once again reconnects them together.

Set was experiencing the crisis of assimilation initiated by the Euro-Americans. This is considered as a harmful method that forces the Native Americans to merge into the mainstream American culture. The departure of Set to San Francisco made him to undergo certain troubles and periods of frustration. Set struggles between his human identity and bear’s identity. This has both a negative and positive aspects to it. On the artistic side, Set began to draw deeply and his art becomes more luminous. At some point, Set loses his voice which is a dangerous thing because losing his voice completely would be losing his identity. Stevens says that Momaday added a third agent, a “monstrous resistance,” which stood between Set and his bear-self that was blocking him from the source of his voice, this created clash in Set’s split personality and rendered him voiceless (76). Back in his place, Set looked into the glass and muse over his own image. On one hand, he expressed his admiration for it and on the other hand, his confusion over the mystery associated with it. Set was on the verge of losing his own self, and he confides this to his father, Bent. He had the fear that he had come face to face with his own demon.

As his art degraded, Jason scolded him that he was not painting according to his standard. Set remembered that his experience was pointing to a remote past that was trying to re-emerge. As a painter, his works also reflect his mental state of despair. One of his paintings was called as an “animal” by his manager Jason, which, in fact, was a self-portrait of himself (Momaday, *Ancient* 143). His arts are a reflection of his personality. Set was a responsible person from a young age determining his own actions. However, this too changed in his present condition as something beyond his power and knowledge intruded upon his works. Set must learn that he is destined to become a bear and must claim this creature inside of him. He was not himself anymore after his return from Cradle Creek and he undergoes depression and physical weaknesses. Bent’s death added more distress in Set’s life. After the

decease of his parents and his adoption by Bent, Set finds a refuge and a confidant. However, with Bent's decease he once again became an orphan. Set's sickness was described as a sickness of the mind and the soul, a larger disorder so that his friends could not understand his strange and hostile behavior. In fact, Set himself had thought that he was going mad. He had a vision of a bear and had feared that the beast would beat him up and he would become one with the blood and bile of the beast. Set becomes destructive and he resorted to alcohol, depriving himself of sleep and food. Despite of the problems and disorder of his life, Set experienced periods of great calm and creativity. He also perceived that there is only one story and that is the pursuit of man by God or a man's "holy quest" into the wild and he must be true to that story (216). This is the quest of Set and he must execute it.

Devils Tower is connected with the myth of Tsoai and is a monument for the Kiowas and other tribes of the Native Americans. For indigenous societies, the monuments and heritages serve to unify the ethnically diverse population (Brown 15). Devils Tower is a squat monolith of dark colored porphyry that has the mark of an eroded volcano. It was given its English name by Colonel Richard Dodge. Various American Indian tribes in the late 1980's complained about the behavior of the visitors in the Tower who showed lack of respect for spiritual forces residing there. In the novel, the description of Set rearing against Tsoai at the end of the book is given. Given below is the image of the Devils Tower.



Fig.6. Lucas Barth, "Mato Tipila Storm Light," 2017.

Set's intensive suffering and the period of frustration can be compared to the initiation ceremony of the Indians into a higher stage. This is likened to the hibernation of the bear. The act of isolation and fasting resulted in symbolic death and rebirth, thus, paralleled with bear's hibernation (Rockwell ch. 2). Just as bears hibernate in deep forests and dens, an Indian undergoes initiation rituals in isolation without food. Both Set and Abel in *The Ancient Child* and *House Made of Dawn*, underwent initiation rituals in the wilderness to discover their lost identity or to attain maturity in life. There are two contrasted views of Set by the people who surrounded him. For a person like Grey, she knows what Set was struggling with as the bear was taking hold of him. Grey has to instruct him in the proper path. On the other hand, people like Dr. Charles Teague Terriman, the cousin of Lola Bourne, misunderstood Set. He explained the condition of Set to Lola and cautioned her to be careful as Set thought of himself as a bear and he is self-centered. On the contrary, Set was suffering in life because he was driven away from the centre. He was unable to control the bear in him. As Set's situation worsened, he was taken back to Cradle Creek by Lola Bourne. Grey had a premonition of his return before Set's arrival in Cradle Creek. As the western world and its medicine could not heal him, he was transported back to his home.

The journey to discover self was never easy and Grey had to strengthen Set. Grey reminded him that he is Set, the bear, and he must act according to that. The motion of going forward with his journey acts as a healing for him. Grey enlightened Set that he needs great strength for the thing that he must do. Despite of the pain, loneliness, and confusion going on in his mind, Set was trying to get himself back together and he repeated the words: "I am growing stronger... I am Set" (Momaday, *Ancient* 278). Repeating the phrase "I am Set" has a powerful meaning as it reminded him who he is and his identity. In Lukachukai, he began to settle down and was observing the stars at night, and early in the morning he began to walk and was awed by the vast and wonderful beauty of the land. These things gave him strength to run.

Set understood the dual power of the bear as it is associated with enemy and healer. He had abandoned painting for some time, but he took it up again and painted simple things like those of a child. He became more conscious of the world around him as he listened to the wind, the birds, and the thunder rolling on the cliffs. He listened to Grey and was in love with the woman. Set became stronger and better physically and spiritually. His physical body was growing stronger with more hairs and added to it running became one of the best expressions of his spirit and he was unable to control it. Set and Grey got married and Set began to move

in to the tradition, rituals, and ceremonies and was happy to find meaning in them. At the end of the book, Set is seen rearing against Tsoai, and Momaday explains this to Prampolini that this is suggestive of Set becoming the bear and he is “in it” (206). The bear is not his double but it is himself. The bear is taking him over and his sense of smell becomes acute, and his sight diminishes. Set is retreating from the human world into another dimension of existence. What happens at the end of the book remains elusive. However, as Momaday has said in *The Death of Sitting Bear* that the story does not end with the last word. It goes on and exists to that part of the unknown region, the mysterious, and to the origin of the word in which all words are contained (xiv). Likewise, the bear will be always related to human beings. Set takes up his bear identity because he suffers when he distances himself from it. This acceptance will reconnect him with the wilderness and nature.

4.2.2 Women as Bearers of Tradition

Native American women play important role in their family and in their society. They are also bearers, transmitters, and preservers of tradition. Their status in the society cannot be undermined as their presence and their works are vital to the functioning of the society. In *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Momaday gives a glimpse of the Kiowa women. Mammedaty's (Momaday's grandfather) grandmother Kau-au-oıntı was a Mexican captive, who was taken from her homeland at the age of eight or ten years. She was criticized for being defiant as she would not play the role of a Kiowa woman. She rose up from slavery to become a figure in the tribe. This is added with her owning a great herd of cattle and she was also a good rider as good as a man. In 1843 Sun Dance, a man stabbed his wife in the breast because she accepted the invitation of Chief Dohasan to ride with him in the ceremonial procession (59). This insulted her husband because she prioritizes another man over her husband. Momaday writes that the graphic in the Kiowa calendar states that the lives of the women whether good or bad were hard. Women captives were common from warfare and they were kept as slaves and they hold a lower status. Momaday was aware of the power and the abilities of women Native American society and he has reproduced this in *The Ancient Child*.

Among all the women characters in the novel, Grey and grandmother Kope'mah stood out. From their relationship, the strong bond between a grandmother and her great granddaughter is seen. Both of them had played an important role in the life of Set as they imprinted in him the need to accept one's destiny and to remain true to the story. Born of mixed parentage, with a Kiowa father, and a Navajo mother, Grey is a free, wild, modern,

and independent woman. From the beginning of her introduction in the novel, she is presented as a woman fantasizing Billy the Kid, the notorious outlaw, as her lover. Grey talked profusely to the imaginary character, Billy the Kid, and he inspire her in her writings. She considered herself to be beautiful. Her preference and her likings for things were unusual. Once she had seen a Kiowa doll in a museum and a Navajo doll at Hubell's trading post, she got interested in their centers. Grey believed that the dolls were involved in her own being. They were masks that stood for her and from them she began to love masks. These were important landmarks in her life and with her identity.

Grey was a woman with peculiar interests and hobbies. From a very young age, she began to read a lot. She is a good rider and she also declared herself as the mayor of Oklahoma. Grey's flexibility allows her to be a modern and a traditional woman. Momaday tells his interviewer Adkins that he enjoyed working with the character of Grey and called her as a little larger than life figure (223). Grey's presence in the life of Set is very crucial as she will guide Set to recover his bear's identity. Grey experienced forced sexual relations with men like Perfecto Atole, Murphy Dicks, and Dwight Dicks. The only secured relationship of Grey with a man is Set. Many critics condemned the savages and the rape experiences of Grey. In a lecture in the University of Arizona in 1992, Momaday explained this controversy by positioning the rape as symbolic of American destruction of the Indian literature, that it turned it into an "emblem" combined with "savage wilderness" to satisfy the desire of the so called civilized nation (qtd. in Stevens 68). Prampolini expresses his view that he finds the striking of Set to be more violent than the rape scenes because Grey was rather merciful about them (208). Rape scenes were common in contemporary literature but the circumcisions of men were lesser. Grey had experienced some painful moments in her life, however, she surpassed them and emerged as a matured woman continuing the tradition of her grandmother as a medicine woman and guiding Set to fulfill his destiny.

In the grandmother Kope'mah, we see an important figure who enjoyed high reputation in the society. She had faithfully conveyed her duties toward others. Grandmother Kope'mah was old and she had witnessed many important events in her lifetime. One of the significant events was the K'ado or Sun Dance of 1877 which was held in Oak Creek, above the Rainy Mountain Creek. As a young girl, Kope'mah came into contact with Tai-me, the sacred Sun Dance doll and the most powerful medicine of the tribe during the Sun Dance. That day in Oak Creek marked a special day for her as she became powerful in that instant when she was still a young girl. She earned respect among the Kiowas and she was feared by

them. This also makes her lonesome, however, she remained careful in using the power lest she misused it. As it is important to transmit the gifts and tradition from one generation to the next generation, the grandmother Kope'mah worked towards the same when she was near her end. She call upon her great-granddaughter Grey everyday and instructed her about the necessary requirements of being a medicine woman. Kope'mah was a wise woman who does not want to bury the gift with her, thus, with a sense of urgency she taught her great-granddaughter Grey about the role and work of a medicine-woman.

The relationship between Grey and her grandmother Kope'mah was strong and it was sealed with secrets and mysteries that were unknown to others. Grandmother communicates her powerful dreams and stories to Grey. On a particular night, the grandmother Kope'mah said something in the ear of Grey which was not related to anything said before. She informed Grey about the coming of the bear and that night Grey dreamed of sleeping with a bear. The huge body of the bear began to absorb the body of Grey. This particular dream was a premonition of Set's coming to Oklahoma. Grandmother has revealed this to Grey for she will lead Set in the good and bad times to find his lost identity. The relationship between Grey and her grandmother Kope'mah is strong and deep. They were like mother and child. Grey had taken good care of her grandmother and grandmother too confided everything in her. Kope'mah not only instructed her about the role of a medicine woman, but she also tells her stories that were important to their culture. The storyteller and the listener is a constant presence in Momaday's two novels. This is a recreation of the folk life of the Native American people. In an interview, Momaday tells Evers that when the storyteller tells the story, the person listened to him and he entered a particular kind of relationship, united with the storyteller. In this way, the storyteller creates the audience as he appropriates the listener experience (37). The narrative sketched Kope'mah and Grey as the storyteller and her listener. Grandmother Kope'mah narrated the story of the ancestral belief in the emergence of light to her great-granddaughter. By narrating stories to Grey, Kope'mah and Grey developed deeper bond as grandmother transmitted knowledge, beliefs, and values to Grey which will help her in living her life and develop respect for her culture. Elderly people hurriedly narrated their legendary and mythical stories to the younger generations for fear of losing them. This helped in keeping the stories alive for generations.

Grey was completely swept away by her imagination of Billy the Kid. Similarly, Momaday has his share of fascination for Billy the Kid. Grey conversed with Billy the Kid about her problems and asked Billy about the dangerous adventures that he had taken. Grey

also imagined Billy chained in hand and foot and taunted by Olinger. She witnessed the escape of Billy from the prison and his chase made by the police, Bell and Olinger. Grey's dignity was taken away by Dwight Dicks whom she thought of it to be Billy. Even after the deceased of the grandmother Kope'mah, Grey could hear her voices and she continue to converse with her. Grandmother's voices are important because they help Grey to the proper path of her destiny. Also relations between women are important because they help in keeping the culture and traditions alive.

Paula Gunn Allen in *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* tells what her mother used to tell her as a child. Her mother instructed her to accord respect for all beings, that is, plants, animals, and insects because life consisted of all these and it is a circle and everything has its place in it. She further identified a distinction in Native American culture, that its social systems are based on woman-focused worldview. Tribal gynocracies practiced the even distribution of goods among its members, following the example of the First Mother who ensured equal sharing on all her children. Unlike the Euro-American women, the Native American women are primarily defined by their tribal identity. The Native American woman's destiny consisted of her people, and her sense of herself is that of her people and her tribe. Allen also decried the position of women in the modern times that they had fallen down from the women centered to the bottom and the pits. Native American feminism is synonymous with heritage. Allen supported this and she confesses in an interview with Coltelli that this is the reason why she is a feminist because there exist no contradiction between feminism and her tribal background (14). They enriched each other.

Grandmother Kope'mah could not meet Set while she was alive, but the news of her near death brought Set to Cradle Creek, where Kope'mah resided. Set learned about the lifestyle of Kope'mah after her death from Milo Mottledmare, the husband of Jessie. The place where grandmother lived was old and it lacked the modern equipments. But, that was how grandmother wanted to keep it. Milo informed Set that grandmother wanted to live in the "old way" without depending on electricity, plumbing, or other western products (Momaday, *Ancient* 65). For an outsider, Kope'mah appeared as old-fashioned and outdated. On her part, Kope'mah preferred to live a simple life without depending on western products and lifestyles. From grandmother's life, Set learned the humility and the simple lifestyle of the old people. It also gives him the opportunity to meet Grey and this memory will stay with him even after his departure from Oklahoma. As Set came to know more of Grey, he was captivated by her actions, movements, and her nature. For Set, Grey was beyond beautiful, an

interesting character, and she appealed to him more than anyone else from a painter's perspective. Set had been in relationship with Lola Bourne and had affairs with other women, but none of them appeared to be interesting, appealing, wise, and as beautiful as Grey. Set and Grey went to visit the camps of a soldier society. Set was exposed to the dances of men and women there. It was a new experience for him, and the novelist has used this to help Set to appreciate his culture. It was unlike other ordinary dances and Set had to wait for the dancers because they will dance only at the "Indian time" (110). On that day, Grey transacted the medicine bundle of the bear to Set. Set was thrilled and shivered by it. It was Grey who carefully guided Set to his traditions and rich culture.

Momaday described his father's people to be "arrogant" people, but this remains as their strength and this implies that they can sustain suffering (*Names* 8). Some of the memories of Momaday's mother became his and this became a burden of the blood for Momaday. His mother "imagined" herself audaciously and this was what Grey does in *The Ancient Child* (20). As she was growing up, Natachee, the mother of Momaday, began to see herself as an Indian. She imagined who she was and this act of imagination became a vital part in Momaday's own life. Grey is the most suitable person to guide Set to his bear identity because she has knowledge of the bear in both Kiowa and Navajo culture. Thus, she will guide him through her knowledge and experience. Momaday also used satire in the creation of Grey. Her imaginations were wild and she acted on them foolishly.

Grey's admiration and fascination for Billy the Kid is an example. Grey taught Set about the importance of bear images and the centaur. She guided Set to Perfecto Atole who had beaten Set with the bear's paw as part of his healing and recovery. Koi-ehm-toya is the Indian name of Grey and it is also the old woman who saw the children disappearing into woods. Similarly, Grey who inhabits the myth of the old woman would lead Set to his destiny and she will keep their stories and myth alive. Momaday's own experience of growing up from different Indian reservations besides his tribe Kiowa, is a source of his books. After the decease of grandmother Kope'mah, Grey had to continue the legacy of Kope'mah. Grey was given a big responsibility in her life and she accepted it and remained true to her destiny. The narrative defended the fantasies and dream of Grey, that they sustained her and she required them because they expressed "her spirit" and "her imagination" (Momaday, *Ancient* 173). Nothing can stop her from dreaming because she was born to dream. It was in her blood and it became her center. Grey also respects herself, the earth, and all its creatures.

It was not the decision of Grey to become a medicine woman, but she became one because it was in her blood to do so. Being a medicine woman, Grey was endowed with enormous power but she would own more when her knowledge increases of the world. Not only that in her dreams the grandmother Kope'mah, the earth, eagles, fishes, coyotes, tortoises, mice, and spiders instructed her. Grey was informed of many new and lost things, remote past, bears, and the ancient child. So many things had happened to her, but Grey did not stop dreaming and thinking about Billy the Kid. She was working on the memorial of Billy the Kid who was her companion, lover, confidant, and hero from her childhood and he deserved a commemoration from her. Grey attained maturity and she was no longer a little girl with wild dreams and fantasies. She was growing into a woman and she was becoming more aware of her duties as a medicine woman. She no longer fantasizes Billy but she was getting serious as a medicine woman. She stayed in her grandmother's room and listened to her and she would sing. Grey even wear the dresses of her grandmother and touch her walking stick, her comb, and her beaded pouch. She began to make different masks of humans, animals, and spirits. These were not simply masks but they were masks of power. She would be able to improve her crafts and they would become sacred objects and objects of power. She had moments of abandoning her work, but that was a dangerous thing. She persevered through it all to fulfill her dream. Grey not only followed the instructions of her grandmother but she also followed her footsteps. She takes pleasure in the beautiful landscapes, the moon, and her surroundings. Grey knows the power of the storms that bring destruction to the land, the trees, houses, and fields but she was enlivened by such storms. These were innately powerful and their power informed Grey's spirit. She wholeheartedly supported and guided Set to find his identity. Grey's full development into a medicine woman was possible with the assistance of the grandmother Kope'mah and her obedience to her fate.

4.2.3 Earth Keepers

Momaday keeps close to aspects of nature and the environment. In his writings, Native American ethics towards the environment and ecology were always present. The two prime aspects of Momaday's nature writing can be identified as his people approach of nature as dear, sacred, and valuable, and the condemnation raise on the exploitation of the rich environment and resources by the forces of colonialism. Momaday stresses that the Native American worldview of the land consisted of spiritual dimension. Since man is in the land, he must affirm to the spirit of the land. By this a man invests himself in the landscape and blends the landscape into his most "fundamental experience" (*Man* 39). In *The Ancient Child*,

Momaday used the subject of nature to focus on the power, beauty, and to the dangerous and destructive side of nature. For Native Americans like, the Kiowas and the Navajos, the different aspects of nature like, sun, moon, air, water, stars and others have their own names and they have their own mythical stories. By using myths, legends, and stories, Momaday depicts nature and its various components in *The Ancient Child*. The comparison made between the city and the rural environment and the characters experience of them is another feature in the novel. Momaday makes an opposition between the rural and urban or between wilderness and civilization. This is seen through the various journeys undertaken by Set.

In many Native American cultures, the land is the people and they are inseparable. The novel talks about the centre, and Momaday explains this centre to Prampolini that it is about “restoration” and coming back to the center and to a “balance” (199). There is the necessity to be back to traditional world and live in harmony with it. Momaday perceives the earth to be alive and possessing spirit. The beating of the human heart is felt by the earth and by this they become one. Humans must go in pace and rhythms of the earth and they must keep the earth (*Earth Keeper* 12). Moreover, the Kiowa myth of the earth also pointed out to the relation between man, animal, and the cosmos. Stars were the relatives of man and bear and man are related. The animals that were killed by the hunters were carried out with prayer of forgiveness for killing them. In this way the relation with the earth and its inhabitants were established. In an interview, Simon Ortiz tells Bruchac that the Indian tribal world is “*experiential*” as people live, touch, and breathes it but on the contrary, the western world operates differently as they acquire knowledge rather than live the practical aspects of the Indians (“Story Never Ends” 216). The Native Americans take active participation in the preservation and conservation of their ecology and they give equal importance to all forms of life on earth. They are attuned with the mysteries of their ecology unlike the whites who lacked such experience.

Stories were told in the novel not for the sole purpose of entertainment or recreation. It is much broader than that. The main purpose of Native American stories McTaggard notes is to teach the people to find unity in the Medicine Wheel, also called as the Sacred Circle, which integrates the relationship of the self and the cosmos (7). The grandmother Kope'mah narrated different stories of the land to her great-granddaughter Grey in *The Ancient Child*. They were being told to enlighten Grey and the reader about the belief of the ancestors towards the natural environment and its components. One night after midnight, Kope'mah narrated about the ancient emergence of light to Grey of how light appeared as a crumpled

surface of dark water on the grasses, and spread to other parts and vegetables of the earth. Along with the story that the grandmother had narrated, it was a beautiful night with low wind and grasshoppers were emerging out from the ground. The rural life was distant but it was vibrant with the different sights, sounds, and view of nature and animals. Momaday writes these details because they constitute the nature and environment of the native people.

When Set returned to Oklahoma for the illness of his grandmother Kope'mah, he could not reconcile with the bad road condition, the habitation, and the environment of his grandmother's residence. His reaction to Kope'mah's abode was not pleasant as the house was deteriorating and seemed to appear as old as the land. Moreover, the surrounding was covered with weeds, wild grass, and stained with kitchen wastes. This is a picture of the living condition in the distant rural life. Set was tired because of the long journey from San Francisco to Oklahoma. To relieve himself, he went outside the house and experienced a whole new world. The cool breeze felt good on his skin and he could smell the trees and the grass which were absent in the city life. He walked further towards the creek and witnessed the slow current of the river. Set was able to see the clear distinction of nature in city life and life in Cradle Creek. The experience he had at Cradle Creek from his surrounding imprinted a realization in him. He felt that he belonged to this place and it was where his genesis lies. Set was also enthralled by the beauty of the moon which was brighter than the city lights that he was used to and the night engulfing the vast openness enthralled him and he wished to join it. The different seasons of the climate brought both destruction and rejuvenation to the land. A great blizzard hits the regions of Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Cradle Creek. In Cradle Creek the trees were broken, frost were scattered on the grass, and some cattle died and the remaining ones huddled together for warmth. The blizzard made the graves of Kope'mah and Catlin Setman go barren but summer came and changed the destructive landscape and spring restored the earth back to life and grass began to grow, trees began to bud, and water ran unceasingly. The land was good again and birds appeared everywhere. It was like the arrival of spring.

In expressing their intimacy with the cosmos, Momaday narrates of how the Kiowas language is a difficult language but the storm spirit called *Man-ka-ih* could understand it (Way 48). The mythical story goes on to describe the creation of a horse by the Kiowas from clay. The horse came into being and it began to writhe violently and there was a great commotion everywhere. The wind blew harder and created havoc that when the Kiowas became frightful and talk to it, it receded. Even today the Kiowas believe that when clouds

gather in the sky, they take it to be a strange wild animal that has the head of a horse and the tail of a great fish. Lighting appeared from its mouth and the whipping and thrashing of the air by its tail caused hot wind of tornado. But they do not fear *Man-ka-ih* and they call upon it to pass over them because it understands their language. Lincoln writes that in Kiowa culture, all things talk, thus, by speaking with the world, they tribalize their environment (*Native American* 113). The communion between man and other existences also harmonize their relationship and their world.

Momaday called the ancestors of Kiowa people “earth keeper” because they respect their land and protect it from destruction (*Earth Keeper* 51). Momaday himself is an elder and an earth keeper. He kept the earth and revered it and this is reflected in his writings. Those who poison the earth and inflicted wound on it were considered as shameless people without the basic virtues of humanity. Grey, a lover of nature, admired the great majestic beauty of the Plains which is incomparable with anything else. The Plains was unending and when she stood on it she felt like standing in the sky among the moon and stars. However, it was always beyond her reach even if she rode closer to it. This remained as the great mystery and strength of the Plains. In this vastness and beauty, Grey imagined her Kiowa ancestor’s elation over the land. Things have changed but the legacy of the land could not be altered. It stands in total contrast with the development and the advancement made by the whites. Grey appreciates the Kiowa people, the nomadic hunters, who had lived in the landscape for thousands of years and observed the land on horseback. She criticizes the development projects like the roads, fences, and townships which were mean, ugly, and unworthy and they were contrasted to the wild Plains. The Great Plains of North America illuminates as the center of “highest human experience,” a place of nobility, courage, honor, and a moral conduct of the ancient people (Momaday, *Ancient* 222). This continued to mesmerize and inspired the younger generation.

Although the Native Americans have high regards for the land, Deloria points out that it is wrong to assume that they “deal with” and “love” nature (*Spirit* 239). This is because nature is not an abstraction and a concept to them. They talk about the immediate environment in which they live and they formed connection with some trees and mountains and not all trees or mountains. The sacred circle of the Indians which is concerned with the wholeness of the beings was broken during the Indian-white contact. The effects are seen in military assaults, treaty signing, subjugation, disease, displacement and so on. The “circle” which has components of mental, cultural, physical, and spiritual has been reshaped into a

“square” with components of physical, material, and a lack of spirit (16). Everything that an Indian does is in a circle because the power of the world works in circle. In the olden days, the people derived their power from the sacred hoop and the society.

The Kiowa ancestors had settled in a good land. It was distanced and isolated, but it was filled with wonder, peace, and beauty. The earliest settlers lay claim to it and they thrive from it. The land was endless and beyond the reach of the colonizers. The ancestors with much pain settled in the Great Plains and it was equalized to the efforts, the dangers, and the sacrifices that they endured. They claimed their belonging to the land and they thrive in it with their families. This land became the center of the world and the sacred ground of sacred grounds (Momaday, *Ancient* 244). The land was fit enough to sustain their dreams and wishes. The broken Set journeyed to Lukachukai and this brought him closer to the natural world. He was able to get a good view of the natural world through the long journey. It strengthens him physically and mentally. Indian tribal religions and Christianity differed considerably on many theological standpoints, however, one of the basis distinctions lies in creation. Deloria points out that while Christianity perceive creation as a specific event, the Indian tribal religion based its creation as an “ecosystem” present in a definable place (*God* 77). There is less religious controversy as the Indian religion is integrated into the daily aspects of people’s lives. The land, the earth, and the cosmos are equally important for the tribal people because their harmonious living comes from a good relationship with them. Thus, they keep them and protect them for a good life.

