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Nature in the Realm of Indigenous Writing: An Ecocritical Perspective

*G. Anish S. Georshia**

Abstract

This paper is a study of the Indigenous literatures of Australia and Canada. As Indigenous writings reflect the symbiosis of nature and culture, an important aspect of Indigenous people is that they try to return to nature to receive Indigenous spirituality that has its roots in harmony among all beings. These writings based on nature-centred thoughts, belief system, traditional patterns, spirituality and cultural practices, environmental knowledge and respect, change and catastrophe, and dependence on nature and natural resources have been studied as presented in some relevant texts.

Keywords: Nature, Ecocriticism, Home bioregion, Wilderness, Ecocritics, Ecoconsciousness, Indigenous, Ecoconstructs.

Henry David Thoreau says, "Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread" (qtd. in Scheese 316). 'Save the Earth' has been the motto of the conference in Rio way back in 1992. From then on, 'Go Green!', 'Live close to Nature', prove to be the cry of a section of human society that yearns for the good old days and a peaceful, pollution free life at the lap of nature. These voices that echo even today, put forth the fact that the natural world that surrounds humanity is in danger. This is because "formerly man had been part of nature; now he was the exploiter of nature" (White 8). 'Nature' originally means the intrinsic characteristics that plants, animals, and other features of the world develop on their own accord. Now at large, 'nature' refers to the natural environment or wilderness, consisting of wild animals, birds, flowers, trees, rocks, mountains, forests, beeches, and in general those things that have not been substantially altered by human intervention, or which persist despite human intervention.

It is within the realm of nature that human beings live and interact with. In short, it is also claimed that the human kind is connected with nature by blood ties and that human beings can never live outside nature. This is because, human beings are

* *Assistant Professor of English, Scott Christian College (Autonomous), Nagercoil - 629003, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli), India. Email: anishgeorshia@ymail.com*

constantly aware of the influence of nature in the form of the air for breathing, the water being drunk, the food being eaten, and the flow of energy and information. Considering this, it is a definite fact that the more nature is lost, the more life is lost on earth. It is a bitter truth that human actions violate the laws of nature and similarly the harmony that nature displayed once, has transformed into universal disasters. The relationship of human beings with nature began as a hunter-gatherer society. A kind of dynamic balance between human beings and nature prevailed in the primitive era.

Nature then in its unaltered hues of the beginning stage had a different relationship with humans. It frightened and conditioned life with its mysterious vastness and uncontrollable energy of its elemental forces. Such a life closer to nature with an underlying factor of reverence towards it helped in maintaining a balance. However, it has receded to the background because of human intervention. The moment mankind inflicted the destructive effect of technology on nature, the dynamic balance that once prevailed, seems to have lost ground and there are ominous signs of breakdown in the relationship with nature. Yet, the frightening factor lingers in a different manner. It now frightens human beings with its limitations, new-found fragility and delicate nature.

In early literary writings, the beauty that existed in nature was appreciated by writers. The more nature showed its ominous signs, the more was the cry of the environmentalists and this is in accordance with what Kate Rigby observes, "it might be countered that at a time when there is allegedly no place on earth that has not been affected in some way by humanity's alteration of the natural environment, the precedence of nature has now become questionable" (154). When they started raising questions regarding the lack of ecoconsciousness among modern societies, literature also opened its gates for such questions. At this juncture ecocritics and ecocriticism were born. This later on emerged as a different canon of literature that has the natural world as its centre of discussion.

Ecocriticism as a branch of study officially began with Cheryll Glotfelty, Scott Slovic, and Harold Fromm. Even before them, ecological approach has been found explicitly in the American Transcendentalists like Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller, in the English Romanticists, like Wordsworth and in other writers from varied literary backgrounds. The 21st century saw the emergence of other well-known ecocritics like Jonathan Bate, Karl Kroeber, Lawrence Buell, and most recently, Kate Rigby. When ecocritics analyse the current literary canon, they find that, "much writing today continues to view nature solely as a backdrop to the really important things, which are human matters divorced from a nature that remains 'out there'" (McDowell 379). Indigenous literature has an entirely different approach. As Rigby points out, they ". . . seek to restore significance to the world beyond the page. More specifically, they are concerned to revalue the more-than-human natural world, to which some texts and cultural traditions invite us to attend" (154-55).

