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**Recycling Trauma: An Ecocritical Approach to Healing  
Narratives.**

**A Comparative Study of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* and P. J.  
Curtis's *The Lightning Tree***

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Anglophone Language, Literature and  
Civilisations.**

**Board of Examiners**

Chairwoman: Mrs. MAGHMOUL Leila

University of 8 Mai 1945/ Guelma

Supervisor: Ms. CHIHEB Amel

University of 8 Mai 1945/ Guelma

Examiner: Mrs. CHAHAT Narjess

University of 8 Mai 1945/ Guelma

**Submitted by:**

**Supervised by:**

**Karima ASSASLA**

**Ms. Amel CHIHEB**

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    **Dedication**    

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

From the bottom of my heart I dedicate this work:

- ❖ To the woman in whom I see God's kindness and compassion. The woman who instilled in me the love of learning and knowledge. The healing balm for my wounds and pain. The torch in the darkest nights of my life. The spring of compassion and tenderness, my dearly beloved mother "***Ismahane Rouabhia***", who was always there for me and taught me to be a fighter in this uneasy world. Undoubtedly, words are not enough to express my gratitude. So May Allah, the all powerful, protect you and give you health, longevity, and happiness.
- ❖ To my sisters and brother: Chayma, Meriem, Mariah, and Yahia Louai. I specify here my sister, Chayma, she is my soul mate. Though she is three years younger than me, her advice were and are always wise and precious.
- ❖ In the memory of my dead little brother: Ahmed Yasine.
- ❖ To my great supervisor, **Amel Chiheb**, it has been an honor to be her student.

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## Abstract

This thesis presents a comparative study of two healing narratives namely *Ceremony* (1977) by the Mexican American writer Leslie Marmon Silko and *The Lightning Tree* (2006) by the Irish writer P. J. Curtis. It provides an ecocritical analysis of these two novels through the consideration of the crucial role nature plays in individual and communal healing. In particular, this study examines the overriding theme of healing by delineating the different narrative healing strategies employed to recycle the trauma caused by the devastating colonial encounter between the colonized, the Irish and the Native Americans, and the conquistadors. Also, this paper considers how the Burren region of North County Clare and the Laguna reservation are set as ecological worlds in opposition to the modern anthropocentric world. Closely related to the theme of healing are the rich symbolism and literary motifs used throughout both works to affirm the importance of natural elements in healing the characters' wounds and boosting their sense of belonging and identity. Therefore, the research probes into the symbols and motifs characterizing the two works. This thesis seeks to examine the narrative structure both writers used in writing their literary productions. Evidently, their narrative structures seem to challenge the Western standard literary structure. The work concludes with the statement of what the concept of healing represents for each culture / literature / text.

**Key terms:** healing, narratives of healing, narrative strategies of healing, trauma, nature, anthropocentrism, biocentrism.

## التلخيص

تقدم هذه الأطروحة دراسة مقارنة لاثنتين من السرود العلاجية ألا وهما *Ceremony* (1977) للكاتبة المكسيكية الامريكية Leslie Marmon Silko و *The Lightning Tree* (2006) للكاتب الايرلندي P. J. Curtis حيث توفر تحليلا إيكولوجيا لهاتين الروائيتين من خلال النظر في الدور الحاسم الذي تلعبه الطبيعة في العلاج الفردي والمجتمعي. على وجه التخصيص يدرس هذا العمل الموضوع الجوهرى المتمثل في المعافاة من مخلفات الاستعمار خاصة النفسية منها عن طريق تحديد مختلف استراتيجيات السرد العلاجي المميزة للكثير من الروايات و التي تهدف الى معالجة الصدمة الناجمة عن اللقاء الاستعماري المدمر بين المستعمر و السكان الاصليين. أيضا، تركز الدراسة على اظهار كيف ان منطقة *the Burren of North County Clare* و محمية *Laguna* تعتبران صور مصغرة لعوالم إيكولوجية معارضة للعالم الحديث المعروف بنظراته الدونية و الازدواجية للطبيعة و مختلف مكوناتها الحيوية، كما ان كلا الروائيتين تحتويان على الرمزية الغنية و الكثير من العناصر المتكررة التي لها أهمية رمزية أيضا و المستعملة لتأكيد أهمية العناصر الطبيعية و القرب من الطبيعة في تخطي الجروح النفسية التي سببها الاستعمار وتعزيز الشعور بالانتماء و الهوية الوطنية، ويسعى العمل أيضا الى دراسة الهيكل السردى المستخدم في كلا العملين اللذين من الواضح انهما يتحديان البنية الأدبية المعيارية الغربية. ويختتم العمل ببيان ما يمثله مفهوم المعافاة لكل ثقافة / أدب/ نص.

## الكلمات المفتاحية:

المعافاة، السرود العلاجية، استراتيجيات العلاج السردى، الصدمة، الطبيعة، مركزية الإنسان، مركزية الحياة.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b> .....	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	ii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	iii
<b>Abstract in Arabic</b> .....	iv
<b>Table of contents</b> .....	v
<b>Epigraph</b> .....	vii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
 <b>Chapter I: Nature and the Trauma of the Rupture with It</b>	
I. 1. The Significance of the Native Environment for the Indigenous Colonized: Engagement and enchantment with nature.....	5
I. 2. The Colonizer’s View of the Natives’ Land.....	11
I. 3. Trauma of the Rupture with the Native Environment.....	17
I. 3.1. Trauma of Acculturation.....	18
I. 3.2. Trauma of the Colonizer’s Language.....	26
I. 3.3. Trauma of Christianity.....	32
 <b>Chapter II: Recycling Trauma, Narrative Strategies of Healing</b>	
II.1. Orality.....	37
II.2. The Rejection of Christianity and the return to Paganism (ancient myths).....	46
II.3. Revising and subverting the Stereotypes.....	65

II.4. The Use of the Native Language: Disempowering the Colonizer’s Language (the New “englishes”)	73
II.5. Traditional and ecological healing	77
II. 6. Remembering, apology and redemption	78
 <b>Chapter III: Symbolism, Motifs and Narrative Structure</b>	
III.1. Symbolism	80
III.2. Prominent Literary motifs	83
III.3. Narrative structure	86
<b>Conclusion</b>	88
<b>Notes</b>	90
<b>Works Cited</b>	94

## **Epigraph**

“The seeds remembered the land they came from. Corn is more than food. It is history. It is spirit.”

Winona LaDuke



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**ମରୁତ** *INTRODUCTION* **ଧନର**

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## Introduction

Colonialism and Eurocentrism had a devastating effect on the indigenous colonized peoples. The colonizers arrived and established systems that proved fatal to the subjugated peoples and their lands inflicting on them a serious trauma. The effects of the historical wounding which resulted from the colonial encounter could not be overstated. Subjugated peoples throughout the globe had to deal with such effects and reconcile with themselves and with the land affected by colonization. Many literary works fell under the category of healing narratives for they provided a variety of healing strategies aimed at dealing with the repercussions of colonization and overcoming its devastating effects. The work of the literary master Leslie Marmon Silko entitled *Ceremony*, and *The Lightning Tree*, the novel by P J Curtis, are two interesting healing narratives which dealt with the impacts of the colonial contact and the process of trauma recycling through a variety of healing strategies aimed at renewal and healing.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the representation of trauma and the narrative healing strategies employed in overcoming the historical wounding with a focus on the role of the non-human nature in such a process. Thus, this work raises several questions such as: How do the Irish and the Native American peoples view nature? How the native myths, ceremonies and traditions rotate around the natural biotic and abiotic environment? What is the colonizer's vision towards nature? How the rupture with the land caused an accumulation of traumas for the colonized Native Americans and the Irish? What are the different narrative healing strategies used by Silko and Curtis to recycle the historical wounding? What does the concept of healing mean to both literatures?

The choice of dealing with the theme of healing is highly motivated by the fact that though this theme is very important, it does not receive the attention it deserves. Few attem-

pts have been made to analyze the healing strategies presented by these narratives. Much focus has been directed to healing as a thematical aspect of the plot and not as a general theme characterizing the whole narratives. Also, no attempt has been made to compare between the Irish and the Native American narratives of healing. Therefore, the choice of dealing with a Native American and an Irish novel is not haphazard. For certainly the Irish and the Native American peoples share the same colonial experience. Moreover, many historians and observers claimed that Ireland provided a model for England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for colonizing the New World. Also, a variety of pejorative qualities which are assumed to be found in the Irish people were projected into the Native People of the New World. This included barbarity, drunkenness, nakedness, and resistance. Therefore, the colonized Native Americans were treated brutally like the Irish.

Choosing to tackle an Irish novel in particular is due to the fact that Ireland is sometimes ignored compared to the other historically marginalized communities. The strong resemblance between the Irish and the British in color and in many other qualities invites a blurring of boundaries that's why Ireland was called by many historians "the white colony". However, though the Irish were white, they did not escape the harsh teeth of colonization. Moreover, Ireland's coloniability was put into question mainly in the nineteenth century by some commentators who saw that Ireland's situation was not comparable to other colonies. Therefore, this study proves the opposite. The aim is to show and ascertain that Ireland's situation was far more gloomy than many other colonies. The Irish people's colonial experience was harsh and painful since they were brutally treated by the British hegemony despite being white and not so different from the British people. Therefore, through this study, the more will be known about the Irish culture, literature, trauma, and healing strategies.

Through an ecocritical approach, *Ceremony* and *The Lightning Tree* are analyzed and compared by delineating the different relationships these narratives have with the non-human nature. The term Ecocriticism first appeared in a 1978 essay by William Rueckert entitled “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”. As a theory of literary criticism, Ecocriticism emerged in the 1990s. Its proponents were called “ecocritics”. They established the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) and the Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment journal (ISLE). In fact, Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach defined by Cheryll Glotfelty as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). It takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies and aims to preserve the “where” without which there can not be “is” or the survival of mankind. Therefore, this thesis examines the relationship between the characters in both novels and the physical world and how nature contributes to healing and survival. In addition, some other theories and disciplines may be used when necessary. This may include history and psychoanalysis.

The work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter examines the importance of nature and the trauma of the rupture with it. It includes three sections. The first section deals with the significance of the native environment for the indigenous colonized and their engagement and enchantment with nature. The second section of this chapter is about the colonizer’s view of the native land. The third section considers the rupture with the native environment and the accumulation of traumas it caused in the colonized Native American and Irish people. This included a trauma of acculturation, of the colonizer's language, of Christianity, of the written Eurocentric tradition. Thus, a historical account of this destructive encounter is also emphasized.

The second chapter of this study deals with the process of recycling trauma through a variety of healing strategies characterizing Silko and Curtis’s novels. Thus, each section of

this chapter examines a narrative healing strategy. In fact, as much as colonization was brutal, native people's resistance was fierce, this entailed the rejection of all what was associated with the colonizer including the language, the Christian religion, the written Eurocentric tradition, and the modern healing remedies. As part of reconstructing the native identity, the colonized people sought to return to their precolonial past characterized by an oral tradition, pagan religions, a native language, and traditional ecological healing.

The third chapter is also divided into three sections. It sheds light on the prominent literary symbols and motifs rotating around the theme of healing. Also, it focuses on the narrative structure characterizing the two novels.

# CHAPTER I

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## **Nature and the Trauma of the Rupture with It**

I. 1. The Significance of the Native Environment for the Indigenous Colonized: Engagement and enchantment with nature).

I. 2. The Colonizer's View of the Natives' Land.

I. 3. Trauma of the Rupture with the Native Environment.

I. 3.1. Trauma of Acculturation.

I. 3.2. Trauma of the Colonizer's Language.

I. 3.3. Trauma of Christianity.

## **CHAPTER ONE: Nature and the Trauma of the Rupture with It**

### **I. The Significance of the Native Environment for the Indigenous Colonized:**

#### **Engagement and Enchantment with Nature**

Throughout history, indigenous peoples from all over the subjugated peripheries demonstrated a keen affinity with nature and the natural biotic and abiotic environment. Nature provided them with a sense of rootedness and belonging. This sense of place and locality helped them define themselves as well as the other who is not part of their locality; thus, it was regarded as an essential marker of their identity. Lawrence Buell said that “there cannot be is without where” (qtd. in Tošić 44), his statement confirms the fact that one’s personal identity is always identified with the physical environment to which one belongs.

Nature was present in every aspect of native peoples’ lives and they relied on it for shelter, spirituality, and everyday survival. In fact, the connectedness with Mother Nature was at the very heart of the native culture which manifested a strong engagement with the flora<sup>1</sup> and fauna<sup>2</sup> of the ecosystem. Certainly, the native inhabitants seemed to be the paragons of what it meant to have an intimate acquaintance with nature over the tendency of considering it as “Other”.

The environmentalist David Seamon stated that the people-place relationship can be explored in terms of a triadic relationship among three dimensions of place, the first of which he called “the geographical ensemble” which refers to the material environment whether natural or human-made. Secondly, “people-in-place” dimension, this refers to individual and group actions and intentions towards the place. Thirdly, “spirit of place”, or what he called “genius loci”. i.e. the atmosphere and character of the place. (qtd. in Casakin and Bernardo 10-11). Undoubtedly, indigenous people-place relationship presents a clear intimate interconnectedness between the three aforementioned dimensions.

In fact, everything in the landscape has special significance for the native inhabitants for the native customs, stories, myths, ceremonies, spiritual practices, and cures all rotate around nature and the native biotic and abiotic environment, Stella Tamang explains this relationship saying:

“[I]ndigenous peoples... have an intimate connection to the land; the rationale for talking about who they are is tied to the land. They have clear symbols in their language that connect them to places on their land... we have groups that only can achieve their spiritual place on the planet by going to a certain location”. (Tamang)

Furthermore, the native people had a tendency of identifying themselves with their lands; they consider themselves and the land as one. Indeed, the land is the source of their physical and spiritual sustenance and without which their presence would be impossible. This was evident when the Indigenous Peoples in the Kimberley Declaration stated:

Our lands and territories are at the core of our existence – we are the land and the land is us; we have a distinct spiritual and material relationship with our lands and territories and they are inextricably linked to our survival and to the preservation and further development of our knowledge systems and cultures... (Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism)

As far as Ireland is concerned, the unique geological heritage of the Island contributed to its distinctive nature, rendering it abundant and diverse in its flora and fauna. Ireland was characterized by a rural landscape including two famous types of wild habitats, namely the “woodland” and the “bog-land”. The former is a land covered with woody vegetation and the latter is a wetland providing people with water and inhibiting flooding. Another famous type of habitat in Ireland is “the demesne” which is a cultivated manorial land traditionally owned



by the lords. These natural habitats shaped the Irish society and culture which were characterized by a farming tradition.

Actually, many English writers considered Ireland as the land of future prospects and great opportunities. This is due to the rich landscape of the country which was characterized by special varieties of animal, plant and wild lives. Therefore, the Island of Ireland was not only celebrated in Irish writings but also in the extensive literary productions of many English writers who depicted Ireland and its rich nature. One of these writers was the famous poet and colonial administrator Edmund Spenser<sup>3</sup>, who, in his *A View of the Present State of Ireland*<sup>4</sup>, argued:

And sure it is yet a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under Heaven, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly, sprinkled with many very sweet islands and goodly lakes ...as that, if some princes in this world had them, they would soon hope to be lords of all the seas, and ere long of all the world; also full of very good ports and havens opening upon England, as inviting us to come unto them, to see what excellent commodities that country can afford, besides the soil itself most fertile, fit to yield all kinds of fruit that shall be committed thereunto... (qtd. in Wright 494)

The colonizer's vivid depictions of Ireland may trick the reader into believing that the oppressor is praising the country's richness. However, these depictions are a clear indication of the colonizer's envy of the Irish people because England did not possess such diversity of flora and fauna. Also, they are widely considered as discourses of colonial propaganda aimed at attracting more settlements into the Irish land. The agricultural writer Robert Payne was also one of those English writers like Spenser to paint glowing depictions of Ireland to encourage more English planters to come and settle there. Surprisingly, even the Irish birds

did not escape his descriptions and envy as when he argued that “There be great store of wild Swannes, Cranes, Pheasantes, Partridges, Heathcocks, Plovers, green and gray, Curlewes, Woodcockes, Rayles, Quailles, & all other fowles much more plentiful then in England” (qtd. in Foster and Chesney 28).

In fact, the Irish, particularly the ancient Celts of Ireland, were called “animists” because they used to believe that spirits inhabit all the world and so all the natural things, animals, plants, rocks, and rivers ...etc, have spirit. Thus, all constituents of nature were revered as being the abodes of divine beings or being divine beings in themselves. Many other places were seen as mediation between the human and the powerful spirits. Moreover, in Ireland there was the tendency to identify and define places by a natural constituent whether it be a bog, a river or a hill... etc. Henceforth, this generated a kind of place and typography lore. Undoubtedly, the Irish people had a strong and close association with the natural environment. This was also evident in the relationship which exists between the people and the fauna of Ireland. Animals played a central role in the Celtic life because the people depended on them for everyday survival through hunting. This latter was carried out through a sacred ritual since the prey was regarded as a gift from the Divine Spirit<sup>5</sup> and in many cases the prey was given as an offering to the Divine Spirit itself; therefore, it was highly respected. Not only this, but also, many Irish deities’ names were associated with particular animals and seemed to possess both human and animal features or metamorphosed into a particular animalistic form.

As for the Native Americans, they had a sacred vision about the land and this was clearly manifested through their strong animism, reverence and respect for the nature’s flora and fauna. The land was a source of physical and spiritual sustenance and the definer of individual and tribal identity. Furthermore, it was the source of the native traditions, myths,

stories and ceremonies. In fact, the native people of the Americas are the pioneers of the biocentric vision towards nature as they were aware of the interconnectedness and the value of all the creatures on the Earth. This vision was evident in many discourses of Native American writers (oral and written) such as the narratives of the famous Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko who believes that the human individual is only a part of the net of nature, possessing the same intrinsic value as any other of its constituents; thus, she argues:

The term *landscape*, as it has entered into the English language, is misleading. ‘A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view’ does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *outside* or *separate from* the territory he or she surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (“Yellow Woman” 27).