4.2.4 Styles and Techniques of *The Ancient Child*

The Ancient Child is weaved with the employment of various literary styles and techniques. Under this topic, different features will be taken into account. They are the division of the book, the language used, the stories, myths, legends, rituals, humour, beliefs, and so on. Momaday’s *The Ancient Child* is rooted in Native American folklore and oral tradition. It also derived some of its techniques from western literary traditions. There are four different types and kinds of prints in *The Ancient Child*. The first one is the prologue and the different epigraphs, the second is the myth of Tsoai in italics, third is the narrative of the story, and the fourth covers the scrapbook of Grey on Billy the Kid. Since the novel has stories within a story, and also contain the prose and poetic writings of Grey, they were set off from the narrative of the novel with different printing forms. Tudor refers to Michelle Trusty-Murphy who pointed out that Momaday use the style of “clustering,” clustering and

reverse-clustering is defined as locating the center of the story and moving out from it (143). This is a deviation from the western literary style which has a beginning, middle, and an end but has no centre. The centre of *The Ancient Child* lies in Set's finding his identity. He went away from his community but return to it, to recover his identity.

The Ancient Child is divided into four sections or books. The books were preceded by a prologue and concluded with an epilogue. The novel also makes use of different epigraphs. The general epigraph of the novel is borrowed from Borges, "For myth is at the beginning of literature and also at its end." Discussing about the general epigraph of the book with Prampolini, Momaday explains that myth cannot be escaped. Literature finds its root in myth, similarly, the novel begins with myth and ends with it. Momaday has no answer to what becomes of Set at the end of the novel. It leaves the story-open ended (197). This also differs from the colonial literary style which has a definite ending. The divisions of the novel are titled as planes, lines, shapes, and shadows. The novel's structure or shape signifies the reflections of an artist's or painter's mind. This is referred to none other than the protagonist of the novel, Set, who was a distinguished painter. In book one, Set's art instructor, Cole Blessings, touched on the subjects of lines, planes, and shadows when he taught Set about the art of painting. Momaday himself was a painter and his father was a painter as well. What matters are the shadows or the appearances of things rather than the reality.

Momaday has represented the Indians not only through language and literary forms but through image as well and this is seen in the visual art in the divisions of the book. The images are passed through "racial memory" and once they are resisted, they bring spiritual and physical illnesses. With the help of Grey, Set was able to understand and incorporate his mystical painting which leads him to a path of mythology and spiritual wellness (Kendall 106). Words are not dead but they are beings in themselves, "incantatory" with "spirits" and "bodies." Moreover the songs, stories, visions, and names lived empirically in the world, thus, men could seek them for power, or for other purposes like identity, beauty, peace, and survival (Lincoln, *Native American* 18). In Momaday's *The Journey of Tai-me*, the Kiowas narrated the tale of a young man who was blinded by the wind for his recklessness. The blind man, his wife, and child were ostracized by the society. His wife abandoned him saying that his arrows missed the buffalo; but even though blind, the man knew the truth because he can recognize the sound an arrow when it strikes the flesh of animals (27). The blind man was left alone to eat grass but after seven days, a band of the Kiowas brought him back home. The man was blind, however, he could hear the voice of his wife clearly when she narrated the

story of her dead husband by the firelight. The bad wife was caught and was thrown away in the sunrise. This tale points out to the integrity of tribal words and the people's approach to it. Those who violate it are being punished because words have meanings and every word is taken into account. The blind hunter was given another chance in his band because of his ability to identify the sound of an arrow and an authentic voice. On the other hand, his wife was expelled for lying and dismissing the tribal value (Lincoln, *Native American* 114). A person is accountable for his words and to speak the truth is of vital importance in the Kiowa society.

Besides the many literary achievements of Momaday, his use of language is another feature which deserves special mention. Momaday has a fascination with the use of language and he exhibits this in his works. The dialogues were limited and myths, stories, poems took a big part in the novel. *The Ancient Child* uses Kiowa and Navajo languages along with English. Language is a crucial factor in the novel. In *Man Made of Words*, Momaday relates the story of "The Arrowmaker," who defended himself and his wife from the stranger when he did not reply him. The man addressed the stranger outside that if he is a Kiowa, he would understand him and he would speak his name. But since the stranger did not say anything, the arrowmaker released the string of his arrow and it went straight to his enemy's heart. Momaday explains that the story of the arrowmaker centers upon the procession of words toward meaning, that language involves the elements of "risk" and "responsibility" and literature too depends on that (11). The arrowmaker is notably the "man made of words". Language is his being and he takes that as a shield and a protection against his enemy. Momaday also paralleled the storyteller with the arrowmaker. Like the arrowmaker, the storyteller survived by the use of words. The Native Americans considered words as sacred and in the absence of written word they survived solely on word and oral communications.

Language is a fundamental concept of the Native Americans. It is vital for the Native people to express themselves and Momaday has incorporated this importance in the *The Ancient Child*. Even though Momaday grew up speaking in English, he was also fluent in Kiowa because it was the language of his father. In *The Ancient Child*, Momaday has used native language, expressions, and words to give it a sense of nativeness to the novel. Even though the novel is written in English, the conversations between the characters were marked with native language and expressions. For example, when the novel first opens, an old American folk song is used. There are various expressions and words used like, *zap*, *hooooeee*, *hooo ha!*, *¿Quién es?*, *ahó*, and "*tal-yi-da-i*" meaning the ten bundles containing

the boy medicine (21), “Eh neh neh neh neh!” which is translated as “glad weeping” (34), “*Nizhóní yei!*” is a Navajo word which means “beautiful” (164), *Man-ka-ih*, is the storm spirit. In a conversation between Perfecto Atole and Grey about Set, the former speaks to Grey in native language, “*Muy bien, Chiquita*” and “*¡Madre de Dios!*” (284). When Set settled in Lukachukai with the family of Grey, he began to speak simple Navajo words like, “*aoo’, dooda, daats’i, hágoóneé, Set yinishyé, hash yinilyé?*” (292). It is important for Set to speak in native tongue, as language serves as an identity of a person.

Many Native American writers preferred to write in English than in their Native language. Wilcomb E. Washburn defended the use of English language because many of the Native American writers shared two or more Native heritages (449). Today, the native languages of Native Americans are threatened because of the popularity of the English language. Lynn indicates that in a convocation in 1970, many American Indian scholars expressed that their language can be defended through the restoration of their homelands (9). Literary writers share this concern and they expressed it in their writings through the use of native language and writing in their own Native English. Traditions and techniques used in *House Made of Dawn* are repeated in *The Ancient Child*. Both of the novels deal with the common theme of the Native Americans search for identity. Besides this, the use of native expression, ceremonies, the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents, and the transmission of traditions are evident in both novels. Moreover, *The Ancient Child* contains many ideas from the earlier published books of Momaday, like, the history of Kiowa, the Sun Dance Doll Tai-Me, the myth of Tsoai, and others.

The novel is narrated by an omniscient narrator with occasional shift to the first person narrator. It has intermixed the past and the present events. Thus, there is no fixed narration and multiple and non-linear narration takes hold of it. The sections regarding Billy the Kid purely happened in Grey’s imagination. Thus, the concept of imagination also took a major part in the novel. Imagination is another literary device of Momaday and he says that people are what they imagine to be. In *The Ancient Child*, Momaday has used humour in the creation of his characters. This humour is an essential characteristic of the Indians. Grey is a humorous character. She is conscious of her appearance and she confidently declared herself to be beautiful. Grey described herself to Dog, her horse, that she has a tall feature with a clear mind, and she is free from the strictures of civilization. She fully appreciates herself and sees herself as flawless. In sketching the character of Milo Mottledmare and Worcester Meat, Momaday used humour. Rev. Mottledmare was a man of few words and he was awkward

with people. This is seen in his interaction with Set in the Cradle Creek. Both of them were unable to communicate with each other as they were men of few words.

The oral traditions of the American Indians are not stories or myths alone, they go beyond to include the history and lifestyle of the people. Oral traditions are part of the novel. The folkloric root of the Kiowa and Navajo tribes added a multitribal form to the novel. They suggest the inclusivity of other tribes and their experiences rather than Momaday's own tribe. Momaday also touch on the legendary character of Set-angya, a famous warrior, and chief of Kaitsenko Society, also known as the Crazy Dog or the dog soldier organization. The Society has ten members and they were the bravest men. The motto of the Society was bravery and they were the first and last security of the people. If they die, other members perish. Set-angya displayed his bravery by collecting the bones of his son who was killed in a raid in Texas. He cleverly staged his own death when he and his friends, Set-tainte and Big Tree, were on the way to Fort Richardson to be tried for the raid of the Warren wagon train. Before his death, Set-angya sang the song of the Kaitsenko, a sacred song, sung only in the face of death. Another ritual that deserved to be mentioned is the centaur dancing performed by Perfecto Atole. Set also needs the help of Atole who was the keeper of bear's paw. The healing was performed with the striking of bear's paw. The scene was violent and Set had to bear through it to heal him and embrace himself. However, after the ritual Set felt better and in the morning he made a prayer. The marriage ceremony of Grey and Set is performed by a priest who came down from the Chuskas. He performed the ceremony the whole night, and Set and Grey shared their beautiful visions and they made stories, songs and prayers. It was a sacred ceremony that joined the two beautiful souls together. Momaday finally ended the story with loose ends untied and this is a part of the oral tradition of the Native Americans. Towards the end, Set ventured into the wilderness and no one knows whether he will return back home or he will wander in the wilderness alone.

The seed of *The Ancient Child* comes from the Kiowa myth of Tsoai or the bear-boy. The presence of the Kiowa myth makes it a story within a story. In the prologue of the book, the myth of Tsoai was given a short glimpse. The myth was concerned with eight children, seven sisters, and their brother who were playing together and suddenly the boy changed into a bear and ran after his sisters. The sisters were turned into the stars of the Big Dipper. The telling of stories and myth is significant as they helped the protagonist Set to establish his mind in his culture. They are not simply tales but they contained healing, strength, power, and the history of the ancestors. In the preface to *The Man Made of Words*, Momaday

stressed on the importance of stories that they are being told to be believed because they are true and consisted the realities of the people (3). The myth of Tsoai served as an oral literary form in the novel. The myth points out the relation of man, animals, and the celestial bodies. *The Ancient Child* is the modern vision of the myth of Tsoai. The use of repetition is significant in Native American literature. It is seen in the ceremonies, rituals and also used as a literary device. The use of mythical stories in the novel has a primary importance. It is necessary because myth, especially, creation myths play a significant role in the healing process. The novel also makes use of premonition and prophetic dream for the future. Set and Grey had prophetic dreams of each other before their real meeting and the grandmother meditates the homecoming of Set before her deceased. Momaday's literary styles and techniques are inspired by his oral tradition and he also added his own methods to it.

4.2.5 Conclusion

The Ancient Child is inspired by the myth of Tsoai, which is popular in Kiowa culture. The novel is centered in the life of Set Lockman, a Kiowa, who was alienated from his culture. The problem of Set lies with his identity. He was destined to be a bear but when he refused to accept the bear identity it caused degradation to him both physically and spiritually. With the help of his grandmother Kope'mah and Grey, Set returns back to his tradition and accept his identity. It was done with much physical pain and spiritual agony on the part of Set. Besides the life of Set, women too played an important role in the narrative. Two of them stand out. They are Grey and Kope'mah. Their relationship is that of a storyteller and the listener, a mother and her daughter, and a medicine-woman and her apprentice. Through the lifestory of Kope'mah, the rituals, ceremonies, and the history of the Kiowa people were brought to life. She is a transmitter of knowledge to the younger generation. As a wise woman, she passed her gift to Grey, instructing the latter continuously. It was through Kope'mah's prayer and concern that brought the alienated Set to his native land again and his acceptance of his identity was also possible. Grey is one of the most interesting female characters of Momaday's fictions. She is independent, bold, and clever and she can be both traditional and modern. Her role as a medicine-woman shows her traditional side and her interest of reading and writing shows her modern side. With the instructions of Kope'mah, Grey brought Set to his roots where he was healed of his ailments. Momaday's writings were particularly distinguishable for the use of nature and landscape. It is very close to the life of the Native Americans. They believe it to be sacred and they derive inspiration, peace, and comfort from it. This is seen through the life of Set when he returned back to the

landscape of his land. He felt the clear difference of the environment in the rural and city life. The rural life in Cradle Creek opened his eyes to the calm and soothing land and the vastness of the land. *The Ancient Child* is a remarkable novel for its styles and techniques. It is woven with the elements of oral tradition and it also makes use of western literary forms. The myth of Tsoai and the legend of Billy the Kid move alongside the story time of the novel. Momaday also use humour in the creation of his characters. This added uniqueness to his style. *The Ancient Child* at its heart is concerned with the culture and tradition of the Native Americans because the Native people who isolated themselves from it get destroyed by the foreign culture. Thus, it emphasizes on the need for the Native Americans to return back to their own culture for survival and to recover their lost identity.

CHAPTER 5

ALIENATION AND SURVIVANCE IN JAMES WELCH'S *WINTER IN THE BLOOD* AND *FOOLS CROW*

5.1 *Winter in the Blood*

Winter in the Blood is the first novel of James Welch published in 1974. It is written by a Native American author, however, because of its modern context and themes, many non-native readers can relate to it. Louise Erdrich writing an introduction of the book calls attention to the book that in 1974, no Pulitzer Prize was awarded for fiction and she reminded that it should have been given to Welch for his debut novel, *Winter in the Blood* (ix). The book is known for its realistic portrayal of a modern Native American man who struggled to find an identity in the fragmented world and who resorted to other means like, alcohol and debauchery to find meaning and identity in life. Besides this theme, it has been marked for its use of humour, elder figures, animal imagery, and Blackfeet history. The novel features an ordinary man and his hard life in the reservation. He is not heroic and his life represents the reality of the reservation people's life. By acknowledging the history of his people with the help of elders, the protagonist finds meaning and purpose in his life again.

The novel has got some patterns of the vision quest usually undertaken by the protagonist or the hero to discover himself or to attain maturity in life. Welch's protagonist is not a hero, he is a nameless person and his life contradicts the characteristics of a western hero. Written in a poetic form, the narrative structure of the novel is opposed to western forms. It follows the popular circular narrative form by ending from where it started. Similarly, other novels of Welch, like *The Death of Jim Loney* and *The Indian Lawyer*, followed the same pattern. Another important feature of the novel is the timeline, the events take place in the aftermath of colonization. While writing about the inferior position of the Indians as compared to the whites, Welch also concentrates on the daily life and problems of the Indians which were created by the Indians themselves and also by the whites. The narrative is spiced with comic and humorous element, thus, putting it in the genre of dramatic comedy. The harsh reality of reservation life added to poor federal laws of neglecting the basic rights of the Indians is another concern in the book. An honest picture of the hardworking Indians, their lifestyles, their daily struggles, and their occupation is narrated. Welch presents the contemporary Indians as they are in their original form. He opted for a contemporary theme because traditional history is much alive in contemporary literature.

Moreover, he does not confine his work to the native readers alone, he has written it for the non-native readers as well. The reason is because concentrating on the history and oppression of the Native Americans alone would only isolate them from others.

Welch gave multi-solutions to the problems that existed in the modern world. The rich oral traditions derived from the Blackfeet tribe guided the alienated protagonist to return back to his culture which is capable of reviving him. The animal imagery of fish, deer, duck, horse, and others play vital role in the narrative, heightening the emotion and the emptiness of the narrator's life. The elders are respected and considered as important figures in Native American societies. They carried the traditions, the history, and values with them, transmitting them to the younger generation and preserve their culture from extinction. The ecology of the native people, as presented in the novel, is depicted in its decadence and there is the need to revive them. The following sections will look at the unconventional art of Welch, the protagonist's problem of distance and his overcoming it, the relation of all things, and the importance of history.

5.1.1 Unconventional Art of Welch

Welch's first novel, *Winter in the Blood*, uses western and Native American oral tradition in structuring and framing the narrative. George Bird Grinnell's text *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* is a major source of Welch's novel. The book started as a poem and grew into a novel, however it retained poetic quality in it. James Welch is a great storyteller who portrays the reality of the situation and evokes sympathy, consciousness, and urgency in the mind of the readers. Erdrich praises Welch's artistic technique for he extends sympathy to all his characters irrespective of their colour, and says that the "small gestures" exchanged between people tell big stories (x). All the characters do not play a major role, some of them appear rarely because they were dead or were secondary to the story, however, the author mention them with sympathy and humanity.

The novel is set in contemporary time, and it follows the modern technique of using loose and non-linear narrative forms like flashbacks, memories, and intermixing of past and present events. *Winter in the Blood* centers on an unnamed character, a wanderer, who undergoes a quest or a mission to find himself. This puts it within the bound of a picaresque novel. As the novel deals with an alienated and anonymous figure, the structure of the novel too conveys this theme. Kathleen M. Sands pointed out that like the protagonist of the novel who lacked direction in life, the novel shared the same feature with no definite direction

(“Alienation” 99). By using the first person narrator, the readers were given the chance to understand the insights, dreams, visions, traumas, sufferings, and memory of the narrator. This technique best represents the narrator’s situation.

Through the narrative of the unnamed protagonist, the events were unfolded in the novel. Welch’s “I” narrates his story and his family history by taking the role of the narrator which is one of the best methods to convey the psychological and mental trauma of the Indians in the contemporary world. As Mary Jane Lupton points out and laid out the structure found in Welch’s novels. The first consisted of the relationship between the characters and the natural world including animals which is known as “*mitakuye oyasin*” or “all are related.” The other is the “vision quest” which simply means a “tribal ritual” undertaken by the protagonist or a character to find himself and his identity. It is usually marked by the concept of “departure” and “return” (41). *Winter in the Blood* is divided into four parts, preceded by an epithet and ends with an epilogue. It is consisted of disjointed narratives with no past, present, and future. On the other hand, the five-part structure of the novel mirrors the correlation of the developmental stages of the protagonist. The wanderer figure at the opening of the novel changes to a responsible man attending to the affairs of his family and tended to his own life at the closing of the novel.

Paul Eisenstein stated that the Indian worldview has a non-linear relation to time, and it takes an individual to experience the mythic and move “beyond age,” and informs the individual of his ancestry and history (9). The history was omitted or concealed in the first place, and it is open to the people only when they make an effort to learn it. This is not limited to history alone; it consisted of wisdom and survival strategies. Yellow Calf’s narration opened the eyes of the narrator to the Blackfeet history and only then he connected himself with his ancestors and appreciated their sacrifices and perseverances. History has been marginalized and the experiences of the marginalized people were failed to be recorded in the historical documents. Welch objected to this bias attitude of writing. The only way to undo this is to rewrite and include the history and experiences of the minority culture in the texts. *Winter in the Blood* being the first novel of Welch, propagates the rewriting of history from Native American perspective. The novel has used the storytelling tradition to revive the lost cultures of the Native Americans. They are not stories alone but are repositories of culture, traditions, and history. Erdrich writes that Welch has rightly claimed that they were “storytellers” from the past and they will continue to do so (xiii). This storytelling in the novel helped the protagonist to learn about history and acknowledges it.

Focusing the narrative on a wanderer, his decaying family, and the complex problems of the contemporary world, the author lightens up the gloom by employing the technique of humour in the narrative. For this distinctive feature, it is wrong to classify *Winter in the Blood* as entirely a “protest novel” against colonialism, as the vein of comic runs strong in the story. In fact, Alan R. Velie called the novel as a masterpiece of “comic fiction” (92). Humour is part of the Indian life and Welch has used this element in framing the story. Lupton refers to Alan R. Velie who claimed that scatology creates comic effect in the novel. In literature, scatology refers to the literature that focuses on “obscene” or “excremental materials” (56). Some of the scatological effects in the narrative will be discussed below. In the opening of the novel, the narrator admits, “I took a leak,” meaning he peed, and watched the animals moving towards the cabin (Welch 1). He also remembered his father First Raise peeing his name in the snow (127). In Malta, when the narrator helped Dougie in robbing a man, Dougie turned to the urinal and peed, thus, dismissing the question of the narrator pertaining to Agnes. In a bar by the railway road in Malta, the narrator met a wooly-headed man who knew his mother. He requested the narrator to yell when people are entering because he has to “bleed” his “lizard,” meaning he has to pee (46). At the conclusion of the novel, “Bird farted” when the narrator was trying to understand the relation between his grandmother and Yellow Calf (124). This fart helped the narrator to understand the relation between them.

The Indians have found a humorous side in nearly every problem and the experiences of life are explained and approached through jokes and stories that became a thing in themselves (Deloria, *Custer* 147). Besides scatology, other examples of humour are found in the narrative. The humour identified in the novel is better known as “Indian humor.” Welch explains in an interview with Coltelli that in this kind of humor the characters are not being poked at to make fun of them, but they are seen for who they are, and they can be teased a little bit. Indians have a humor culture which consists of teasing, playing with words, and puns. It is traditional and survived for hundreds of years (192). Also, Blackfeet people were not stoic or gloomy people, Grinnell says that they were fun loving people and they were a race of jokers (78). Lame Bull beating up Larue Henderson and Henderson’s permanent wearing of glasses is humorous. In the Dutch Shoppe restaurant, an old man after inhaling his cigarette plunged into the oatmeal and died. This scene contains humour as there is no definite reason why he died. The narrative also makes use of repetition to show the humour and shallowness of conversations between the characters. Ferdinand Horn and his wife

stopped at the narrator's ranch to share their grief with the narrator over his grandmother's demise. Horn was awkward, and he repeated the words, "We just stopped to offer our condolences" thrice in different manners to the narrator when his wife constantly changed the topic to the narrator's girlfriend (Welch, *Winter* 127). The funeral rite of grandmother did not pass away without comical action. Grandmother's coffin hole turned out to be too short, but they came to know about it only when the coffin was put halfway down. Lame Bull jumped up and down on the high end of the coffin and this helped in putting down a bit and it appeared to be more respectable.

The comical characterization and incidents lighten the hopeless situations in the narrative. The grandmother is old, however, she is always ready with different weapons to attack her grandson's girlfriend. Another character, First Raise was a wanderer who was estranged from his own family. He fixed the machines of the whites and charged them heavily for insignificant repairings like, twenty dollars for kicking the baler awake, one dollar for the kick, and nineteen for knowing where to kick. First Raise's behavior, thoughts, and actions were humorous. He was planning meticulously to take elk in Glacier Park; he even enquired around about the penalty if being caught. However, the narrator heartily described that he was never caught because he never made the trip.

The poetic quality of Welch is seen through the speech made by the characters. Welch's style is unconventional and uncanny. Genuine expressions or heartfelt emotions are conveyed through them. The protagonist sometimes speaks to himself, expresses his sorrows, anger, loss, and frustration to himself and to the animals. At the end of part three, the narrator cried, "What use, what use, what use ..." recollecting the death of his beloved brother, Mose (116). He did not want the sympathy of people nor Bird, but it was done for the relief of his soul towards the guilt of Mose's death. In an interview with Bruchac, Anishinabe writer, Gerald Vizenor has opined that writers in general are tricksters in the broadest sense of disruption, they disrupt the traditional forms or rules of writing by adding new elements into it ("Follow the Trickroutes" 294). This is what writers like Welch do in their literary works. They disrupt the universal forms and invent their own styles in narrating the stories. Welch's style is unconventional, but it also supports the aimless life of the protagonist. The use of animals is another method of Welch. The broken relationship between Teresa and her son is symbolized through the various animals and their relation to each other. They are the sorrel mare and the colt in the opening scene, the heifer and the bawling calf at Mose's death, and the cow at the end of the book that cries for her lost offspring.

Flashbacks and memories are other techniques employed by Welch in his narrative. They are painful for the narrator in his helplessness but they will also free him from his burden of guilt, when he learns to accept the reality and the good over his mistakes. The protagonist was mentally affected by the loss of his brother and father, he only has flashes of broken memories about them. He became a servant to the memory of death. These memories held him captive and he was unable to process his mind in the present. His healing can be found in his acceptance of the past, processing the painful memories, and discover his place in the tribal history. He thinks about Mose and his father in his desperate states, like, when he was beaten up by Dougie in the Gable bar, or when he had unsuccessful encounters with women. When the narrator and Lame Bull were digging the grave of grandmother, the narrator recalled the grave digging of his father in winter. Also, the tragedy led to the death of Mose is presented through the narrator's memory and flashbacks. They are conveyed through these forms because it was too painful for the narrator to convey the story directly to someone and he was not close to anybody. His memory takes the readers back to that painful moment of Mose's death. Mose was hit by a car in their search for a cow that strayed from the herd. The narrator too injured his knee when Bird tumbled him down from his back. In the earlier part of the narrative, this story was not disclosed and only towards the end of the third part this incident was revealed through the recollection of the narrator. When the narrator makes an effort to confront his memory, he was able to relieve himself of his guilt. One of the dominant trends in Welch's novels and other Native American novels is the return to the reservation by the characters for their survival and healing. Both *Winter in the Blood* and *The Indian Lawyer* concluded with a funeral which prompts the protagonists to return back to the reservation.

5.1.2 Overcoming the "Distance"

Winter in the Blood is centered on a thirty two year old unnamed Native American man who is also the protagonist and the narrator of the novel. Other fictions of Welch like, *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, *The Indian Lawyer*, *The Death of Jim Loney*, and *Fools Crow* have protagonists whose names were mentioned, but *Winter in the Blood*, the first novel of Welch, does not carry a name. A Blackfeet man avoided telling his name, if he can. This is done so because he believes that revealing his name would bring bad luck to his life (Grinnell 83). However, the namelessness did not define the whole truth of the protagonist, as towards the end of the novel he discovered his ancestry and his tribal history provided meaning to his void life. Owens says that the name "Earthboys" in the novel is suggestive of

the traditional Blackfeet Indian males who have disappeared from their community (130). They were men who once lived in communion with their community and the earth. Welch portrays in the novel about Indian men who abandon the legacy of their ancestors and live an aimless life. The women have to take up their role and fill the vacuum they leave behind. Similarly, in Welch's *Winter*, the Earthboys were all gone except their sister who was married and living somewhere else.