Further, as put forth by the ecocritics, ecocriticism is an earth centred approach to literary studies that has gained a lot of attention during recent years, due to higher emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. Ecocriticism

concentrates on how individuals in a society behave and react in relation to the natural and ecological aspects. On the whole, ecological concerns, ecological setting, relationship of human societies and individuals with the natural world, and ecoconstructs within the texts form the base for an ecocritical analysis of literary writings across the globe. Moreover, as Glotfelty says, "an ecologically focussed criticism is a worthy enterprise primarily because it directs our attention to matters about which we need to be thinking. Consciousness raising is its most important task" (xxiv).

Ecoconsciousness is something that applies largely to most Indigenous writings. Indigenous cultures throughout the world have nature centred beliefs and practices. A similar pattern of relationship with nature is seen in all Indigenous cultures. Indigenous people are rich in environmental knowledge as they are sustained largely by the natural world, and consequently their traditions, spirituality, and culture are all shaped by it and thus have immense respect towards nature. The Indigenous people see Mother Earth as a life-giving force and as a living person. They believe that if the inhabitants of this world continue to desecrate her, then she will no longer be a life-giving force. This is the reason why Indigenous people protest against the misuse of their land. When talking about Indigenous people and nature, Leonardo Boff observes,

> Indigenous people are as cultural as we are, but their culture is of a different type. Perhaps what makes indigenous people unique, different from modern human beings, is that they feel and see nature as part of their society and culture, as an extension of their personal and social body. For them, nature is a living agent, one charged with purposiveness; it is not what it is for modern people, more in the nature of an object, mute and neutral. Nature speaks and Indians hear its voice and message. Hence they live a true ecological and cosmic sharing. Nature belongs to society and society belongs to nature. They see nature-as-subject and human-as-subject having exchanges such as always exist between subjects. (89-90)

The Indigenous people believe in the laws of nature. They know that there is a time and season for all life-sustaining activities. For example, animals are not killed during their reproductive cycles and they also take only what is found in abundance in a particular season. They are a set of people who thrive only on abundance and not on scarcity, unlike modern hunters who go behind rare species that are on the trajectory of extinction. Because of such a living, the Indigenous people are often referred to as people who are satisfied with what they have and what is given to them freely from nature. The Indigenous people also have high respect towards the life-sustaining elements of the world, Air, Earth, Fire, and Water.

The interrelationships and interconnectedness of the Indigenous people to nature are also noteworthy aspects. According to them, no person, animal or thing must be taken for granted, because everyone and everything has a role and a place in the natural realm. This explains why Aborigines respect each and every aspect found in nature. The above patterns of eco-consciousness very much apply to the existence of

the Indigenous people in Australia and Canada. Indigenous literatures hailing from both these countries give importance to the natural world. In their works, as Santosh K. Sareen points out, ". . . there is a particular poignancy to the Aboriginal experience, a depth in the sorrow they express, that is different from other such expressions. Theirs is the voice of a people dislocated from their habitat, dispossessed of their land, often concealing, masking, suppressing and at other times expressing, manifesting or revealing their angst, anger and despair" (32).

Alexis Wright of Australia and Lee Maracle of Canada are excellent Aboriginal writers, who have explored so beautifully the deep sacred connection that their people have towards the land. Both the writers have constructed their plots on the four areas or eco-centric setting put forth by Peter Barry in "Ecocriticism". They are the 'wilderness' (desert, oceans, uninhabited continent), the 'scenic sublime' (forests, lakes, mountains, cliffs, waterfalls), the 'countryside' (hills, fields, woods), and the 'domestic picturesque' (parks, gardens, lakes). Wright's Plains of *Promise and Carpentaria*, and Maracle's *Ravensong* and *Sundogs*, use all the four eco-centric setting. But, as Lawrence Buell observes, "The non human environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (qtd. in Rigby 160). Wright's *Plains of Promise* shows how the natural world governs the existence of an Australian Aboriginal community. According to Jonathan Bate, ". . . ecological exploitation is always coordinate with social exploitation" (qtd. in Rigby 163). This is something that Wright's *Plains of Promise* and Maracle's *Ravensong* portray.