The Native American landscape tradition can be further clarified through the famous association and identification of certain tribes with special places in the land. According to Alfonso Ortiz this process is termed “precise spatial referents.” (135). These precise spatial referents are certain places which are considered as home for the tribe and also as the origin of their creation. Silko called this “the Emergence Place” which is also the origin of the tribe’s ancestors and she accorded it with a physical as well as spiritual importance; hence, she argues:

The small spring near the Paguete village is literally the source and continuance of life for people in the area. The spring also functions on a spiritual level, recalling the original Emergence Place and linking the people and the spring water to all other people and to that moment when the Pueblo people became aware of themselves as

they are even now. The Emergence was an emergence into a precise cultural identity.  
("Yellow Woman" 36)

According to the Native Americans, the land was equal to man. This fact was evident in a collection of Native American stories entitled *American Indian Myths and Legends* written by Alfonso Ortiz and Richard Erdoes. In one of the creation stories entitled "How the Sioux Came to Be", the ancestors of the Sioux<sup>6</sup> nation were killed because of a flood and their blood created a pipe-stone quarry, which turned to be the tomb of the Sioux ancestors. Since then the pipe has become a sacred thing for the people who claimed that when using it in a ceremony, the pipe comes alive. Therefore, the place which entombed the dead bodies of the ancestors inevitably gained their spirit and become a hallowed place embodying the ancestor's very being. By drawing the parallel, it possessed the same qualities of the ancestors, including their power and wisdom. As for the stories, everything in the native environment has a story to tell; henceforth, in order to understand nature, one has to return to the native stories and by turn, nature itself is essential to the act of storytelling because it provides the impetus for the latter. This intertwining of nature with storytelling through the appropriation of nature in the creation of stories is said to be crucial for the Native American oral tradition. The same was true with ceremonies whose form and length depended on the place where they were to be performed.

Concerning the relationship between the Native Americans and the animals of the land, it was one based on equality and respect. This was evident in many Native American narratives. Certainly, the ecological Native American was and is a friend with the animal beings: speaking to them, understanding them, and even transforming into them. Besides, during the act of hunting, the Native American considers the animal as an equal and not as an inferior prey to be hunted. Carolyn Merchant seemed to confirm this fact, especially when he

claimed "... during the hunt, humans and animals confronted each other as autonomous subjects, not as subject and object..." (47)

## **I. 2. The Colonizer's View of the Natives' Land**

Unlike the native people's biocentric vision of the land, the colonizer's vision was largely anthropocentric and thus totally the opposite. From an anthropocentric point of view, the human being is at the top of the Earth's menu and the only one possessing an intrinsic value. Therefore, nature was assessed according to its usefulness for the human and so it had only an instrumental value. Actually, Western philosophy used this perspective to justify the colonizer's excessive interference with the native nature and his wanton destruction of it. While the native peoples would value the rich forest and the fertile land for its aesthetical, cultural, spiritual, and healing significance, the colonizer would regard them as a source of raw materials to be exploited for the sake of the colonial mercantile industry.

In fact, the colonizer had not only an anthropocentric vision towards nature, but also an ambivalent one. His depiction of nature was twofold. On the one hand, nature was regarded as pristine, pure and good. On the other hand, it was seen as savage, feral and unregenerate. This was evident during the Elizabethan period when the density of the indigenous forests was seen as a mixed blessing. Though the forests provided timber for the building of the English ships, which meant that timber was a staple raw material, the forests were also abhorred for sheltering the "enemies of the Empire": the Irish or the Native American soldiers. Henceforth, Queen Elizabeth I ordered the cutting down of these forests.

In a point of fact, the native land was criticized the same way as its inhabitants. William King in his *of the Bogs and Loughs of Ireland*, which was published in 1685, described the Irish bogs and large bog-lands as "infamous" and "barbaric" (qtd. in Foster

and Chesney 26). Strangely enough, he also argued that these bogs helped the colonizer in capturing the natives who used them as places to hide in. Clearly, this further demonstrates the ambivalent vision that he and his people have towards the land, especially when he stated that "... the bogs are a shelter and a refuge to Tories (dispossessed natives turned outlaws), and thieves, who can hardly live without them." (qtd. in Foster and Chesney 27).

When the British colonial power launched its imperialistic project overseas, the native peoples' natural environment turned to be the battlefield for the colonizer-colonized struggle and conflicts. It was all in and about the native land, as David Walbert said "The Natives had it; the Europeans wanted it" (qtd. in LEARN NC). Moreover, the colonial power's claim for the dispossession of the native inhabitants' lands was justified by two main pretexts. The first is that the native people, particularly the Irish, were "undeserving custodians" (Foster and Chesney 28) so the richness of the land was wasted and misspent by the irrational, unwise and aggressive native Irish. As for the second pretext, which is the case of the Native Americans, it was "terra nullius" the Latin Word for "nobody's land", this entailed the denial of the existence of the native inhabitants, or even when acknowledging their existence, denying any effort made by them to improve the land. In other words, Western explorers believed that it was their right to seize and own these lands.

The English colonial rule of Ireland has a very long history dating back to the Norman Invasion of the Island of Ireland in the Twelfth Century. Henry II is said to be the first English King to set foot on the Irish soil and later granting his part of the Irish land to his son John Lackland who was declared Lord of Ireland. Therefore, the Lordship of Ireland belonged to the Crown of England. At that time, Ireland was not fully controlled by the English Crown until the Irish Earls started to rebel and posed a threat to the English

hegemonic power there. Subsequently, Henry VIII declared himself King of Ireland. The period of his reign was critical in the history of Ireland because he introduced a policy known as the “plantations of Ireland”. This cruel policy involved the confiscation of the native lands and the planting of foreign settlers from England, Wales and Scotland who were Protestants and came in huge numbers to colonize the area.

This harsh policy was also pursued by many subsequent Queens and Kings including Mary I, Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I, marking its final phase under Oliver Cromwell who enabled thousands of his soldiers to settle in Ireland. In addition to the British settlers, a huge flux of immigrants flooded the country till the Eighteenth century. The result of this policy was that the native Irish were dispossessed of their lands and dislocated from their native environment. Besides, the character of Pre-plantation Gaelic Ireland was dramatically changed by creating alien communities within the Irish mainstream community. The situation was further aggravated by the system known as “Landlordism” which shaped much of Ireland’s history and showed the greedy and the hypocrite colonial mentality of Britain towards the native inhabitants and their dearest lands.

Under this system of Landlordism, the lands were grabbed from the native population who were prominently Catholic, and given to the Protestant landlords (the Nobles, soldiers, wealthy people of England). The landlords would not cultivate these lands, rather they rented them to the poor Irish peasants for a set price and for a short-term period. Without any lease of the agreement made between the lessor and the lessee, the tenant farmer could be driven out at any moment. Furthermore, the tenant farmers get nothing for their improvements of the rented farm and the outcome of their hard labor is exported to the colonial center. The severity of the situation under this system was hardly felt during the Irish Famine, when the native Irish people were left to starve to death, though their country was a major food exporter.

In contrast, the English tenants enjoyed many privileges. They had the right to get a written lease of the tenancy agreement and to enjoy a long-term tenancy. Besides, they were compensated for their improvements of the rented farm. Also, of a commonplace in Ireland was the tendency known as “Absentee landlords”, which refers to the landlords who did not live in the region where their property exists; however, they still could rent the land and earn the profit by managing this from far (England) usually through agents. These unfair practices were enforced by law, especially when the English Parliament passed the “Landlord and Tenant Act” in 1870 which aimed at increasing the price of the rents in order to make more profits.

A period of civil unrest, marked by violence and bloodshed, ensued and was called “The Land War” during which appeared the Irish National Land League: a group of Irish rebels who called for a land reform and redistribution to improve the situation of the Irish tenant farmers. They also called for the abolition of the unfair and cruel system of Landlordism. Their demands were widely known as the “3 Fs” which meant fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure. They used strikes in order to get their demands enforced by the landlords. However, the landlords had the law by their side and as a result the strikers were evicted. In response, members of the Irish National Land League along with their supporters resorted to killing some landlords and their agents as well as destroying their property. The British Imperial Power responded by deploying its army to support the police in enforcing the evictions.

It seemed that the colonial center, the settler, and the writer as well were all aware of the strong link between the Irish people, the land, the soil, and the seeds. Consequently, they viewed the Irish land and its people through the same gloomy light. As did Sir John Davies in 1612 when he used a hypocrite metaphor to suggest a practical plan for defeating Ireland:



For the husbandman must first break the land before it be made capable of good seed; and when it is thoroughly broken and manured, if he do not forthwith cast good seed into it, it will grow wild again and bear nothing but weeds: so a barbarous country must be first broken by a war before it will be capable of good government; and when it is fully subdued and conquered, if it be not well-planted and governed after the conquest, it will often return to the former barbarism. (3- 4)

The situation of the Native Americans was not less gloomy than that of their Irish counterparts. For the Native Americans misfortune, was the arrival of Christopher Columbus to rediscover what was already there tens of thousands of years ago. With the financial support of the Spanish Crown, precisely the Crown of Castile under the reign of King Ferdinand<sup>7</sup> and Queen Isabella<sup>8</sup>, Christopher Columbus launched his expedition on August 1492. His aim was to reach the East Indies in order to secure a westward sea route for the spice trade so that the Spanish traders would not have to pay the tributes when trading overland. He returned one year later with gold and some “exotic, erotic, and barbaric beings” [the native inhabitants]. In fact, the place he rediscovered was not the East Indies, but rather an already inhabited continent just unknown to him and his Europeans. For the Americas was already discovered in the Eleventh century by Leif Erikson during the Viking expedition, and subsequently by Amerigo Vespucci, the Florentine explorer whom the continent was named after.

Columbus, refusing to admit that what he had found was not the East Indies “creating the myth and believing it”, named the native inhabitants “Indios” the Spanish word for “Indians”. Henceforth, that is why the native people of the Americas were called “Indians”, “American Indians”, “the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas”. In fact, Columbus paved the way for the systematic European exploration and colonization of the New World through

the establishment of trade routes, colonies, and slave trade. As the Viceroy and Governor of all the places he had landed on and subsequently claimed for the Spanish Crown, Columbus and his soldiers committed many atrocities which included killing, torturing, enslaving, and forcing the natives to reveal the place of the alleged gold treasures. When Columbus fell sick, the situation was aggravated because his soldiers went even wilder and so they killed and tortured more and more natives. Upon his recovery, Columbus responded to his soldiers' acts by only reorganizing the unorganized killings and raiding the countryside. The result of such a raid was best given in the words of the Spanish missionary, Bartolomé De Las Casas, who witnessed the atrocity and evoked it most vividly:

Once the Indians were in the woods, the next step was to reform squadrons and pursue them, and whenever the Spaniards found them, they pitilessly slaughtered everyone like sheep in a corral. It was a general rule among Spaniards to be cruel; not just cruel, but extraordinarily cruel so that harsh and bitter treatment would prevent Indians from daring to think of themselves as human beings or having a minute to think at all. So they would cut an Indian's hands and leave them dangling by a shred of skin and they would send him on saying 'Go now, spread the news to your chiefs'. They would test their swords and their manly strength on captured Indians and place bets on the slicing off of heads or the cutting of bodies in half with one blow. (qtd. in Stannard 70).

Furthermore, the native leaders, along with the native inhabitants, were captured, chained and sent to Spain to be displayed in public as "Columbus's newly found exotic beings" and who are to work as slaves in the colonial center. Many died before even reaching the journey's final destination "Spain". Therefore, the Native Americans were enslaved for labor on their native land as well as in the colonial center. They had to collect a sum of gold over a period of three months and hand it to the Spaniards who would give them

a copper token. The Indians had to hang this copper token around their necks otherwise their hands would be amputated. Many Native Americans, after having their hands amputated, were left to bleed to death. (Stannard 70-71).

The Native Indians' hardships and sufferance continued throughout the age of exploration and the British Empire building. The English also wanted to secure a free spice trade route to the Far East. Therefore, as Spain controlled much of South and Central America, England sought to obtain the North American eastern coast. Queen Elizabeth I was the first British ruler to grant a royal permission for the colonization of America. She granted patents to Sir Humphrey Gilbert and subsequently to his half-brother Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>9</sup>. Clearly, this marked the beginning of the systematic British colonization of the New World and the establishment of colonies there and the further subjugation of the native people.

The colonial project in Ireland and the New World can be better understood through the Indian environmental activist Vandana Shiva who, in her book entitled *Biopiracy*<sup>10</sup>, claimed that the natives' lands were appropriated by the European hegemonic powers through legal means, including charters, patents and Papal Bulls without any concern for the native inhabitants who were brutally killed and enslaved. Consequently, the colonial power gained wealth and property through the piracy of that of the others and the natives' dispossession and extermination was natural under the law of colonial governments. (Shiva 2)

### **I. 3. Trauma of the Rupture with the Native Environment**

Apart from the harsh physical wounding of the poor native bodies, there was a far hard psychological wounding as the troubled native souls suffered deeply under the cruelty of colonization. The rupture with the native environment resulted in an accumulation of traumas which were inflicted upon the indigenous inhabitants "the victims of the colonial contact".

This included a trauma of acculturation, a trauma of the colonizer's language, and a trauma of Christianity.

### **I. 3.1 Trauma of Acculturation:**

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized was one of domination and inequality. The prolonged colonial contact between two different cultures like that of the colonizer and the colonized had severe effects on the culture under domination. One of these effects is the process known as acculturation which entailed a cultural and psychological change. Although the process of acculturation is supposed to involve a mutual change, much focus was directed towards the colonized people's adaptations to the colonizer's culture. This is largely due to the Eurocentric nature of theory and research which refuses to acknowledge any possible effect of the culture of the colonized "the culture of the inferior" on the "superior" culture of the colonizer.

Given the destructive influence of the colonial power on the subjugated people, their traditional heritage: native customs, beliefs, cultural identity, and behaviors could not remain intact. They had no option but to embrace many features of the foreign dominant culture. In this process of acculturation the native peoples adapt to the newly imposed reality and atmosphere through merging their traditional cultural practices with the newly acquired ones. As a result, they remain in an in-betweenness. They are neither able to remain faithful to their traditions, nor able to assimilate into the colonial dominant society. Therefore, the subjugated natives experience a dilemma that further aggravates their psychological situation.

In fact, acculturation affected all aspects of the natives' lives because it caused many physical, psychological, biological, political, economic, and cultural changes. A physical change occurs when the native peoples are dislocated from their native land and relocated in another land, this results in their estrangement and detachment from their ecological setting.

Psychological change can be related to the loss of self-confidence due to a sense of inferiority and a dilemma of whether to keep a grip on one's own cultural values and norms or to relinquish them and embrace those of the foreign culture. As far as the biological change is concerned, it may occur because of the colonial nutrition systems which are detrimental to the colonized people's health and may cause famine as in the case of Ireland or the epidemics which were introduced by the colonizer to diminish the Native American population.

Accordingly, political change takes place when the colonized group remains under the political dominance and hegemony of the colonial power; thus, remains in a state of dependency and non-self determination. As for the economic effect of acculturation, it is mainly associated with the introduction of new economic systems and patterns which challenge and seek to destroy traditional economic pursuits such as hunting and farming. Concerning the cultural change resulting from the process of acculturation and which lies at the core of its definition, it occurs when one's cultural values, norms, beliefs, religion, and language are affected by that of the foreign culture causing a change or replacement of the aforementioned aspects with the newly encountered ones.

Certainly, this process of acculturation is clearly linked to the stereotyping associated with the colonized subjects. The colonizer considers the colonized as an "inferior other"; therefore, never equal. This entails that any desire for a possible assimilation into the dominant culture is clearly impossible even if the natives wanted to fully integrate. The colonizer worked hard to destroy all the pre-contact traditions and practices of the colonized, forcing them to embrace the colonizer's dominant culture. However, they are never regarded as equal. Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* confirmed this point when he clearly argued against two of Homi K. Bhabha's central concepts "hybridity"<sup>11</sup> and "colonial mimicry"<sup>12</sup> which may entail the suppression of the native cultural identity and traditions in

the effort to be like the colonizer. He claimed that the colonial subject will never be acknowledged as equal to the “White” colonizer.

According to Fanon, the colonized people experience a kind of “‘internalized guilt’” because they have internalized the notion of the colonizer’s superiority; therefore, they feel guilty for not being “White” or like the “superior” colonizer. Despite many attempts from the part of the colonized people to assimilate, especially those native collaborators or loyalists to the hegemonic system who imitated the whites in every aspect in an attempt to be powerful like the colonizer, they are never accepted as equals because the colonizer wanted them to “remain exoticized but denigrated ‘others’ ”( qtd. in Shaffer 107). Fanon believes that culture is the source of identity; henceforth, it should oppose any form of multiculturalism or hybridity. Consequently, the native people are expected not only to venerate their traditions and belong loyally to their homeland and nation, but also to clearly reject and fight that of the colonizer.