The protagonist comes from a humble background, he is a farmer who tends and bale hay for the animals. Cattle and sheep ranching lent themselves to communal effort and they suited the environment of the reservation. Many Indian families had a tradition of ranching success. Hoxie pointed out this tradition declined when the Euro-Americans aggressively captured the water resources and seized the reservation boundaries of the Indians (216). In his first homecoming, the narrator confesses that coming back home is not easy anymore as he suffers from both physical and emotional pain. The narrator suffers from throat ache, bad knee, head ache, and they made a torture for him. On the other hand, he feels distant from his mother, grandmother, and his girlfriend at home. There is no specific reason for this distance as he felt no hatred, no love, no guilt, no conscience, nothing for them but there is a "distance" that had kept him away from them for years (Welch, *Winter* 2). The protagonist is aware that this distance does not come due to others, but it originates from within him. He describes his pitiable situation by taking the example of distance between a hawk and the moon. Some critics and readers termed the novel as an alienation work because Welch rarely shows the emotional side of his protagonist. Erdrich sees it differently, and for her, the absence of personal effect in the narrator shows the humility of his despair (xii).

One of the major reasons of the narrator's distance comes from the irrational guilt felt over the decease of his brother Mose. This has left two damaging injuries in his life, one the injury to his mind and the other a bad knee. Adding to these past injuries which continue to haunt him, in his own home, the narrator was not welcomed. His return to the reservation brought out the coldness and differences between him and his mother Teresa. Their relationship further escalated when Teresa married Lame Bull in Malta. He sees this marriage as a prospect for Lame Bull who had now married 360 acres of hay land and 2000-acre grazing lease. Teresa indirectly furthers her son's alienation from home when she told him to seek a job since Lame Bull has taken charge of the farm. Teresa's marriage to Lame Bull affected the narrator because she had forgotten her dead husband, First Raise, whom the narrator dearly loved. Other factors also contributed to the alienation of the protagonist. He

was raised by a Catholic mother who does not respect tradition, and his own family was disordered. He lost his dear brother Mose and his father First Raise whom he loved the most. Even in his lifetime, his father had lived a distanced life from his family, and he was better off in the company of the whites. Thus, the people who should help him to find his place in the society were the ones who dismissed him and this aggravates his situation. Allen identified speechlessness as another symptom of the narrator ("Stranger in my own Life" 15). The narrator's powerlessness is also exemplified by the theft of his razor and gun by his Cree girlfriend and his crippled knee which prevents him from living an active life sometimes.

Stereotype is maintained for the purpose of social and symbolic order. This very stereotype sets up symbolic frontier between the "insiders" and "outsiders," and "us" and "them." Stereotype occurs in the presence of huge inequalities of powers. In this concept, power is directed against the subordinate or the excluded group (Hall 258). The Indians like the narrator and his father, First Raise, were generalized as weak, alcoholic, fragile, and emotional by the Indians themselves and the whites. Some illustrations will be taken into account. All the ducks reared by First Raise's family were drowned except Amos, the duck that the narrator was particularly attached to. The narrator believed Amos to be smarter than the other ducks because he survived. However, Teresa silenced this idea by labeling the ducks as Indians, meaning they were dull and inept.

The protagonist also becomes a victim of the white sympathy. He was employed in the rehabilitation clinic in Tacoma because they liked him and praised him that he was smarter than practically anybody they had ever seen. The narrator believed them and he stayed there until he came to know the truth of his employment from a nurse who hated the Indians, that, they employed him because they needed a grant to build another wing. His employment as the first Indian male would help them to get the grant. This knowledge made him leave his job because he wanted to be employed on the basis of his ability and not out of white sympathy. The whites invented policies of integration but it utterly failed when they fail to see the Natives as their equal. The narrator's entry into the white men's world is frightful and hopeless as he was beaten, robbed, and his days were spent in bars and meaningless encounters with women. This world is contrasted to the independent and meaningful life that he had lived in the reservation, that is, in Montana as a rancher.

The Indians were treated poorly by the police, the whites, and they treated each other with disrespect. The airplane-man picked the narrator because he is an Indian and he is the

most suitable man to carry out his plan. He made a promise to the narrator that he will pay him five hundred with the car once they reached Calgary. The narrator confesses that Indians are an easy prey to the guards. After an unsuccessful plan with the airplane-man, the narrator came back to the reservation by a ride given by a professor and his family. The professor and his wife perceived the countryside to be dead and extinct. The whites have less knowledge about the Indians and they looked at the Indians with pity and their reservation life as outdated and backward.

As the narrator returns back to the reservation, he began to return back to the life of a farmer unlike the days spent in the town and bars. He worked in the ranch and fed the animals like he did in the past with Mose. The narrator also established a connection with his grandmother by playing music for her and filling her pipe with tobacco. This is one of the closest moments that he shared with his grandmother as an adult. Even though, he feels distance from the people around him, this attitude was transitioning slowly as the narrator started to converse with his mother about his father's past. He believed that First Raise had stayed away from them because he gets more respect from the whites than his wife. As Teresa was a rich woman, First Raise could have abandoned his family but he stayed because of Mose and the narrator because they meant something to him.

In his poem "Harlem, Montana: Just off the Reservation," Harlem is depicted in a poor image where its hotel is being overnamed and its children poor (*Riding* 27). The comfort and peace of home left him once he went to the town of Harlem, Malta, and Havre in search of his girlfriend Agnes. Drinking in bars and meaningless sexual encounters with women became his greatest problems thereafter. In Malta, the narrator helped Dougie, the brother of his girlfriend, in robbing the man who was with Agnes in exchange for the whereabouts of Agnes. However, Dougie ran away without helping the narrator. He cursed them for bringing him to such a horrible state. He confesses that the man whom he robbed and himself had something in common, that is, his girlfriend, and he assume that his girlfriend will lead him to his downfall. In his search for Agnes, he had encountered different women in Harlem, Havre, and Malta. In these towns, women have less economic power and they hang around the bars for wine or money. Agnes is similar to the women who have no definite vocation and they followed men around to pay their way. The fault also lies with the narrator because when he had brought her home the first time, he promised her of a better life unlike her miserable life of drinking and sleeping with men. Many Indians resorted to alcohol as a form of escape and became its slave.

Another problem lies in the prostitution of Indian women. Fisher says that the women could earn twice as much as prostitutes in Victoria. Drunkenness and prostitution were followed by the evils of degradation and disease (166). The legacy of trade resulted in legacy of consumption. Temple and Velie note that the excessive use of alcohol furthers the problems of displacement, poverty, disease, and loss of culture (7). Similarly, alcohol is a major problem with the protagonist Jim Loney in the novel *The Death of Jim Loney*. Like the narrator in *Winter in the Blood*, he suffers from identity crisis and had an unstable relationship with his lover, Kate, and his father. The narrator in *Winter* had sexual encounter with different women but they could not satisfy him as his problem goes deeper than his physicality. At Beany's Bar in Harlem, a woman asked the boys in the bar to buy her a drink. When the narrator went to talk to her, he gets to know that she was depressed as her life was disoriented. She was trained in Haskell for two years to become a secretary but she never became one.

Welch's places his characters between two cultures where they were fixed on what to choose and what not to. Similarly the protagonists of *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and *Winter* were people who were torn between the past and present and the old culture and the new culture. The protagonist of *Winter*, a modern man and his problems of alienation, estrangement, and despair, are common in the contemporary world. He met an alienated and nameless man like himself whom he called as the airplane man; he stands for the epitome of modern man's alienation. In an interview, Welch tells Coltelli that he created the airplane-man's character as a "comic-relief," a man full of himself with foolish ideas ("James Welch" 190). The author wants the airplane-man to awake the consciousness of the narrator to the other world. He is an escapist, the narrator was running away from his duties but he did not end up taking the same path of the airplane man nor his lifestyle. After the airplane-man's arrest, the narrator was torn either to drive home or catch up with the barmaid in Malta. He articulated his helplessness of living in the world of stalking white men and his own fellow Indians at the Gable's. Both of them were merciless, and he remained as a stranger to both, and was beaten by both the whites and the Indians.

After another encounter with Marlene in Malta, the narrator turned more intense and helpless. It was as if he had lost interest in everything around him. He longed for inner peace that does not need worldly care, possessions, or a woman's body. The narrator realized that neither physical relationships nor the luxuries of the world could not make him whole or be complete. Finally, he decided to leave Havre because he has had enough of it and its painful

experiences of bars, cars, hotels, women but most of all he had enough of himself. He wanted to lose himself, ditch his clothes, outrun the burning sun, and to stand beneath the clouds and erased his shadow. He was condemning his own lifestyle of being wasted and he wanted to shed off his old life and start anew. It was most appropriate for the narrator to return back to his home, to the reservation, and to nature because it is capable of restoring him to wholeness. The Native Americans way of life is to live in harmonious relationship with the Mother Earth for a wholesome life.

The narrator had lost connection with his mother, however, his dream of his mother Teresa giving birth to the duck, Amos, suggested a hope for the rebirth or regeneration of himself (Dohal 163). Transition slowly came in the protagonist's life through his association with his grandfather Yellow Calf. He not only forgives himself, but the horse, Old Bird, and the cow that were equally responsible for Mose's death. The Indians accepted death as a part of life. It is accompanied by specific acts of mourning. The grief or mourning ended with a feast given to the community, and after this feast there is no official mourning (Deloria, *Custer* 120). The protagonist had refused to confront the painful memory of his dead brother, Mose, for a long time. However, it changed when he visited Yellow Calf in the outskirt of the reservation and learned his family history and his tribal past. His despair was transformed to hope.

The problem of alienation is common among the Native Americans and the Euro-Americans. However, their approach to it is different from one another. The Euro-Americans sees the problem as an end to itself, where no science, religion, philosophy, or moral truths can help it, thus, the protagonist or the hero defies the normal conventions by developing an independent spirit. Whereas for the Native Americans, the character confronts his history, heritage, and return back to his culture which holds meaning for him. Leto II articulates that the Native Americans see alienation and despair as a beginning into the death-rebirth journey where the individual purged himself of the emptiness and starts afresh (3). At the end of the story, Welch affirms that the narrator has come to term with his distance because he helped in pulling the cow from the mud and also enjoyed the rain thinking happily about his beloved brother and his father ("Interview with James Welch"). He has done a good thing and this act will draw him back to communal life and helped him to acknowledge the relation of all.

The "distance" felt by the narrator was both felt by Yellow Calf and his grandmother. They have provided a pattern for him to overcome this distance and connect the

distance. Yellow Calf had lived three miles away from the Reservation area of the narrator and his grandmother. The narrator's grandmother had lived a distance away from the band during the Winter Starvation of 1883-1884. The narrator wondered what created the distance between them as they lived only three miles apart from each other. When the narrator came to identify Yellow Calf as the hunter of his grandmother and father of Teresa, he was able to gain a new perspective of both of them. He was suffering from the effect of distance but the same thing was suffered by his grandparents, and they overcome it by staying faithful to each other and survive. As the blood of his grandparents runs in his veins, he was able to defeat the alienation and distance in his life. Thus, despite the many seasons of winters in his life, which is referred to the deaths of his father First Raise and brother Mose, he defeated their coldness and the bitterness by accepting the warmth, love, and sacrifices made by his grandparents.

The narrator's changed perceptions about himself, other people, and the natural world finally pointed out to his role in the cultural conservation (Ruppert 63). His identity is reconstituted by the very things that created distance in his life. The guilt that the narrator felt for his brother's death and the distant relationship with his mother, Teresa, affected and prevented the narrator's development into a whole self. The narrator does not allow distance to kill him, he found balance and he accepted death as part of a larger whole and he matured as an individual. In an interview with Coltelli, Welch articulates that it is hard to undergo traditional vision quest for the twentieth century people, however a metaphysical and abstract vision quest has replaced the older form in the contemporary times ("James Welch" 187). Welch is apprehensive about the narrator in *Winter in the Blood* who received a vision and acted on it. He explains that the narrator seems to grow little bit as a person when he learned about the history of his grandfather and delivered the cow from the mud, but those events are not visions from where he can conduct his life. The protagonist's life sets an example of possibility for other contemporary Indians who were undertaking the same journey to find themselves.

In a dialogue with Bill Bevis, Welch has stated that *Winter in the Blood* is a novel of "quiet resolutions" (qtd. in Sands, "Closing the Distance" 78). The protagonist's father and thousands of Indians had failed to deal with their own problems, thus, they ended up in a mess. The narrator respects his father but he would not walk the path of failure that his father had walked. Lupton likened the unnamed protagonist to a trickster-hero which is common in Native American folklores (40). His relation with Yellow Calf, his grandfather, establishes his connection with Na'pi, the famous Blackfeet trickster. The narrator is a trickster who

engages in debauchery, and he is also a trickster-hero for saving the cow from the mud. The narrator's memory of his tribal past had remained in the periphery, thus, he was unable to cope up with his present crisis because of his confused identity. Hearing the survival story of his grandmother and Yellow Calf, the protagonist was able to make sense of his world, his history, and his identity. It gave him the strength to amend his life, his unwanted behaviors, and his rebellious heart. He delivered the cow from the mud with the help of Bird. He did this because of the wisdom received from his grandfather.

The narrator even invented an imaginative story of his girlfriend's return to home. He dreamed of proposing to her and settled down with her. Nora Barry claimed that the novel is a "novel of survival" based on the protagonist's continuous journey and reintegration with his tradition and the world in spite of his sufferings ("Winter in the Blood" 156). The narrator in discovering and remembering his heritage experiences "strength," "continuance," and "renewal" (Hobson 10). The tribal history contained the survival lesson for him. In Native American tradition, all living things must undergo the process of growth and change as a necessary component of their aliveness (P. Allen, "Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary" 232). Similarly, the narrator too went through this process to achieve his self and his identity. The winter in the novel metaphorically stands for the emotional distance of the narrator. His distance from his mother, his grandmother, and his girlfriend was finally overcome with the rediscovery of his ancestry, and his subsequent help rendered to the cow, and throwing his grandmother's pouch into the grave. These acts helped in lessening the winter in his life. The protagonist of the novel transitioned from a faceless individual to a man after hearing the story of his tribal history from his grandfather. As the narrator reconciles with his grandfather and acknowledges the tribal history told by his grandfather, it will help him towards his healing.

5.1. 3 The Concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* or The Inter-Relatedness of the Natural World

The Native Americans believe in the inter-relation of man, animals, and the environment. The structures of Native American literature also embody implied relationships between men and other beings. *Winter in the Blood* has represented this concept also known as *Mitakuye Oyasin*. The Indian principle of observation is simplicity itself, that is, "we are all relatives." This phrase serves as a practical methodological tool for investigating the natural world that can provide guidance in approaching nature and living harmoniously with it (Deloria, *Spirit* 34). The narrative of the novel has referred extensively to animals, nature,

and the environment. Landscape is a principle character in his works. From the inception of the novel, Welch has set the ecological character in the narrative. It does not start off with a bar scene, or life in the town, but it describes the familiar surroundings of the narrator. The scene is not indicative of a thriving environment, but it describes the graveyard of the Earthboys and their decaying cabin. The old heritage and sacredness of the lands were lost and places like the Earthboys remained forgotten and in its place highway is constructed.

The novel is set in Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana in the cattle ranch of the narrator. Lupton suggested that the open reference to “natural functions” in the novel is Welch’s way of putting his characters within the context of the landscape (60). The fact that the narrator took a leak in the grass in his first homecoming and watching the animals connected him with the land and the animals. Unlike urban people who are used to the sanitation systems, toilets, and lavatory, the reservation and rural life of the narrator lived without these facilities. He lives in a free and open space with the landscape and the animals. Sands opined that Welch does not make the land as secondary or a substitute. Landscape goes beyond the concept of setting as it constitutes the essence out of which action is made and it contained the remains of the past (“Closing the Distance” 85). For the whites, the landscapes of the natives are empty and uninhabited that need to be tamed and conquered. The “cyclical reaffirmation” was the foundation for the philosophy of the indigenous peoples of North America. This philosophy treated animal and plant kingdoms with equal respect, thus, the Native people have reverence for them and their exploitations were condemned. The Native Americans aim at maintaining the harmonious whole and balance with nature than to control or appropriate it for one use (Bill 1). In the novel, the reference to the borrow pit is an excavation from which the earth has been extracted or exploited for use. Owens argued that the earth has been appropriated for use by the white settlers and the Blackfeet culture and identity is appropriated by the white culture (129). The narrator’s father, First Raise, was found dead in the borrow pit and was buried afterwards.

To understand Welch’s works, the readers must know the land because Welch’s description of the land is always a priority. The narrator’s homeland was not all picturesque. The novel takes place in the aftermath of colonialism where the different tribes of the Indians were relocated to government allotted reservations. Despite the presence of distance in the land, the narrator finds them blameless for the distance he felt because he sees it as coming from himself. On the other hand, Lupton refers to Robert M. Nelson that the distance of the protagonist is a result of his distance from the landscape and a return to the land of his

grandfather holds the potential in overcoming his problem (60). As the book opens, the reservation of the unnamed protagonist was facing water scarcity and they were expecting rain to pour on their dry land. Like the winter life of the narrator, the land too was experiencing dryness. In Native American oral tradition, man and the environment share a close relationship with each other. *Winter in the Blood* like many other contemporary Native American literary texts try to restore the broken relationship between man and the environment. Lupton also refers to Christopher Norden who commented that the landscape and spiritual restoration must go hand in hand, what is wrongfully taken from nature must be given back to nature through the “aid” of ritual (60). The land must be restored from exploitation because the people derived their survival and healing from it.

The Indian people believed in the unity and harmony of all beings, whether animate or inanimate. This signifies the Sacred Hoop or the Medicine Wheel. The Indian communities have experienced various changes at different phases but they were able to maintain their traditional values and their cultural concepts. There are four directions of the Medicine Wheel. They are east, south, west and north, represented by black, red, yellow and white. The different directions symbolize the stages of life, the seasons of the year, aspects of life, elements of nature, animals, and ceremonial plants (“Medicine Ways”). The Sacred Hoop worked towards the harmonious living of all beings on earth irrespective of the beings and their existence.

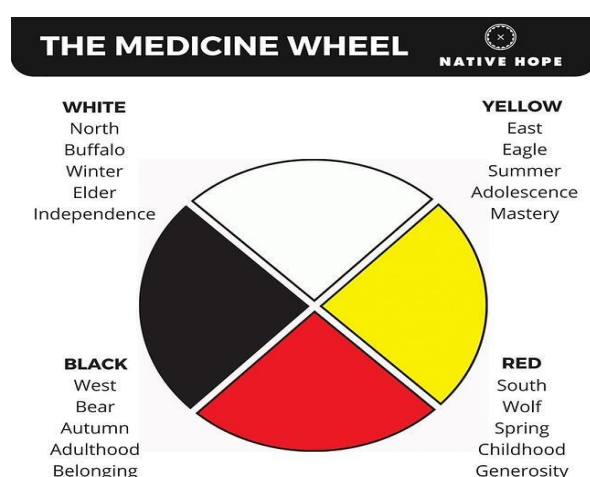


Fig.7. Native Hope, “The Medicine Wheel.”

The cycle of nature, especially, winter season, takes an important form in the novel. Winter is particularly vivid for the narrator because it is connected with the tragic death of

Mose. That year, fall had been brief and they had to bear the heat. By the end of September, fall had arrived and the leaves of cottonwoods changed its colour, the alfafa turned black, the mosquitoes disappeared, and the stars began to appear at night in the sky. Winter came and they all felt the “bite of winter” in their bones (Welch, *Winter* 83). The narrator not only enjoyed the company of Mose, but he also treasured the times spent with his brother, like herding the cattle, and being in the wild together. In his present state of despair, these experiences in nature and animals comforted him and they provided a source of strength for him. The hot weather creates a problem for the people in the reservation. Coming to the present, the narrator was also hopeful that that it will rain and changed the hot weather. True to his assumption, it rained hard before the funeral of his grandmother. The different seasons of nature experienced by the narrator also indicate the seasons of life that he went through in his life. The winter in his life refers to the loss of his father and brother, while the summer or rain stands for his rebirth or growth.

In the Indian tribal religion, animals, birds, and plants composed the “other peoples” of creation (Deloria, *God* 278). Many of these peoples participated in the ceremonies performed by human. Animals were part of the characterization of Welch. They played a major role in the life of the protagonist by helping him to find his roots again. Welch used a number of animals in the novel because animals were part of the Blackfeet mythology. He named the animals and gave them near-human characters and histories. Animal characters help the narrator in his quest for identity by encouraging him and provided necessary informations and warnings to him. For example, Bird carried the narrator twice to Yellow Calf which helped him in discovering his kinship. Thackeray writes that the animals appeared as the narrator “allies” by playing revised traditional and modern roles to help the narrator (39). Animal references or comparisons were seen in the novel. They signify the close relationship between man and animals and also suggest the fallen position of the Indians. Yellow Calf’s fingers were slick and papery like the belly of a rattlesnake. He also compared himself to an old dog losing track of the time. Grandmother had in the past saw the Indians being driven like cows to their reservation by the soldiers. The Indians were treated poorly like the animals and were forcefully herded to the reservation areas.

Animals became the companion of the narrator in his desperate state. Even though he was distant from the people that loved him, the sounds of the animals and birds were bringing him back to nature. For example, as the narrator was pulling water from the cistern, he heard two pintail ducks beating frantically above the cottonwoods and a meadowlark’s song came

from the shade behind the house. In spite of the dry season, the birds were showing activeness and optimism to the narrator. Unseen by the narrator, they urged him to grow closer to nature. Fish is considered as impure to eat among the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre. However, George Bird Grinnell opines that the taboo of eating fish might be broken in times of dire need as fish was not considered as an evil creature (qtd. in Thackeray 45). The reference to fish appears constantly in the novel. However, besides the Blackfeet medicine man, Fish, there is no actual fish that appeared in the novel. There are varied implications of the absence of fish in the river. The sugar beet factory in Chinook was blamed for making the river milky and thus disabled fish growth. Attempts were made by the white men from the fish department to breed pike in the river, however, it was unsuccessful as the river and the fish ignored each other. The fish refused to die in the river and they simply vanished. This suggests that experiments and unnatural methods will not help fish growth in the river. The development projects carried out by the whites make it seem that they were right in the use of the lands. They contrasted with the Indians in their attitude towards the land, they use it to suit their wants and desires, whereas, the Indians respect and revere the land.

Unlike the white settlers, the Indians feared to change the natural landscape and shapes because it was more than a useful tool for exploitation. The land is the main sustenance of the different forms of life and without it man could not survive. Similarly, the Indians respect the land and animals equally because their existence depended on them. For decades, Indian lands suffered from the effects of pollutions contributed by the industry in the form of toxic dumping, contamination of air and drinking water, nuclear testing fallout, extraction of mining, and other pollutants from off-reservation areas. Even though others claimed to be successful in catching fish, the narrator could not catch any fish and Thackeray suggests that this might imply the “personal failures” of the narrator (46). The presence of fish is also ambiguous in the novel and the narrator identifies fish with a barmaid in Malta. He was first attracted to her but later on the narrator becomes apprehensive of her and thought that she might be the daughter or girlfriend of the airplane-man.

There are different traditional beliefs, and theories attached to fish. Fish, the creatures that lived “totally underwater” are important in the Gros Ventre mythology because the most sacred emblem of the Gros Ventre, that is, the Flat Pipe, was found floating on the primal sea with Earthmaker at the beginning of the world. Thus, the ritual of Flat Pipe employ “ground” and “water association” and fish and other creatures take part in it. For this particular role that they played, the anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber pointed out that they were called as “navel-

amulet” (qtd. in Thackeray 48). Thackeray also refers to Tom Shakespeare, the distinguished Arapaho informant and author, who stated that the Arapaho retained the red and yellow navel cord as a “medicine-bag” for their entire life and buried with them when they died. As the Arapaho loves life, they believe with the medicine-bag a person could be reborn if he chooses to (49). The narrator’s continuous search to catch fish symbolizes his desire to break from the womb of his mother whom he was much attached and dependent on it. He seeks to become a mature person by breaking free from his unhealthy relationship with his mother.

The narrator has established affinity with some animals like cow, calf, and duck. He understands them and has affection for them because he sees them as symbolical of modern Indians. The calf, another domestic animal was a long onlooker of the narrator’s life. The calf observes the narrator when he made his journey to the old man Yellow Calf. When its mother was driven out from the slough, it calls out with appreciation. The duck Amos was a close ally and friend of the narrator. Thackeray has said that Amos provided much more for the narrator as it guided the narrator in his path and warned him of the things which he should avoid (50). The duck is also a venerated creature among the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre tribes. Amos has survived the natural threat of drowning when other ducks had died. Unfortunately, he could not survive in the hands of Teresa. However, Amos, the duck, continue to provide guidance to the narrator. As in an alcohol induced dream, he sees Amos’s rebirth from his destroyer Teresa.

Yellow Calf had lived three miles away from the cattle ranch of the narrator. He lives in intimate relationship with nature and the animals. Unlike the idea of the narrator that no man should live alone, Yellow Calf prefers the quiet life in nature. He defended his own lifestyle, retorting that no one is alone as the deer used to come and they whistle to each other. However, the once balanced ecosystem of Yellow Calf’s world was threatened by the modern developments and the animals talk to Yellow Calf about their unhappiness. The world becomes cockeyed. The narrator could not understand the message of the deer about the natural world, but Yellow Calf could. He enlightens the narrator that if he can understand the message, it will cure him and he continues the formulaic cure saying that one has to lean into the wind to stand straight (Welch, *Winter* 55). The world is corrupted by the evils of modernism, colonialism, and capitalism. It does not care for the harmful effects it releases to the environment and the animals. Yellow Calf, unlike the other characters, was living the best of his ability drawing away from the daily concerns of men by living in the hub of nature and listening to the animals.