In the *Plains of Promise*, Wright unfolds a typically beautiful Australian landscape that entices man with its storms, floods, dust storms, clay pans, rivers, lakes, the buffalo grass, kangaroos, wallabies, ghost gums, brolgas, dingoes, black cockatoos, bush pigeons, bush turkey, gidgee trees, pelicans and other water birds. Such a natural world proves to be a huge influence on the Aboriginal in various ways. In the *Plains of Promise*, as Glotfelty says, Ivy's condition proves that ". . . estrangement from nature . . . [is] the basis of our social and psychological ills" (xxi). Wright gives a beautiful picture of the land that comforts Ivy with a huge promise of a better life:

> The land was flat and featureless except for the occasional tree-lined, dried-up river beds. Buffalo grass like pale yellow straw covered the grey gravel and clay. Here Ivy spotted families of emus running away on long, strong legs. The odd dingo half-hidden in the long grass winked at her as the train whistled past. Even flocks of grey brolgas, sometimes a hundred or more, flew alongside the train turning their red faces to look at Ivy, until, tiring of the sport, they turned to fly further northward. (*POP* 183)

It is really the natural world that interests the Aboriginal people. Ivy is no exception. This land of her dreams with typical wild rustic Australian setting is what instils her heart with immense joy and she sees more of a promise in it. Not only the land, but also the trees, the grass, the animals and the birds interest Ivy a lot, more than "the industrial side of town, with huge mysterious sheds" (*POP* 182). Through Ivy, Wright clearly distinguishes between what is man-made and the unaltered hues of the

wilderness. Even Bessie's house gives a rustic setting to Ivy and it becomes her short-lived haven. Bessie's vegetable garden, pot plants, the cedars, the ghost gums, mango, chinky apple, citrus trees, the fowls and the goats, fill Ivy with happiness. In her life full of struggle, nature plays an important role by instructing, guiding and comforting Ivy during hard times.

As pictured in Wright's *Plains of Promise*, Maracle's *Ravensong* also showcases nature as a perfect guiding and supporting factor which constantly suggests change. In this novel, the natural world induces unforgettable memories of the past; it sends in catastrophes to stir up the consciousness of survival through coexistence in the present; and, it patiently awaits and instils hope in the hearts of the Aboriginal community for a better future. According to Neelima Kanwar, "Maracle's writing exhibits the close alliance of the vegetation, birds and human beings in the Native community" (124). In *Ravensong*, the cedar, a tree, the Raven, a bird, the clouds, the rain and the earth are represented with human understanding. As Kanwar says, "A surrealistic flavour is inherent, as birds and trees talk to and advice the humans" (123). Maracle beautifully weaves together the natural and the human world. The novel also presents a conflict between man and nature. It further highlights the fact that human beings are powerless when faced with the forces of nature. The very texture of the novel shows that the human world is nothing without the natural world. According to Martina Rossler in her article, "Nurturing Mother and Destructive Power", ". . . the natural surroundings have not been idealized in Native writing, but been regarded in relation to both their positive and negative contributions to human life". This is in accordance with what Maracle does in her works of art.

The novel largely shows the dependence of the Aboriginal people on natural resources. Having descended from a hunter gatherer society of ancient Canadian Natives, the Salish tribe gives importance to fishing, gardening and picking berries. The significance of these activities also underlines the importance that the plants and animals have to them. They regard them as precious gifts from Mother Earth. As Scholtmeijer observes, "the timeless and time-honoured practice of gathering provisions from nature at seasonal intervals during the year sets up a rhythm for life among First Nations women living traditionally. It is not surprising, then, that this rhythm of return to familiar natural environments should find its way into their stories" (325). Maracle is of Salish and Cree ancestry. She grew up in the mud flats of North Vancouver and quite naturally her own experiences of traditional living have gone in to the making of *Ravensong*. Most of the time of the year, the Aboriginal families spend time in collecting and canning food to be used in times of scarcity. Their traditional food habits help them even in extreme cold climates. It also proves to be a healthy diet for them and so they largely avoid food items supplied from the Welfare Stores set up by the mainstream government.

The life of the Aboriginal villagers in *Ravensong* is enriched with what the land provides. The family trip of the members of Stacey's family and Madeline's family to Yale proves to be a happy trip because of the abundance they find in nature. Crossing hills and prairies, they reach Yale. Though done with an intention of survival, the trip

proves to be a happy-go-ride that refreshes them all. They catch fish and dry them in order to store them up for further use. For leisure after work, they sing, dance and tell stories in the open prairies. They also spend time in picking huckleberries in Yale. The endeavour of fishing and berry picking lasts for several weeks. Their act of gathering as much food as they can is not a self-centred attitude with individual family concern but is done with a community-centred attitude that helps them in being able to share the goods with their fellow villagers. This is because they believe that nature's blessings are equally bestowed on all.