In fact, the natives were seen as untamed people whose assimilation proved to be a very difficult task because they were starkly different from the white colonizers. Consequently, the vocabulary of the imperial culture was full of pejorative adjectives used to describe these colonized people like: barbaric, erotic, primitive, inferior, subordinate to mention but a few. This was further clarified by Edward Said when he argued:

As well as the stereotypes about ‘the African [or Indian or Irish or Jamaican or Chinese] mind,’ the notions about bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples, the disturbingly familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishment being required when ‘they’ misbehaved or became rebellious, because ‘they’ mainly understood force or violence best; ‘they’ were not like ‘us,’ and for that reason deserved to be ruled. (Intro)

Indeed, the colonizer's view of the colonized's society and people was largely disparaging and hostile, manifesting itself clearly in the process of stereotyping. The white colony Ireland was invaded by a whole new society, forcing the native people of the land to integrate into the newly imposed culture. During the Elizabethan period, the Irish soldiers who hid in the woods and bogs were called wolves, wood-kerne<sup>13</sup>, and bog-Irish. These labels were also propagated in the colonial discourses of Spenser. Hence, the Irish people were considered as the animals of the woods and bogs only because they were talented at concealing from the enemy who in the first place dislocated them from their native land and drove them into the bogs and woods. Moreover, over centuries, there was an invidious observation and comparison about Ireland made by Laurence Echard that "All living Creatures, besides Men, Women and Greyhounds, are smaller than ours in England" (qtd. in Foster and Chesney 38).

Also, Giraldus Cambrensis<sup>14</sup> described the native Irish as "gens barbara" which means barbarous people because they were "ignorant"; hence, they can be brought into civility only via religious reform. Indeed, Spenser held the same view as Cambrensis for he also claimed that the Irish people were barbaric due to their supposed descent from the "Scythians", ancient Iranian nomadic people. Henceforth, he concluded that the "civilized" English should break the Irish by "famine, sword, and cultural trauma" (qtd. in Cairns and Richards 4). This was the prerequisite for any subsequent reform. Even worse, John Derrick claimed that the nature of the Irish people was so intractable that it was easier to tame the wild beasts than to convert the wild Irish individual. Generally, the Irish people were largely described as lazy, pagans, and walking barefooted as the barbarians to mention but a few of the repository of derogatory terms ascribed to the Irish natives.

A key to understanding the trauma of acculturation and the impossibility of assimilation is what the New English settlers among them Spenser had called “cultural pollution”. The Irish people were considered as a threat to Spenser and his English newcomers because their culture would denigrate any other culture which is exposed to it. Spenser gave the example of the Old English settlers who intermarried with the Native Irish and as a result of this they were no longer regarded as English subjects because they got polluted when merged with the Irish culture; therefore, Spenser asked whether “is it possible that an Englishman, brought up naturally in such sweet civility as England affords could find such liking in that barbarous rudeness that he should forget his own nature and forgo his own nation?” (33).

Thus, for Spenser the Native Irish were clearly “Other”, their assimilation proved to be impossible given the supposition that they would pollute the New English settlers as they did to the Old ones. However, they were needed as a labor force. Hence, the colonial proposal was to maim the Irish culture in order to remove its pollution and refashion it according to the English perspectives and tastes, but still rendering it different and distant from the English elevated culture. Henceforth, the Irish people remain an “Other”, who is always in a continuous English process of refashioning along which he is used and exploited by the New English.

In 1594, Marcus Gheeraerts<sup>15</sup> made a portrait of Sir Thomas Lee, the commander of English troops in Ireland during the Elizabethan conquest, in this portrait Thomas Lee appears wearing conventional Elizabethan clothing on the upper body but his legs and feet were bare like that of the Irish soldier. Consequently, he was depicted as a hyphenated man who is half English, half Irish. Thomas Lee was seen as drifting into barbarity and savagery



for looking like a “Wild Irish” and only through the erasure of the Irish culture, he could be restored to his English civility.

As a result, a process of acculturation rather than assimilation was taking place, given the fact that the Native Irish were always considered as inferior to the New English arrivals. Even so, such process of acculturation was denounced by many Irish poets who refused any form of cultural fusion between the Irish and the English, though at that time they were not even sure of the loyalty of their audience and leaders:

Native poets denounced the exponents of cultural fusion, sarcastically addressing audiences of whose loyalty they could no longer be sure as (O people Irish-English); or they berated an ambivalent leader (with one shoe Gaelic, and the other shoe English)”. (Kiberd 10-11).

By the same token, the Native Americans experienced the same kind of stereotyping and trauma of acculturation. The very first misconception inflicted upon the poor Native Americans was that of labeling them Indians. Though the place that Columbus reached was not the East Indies, he insisted on naming them Indians. Henceforth, overgeneralizing the term to all the many different Native American tribes; thus, denying their diversity, rich traditions, social structures, dialects, and practices. The true story was clarified in Allan Hope<sup>16</sup>'s song which recycled the big lie of the centuries:

I am Christopher columbus  
just call me cris  
i am de who did miss the land  
india  
i thought i'd discover  
that which was never

how clever of me to see the land  
 beyond  
 i came to tame  
 and claim (Columbus Ghost)

Obviously, the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized were starkly different. European settlers considered many of the Native American practices and traditions as superstitious simply because they did not understand them. Though the Native Peoples of America had a well-organized social structures and tribal rules, they were seen as savages. As a result, the conquistadors' policy was assimilation or extermination. The necessity of this forced assimilation was justified through a process of stereotyping. When the Native Americans are stereotyped as "Other", the white's civilizing mission becomes an inevitable and an effective pretext to force American Indians to overthrow their traditional lifestyles and adopt those of the white colonizers in order to be assimilated into the dominant white culture and be brought into civility.

Accordingly, a process of stereotyping was evident in many American Captivity Narratives, the famous of which is Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings and Removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, the narrative depicted the native captors in a dark and negative manner, showing the Native Americans as savage, barbarous, predators, merciless, and inhuman. The author portrayed many brutal killing scenes as when she wrote "... they knock'd him on the head, stripped him naked, and split open his Bowels" (Rowlandson 12). The natives were also described as bears and wolves attacking "innocent" English men; therefore, Rowlandson depicted them as animals, especially when she stated that "It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of Sheep torn by wolves" (14).

A best example of the trauma that the Native Americans experienced upon the arrival of the European foreign settlers and which resulted from the dilemma of cultural assimilation is Camilla Townsend's *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*. Pocahontas, King Powhatan's daughter, had to find a way to live between her native culture and that of the European invaders while all the way trying to settle the dissonance which existed between the two starkly different cultures in Jamestown colony in Virginia. She accepted to marry an Englishman and depart to England in order to protect the interest of her people. However, the narrative of Townsend perpetuated and maintained many of the old stereotypes about the Indigenous Peoples of America, especially that of the "Indian princess" which was expressed through the character of Pocahontas.

Through the alleged rescue of Captain John Smith by Pocahontas, their relationship was romanticized and the native women were portrayed as driven by their sexual desires and love for the white settlers; henceforth, their easy adaptation to the "superior" white culture. Pocahontas was described as the "Indian princess" the term itself is an oxymoron because the word princess alludes to aristocracy and such aristocracy does not exist in the Native American culture since this latter is based on egalitarianism. Walt Disney's reproductions and cartoons also perpetuated such kind of stereotyping.

Moreover, James Fenimore Cooper's work *The Last of the Mohicans*, though perpetuating the stereotype of the "Wise/Brave" Indian; it clearly manifested an encouragement for the separation between the Native Americans and the whites in the New World. The American frontier employed by Cooper in the story symbolizes the white men's set rules to which the natives must conform and respect. The author concluded that the natives cannot be brought into civility; therefore, they remain denigrated others and white men's "serfs". Hence, he stated that "The pale faces are masters of the earth, and the time of

the red men has not yet come again... have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.’’ (Cooper 698).

Clearly, the process of acculturation caused a trauma for the indigenous colonized, because they were placed in two different clashing cultures, each of which was trying to win his loyalty and claims it for itself. Definitely, this created an immense cultural conflict as embracing any of the new patterns of the dominant culture was seen as a kind of betrayal to one’s own culture of origin. The latter is the source of their spirituality and their ancestors’ culture. Clearly, a double sense of guilt is experienced: for betraying their culture of origin and for not being accepted in the culture they adopted and adapted to. Despite resistance from the part of the native colonized to the forced process of acculturation, there was an inevitable cultural change in a way or another due to the prolonged colonial contact.

### **I. 3.2. Trauma of the colonizer’s language:**

The colonial project was launched under the hymn of civilizing the “uncivilized” natives. This civilizing mission entailed the erasure of the native culture. As language is the marker of cultural identity, it was the target of such devastating project. It can be said that the slogan of the colonial hegemony was “Civilizing through Anglicising”. Therefore, the imperial power sought to exert its control over the native language using various mechanisms. These mechanisms were clearly stated by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their collection “*The Post-colonial Studies Reader*”:

The control over language by the imperial center – whether achieved by displacing native languages, by installing itself as a ‘standard’ against other variants which are constituted as ‘impurities’, or by planting the language of empire in a new place – remains the most potent instrument of cultural control. (Ashcroft et al. 261).

Therefore, all what was native including the language was regarded as an impurity and the colonial authority's task was to remove such impurities and impose its language upon them. Language has the power of constituting and shaping reality, it has the power to name and therefore define and tame. When the oppressor's language is used to name the native peoples or their land, it surely exerts power over them because it provides the only means through which they can be known. Moreover, the colonized people's language goes right to the core of their perception of themselves and the understanding of their identity. Accordingly, the imperial language works to disrupt the colonized people's identity which is embedded in the native language.

The trauma of the colonized people is that when his native language is oppressed and suppressed, everything associated with it will undergo the same. i.e. The disruption of the native language means a disruption of cultural identity, of place names, of reality, and of belonging... etc. Not only this, but also the colonized is put under a great pressure: many privileges are associated with the use of the imperial language, thus in order to benefit from such privileges and gain white man's recognition, the wretched native should adopt his enemy's language. Otherwise, he would be alienated, marginalized, and pushed outside of the "white, superior, and civilized" zone. Trauma is culminated when the colonized experiences a sense of inferiority for not being a speaker of the oppressor's language, and of naively believing that it is the language of humanity and civilization. These psychological effects were confirmed by Fanon, whose descriptions can be overgeneralized to all the colonized peoples across the globe:

The Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language... The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. (8-9)

In Ireland, the growth of the colonial Empire went hand in hand with the planting of the English language in the Irish land. There was a repository of terms used to describe each language showing them as rivals. On the one hand, the colonial language “English”, was considered by its speakers as the language of modernity, commerce, morality, and intellect. On the other hand, the Irish language was regarded as the language of the spirit, Irishness, ancestors, and the past. However, “Irish is familiar; English is foreign. English is familiar; Irish is foreign.” (Crowley 1), thus from here emerged the conflict.

The colonizer executed a harsh colonial plan aimed at quelling all what was Irish, especially the language and religion. This plan drove the Irish language to the near extinction. The English language of the Crown was the language of the new settlements in Ireland and thus it has to be planted there whatever was the consequence for the native Irishmen. The law was implemented to destroy the Irish Gaelic language which was regarded as a contagion that inflected the pure English language and its subjects. An instance of this was “The Statutes of Kilkenny”, a series of acts passed in 1366 in the Irish city of Kilkenny, when the English settlers were drifting away from the English laws and customs, and becoming “more Irish than the Irish themselves” (Crowley 13). The authority’s response was to oblige them, along with the Irish natives, to use the English tongue and relinquish the Irish language in order not to be punished. In one of these Acts it is stated:

...and if any English, or Irish living among the English, use the Irish language amongst themselves, contrary to this ordinance, and thereof be attained, his lands and tenements, if he have any, shall be seized into the hands of his immediate lord, until he shall come to one of the places of our Lord the King, and find sufficient surety to adopt and use the English language...In case that such person shall not have lands and tenements, his body shall be taken off by any of the officers of our Lord the King...

(Crowley 15).

In addition, those Irish farmers who rented the lord's lands were given a long-term tenancy if they used the English tongue and broke any dealings with the other native Irish. Evidently, the situation was far worse in many other Irish cities where the Irish natives living among the New English settlers were not allowed to use the Irish language and were required to plead in court using the English language instead. Otherwise, martial execution was their punishment. Moreover, under the orders of King Henry VIII<sup>17</sup> the inhabitants of many cities were required to teach their children to speak the English tongue and this paved the way for the introduction of education in English as a matter of reform, this was evident in the King's words, especially when he declared:

Every inhabitant within said town endeavor themselves to speak English, and to use themselves after the English fashion... do put forth your child to school, to learn to speak English, and that you fail not to fulfill our commandment, as you tender our favor, and would avoid our indignation and high displeasure. (Crowley 20)

Furthermore, another Act was issued by the King and held that anyone who used the native Irish Gaelic tongue would be accused of disloyalty to the monarch of the English Crown so that "... whosoever shall not use the English tongue, his Majestie will reporte them in his most noble heart as persons that esteeme not his most dread lawes and commandements..." (qtd. in Leerssen, 116)

Unquestionably, an Anglicising storm swept Ireland. Nearly all its cities were Englished and planted by a population of English colonists who were loyalist to the English crown. The poor native Irish had to use his enemy's language, if not for the privileges ascribed with its use, surely for fear of being punished if still speaking the native tongue. Using the oppressor's language meant suppressing one's own language and unfolding a host

of psychological effects. The trauma of the colonizer's language was clearly reflected through the character of Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*<sup>18</sup> who feels alienated by the experience of speaking his oppressor's language; thus, quite uncomfortable with its use. Despite his mastery of the colonial English language, he still perceives it as foreign because it was imposed on him and his Irish people:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words "home", "Christ", "ale", "master", on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech... Damn the dean of Studies... What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us? (Joyce 210-291)

By the same token, the language of "Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible" (Shaw 20) was brought to the New World through the English settlements there. This started in the sixteenth century with the establishment of "Jamestown" colony in 1607. The New World at that time came to be known as "New England" because of the huge influx of colonists from England. The catastrophic ideology of the colonial project was the same as that previously pursued in Ireland. The New World natives were seen as the "Other" of Europe, this entailed viewing them as "wild savages"; therefore, how can a wild savage utter an intelligible speech to the colonizer's ears! Consequently, the natives of the Americas, according to the colonizers' perspective, lacked language and were able to utter only a few sounds. Ironically, the variety of languages associated with the rich and different Native American tribes were simply considered as non-existent by the oppressor.

It was clear that the English language, the language of the "superior" colonial center, had to be planted in the New World. The native inhabitants had no other choice but to abandon their "incomprehensible" languages and adopt that of the colonizer in order to enter



into the white's world of civilization and intelligibility. It was the native peoples who had to shift their language to the English language. The colonizer made no attempt to learn the colonized people's languages; instead communication between the colonizer and the colonized was possible through intermediary Native Americans who could speak English. Furthermore, the educational system to be implemented in the colonies in the following centuries was to be carried out in the English language. In any case, many of the English Classics, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, were extensively taught. When the British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay presented a Memorandum to the English Parliament in 1832, he insisted on educating the Native Peoples of the English colonies in the English language clearly arguing:

We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate... Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws. ( qtd. in black et al. 795)

Accordingly, the Native Americans' trauma resulted from their use of a language which was not their own, the language of their oppressor, the one who inflicted harm and wounding upon them. The use of such language meant the submerging of one's own native language. The latter was considered as inferior and impure. Henceforth, the power of language as a mechanism of control and the trauma associated with it was evident in Shakespeare's work *The Tempest*. Through language, Prospero was able to subjugate and oppress Caliban. He taught him his language, and thus his version of knowledge and reality. The only thing Caliban was capable of is cursing his master using the latter's language. However, Caliban's act was the very proof of his helplessness:

You taught me language, and my profit on't  
 Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
 For learning me your language! (I. ii. 366-368)

### **I. 3. 3. Trauma of Christianity:**

The process of exploration, colonization, and Empire building was launched in parallel with a process of Civilizing through Christianizing. It was believed that bringing the “pagan” native peoples into the light of the Christian religion would restore them from their “barbarity”, “bestiality”, and “paganism”. Indeed, much of the colonial struggle was geared by religious missionaries.

Ireland was a heathen pagan country. The beginning of the Christianizing mission dates back to 431 CE when the Roman pontiff sent a bishop named Palladius to convert the population. However, the mission was a failure for Palladius was reluctant and lacked enthusiasm. Also, he encountered fierce hostility and was unable to assimilate into the Irish culture. However, things started to change with the arrival of the Romano-British missionary St. Patrick. He was kidnapped by slave traders and brought to Ireland in 433 CE. In Ireland, he worked as a shepherd to an Irish chieftain. During his living in Ireland he learned a great deal about the Irish culture and language. After approximately seven years he escaped the Island of Ireland and returned to his home country.

Back in Britain, St. Patrick studied theology and was ordained. Nonetheless, he could not forget his experience in Ireland and the latter haunted his thoughts; thus, he decided to return to Ireland to convert its people into Christianity. St. Patrick was able to communicate with the native Irish fluently; this helped him enormously in his mission because they considered him as one of them and not as an alien stranger. When some of the native

inhabitants refused the new religion, he used to adapt his teachings to their pagan traditions and so they were converted easily via blending pagan and Christian practices. However, not all the subsequent missionaries had St. Patrick's skills. As a result, many natives relapsed back into their pagan traditions and practices.

Actually, the Christianizing mission took on a new violent turn with the English invasion of the Island of Ireland. England turned to Protestantism<sup>19</sup> in 1530, when the Tudor monarch Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church and began the English Protestant Reformation. The rivalry with Catholic<sup>20</sup> Spain started during the reign of Elizabeth I. In an attempt to revolt against the English presence in Ireland, the Irish Catholics sought the help of Spain. Their revolt was brutally crushed by the English and since then the stereotype of the Irish people as "disordered rebels" went into effect. In order to eliminate the Spanish threat and any ally between the Irish Catholics and the Spanish in Ireland, the English imperial center decided to plant English Protestants in the area and suppress the Catholic faith. Henceforth, Ireland was sharply divided. It consisted of the Native Irish Catholics and the New English Protestants who were loyalists to the Crown of England. Under this cruel policy, the Irish Catholics faced great hardships, including the confiscation of lands and properties, extermination, and dislocation.