The narrator's family raised different breedings of animals and they were part of their family. One of the animals closest to the Raiser's family is the horse called Old Bird. The narrator has equalized Old Bird status with his owners. Bird has been with the narrator's family for a long time. Almost everything that happened in the Raiser's family, Bird took part and he had seen most of everything. Bird too carried the guilt of Mose's death and together with the narrator, they atone it. The horse is a venerated and important animal among the Blackfeet and the Gros Ventre tribes. It occupied an important role in their mythologies. The Gros Ventre regarded the horse as the central totem in their sacred Drum Dance. Within the Blackfeet mythology, the horse was viewed as the "supernatural transformation" of an "elk" and was an animal used for the service of man (Thackeray 54). Bird had been with the narrator and his family in their good and bad times and because of his companion, the narrator was able to fulfill his quest. When the narrator decided to make another journey to Yellow Calf before the funeral of his grandmother, Bird did not resist and he accompanied the narrator. He began to appreciate the animal for his faithfulness and unrelenting service to his family.

Towards the end of the narrative, when the narrator was silently processing the narrative of Yellow Kidney in his mind, "Bird farted." The narrator realized that Bird knew the story all along but he had passed it to him only in that "one instant of corruption" (Welch, *Winter* 124). Lupton quoted Sean Teuton who called this moment as the union of the "sacred" and "profane" and called it as "fart-wisdom" (53). After his return from his grandfather's visit, the narrator found the same cow who contributed to the death of Mose, drowning in the mud. The narrator tied Bird to help the cow. This action is described as a "mud-slinging rodeo" where the protagonist, the horse, the cow, and the muck formed the "graphic rendition" of *Mitakuye Oyasin* (45). The narrator reached a stage of comfort and happiness in the rain helping the cow. His experience of the rain, the pulling of the cow, the memory of his beloved brother, Mose, and his father, and being surrounded by animals gave him one of the happiest moments in his life. When grandmother died, the narrator throws her tobacco pouch into the grave. This act signifies that everything is related, thus the grandmother, the pouch, and the shroud were all put back together to the earth.

5.1.4 Unearthing Tribal History

Welch mentioned that the main causes of alienation have to do with weakening or distortion of language and history. The Indian tribes do not record the past events. However,

some tribes in the post-Discovery times recorded the specific sequences of time with relation to their community. The Plains Indians recorded their historical events in the animal skins. Each year, the most memorable event experienced by the community is painted in the skin. By this method, historical events were remembered by the people (Deloria, *Spirit* 90). In the contemporary age, the younger generations were suffering from alienation and identity crisis because they lacked historical knowledge and their ancestry. *Winter in the Blood* focuses on the history of the Blackfeet Indians because the protagonist needs to acknowledge it for his regeneration and revival. Welch has created elder figures who informed the narrator of his ancestry and his tribe, that is, the Blackfeet Indians. Lupton quoted Stephen Tatum that the narrator in *Winter in the Blood* performs the role of a “gravedigger” or “archaeologist” in unearthing the past or the remnants of history (61). The protagonist reclaimed his rightful place in his environment and in nature when he discovered the history of his people.

Storytelling is an important way for Native Americans to keep their histories alive. The old storytellers of the Native Americans narrate the histories and traditions of their culture to the younger people. The grandmother is a central figure in the book. She is the wife of Standing Bear, a renowned Blackfeet chief. She had lived a terrible life in the past but she had survived through them to tell the story to her grandsons. In the absence of written form, the old people narrated and transmitted their historical accounts to the younger generation by the form of storytelling. The narrator retold his grandmother’s story and history which were narrated to him and his brother Mose by grandmother herself. It is a narrative of joy, suffering, and perseverance. When grandmother was barely in her teens, she got married to Standing Bear, becoming his third wife. Standing Bear gave his father two ponies and three robes. The reason of her cheap price was because her father had already given away four daughters (Welch, *Winter* 28). Even though she was not an important figure in her husband’s house, being the youngest wife, she was happy to be the wife of Standing Bear, a good man, and she sang happily for him. The happy life as the wife of Standing Bear was short as the Long Knives, the white soldiers, were riding closer to their camps, requiring them to abandon their home in search of a safer place and later on to the death of her husband.

Traditional Native Americans looked up to the medicine men or shamans for signs or interpretations because they believed in their prophecies and words. The Blackfeet Indians have abandoned their old place following the prophecy of their medicine man, Fish. Fish prophesied the coming of the Long Knives as with the seasons changing, he can smell of steel in the air. Obeying the prophecy, the Indians dismantled their camps and used the tepee poles

as travois frames to carry the old people, their supplies, and furnitures to another place. A week later, the soldiers came to the lodges of the Blackfeet Indians but only an empty space had greeted them. Johnson notes that the Indian people practiced a movement pattern known as “seasonal round” (11). They moved their camps to different sites according to the abundance of growth and hunting. Thus, the Europeans depiction of the Indians as nomadic and wanderers without a home is a misconception.

Fish made another prophetic announcement on the third morning about the fate of the bands, that is, the Little Badger and the Heavy Runner’s group about an upcoming terrible winter. The bands split up to survive on their own. Heavy Runner’s group went north following the east slope of the mountains into Canada. Standing Bear’s people followed the Little Badger band and travelled through different plains to the Bear Paw Mountains and made their way north of the Milk River valley where they faced one of the hardest winters. Many of the band members died in that winter due to starvation. Unfortunately, the suffering was added with the killing of Grandmother’s husband Standing Bear in a futile raid on the Gros Ventres. When his horse was brought back to his family by the survivors, Standing Bear’s eldest son killed it and they survived on it for many days. The horse was killed for two reasons, Standing Bear would need it in the other world and they ate it because they were starving.

Grandmother became a widow when she was not yet twenty. Since she was the wife of a distinguished leader, many young men of the tribe distanced from her, the women too treated her as an outcast. The women envied her dark beauty although she believed that they must have laughed at her barren body. Her life was tragic after the death of her husband, but she held her life together as a widow for nearly twenty-five years before meeting a half-white drifter named Doagie. They lived together but were never married and the narrator doubted Doagie to be the father of Teresa. Coming to the present time, grandmother stopped taking an active part in the daily life of her family. However, her presence, her authority, and her gestures were acknowledged by the people around her. She signaled her presence in the house by squeaking her chair as a response to the conversations or things going on in her household. Lame Bull teases Teresa about marriage and consummation. However, Teresa retorted him because he spoke as if her mother has no ears. The old woman responded with two squeaks from the living room, implying her annoyance. Her body remained inactive, but she has a sharp sense and mentality which are derived from her past sufferings as an outcast and her survival through them.

Grandmother remained as a patriot of her Blackfeet tribe as she plotted to kill her grandson's girlfriend who is a Cree for the unforgiveable crimes committed by the ancestors of the Crees. According to the narrative of grandmother, the Crees were selfish people who only care for themselves. The Crees were cowards who never participated in the battlefield, but fought with their fellow Indians in the bars. They mingled with the Long Knives, that is, the whites and help them in slaughtering the Indians and the Cree girls produced mixed blood children with the Long Knives. Grandmother used to doubly curse the children of these unions. For these reasons, the old lady wanted to murder the narrator's girlfriend to avenge the many sins committed by the generations of the Crees. Lundquist writes of how bloodlines whether of pure or mixed, are always important for the Native Americans (203). This belief is represented by grandmother. Grandmother's attitude towards her grandson's Cree girlfriend originates from the history of suffering meted by the Crees towards their fellow Indians.

A part of Blackfeet history is heard from the narration of the narrator's grandmother. However, grandmother did not tell the whole story to her grandson. It was only later, in his second homecoming, when he visited Yellow Calf when his grandmother died that he learns about the real father of Teresa and his own ancestry. Back then, Yellow Calf was a youth and he had known grandmother as a young woman. He knows Standing Bear because he himself was a Blackfeet. Yellow Calf shared the same history with the narrator's grandmother as they both went through the Winter Starvation. However, his narration was more detailed as it included the conflicting belief and changed attitude of the people in the face of hunger. It all started, when their leader, Standing Bear, was killed in a party led against the Gros Ventre. It was then that they realized that their medicine had gone bad. They have been through some of the hardest winters of their life but seeing the dead body of Standing Bear, the people in the Blackfeet camp realized that they were being punished for leaving their home. The people promised to return to their home as soon as the winter is over, whether there will be soldiers or no soldiers. That winter, Yellow Calf had lost his father to pneumonia, and his four sisters and mother died from starvation. When spring came, the people went away to their old home, but Yellow Calf stayed because his people too stayed.

When people live in comfort and luxury, they live peacefully and were generous to each other but when the pot is empty, the atmosphere changed as people looked around with critical eyes. The people blamed the youngest wife of Standing Bear and accused her of bringing bad medicine to their camp. Things were different when her husband was alive, people accept her and they were proud of her beauty. However, her beauty worked against

her when Standing Bear died. Men who used to share their hunting meat with her were prevented by their wives. Fish, the medicine man, interpreted the signs. The people looked at grandmother and blamed her for bringing despair and deaths to their camps, and that her beauty was seen as a mockery to their situation. This also puts the medicine man and his profession into question since medicine-men and their prophecies were closely guarded and respected in the society. The narrator critiqued the belief of the people, but Yellow Calf replied that it was the way things were. Despite of his effort to understand the thinking of the people that is, the hatred of the women, the shame felt by men, and the starvation that led to the ostracization of his grandmother from the rest of the community, the narrator could not understand how his grandmother's beauty could have created the problems facing in their camps.

Apart from the problem faced by the young widow, there was a lot of confusion among the people in the camp that spring. Some of them wanted to stay in their present place and some wanted to move back home. However, the soldiers from Fort Assiniboine took the choice of the people by forcefully driving them down one late spring to the newly created Blackfeet Reservation. The people did not mention the young widow to the soldiers, since, they were unconcerned about her. She had lived a distanced life away from the people after the weather had warmed. Thus, the soldiers thought of her to be a Gros Ventre and left her. From the story of Yellow Calf, the narrator was able to piece his grandmother's story of the image of people driven like cows to the reservation. This was a strange victory for his grandmother. The narrator wondered how his grandmother had survived when others had left her alone. In her stories, she never mentioned the name of Yellow Calf even though they had faced and survived the same winter. As a matter of fact, nobody told him their story or connection, the narrator understood their secret relation by himself. The old man had been blind for over thirty years but he had also lived a lifetime before that. He remembered the calendar in Yellow Calf's shack which was dated 1936 in his previous visit. Following the calendar, the years, and time, the narrator began to laugh at the realization that Yellow Calf was old enough to hunt at that time and he was the sole provider of meat for his grandmother. He also realized that Doagie was not Teresa's father but Calf and exclaims, "*it was you, Yellow Calf, the hunter!*" (Welch, *Winter* 125). Yellow Calf's face changed when he heard the laughter of his grandson. Eisenstein refers to Charles Ballard that the narrator's realization has led him to discover not only a lost kinsman but a lost community of animals and passing seasons (13). His loss is not composed of his beloved father and brother alone

but it includes his tribe, the animals, and many others. This meeting not only provided an emotional and spiritual healing for the narrator but it also offered happiness for Yellow Calf because his own grandson had learned and identified his heritage and the burden and sacrifices that he made long ago.

Welch knows the importance of elders in the contemporary Indian society as they serve as the only link to retell their history, stories, and beliefs to the younger generations who were mainly affected by the process of colonialism and modernisation. Yellow Calf unfolds the events of the winter of 1883-84, the Starvation Winter, to his grandson. It was called as the “Starvation Winter” because there was nothing left for the Blackfeet Indians as there was no buffalo and no supplies came from the government. Thus, approximately 600 Blackfeet members died due to the unbearable starvation (Nozedar). Listening to his grandfather’s story, the narrator imagines the journey and sufferings undertaken by his ancestors. This makes him to appreciate his grandmother and Yellow Calf who suffered silently for years, yet continue to hold on with dignity and wisdom. Eisenstein opines that the grandmother of the narrator had taught him many things about her past but it lacks the “survival lesson” and “closure” which might help the narrator to articulate his own experience (11). The grandmother’s narrative exclude the “balancing image,” but Yellow Calf’s narrative restores it by providing the image of the people, the culture, and the surviving spirit of that winter (12). Unlike other historical writers who neglect the details of history, Welch included all the details to give a newer perspective of history. The Blackfeet history as narrated by Yellow Calf is not a history of suffering alone but it consisted of hope, survival, and perseverance. This is what Eisenstein calls it as “authentic history” (15). When the narrator recovered his ancestry, he also recovered his identity as the two were closely connected to each other.

5.1.5 Conclusion

Winter in the Blood is studied under four main themes all connected to the theme of alienation, searching for ancestors, and survivance from it. The nameless protagonist, a modern, and directionless man, was able to achieve his lost identity with the recovery of his tribal history. The structure of the novel, like its unnamed protagonist and his disoriented life, has no definite structure as it moves from past, present, to the future. Within the narrative, elements of native humour, oral tradition, and beliefs make the narrative richer. The novelist employed Native and western literary techniques in telling the story. Even if the structure

seems odd, it contributes to the theme of recovering cultural identity by its style. The distance felt by the protagonist originates from him. Since he has a problem of distance with himself, his distant relation with others is obvious. The healing process or the overcoming was not possible by himself, but it was carried out under the guidance of the elders, and his association with the animals and nature. His problem was a common problem in contemporary Native American society and his recovery or revival paved way for other people's healings as well. The healing pattern of the Native American falls under the concept of "all are related." This brought the narrator back to the ecology. The animals provided healing pattern to the narrator and leads him back to the mythology of his culture. He was also awakened to their sounds and presences. Tribal history is an important component in people's lives. It is crucial for the people and for the individual to know their history because it contained the knowledge, wisdom, truth, perseverance, and bravery essential for the survival of the people. The wholeness of the narrator's life is achieved when he discovered the history of the Blackfeet people who had suffered tremendously but they survived nonetheless. All of these helped the narrator to dream a new life for himself despite the repeated tragedies that he had experienced in life. The story comes into full circle towards the end of the narrative only when the protagonist makes an effort to learn his cultural history. The elderly figures and their stories of survivals pushed him back to his culture and he began to start a new life in the reservation after many sorrows, troubles, and failures that had happened in his life. It is believed that the narrator was not only healed from his ailment but he will survive and tell the stories of his culture and history to others. Moreover, the problems of the Native people were solvable with the help of their culture and history.

5.2 *Fools Crow*

Fools Crow written by James Welch is one of the novels that gives a closest view of the traditional Blackfeet Indians and their culture. Published in 1986, it is a historical novel which corresponds with the historic Marias Massacre of 1870, where the United States Cavalry unjustly killed a non-combatant friendly band of the Blackfeet Indians. Welch shifted the narrative to the Blackfeet Indians who witnessed the inhuman massacre and thus deconstructs the narrative of the Euro-Americans. He amalgamates western literary styles with Native American folklore, myths, storytelling, dreams, and visions. This resulted in a "cross-cultural hybridization" where the author brings the two cultures together (Bak 35). For non-native readers, the novel is difficult to understand because of its style, techniques, and the usage of language. However, by doing this, Welch puts the Blackfeet Indians at the centre

of the narrative. An understanding of the oral matrix of the Blackfeet Indians and Native Americans is necessary and important to grasp the text of *Fools Crow*. The novel does not romanticize the Blackfeet Indians and their culture, in fact, it represented the society as it is. Thus, a realistic representation of the Blackfeet Indians, their characters, behaviours, beliefs, etiquettes, and errors are seen in the novel.

Set in Montana, *Fools Crow* is concentrated on the Blackfeet Indians that are consisted of the Pikunis, the Kainahs, and the Siksiwas. Besides these major divisions, there are a number of sub-divisions into different lodges. The pre-colonial lifestyle and culture was prevalent in the narrative. However, the interferences and influences of colonialism were also creeping into their culture. This is seen by the land acquisitions, destruction of the forests and animals, tradings, and the different treaties made with the Indians. The novel centers on the Pikunis of the Lone Eaters lodge and some other Blackfeet bands. The different bands of the Pikunis were divided amongst themselves whether to use force or peace in approaching the Napikwans, that is, the Blackfeet term for the whites. While the young people headed by Owl Child and Fast Horse were adamant to use warfare methods, the older people and chiefs like Heavy Runner, Three Bears, and Rides-at-the-Door looked for peace since the use of force would lead to their further downfall. The white-scab disease or the smallpox was a major threat to the wellbeing of the Pikunis. It also tests their belief in their gods and rituals which were becoming ineffective. Despite all the sufferings and injustices that they went through, the author optimistically emphasized that the Pikunis will survive in spite of their losses because of their rich traditions and culture. On the other hand, the novel follows the growth and development of White Man's Dog from being an unlucky man, a dog's lover to a warrior, healer, and a medicine man. Besides this, betrayal among friends, violation of taboos, dreams, visions are seen as important features in the narrative.

The novel will be studied under different sub-themes. Some of the characters will be studied in particular for their heroism and for the sacrifices that they made for their community. It signifies the coming of age of a man. Moreover, the worldview of the Pikunis needs another mention as it helps them to stand strong in the test of time. It points out to the co-existence of spiritual and physical worlds and provided survival and guidance to them. Welch was not a political commentator or writer, he does not write about socio, economic, or political problems; he writes about the Indians as they are. The historical accounts and the perspective of the Native people will be taken into account. The novel is also colored by the various traditions and culture of the Blackfeet Indians and this will be closely studied.

5.2.1 The Coming of Age

Fools Crow is a bildungsroman that traces the mental, spiritual, and physical development of the protagonist Fools Crow. His life is also symbolic of the coming of age of the Pikunis. He was born as Sinopa, but was renamed as White Man's Dog after his close acquaintance with an old storyteller named Victory Robe White. Unlike his father, Rides-at-the-door, he was a failure in terms of a Pikuni man. He was eighteen winters, meaning eighteen years old, but was unmarried and the three horses that he owned were punny, and the blackhorn that the Pikunis prized, he does not have any. The horse was a part of Blackfeet culture and it is used to measure the wealth of a person. At this age, since he does not have a good gun and fine horses, girls do not recognize him. His father's third wife, Kills-close-to-the-lake, was interested in him and he was happy about it, but he dismissed the thought and asks forgiveness from the Above Ones because she is his near-mother, his father's wife. White Man's Dog image at the opening of the novel is insignificant and hopeless in terms of the warrior culture and the status of men in the Pikuni society.

A man earned reputation in the Pikuni society mostly by engaging in war and carrying out raids. White Man's Dog received an opportunity to participate in the upcoming Crow horse raid under the leadership of Yellow Kidney. Yellow Kidney knows White Man's Dog and his luckless life, but he gave his consent because the latter respects his father. A young Blackfeet boy on his first raid was given a derogatory name. If he had killed an enemy or stolen a horse, he was given a new name that had carried honour with it (Nozedar). For the raid, White Man's Dog humbled himself and prayed to the Sun Chief for success and he vows to perform sacrifice at the Medicine Pole in the next Sun Dance ceremony. Following the instruction of Yellow Kidney, White Man's Dog supervised the younger men in the raid. White Man's Dog had carried out his duties carefully and the raid turns out to be successful. Besides stealing the horses, White Man's Dog killed a Crow rider who witnessed the raid. He felt guilty for killing the youth because he was still young, because White Man's Dog is a man who is seeking glory but that does not make him a heartless man. The Crow's horse raid and its achievement was the beginning of his entry into the manhood of the Pikuni society.

Successful horse raiding helps a man to elevate his status in the society. White Man's Dog success in the raid earned him a feast, it was given by his father Rides-at-the-door. His father had given him a war club that he had taken from the Crows. From this raid, his brother, Running Fisher, and other young men looked up to him with respect. Moreover, many of the

men honored him with scalp songs. For the first time White Man's Dog was happy about his own achievement and the prospect of having his own lodge and woman. He would be his own man. White Man's Dog did not grow boastful, in fact, he felt responsible for the family of Yellow Kidney when Yellow Kidney did not return from the Crow's horse raid. He hunts for his family and continue to extend his generosity towards them. Thus, when he attained a certain position, he also carried the responsibility by looking after others. After several days of estrangement from his camp, Yellow Kidney returned home mutilated and devastated. However, he gave an honest account of the bravery of White Man's Dog in the Crow's raid and thanked him for providing for his family in his absence.

A man gets additional respect in his community for his marriage. White Man's Dog knows this importance. Even though he desires his father's third wife, Kills-close-to-the-lake, he never had the intention of marrying her. In fact, his mind has been set on Red Paint for a long time. On the other hand, Yellow Kidney shared his concern with Mik-api for Red Paint's marriage because in his crippled situation no one rich and powerful enough among the Lone Eaters would want to marry her. Mik-api conveyed this message to White Man's Dog and he was brave enough to be that man. He had been providing for Yellow Kidney's family in his absence and he was willing to hunt for them again when he expresses his wish to marry Red Paint. White Man's Dog never looked for wealth and riches in marriage. Unlike his friends who took pride in sleeping with women, White Man's Dog had kept himself away from those affairs. As a keeper and fulfiller of vows, White Man's Dog performed a sacrificial act at the Sun Dance, which he had promised earlier to the Sun Chief in the Crow's horse raid. It included physical pain as a bear claw was pierced into his flesh. He communicates honestly with the Sun Chief asking for forgiveness for desiring his father's young wife and thanked him for his new wife and vowed to be good and true to all the people. On the other hand, his friend, Fast Horse, had not fulfilled his promise to Cold Maker and his life was overshadowed by this guilt and he distanced himself from his community. White Man's Dog as a true friend of Fast Horse had fulfilled the promise of Fast Horse to Cold Maker. He and Eagle Ribs left two prime blackhorn hides in the notch of a young tree and they burned down woods and left the coals to Cold Maker which Fast Horse had promised earlier.

To achieve certain position in life a person confronts his inner self, sacrifices his personal interests and only then emerged as a respectable person in the society. Similarly, in a warrior society, a man has to engage in war and battlefields and prove his worthiness.

Welch's protagonist is not a superhuman; he is an ordinary person with flaws and fear. When the Lone Eaters were preparing to attack the Crows, to avenge the mutilation of their warrior, Yellow Kidney, White Man's Dog too vowed to do so. However, on the night before the war raid, he converses with his wife and shared his fear with her. Despite his fear for his wife's life and their child, and the absence of a hunter for his wife's family, White Man's Dog believed that the path he has chosen is different. As a young warrior who has a good medicine he has to do his duty or else others would lack respect for him. Native American warriors prepared for battle by wearing their best clothing and elaborate headdresses. Shimer points out that the purpose behind their dressing is their preparation to face death bravely should they meet it on the battlefield (25). White Man's Dog stayed true to his profession despite the dangers and fright.

The acknowledgement of fear by White Man's Dog, an upcoming warrior, points out to the fear that warriors experience in the face of war. It shows their human side and dismantles the idealization of warriors. White Man's Dog was chosen to count the first coup of the Crow chief who mutilated Yellow Kidney, his father-in-law, in the earlier horse raid. Counting coup refers to a piece of battle etiquette. This act is carried by a person who touches his enemy with a stick, weapon, or hand while the enemy is still alive. By this, victory over an enemy is "certified." This is the first coup. This coup is understood as the greatest honour and it is considered as more important than the act of killing. The second coup refers to the subsequent killing of the enemy, and the third coup refers to the scalping of the boot (Nozedar). White Man's Dog bravery was paid when he killed the Crow chief, Bull Shield, in the raid and took the warrior's scalp back home.

The naming ceremony is an important part of the Indian life. It signifies the coming of age and a person's entry into a higher order of the society. The Blackfeet follows the tradition of changing their names every season, which is done by many people. Grinnell notes that if a Blackfeet man counts a new coup, he is entitled to a new name (82). A remarkable deed in the Crow's raid earned a new name for White Man's Dog, that is, "Fools Crow" (Welch, *Fools Crow* 151). It was given by Three Bears, the chief of the Lone Eaters, after he heard the story of how White Man's Dog had tricked Bull Shield by pretending to be dead and had risen up and killed him. He began to like the name Fools Crow, but on the other hand, he wept with shame because of the humiliation he caused to his father-in-law, Yellow Kidney, when he boasted in front of the Lone Eaters about his deeds in the Crow's war raid. He knew that his boastfulness was no different than that of Fast Horse's in the Crow's horse raid that

led to the capture of Yellow Kidney. Moreover, the name that he earned was not genuine, people have exaggerated it. Fools Crow had experienced horse raid and war raid in his life and it was done with both fear and courage in his mind. Even though Fools Crow has no intention of becoming a many-faces-man himself, Mik-api gave him the responsibility to prepare the sweat lodge. Sweat lodge is believed to heal the individual and the cosmos as well. This was the first stage of his apprenticeship. Later, in the absence of Mik-api, he performed the healing ceremony for One Spot when the boy was attacked by a wolf. When the Lone Eaters were afflicted by the white-scab disease, he prayed and performed ritual for the sick by visiting their lodges. He was warrior turned into a healer.

Fools Crow is likened to the mythological character, Scarface, who encountered various criticisms for his scarface and whose journey towards healing was met with many difficulties. Fools Crow has undergone both physical and psychological trials when he accepted bigger responsibilities for his community. His psychological tests were seen with his attitude towards the Napikwans' attacks, and his longing for personal freedom which his friend, Fast Horse, had been chasing. His responsibility towards others gained him respect, honour, and incorporation into the band. Raven had entrusted Fools Crow to kill the Napikwan, the white man, who was killing the animals for game. Fools Crow was aware of the risk of killing the Napikwan, as they were already being warned by the white seizers of the recent killing of Malcolm Clark. On the other hand, he could not permit a Napikwan to kill his animal brothers for fun. Risking his own life and his pregnant wife's life by using her as bait, he killed the Napikwan after much struggle and terror. In the conference and council-fire sessions, the Native American men of valour were given the chance to express themselves. Vanderwerth indicates that each brave man seizes the opportunity by speaking and using gestures and sought approval of every important phrase (2). Fools Crow did not hide his action from his community and he recounted the story of the killing to them. Young men present there honoured him for his action. Unlike Owl Child and his gang who teases the Napikwans, kill them, and causes much trouble for their people, Fools Crow's approach was different as he shared everything with his community.