Another significant activity of the Salish community is gardening. While talking about gardening, Maracle explains how the pattern works differently in the Aboriginal world and the European world. Stacey's mother, like any other Aboriginal woman, maintains a garden where she cultivates comfrey, dandelions, pigweed and predominantly, mint. Her attitude towards her garden and the plants shows the connected feeling that she has towards them – "She watered the mint plants regularly. She rarely missed addressing the mint like old friends as she entered the house" (*RS* 31). Stacey is unable to "imagine life without mint garnishing every dish" (*RS* 31).

During gardening, the white women have "their hands [were] covered by real garden gloves" (*RS* 31). Mrs. Snowden's action of wearing gloves while gardening shows her lack of connection with the land. On the other hand, Stacey enjoys touching the black soil with her bare hands. It shows her deep connection with the land, while the other has an underlining belief that the soil is something that one should avoid touching. The learning process behind this in Stacey comes from her mother. While eating food also Stacey reveals her revered attitude towards nature. This is also something that is taught to the younger generation by the elders. Whatever food is taken by the Aboriginals, they thank the "originator of the food" (*RS* 116). As Stacey says, "salmon was thanked for salmon, saskatoons for saskatoons, and so forth" (*RS* 116). This shows their heartfelt gratitude to the natural world that sustains them.

An old memory of grating camas root strikes Stacey and she remembers how she was asked to grate camas root for the feast after the winter dances. Stacey grates a little and then hesitates. She questions, "Doesn't it hurt?" (*RS* 173). Her mother tells her that it does hurt, but at the same time she tells Stacey, "camas is here to take care of us. Never forget to be grateful. Don't waste her, remember she sacrifices her life to you. Whisper sweet words to her. Give her courage" (*RS* 173). This is a heart touching incident for any ecocritic who places a huge amount of importance on the various aspects of nature. A plant that comes from the natural world is entrusted with the character of a martyr who sacrifices herself for the betterment of others. In the Aboriginal communities, everything that comes from nature is revered and their utility capabilities are highly appreciated. This old memory of grating camas also brings to the forefront how even as a little child, Stacey is reminded by her mother as Rossler observes in her article, ". . . to be grateful for that which they receive from their mother earth and treats plants and vegetables as living beings".

According to the critics Williams and Baines, such transmission of knowledge is a part of traditional ecological knowledge. Again, as critic Hunn quotes in Rossler's

article that this transmission "is validated by its relevance to the daily struggle to wrest a livelihood from one's land". Such passing on of knowledge in the European-Canadian neighbourhood teaches Mrs. Snowden's daughter Carol that some roots must be thrown off as weeds. At the same time the Aboriginal knowledge teaches Stacey the uses of herbs and plants. This education received in the lap of nature actually proves how a person's interaction with his/her ecosystem is according to the kind of upbringing they have. According to Scholtmeijer, "in the Euro-western world, when a human person encounters the branches of a tree, all action is with the human person. There is no thought that the tree might have reached out or that some motive force or feeling might be in the tree herself" (323). When Maracle deals with this aspect, she presents a reversal of this concept and shows how it is different in the Aboriginal set up. Like any Aboriginal woman writer, she presents trees as affectionate, receptive beings that have the capacity to heal. It is the cedar that reaches out to Celia and not vice versa. The cedar brushes Celia's cheek with her lower branch. With this soft caress, Celia is brought back to attention and the cedar is seen expressing, as Scholtmeijer comments, "tender feelings toward the human being she touches" (322). In *Ravemsong*, Maracle seems to suggest that "the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest" (Rigby 160).

After the European world was thrust into Australia and Canada, the Aborigines lost their pristine connection to nature. They not only sustained themselves with what nature gave them, but they also made sure that nothing is destroyed, and tried to safeguard it all. Their kinship with nature goes up to the sacred level. Once the European intrusion moved in more and more, the Aborigines lost their lands inch by inch. What the Aborigines have enjoyed for over thousands of years is now been taken away from them. Their fishing, hunting and food gathering occupations have been restricted as the new settlers took up more and more land away from them. As William Howarth points out, "as land is traded, people are degraded, moved to and from regions as mere chattel in an invidious property system" (81).