Spenser's comments cannot be escaped, for he had an opinion about every Irish matter. As far as religion is concerned, he considered the native Irish refusal to conform to Protestantism as the very proof of their still paganism and barbarity, further claiming that their case is the same as that of the Native Americans for assuming to accept Christianity but deep within remaining loyal to the ancient pagan religion that "They are all Papists by their profession, but in the same so blindly and brutishly informed for the most part as that you would rather think them atheists or infidels." (qtd. in. Cairns and Richards 5).

As the majority of the Irish Catholics refused the imposed Protestant faith, they were damned and considered as being out of Christ's immunity and blessing. Thus, they were doomed as inferiors. Moreover, the plantations of Ireland were aimed at fusing all what was native including the religion, causing a trauma for the inhabitants. This was due to the ensued periods of violence and civil unrest that swept the country and also because of the geographical and emotional divide which tore the country between Irish Catholics and Protestant Newcomers. An instance of the religious conflict and its harsh consequences was the 1641 Ulster rebellion. The Irish Catholics rebelled against the mass plantation of Protestants in the town of Ulster. Oliver Cromwell retaliated by killing Catholic children in other southern towns, who had no hand in the rebellion of Ulster, he justified his cruel act through the famous proverb "Kill the nits and you will have no lice".

Having considered the situation of Ireland, it is also reasonable to look at that of the New World. Columbus's arrival in the New World was widely described as the "Second Coming", alluding to the coming of Jesus Christ "the savior" symbolized in the character of Columbus who was Christian and wanted to spread the religion of his princes in the lands he discovered. Certainly, the significance of his name is highly symbolic because the name "Christopher" means "bearing Christ". In 1493, after one year of Columbus's landing in the New World, and precisely on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1493, Pope Alexander VI<sup>21</sup> issued a "Bull of Donation" granting the overseas territories which are "vacant" i.e. not yet occupied by any Christian ruler, to the monarchs of the Spanish Crown: Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand. Therefore, through his Bulls, the Pope considered himself as the ruler of the world, dividing it as he wished. Walter Ullmann argued that "The pope as the vicar of God commanded the world, as if it were a tool in his hands; the Pope, supported by the canonists, considered the world as his property to be disposed according to his will." (qtd. in Shiva I)

Correspondingly, since the fourteenth century, the grabbing and exploitation of the natives' territories (piracy), was justified through Patents, Charters, and Papal Bulls<sup>22</sup> and under the pretext of fulfilling the divine duty of civilizing the "pagan savages" of the discovered territories. The same rhetoric was prevalent in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the idea of the "Manifest Destiny" was circulating and which entailed the belief that the white settlers were divinely destined to take hold of the New World. The Spanish monarchs and Columbus were devoted Christians embracing the oldest of the Christian faiths "Roman Catholicism".

To express his gratitude to God for reaching the first Island safely, Columbus named it "San Salvador" which means "Holy Savior". Furthermore, when he reached Hispaniola in 1492 on Christmas Day, Columbus built a settlement there and named it "La Navidad" the Spanish word for "Christmas". Evidently, this marked the beginning of the Christianizing mission in the far away spots. Columbus himself claimed "God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth of which he spoke in the Apocalypse of St. John after having spoken of it through the mouth of Isaiah; and he showed me the spot where to find it." (qtd. in Zakai 85)

In this way, the pagan natives were seen as sinking in idolatry and heretical practices. Therefore, they had to be converted using all means .i.e. If not peacefully, then it's through using force. Since they have no religion, it seemed to the conquistadors that the natives will happily welcome Christianity. Under the name of Christianity, many natives were subjugated, enslaved, and tortured pitilessly. Many Native Americans kept their ancient faith for it was the religion of their ancestors and also because of the brutality of the invaders. As a result, they stubbornly resisted Christianity. Others incorporated many elements of the newly imported religion into their previously held faith creating a hybrid form of belief. Those who

accepted Christianity were forced to do so by the violence and harsh treatment of the settlers and missionaries. However, very few were converted because of some missionaries' gentle way of exposing the Christian religion to them. A Nicaraguan Indian named Don Gonzalo confirmed the brutish nature of those who came to civilize under the name of Christianity when he argued that "Christians are by no means good.... Where are the good ones? To be sure, I myself have certainly not yet known any good ones, only bad ones." (qtd. in Lynn 192)

Therefore, the native inhabitants of the Americas were largely Catholic as a result of the Spanish missionaries there. Subsequently, the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 marked the collapse of the Spanish Empire and the rise of its English counterpart in the Americas. Clearly, this meant the planting of the Protestant religion in the Americas just the same as happened in Ireland. As a result, the native peoples' trauma and hardship persisted throughout the difficult colonial period and this required a healing process to put an end to the historical wounding inflicted upon the wretched colonized peoples of Ireland and the New World.

## CHAPTER II

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### Recycling Trauma, Narrative Strategies of Healing

II.1. Orality

II.2. The Rejection of Christianity and the return to Paganism (ancient myths)

II.3. Revising and subverting the Stereotypes

II.4. The Use of the Native Language: Disempowering the Colonizer's Language (the New "englishes")

II.5. Traditional and ecological healing

II. 6. Remembering, apology and redemption.

## CHAPTER TWO: Recycling Trauma, Narrative Strategies of Healing

### II. 1. Orality

An oral tradition was the characteristic feature of preliterate societies, especially those which were predominantly rural. In fact, a revered deposit and repository of native folklore was passed down orally throughout generations. Namely, a mode of cultural transmission untainted by the written mode associated with Western modernity. The oral tradition stood in opposition to its written counterpart.

The difference and strained conflict between the oral and the written traditions can be better understood through Plato's tale entitled *Phaedrus* which included a dialogue about rhetoric and writing. Under a tree, the character Phaedrus had a prolonged conversation with the great Greek orator Socrates about many things including the art of rhetoric and writing. Socrates discussed the proprieties and improprieties of writing recounting the legend of the Egyptian God Theuth who invented the alphabet and gave the gift of writing to the king Thamus. The God Theuth considered his discovery as a remedy for the memory and a guarantee of wisdom. However, Thamus considered Theuth to be subjective in his glorification of his own invention. Hence, he believed that writing can be a remedy for reminding but not for remembering further claiming that if the king's people relied on writing it "will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves" (Plato 116). Thus, for Socrates also, a spoken word is "an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself, and knows when to speak and when to be silent" (Plato 117).

In contrast, Plato as a writer was against the oral tradition. This was evident in his opposition to poetry which was at that time the very manifestation of the Greek ancient oral



tradition. Indeed, this strained tension between what was oral and what was written and as it was shown through the opposing characters of Socrates and Plato, was just the beginning of the great controversy of the shift and transition from the oral to the written mode, especially during the colonial period. Eventually, the oral tradition ensured a more faithful passage of information and knowledge than the written word. In most of the times, the written tradition depended upon the whims of an authoritative power (mainly political and religious), especially when it comes to writing about the communities under its control. Furthermore, it was open to a variety of interpretations and falsifications. However, any content which is transmitted orally is passed on carefully and accurately in the effort to render it as it is with its fullest details.

Accordingly, the Irish and the Native American cultures were purely oral cultures. Memory was more than crucial for these preliterate societies since it was the medium of keeping and preserving the cultural heritage of the native peoples throughout generations. Through memory, the natives were able to store all the knowledge of their culture and to exchange and pass it down to others through speech. Henceforth, all knowledge was embedded in the native songs, poems, stories, legends... etc. Among the characteristic features of these preliterate peoples is their emotional involvement with each other and their sense of unity and collectivity. This is consolidated through the act of storytelling and face to face communication. This tendency is clearly lacked when adopting a written mode of communication. Also, under the oral tradition, language was used rhythmically to enhance memorization. In his *Orality and Literacy*, Walter. J. Ong<sup>23</sup> argued that “Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche.”(14)

*Ceremony* and *The Lightning Tree* are clear celebrations of the oral heritage of the Irish and the Native Americans. In their works, both Silko and P. J. Curtis reaffirm the

power of the pre-colonial repository of oral tradition unfolded in a web of native stories, myths, ceremonies... etc. Through stories, both authors sought to reclaim native identities via a return to the pre-contact valued past of the native ancestors, a past untainted by colonial hypocrisy. As the Irish and Native American peoples were always the other of the colonizer, their primitive oral mode was also othered or marginalized in respect to modern written tradition. Henceforth, the oral tradition was embedded in these works in order to challenge the Eurocentric literacy and mode of knowledge. Essentially, the use of oral tradition is a response to Western ceaseless attempts to destroy and replace native oral ways and by that the cultural print / identity of the natives. Consequently, orality in these narratives is employed as a prominent subversive strategy that sought to impose itself upon the Western written tradition and double legitimize itself through this written medium. Memory and remembering were potent tools for deconstructing a world denigrated by the colonial contact.

In the Irish and the Native American cultures, the native old men and women were the preservers of the cultural heritage of their societies. They were the legitimate and faithful narrators because their life experiences qualified them to speak and to pass the fruit and wisdom that they gained through experience. They can be considered as the fathers and mothers of the native race. In *Ceremony*, the native stories were told by old Grandma, Josiah, old medicine men Betonie and Ku'oosh. In *The Lightning Tree*, all the stories were told by the old Irish woman Mariah. These are the elders of the community; therefore, they are the authentic storytellers of the traditional oral heritage of their cultures.

Silko's *Ceremony* is full of traditional native stories generated from the beginning by a feminine figure "Thought Woman", the creator of the universe in Laguna Pueblo mythology, and then told by the author using multiple points of view. Right from the beginning, the importance of the traditional stories is emphasized by clarifying their significance to the Native Americans. Stories are not a mere entertainment tool as it is widely

believed by the white culture, rather, they are all what the People of the Americas have as a weapon for fighting the oppressor. This latter's aim is to destroy these stories and make them forgotten because they form the past of the native people. Consequently, one of the colonial mechanisms is to disrupt and denigrate this pre-colonial past. This fact is clearly presented in the second poem of the novel entitled "Ceremony" which stated:

I will tell you something about stories,  
 [ he said]  
 They aren't just for entertainment.  
 Don't be fooled  
 They are all we have, you see,  
 all we have to fight off illness and death.  
 You don't have anything  
 if you don't have the stories. (Silko 19)

Native Pueblo stories are woven into the narrative in the form of poems. These poems frame the novel's main narrative and are also interspersed throughout the whole narrative. Stories of the protagonist Tayo are juxtaposed with the traditional stories of his community. Since all the ceremonies and ritual practices are embedded in these stories, they are evidently the path to individual and communal renewal and healing of the protagonist and his community. As these stories are told in the poetic sections, they are directly remembered and adapted in the prose sections. They tell the same story, but only using other different mythical characters instead of the modern characters like Tayo. Therefore, a process of remembering and retelling is employed effectively in the novel.

Silko, a half-breed writer as her novel's protagonist, took the pain of rewriting and retelling the rich oral heritage of her Laguna Pueblo community. She assumed the role of the

storyteller in both the prose and poetry of *Ceremony* as a way of double legitimizing what was already existent and legitimate outside of the written colonial mode. Therefore, she tried to give voice to the rich cultural production of her people who were unfairly represented in the colonial Eurocentric and ethnocentric discourse. In fact, she was very aware that the continuous process of telling and retelling the native oral heritage till contemporary times ensures the survival of the native people and their culture. Accordingly, the material employed in her narrative works is derived from the native oral tradition as a way for ensuring its persistence. The folklore of Native American people was skillfully appropriated into many of her textual productions, especially *Ceremony*.

*Ceremony*'s protagonist, Tayo, seemed to realize the potential power of the native stories of his people. The stories provided him with a way for coping with and adapting to the situation imposed by the inevitable contact with the whites and their imported modernity. Moreover, the stories had the power of transcending any spatial and temporal obstacles:

Distances and days existed in themselves then; they all had a story. They were not barriers. If a person wanted to get to the moon, there was a way; it all depended on whether you knew the directions—exactly which way to go and what to do to get there; it depended on whether you knew the story of how others before you had gone. (Silko 19).

These stories are inherited from the native ancestors, the fathers of the race. Henceforth, they are sacred. Retelling them as they were passed down from generation to generation ensures their survival as a source of a faithful and true history of the Native People of the Americas. Clearly, this was confirmed when the native medicine man old Ku'oosh started addressing Tayo and performing an old ceremony. The narrative stated that "He spoke softly, using the old dialect full of sentences that were involuted with explanations of their

own origins, as if nothing the old man said were his own but all had been said before and he was only there to repeat it” (Silko 34).

The old people are looked to as a legitimate native authority in the act of storytelling; their knowledge cannot be questioned but just respected and accepted. Consequently, the famous formula used to introduce stories is widely used in the novel *Ceremony* like: “the old people used to say”, “people said”, “people say” (Silko 49-110). When Tayo evoked Ku’oosh’s words and the story he has told him, he started to recognize the power inherent in the old native stories as when it is stated that “The old man only made him certain of something he had feared all along, something in the old stories. It took only one person to tear away the delicate strands of the web, spilling the rays of sun into sand, and the fragile world would be injured” (Silko 38).

Indeed, these stories are the very expression of the interconnectedness of all things on this Earth and the people’s unity with the universe. Josiah explained to Tayo that all things in this world are tied to each other:

This is where we come from, see. This sand, this stone, these trees, the vines, all the wildflowers. This earth keeps us going. . . These dry years you hear some people complaining, you know, about the dust and the wind, and how dry it is. But the wind and the dust, they are part of life too, like the sun and the sky. You don’t swear at them. It’s people, see. They’re the ones. The old people used to say that droughts happen when people forget, when people misbehave. (Silko 45-46)

The stories provide the one who knows them with an understanding of the world that he inhabits. They are the very expression of one’s connection to the surrounding environment. Once this sense of unity is lost, the only way to restore it is via these stories. In

the novel, the teachers of the white schools tried to instill in Tayo's mind that the stories of his ancestors are superstitious and fallacious. However, only when Tayo remembered and reenacted them, he was able to restore the bond with his native community and the universe as a whole. In fact, the potent power of the traditional Native American stories lies in their ability to provide a path for renewal and healing the historical wound.

The Irish writer P. J. Curtis, chose for his novel, a female protagonist Mariah Honoria "the oldest, wisest and most feared woman in the whole of the Burren" (Curtis 7). A woman rooted in the land, and a healer with great spirit, strength, and extraordinary memory. She is the typical representation of the old wise native storyteller. Throughout the whole novel, Mariah was relating her treasure store of stories. The stories were told as if unfolding a long book of her entire life to the writer (Curtis) when he was a young boy, and to the readers of *The Lightning Tree*. Mariah unfolds and promulgates a repository of precious stories hoarded in her memory throughout the years of her life. Her experiences could not be overstated for she "had a foot in each century". (14). She recalls them most vividly with detailed descriptions keeping them intact, that one could only marvel at her wisdom, power of observation, and strong memory. Having lived ninety-six years, her age is clearly the evidence of her unquestionable authenticity and wisdom, a way of legitimizing her old experience.

Throughout the novel, Mariah was recalling stories from any period of her life resembling her memory to a spider who can move from one strand of the web to the other quickly arguing that "when that memory-spider was young, it made a quick leap across the web, and it landed exactly where it wanted to be" (25). She relates the story of her life and her people. The memories that survived throughout the decades bear witness to the short periods of happiness and the long ones of grief and yearning. The novel is full of stories

about the times when she shared with her community the hardships of the Great Hunger which “came like a black killing mist out of the skies” (Curtis 17). She also narrates the exilic experience of some of her family members and the people from her cottage. Especially when her brother, Frank, and his wife, Margaret, departed to Australia never to be seen again. Besides, nearly all her school friends left for the Americas in search for a better life like her friend and old schoolmate Mary Mulqueen who begged and pleaded Mariah to go with her to America.

Many other stories of war and deportation were also developed at length in *The Lightning Tree*. This includes her uncle Tomas, who was but a lad of sixteen when forced to serve in a bloody war for fighting the Russians in Crimea land. Eventually, he returned home with a lot of war stories and adventures. Moreover, the story of the protagonist’s cousin Hannah was the example of the cruel experience of deportation that the English colonizer enforced in order to clear the Irish land of those unwanted souls by sending them faraway, so Hannah’s “only ‘crime’-so she was accused- was that she stole a loaf of bread to feed her hungry baby. She was sentenced to deportation to serve seven years’ labor in Australia” (Curtis 67).

Mariah relates the story of meeting with Nora who then appears to be only a ghost of a girl who died long ago because of the famine, her first journey to the healing well on May Day morning when seeing an old woman burying her wretched daughter’s baby, and also the story of her found and suddenly lost love of the Scottish engineer Alexander McNeil. All these stories of Mariah and the people of her cottage are only a drop in the sea of stories contained in this novel. The ancestors’ folklore is also retold in the form of proverbs, old sayings, *piseoga i.e.* “superstitions”, poems, songs, legends. Moreover, Mariah’s family is well known for its gift of healing physical and spiritual ailments. This healing lore was passed

orally from one generation to the other till it reached her grandfather who passed it to her father. The power hidden within the plants of the earth was embedded in this healing lore.

It was the tradition in Ireland to gather in the evenings near the hearth and listen to the stories as told by the elders of the family who would relate what their fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers has narrated to them long ago. Also, the Irish people used to enjoy conversing and telling stories under the trees, especially the chestnut tree. As the songs are also a clear form of orality, the novel is indeed abounded with songs sung out loud. A prominent song was sung by a woman named Grace who was wrapped in a black shawl and sheltered beneath a tree after building an open fire inside a small circle of stones. She was singing a song of love and loss and she “sung in the voice of a woman of all ages and in the tones and tongue of her people” (Curtis 260). The song she was singing was known as *The Lament for Donal Og- The Grief of a Girl’s Heart*, she said that she learned it from her mother who got it from her mother. This song was piercing deep into the hearts of those who heard it, especially Mariah:

You have taken the east from me;  
 You have taken the west from me.  
 You have taken the moon,  
 You have taken the sun from me  
 And my fear is great that  
 You have taken God from me (Curtis 260-261)

Even when Mariah was not busy at work, other than browsing the odd national or local news item, she felt that she didn’t need to read any news from the printed page because she was overhearing the lively conversations at the bar and the gossip from the street; thus, she declared “I was kept well up-to-date and regarded myself to be better informed than the



royal advisor to the King of England.’’ (Curtis 165). Therefore, the local newspaper entitled *The Clareman* and subsequently *The Clare Champion* did not replace the lively oral form of conversations.