Nora Barry claims that *Fools Crow* is a "survival myth" within the historical genre. Welch presents his hero who must survive for his people and carry the traditional Blackfeet myths and historical events to them ("Myth" 3). The myth of *Fools Crow* is timeless and it is interlinked with the past, the present, and the future. He underwent a vision quest after the dream helper, Nitsokan, bid him to travel as a beggar for three nights and three days. Lincoln

explains that the vision quest is cyclic and it requires solitude but not hiding, as the person leaves his tribe periodically but returns to his tribe with powers and knowledge (*Native American* 59). The Blackfeet men went on an individualized journey to fast and dream for power. The person abstain from food or drink for four days and four nights; resting two nights on the right side, and two nights on the left. Often at the end of the fourth day, a secret helper in the form of animal appeared to the man in his dream, talked to him, instructed him and gives him its power (Grinnell 82). With the help of the Feather Woman, Fools Crow in his quest foresaw the future of the Pikunis which will be affected by disease and the process of colonialism. However, he did not lose hope as Feather Woman has encouraged him that the story will live on. He returned back home and visited the lodges of the Lone Eaters who were afflicted by the white-scab disease and reported the dead numbers to his father who became the chief after the deceased of Three Bears. He was supportive of his band and also helped his father by assisting him in overseeing the Lone Eaters. The surviving members of the Lone Eaters needed meat to strengthen their body. For this, Fools Crow and some young men went to hunt and in their hunt they helped the surviving members of the Heavy Runner's Band who were being shot and crippled by the seizers.

Welch's portrayal of masculinity and manhood of the traditional Native Americans is seen through the various male characters in the novel. They were categorized into two types, the first is the "community-oriented manhood" and the second is the "individualistic manhood" (Fernández 208). The first is someone who puts the concern of the community first and the second is someone who puts himself first. From his actions and behaviours, Fools Crow belongs to the community-oriented manhood who puts his community first and Fast Horse belongs to the individualistic manhood who selfishly thinks only of himself. Fools Crow's relationship with his father is also an example of father-son relationship in tribal patriarchal societies, which rest the authority in men and depended on them for food and shelter. In other words, their relationship symbolizes band survival. However, when this is separated from tribal communal context, it can turn into "masculinists values" (222). Fools Crow does not become an authoritarian figure who dismisses women or other members of the society, but he worked for the common welfare of his people. He keeps the concern and welfare of his people above everything else.

Fools Crow left his home many times to fulfill a vow or a quest and returns back home. This circle is a part of Indian traditional spirituality. In this way, Welch also challenged the colonial model of a hero or a protagonist. Fools Crow is a person with many

titles, he is a warrior, a healer, and a visionary man. He goes through various phases of life and initiation rituals that provided the background of his education for his culture. By learning the ceremonies, rituals, myths of the Blackfeet, he internalizes the ethics, moral, values, religion, and spirituality of his people. Thus, in the end, when all was transitioning through a rough phase, he becomes the guarantor, survival, or representative of his culture. Nora Barry calls Fools Crow as “a new kind of culture hero” who will not battle against the monsters but whose battle will be against those of “the human spirit.” She added that the true historicity of this novel lies in presenting the Blackfeet culture and its heroism (“Myth” 17). Fools Crow excels the masculinity and manhood of the Blackfeet Indian by balancing his personal and communal interest, thereby, gaining respect and confidence of his people.

5.2.2 The Reality of the Supernatural Realm

The Pikuni worldview is influenced and guided by the natural world and the supernatural world. For non-native readers, the combination and closeness of the natural and supernatural might be irrational and illogical, however, the Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians depended heavily on the supernatural world and its powers in their individual and communal life. The novel inter mixed the real with the surreal or the supernatural world. It is distinguished by the use of surreal techniques, dreams, dreamlike disruptions, visions, transportation to supernatural world, reference to Shadowland and so on. Welch adaptation of dreams, visions, and supernatural beings, deftly handles the border-crossing between the mundane and the spiritual. The use of these techniques also point out to the hybridity of post-colonial writing which is both fluid and flexible. The surrealist techniques are traditional based and they are called “Blackfeet surrealism.” Welch explains this in an interview with Coltelli that if one gets immersed oneself in Indian culture, the notion of reality disappeared (“James Welch” 188). Doro Wiese opines that in *Fools Crow*, Pikuni “temporalizations” resists the settler time and its exact temporal notions. In contrast, the past, present, and future were fused together by the interactions between the spiritual, physical, and animal entities. By this, the novel puts forward the idea of “untranslability” at its centre, where time cannot be controlled and directed by the settler-colonial temporalizations.

Dreams play a vital role in the daily affair of the native people. Jean-Guy Goulet quoted Monica Wilson that individuals dream in the “symbols” of their society as they think in the “categories” of their own language (188). Dreams offer knowledge to a person of the impending future. Native Americans considered dreams as an important source for both

practical and spiritual guidance. Dreaming was a survival tool for them. The disguised fantasies that are evident to the consciousness are called as “manifest,” and the unconscious wishes that find a semblance of satisfaction in distorted form is called as “latent” (Abrams 249). *Fools Crow* is noted for many significant dreams and visions. The individual dreams bear meaning for the individual and the community as well. By this, one cannot keep one’s dream in secrecy when it is a dream for the community or for others. To report one’s dream to one’s family, friends, or community is crucial, as they contained messages for them. William Bevis pointed out that dreams in *Fools Crow* were opposite to the definition of dream given by Freud. They instead of taking the readers to the deep or the inner psyche of a person, they take them “out of private psyche” to an open view (qtd. in McFarland 115). There are some good dreams meant for the individual and community and they bring hope and prosperity to them. There are characters in the novel whose dreams are considered more valuable because their dreams are believable. However, there are some dreams that people doubted because they lack faith in the dreamer.

The spirit world and the natural world interconnect through dreams. The shamans or the seers were people who attuned themselves with the spiritual world and natural magic. They restore the balance of things and health to people through their power. The Iroquois believed that a person’s innermost desires would inevitably emerge in dreams. They are important to be deciphered and acted out or else they would create anxiety or physical illness (Shimer 21). Dreams guided the people in their daily life and decision makings. Allen points out that there is inseparability between Indian and spirits because they are always found together (Allen *Sacred Hoop: Recovering*). The Indian world co-exists with the spirit world like many native or indigenous cultures like, the Angami-Nagas and Adi and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh.

Fools Crow has present more than ten significant dreams. The first dream in the novel belongs to Fast Horse, a youth of the Pikuni in the Lone Eaters lodge. He is a rough and boastful man. When some of the Lone Eaters youth under the leadership of Yellow Kidney was planning a horse raid of the Crow’s, he narrated his skeptic dream to his band members. In his dream, Cold Maker, a supernatural being, came down from the Always Winter Land and asked Fast Horse to remove the big rock that had fallen on the spring where he usually drinks water. In return he will make their raid successful by making snow to fall on their tracks. He must also bring two prime bull robes for his daughters during the helping-to-eat-moon. Fast Horse was confident of his dream, but his friends did not share his confidence.

Their raid was successful and Cold Maker true to his promise covered their tracks with snow which made it impossible for their enemies to follow them. Fast Horse and his band were able to procure many horses but he failed to fulfill his promise to Cold Maker. His foolish boasting in the Crow's camp led to the capture of Yellow Kidney and he also suffered afterwards from the guilt of not fulfilling his promise to Cold Maker.

The ability to read and understand one's dream correctly is important because it conveys a bigger message not only for the dreamer but for others as well. White Man's Dog, the protagonist of the novel, had a dream which was related to the disappearance of Yellow Kidney. In his dream, White Man's Dog was led by a black dog to the Crows lodge. There he saw several dark shapes around the perimeter which were not breathing. One of the shapes lifted its sleeping robe and wave to him, she was a young white-faced girl whose eyes convey desire for him. Suddenly all the dark shapes began to move, and they were all naked and have the same look in their eyes. Later, he disclosed this dream to his father, Rides-at-the-door, when Yellow Kidney returned to the camp with all his fingers cut off by Bull Shield, the Crows chief. White Man's Dog felt responsible for the condition of Yellow Kidney because he believed that if he had told his dream to the raid party, it would prevent the tragedy to befall on Yellow Kidney. White Man's Dog dream was experienced by Yellow Kidney in the Crow's camp. Yellow Kidney fornicates with a girl who was dying out of white scabs disease. He was caught and tortured by the Crows and he suffered from white scabs disease.

When dreams are fulfilled, they bring happiness to the dreamers. During the absence of Yellow Kidney, his wife, Heavy Shield Woman, was visited by her husband in her dream. He told her that he was wandering in the land of the Crows and he could not return until Heavy Shield Woman agreed to perform a task. Following her dream, Heavy Shield Woman decided to take the role of the "Medicine Woman" at the Sun Dance ceremony. Meanwhile, her husband returned and she carried out the role which she had promised earlier. Action is required on the part of the dreamer who is entrusted to do a task received from a dream. Without it, the dream would die in the face of the dreamer. Mik-api, the many-faces- man, was visited by Raven in his dream. Raven entrusted Mik-api to request White Man's Dog to release a "four-legged brother" from the traps of the Napikwans. Here, Mik-api stands as the mediator between the supernatural and the real, that is, between the Raven and White Man's Dog. White Man's Dog obeyed Mik-api and released the wolverine. From there on, he acquired the power of the wolverine called as Skunk Bear. The protagonist was aware of the connection between people, the environment, animals, and the universe which was bestowed

to him by his ancestors. Thus, unlike other protagonists in some of the Native American fictions who mourn the distance that they established with nature, White Man's Dog was fully in the presence of nature.

Notwithstanding the difference earlier pointed out, Freud's interpretation of dream as a form of repressed wishes or desire fulfillment is evident in the novel. This desire becomes a part of the unconscious and in dreams it comes forth. Welch shows the dream reality through the connecting dreams of White Man's Dog and Kills-close-to-the-lake which took place in reality. During the Sun Dance ceremony, White Man's Dog purged himself of the desires that he has for his father's wife Kills-close-to-the-lake. That night he dreamt of a river that he had never seen before. He saw the wolverine caught up in a trap and released him; the animal gave him a white stone and taught him a war song. After a while, he saw Kills-close-to-the-lake who came to the river and took a bathe. White Man's Dog desired her and slept with her. The repressed desire of White Man's Dog for his father's wife was fulfilled in his dream, which in the world of reality was governed by his morality not to commit adultery. Kills-close-to-the-lake also cleansed herself of her lust for White Man's Dog. She had a dream in which an animal with long claws and sharp teeth ravished her and when he had finished, he bite off a finger from her. Then the animal warned her that this bite will remind her of her wickedness. Her severed finger turned into a stone and she gave it to White Man's Dog. Kills-close-to-the-lake wept for her shame and after that she had felt lighter. White Man's Dog had realized that the wolverine had cleansed both him and Kills-close-to-the-lake through their dreams. From this incident, Nora Barry concludes that dream contained truth and "morally cleanses" the dreamer and bestowed power to the tested worthy ("Myth" 12). Thus, everyday reality and dream reality are connected to one another.

The spiritual dimension is fluid and humans can visit the mythical creatures and spirits in their realm. Bak argues that Fools Crow is an "amphibious" character who can move freely between the real world and the mythical world (43). He lived in the physical realm and he journeyed to the mythical realm at the bidding of Nitsokan, the dream helper, and it made him wiser. This is also referred to as the vision quest of the hero. The only difference between dream and vision is that the former is acquired in sleep while the latter is perceived during the waking moments. Fools Crow visit the Feather Woman, who is the wife of the Morning Star and mother of Star Boy. There, he had foreseen different visions in the yellow skin concerning the future of his people. The visit to Feather Woman is described by Welch as the Blackfeet "sense of reality" (Bevis). The first vision pertains to the spread of

small pox within the Pikuni camps, with many dead bodies and more stacked in the platform. The second is the coming of seizers in their land. The third vision was an empty land with no animals. This is another horrendous deed of the Napikwans who were killing the animals continuously. The fourth is the vision of the Indian children attending school and were surrounded by twisted wire and pointed barbs. These visions saddened Fools Crow because he could not prevent them. However, Feather Woman advises him to prepare his people for the times to come. He was grieving for their children because they will adopt the culture of the Napikwans and forget their own culture and identity. Feather Woman comforted him that the stories will not be lost and from them they will continue the culture and belief of their ancestors. Steven Otfinoski has commented that history in *Fools Crow* is driven by “a divine plan” because the mythical figure, Feather Woman, will help her people that is, the Blackfeet through Fools Crow to be prepared for the future (50). The Pikunis were severely affected by the white scabs disease and the killing of its people by the seizers, however, they persisted and they survived. This optimism is seen through them emerging from winter to spring, the birth of Fools Crow’s son, and Fools Crow taking the role of many-faces-man and the people preparing for the Thunder Pipe ceremony.

Mik-api’s story of becoming the many-faces-man has surreal elements. Mik-api earlier called as Spotted Weasel was hunting in the mountains and he was drawn towards another direction by a wailing sound. In the bush, he found Head Carrier being shot by the Snakes. Head Carrier resented Mik-api’s help and asked him to let him die like a warrior. However, Mik-api began to weep profusely in his helplessness and the green-singers or frogs began to sing to cheer him up. Mik-api shared his grief with them and the biggest frog sympathises but he said that humans were cruel as they kill the green-singers for no reason. He pleaded the green singers to help him and vowed that the Pikunis will never harm their little brothers. With this, the underwater people gave Mik-api a medicine which restored Heavy Carrier’s life. Mik-api’s story is an example of the close proximity and interdependence between the natural and the supernatural powers. Men always seek the help of spirits or deities to solve their problems and crisis. Old Man or Napi sometimes played the role of a trickster and he can also be a hero, a healer, and a villain. Mik-api performed the role of the Old Man in *Fools Crow*. He guided Fools Crow to become an accomplished person among the Pikunis and helped him in getting closer and more knowledgeable about the supernatural world and its powers. Animals with supernatural powers and abilities were part of the narrative, they were part of the mythology and belief system of the Blackfeet

Indians. Raven possessed supernatural power in the story. He can also speak the language of two-leggeds, that is, human beings. He looked over the land of the Pikunis, watched the animals, and reported the unlawful acts of the Napikwans. Fools Crow became a powerful warrior because of his closeness with supernatural beings. He obeyed their biddings and he turned to be successful with their help. One of them is the wolverine, his animal helper, who gave him a war song and strengthens him in the battles.

The Pikunis referred to the place of the afterlife as the Sand Hills. Many of the characters in the novel desired to meet the “long-ago” people in the face of dangers, singing their death songs. Deloria writes of how the song acted as a “benedictory statement” of the individual and summarizes and concludes the time of his existence, as opposed to a feverish preparation for death. It glorified the personal virtue of a person and the song also individualized his tribal membership (*God* 178). One of the most important aspects of Indian tribal religion is that they depicted people besides warriors who were unafraid of death. Death fulfills the destiny of the tribal people because they believe that as their bodies turn into dust, they once again contributed to the ongoing life cycle of creation (183). In the Crow’s raid, Yellow Kidney was captured and mutilated by the Crows and was sent back home in that condition. He had no strength and he wanted to die; he called upon the long-go people to take him in, but the Old Man, the one who created him would not release him. Yellow Kidney had experienced many trials and difficulties because he had broken one of the simplest decencies by which people live. In fornicating with the dying girl he had taken her honour and her opportunity to die virtuously (Welch, *Fools Crow* 81). Thus, the Old Man made him to suffer near-death experiences in different forms to teach him of his transgressions.

Fools Crow has made his physical journey through linear time, but in his vision quest he was led to a mythical place and time where the past and the present move simultaneously. Kathleen Mullen Sands is of the opinion that this is simply “realism” of a tribal nature in which reality is composed of mythic forces and figures of the Blackfeet tribe, as opposed to what some critics would term it as magical realism (“Closing the Distance” 84). The ceremonies of the Pikunis have powerful meanings and resulted in benefitting the whole community. One such ceremony is the Sun Dance ceremony which was held in high esteem by the Pikunis. The Pikunis venerated the Sun Chief in the Sun Dance ceremony for the blessings a person receive and also to atone one’s sins. In the novel, Fools Crow has participated in the ceremony. The Indian men usually pierced their breasts with claws and circled the Medicine Pole. The suffering and pain that they endured resulted in renewal and

joy. The overall importance of the Sun Dance was the renewal of a person's spirituality and it also signifies the kinship between the social and natural realms.

The Sun Dance is concerned with So-at-sa-ki or Feather Woman, her husband Morning Star, her father-in-law Sun Chief, and her mother-in-law Night Red Light. Feather Woman was banished to earth after she dug out the forbidden sacred turnip. She and Morning Star had a son named Star Boy. When Star Boy grew up, a scar appeared in his face and his friends taunted him as Poia, Scar Face. He made a difficult journey to Sun Chief for healing purpose. Sun Chief did not accept him, but on the other hand, he and Morning Star grew closer and the latter told him many things about Sun and Moon without knowing that Star Boy was his own son. In a hunt, Star Boy helped Morning Star from the hands of seven large birds who had tried to kill him. When Morning Star recounted the story to Sun Chief, Sun Chief removed the scar from Star Boy's face. He also instructed him and his people to honour him every summer and he would heal their ailments and nurture their foods. This is the origin of the Sun Dance ceremony. Ambush Chief prayed to the "Great Sun" for healing and abundance for his people recounting what he had done for Poia. The people communicate with the supernatural beings for themselves, for the earth, and other things. The acknowledgement towards several gods is common among the Pikunis. The poetry of the Native Americans offered gratitude to the Great Spirit, the Mother Earth, and to various other creatures. Their worldview included physical and spiritual forces, thus, Kenny states that the acknowledgment towards the spirits is a requisite of the Indians (13). Thus, ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, is performed to appease the Sun and acknowledge his blessings. The spiritual world, its powers, and spirits helped the tribal people in executing important task, bestow them with blessings, heal their ailments, providing guidance and so on. Thus, the tribal world alone is unable to sustain itself without the supernatural world and its powers.

5.2.3 History of Survival

The Indians occupied the central place in Welch's writings. Further, Welch describes his writing of *Fools Crow* as writing from the "inside-out" as opposed to the historical novelists who write from the "outside looking in" (qtd. in McFarland 5). In *Fools Crow*, Welch places the Blackfeet Indians at the centre and the Euro-Americans as the "others" (Coulombe 98). The Blackfeet Indians were reclaiming the authority over their culture and land which were unlawfully seized by the colonizers. *Fools Crow* has presented a more balanced and critical perspective of history than the Euro-centric descriptions of the Indians

as barbaric, savages, stoic, bloodthirsty, villainous and so on. The novel is a counter-narrative attempt and is against the selective remembering of some events as done by the Euro-Americans. It makes use of oral tradition and this is justified by Holm who says that the Native American oral tradition is not fictitious but it is an “alternative” form to the dominant narrative of history (qtd. in Bartulović). The history of the Native Americans were derived from the writings of the non-natives, thus, it is subjected to distortions, misconceptions, biases, and ignorances that signify the history written from external cultural perspective. In addition, Native American history shares the problem of history in general. British historian Christopher Hill stated this problem that history is rewritten by every generation because the reason pertains in every generation asking different questions about it. For this, historical writing reveals much about the historians and their time than the main subject (qtd. in Washburn and Trigger). Native Americans need to take control of their own narrative and narrated their history and culture from their tribal cultural perspective and deconstruct the false representations made by historians and colonialists.

Loewen argued that many of the texts written by non-native writers failed to give an account of the contact zone experience from the Native side (107). The contact between the two created the perception of each other, one as dominant and the other as subordinate. The Native people continue to live in a condition of “late imperial” as termed by Thoma Biolsi and Larry Zimmerman. Chief John Marshall called their position as “domestic dependent nations” (qtd. in Krupat and Elliott 127). To overcome these assumptions and terms, Native people first and foremost resist the limitations set by colonial power. *Fools Crow* brings out the resistance of the Blackfeet nation against the Euro-American conquest. The contact between the Euro-Americans and the Native Americans caused irreparable damage, as it resulted in exploitation of nature, land, animals, forced removal, pandemic, genocide and so on. This happened because of the inequality in power and forces between the two. The policies of colonialism and imperialism are the major forces in the encounter between the Natives and the non-natives. The Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians were capable of withstanding the cultural forces of the Napikwans and established themselves as repository of cultural knowledge and identity.

The history of colonialism in the land of the native people is replete with war, killings, molestations, and conflicts. The Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians were no exception to these problems. One of the biggest problems faced by the Pikunis is the presence of the Napikwans in their territory. Different tribes of the Pikunis were not united because some

wanted to use force like, Mountain Chief, who is supported by Owl Child and his gang, while the Lone Eaters and Heavy Runner's Band resorted to peace because they were matchless for the Napikwans. The first mention of the Napikwans in the novel is pronounced by Yellow Kidney when he and some other youths went to raid the Crows. The big chiefs of the Napikwans hated and feared the Pikunis and wished to exterminate them from their own land. The Pikunis had already signed much of their territories to the Napikwans. In return they received different gifts from the Napikwans. The beginning of their trade seems quite harmless and friendly. The Native societies of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were shaped by trade. The land is home and they would protect it at all cost. The Blackfeet Indians were persistent to defend their land, their home from people who have no sense of value or respect as they do for their land.

The Pikunis do not defend the criminal or the culprit even if the man belonged to the same tribe or clan. An example of this is seen in their aversion towards Owl Child for instigating hatred between the Napikwans and the Pikunis. The people longed for peace and shun the behavior of Owl Child who used to rob the Napikwans, killed them, and brings trouble to the lodges. The Pikunis wanted peace but it was never achievable because of the ulterior motives of the Napikwans. An example is the relation between the Black Patched Moccasins and the Napikwans. The beginning was successful and both sides treated each other with loyalty. The Black Patched Moccasins has huge respect for the Napikwans and thinks highly of them. Little Dog from the Black Patched Moccasins even believed that the Napikwans possessed greater medicine than the Pikunis, for they came from the place where the Sun Chief rises to begin his journey. The white chiefs showed them new tricks of cultivation by scratching the breast of Mother Earth. They taught the people to quit hunting blackhorns and encouraged them to plant seeds. Little Dog and some other people had moved to the settlement of the Pile-of-rocks River and cultivate but it was unsuccessful and the whitehorns that they herded were tasteless. This was a failed imitation and they came back to their own place and followed their traditional lifestyle. Little Dog continue to appease the Napikwans by bringing back their stolen horses and appeal his people not to kill the Napikwans. This earned him hatred among his people and he was killed by his own people.

Unlike the stereotypical portrayal of women by the Euro-American authors, Welch gave an honest account of the Blackfeet women. The Blackfeet women were known for contributing to domestic work, playing economic roles, and working for social and cultural preservations. Shoemaker pointed out that Indian women were known not only for

reproducing the traditional methods but also for their ability to adopt new methods (qtd. in Bartulović). The women characters in *Fools Crow* were wise and traditional women with deep cultural mindsets. Heavy Shield Woman, the wife of Yellow Kidney, vowed to be the Sacred Vow Woman during the Sun Dance ceremony. It was a heavy task and if it is executed properly it will bring blessings to all of them but, if not, it will have its own consequences. The people from different lodges and camps approved Heavy Shield Woman to be the Sacred Vow Woman because she is a remarkable and virtuous woman. Heavy Shield Woman fasted and sacrificed a lot to fulfill the vow. She had endured grief and loneliness in the absence of her husband, and she continued to suffer silently even after his return because Yellow Kidney had lost interest in his family. Red Paint is another virtuous character who dedicated herself for the welfare of her family. When her father could no longer hunt for them, she invested herself in beadwork to exchange for other goods.

Even though men are considered as the head of the family, the women, especially, the first wife, also known as sits-besides-wife, have great influence over her husband. The sits-besides-wife of Rides-at-the-door, that is, Double Strike Woman, plans the marriage of her son, White Man's Dog, without the consent of her husband. She also persuaded her husband to take another wife as she needs another helper at home. Her husband took her sister, Striped Face, as his second wife. The first wife has considerable authority over the other wives and she takes the responsibility in supervising the other wives to do their duty and look after the comfort of their husband. She sits at the right side of her husband in the lodge and is allowed in informal gatherings to smoke with the gatherers and join their conversation.

For women who brought disgrace to their family by adultery were punished according to the law. Kills-close-to-the-lake was treated with mercy when she committed adultery with her husband's son, that is, her step-son. She was given the freedom to go back to her father and ceased being the wife of Rides-at-the-door. There are other women who dishonored their husbands and they were killed by their husbands or their relatives. The Hard Topnots women noses were cut off for their infidelity. Grinnell says that a Blackfeet man can take as many wives as he can, however, they depended a lot on how he treats his first wife. Other elder men who saw the man as a good husband proposed to the man for their daughters. The man sent horses to his new father-in-law's lodge and the girl goes to the man's house with her belongings (95). Leah Sneider in the paper "Indigenous Feminisms" opined that indigenous feminism is as old as Native women because as long as Native women live, there exist some

forms of indigenous feminisms (ch.8). Indigenous women worked for the welfare of their community and it cannot be separated from them.

Cheyfitz notes why the different treaties signed between the Native Americans and the Napikwans had failed to protect the interest of the Native Americans. One of the problems is the use of English language and its vocabularies, for example, “property” (9). One distinct feature of a war agreement is to cease war between the Natives and the whites and the inter-war within the tribes. Fox Eyes, the head war chief reminiscence the treaty signed between the Napikwans and the chiefs of the Indian at the camp of the Small Robes. Both parties violated it because the Pikunis cannot remain silent when the Napikwans continue to insult them and also dishonoured the treaty and they proved to be “two-faced” (Welch, *Fools Crow* 138). The Pikunis love their people and they retaliate against their enemies who threaten their lives. However, their retaliations are carried out with rationality and wisdom. For example, in the Pikunis retaliation against the Crows for the mutilation of their member, Yellow Kidney, Fox Eyes called out the people to assess their motive carefully. He enlightened the young people who were going to war for the first time that they should follow the counsels of their chiefs. For those people who were seeking glory for themselves, they must not go in the raid because there is no profit in it. They were principled people who were committed to their tribe and there is no place for individual vainglory.