Though pushed to the background, the Aborigines hope against hopes that their land will be taken care of, but the European interpretation is in contrast to what the Aborigines believe. The Whites fail to live in harmony with nature, but live off it without taking care of it. This is because as Greg Garrard points out, "nature is only valued in terms of its usefulness to [them]" (18). With all modern appliances and technology, the land is destroyed gradually and this forces nature to show ominous signs of total destruction. As the Aborigines cannot withstand the destruction of their sacred land, they started reclaiming their land rights. They fight not to violate their land with thriving business, but to re-establish the lost connection to their sacred land.

In Wright's *Carpentaria* and Maracle's *Sundogs*, the sacredness of the land is violated by the Whites and this triggers off a fight for the land. Both the novels uphold the fact that the Aborigines have the power to fight out any powers in order to save their sacred land. Both the novels use what Rigby calls as ". . . the new conception of nature as totally knowable, manipulable, and predestined to be conquered and transformed by man" (157). At the same time, they also show the prevalence of

nature as a powerful aspect. While *Carpentaria* ends with the natural world's fury, *Sundogs* shocks the younger generation back to conscience about safeguarding their traditional life connected to their land. Ecoconsciousness blended with a tinge of the superfluous and spirituality fills both these novels. Wright and Maracle try to say that, as in the case of Aboriginal tradition, contemporary people should also think about living in close kinship with nature and not to violate it or destroy it little by little in the name of booming business.

Aboriginal law and life originate in the land, and are governed by the land. The Aboriginal connection to the land, gives the Aboriginal people their identity and a sense of belonging towards it. For the Aboriginal people, their land is their home, their mother, their culture and they believe that it is their responsibility to care for it. The land is what sustains the Aboriginal life in every aspect, spiritually, physically, socially and culturally. These aspects find voice in an Aborigine, S. Knight's emotional comment quoted in the article, "Aboriginal Indigenous Spirituality and Beliefs" - "We don't own the land, the land owns us. The land is my mother, my mother is the land. Land is the starting point to where it all began. It's like picking up a piece of dirt and saying this is where I started and this is where I'll go. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and identity".

This being the case, it is a fact that Aboriginal people can never tolerate their land being destroyed in the name of a booming business. One's own land owned for generations and generations also means a lot to the Aboriginal people. Living on it for many generations makes them the traditional owners with traditional ownership titles. This explains why the Aborigines fight for land rights in order to claim Native titles to their traditional lands. This also exposes the fact why so many Aboriginal people get sick and suffer a lot when they are removed from their traditional land. The spiritual and cultural connection to their land is what makes the Aboriginal people look after cultural sites which according to them are living museums of their ancestors and include dreaming sites, archaeological sites, water holes, and burial grounds. To the Aboriginal people, the land is not just the soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture. They see the land as the centre of all spirituality and this relationship is central to the issues that are important to Aboriginal people, even today. Like what is represented in *Carpentaria*, the contemporary world also lives in a similar situation, in constant fear about nature not knowing when it will dramatise her lethal capabilities. This is pointed out by Boff, who says, "it's too late: the machinery of the means of production (destruction) is so well oiled that there's no stopping it; we are heading toward a natural collapse of the Earth-system" (127).

Maracle's *Sundogs* also upholds the importance and sacredness connected to the land by the Aboriginal people. The novel also foreshadows how the campaign for saving a piece of Native land, actually shocks the younger generation into a realisation that re-establishes their close connection to the natural world of the Natives. The character Marianne beautifully proves Maracle's belief that Native people become strong only by seeking knowledge in the lap of nature that sustains them. As Glotfelty

points out, ". . . ecocritics support concepts like interconnectedness and interrelationship, values like community and cooperation, and all advocate rootedness and affection for a particular place, one's home bioregion" (7) and Wright and Maracle as ecocritics also do the same. Their own deep connection to the land represents itself by the way they present the natural world of their homelands. Through all the four novels, as Michael J. McDowell states, ". . . the environment plays a role as important as the roles of the characters and narrator" (387). They have shown how every part of nature, be it a tree, an animal, a stone, a river or anything for that matter, has a heart that breathes life and that with it is connected precious memories.