In *The Lightning Tree*, Curtis denounced and also justified the use of the ethnocentric written mode. Through Mariah’s words, it becomes clear that the written history books are fallacious and not reliable like the ancestor’s oral tradition. Speaking of the old chestnut tree, Mariah would declare that if this tree could speak, it would surely tell the true and honest history of the land than that which one will ever read in books. However, the new generations are drifting away from the native ways and mores of their people. They are supposed to be the transmitters of the rich oral heritage. Consequently, the lack of commitment and willingness on their part threatens the centuries-old oral tradition. Therefore, out of awareness, P. J. Curtis realized the need for writing all what was oral in order to preserve and double legitimize it. In fact, the use of the written mode is effective in double legitimizing what was already legitimate outside of the written Eurocentric tradition. Also, it helps reaching the literate audience whose preference is the browsing of the print paper. Hence, on his death bed, Brian, asked Mariah to write down all his cures and copy them down because he did not want his knowledge to go with him to the grave as happened with his father, so he declared “We had often spoken of what old knowledge was lost when Michael died; for other than what he passed on orally, he never wrote down a single one of his hundreds of cures.’’ (Curtis 245).

Certainly, *The Lightning Tree* is a clear representation of the Irish social mores, customs, traditions, landscape, and belief system. Curtis undoubtedly articulated the rich Irish folklore in his literary production as a celebration of the revered oral tradition of his native people. Mariah’s father would never let anyone sweep away or damage a spider’s web for he

believes in its power to heal all cuts, wounds and bruises. In the same way, memory and the oral stories it unfolds also heal the spiritual wounding. This alludes to the fact that orality is of utmost importance to individual and communal healing.

## **II.2. The Rejection of Christianity and the returning to Paganism:**

Pre-Christian native societies were pagan. They believed in the existence of many deities and so they worshipped them. Actually, paganism was the religion of the pre-modern rural peasantry who used to believe in animism. i.e. that all things have spirit. The term paganism is a Western invention used to label those who were not Christians and so they were defined as pagans: the ‘’other’’ of Christians. This entailed a derogatory and pejorative connotation. As the colonial power sought to plant its religion on the subjugated peripheries, the native peoples rejected all what was associated with the colonizer and Christianity was no exception.

In Ireland, when the pagan Irish people rejected the Christian faith brought by St. Patrick, his response was to adapt his teachings to their religion; thus, mixing Christian beliefs with pagan traditions and practices. Many subsequent missionaries adopted the same method, and in most cases the native Irish lapsed into their pre-Christian paganism. Hence, Ireland remained largely a heathen pagan. This fact was confirmed by the English geographer and writer Emyr Estyn Evans, who argued that despite assuming the guise of Christianity, many Irish customs and religious traditions are clearly pagan, therefore, he clarifies:

I became convinced that a significant factor in what is sometimes called the essential unity of Ireland... has been the retention, persisting in many areas into modern time, of certain attitudes towards the world and the otherworld, of traditional customs, beliefs and seasonal festivals which had often assumed the guise of Christian piety, but which had their origins in the Elder Faiths of pre-Christian times. (Evans xi)

*The Lightning Tree* is a clear evidence of the rejection of Christianity and the return to paganism. The title of the novel refers to an old giant tree that stood for generations in the Burren of County Clare, near Mariah's house. This tree was struck by a lightning and Mariah saw it burning:

Now I looked on in amazement and I saw it all aflame, having been struck by a single bolt. There was a 'crack' and a groaning so loud; it was as if the lightning in its fury wanted to tear the tree from the roots. I stood for hours at the bedroom window and gazed on as the stricken tree burned: a torch in the black sky, like a huge naked man spitting flames high into the sky... a black-boned skeleton with its arms reaching out to the sky. (Curtis 15-16)

Since this incident Mariah has called the tree "the lightning tree". She used to sit beside and inside it, nestle among its limbs safe and secure from the world's prying eyes, and whisper to it her inner thoughts and secrets. Many times, she felt herself like that old tree. The strong bond between Mariah and the tree is the very expression of the protagonist's paganism. Mariah adored the old ash tree considering it as her soul mate. In many cases, it seemed that she worshipped this tree as a goddess because whenever she felt sad or had some lingering thoughts, she did not go to the Church or the priest but rather she directly headed off to her beloved lightning tree.

When the drought affected the parish and so the Irish people were suffering, Mariah said that "... the people prayed to their saints and the priests prayed to Jesus and his mother, and still the sun burned in the sky and the rains did not fall" (Curtis 77). This is a clear confession that the Christian faith is powerless in front of such great drought and that Christianity did not seem to bring relief to its believers. Yet, the rain returned only when Mariah prayed under her lightning tree. Indeed, when Mariah entered a state of coma after

hearing the sad news of her lover's death and as she has awoken several hours later, she, in the dead of night, headed off directly to the old lightning tree:

I fell on my knees and covered my hair and face and clothes in the dust at the foot of the rotted tree-stump. I wrapped my arms about the tree and pressed my cheek to the dry bark and pounded my fists on its black skin and called and cried and shrieked...A crack so loud as was never heard before split the sky in two and, as a curtain might be drawn across the night sky, the rain began to fall (Curtis 108-109)

The connection with the other world's spirits is considered to be part of pagan beliefs. Mariah is said to possess the gift of second sight. i.e. she could see the ghosts of dead people and communicate with them as if they were still alive. In one of her stories, she relates meeting a girl named Nora O'Loughlin, who was about the same age as Mariah. Nora was singing in an enchanting voice that attracted Mariah who drew near to see the singer, when Nora saw Mariah she spoke to her:

*'Cad is ainm duit? What's your name?'* she said.

*'Is mise Mariah. My name is Mariah,'* I told her shyly.

*'My name is Nora.'* She sprang to her feet and smiled. *'Will you play with me, Mariah? We can pick flowers together and make daisy chains.'*(Curtis 30)

Henceforth, Mariah befriended Nora for the whole summer and was so happy with her company. She did not tell anyone about her new friend and so one day when she was playing with Nora on the hillside, Mariah's mother, Mary Ellen, happened to be close by gathering some flowers and she heard Mariah speaking. The mother inquired with whom Mariah was talking, when Mariah informed her about Nora the mother said that there was no body but Mariah. Nora seemed to disappear suddenly. Back home, Mariah's father explained to her that Nora died years ago before Mariah's birth. She died along with her family because of the

great hunger and was buried in *The Gort na Marbh*, the field of the dead, and so the father said that “If you saw this girl- poor Nora- it was her unearthly spirit you saw and not a living person of flesh and blood” (Curtis 32)

Mariah could not believe what she heard, for Nora seemed as alive as Mariah herself and so how could Nora be only a ghost of a dead person! Only later, did Mariah realize that she was endowed with a second sight as she was able to see “the pale people”: those poor wretched persons who died because of hunger. Henceforth, she “could sense and see a world beyond this world... I knew then that I had the gift of second sight.” (Curtis 33)

Undoubtedly, signs of paganism are pervasive throughout the whole novel. The protagonist’s grandfather used to believe in the power of the juniper tree to ward off evil and witchery instead of the Christian Cross. Ironically, Jesus himself seems in need of such tree to protect himself from danger and evil, and so they used to take a sprig from that tree and tie it to animals’ tails or place it on the house’s door and recite:

I will pluck the gracious yew

Through the nine fair ribs of Jesus

In the name of the Father and Son

And the Spirit of Grace

Against drowning, against danger, against fire. (Curtis 35)

Many of the things associated with Christianity were subverted. The source of the family’s healing power is said to be given by St Patrick himself, the first Christian missionary to set foot on Ireland. In a way this suggests that St Patrick himself was a pagan. Also, many days were celebrated for their association with the arrival of the first Christian missionaries. The celebration of St Patrick Day in Ireland did not mean that the people are welcoming Christianity. Instead, many of the traditions and practices used in the celebration of this day

are clearly pagan and the people think that it is St Patrick who was influenced by paganism and not them getting influenced by the imported Christian faith. Ironically, St Patrick Day which supposed to be a good day associated with the coming of the Christian faith and salvation, became a bad day. Mariah met her first lover Alexander McNeil when celebrating St Patrick Day in the Butler's house. However, after the death of her beloved Alexander McNeil, she feared the approaching of St Patrick Day for this day will unfold a deposit of memories that she did not wish to remember because they will only add to her grief and yearning. As if the writer here is alluding to the fact that the coming of Christianity to Ireland is linked to loss, grief and sadness.

However, the day for which the people wait eagerly and so Mariah is *Oiche Bhealtaine*, May Day. Many native rituals and ceremonies are performed on this day. The first of which is the May Day water taken from an ancient well. This well is believed to be inhabited by a woman spirit, invisible to human eyes, but only Mariah was able to see her sometimes. The holy water had to be gathered as the first light of May morning struck it; otherwise it would be of no power so "When the light of dawn strikes the surface and you can see the sky reflected, that is the moment when it gains its greatest power. That is the moment it becomes filled with a spirit and becomes a healing water." (Curtis 43)

Part of the celebration of this day is the placement of a piece of rowan above the doors and windows to ward off evil spirits. After the journey to the well of the magical water, Mariah's father would weave a wreath of rowan and marigold with two balls, one covered with silver and one with gold paper and hang it on the door. The old people used to say that these balls represented the sun and moon. Her father would then recite: "May this bough banish all misfortune from our house... We indoors knew that we were safe and secure for the months to come from bad luck, curses, charms and all hexes that might be directed towards

us by those who would wish us harm, ill-health or bad fortune.” (Curtis 44). Moreover, it was a tradition in this day to pick three still glowing turfs from the hearth and to put them in a pan. The ritual was to carry this pan around the house three times and the remaining ash was spread on the doors and windows in order to ward off all evil and bring good luck till the coming year. This was the ritual and custom in all the Irish houses.

In fact, the conflict between Christianity and Paganism was clearly presented in the novel through the strained tension between Mariah’s family and the Clergy. The priests considered the family’s healing power and cures as stemming from the devil himself and so they worked hard to deter the family from using such healing lore to cure the people who flocked from near and far to the family’s house seeking help. Thus, the Clergy fiercely denounced the family’s healing lore, stating that it did not stem from the power of God, but rather the healers were in league with Satan. Yet this never stopped the people from seeking the family’s cures and “they came to *this* house with their illnesses and not to the priest’s door. And more than once, the priest himself came to our door in the dark of night, for a cure for some sickness or other.” (Curtis 58).

The Christian priests tried to convince the people that the terrible drought is a punishment from God for the people’s sins and unless they repent their sins, they “will crave water as would the burning souls in Purgatory! Repent! And ask God for forgiveness and He will cause the rains to return.” (Curtis 77-78). Ironically, the priests’ words did not seem to frighten the old people, especially, for they were smiling confidently, knowing that the rain will return soon. Furthermore, the Clergy barred any relationship between Catholics and Protestants especially, in marriage. Any relationship between a Catholic man or woman with a Protestant was considered as an intolerable act. Mariah was to suffer because of this, for

Alexander MecNeil, the railway Scottish engineer was Protestant and she was Catholic. The people did not stop gossiping each time they saw them together:

stepping out with a Sassenach.

No local lad good enough for her?

‘and he a protestant. (Curtis 101)

When Mariah’s brother Brian saved an injured man from death and a witness commented that Brian was only lucky for the man was not badly wounded, Brian boastfully declared that he “could bring this man back from death’s door... even from death itself”(Curtis 197). As the recently appointed priest to the locality, Father Tobin, happened to be close by, he was enraged and argued:

In the name of God, you go too far, sir! Do you claim to do miracles? No ordinary man can do as you claim. Either you are a lost soul in league with Satan or you are a common fraud, a trickster and a rogue! You should get on your knees in this place and ask God’s forgiveness for claiming a power that only He dispenses. (Curtis 198)

Brian challenged the priest by claiming that he could summon the blackbirds which were on the tree yonder to come and land on his arm just with a simple wave of hand. He bravely asked whether the priest can do the same since he considers himself a man of God and has powers dispensed from him. The priest’s face turned deathly pale and he quickly went away. Since this incident, Father Tobin was attacking and denouncing from the altar the family’s healing activities in every weekly sermon accusing them of slipping back to the old religion and “going back to godless paganism” (Curtis 201). Moreover, he was inciting the people to cut relations with the family otherwise they were putting their souls in mortal danger by engaging in non-Christian heretical practices among which he mentioned the



healing of Christian beings through the use of unholy mixtures, and magical potions. Besides, the family members were described by the priest as a flock who went astray and thus in need of a good shepherd to guide them back to the right path that of Christianity. Actually, Brian refused to repent because he knew that his healing practices were pure and meant to help the poor people in need. He decided not to set foot on Church again and carry on his practices. Several years later, the same priest, Father Tobin, fell sick with consumption and spent the last of his days in a sanatorium in Limerick City. Surprisingly, he pleaded the carers to call for Brian to heal him!

In a point of fact, paganism had left its imprint and influence on the country's mythology. All the Irish myths rotate around nature and the natural biotic and abiotic environment. Many ancient myths are incorporated in *The Lightning Tree*, celebrating the rich Irish mythology of Ireland and as a way of rooting things and places in the abundant mythology of the ancestors.

When some women in the parish were not able to conceive, they turned to the old ways and so they came to Mariah's mother seeking help. Mariah's mother would send them to the Sheela-na-gig, which sits over the door of the Church. This Sheela is said to be there for thousands of years ago. Actually, the Sheela-na-gigs are stone carvings of naked women. They symbolized fertility and were considered as pagan goddesses. Many scholars have suggested that the Sheela-na-gig was a representation of the Celtic divine hag or old woman Cailleach in Irish mythology. This Cailleach is said to appear as a lustful hag or a barren feard land. Only when one man, a king usually, did not fear it as a land and accept it as a hag, she would metamorphose into a beautiful maiden and bless his reign.

Now the Sheela-na-gig sits there on the Church and Castles' doors "watching over us all and all our comings and goings. If only her old stone lips could speak, what a tale she

could tell.’’ (Curtis 38). And so childless women who longed for a child would pray directly to her to give them a fruitful womb. Strangely, some women who had many children asked the Sheela to make them barren! The ritual was that they should first kneel in front of her and then walk around the Church seven times and fall on their knees again to plead her to answer their prayers. All this was done around and at the Church’s door, making it evident that the Church and its priests did not possess such great powers of the Sheela-na-gig.

Mariah’s father explained to her how the water of the well, fetched on May Day, became so magical, referring to the magical Seven Streams of Taosca that flowed from a stone fort called the *Sliabh na Glaise* and the myth of Lon Mac Liomhtha and his cow named the Glas Ghaibhneach. Lon Mac Liomhtha was said to be the first ironsmith in Ireland who could make sharp edges spears and swords in his fort at Sliabh Na Glaise. He stole a magical cow from the king of Spain, and this cow became so famous throughout the whole country for she could fill any vessel no matter how big it was with her milk. However, an old hag witch swore that there was a vessel that she could not fill and so she milked the cow till it was unable to give more. This milk ran endlessly and turned into the Seven Streams of Taosca. It was said that the poor cow died of a broken heart and the spot where she died turned to be barren that no animal would settle there.

As Mariah was on her way back home before dawn, after finishing her work at the bar and seeing her sick mother in a dream asking her to come, she stopped by a beautiful lake named Lake Inchiquin from where she was able to see the ruined Inchiquin Castle. The windows of the castle seemed alight. The old people used to say that the castle is haunted and the corpses inside it are the source of the light seen from its windows. These lights would disappear if anyone approached the castle. Mariah saw a three sleeping swans and she

thought them to be The Swan Woman and her cygnets still hidden from Lord Conor O'Quin her long-dead husband.

Actually, many myths and stories are associated with swans. The old people said that many people were transformed to non-human forms, usually to swans, because they ignored the wild swan's siren and did not take one plumage of it. And so they say that the wild swans of Lake Inchiquin were once humans, but were transformed into swans by an evil witch. Consequently, they return on their animal forms to live by the lake near their home and people. Mariah narrated the story of The Swan Woman as her mother had narrated it to her when she was a child. Hence, it was said that a young Lord named O'Quin Clan Conor was hunting with his friends by the shores of the lake not too far from his castle. When he broke away from the company of his friends, as he was tracking a wounded stag, he suddenly saw a three beautiful swans swam ashore and turned into beautiful young women. As he ran forward, two swan women managed to escape except one of them who was left alone weeping on the shore. O'Quin Clan Conor took her to his castle and they fell in love with each other. Eventually, the swan maiden, after a year and a day, accepted to marry him on three conditions. The first condition is that O'Quin Clan Conor keep their marriage a secret. Secondly, he should not participate in gambling or chance games. Thirdly, that he should not allow any member from the O' Brian clan into the castle. O'Quin Clan Conor was fascinated by her beauty and so in love with her that he directly accepted her conditions. She warned him that if he did not respect these conditions he would never see her again.

And so they got married, bore two children, and lived a very happy life for a seven year period. However, it happened that one day O'Quin Clan Conor attended a horse race where he met Taigh O'Brien, a rogue and an enemy to the Q'Quin Glan. He eventually invited him to this castle. They spent the night drinking and started gambling and Conor lost

all his property to O'Brian. Then he suddenly remembered his promise and coming to his senses, he ran looking for his wife and children. After searching the whole castle he did not find them, when he went to the tallest tower he was astonished at the sight he saw for his wife turned to a swan with little cygnet under each of her wings and with a forlorn look, flew away disappearing forever.