Many critics have expressed how Welch aimed to give a realistic picture of the Natives and the non-natives. That Welch transcends beyond the narrow understanding of race by portraying the true characteristics of the Native and the non-natives. The first picture of the Pikunis that Welch’s gives is describing them as human beings without romanticizing them (Shanley, “James Welch” 235). The Napikwans generalize the Indians when they made the whole community accountable for a person or few law breakers. Captain Snelling and his war chief, John Gates, visited the lodges of the Lone Eaters with Joe Kipp, a mixed blood. In the words of Heavy Shield Woman, Kipp is a wolf for the seizers. Mixed marriages have taken place between the Indians and the whites. Their offsprings acted as mediator between the two cultures, however, they were resented by the Indians as many of them were unfaithful to the Indians. The purpose of Captain Snelling and John Gates visit was to talk with the leaders of the Lone Eaters about the recent killing of Malcolm Clark. Also known as Four Bears, Malcolm Clark, the husband of Cutting-off-Head Woman, was murdered by Owl Child, Bear Chief, and Black Weasel. They wanted the location of Owl Child and his gang so that they can be tried in the white court. The Pikunis had nothing to do with the bad blood,

they do not support Owl Child neither sympathizes with Four Bears because he was a betrayer of the Pikunis. Three Bears told Joe Kipp to convey his people's message to the seizer chief that the Lone Eaters were peaceful people who attended to their own affairs and wish to be left alone.

The attitude of the Pikunis towards the seizers was such that they do not wish to interfere or meddle between the whites and the problematic youths of the Indians. In the face of aggression from the Napikwans, the Pikunis faced disagreements among themselves as to what should be their response. They could have made war against the Napikwans but the wise chiefs saw no good in it as they were no match for the Napikwans and they care more about the future of their children. The contact or encounter between the two is best described as the meeting of two unequal powers and opposite worldviews. Three Bears articulated that they will not become like the "whitehorns" that the white people herded from one place to another. Native people were divided among themselves to the acculturation and accommodation of the western power. Townsend notes that even if they try to assimilate, the basis of their cultures are retained like the family structure, traditional values, and their beliefs (59). In *Fools Crow*, Three Bears emphasized on the need to follow the lifestyle of their forefathers for survival to the young people who were intoxicated with alcohol, and girls who were marrying the Napikwans.

The Pikunis were wrongly portrayed by the Napikwans. They were looked down as savages, stoic, and bloodthirsty people. Welch has contradicted these assumptions and he portrayed the Pikunis as fun loving and humorous people. Lois M. Welch, the wife of James Welch, has commented that in the Indian society, humour is essential because it serves as a "survival tool" in the face of "ancient" and "continuing adversity" (19). In the gatherings, warriors and youths tease each other about their adventures, honors, and encounters. White Man's Dog experienced the hugs and the mocking praises after the successful Crow's raid. Before this, Fast Horse used to mock the pitiful state of White Man's Dog because he does not have any accomplishment. The people's conversations were filled with humour. White Man's Dog requested Mik-api to speak to Red Paint's parents for marriage. Mik-api stopped him amicably because he has no distinctive quality about him which would appeal Red Paint to marry him. The response of Double Strike Woman, the mother of White Man's Dog, was equally humorous. She believes that people will mock his son if he marries Red Paint because he has to marry Yellow Kidney as well. That would be like marrying the whole family.

Even in the gatherings, when the men discussed serious issues they ended their meetings in a good humour with jokes and teasings. Teasing played a greater role in the traditional life of the Indians. It controls the social situations of the people's lives. The method does not publicly embarrass its members but it is use to tease members that are out of step with the consensus of tribal opinion. By this, the ego of a person is curbed and disputes within the tribe were held at minimum. Deloria articulates that men would control from praising themselves and they portray respect for their tribe by respecting its decrees (*Custer* 147). This helped in earning respect from the society and trust among the people. Fools Crow's story of taking the Napikwans cap that he had killed in the Backbone instead of his hair amused the gatherers when he placed the cap atop of his head.

The inconsiderateness of the Napikwans is condemned by Welch in *Fools Crow*. Some of the Napikwans looked at the Indians with hatred and for no definite reason. A white rider was disturbed by the murder of Frank Standley by some Indians who had also molested his wife. He was also recollecting the murder of Charles Ransom, a rancher, about a year ago. These incidents gave him dreadful thoughts and he wanted to kill an "Indian" (244). The white rider shot Yellow Kidney in the war lodge when the latter was making plans to return back to his wife and children. General Alfred H. Sully, the man who is in charge of Indian policy, is a total contrast to some of the narrow minded whites. He was called as an Indian lover for his moderate stance between the Indians and the whites. Under him, Heavy Runner and some other chiefs signed a treaty. General Sully authenticated the document dated 1 January 1870, that the chiefs had cooperated to the demands of the whites pertaining to the arrest of Owl Child and the return of the Napikwan horses that were stolen by the Pikunis.

The 19th century small pox epidemic in Europe hits the Blackfeet Indians. The smallpox was common in Europe from 1660-1880. This disease does not originate from their lodges but it was transported to their lodges by the white men. In 1837, some 6,000 Blackfeet Indians died due to the smallpox which was contracted from European passengers on a steam boat (Nozedar). Known to the Pikunis as the white scabs disease, it was the most effective weapon brought by the white settlers. Welch and Stekler note that the disease was more deadly than destruction brought by rifles, swords, artillery, and battles. At times, it was deliberately used by the whites as weapon against the Indians (33). The Columbian exchange refers to the exchange of diseases, ideas, food, crops, and populations, between the old world and the new world (Nunn and Qian 163). Deadly diseases like smallpox, chicken pox, malaria, and measles were transported to the new world. Since the Native populations had not

suffered from these diseases before their contact with the white world, their immune systems were weak to combat against the diseases (165). The viral and bacterial diseases brought by the process of colonialism reduced the indigenous populations and they are act of genocides. The popular belief of the “survival of the fittest,” a term originates from Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859) is applied to the indigenous world by which they were generalized as vulnerable to the diseases and would soon die out.

The lodges of the Pikunis were afflicted by small pox and they were growing helpless as their medicines and rituals were not good enough to heal the afflicted. A Napikwan named Sturgis, who was married to Blue Grass Woman from the Black Patched Moccasins visited the Lone Eaters with Pretty-on-top. His wife had died from the white scabs and since then he had been visiting the Pikunis lodges to enlighten them of the disease and treating the sick. He suspects the white scabs to have come from Many Houses, the abode of the Napikwans. However, the Napikwans were able to survive because of the medicine that they used. The white scabs spread rapidly to the camps of the Lone Eaters. Fools Crow took the families that were not touched by the sickness to the sweat lodge and performed rituals for them. He understood that their ceremonies were futile because by the end of the ceremony, twenty others would contract the disease. With the passage of time, the white scabs began to subside. The sickness has made people to isolate themselves from one another and children who played with other children that were affected by the bad spirit were called and scolded at home. However, the people realized their mistake when they saw an old woman, the sole survivor of her lodge, who out of grief had dug the frozen ground with her bloody hand. She made the people to realize the extent of their loss.

The historical events are “rememoried” as Toni Morrison would say in the *Beloved*. In the midst of the deadly disease, white scabs, which took many lives of the Pikunis, Heavy Runner’s band of the Pikunis were killed and injured by the seizers. This is the historical Marias River Massacre of 1870 which was triggered by the murder of Malcolm Clark. The US cavalry killed one hundred seventy three unarmed Blackfeet Indians on January 23, 1870. Welch deconstructs the Euro-American historical version of the Marias River Massacre. The treaty that was earlier signed between Heavy Runner and Alfred Sully was violated when the Napikwans killed the innocent Blackfeet band on their own volition. On January 23, 1870 under the leadership of Colonel Baker, the soldiers attacked the Heavy Runner’s band. Colonel Baker’s report was issued after two months and he claimed that he did not know that the camp had belonged to the friendly Heavy Runner’s band. This act of cruelty was

condemned by citizens and legislators alike. Congressman Daniel Vorhees condemned the inhuman act that the massacre cannot be justified before human civilization and neither God nor man. Military apologists like Job Stevenson supported the warfare and retorted that the Indians were savages who should be defeated only by the methods of warfare (qtd. in Welch and Stekler 35). These views gave a two sided view of the Indians and their sufferings from the hands of their perpetrators. Historical atrocities were repeated by the Euro-Americans. The Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 happened because of the false fear of the U.S Army that Indians living in the reservation were preparing to go to war for their losses of land, properties, and losing lives to poverty, disease, and warfare. Allen pointed out that the enduring nature of the Indians in terrible situations and their survivals are a “testament” of their will to survive in the sense of duration and longevity (*Sacred Hoop: Recovering*). *Fools Crow* echoed celebrations of life at different periods but most importantly survivance through the atrocities, injustices, epidemics, ecocides and other afflictions.

5.2.4 The Unique Life of the Pikunis

Fools Crow gives a closest view of the traditional Blackfeet Pikunis way of life. Welch writes in his own intimate style about the existence, habit, beliefs, bent of mind and character. The Pikuni society is marked by various cultural and traditional practices. Welch notes these details in the novel. For instance, Native language, ritual of smoking, the relation of all living beings, death songs, taboos, good medicine, marriage, honor and so on. Moreover their belief or religion is part and parcel of their daily life. The unique life of the Pikunis will be studied below.

One of the first distinctions in reading the novel *Fools Crow* is the use of language. McFarland notes that the use of language is in the translated form, the linguistic term for the process is “calque” or “loan translation” that is “close to the bone” (111). For example, buffalo is called “blackhorn” because the horns are black. The calques of Welch like “sits-beside-him-wife,” “many-shots-guns,” and “white-scabs-disease” are borrowed from the work of James Willard Schultz who lived with the Pikunis in the 1880’s. McFarland also refers to Gish that Welch uses this linguistic style to reproduce the world of the Lone-Eaters (113). Welch has used a near translation of the English language. The characters’ names are unique. Some of them are White Man’s Dog, Rides-at-the door, Three Bears, Boss Ribs, Running Fisher, Yellow Kidney, Heavy Runner, Kills-close-to-the-Lake, Red Paint, and Heavy Shield Woman. Welch derived his characters’ names from George Bird Grinnell’s

Blackfoot Lodge Tales, historical books, and other sources. The use of Grinnell's word "the doctor" is named "*I-so-kin'-uh-kin*" and the nearest translation of the English word is "heavy-singer-for-the sick" (Owens 159). Welch's language de-centers the non-native readers. John G. Neihardt, the author of *Black Elk Speaks*, articulates his task of translating Black Elk's speeches into English that it was not about the translating of facts but it was to recreate in English the "mood" and "manner" of Elk's narrative (Preface). This is what writers like James Welch does in translating the culture, traditions, and ceremonies of the Indians into English. Welch uses parenthetical translations in his novel, that is, first he named an unfamiliar name, place, thing, or object and then describing it through indirect reference. In the novel, many moons stands for many months, sleeps stands for nights, Red Night Paint stands for moon, Seven Persons stands for constellation, seizers for U.S soldiers, Napikwans for white settlers, skunk bear stands for wolverine, green-singers stands for frogs, and so on.

Besides the seizing of land comes the renaming of lands by the white settlers. Native children were introduced to the new names in schools and maps and they disremembered the indigenous names. Smith argued that this created a distance and a disconnection of the land with the songs and chants that are used by the indigenous people to trace their histories and in performing ceremonies (51). The Indians suffered from various kinds of losses. They are loss of language, loss of land, loss of ceremony, culture loss, loss of the young to boarding schools, loss of their men to suicide, alcohol and drugs, and loss of their names and ancestors (Krupat, *That the People* 7). Places were renamed into English and the younger generations failed to recognize the names in their native language. On visiting Pueblo Indian students, Simon Ortiz asked them about where Deetseyamah is and no one answered. Then Ortiz asked who Mc Cartys is and the students answered him. The point is Deetseyamah is the native word for Mc Cartys. In his vision, Fools Crow saw the Pikuni children in boarding schools enclosed in a new environment. The system of education differed greatly among the Native Americans and the whites. While the basis of Indian education system lies in experiencing it, the western insists upon knowledge and is enclosed in an environment.

The Pikunis looked for symbols and signs in raids and hunting. There are certain meanings associated with them. Yellow Kidney and some youths of the Lone Eaters journeyed nights and days to raid the Crows. Towards the Bear River, they scared a kit fox and Yellow Kidney considered it as a good sign because fox is believe to bestow men with cunningness. It was also believed that those people who were visited by fox in their dreams turned into strong leaders. Later that day, the rider party saw a pair of golden eagles and

Yellow Kidney was elated to see them because they would give him the vision of long distance. The mention of the word “medicine” is prominent in the novel. It connotes power and luck crucial for men. Menfolk especially warriors used the term more than others. At the beginning of the novel, White Man’s Dog pitied his own life because he was a failure in every characteristic of a man. He prayed to the Above Ones for a stronger medicine, however it was futile. On the other hand, Fast Horse, his friend, took pride in himself that Yellow Kidney has agreed to let him join the raid because he has a strong medicine. Yellow Kidney too has a good war medicine and it also comes from the two eagle feathers that he wore in his hair. He has confidence in his medicine and he believes that he is capable of leading the young youths in the Crows raid. Eagle Ribs, one of the young warriors from the Lone Eaters, was assigned by Yellow Kidney to travel to the land of the Crows by day. The task was dangerous, however, Yellow Kidney has faith in Eagle Ribs because he possesses a good medicine.

Historically, the horse is an important animal among the Pikunis. The horse was introduced to the American continent by the Spaniards in 1540. Before this introduction, dog was considered as one of the most important animals among the Blackfeet Indians. The horse became useful in hunting, hauling, and in the mobility of the tribe. The greater possessions of horses for men also indicate more wives and more tanned buffalo skins for trading (Lupton 19). The adoption of the horse for the purpose of war, hunting, and transportation rapidly spread among the Plains people. Warfare and revenge parties in the form of horse raids became popular in the eighteenth century. This has helped in abandoning the bigger forms of battles and smaller forms of raids were popularized. Hunting became more accessible with the ownership of horses. Families that owned many and best buffalo-hunting horses and warhorses formed a higher status in the society. Fowler notes that the Blackfeet and the Kiowa tribes had named social categories for “horse-wealthy elites” and “nonelites” (10). When Yellow Kidney leaded some young men like, Fast Horse, White Man’s Dog, Eagle Ribs, Medicine Stab and others in the Crows horse raiding, Yellow Kidney instructed White Man’s Dog to steal the fine and strong horses. The owning of horses determine the status and power of a person. Owl Child, his gangs, and Fast Horse stole the horses of the Napikwans and traded them in Canada. This created trouble among the Napikwans and the Pikunis. The blackhorn is another important animal of the Pikunis. They prized the robes of the animal and it is also one of the main nourishments of the Pikunis. The Blackfeet were known as a race of meat-eaters. Among the animals, the buffalo remained as the most important animal because

in addition to providing food, clothing, and shelter, they lived in comfort as long as there is an abundance of buffaloes. In *Fools Crow*, in the midst of white scabs disease some of the band members went to hunt for the survivors because the Pikuni people do not live without meat. However, they valued the animals and make efforts to preserve them unlike the Napikwans who destroyed the animals and their habitats.

Death songs are sung in the face of death mostly by warriors. The song strengthens the warriors' spirits in the hands of the enemies. Examples of death songs are heard from Head Carrier, Yellow Kidney, and Fools Crow. The reference to evil spirit or bad spirit is seen in the narrative. The Napikwan who was killing the animals in the Backbone was considered as an evil. He must be killed otherwise animals will go extinct. White Man's Dog dream of white-faced girls continued to disturb him after the Crows raid. He told his dream to Mik-api and the many-faces-man performed a ceremony for him by singing purifying songs, applying medicine to his body, and striking him with the wing of eagle. This ritual had driven away the bad spirit from his body. On the other hand, Fast Horse was driven away from his family and his people after the Crows raid. He became a different person. When he was shot by the Napikwans, Mik-api performed healing ceremonies for him and had driven away the evil spirit from his body. However, his sickness was more than body sickness and for his healing it needs the cooperation of Fast Horse, which he denied and he isolated himself more from his band. The natural state of existence depends on wholeness. In Fast Horse's case, he was suffering because he committed a grave mistake in the Crows' lodge, however, he failed to admit it and continued to suffer from it.

Smoking is practiced with traditional honour among the Pikunis. The Native Americans considered tobacco as a sacred herb and is smoked as a ritual act intended to show respect to the Great Spirit and for healing and protection. Traditionally it was used as a medicine, however, it came to be abused by the white settlers (Nozedar). Black Elk explains that the four ribbons hanging in the stem of the pipe indicates the four quarters of the universe. The black one for the west, that is, the thunder beings which send rain; the white one for the north from which comes the great wind; the red one for the east that brings spring and from which the morning star resided and gives men wisdom; the yellow stands for the south that brings summer and gives power for growth. These four spirits are unified as one (Neihardt ch. 1). The traditional form of smoking is equalized with the civilized oath. In many Indian tribes, smoking is considered as a sacred ceremony (Grinnell 81). If a respected person like a chief, or a leader calls you to smoke with him, it suggests his acceptance of you

or you are welcome to his lodge. Mad Plume, the chief of the Black Patched Moccasins, welcomed White Man's Dog to his lodge and he expresses his wish to smoke with him. In another situation, Captain Snelling met the chiefs of the Lone Eaters and demanded Owl Child who had killed Malcolm Clark. Three Bears could not understand his reaction because Captain Snelling had smoked with them and threatened them at the same time.

When a man is put to test by his fellow men, others breathe in and out with him in a kind of relief when he smokes. Pretty-on-top came with Sturgis in the lodges of the Lone Eaters and when he smoked with Three Bears, others held their breath too long and they perceived that they can no longer trust Pretty-on-top. The truth of a person's story or narrative is tested by the act of smoking. Grinnell writes that the pipe is painted by the medicine man who prays over it. It will be handed to the man and if he is telling the truth, he will have a long life but if not he will have a short life (81). By this method, a person's honesty is tested by his folks. The traditions of the Native Americans are earth and wilderness centered. They are animistic and polytheistic societies which are based on sacred and nonpolitical power. These views are understood by the white settlers as profane.



Fig. 8. Karl Moon, "Legends of the Long Ago (A Native American holds what appears to be a calamut, which is better known as a Peace Pipe)."

Among the Pikunis, the relationship between a son-in-law and a mother-in-law is governed by specific rules. This is illustrated through the life of Fools Crow and his mother-in-law, Heavy Shield Woman. After the Sun Dance ceremony, White Man's Dog saw her mother-in-law washing her face and arms in a small creek, thus, he retreated to another path.

He avoided Heavy Shield Woman as she became his mother-in-law and according to custom he must not look at his mother-in-law's face again. When Fools Crow came in the presence of his wife and his mother-in-law, he addressed his wife and avoided his mother-in-law. At another time, when One Spot was attacked by a wolverine, they violated the taboo by looking into each other's eyes in their helpless situation. Grinnell says that according to the Blackfeet custom, it was considered as a "gross breach of propriety" for a man to meet his mother-in-law (84). The mother-in-law was equally cautious to meet or speak to her son-in-law. For this reason, the mothers-in-law of the Navajo Indians wore small bells in their ears so that their sons-in-law would be warned of their arrival (Nozedar). Fools Crow has carefully observed this custom in the novel.

In a patriarchal Pikuni society, honour is everything that mattered to a man. It is earned with his achievements, from his wives, and from his children. Rides-at-the-door, the war chief of the Lone Eaters, is a man of honour. People looked up to him because of his rational mindedness. He played an influential role between the Pikunis and the Napikwans. By his wisdom, he was able to calm the anger and frustration of the Pikuni warriors who were ready to wage war against the Napikwans. He puts the welfare of their children first and resorted to the path of peace. He has been a good father to his sons, White Man's Dog and Running Fisher; White Man's Dog, in turn, had brought honour to him by his deeds in the war. This honour is so important to him and he will do anything to expel the things that will try to bring dishonor to him and his lodge. One of the most difficult things that he did was expelling his son Running Fisher and his third wife Kills-close-to-the-lake for their adultery. It was a hard thing for Rides-at-the-door but unless he does something, the affair will bring dishonor to his lodge. He was ready to sacrifice his body despite being old at the Medicine Pole, if his son has said otherwise. But the confession of Running Fisher really pained him.

As a man of wisdom, Rides-at-the-door asked forgiveness from his third wife for neglecting her and for treating her badly. On his part, he did not forgive her for betraying him and his family. Forgiving her would be another dishonor because she had fornicated with her step-son. Being a respectable man enjoying high status in the society, it was beyond his power to forgive her. He gave her the freedom to live with her father by allowing her to take her riding horse and three other horses as a gift to her father from him. As the society follows polygamous marriage where a man can have many wives, the men in *Fools Crow* practiced this form of marriage. Rides-at-the-door has three wives, similarly Three Bears and Boss Ribs have three wives each. Men took pride in having many wives. Boss Ribs, the owner of

Beaver medicine, was a venerated man in the society because of being the owner of one of the most important medicine bundles of the Pikunis. His son unlike his father was boastful and proud, however, people honoured him for the sake of his father. The respect and honour that people has for Boss Ribs saved Fast Horse from the hands of the angry Pikunis who wanted to kill him, because his mistake had led to the capture and mutilation of Yellow Kidney by the Crows. For the sake of Boss Ribs, some people were ready to forgive Fast Horse and call him back to the Lone Eaters. Thus, honour can save a person from a dangerous situation and men would do anything to dispel the things that would try to rob their honour.

5.2.5 Conclusion

Fools Crow gives a detail portrayal about the Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians. The novel gives a close view of the traditional and cultural lifestyle of the Pikunis. Centered on White Man's Dog who later became Fools Crow, it talks about the humility, and the sacrifices made by the leader for his people. Unlike the western hero, Fools Crow has his weaknesses but he admitted them and move on with life. Fools Crow has lived his life through the Blackfeet Indian values and it gained him a slow but steady reputation in his society for his trustworthiness, reliability, and humility. As his fame was expanding, his responsibility towards his community also expanded. He helped his people in their bad times and situations, igniting hope in their life. Fools Crow acquired cultural and traditional knowledge from Mik-api, Boss Ribs, his father, and the Feather Woman. They helped him to a growth of wholeness, both personally and culturally. The worldview of the Pikunis made no distinction between the supernatural and the real. They shared a close relation with the supernatural world and supernatural beings. Their dreams and visions guided their life decisions and their community. They take the help of the supernatural beings for their life problems and they also obeyed their biddings for blessings and success in life. Some of the characters in *Fools Crow* became successful for obeying their dreams, whereas, some isolated themselves from their band due to their disobedience to the supernatural beings. The spiritual dimension is fluid, thus, it is possible for men to pursue their quest in their realm. Fools Crow visits to its realm brought knowledge and wisdom to his people. The ceremonies that the Pikunis performed, like the Sun Dance, is made as an acknowledgement towards the Sun Chief for his blessings and also an offering for good health, healing, and sustenance of the people. Another landmark of *Fools Crow* lies in Welch's method of rewriting history from the Pikunis perspective. The Pikunis were not bloodthirsty people but they desired for peace

above everything else in their lodges. While the Napikwans signed various treaties with them to control them, they also violate the treaties themselves. The Pikunis remained firm to protect their land and their children from the intruders. The Blackfeet Indians in general were crippled by the smallpox called the white scabs disease and the Marias Massacre of the 1870. The smallpox disease was imported to their lodges by the Napikwans and this was a weapon to minimize the Native populations. In addition, the massacre of the innocent Blackfeet Indians was condemned by Welch in his book. This event shows the inhuman and heartless action of the Napikwans. On their part, the Pikunis lived a humble life and they were against the behaviours and lifestyles that threaten the harmony of their community life. They condemned people who brought dishonor to their society. The cultural life of the Pikunis point out to the bravery, courage, superstitious belief, and etiquettes of the society. The Pikunis of the Blackfeet Indians were not uncivilized but they were principled people who organized their life democratically and equally for the common welfare of all people. Violations of the laws and cultural values by its members were dispelled and condemned by their society. This was how the society function keeping in mind the priority of the society foremost. By remaining firm to the cultural values and ethics of their forefathers, they were able to survive and live life despite of the various problems and threats that they experienced in their personal lives and their community living.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The thesis entitled “Native Representations in the Select Novels of Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Navarre Scott Momaday and James Welch: A Critical Study” concentrated on the native or indigenous people of the Northeast Indians and Native Americans and studied them from various perspectives. The select authors were pioneers in the literary establishment of their respective community and region and their writings added a great boost to their body of literatures. Literary works and history have been written about their communities but they failed to capture the reality of their cultures and experiences. These writers write from the experience of their own culture and they rewrite the history and deconstruct the false representations made by historians and non-native writers. The subjects of the select novels mainly deal with similar themes like pre-colonial period, colonialism, post-colonialism, environmental issues, and socio-cultural concerns. On one hand, they looked at the pre-colonial space and time of their land which is marked by autonomy, freedom, and communal harmony and on the other hand, they decried and condemned the evils of colonialism that destroyed the authenticity of their culture and misrepresented them. The writers find ways to reconstruct their culture and restore their traditions which got deteriorated and misrepresented in the hands of the colonizers.

Easterine Kire’s novels *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don’t Run, My Love* are both set in pre-colonial times with elements of surrealism in them in keeping with the religious and superstitious mindset of natives. They focus on the pre-colonial world of the Angami-Nagas, which is a world of mystery, miracle, magic, and rich folklores. In the two select novels, the daily life of the people, their work life, culture, traditions, beliefs, and worldview dominated the narratives. In *Son of the Thundercloud*, Kire retold the Naga folktale of the primal woman who was impregnated by a raindrop and gave birth to a son. She added her own imagination in weaving the tale. Thus, apart from the oral folktale of the primal woman, it also makes an allusion to the miraculous birth of Christ from a virgin woman. With the miraculous birthing, comes the regeneration of man and life in nature. Another theme pertinent in the novel is the presence of evil in the life of people. *Son of the Thundercloud* portrayed this. While the community and the people were thriving, dark ones existed among them and brought disharmony, disbelieve in the stories and prophecies, and it killed the storytellers who ignited hope among the people. Another form of evil is the spirit tiger whom

the people were protecting, thinking it to be good. The tiger was evil but the people failed to recognize it and instead blamed Rhaliétuo for killing the spirit tiger. Evils present in the novel are in the form of men and animal and they killed the hope and joy of the people. They are conquered with the sacrifices made by a pure heart which awaken the people to realize their mistakes and love one another again.