The destruction of the environment of the Aboriginals is literally the destruction of the Aboriginal people and their culture. The writers also point out the fact that the world also loses much along with the Aboriginals. A sense of familiarity with nature will be completely lost if the Aboriginal way of life is stunted. Another important thing that pervades the novels is the experiences of finding one's true self within the realm of nature. Both the writers present nature as an educator, a guide, a judge, and as being alive with emotions and sensibility. Both the negative and the positive aspects of nature as regenerator and destroyer are also presented. On the whole, nature as a vital entity is adorned with spiritual undertones and given due importance. As Glotfelty points out, "in an increasing urban society, nature writing plays a vital role in teaching us to value the natural world" (xxiii). Wright and Maracle very well seal this fact through their works of art.

"A work survives, not because it expresses what was never expressed before… but because the author, in his whole being, experienced the theme of the work intensely and authentically. Such an experience, and not the striving for newness, creates great, lasting literature" (Rath 15-16). Wright and Maracle are writers with an authentic feel towards their environment, culture and people. So their texts prove how the natural world governs the very existence of the Indigenous community. Nature also becomes a medium through which the intrusion of colonisation is represented. The writings represent the presence of the spiritual ancestors as being one with nature.

Further, nature is treated as a harbinger foreshadowing death and destruction. Typical Australian and Canadian landscapes are presented in a realistic and enticing manner. The writings of Wright and Maracle, elaborate on nature giving voice, support and encouragement to powerless people. Changes in the natural environment fore shadow impending changes in the lives of the Indigenous characters. The writings strongly stress the fact that the native landscapes stand as a testimony to all violent acts and injustice towards Indigenous people. The cry of Indigenous hearts is to renew their once peaceful co-existence with nature is evident in all the four texts.

In the Indigenous writings, nature is filled with signs and wonders that warns, saves and teaches. Nature is a messenger to many characters. It is also surprising to note that most Indigenous characters adhere to thoughts and actions within the framework of the messages communicated by nature. Landscapes trigger

unforgettable and emotional memories of the past. Nature is even attributed with human understanding. The writings have closely knit together the natural world and the human world. The powerlessness of human beings before the forces of nature is also presented. Another important aspect explicated is how nature desires the coexistence of human races in order to achieve the level of coexistence between nature and man.

The writings also reveal the fact that the Indigenous people are largely dependent on natural resources. At the same time, this dependence is not a one way process. Indigenous people nurture nature so that they are nurtured in turn by nature, in an abundant manner. Their life is adjusted according to seasonal changes. They are largely dependent on natural healing herbs for varied treatments. Gathering food as a community proves to be a greatly celebrated aspect of the Indigenous people. Another interesting part is that, they also show their heartfelt gratitude to the natural world that sustains them in all possible ways. A well noted aspect is their realisation of the self-sacrificing nature of the natural world in the process of sustaining them. The writings show that the people's grateful and positive interaction with nature is in accordance with their upbringing and proper education about nature.

Apart from focusing on the interconnectedness of the Indigenous people with the natural world, the writings also show nature as an educator to the Indigenous characters. Every now and then nature imparts vital knowledge to the Indigenous people. Their tryst with nature moulds them as mature individuals filled with sacrifice and a sense of community. These aspects of nature take it to the level of being treated as sacred. Land is treated as sacred by the Indigenous people. Whenever the sacredness of their land is violated, the Indigenous people fight it out in order to save it. Though European concepts see nature as something that could be conquered, manipulated and transformed by humans, Indigenous writings strongly maintain that nature is powerful and has the power to destroy man made designs with its furious natural calamities. The natural world being treated with sacredness in the writings gives way for a superfluous mythical quality in the representation of nature.

Indigenous writings hold imperialism, capitalism and materialism as reasons for the destruction of nature and subsequently for the violent and destructive reactions of nature. The writings send out a strong message of zero tolerance towards the destruction of sacred lands and nature in general. The characters see land as living museums of their tradition, culture and history. The writings also reveal how the invasion of Indigenous lands by European forces cause huge losses to the Indigenous people. They not only lose their land, but their food resources, water resources, old ecological practices, sacred burial sites and freedom. The writings also depict the struggle of the Indigenous people to re-establish their close connection to the natural world. They also represent their campaign for saving Indigenous lands from encroachment. On the whole, the eco-critical aspect of Indigenous writings proves that nature is a vital entity that has to be given due importance for humanity to survive. Indigenous writings have a lot to share as lessons for the core areas of life in general. Nature proves to be a home not only for the past and present generations, but also for

scores of future generations. So it is important for humans to preserve their own home bioregion with shared responsibilities and stand against all greedy structures that aim at destroying nature.

Note: *POP - Plains of Promise, RS - Ravensong*

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