Another mythical figure which was represented in the novel and mentioned many times is that of the woman of the well whom Mariah used to see since childhood with her mother when visiting the well. From the bottom of the well, Mariah heard a distant keening, sobbing, and crying:

It was the voice of the ancient Woman of the Well

It was the mourning of ancestors.

It was the lament of the *bean sí* who cried now for Mary Ellen and for me and for you and for decent country folk who are visited by Death.

As if her crying was a song of prayer or hymn to life. (Curtis 187)

In Irish mythology, the woman of the well is known as the *bean sí*, a banshee in English, which means a female spirit who used to keen as a way of heralding the death of one of the family members. For Mariah, the banshee was not only mourning the death of Mary Ellen, but also all the Irish ancestors who surely had come to this well through generations to drink from it and heal their wounds using its magical water. Evidently, they were enchanted when seeing the face of the well woman mirrored in the magical waters and hearing her crying with them and sharing their grief when they lost a dear soul from the family.

As far as *Ceremony* is concerned, Tayo's family, except his Auntie and her son Rocky, was clearly pagan, believing in the native old ways and rejecting Christianity. When Old Grandma heard Tayo crying, she felt pity for him and started crying too, she put his head

in her lap and she repeated saying “A’ moo’ oh, A’ moo’ ohh” (Silko 40). Clearly, she was praying to some pagan deity instead of Jesus Christ or his Mother. She knew that the modern ways of healing could not help Tayo for the white doctors did not seem to make him recover. Therefore, she decided to call for an old native medicine man because she believed in the healing power of the old practices. However, Tayo’s Auntie was a devout Catholic who rejected her people’s religion aspiring to be a member of the “elevated, superior” American society. No one of the family went to Church or attended Sunday mass. Auntie as the only Christian in the family told Tayo that she prayed for them to accept baptism. One day, as Old Grandma woke up and saw that Auntie was preparing herself to go to Church, she was surprised and exclaimed “‘ Church,’ she said, wiping her eyes with a Kleenex from her apron pocket. ‘Ah Thelma, do you have to go there again?’” (Silko 71). In fact, Auntie, by going to Church, wanted to prove to all that “she was a devout Christian and not an immoral or pagan like the rest of the family” (Silko 77). She opposed her mother’s suggestion to call for a native medicine man by claiming that the white doctors at the veterans’ hospital warned against doing so. She believed that the old ways of her people were superstitious and that by keeping the practice of paganism the family was criticized harshly especially by the white community:

You know what the people will say if we ask for a medicine man to help him. Someone will say it’s not right. They’ll say, ‘Don’t do it. He’s not full blood anyway... You know what the Army doctor said: ‘No Indian medicine.’ Old Ku’oosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust. The doctor won’t like it’” (Silko 40-41)

Nevertheless, Old Grandma did not change her decision and was determined to call Ku’- oosh. Indeed, she did not care for what the people said or will say for she believed that with time, they will surely forget; henceforth, she stated “He’s my grandson. If I send for old Ku’oosh, he’ll come. Let them talk if they want to. Why do you care what they say? Old

Grandma stood up straight when she said this and stared at Auntie with milky cataract eyes.’’(Silko 41)

Old Ku’oosh seemed to be rooted in the land, he “smelled like mutton tallow and mountain sagebrush’’ (Silko 41). As part of performing a ritual, he addressed Tayo in the native Indian tongue murmuring things that Tayo did not understand. He also mentioned many native places and waved his hand to the northeast pointing to a cave full of bats and snakes which Tayo seemed to have visited before. Realizing that Tayo’s condition is caused by serving in the war, Ku’oosh intended to perform an old ceremony named *The Scalp Ceremony*. It was said that warriors who killed enemies in the war or touched dead bodies had to perform this ceremony through dancing and eating blue cornmeal so that a witch named K’oo’ko and had great fangs would not haunt their dreams. Consequently, Tayo had to drink Indian tea and blue cornmeal. However, old Ku’oosh warned that this ceremony is not effective as it was before because of the colonial contact with the white people. Hence, the ceremony should be updated. Ku’oosh could not change any of his old ways for he was so faithful to his native ancestors. Consequently, he advised Tayo to consult another medicine man who seem to know much about the repercussions of the devastating colonial contact. Old medicine man Betonie is also a mixed blood like Tayo. He decided to make Tayo undergo an eclectic healing ceremony incorporating and fusing elements from both native and white cultures because Tayo exists in a hybrid world now. Betonie was skeptical of Christianity and its ways of salvation; thus, nature was his source of curing and ceremonies.

Another character who rejected his people’s religion and old ways was Rocky. He seemed to be influenced by his mother who wanted him “to be a success’’ (Silko 51). According to Auntie, this success is achieved only when he rejects the old ways including the old superstitious religion. Therefore, his mother was aware to restrict him from

accompanying the old men of the family mainly his father and Josiah as these people were the personification of traditional thinking and pre-Christian paganism. As a way of showing respect to the deer, when Tayo and Rocky had hunted one, Tayo covered the deer's head with his Jacket. Though Rocky knew the ritual, he asked why Tayo had done that. Tayo did not respond since he knows that Rocky knows. When his boots got dirty with the blood coming out of the deer's throat, Rocky was disturbed. Moreover, he refused to drink the blood of the deer as the old hunters used to do. Even more, he opened his textbooks to show Old Grandma that these rituals and ceremonial practices are just superstitions. Clearly, he was mocking such rituals because "He was an A-student and all-state in football and track. He had to win; he said he was always going to win. So he listened to his teachers, and he listened to the coach. They were proud of him. They told him, "Nothing can stop you now, except one thing: don't let the people at home hold you back." (Silko 52). Old Grandma used to reprimand him for such declarations.

It was believed that when spreading cornmeal on the deer's nose, this would nourish its spirit; therefore, Josiah and Robert would lift Tayo's jacket and feed the spirit of the deer with cornmeal. This ritual was necessary as a way of showing respect and appreciation for the prey so that it would sacrifice itself in the coming year. Back home, Old Grandma would wrap the deer's neck and antlers with turquoise. Rocky wanted to tell them that their ways would make the meat unhealthy "But he knew how they were. All the people, even the Catholics who went to mass every Sunday, followed the ritual of the deer." (Silko 53). Indeed, Rocky died in the war and his beliefs did not save him. However, Tayo survived because he believed in the old ways and religion of his people.

Actually, the Native Americans had a special sensitivity which existed thousands of years ago. This was consolidated through a shared unified clan name which had been used to

identify them, a thing which they were so proud of and so “the people shared the same consciousness’’. (Silko 64). However, as a result of the colonial contact, the world had been contaminated by the colonizer’s European imposed names of “ the rivers, the hills, the names of the animals and plants—all of creation suddenly had two names: an Indian name and a white name.’’(Silko 64). Under the name of Christianity, people were separated and encouraged to stand individually for Jesus’ salvation was said to be bestowed upon the individual soul and not the whole community. Consequently, “Christianity separated the people from themselves... encouraging each person to stand alone, because Jesus Christ would save only the individual soul; Jesus Christ was not like the Mother who loved and cared for them as her children, as her family.’’(Silko 64). But the native people’s sensitivity for each other and their sense of unity persisted. As when Little Sister was dating white men, the Catholic priest denounced her lust and drunkenness, but the people did not want to lose her because after all she was one of them.

Eventually, the Christian faith was clearly rejected by the majority of Native Americans, this was evident in their still belief in old traditions and ceremonies which undoubtedly show the influence of pre-Christian paganism. The novel is rich with Native American mythology which is the very manifestation of paganism. All the Native American myths seemed to challenge the Christian notion of God as the creator of all things on this earth. So instead of worshipping one God, Native American mythology is characterized by three powerful deities: Thought Woman, Corn Mother, and Sun Father. These three are indeed presented in *Ceremony*. The novel starts with a poem about Ts’its’tsi’nako, Thought-Woman who, along with her two sisters, Nau’ts’ity’i and I’tcts’ity’i, created the five worlds constituting the universe. This myth is crucial for showing Native Americans’ understanding of the universe as consisting of the world of the living and four underworlds for dead people’s spirits.



Another myth was that of Corn Mother and her sister Iktoa'ak'o'ya "Reed Woman" who was always splashing in the river while her sister Corn Woman was working hard. One day she got enraged for her sister's laziness and reprimand her. Consequently, Iktoa'ak'o'ya left, taking with her the rain and so the drought affected the people and the land. Furthermore, a long poem was interspersed in the novel at irregular intervals, it was unfolded with Tayo's story and the drought that affected the Laguna reservation. This poem tells of Old Woman K'yo's and her son Pa'caya'nyi who was known as Ck'o'yo medicine man. He came from Reedleaf town and wanted to teach the people his magical tricks. Two twin brothers named Ma'see'wi and Ou'yu'ye'wi were serving Mother Corn. However, they were tricked into believing the magician. As a result, the twins were so busy learning and playing this magic, thinking that it has the power to do anything and so they neglected the Mother Corn, Nau'ts'ity'i. She got very angry and left, taking with her the rain clouds, plants, and grass. The people were starving of hunger and decided to send someone to ask her to forgive them. The Flying Hummingbird seemed to be well fed since he looked fat and so the people wondered. He informed them that there are four worlds below this world abundant with green lands. Thus, the people knew that Mother Corn went there. Hummingbird advised them to send a messenger, prepare a special beautiful jar, and sing a special prayer.

After four days, a green fly with yellow feelers emerged from the jar and Hummingbird decided to go with this fly to ask Mother Nau'ts'ity'i to return. They gave her offerings and hoped for the rain to fall again. She demanded that the town be purified by old Buzzard first. And so they went to Old Buzzard with offerings. Their offerings did not seem to satisfy him for lacking tobacco. When Fly and Hummingbird returned to the people for tobacco they did not find any. They went again to Mother Corn to ask about the place where they can find tobacco. She informed them that the caterpillar had what they wanted. Indeed,

caterpillar gave them tobacco. They took it to old Buzzard who purified the town from the magic. Consequently, things were restored to order. The people saw relief when the rain clouds returned and the land flourished and thrived once again. Henceforth, Mother Corn warned them:

Stay out of trouble

from now on.

It isn't very easy

to fix up things again.

Remember that

next time

some ck'o'yo magician

comes to town. (Silko 202)

When Betonie was preparing Tayo to undergo a ceremony, he related to him the story of a boy who was captured by Coyote. Some people went searching for him following the human tracks they found. After a long search, they finally found a strange creature sleeping under a wild rose bush. This creature was making a coyote sound and moving his tail. They knew that this was the boy they were looking for, now he had been transformed by Coyote's witchery. They sought the help of the old Bear People to make him regain his state of mind and return to his human form. The old Bear People made him sit in the center of a white corn painting, the same painting which old Betonie had painted in the sand. Then, they performed a ceremony using blue pollen. As a result, Coyote's witchery began to fade. This story alludes to Tayo who was also lost after serving in the war. Therefore, he has to be restored to his peaceful state of mind, to his origins and people.

Another important myth which was developed at length in *Ceremony* is that of Ck'o'yo magician called Kaup'a'ta or the Gambler. He lived on the peaks of mountains waiting the hunters' visit. One day, when the people passed by, he wanted to gamble with them: his extravagant clothes and beads for their ones. They had nothing to lose since their clothes were old because they used to wear them when hunting in the mountains. He offered them blue cornmeal to eat. Indeed, they ate it without realizing that it was mixed with human blood and anyone who would eat it will not be lucky. Ergo, they lost all what they possessed and the gambler tricked them again by claiming that he can offer them a last chance to regain all their belongings and win his if they succeeded in guessing the content of a hanged bag on the wall. When they did not guess right, he killed and hanged them. Another day, Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta captured the storm clouds. Since he could not kill them, he kept them prisoners in four rooms of his house. Father Sun was their father; he went searching for them without any success. As a result of their absence, the land dried up and all living creatures were suffering. Consequently, he took offerings and headed off to his grandmother, Spiderwoman:

'Grandson,' she said.

'I brought you something, Grandma.'

'Why thank you, Grandson,

I can always use these things,' she said.

'The stormclouds are missing.'

'That Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta the Gambler has them locked up,' (Silko 140)

Spiderwoman offered him a medicine to blow on the gambler's guards and gave him another set of instructions. She told him not to eat what the gambler offers but just pretend to do so. The gambler then would be confident that he possessed Father Sun's soul with his mixed food. Then, when Ck'o'yo Kaup'a'ta makes his offer "your life for a chance to win

everything, even his life.’’(Silko 140), Father Sun would be required to guess the content of the hanged bag. He should keep giving him false guessings until the gambler gives him a last chance:

Could it be some bumblebees?

He'll laugh and say No! Maybe some butterflies, the small yellow kind.

‘Maybe some tiny black ants,’ you'll say.

No! Kaup'a'ta will be smiling then.

This is it, he'll say.

But this is the last time, Grandson,

you say ‘Maybe you have Orion in there.’

And then

*everything—*

his clothing, his beads, his heart

and the rainclouds

will be yours. (Silko 141)

Father Sun did as Spiderwoman had told him. In consequence, he defeated the gambler. He cut out his eyes with a sharp blade and threw them in the sky; they eventually turned into two stars which appear always in autumn. Henceforth, Father Sun rescued his children “the storm clouds”, and their Mother Earth was so happy with their return.

*Ceremony* also contains allusions to Native American mythical figures like Yellow Woman, Arrow Boy, and Mountain Lion Man. Yellow Woman is said to be the leader of the Corn maidens and the symbol of fertility and the seasons. Arrow Boy is a good hunter who marries Yellow Woman; however, she leaves him and goes with Buffalo Man to the mountains. Arrow Boy loses his hunting skills and becomes unable to hunt unless he finds his

wife. Mountain Lion Man is Yellow Woman's brother. When drawing the parallel, Tayo is the personification of Arrow Boy because he needed Ts'eh's love to perform Betonie's ceremony. Ts'eh is clearly Yellow Woman, her blanket alludes to the mantle that Yellow Woman covers herself with and she disappears and reappears just like Yellow Woman. Moreover, the hunter who was singing a native song and whom Tayo met when descending the mountain is a clear reference to Mountain Lion Man. Henceforth, the old myth of Yellow Woman and her brother is updated and reenacted in *Ceremony*.

### **II. 3. Revising the Stereotypes:**

As nothing native escaped the teeth of the colonizer's criticism, the Irish and Native American peoples were described so pejoratively. In response, many native writers, including Curtis and Silko took the responsibility of revising many of the stereotypes which were unfairly attached to their people. Henceforth, many stereotypes were subverted effectively in both *The Lightning Tree* and *Ceremony* as a way of defending one's people and identity. Also, for providing a more faithful discourse than the fallacious one provided by the colonizer.

Concerning the case of Ireland, and as it was mentioned in the first chapter, the Irish were described as barbaric because they used to walk barefoot. In *The Lightning Tree*, this stereotype is proved to be unfair and mistaken. Mariah used to stay without leather on her feet from dawn to dusk. She walked barefoot till the snow fell and froze the rivers and lakes. She clearly declared "I ran like a young deer in the grassy fields, through carpets of daisy and clover... It was as if I had wings on my heels, and I was never bothered by sharp stone, nettle or briar." (Curtis 21). Evidently, Mariah loved to feel the earth, the shoes would separate her body from being in direct contact with the land. Henceforth, she considered the leather or

boots as obstacles inhibiting such intimate connection with the soil. This latter is the second home of the dead body when the soul leaves it and so why now avoiding contact with the soil by wearing boots!

In fact, walking barefoot, as all the Irish people used to do for much of the year, had a very interesting advantage which is to save the boots for important outings such as weddings, funerals, and fair days. Even when some people went to Church, they would carry their boots with them till they arrived at the Church's door. They would then put them on and go inside. When they came out, they immediately took them off. Also, Mariah hated to wear boots because they restricted her feet and toes from wagging and moving freely; therefore, she argued "I hated having to put my boots on when the first frosts came in November. I remember my leaden feet choking for air and freedom inside my boots... and how light and free they would feel when I cast them off at night-time." (Curtis 22).

Furthermore, the Irish were widely described as lazy people. However, in the novel, they proved to be more than very active people. The Irish men, women, and even children were hard workers. On the one hand, Mariah's family was a family of healers. Indeed, very talented healers at whose door people flocked from near and far seeking help. They had to gather plants, fetch the magical water from the well, produce many kinds of herbal medicines, and then use all these when curing spiritual and physical ailments. On the other hand and apart from practicing this healing lore, the men worked the fields, gardens, meadows, and bogs. Women would do the daily household chores and care for the house's garden. They all had to work from dawn till dusk as Mariah made it clear when saying "from dawn till dusk there was much work for us to be doing" (Curtis 25). Irish women like Mariah and her mother used to work inside the house and also outside it in the farmyard. In the house, they would do many activities including the baking of all kinds of bread, sewing, darning, knitting, washing and ironing clothes. Mariah also milked the cows, churned the

milk for batter, fed the calves, pigs, and poultry. Besides, as the kitchen garden was women's domain, they sewed in it many kinds of vegetables, especially potatoes, this latter "were watched and nursed and molly-coddled as you might a sickly child" (Curtis 26).

Obviously, Mariah, her father, brothers, and mother are the prototypes of the active men and women of Ireland. Mariah herself was a strong woman who did women's as well as men's work. In summer, she went with the men to work the bogs and save the turf, following them in the cornfields to gather wheat and oats. Also, she followed the peasants who dug for potato and picked it from the black soil, she stated that "at the end of each day picking potatoes, my back ached and my hands and fingers were red raw and sore from the chafing of the earth" (Curtis 28). All this hard work and no one did complain. Actually, Mariah's mother was a good example of that because no matter how bone tired she was from "her day's endless labours" (Curtis 64), she gave each member of the family her time, stories and songs.