Like many of the native and indigenous people who associate nature as a being rather than a resource, the Angami-Nagas too viewed nature as a being. *Son of the Thundercloud* portrayed the rich ecology and mystery present in the land. The “river” in the story is called as “mother” for she feeds the people and meets their needs. Nature is personified and given human attributes to it. The river waned because of drought and the disbelief in prophecies. However, it came back to life of fruition and abundance after the fulfilment of the prophecy about the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. The native ecological conservation and ethics were practical and infused with understanding and reverence for nature and its inhabitants. They were practiced by the people that not only helped in conserving their ecology but helped in sustaining them as well.

Through the simple narrative of the birth of a son from raindrop, Kire weaves the ritualistic life, beliefs, and observances of the traditional Angami-Nagas. The communal people were marked for their deep wisdom about life, ethics, and survival strategies. The people were able to live during the famine for more than two hundred years because of their faith in the prophecy of Son of the Thundercloud. The strict observance to taboos and rituals also make their life prosperous and it helped them to survive in different climates. For example, the inhabitants of Nialhuo and Noune suffered from the terrible famine, however, they religiously followed the taboo of refraining from eating (rice) seeds, thus, they were able to cultivate again when it rained. Another example worth to mention is the respect for tiger considered as the elder brother or *udzürieu* among the Angami-Nagas. This tradition also worked towards the conservation of tiger. Naga communities like the Ao-Nagas, Sumi-Nagas, and other communities believed in the brotherhood of man and tiger. Among the Angami-Nagas, tiger killing is followed by elaborate rituals. They respect the tiger which is also a representative of the animal world, thereby, pointing to their relation and co-existence with other beings.

Son of the Thundercloud presents three strong women characters who are rich in love, wisdom, and have hope and faith in the renewal of nature and life. They faced criticism and

isolation in the male dominated society for their belief in the prophecy of Son of the Thundercloud. The three sisters in the novel have put their faith in the goodness and justice of nature. Thus, in spite of their sufferings, they hold onto their belief and faith in the prophecy and were rewarded with the regeneration of life and nature. Kire's *Son of the Thundercloud* brings out the eco-consciousness of the author. Contrary to the image of a rich ecology especially in pre-colonial times, the narrative presents a dead and famish world because of drought. However, all hope is not lost as people like Kethonuo and Siedze who lived for more than two hundred years each hope in the rebirth of their land, with the birth of Son of the Thundercloud. The birth of Son of the Thundercloud brings renewal to their land. Women played an important role in ushering this hope to the people. Unlike, the colonial world which treated nature as a resource by carrying out trade, progress, and development, the pre-colonial world of the Angami-Nagas who practiced the faith of animism believed nature as an entity. Thus, each step towards nature and their ecology is carried out with rites, rituals, taboos, and acknowledgement.

Don't Run, My Love shared some similar themes with *Son of the Thundercloud*. Like *Son of the Thundercloud*, it is set in pre-colonial times where the natural and the supernatural world occupy an important place. The traditional Angami-Nagas with its close knitted community life, rules, traditions, and a rural agricultural life provided the foundation for the narrative. A love affair between two young people is infused with the were-tiger culture and it complicates the love. *Don't Run, My Love* brings out the closeness between the real and the supernatural world and the people dependence on the latter. The Tenyimia people of the Angami-Nagas are known for living in a well-knit community surrounded by traditions, values, ethics, festivals, and beliefs. The administration of the village runs by elders and wise people hold one of the most important places in the Tenyimia community. Individual aspirations which pose as a threat to the unity of the community have no place to thrive in the community. This is similar to the tribal life of the Native Americans which places the community above everything. The individual must integrate himself to the rules and culture of the community for his survival and maintenance of his or her identity. This is what Abel in *House Made of Dawn* and the unnamed protagonist in Welch's *Winter in the Blood* integrated into for their survivance and healing.

Kire's central characters in *Don't Run, My Love* are women characters, they are Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo. It brings out the hardworking life of the widow Visenuo and her dutiful daughter Atuonuo. They represent the life of traditional Angami-Naga women

who worked as hard as men in the fields to feed their family. The womenfolk of the pre-colonial and post-colonial remained as major contributors when it comes to the sustenance of the family. In addition, they were women who were strictly watched by the society. Unfortunately, it is women who taught its own genders to abide by the laws of the society and this is carried out by Abau and Khonuo in the narrative. Women who create scandal in the family were detested in the society. Thus, elder women were precautionous of young girls committing this mistake. The traditional education system of the Angami-Nagas is highlighted in the narrative. A young person grows into a responsible adult by the knowledge he received from the *thehou*. Warriors and leaders were raised from the institution of *thehou*. They instilled courage in the mind of the warriors who were able to gain victory in war. People who are attuned to the community life have the privilege of being called as *thehou nuo*, meaning child of *thehou*.

The community life of the Angami-Nagas is known for the observance of various rites and rituals. They are related to the well-being of its members and for their prosperity. Agriculture being one of the main occupations of the Angami-Nagas is practiced with certain rites and rituals. The *liedepfü*, the ritual initiator of the harvest, blessing is needed for the harvest. Here, her role is likened to the cacique of the Native Americans who performed agricultural rituals for the community. In return, the community toil his fields for his service. For the Angami-Nagas, it is an old woman who performed the rituals of harvest. Another interesting aspect of the harvest ritual is *kevakete*. This ritual is connected with the preservation and respect for nature and ecology. It helps the members of the community to acknowledge the blessings of nature and calls for a judicious use of it. They pointed out to the wisdom of the Angami-Naga people in the pre-colonial era where men totally depended on nature and revered it in return for its abundance and blessings.

All kinds of good, evil, magical, mysterious, and powerful live and interacted with one another even if they belonged to different realms. One of the clearest illustrations of this is seen through the were-tiger tradition of the Angami-Nagas. The were-tiger possessed immense physical and spiritual power because of his association with the spiritual world. His power prevents people from killing him because they consulted him on matter of war, sickness, and other things. Even though some people consulted were-tigers or *tekhumevimia*, not all ordinary people can accept them, for example, Atuonuo and Visenuo in the story. The ancient kinship between man and tiger is another theory which is connected with the were-tiger culture of the Angami-Nagas. It is also transmitted through lineage, some foods, and the

use of herbal medicines. While their powers were acknowledged, were-tigers never occupied the place of a deity in the society. The affinity with tiger, a representative of the animal world and calling the tiger as elder brother or *udzürieu*, the Angami-Nagas do not hold an anthropocentric view about the natural world, but they believe in the mutual existence of all. The Native American people also believed and practiced the bear-tradition among its people. The Kiowas considered the bear as their brother who is ferocious but who is also associated with healing powers. The Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh also considered tiger as their elder brother. Thus, killing a tiger is considered as a “grave crime” unless the tiger is damaging crops or threatening people’s lives (Aiyadurai 305). The Angami-Nagas have strong belief in the spiritual world and its powers as they consult seers, dream-men or women about their life, disease, or complex dreams that they had. This also points out to the co-existence of the supernatural world with the human world.

In the two select novels of Kire, *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don’t Run, My Love*, the central characters are women. By this, the author has represented the sometimes forgotten womenfolk in the Angami-Naga community. The women presented were not rebellious figures, but they were women who love their community, have ecological mindset, and were preservers of their traditions and culture. The select novels are not feminist texts, as they simply portray humble women characters who struggled with their daily lives but never retaliate against their society. This does not put women characters like Mesanuo, the mother of *Son of the Thundercloud*, her elder sisters, Kethonuo and Siedze, neither Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo as weak women. They love their community but they also corrected its mistakes. The women know themselves and their responsibilities and they uphold their societal values and their individuality, balancing the two. They also stand out in their closeness to the environment.

Oral traditions like the myths, legends, rituals, taboos, rites, and others are deeply imbued in the works of Kire. In *Son of the Thundercloud* and *Don’t Run, My Love*, Kire retold the myth of the brotherhood of man and tiger and the legend of the were-tiger in the narratives. In the hands of Kire, these lores were re-written and re-shaped to suit the understanding of the modern readers. The plots were infused with mystery, magic, and miracles. They were part of the worldview of the Angami-Nagas who believe in the relation between the natural and the supernatural and the interaction between the two. Many of the olden traditions be it myths, legends, taboos, and rites were forgotten or discarded with the onset of colonialism and modernism. However, they are important because they constitute the

essence of life of the olden people, and more importantly they contained the worldview and identity of the people. The eco-consciousness of the select novels brings out the attitude of the people towards their ecology. Their ecology is infused with mystery and miracle. The people were aware of the various dimensions of ecology and they respect it and use it wisely. The Angami-Nagas believe in the co-existence of all beings and this is summed up by their belief of referring and calling “Sky” as their “father,” and “Earth” as their “mother.” Thus, the cosmos and the inhabitants of the earth were given equal respect by the people. Similarly, the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Kiowa people of Native Americans have similar belief about the earth and sky.

Mamang Dai’s select novels *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill* focus on Dai’s community that is the Adis, earlier called by the British as Abor. The Mishmee tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is also mentioned in *The Black Hill*. They differed from the select novels of Kire mainly because of the period or the time setting. Whereas Kire sets her select fictions in pre-colonial space with no traces of colonialism, in Dai’s select novels both the period and time of colonialism and pre-colonialism were present in the narratives. However, both of the writers set their novel in their native land with the background of rural and tribal life. In the select novels of Dai, the clash between the tribal culture and *miglun*, that is the Britishers, occupied a foremost place. Besides this, Dai gives an extensive account of the beliefs, lores, myths, legends, and lifestyle of the Adi and Mishmee people. The transition of the tribal people from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial is a major feature in the novel.

Arunachal Pradesh formerly called as NEFA has a rich biodiversity which remained hidden and undisturbed until the advent of the *miglun*. The region was protected with the Inner Line Regulation or permit which required a special pass for foreigners to enter the land. This pass has helped the region and its rich ecosystem from total destruction by the outsiders. Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*, takes the form of travel writing where the beautiful and breathtaking mountains, rivers, and valleys of the Adis were portrayed. Since the Adi belief system is connected with ecology, they religiously maintained and tended their ecosystem. However, not all the people were ecological-minded as some of the people started to sell their land to the *migluns*, defying the age old sacredness that their forefathers practiced about the land. The Adi people acknowledged the presence of various evils in the ecology. They exist in different forms and they are propitiated by the shamans who performed rituals to save the common people from the harm caused by the evils. Evil is common in human societies and it is interpreted in various ways by people. Both Kire and Dai presented evil in their select

novels and they acknowledged it as a dangerous thing which should be addressed by doing the right thing. For example, performing rites with the help of shamans to restore health and peace in *The Black Hill* is seen in Auli and Gimur caused by evil spirits.

In *The Legends of Pensam*, Dai weaves the majority of the narratives with the element of myths, legends, and presence of supernatural powers. For example, the first story in the book titled, “The Boy who fell from the Sky” refers to the story of the boy who fell from the sky and follows his life till he grows old. Hoxo has experienced different phases of life and saw the changes that came to the different villages and towns. The book in one way chronicles the life of Hoxo from his mysterious arrival, to his youth, and to becoming a chief in his village. The novel is also marked for portraying people from different backgrounds and walks of life. The earlier stage of the village life filled with rural people was transformed into educated native elites at the later stage of the novel. They are a product of change brought by colonization and modernization. Many of them have changed since they were educated in the colonizers way. Duan, a young politician, is a product of it, and people like Larik and his friends blamed the politicians and bureaucrats for ignoring the struggle of the rural people.

The Adi people like the majority of the tribes inhabiting in Arunachal Pradesh practiced animistic faith which is interwoven with forest ecology and co-existence with the natural world. Here the closest form of the ancestral faith and practices still survived and were being handed down to generations. Everything is inter-related and rocks, stones, trees, rivers, and hills have life and they are sacred. This belief is called Donyi-Polo, Donyi meaning sun and Polo meaning moon. Rural Adi folks toil hard to sustain their livelihoods. They depended their livelihood on agriculture. This culture presented not only their humble lifestyle but it also brings out the scenic rural valleys and hills where the farmers cultivate their fields. For example, in the story “Pinyar, the Widow,” the narrator points out to the hard labour yet satisfying life of the villagers who were addictive to the valleys and their fieldworks (Dai, *Legends* 27). As opposed to the colonial view of being called as lazy people, the Adi people were diligent workers who lived in close relation with nature and acknowledged its benevolences.

Mamang Dai influenced by her oral roots has woven the stories in the *The Legends of Pensam* from folklore. She built her stories on folklore because it constitutes the basis of her people. Almost everything in nature contained a soul and a spirit in Adi’s animistic faith. For example, the rain is personified as an ecological evil obstructing the daily activities of the

people. Men is powerless in itself to combat against the forces of evil, thus, supernatural powers are required to overcome them. Shamans or miris, that is, the religious priests, perform ceremonies to propitiate the spirits for men. In Adi language, a priest is called as *nyibo* or *nyibu* or *miri*. The shamans or miris of the Adis and the medicine men of the Native Americans perform similar roles. They performed healing rites for the sick and they are also raconteurs of their people who remembered their stories, the source or roots of certain rites and rituals and transmitted them to the younger generations.

The life that Dai presented in *Legends* is common with tragedies, accidents, deaths, and conflicts, but tribal justice prevailed. For instance, in case of hunting accidents and killings, the killers observed taboo of isolation in the outskirts of the village away from their families and village. This shows the democratic law of the tribal people who deal with issues justly. The convicted man is banished to live in the forest for a whole month like an animal. Similarly, in Angami-Naga culture, a person who accidentally killed another person in a hunt is referred to as “*themou*” meaning homicide. The slayer and his family exiled from their native village for seven years (Zhale, *Tenyimia* 70). In spite of the many problems and accidents that happened to the people, the village was still resilient and life goes on for them. Like many of the tribal and indigenous worldview, the Adi people believe that there is a vague division between the world of spirit and man, as man and spirit were believed to be brothers. Blood occupies an important subject in the community, and this importance is a characteristic of tribal community which weighs between good and bad blood.

Dai adopted the English language and nativised the language to suit the mood, tones, and temperament of her native-based stories. The Adis like many other Northeast communities is an oral community. The old people emphasized on the importance of words. If a person has given his word, he has to keep that. Words cannot be dismissed easily because they are believed to be immortal (Dai “Finding”). In the hands of native writers, the actions and simple behaviours of the native or indigenous people were recorded and given importance. The words spoken by the characters are simple and local in nature. The use of the word “*miglun*” instead of the whites indicates that the Adi people are in control of the narrative and it shows the veneration towards native language. Words are believed to have magical powers and there is a restriction in using them thoughtlessly. In oral societies, words are not meaningless, but they are believed to have magical power which can bring prosperity or calamity in people’s lives. The Native Americans considered words to be sacred and they used it economically unlike the whites who have no regard for words and use them carelessly.

Another thing which Dai does is the use of Adi language and expressions. This is one of the distinctive features of nativism which calls for a return to the indigenous culture, its language, and tradition. This saved the tribal people from losing their mother-tongue completely. Even though the novel is written in English, the native expressions used by the characters and the dialogues spoken or exchanged between the people are representatives of native English as they deviate from the colonial English. By this, the English language has undergone new forms in the hands of native writers. Mamang Dai also believe in leaving native concepts and terms unexplained to protect the integrity of the tribal world and its language (“Finding”). This is also a technique of post-colonial writers who keep some words untranslated in their writings.

The land takes a big dimension in *The Legends of Pensam*. The people were closely attached to it and they sacrificed their personal interests to protect their land at all cost. Unlike the *migluns* who considered land and the rich biodiversity as an asset, the Adis attributed their land with respect and reverence. Nenem, a beautiful woman, chose his land over western education and love. Their relation with the land involved a long tradition which was handed down by their forefathers. Thus, they strongly opposed the British interference upon their land because it is taking away one of their oldest and richest traditions. The primeval society at the beginning of the book has completely changed at the end of the narrative and the people entered into a new era of change and acculturation. Thus, we see a society that first resists against foreign power but gradually gets acculturated to it because change and influences are inevitable. The new developments ushered in by the *migluns* in *Legends* robbed the property and materials of the tribal people. By this, they also violated the sacred things of the tribal people as well.

The Black Hill combines the history of the Adi and Mishmee people with their oral traditions. It is one of the most remarkable books of Dai written on the relationship between the *migluns* and the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. The intrusion and activities of the *migluns* were discussed and resented in the early part of the narrative. The people took a strong stand against it and they were ready to defend their land at all cost. The colonizers’ idea was to colonize the land, language, their mind, their religion, whereas, the tribal people opposed these as they were autonomous people by nature. Land is a sensitive issue in the contact between the colonizer and the tribal people. The Adi people and the Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh closely guarded their lands. For them land is not an empty space that needs to be colonized as the colonizers have viewed it, it is sacred, and it existed

independently. The land not only sustained the people but it also teaches them to be truthful and faithful to it because negligence on their part could lead to their own downfall. When the *migluns* intervene, they disrespect the environment and land ethics of the native people. The mysterious and hidden ecology of the land prevented the oncoming of the *miglun*. The land is everything to them as Kajinsha reiterates it, that they read the land and everything that is in it. They were attuned with the land and the cosmos. However, the land and the rich natural resources were transformed to make it aesthetic besides its destruction by the colonialists (Smith 51). These activities changed the original and natural landscape which the tribal people and the native people sometimes derived their legends, myths, and belief from it. The tribal communities had independence and autonomy over their land, resources, and political life. However, these were altered under the British rule and were further continued with the post-independence of India.

The communications in the *meroms* are vital because they always put the integrity of their land and community above other things. Similarly, among the Angami-Nagas, the *dahou* and *thehou* serve as meeting places for the people to discuss various issues pertinent to their community. Land ownership and resolving land conflicts are two toughest challenges a chief has to resolve. The Mishmee people of Kajinsha and his clans fought with the nomadic Brokpa herdsmen in the black hill for land ownership. While land gives ownership and rest, the irony situates in land never providing peace to the people, including Kajinsha's father, who was a man of peace. This prompts Kajinsha to think that it is impossible to "defend" the land because it exists on its own. It has a heart and a language that beckoned men from different parts of the world to it (Dai, *Black* 113). The native worldview of nature is not anthropocentric as they believe in the inter-relation of all. Human beings belong to the land and the land is a good mother to them.

In *The Black Hill* women were doubly colonized, one by their own people and one by the colonial power. While the menfolk supervised and protect their homeland from the *miglun*, the women run the households and were occupied with field works. The tribal life is integrated into the life of the womenfolk and they accepted it because it consisted of their identity. The women characters in Dai's select novels and Kire's select novels exemplify this feature. Gimur, in *The Black Hill*, suffered from exclusion in the society even after her marriage with Kajinsha because she lacked one of the most important requirements in marriage. The only way to seal her marital status with Kajinsha is to bear his child again, that

is, a healthy boy. Society has strict rules and if there is no child than there is no acceptance. Tribal women were bound by various customs and traditions, thus, they could not express themselves freely unlike some women in other regions. Dai also presents strong women characters like, Moi, Auli, Gimur, Nenem, Pinyar and others in her select fictions to depict the strength and endurance of women in different situations of life.

Menfolk in traditional societies have enjoyed power and authority which were not extended to women. In some tribal societies men were permissible to practice polygamy because it was considered as a matter of pride. Chief Zumsha had many wives who had borne him many sons and daughters. They were his pride. Similarly, among the Blackfeet Indians, men were permitted to have more than one wife. In Welch's *Fools Crow*, Rides-at-the-door has three wives who brought him honour and respect in the society. Women on the other hand should remain loyal to their husbands and infidelity is condemned and judged with severe punishment in the tribal societies like, the Angami-Nagas, and even among the Blackfeet Indians. The Adis acquired slaves for agricultural work, from war, and sometimes slaves were given as bride-price or dowry. In *The Black Hill*, Yenjee, a Burmese slave, became the wife of Lamet. Similarly, among the traditional Kiowa people, women were taken as captives and later on become the wives of the Kiowa men. They can attain high status in the society with their hard work. An example is seen in the life of Kau-au-oıntı, an ancestress of Scott Momaday, who rose into prominence from a captive to a distinguished woman in the society.

The Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh and the Angami-Nagas also share some similar beliefs. After the delivery of a child, an Adi man claimed the child saying “ngokke! ngokke” meaning “mine! mine” (Nyori 229). This was done to claim the child before an evil spirit has done so. Similarly, the Angami-Nagas too practiced this method at childbirth, when the husband claimed the child before the spirits. The wedding rituals of the Kmaan were complicated and difficult. In the absence of Gimur's relatives all the details were not observed, however, that would not exempt Kajinsha from doing his part. He reciprocates all the gifts brought to him by chief Zumsha and his relatives by killing a pig and honoured his guests with rice beer. This act was called the flow of the “commodity basket” where the groom seeks the help of his relatives and his relatives seek the help of other relatives to engage in the wedding. It includes delivery and payback which sometimes end up being costly (Dai, *Black* 77). The colonial desire to spread education, its culture, and Christianity

were core issues in *The Black Hill*. They were a large failure because they failed to transform the heart of the tribal people. Even though the *migluns* failed to understand this, Father Krick on his part learned that the only thing which could transform the people lies in understanding the language of the heart and practicing it. On the other hand, some of the tribal people failed to practice their cultural ethics and values under the influence of colonialism. The tribal people who had once lived a self-reliant life had lost that value and were driven to the materialism of the *miglun*. Chief Chowsa lamented the behavior of his people who fantasized the products and materials of the *miglun*, forgetting their humble culture. Through the select novels, Dai has recounted the cultural history of the Adi and Mishmee tribes through the various phases of history.

Navarre Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child* are both set in contemporary period, presenting two modern alienated figures as protagonists. *House Made of Dawn*, published in 1968, makes history as it brought worldwide attention to Native American literature. The book deals with the contemporary problems of the Native Americans. *The Ancient Child* published after twenty one years since *House Made of Dawn* has continued some of the traditions of the earlier novel, *House Made of Dawn*. The modern world robs the Native American of their ethnic identity and they were driven to a desolate state of loneliness, isolation, and frustration. Their culture on one hand and the Euro-American culture on the other hand, pulled them to different directions where they were unable to belong to either world. However, the Native world offered survival lessons to the alienated characters when they return to their community, accepted, and acted on the stories and myths.

The Native Americans recognize the sacredness of the land and gives one of the highest reverences to it. It not only provides physical sustenance but it also contributes to their spiritual well-being. They shared close resemblance with the people of Northeast India when it comes to their traditional belief. For example, they considered sky as their father, and earth as their mother, and this is a similar belief with the Northeast Indians of the Angami-Nagas and tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. The earth consisted of land, animals, mountains, and rivers is capable of nurturing the things living in it whether living or non-living. It is aesthetically beautiful and the landscape provided a sense of well being to the people. In *House Made of Dawn*, Abel returned home in Walatowa, broken and dejected from war but the beautiful canyons, the breathtaking landscape, and the farmers working in the

field provided consolation and peace to him. The land is not an empty space for the Native American people. It transcends beyond as it contained the languages, the stories, and the histories of the people. It gives sustenance by providing water, air, shelter, and food. In traditional literature, there is an absence of individual alienation or isolation because the individual lives under the premise of his community and under the sacred hoop. However, in modern literature, alienation becomes a major literary theme because the individual separates himself from the community and breaks the circle which contributes to his wholeness.

Identity-crisis is one of the biggest problems faced by the native people all over the world. Abel suffered from this problem. There is no western medicine to cure this problem, however, Abel's own culture is capable of overcoming this problem. He suffered from unknown heritage from his father's side and his mother and brother had died prematurely. Adding to this, his entry into the military displaced him from his culture. The horrors of war added trauma to him. After his return from war, he remained dumb and was unable to communicate with his grandfather. This is a serious illness as words contained power in them. Abel must learn to sing and accept his cultural stories for the revival of his spirit. The Native American worldview consisted of wholeness and this is exemplified in their rituals, songs, and ceremonies. All of the inhabitants living are related to one another. Thus, in the midst of an illness or suffering, chants and rituals are performed for the restoration of wholeness because a break or a division in wholeness causes illness. One of the most important things that Abel did was running the race of dead which regenerates him and which fulfilled his grandfather's wish. Another ritual which Abel participated in was the rooster pulling which reintroduces Abel to his culture. It also helps in the renewal of animal life and agricultural system. Abel could be restored not only by listening to the stories alone, but he needs to participate in the rites and ceremonies which will help him in his rebirth.

In spite of the colonial hegemony and power in the land, many Native Americans were able to uphold their traditions and practices. These stories continue to provide sustenance and hope to the modern Native Americans who were stuck between their own culture and the Euro-American culture. For example, the narrative praises the effort of the Native people who practiced their traditional prayer and culture despite colonial influences. The people of the town still adhere to the old tradition and they still prayed in Tanoan to the deities of the earth and sky. Their lifestyle remained unchanged as they followed the traditions of the past, carving them into their "secret souls." This is the symbol of their

“resistance” and “overcoming” of the influence of the western world (Momaday, *House* 53). The battle between good and evil is eminent in traditional and modern culture, it has been a part of the daily life of men. Abel killed the albino, who is a representation of evil. He is menacing and poses a threat to Abel’s life and his culture. In another part, Abel saw the runners confronting evil in his vision. They were not afraid but they were facing it with courage. The police officer, Martinez, who had beaten up Abel in Los Angeles is a representation of the white people from whom the Indians suffered for generations.

Another interesting aspect of the novel is the trickster figure which Momaday employed in his novel. Tosamah is the trickster figure who remained critical of both the Native American culture and the Euro-American culture. What each culture hesitates to confront each other, Tosamah did it mischievously without hurting each side. He mediates between the two cultures. He critiqued the shallowness and the artificialities of the whites but sometimes he acted as an outsider to his own culture. This is seen when he speaks lowly of the reservation people, especially, Abel, when he showed no progress in his life. At other times, he acts as a preserver of the Native American culture, by narrating the history and survival of the people. *House Made of Dawn* tells four bear stories for the healing process of Abel. The bear stories narrated to Abel by four different people had an impact on him, it provides a sense of urgency in him and drives him to bear consciousness. Abel makes a return back to the tradition. He does not become a traditional man in the narrow sense, but he becomes one with a different understanding. Abel’s act of running re-integrated him into the wholeness of being and his community. His ego is being shed and he finds his place in the community to which he belonged.