The English mocked the Irish people for being superstitious. Nevertheless, what the English considered to be superstitions, were proved to be true. In *The Lightning Tree* many old piseog are presented and immediately confirmed, this shows their truthfulness. Almost every single daily activity had a piseog to bless or to hinder it and "They were seldom wrong" (Curtis 34). The old people used to believe in all the Irish superstitions because they had power and truth in them. They used to say that anyone who heard the Ghost Bell of the sunken village in West Liscannor ringing, his/ her days would be numbered and so s/he will soon fall ill and die before the year's end "That's what the old people said, and they were rarely wrong (Curtis 74). When Mrs Biddy Hennessy came to Mariah's father, she was so nervous and frightened, telling him that she heard the ringing of the bell and she knew that this was a terrible sign. Though Mariah's father believed in this superstition, he tried to calm

the woman by telling her that not all piseog are true. However, Biddy Hennessy got a flu and died in the spring before the end of the year!

A cricket was found in the family's house and it was chirping. The old people believed that the coming of a cricket into the house foretold death. Also, when Mariah's lover Alexander MecNeil gave her "a gaily colored feather that glistened and shimmered in the late evening sunshine" (Curtis 105), her mother was shocked and disturbed when she saw it since it was a bad luck to bring a peacock feather into the house. Her Grandma Maudie also used to say that "A death follows a peacock feather into a house". Ignoring her mother's remark, Mariah did put the peacock feather in a vase which was put on the room's table. Just one day later, Mariah received the shocking news of her lover's death.

Another stereotype commonly attributed to the Irish people is that of drunkenness. This quality was celebrated in the novel in an interesting way. The Irish were and are so proud of drinking many kinds of *poitín*, whiskey in English. Poitín was made out of the earth's bountiful fruits and so it was regarded as any other kind of food or drink. The mother and father used sloes and rosehips to make strong wine. This wine was used as a medicine for severe cold or flu. Sometimes it is made also of cloves, honey, and ginger so that "Mother swore by its merits, and we took our medicine regardless of our complaining" (Curtis 29). Moreover, Mariah's father always praised the liquors brewed from nature's store of natural crops such as wheat. It was said that a glass of the original Irish whiskey named "uisce beatha-poitin" would warm the blood and fortify the soul. Indeed, the people viewed whiskey as an effective panacea. Furthermore, a special kind of whiskey which Mariah's father made out of gallons of mead and honey is said to be drunken by the Irish mythical hunter Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his Fianna warriors at their great feasts at royal Tara. Therefore, even whiskey is rooted in the Irish mythology and so it is like a tradition for the Irish people.



Mariah herself worked in Bessie Moran's bar serving all kinds of liquors. Bessie Moran was a second cousin to Mariah's father and wanted a smart and capable woman like Mariah to run the pub for her because she was getting retired. She saw Mariah as a business partner not just as a working barmaid. There were twelve regular customers at the bar whom Moran called "the twelve apostles" (Curtis 148), they were daily present at the bar but rarely at home for last suppers. Mariah recognized later that the bar was their second home and she was too calling them the twelve apostles. In Christianity, the twelve apostles are the twelve disciples of Jesus who are said to have written portions of the Bible. Now these apostles are depicted in *The Lightning Tree* as drunkers par excellence: drinking glasses of whiskey or wine, pints of porter, all kinds of beer and further snuffing and puffing at clay pipes. Besides, each day, the parish priest's housekeeper, Molly Dolan, was the first to arrive at the bar to fill the can to the brim with whiskey to take it back to Father Murphy. And so since Jesus' twelve apostles and the Christian priests are drunkers, how can the Irish people be blamed for drinking whiskey!

Also, the Irish were stereotyped as chaotic, rebellious and unruly people who need to be disciplined by colonialism. However, the Black and Tans were the chaotic, barbaric and unruly ones. They were an army force constituting of those who were in the English jails and asylums as one of them stated that "In England they gave me life in jail for murdering my wife. Here in Ireland- as a Black and Tan- they pay me five pounds a week for killing Irishmen and woman" (Curtis 226). Actually, their killing acts proved to be so barbaric and chaotic that they were widely described as a group of mad hunting dogs. Nothing escaped their brutal rifle shoots, even the family's old faithful dog Charlie was killed leaving Mariah grieving its loss. As they patrolled the countryside, they went on killing poor souls, animals, and destroying the people's homes and property with the stated excuse that they were putting down an uprising. Thus, the Irish were seen as rebellious simply because the Black and Tans

wanted this as a justification for their brutal and callous actions and so “every man, woman and child who came in their sights was a rebel or suspect rebel and so deemed a legitimate target.” (Curtis 230). Consequently, it was no wonder that the Irish people volunteered to fight these barbarians because it was their right to rebel and fight them back.

In fact, Curtis was not the only writer to revise many of the stereotypical images attributed to his people, Silko did the same too. Many of the distorted Native American images has been countered. The Native Americans were widely described as subservient people; however, in the novel, though Tayo served in the war, he did not kill any Japanese soldiers. Therefore, he did not fulfil the Whites’ expectations and he even confessed that he did not hate the Japanese. Besides, Native Americans did not serve the colonizer out of respect, but rather, if they did so, they surely did it either by force or when the Whites tricked them by their lies and false promises. Moreover, Native American women were considered to be driven by their lust and seemed to adore white men. In *Ceremony*, it was clear that the white men are the trickers. It was the white teachers in the white schools who encouraged native women to dress and behave like white women. However, when they made relations with white men, they were denounced and damned by the whites especially the priests of the Church. Indeed, the white women were the ones driven by lust and seemed to adore having relationships with the Indians, especially when in uniform and so “the white women were still waiting for them to come back and give them another taste of what white women never got enough of” (Silko 59).

In fact, the white people were all hypocrites. When the Native Americans were in uniform, young white women loved them and were fighting over them. The older women respected them and always smiled when seeing them as when “an old white woman rolled down the window and said, ‘God bless you, God bless you,’ but it was the uniform, not them,

she blessed.” (Silko 46). Also, White men at the bar served them whatever they wanted and treated them as equals to them. However, all these changed when the war was over, the Native Americans were treated worse than before:

The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she’s really careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change. You watch it slide across the counter at you, and you know. Goddamn it! You stupid sonofabitches! You know! (Silko 46-47)

The idea of the disappearing “Noble Savage” is clearly subverted through depicting a resilient and surviving Indian personified in the character of Tayo. Besides, large amounts of liquor were sold to Indians at Gallup and when whiskey was made illegal, the whites bootlegged it and sold it to the Native Americans. This shows that the whites are the source of all bad habits and unhealthy goods. And then the Indians are described as drunkers! In addition, through Betonie, Silko deconstructed the idea of the white man as the potent and dominant master. Betonie explained to Tayo that the whites were created in a native witches' ritual and argued that “We can deal with white people. . . It was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place” (Silko 132).

Furthermore, the Native Americans were largely described as weak individuals who are unable to defend or speak for themselves and so the colonizer did speak for them by providing fallacious accounts and depictions. As a way of countering this, the natives broke such misconception through redefining themselves from their own perspective. Therefore, the novel *Ceremony* includes very few white characters and even when they speak they are not linguistically active as the Native American characters who are given a voice to express their true experience and reality.

Indians were seen as savages who adored nature. However, in *Ceremony* it is confirmed that this love of nature is what rescued Tayo and his community because without incorporating the natural biotic and abiotic environment in the native ceremonies, these ceremonies would be useless. The stereotype of the savage and the violent Indian was clearly countered when Tayo instead of killing Emo as it was expected by the whites, joined the older men of his community to perform a ceremony of love and peace. Nevertheless, the whites are the ones depicted as violent and savage. All the white agents are heartless including the doctors of the hospital and the police. All what they wanted is to lock Tayo in the hospital again. They came to hunt him like a prey. “Because this is the only ending they understand.” (Silko184).

When the snow fell, it covered all the land with its whiteness and blurred all the fences and boundaries which the whites set to exclude the Native Americans from the land. This suggests that the snow now had reclaimed the land again. The whites could not take control of the hills and mountains because they were cowards who feared the nature. Their fences could not reach the length of the mountain and so this shows their powerlessness. Therefore, “The mountain outdistanced their destruction, just as love had outdistanced death. The mountain could not be lost to them.” (Silko 175)

The two patrolmen who were chasing trespassers were so hostile and agitated when talking to Tayo, further calling him a “son of a bitch!” (Silko160). They intended to take Tayo as a prey to their boss. But when they saw the tracks of the mountain lion they decided to follow the tracks to get the lion instead of wasting their time on an Indian. One of them was chewing tobacco like an animal and savagely spitting. Also, the whites were depicted as destroyers and liars. When Tayo found the cattle in a land of a white man named Floyd Lee, he could not believe the idea that they were stolen. Then, he realized that the white teachers

were teaching him lies including the lie that "... only brown-skinned people were thieves; white people didn't steal, because they always had the money to buy whatever they wanted." (Silko 153)

#### **II. 4. The Use of the Native Language: Disempowering the Colonizer's Language (the New 'englishes')**

The use of the colonizer's language was a very controversial issue which stirred debates for centuries. Post-colonial writers split into two groups. On the one hand, some writers called for rejecting all what was associated with the oppressor including his language. They preferred the use of their native language in their literary productions because they considered writing in the colonizer's language a proof of their still subjugation. Among the famous writers who called for a radical rejection of the colonizer's language was Ngugi Wa-Thiong'o. For him, any claim for an ethnic and national identity should be done through the native language and a refusal of the use of the English language. This stance was confirmed when he turned away from the use of English to his native language, Gikuyu, as the medium of his literary expressions. However, through a process of subversion, another group produced a literature of English expression depicting a pure native experience. These writers made the English language an anti-hegemonic tool when appropriating it to suit their native reality and experience. One of the advocates of this stance was Chinua Achebe who seemed to realize the fact that the human experience is heterogeneous; therefore, the colonizer's language can be appropriated and adapted to the colonized people's situation and unique experience. Indeed, the alien language becomes a different language, another "english".

Actually, having been educated in the colonial language and taught many canonical British literary works, the influence of the colonizer's language was inevitable. But the native writers' use of English was not without advantages for through this medium they were able to

reach a wider audience, voice their native experience, benefit commercially, and show their mastery and fluency in the use of an alien language to the point that they even outshone its native speakers. Indeed, the people who were once accused of being barbaric and illiterate are now the masters of the English language. As a result, the English language had many localized forms, as many as the former territories which were under the English colonial hegemony. The first sign of the dispossession of the English language from its assumed superiority is denoting it with a lowercase initial letter “e”. Undoubtedly, the native writers made the English language their own. The Indian writer Raja Rao seems to confirm this when he stated:

One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word “alien,” yet English is not really an alien language to us. . . We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American. (vii)

Silko and Curtis are unquestionably well versed in the English language and its use. They produced a literature of English expression that denounced the colonial Empire and set itself against the literature of the colonial center. Through going beyond the limits imposed by any literary convention, both writers excelled at depicting a pure Native American and Irish reality and experience. *Ceremony* and *The Lightning Tree* are full of references to the Native American and Irish languages respectively. The native language is mostly associated with the elders of the native community, those people who are rooted in the land and in the traditional native heritage.

In *Ceremony*, old Ku'oosh is a good example of the affinity with the native dialect, especially when it is stated that “He spoke softly, using the old dialect full of sentences that were involuted with explanations of their own origins, as if nothing the old man said were his own, but all had been said before and he was only there to repeat it.” (Silko 41). Moreover, the repercussions of the imposition of the colonizer’s language are clearly indicated when Silko denounces the changing of Indian names to European ones. Undoubtedly, the colonizer’s aim was to alienate the people from the land and create a kind of disharmony among the people and between them and their beloved land. Though Silko chose the English language for writing her novel, she unquestionably called for a return to all what was native including the language if it was possible. Indeed, since the heart is still native, the medium does not matter much.

Curtis’s use of Irish words and sentences in his novel is pervasive. All the Irish words and sentences are italicized, sometimes they are followed by an English translation and sometimes not. The untranslated words may be words with no equivalent in English. Certainly, this is a sign of the untranslatability of the Irish culture and the limitations and impotence of the English language to convey an Irish reality. Consequently, the novel is enriched with this Irish vocabulary which added a special flavor to the whole work. The writer’s depictions and detailed descriptions of the Irish daily life, customs, and traditions would not allow the reader to pay any attention to the language issue for the writer excelled at showing the purity of the native Irish culture and society. Henceforth, the reader would only marvel at Curtis’s mastery of the English language and playing with words. Many English words are appropriated by the writer like the words: *childer*, *good morrow*, *the wee*, the use of “*wither*” instead of *whether*, and “*if*” instead of “*of*”... etc. Furthermore, Grace, the woman wrapped in her black shawl used to sing in the tongue of her people and not in the English language. Also, when Mary Sherlock, an old tinker woman, was on her deathbed and

the priest visited her, she spoke to him in Gaelic. Not having a good grip of this native language, the priest asked her to speak only English. She replied angrily and asked him “Does your Reverence think that I will speak my last words on this earth in the language of the Sassenachs? (Curtis 168). All these incidents are a clear indication of the native Irish people’s rejection of the English language and love for their native mother tongue. Their mastery of the English language undoubtedly was due to the prolonged colonial contact, and so they are not to be blamed for that.

## **II. 5. Traditional and ecological healing:**

The native peoples had a holistic and ecological view of nature. They believe that there is a harmony between all the constituents of the universe; thus, all sources of trouble arise when breaking such harmony. Therefore, their key to healing the individual and communal soul was the traditional and ecological healing practices. These remedies evidently derive their materials from Mother Nature and their aim was to help the people recover through re-establishing harmony with the natural biotic and abiotic environment. Indeed, Western healing cures proved to be a total failure.

In *Ceremony*, Tayo was suffering physically and psychologically. The veteran’s hospital failed to cure him. However, when he turned to the traditional healing practices, he regained his health and soul. All the ceremonies that Tayo had performed were based on natural elements. This included places of sacred importance, eating special kinds of crops, and meeting animals like the mountain lion... etc. These ceremonial practices helped Tayo to restore his connection to the land because he cursed the rain before, and so he had to redeem. When he returned to his people’s ways and cures, he reconciled with Mother Nature and healed his wounds.



In *The Lightning Tree*, the family's healing lore is so significant. It had a great power and outperformed Western medical remedies. The practice of healing itself was the key to healing Mariah's soul since she found happiness and relief when healing the people who came at her door asking for help. It was the knowledge of the herbs and plants which saved the people during the great hunger neither "God nor government nor Queen Victoria reached out with a helping hand" (Curtis 17). So the people were in need of a special balm that cannot be found either in a doctors' chambers or across a pharmacy counter.

In both novels, ecological healing set itself significantly against religious healing. The Church seemed to be useless for the native people who did not believe in the priests' Christian religion and practices. Mariah's cure was the lightning tree and the well: constituents of the ecological system. The people's cure was found in nature and no where beyond. Similarly, Tayo's cure was found in the native ceremonies which incorporate many elements of nature. Any quest for healing was established through maintaining a balanced relationship with all the elements of the ecological system without any exception.

## **II. 6. Remembering, apology and redemption:**

Part of healing is remembering and acknowledging the harm inflicted by colonization for this difficult experience cannot simply be wiped out from the memory. However, it also entails washing away the grief and sense of guilt because what had happened is part of the past and nothing can be done towards it. Moreover, healing the historical wounding which resulted from the devastating colonial encounter requires a mutual healing process. i.e. the colonizer also has to apologize and redeem. Henceforth, the perpetrator is supposed to acknowledge that what he did was unfair and wrong. Surprisingly, the perpetrator also carries the weight of the crime and becomes his own victim. The sense of guilt he feels makes him

not healthy either. Therefore a mutual process of apology and redemption on the part of the colonizer and forgiveness on the part of the colonized is crucial for healing and renewal.

As far as the Native Americans are concerned, the story of the Pawnee tribe as it was told by the American activist Winona LaDuke exemplifies the process of apology and redemption in action. The Pawnee people were driven out from their homeland in Nebraska and they took with them their sacred food that they grow, especially corn. They moved to Oklahoma, and there they could not grow their sacred seeds. The seeds continued to shrink until they had very few of some of those varieties. One day, a descendant of the settlers in the Pawnee homeland near corny Nebraska called the Pawnees and said that his people would like to grow the Pawnees' seeds, which they had very few left. Surprisingly, when the Pawnees sent those seeds back to Nebraska, the seeds flourished and thrived. The Pawnees said that the seeds remembered the land they came from and so even the seeds have spirit. Certainly, in this story there was both an apology and a redemption for the settlers in Nebraska welcomed the Pawnees back home and celebrated with them a "welcome home Pawnee days" in corny Nebraska.

Concerning the case of Ireland, to have an apology from the arrogant colonizer seemed to be impossible. Therefore, the Irish people did not wait for such apology or redemption from the part of the perpetrator and seemed not to accept it even. They did remember and acknowledge the effects of the colonial encounter, but through their healing strategies, they effectively managed to overcome it.

# CHAPTER III

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## Symbolism, Motifs and Narrative Structure

III. 1. Symbolism

III. 2. Prominent Literary motifs

III. 3. Narrative structure

### III. Chapter Three: Symbolism, Motifs, and Narrative Structure

#### III. 1. Symbolism:

Symbolism refers to words or phrases which have an array of references beyond their literal meaning. Both *Ceremony* and *The Lightning Tree* are dense with literary symbols. Symbolism added a great deal to the novel's importance. In Silko's *Ceremony*, the Gallup Ceremonial is highly symbolic of the Whites' view of Indians. In fact, the whites had an ambivalent and contradictory vision about Native Americans. Although the whites mistreat Native Americans, especially in Gallup by giving them the cheapest of wages and preventing them from having even the simplest of houses, they mass in large groups to see the Indian ceremonial where the Native Americans play their performances, dances, and show their traditions and crafts. That is how the whites view the Native Americans, as inferior beings offering an interesting commodity which acts as a source of entertainment for the whites. All the varied traditions presented by the different Indian tribes are squeezed under the name "Indian", thus, ignoring their diversity.