Momaday’s literary technique and styles contributed to the healing process of Abel. The novel is not only divided into four parts, but for the healing process of Abel, four characters narrate bear stories and its powers from four cultural perspectives. This four is a sacred concept in many Native American traditions. The novel followed a circular form and ended from where it began. The book is also likened to a race. Abel left the reservation but returns back home and joined the circle. Imagination is a valuable source for Momaday and many of his writings were coloured by his own imagination. This is something which Momaday inherits from his ancestors who used to imagine themselves. Imagination works best with language and Momaday reproduced this in his works. Speaking the right words is important and words cannot be used carelessly. Momaday and Welch also used the technique

of storytelling in their novels to educate the audience of their myths, legends, stories and morals which are considered valuable for their people. The elders in the select novels like Francisco, Yellow Calf, and Kope'mah are storytellers who put history and reverence for their land in the minds of the youngsters through their stories.

The American Indians' perception of bears as healers stemmed from the animal behavior of gathering roots, stems, nuts, and other vegetations which has medicinal purpose. By this, the bear is seen as the guardian of the first medicines and transmitter of the knowledge of healing. The bear is killed for the purpose of food in times of starvation and paws for medicinal purpose. In *House Made of Dawn*, Francisco performed the necessary rituals of eating the bear's liver, and smeared himself with the blood of bear. Men and women helped him in carrying out the necessary rituals. This event helped him to become a man. Similarly, among the Angami-Nagas, tiger killing is equalized with worthy deeds in war because tiger is considered as a powerful animal and has an aura surrounding it. Like the Native Americans kinship with the bear, the Angami-Nagas too acknowledged the kinship with tiger and its killing is followed with proper respect given and rites that are carried out. The bear veneration practiced by the American Indians is shifted to the supernatural controller of the bear and not the bear itself. Also, the Angami-Nagas respect the tiger but does not worship it.

Tribal society requires people to experience it from inside. People like Angela St. John and Father Olguin looked at the Indian from the outside and even though they lived with the Indians they failed to understand the Indians. The Indian worldview requires a person to transcend the physical world and enter into the divine or the spiritual. Stereotype is a common weapon of the colonizers to look at the colonized. Momaday has employed this technique himself to provide the truth about the Indians, it is a poetic license for him. For Momaday, there is hope in re-building, restoring, and reviving Native American culture because it is the only way to counter-attack the oppressive forces of the Euro-American ideas and colonialism. Native American culture has the power to combat against these forces because it is rich, practical, dynamic, and was able to survive in the different situations of life. The history of the Bahkyush migrants serves as one of the best examples of perseverance and survival. The Bahkyush people experienced great sufferings from the hands of their enemies and plague. However, they persevered through their sufferings and began to grow again when they were helped by their distant relatives.

The Native American writers do not simply critique the western society, their concern also lies in improving their society by acknowledging its defects and mistakes as well. One such problem is alcoholism. The protagonists in both the select novels suffered from this problem. The native culture with its songs, rituals, beliefs and chants are capable of restoring the individual from alcoholism. Another form is the peyote ritual which aims at wholeness of the community and it is against alcohol use. People like Abel in *House Made of Dawn* and Set in *The Ancient Child* received urgent calls from their elders and tribes to return back to their native land filled with their tradition and practices. However, they ended up accepting their culture and western culture because they were unavoidable. Nonetheless, the elders inculcate the sense of urgency in the younger generations about their culture, traditions, stories, language, and songs to help them in recovering their identity and to recognize the durability and strength of their culture.

Community is of central importance in Native American culture and literature. Jace Weaver also called literature as “communitist” because it aims at promoting community values and work towards the healing of the communities that suffered from colonialism for a long time (Weaver, *That the People* 43). This is what the select novels of Momaday and Welch were emphasizing on. A lot depends on the people to return to their community and culture because it is the centre of people’s life and is capable of healing the ailments and restoring wholeness for its members. Similarly, the literature of Northeast Indians also emphasized on the community because it is the foundation of an individual’s life. Thus, a threat to the community living in any form is condemned and resisted by the people.

The Ancient Child like Momaday’s first novel dwells on a contemporary Native American man who suffers from identity-crisis. The novel is inspired by the myth of Tsoai which is prominent among the different tribes of the Native Americans. Like the Angami-Naga folktale about the brotherhood of tiger and man, the bear story of the Native Americans makes a connection between bear and man. The tale originates from the story of seven sisters and their brother who turned into a bear and ran after his sisters who became stars of the Big Dipper. In Native American culture, bear is seen as a powerful animal with positive and fearful characteristics. Bear stories are narrated to ignite strength and power among the people. People respect the bear, and the killing of the bear is done with proper rituals.

The father-son relationship is important in Native American communities. The story of Set-angya, a legendary figure, who always carries the bones of his son, is an example of a

traditional father-son relationship. Set's relationship with his father and his step-father is contrasted to traditional father-son relationship. It is partly his fault because he moved away to the urban Euro-American world where relationships are not valued. If Set's adoption was the beginning of his estrangement from his roots, his compromise with his work is the point of his dissatisfaction with western culture and lifestyle. His disillusionment had affected his mind and body. However, in Cradle Creek, Set established a connection with his native soil.

Momaday's novels *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child* critiqued the Euro-Americans for causing serious mental crisis to the characters like Abel and Set. For rediscovery and healing, an action based on indigenous knowledge that evolved from the stories, traditions, and rituals which were inspired by the landscape is needed. This is present in the cultures of the Kiowa, the Navajo, and the Pueblos. For Set, he must accept his bear identity and relive the story of Tsoai or the story of the bear-boy. The problem of alienation is not confined to the Native Americans alone and this problem is experienced by different types of people all over the world. Native American writers like Momaday and Welch acknowledged this in their writings. It also lies in the individual to discover or recover his identity. Billy was shot dead because he failed to articulate who he was and Set must discover his identity not to suffer the same fate as Billy.

Set's intensive suffering and the period of frustration can be compared to the initiation ceremony of the Indians into a higher stage. This is likened to the hibernation of the bear. Set meditates on his life and art and avoids going outside. During this period, he experienced emotional, mental, and physical crisis. But this was necessary for his acceptance of his identity and his healing. Both Set and Abel in *The Ancient Child* and *House Made of Dawn* underwent initiation rituals in the wilderness to discover their lost identity or attain maturation in life. As Set's situation worsened, he was taken back to Cradle Creek by Lola Bourne. As the western world and its medicine could not heal him, he was transported back to his home. Despite of the pain, loneliness, and confusion going on in his mind, Set was trying to get himself back together and fulfill his destiny. It is important to remember that the bear is not Set's double but it is himself. The bear is taking him over and his sense of smell becomes acute, and his sight diminishes. He retreated into the wilderness and it remained elusive whether he will become the bear and return back to human society. This is another technique of Momaday which leaves the story inconclusive. Momaday believes that the story does not end with the last word but continues in the unknown region.

Another interesting aspect of Momaday's novel *The Ancient Child* lies in the depiction of women as the bearers of tradition and as medicine women. Momaday writes that in the Kiowa graphic calendars, the lives of the women whether good or bad were hard. Women captives from warfare were common and they were kept as slaves and they hold a lower status. There are some women who were raised to high prominence because of their wisdom, perseverance, and hard work. In the novel, the relation between grandmother Kope'mah and Grey stood out. They are like Abel and his grandfather Francisco in *House Made of Dawn*. Kope'mah, too, like Francisco transmitted the old cultures and tradition to her great-granddaughter as it will die with her if she fails to transmit them. This is one of Momaday's techniques and it is also found in other Native American works of James Welch and Leslie Marmon Silko.

Kope'mah not only instructed Grey about the role of a medicine woman, but she also narrated her stories that were important to their culture. The storyteller and the listener is a constant presence in Momaday's two novels. This is a recreation of the folk life of the Native American people. Kope'mah and Grey developed deeper bond as grandmother transmitted knowledge, beliefs, and values to Grey which will help her in living her life and develop respect for her culture. Elder people hurriedly narrated their legendary and mythical stories to the younger generations for the fear of losing them. Also the relations between women are important because they help in keeping the cultures and tradition alive. Unlike the Euro-American world, the Native American woman is primarily defined by her tribal identity. Her destiny consisted of her people, and her sense of herself is that of her people and her tribe. Grey was given a big responsibility, she remained true to her destiny and fulfilled her role by guiding Set back to his culture and tradition. Women were carriers of tradition, transmitters, healers, and acted as guidance for the people.

The two prime aspects of nature writing of Momaday can be identified as that of Native people's treatment of nature as dear, sacred, and valuable, and the exploitation of the rich environment and resources by the forces of colonialism. Momaday himself is an "earth keeper" who respects the land and preserves it. Set was able to see the clear distinction of nature in city life and life in Cradle Creek. The experience he had at Cradle Creek from his surrounding imprinted a realization in him. He felt that he belonged to this place and it was where his genesis lies. Set's grandmother established a lasting connection with her abode in Cradle Creek. She rejected the developments and the colonial products and rooted firmly in

her traditional lifestyles. In this vastness and beauty, Grey imagined her Kiowa ancestor's elation over the land. Things changed but the legacy of the land could not be altered. It stands in total contrast with the development and advancement made by the whites. Grey comes to appreciate the Kiowa people, the nomadic hunters, who had lived in the landscape for thousands of years and observed the land on horseback. She criticizes the development projects of the whites which destroyed the landscape and the land ethic of the native people.

James Welch's select novels *Winter in the Blood* and *Fools Crow* concentrate on Blackfeet Indians at different phases of history. The former is set in contemporary period and the latter has pre-colonial and post-colonial settings. The central characters in the select novels are different from each other because while one tries to find his way back home, the other is a warrior, a healer, and a responsible person who will guide his people to the future. While alienation is central in *Winter*, in the latter, the protagonist's life mirrored the growth, development, and change of his people. In both the novels, the ancestors in the form of elder figures, chiefs, fathers, and leaders are prominent because they helped the individual and the community to survive and reconnect with their culture.

Winter in the Blood like many modern novels is centered on an unnamed character who alienated from his own culture. His namelessness suggests his insignificance in the society and in his own family. Like Momaday's novels, *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child*, the central character is caught between two worlds that is his own world, the Native American, and the Euro-American world. The structure of the novel is broken and it reflects the aimless situation of the protagonist who is also the narrator of the story. Welch differs his narrative mainly from Momaday by omitting history in the first place and revealing the full story at a later stage when characters make an effort to learn their history. Thus, the discovery of history lies with the character. History has been marginalized and the experiences of the marginalized people were never recorded in the historical documents. Welch objected to this bias attitude of the privileged group. The only way to undo this is to rewrite and include the history and experiences of the minority culture in the texts. Welch incorporated the Marias Massacre of 1870 and Winter Starvation of 1883-1884 in his two select novels from the Native American perspectives. Welch's first novel, *Winter in the Blood*, uses western and Native American oral tradition in structuring and framing the narrative. This is also a technique that Momaday followed in his two fictions. It amalgamates Indian oral tradition with western literary forms.

Central themes in modern literary works lie in alienation, displacement, and distance. *Winter in the Blood* focuses on the problem of “distance” felt by the protagonist. Like Abel and Set in Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn* and *The Ancient Child*, the unnamed protagonist in *Winter* suffers from the absence of a father figure and had lost people who were dear to him. This is the first seed of alienation and distance in the life of the protagonist. The outside world also contributed to it, but the seed or the origin lies in their own families which were broken and fragmented. Thus, when they failed to confront this and displace themselves from home, they have to return back and overcome the distance. Their separation from home furthers the problem of alienation or distance. The unnamed protagonist in Welch’s *Winter* does not blame others for the distance because it originates from him. He went away many times from home but returns back and finally overcomes the distance in his life by acknowledging his culture, traditions, by listening to the elders, and by establishing his connection with the land and its inhabitants. The protagonist was able to overcome the distance after hearing the distance story of his grandfather and grandmother. They managed to bear the distance and survived despite of the odd circumstances in life.

Contrary to popular belief, *Winter in the Blood* is not a political or protest novel but it is a comic fiction which represents the other side of the Indians which the Euro-Americans do not portray at all. Focusing the narrative on a wanderer, his decaying family, and the complex problems of the contemporary world, the author lightens up the gloom by employing the technique of humour in the narrative. Humour is part of the Indian life and Welch has used this element in framing the story. Welch’s use of humour is different from Momaday because the former used scatology to point out the humour in the situation. Two of the most common examples of scatology refer to peeing and farting. Besides scatology, other examples of humour are found in the narrative. The humour identified in the novel is better known as Indian humor. This tradition is continued in *Fools Crow* and commonly practiced during the tribal gatherings where young people tease each other. This teasing also helped the individual to attune himself with the communal life.

The concept *Mitakuye Oyasin* or “all are related” occupies a central place in *Winter in the Blood*. Welch revived the Blackfeet mythologies of animals in the narrative. The animals like the humans, equally contributed in helping the protagonist to find his way back home. They reminded him of the need to return back to his community and warned him of the dangers ahead of him. One of the animals who stood out was Bird, the horse, who had been

living with the narrator's family in the ranch since he was a child. On one hand, he blamed the animal for the death of his brother, Mose, but his attitude changed when Bird helped him in pulling the cow from the mud. The animals, the land, the human beings all are related and interconnected in the Native American tradition, thus, when the protagonist acknowledged this, healing comes to his life. Landscape is a central character in *Winter in the Blood*. Welch's portrayal of landscape is different from Momaday because he used natural function like peeing and farting to point out to the landscape and inter-relation of all. However, in both of their writings landscape is a prominent theme and for healing, that an individual needs to establish contact with the land. For in the land, the beliefs, the songs, the stories, and the legends of the people were derived from and they constitute the identity of the people.

Welch also depicted the difference in the atmosphere of the reservation area and the urban world in his novel. The narrator's entry into the white men's world is frightful and hopeless as he was beaten, robbed, and his days were spent in bars and meaningless encounters with women. This world is contrasted to the independent and meaningful life that he was living in the reservation, that is, in Montana, as a rancher. The whites have very less knowledge about the Indians and they looked at the Indians with pity and their reservation life as outdated and backward. This is seen through the narrator's contact with a white professor and his family. The professor and his wife looked at the reservation land as dead and devoid of life. As the narrator returns back to the reservation, he also picks up the life of a farmer again, unlike the days spent in the town and bars. The narrator also established a connection with his grandmother by playing music for her and filling her tobacco pipe. This is something which he does not do before.

With the help of Yellow Calf, his grandfather, and his grandmother, the narrator was able to rediscover the history of the Blackfeet Indians. They provided a solid background for his cultural identity. As the blood of his grandparents run in his veins, he was able to defeat the alienation and distance in his life. The protagonist's father and thousands of Indians had failed to deal with their own problems and thus they ended up in a mess. The narrator respects his father but he would not walk the path of failure that his father had walked. In the contemporary age, the younger generations were suffering from alienation and identity crisis because they lacked historical knowledge and their ancestry. *Winter in the Blood* focuses on the history of the Blackfeet Indians because the protagonist needs to acknowledge it for his regeneration and revival. Unlike other historical writers who neglect the details of history,

Welch included meticulous details to give a newer perspective of history. The Blackfeet history as narrated by Yellow Calf is not a history of suffering alone but consisted of hope, survival, and perseverance. This historical narrative awakened the narrator to renew and evolve from his hopeless life.

An understanding of the oral matrix of the Blackfeet Indians and Native Americans is necessary and important to grasp *Fools Crow*. George Bird Grinnell's text, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, is a major source of Welch's novel. The novel remained as a remarkable text for portraying intimate details and culture of the Blackfeet Indians. It was impossible for the tribe to remain static, and they must prepare for the change coming on their way. White Man's Dog also known as Fools Crow will guide the Pikuni people towards the future. His image at the opening of the novel is insignificant and hopeless in terms of the warrior culture and the status of men in the Pikuni society. However, with patience and perseverance, he was able to rise up in his community. Fools Crow is a person with many titles, as he is a warrior, a healer, and a visionary man. He is what the Pikuni society is needed for their evolving state. He goes through various phases of life and initiation rituals that provided the background of education for his culture and helped him to survive and guide his people.

The novel is distinguished by the use of surreal techniques, dreams, dreamlike disruptions, visions, transportation to supernatural world, reference to Shadowland, and so on. Welch adaptation of dreams, visions, and supernatural beings, deftly handles the border-crossing between the mundane and the spiritual. This also established a similarity with the Angami-Naga people and the Adi and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh belief in the co-existence of the supernatural world and the natural world. Native Americans also considered dream as an important source for both practical and spiritual guidance. Dreaming was a survival tool for them. The ability to read and understand one's dream correctly is important because it conveys message not only for the dreamer but for others as well. In the novel, the character Fools Crow followed his dreams faithfully and brought honour and benefit to himself and his community. Similarly, the Adi and Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Angami-Nagas heavily depended on their dreams for marriage, sickness, war expedition and others. The dreams and visions of Fools Crow in Welch's novel act as a guidance for the survival of himself and his people. Many indigenous or native people in the world invested in their dreams for their daily life and they believe in the co-existence of the physical and spiritual worlds.

The novel is a counter-narrative attempt and is against the selective remembering of some events as done by the Euro-Americans. Like *Winter in the Blood* which recounts the Winter Starvation of 1883-1884 of the Blackfeet Indians, *Fools Crow* presented the Marias Massacre of 1870, when a band of Blackfeet Indians were mistakenly killed by the US soldiers. It depicted history from the perspective of the Native Americans as opposed to the colonizers' narration. The seizers killed the band members mercilessly and destroyed their homes dismissing the earlier peace treaty signed between the band and the whites.

Unlike the stereotypical portrayal of women by the Euro-American authors, Welch gave an honest account of the Blackfeet women. The Blackfeet women were known and venerated for contributing to domestic work, playing economic roles, and working for social and cultural preservations. Even though men are considered as the head of the family, the women especially the first wife also known as sits-besides-wife has great influence over her husband. Unfaithful women were punished by the laws of the society. However, virtuous women were praised and admired in her community. A mother-in-law and her son-in-law avoid meeting face to face and violation of this is criticized.

One of the cultural values of the Pikunis is found in not defending the criminal or the culprit even if the man belonged to the same tribe or clan. An example of this is seen in their aversion towards Owl Child for instigating hatred between the Napikwans and the Pikunis. The Pikunis love their people and they retaliate against the enemies who insulted them. However, their retaliations are carried out with rationality and wisdom. Besides the open rebellion made by the whites, there are other methods which destroyed the indigenous populations. Known to the Pikunis as the white scabs disease, the small pox became the most effective weapon brought by the white settlers. The disease was more deadly than destruction brought by rifles, swords, artillery, and battles. The lodges of the Pikunis were afflicted by small pox and they were becoming helpless as their medicines and rituals were not good enough to heal the afflicted. The Pikunis were crippled by this disease.

One of the first distinctions in reading the novel *Fools Crow* is the use of language. As McFarland points out, the use of language is in the translated form, the linguistic term for the process is "calque" which is a sort of "loan translation" that is "close to the bone" (111). This is a deviation from the colonial English. Native words, expressions, and phrases added indigenous flavor to the novel. *Fools Crow* also points out the significance of horse possession among the Pikunis. The horse was introduced to the American continent by the

Spaniards in 1540. The horse became useful in hunting, hauling, and in the mobility of the tribe. This importance is seen in *Fools Crow* and it is attached with power and prestige. Another interesting tradition of the Pikunis is the death songs. They are sung in the face of death mostly by warriors. The song strengthens the warrior's spirit in the hands of the enemies. It also summarizes the life of the person and talk about his tribal membership. Examples of death songs are heard from Head Carrier, Yellow Kidney, and Fools Crow.

The reference to evil spirits or bad spirits is seen in the narrative. They are conquered with the help of the medicine-men. Evil is pertinent in native or indigenous cultures and it is propitiated with the help of priests or shamans. Smoking is practiced with traditional honour among the Pikunis. If a respected person like, a chief or a leader, calls a person to smoke with him it suggests his acceptance of the person and the person is welcomed to his lodge. This is illustrated in the meeting of Fools Crow and Mad Plume. In a patriarchal Pikuni society, honour is everything that mattered to a man. It is earned with his achievements in war, from his wives, and from his children. Rides-at-the-door, the war chief of the Lone Eaters is a man of honour. He guarded his honour closely and dismissed the things which try to dispel it.

One of the important themes of the novel is masculine power. A man becomes a full fledged member of a society through his achievement in war. Similarly, the protagonist of *Fools Crow* became an accomplished member of his community through his successes in the horse raid and war raid. The naming ceremony is an important stage in a man's life. The Native Americans practiced this tradition which is seen in *Fools Crow*. Earlier called as White Man's Dog, his name was changed to Fools Crow for his achievement in the Crow's war raid. The Angami-Nagas also earned names in their community by hosting Feast of Merit. The host's name was not only praised but the structure of his house also changed its pattern when a man hosts the Feast of Merit.

Traditional native societies are known for the various gatherings held after a war exploit or for any discussion related to the community. The Native Americans, the Angami-Nagas, and the Adi and Mishmee tribes of Arunachal Pradesh display this importance as this is seen in the select novels of the study. This is the place where stories are narrated, men recounted war honours and exploits, discussed important matters related to their community, laying out strategies to defend their people in the hands of intruders and so on. In *Fools Crow*, the men gathered to praise and tease Fools Crow for his war exploits and listen to his stories. This informal gathering represents the heart of discussion for native people. In the

native societies, a man is honored and praised not for his war achievements alone but for his responsibility towards his community.

Tribal realism is used instead of the popular term magical realism by some authors. Welch, Momaday, Kire, and Dai have used this. The real and the supernatural are inter-related and they exist side by side. The supernatural and the magical are part of the daily life of the tribal people, thus, they become a part of tribal reality. In *Fools Crow*, Welch brought out the fluidity of the natural and the supernatural world. Supernatural beings and deities were part of the narrative and guided the characters to perform great deeds. Ceremonies like the Sun Dance and others were observed to acknowledge spirits or supernatural beings for their blessings upon life and nature. Fools Crow sacrificed himself at the Medicine Pole during the Sun Dance ceremony asking forgiveness for desiring his father's wife, and thanking Sun for the successful raid and for his new wife, Red Paint. Even though the Angami-Nagas do not perform body piercing rituals like the Native Americans they also refrain from eating, which is called *kevakete*, during the Harvest Festival. This is portrayed in Kire's *Don't Run, My Love*. In both of the ceremonies, the individual refrains from eating and dedicates himself to a greater power for acknowledgement and blessings in life.

The study has made use of three literary theories. They are nativism, post-colonialism, and ecocriticism. They shared many related aspects together. The select writers and their works belonged to post-colonial writing. In post-colonial discourse, environmental studies and aspects of nativism like, the resistance against colonialism, to recover indigenous cultures and practices, and the pre-colonial spaces are central to it. This connects the three theories together. Colonialism goes beyond the political administration by collecting indigenous materials, artifacts, lands, and distributes new species of plants and animals to facilitate development and to improve indigenous species. This refers to the colonization of indigenous ecology.

The native or indigenous people like the Native Americans and the Northeast Indians make efforts to deconstruct the images created about them and make ways to go back to their own cultures and traditions. These are portrayed in the select novels of the study. The basis of indigenous worldview, traditions, cultures, and beliefs are retained by the native people in the process of colonization. Nonetheless, the Native Americans and the Northeast Indian cultures do not remain static, as they also move towards change because it is inevitable. This also reflects the dynamicism and hybridity of their cultures.

The select novels of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch do not romanticize their people unlike the writings of the non-native writers. They give a faithful representation of the native or indigenous people in their truest sense by depicting their good characteristics and their weaknesses as well. One common problem faced by the Northeast Indian writers and the Native American writers is the stereotypical assumption that they write or they should write only about themselves. While on one hand, they carried the voice of their people and culture, on the other hand, they write about their cultures from a broader perspective which can help other cultures to appreciate them.

The settings of the select novels are marked for their fluidity as they shifted from the real world to the supernatural world, the present, to the past, and the future. The native or indigenous people resist colonialism in the select novels but they also got integrated to it through the means of education, Christianity, and modernity. However, it is important to note their survivance in the post-colonial world through the retention of their basic cultures, traditions, and values. The select novels of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch are set in their native soil and the writers write with firsthand knowledge and experience about their cultures and histories. They are representations of native or indigenous people and their cultural life through various phases of history and generations.

In their representation of natives, we see varied approaches. Kire's creative imagination turns more to ancestral and pre-colonial times, bringing the past alive and breathing life into the rural folk characters. Dai attempts to represent the history and culture of her people, from pre-colonial times to colonial and post-colonial modern societies, and from nativist resistance of colonialism to adaptation of some foreign culture. While Momaday and Welch's approach is from alienation to the recovery of identity or self of the protagonists in the contemporary world. The protagonists return back to their native culture and re-inhabit their land and traditions. Survivance from the threats of colonialism with the aid of native culture is a triumph in Welch's *Fools Crow* which has traces of pre-colonial and its aftermath. In the select novels of Momaday and Welch, Native American culture is represented as the means of survival and healing for the characters who were suffering from the modern ailments of fragmentation, speechlessness, alcoholism, and distance. The study covers the post-colonial writings of Kire, Dai, Momaday, and Welch who represent the native or indigenous people in different periods and spaces. They give voices, life, and meanings to the native people by writing about them from the inside of their culture.

Ecology functions as a base in the writings of Northeast Indian and Native Americans. This can be taken as a separate study by delving deep into the cultural concepts of their ecology. The study can be expanded and further enriched by making a comparative study of the trickster figures found in Native American and Northeast Indian fictions and folktales. Another lies in the study of the were-tiger culture of the Angami-Nagas, the relation between man and tiger among the Mishmee people of Arunachal Pradesh, and the bear tradition of the Kiowa Indian tribe. Among other features, the community life is of central importance for the two cultures and this can be studied in depth and comparatively along with other tribal communities. Further, native or indigenous study based on beliefs, cultural values, ethics, social and political life, and others can be carried beyond Northeast India to other Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Philippines, Myanmar, and Thailand.

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