Another potent symbol is Josiah's spotted cattle. The cattle are considered by the white people as wild, useless and untamed. The cattle were bought from Mexico by Josiah, who was always dreaming of having a cattle that can resist and thrive in drought. However, the cattle broke any fence and kept running west, heading off to their place of origin. Henceforth, "They ran as Robert said they did, wilder than antelope, smarter than elk about human beings... the dim memory of direction which lured them always south, to the Mexican desert where they were born." (Silko 158). Indeed, this is symbolic of the Native Americans who are also relentless to be free from white people's domination and imposed standards. Their key to healing is the return to their past and their roots to reclaim what was lost from them as a result of the destructive contact with the white colonizer.

A dominant color symbol in the novel is the hazel color of eyes. The eyes of Tayo are hazel symbolizing his hybridity and mixed origin. Tayo at first suffered because of this for his friends were mocking him and accusing him of being a half-breed. Only later on did he realize that his hybridity provides him with a powerful insight into the native and the white cultures. Night Swan, the Mexican woman who was Josiah's mistress was the one to teach Tayo how to embrace change and see the positive side of being a half-breed: his hybridity helps him adapt in a constantly changing world. This fact was confirmed when Tayo declared "I'm half-breed. I'll be the first to say it. I'll speak for both sides." (Silko 46). Moreover, Betonie's hazel eyes also act as a symbol for the openness to cultural diversity and the adaptation to the ever changing world. His ceremonies incorporated elements from both cultures: the native and the white's. Henceforth, in the case of Native Americans, healing the historical wound requires the acceptance of change and cultural hybridity, and also the flexibility in dealing with the imposed realities.

Also, the drought is a very important symbol in the novel. It symbolizes disharmony with nature and the punishment for such disconnection with the natural biotic and abiotic environment. Indeed, "The old people used to say that droughts happen when people forget, when people misbehave." (Silko 49). Therefore, the drought acts as a warning for the people that there is something wrong in their relationship with the surrounding environment, and so they have to reconsider their actions and behaviors towards nature. When Tayo was in the war, the Japanese forced them to walk the very long road to the camp of the prison, this was called "the Bataan Death March" (Silko 45). On their way, Tayo cursed the rain because it made the road so muddy and Rocky's injured leg was getting worse due to the rainfall. As the road became slippery, Tayo and the corporal were not able to keep hold of the blanket containing Rocky:

It was that rain which filled the tire ruts and made the mud so deep that the corporal began to slip and fall with his end of the muddy blanket that held Rocky. Tayo hated this unending rain as if it were the jungle green rain and not the miles of marching or the Japanese grenade that was killing Rocky. He would blame the rain if the Japs saw how the corporal staggered... then it would be the rain and the green all around that killed him. (Silko 24)

Back home, Tayo regretted deeply for cursing the rain because he knew that his action caused the drought. Therefore, the healing process he has undertaken and all the ceremonies he performed are part of restoring the connection and harmony with nature once again. This re-established connection with the land is what brought relief and healed the individual and the community: Tayo and his native people.

*The Lightning Tree* is also rich with symbolism. The title of the novel itself is highly symbolic. It consists of two powerful symbols: the lightning and the tree stricken by this lightning. Mariah's lightning tree is a symbol of the native ancestors, of origins, of healing, of knowledge, of the intimate connection to nature, and of traditional thinking. The tree, rooted in the land, was there throughout generations witnessing all the life events of the people. Any one who stood behind it, would be sure that many people were in this place long before. This clearly creates a sense of communal belonging. It is also a symbol of healing because no matter how troubled and sad Mariah was; she found relief and happiness under this great tree. Moreover, the tree has become to symbolize knowledge since many elder people used to gather beneath it and discuss all sorts of knowledge, even politics. Also, Mariah buried all the papers on which she had written the family's cures under the lightning tree. Furthermore, the tree stood as a potent symbol of tradition that set itself against progress. Tom Canny, the engineer from the offices of the County Council, informed Mariah that the Council's plan is the clearance of the site at the crossroads where she lives. This included the cutting of the

trees found there. Therefore, Mariah was shocked “You’re cutting down that grand old tree? How in heaven’s name can the cutting down of that noble tree be regarded as a road ‘improvement’? What harm is it doing to anybody where it stands?” (Curtis 253). She totally refused rural electrification and many other improvement plans assuming the name of modernity and progress. The lightning tree was not cut and remained there; this clearly symbolizes the triumph of nature and tradition over modernity.

The lightning, which struck the tree symbolizes life and death. It was the strong flash of lightning in the sky, followed by the thunder which frightened Marry Ellen and so she went into labor after weeks of pain, giving birth to Mariah who declared to the readers “... and so it was I arrived into this old world while the forces of nature tumbled, rumbled and flashed all about my crib. (Curtis 13). However, the lightning also symbolizes death because in its fury, the lightning struck the tree and caused it to burn. But not all trees survived the lightning as the lightning tree. Among the other prominent symbols in the novel by Curtis is the water of the well. Undoubtedly, it symbolizes healing. This water is said to possess magical powers and the ability to heal all kinds of ailments including the physical and the spiritual. Mariah’s father used to mix it with all the cures he made before giving these cures to the sick people who sought help. Also, the spirit of the woman of the well, symbolizes spiritual healing and the mourning of the ancestors.

### **III. 2. Prominent Literary motifs:**

A motif is any recurrent idea, object or image which helps to develop a literary work’s major theme. In Silko’s *Ceremony* and Curtis’s *The Lightning Tree*, many motifs are used to reinforce the novel’s major theme which is healing.

A significant recurring motif in *Ceremony*, which is directly linked to the novel’s theme of healing is the native ceremonies. The native ceremony stands as a key to change.

This change is what the individual and the community need to accept in order to heal the historical wounding. After serving in the war and returning home, Tayo found that many things changed. The world has become more chaotic and seemed to lose its natural order. Consequently, Tayo was deeply troubled and this added to his burdens. Restoring his physical and psychological stability required the performance of a ceremony of change to cope with the ever changing world and realities. At first Tayo was skeptical of change and the native ceremonies, but as he undertook them, he realized their potent power to heal. Indeed, through ceremonies, Tayo did recover and returned the rain to his people. Right from the beginning of the novel, the power of the ceremony to heal is emphasized:

What She Said:

The only cure

I know

is a good ceremony,

that's what she said. (Silko19)

Another important motif related to the theme of healing are the stars. The stars were Tayo's guide as they were before the guides for all the ancestors. In fact, the stars were there since antiquity and under them generations stood. Mountains and rivers may change but the stars didn't. References to stars throughout the whole novel are pervasive. Betonie's sand painting included a special pattern of the stars which Tayo is supposed to find and follow during the enactment of the healing ceremony. Certainly, without the stars Tayo would not be able to perform the healing ceremony because it included a phase when Tayo meets and spends the night with a woman. Actually, the stars in the sky helped Tayo to reach this woman's home since "... there were the cattle to find, and the stars, the mountain, and the woman." (Silko 137). Moreover, the special plant which Tse'h had shown Tayo and asked him to collect it for her when it is ready, resembles the stars in the color of its seed which



have the same light as the stars. The nights and the places which Tayo had to spend and stay in are marked each by star.

References to the spring were also recurrent. Tayo used to stay by the spring along with his uncle Josiah. The spring is sustenance for the people, the flora and fauna of the land. Certainly, it is a precious and priceless ecological component, as when Josiah stated that “there are some things worth more than money. He pointed his chin at the springs and around at the narrow canyon.” (Silko 49). Tayo used to enjoy the coldness of the spring’s waters especially in summer. Indeed, the spring is highly revered by the native peoples for its waters “... came from deep within the earth, and the people relied upon them even when the sky was barren and the winds were hot and dusty”. (Silko 83)

Concerning *The Lightning Tree*, the most significant motif throughout the whole novel is that of the lightning tree. The lightning tree is mentioned about thirty times. It highly contributes to the novel’s theme of healing since it is the healer of all the wounds of Mariah. This tree was the guardian and shelter for all. Beneath its spreading boughs old men gathered to narrate stories and talk about the ebb and flow of their lives and labors on the land. Furthermore, on the gloomy nights of troubles, many brave Irish warriors met there to discuss secretly their plans and dreams of rebellion and of freedom. So, too, beneath this tree promises were made, pledges broken, bonds of friendship forged, happy greetings and sad farewells enacted. Also, poor travelling people sheltered underneath it. Mariah stood under that same tree as she bid her last goodbyes to her one true love, Alexander McNeil. In this very place she heard many old travelling women sing, especially Grace Furey, who sung her lonesome song of love that flooded Mariah’s eyes with tears of loss. For the Council officials, the tree “... means for them no more than some soulless, dead thing which is standing in the way of progress” (Silko 261). For Mariah, the giant tree was the last of her living old friends and it was history that if it could speak, it would tell a more honest history of Ireland than

that ever read in books. Besides, the tree is also a sign of survival. Surprisingly, though the old tree was now aged and decayed by the years, when Mariah peered into its hollow center, it found a fresh young ash sapling. And so life starts to spring once again from it. Henceforth, Mariah was more than sure that a great tree will stand again. Certainly, Curtis is offering a potent strategy for healing any kind of wounding: nature is the most effective healer and the key to renewal and survival.

### **III. 3. Narrative structure:**

Western literary narratives are characterized by their traditional narrative structure which evolved as a combination of Aristotle's narrative arc of beginning, middle and end, and Gustav Freytag's climactic plot. Linear Eurocentric plots follow the chronological order of time and space. They proceed from the past passing by the present until reaching the future. However, many narratives of native writers are highly cyclical and seem to abandon the linear structure by experimenting with the narrative chronology of the story. Also, Western novel's standard form is presented in the form of chapters. The novel *Ceremony* is unique in its structure because it does not adopt the chapter form; instead long indents are used to mark the separation of unnumbered sections. Thus, there are no titles and no divisions to chapters. This clearly alludes to the interconnectedness of all things. Furthermore, Western literature is well known for its generic divisions. However, in *Ceremony*, Silko mixes the prose and poetry genres, creating a totally new form of narrative.

The story of Tayo is interrupted at irregular intervals by traditional folklore presented in the form of poems which contained the ceremonies, stories, rituals. They interrupt but do not inhibit the progress of Tayo's contemporary story for his story seems to repeat and consolidate the old native stories. The past with its memories keeps haunting Tayo, as a result, the novel keeps moving backward and forward in time and space in parallel with

Tayo's memories and troubled mind. The use of flashbacks and flashups throughout the whole novel is pervasive. At the beginning, it seems difficult for the reader to keep track of the novel for the events jump in time and space. Henceforth, Tayo's confusion is transferred to the reader. But things start to make sense later on when the story comes to a full circle. The cyclical nature of the narrative is clear when the whole story of the novel is framed within a poem which starts with the word sunrise and appears at the end of the novel in three lines offering a tribute to sunrise. Also, Tayo starts his ceremony with the elder medicine man of his community and also concludes it with them.

*The Lightning Tree* starts with the end of the novel's story. However, the reader does not seem to realize that only when s/he reaches the last page of the novel. Thus, the reader is inevitably invited to read the beginning of the novel to grasp the ending of the story. The novel starts with old Mariah snoozing in her whitethorn armchair and ends also with her sitting in this very chair. Consequently, the novel's structure is cyclical par excellence. The events keep weaving back and forth in time through the use of flashbacks and flashups following Mariah's memories. The past is interwoven with the present and the future, suggesting their interconnectedness and cyclical nature. The writer's way of narrating events is also non-linear. Curtis starts by the end of the stories and then he indulges in the details and only sometimes he does the opposite. The novel is divided into thirty five chapters and contains many old Irish proverbs, ballads, songs, and conversations.

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**ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ** *CONCLUSION* **ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ**

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## Conclusion

As a conclusion, native writers from the marginalized communities resisted the colonial hegemony through their writings. Their works provided an outlet for discussing the experience of their people and the issues of most concern to them. The word proved to be a powerful weapon of resistance and an effective tool for spreading awareness. Despite the fact that colonization is over, its harsh effects are far reaching. The native peoples and writers cannot simply turn a blind eye on the harsh colonial experience for it affected them deeply. However, it provided the native writers with a repository of themes and issues to write about.

In dealing with the trauma of colonization, the panacea was to revive a native identity embedded in the native culture and the past. Through their narratives, Silko and Curtis offered a variety of healing strategies which made their narratives known as healing narratives. The physical world was of paramount importance for the Irish and Native Americans because it was their source of physical and spiritual sustenance. Mother Nature was highly revered and it seemed to possess a high value the same as any human being. Therefore, their view of nature was undoubtedly biocentric. The problem started when the colonizer's vision towards nature was largely anthropocentric and thus the total opposite of that of the colonized people. This meant the view of nature as an instrument serving human interests and economic ambitions and as lacking an intrinsic value. Therefore, the colonizer went on with the pillage and wanton destruction of the native environment causing the native people's rupture with it. This caused many traumas for the Irish and the Native Americans.

The path to healing and renewal was through the return to all what was native. This included the return to the pre-literate communicative mode characterizing the Irish and the Native American cultures namely "orality". In fact, both Silko and Curtis succeeded in presenting the rich oral heritage of their peoples through stories, poems, ballads, and proverbs, all of which were transmitted orally from one generation to the other. Also, part of

healing was the return to the pre-Christian old pagan religion. Actually, their paganism is the very proof of their animism and affinity with nature. Moreover, the revision and subversion of many of the derogatory stereotypes attributed to the Native Americans and the Irish is regarded as another potent healing strategy. The natives redefined themselves and dismantled the pejorative labels given to them by the subjective colonizer. Also, the Irish and the Native Americans disempowered the colonizer's language by appropriating it to their native reality and experience creating a new "english". Certainly, the most effective healing strategy of all these is the use of traditional and ecological healing. This evidently stems from Mother Earth and its bounty which is regarded as the most powerful healer of all wounds. Therefore, the key to healing is the establishment of oneness with nature, the intertwining with it, and the acceptance and appreciation of all what it offers.

In fact, both the Irish and the Native American people shared the same previously discussed healing strategies. However, when delving deep within, there are some differences characterizing each culture and its dealing with the theme of healing.

For the Native Americans, healing meant to accept the still inevitable contact with the whites and the existence in an environment where they still exist. Therefore, they should adapt to the situation and benefit from the positive aspects it may offer. Actually, the unique thing about Native American healing is that it requires a mutual healing process: the colonizer has to apologize and redeem and the colonized accepts such apology.

As far as the Irish people are concerned, they preferred the total isolation from the English. No middle way or compromise with the enemy seemed to satisfy them. They could not wipe from the memory the harsh colonial experience and so they harshly criticized the colonizer the same way this latter had unfairly done. However, they realized that lamenting the situation for too long is of no use. Henceforth, their key to healing was to move on carrying the hope and expectation of better days ahead for the Irish people.

## Notes

**1. Flora:** it refers to all sorts of plant life on earth.

**2. Fauna:** it refers to all sorts of animal life on earth.

**3. Edmund Spenser:** he was an English poet and colonial administrator, best known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, which celebrated the dynasty of the Tudors and Queen Elizabeth I. Although he was fascinated by the Irish rich faerie mythology and land, his literary productions bore a harsh criticism and hatred for the Irish people, especially the ancient Gaels and their Gaelic culture and were considered as war propaganda against the Irish people.

**4. *A View of the Present State of Ireland (1596):*** is Spenser's famous prose pamphlet which appeared in the form of a dialogue and because of its inflammatory content it was not printed until after his death. In this work he called for the total eradication and distortion of the Irish language and culture through offering a range of cruel plans for the subjugation and destruction of Ireland.

**5. The Divine Spirit:** it is the spirit of the powerful god or goddess. In the Bible, there are two kinds of spirits, the Divine Spirit and the human spirit. The human spirit is said to be born out of the Divine Spirit.

**6. The Sioux:** are said to be the first Native American tribe in North America and so they are regarded as the ancestors of all the natives of the New World.

**7. Ferdinand II:** was the King of Sicily and then of Aragon. When he married Isabella I, he became the King of Castile. He also agreed to sponsor the voyages of Columbus. Along with his wife they fought the last war with Granada completing the Reconquista.

**8. Isabella I:** was the Queen of Castile, who married Ferdinand II of Aragon. She struggled to get her right to the throne. Under her reign, the kingdom paid all its debts and

saw prosperity. She issued an order which called for the conversion or exile of Muslim and Jewish people in Spain; thus, completing the Reconquista. Also, she is the one who financed the voyages of Christopher Columbus in 1492.

**9. Sir Walter Raleigh:** was an English explorer, writer, soldier, and a courtier. He served some time in Ireland to suppress the rebellion. He gained the property which was confiscated from the native Irish people and eventually became a landlord. Queen Elizabeth I favored him so much; therefore, he was given the title of a knight in 1585. He was the one who paved the way for the English colonization of North America.

**10. Biopiracy (biological theft):** is the exploitation and appropriation of others' biological resources or knowledge of these resources and patenting them without the owners' permission and consent

**11. Hybridity:** is one of Homi Bhabha's central ideas, it refers to the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism.

**12. Mimicry:** is another central concept of Homi Bhabha, it occurs when the colonized people imitate the colonizer and his culture.

**13. Wood-Kerne:** a label given to the Irish rebels who lived and hid in the woods during their resistance of the English hegemony in Ireland

**14. Giraldus Cambrensis:** he was a Cambro-Norman historian and archdeacon of Brecknockshire, widely known as Gerald of Wales, he was known for his wide travels and extensive accounts of the life during the 12<sup>th</sup> century which were regarded as valuable sources of history.

**15. Marcus Gheeraerts:** a Flemish Tudor court artist and a large scale worker in England.

**16. Allan Hope:** is a Jamaican poet, musician and songwriter better known as Mutabaruka. He is well known for his "Dub poetry" which is a kind of performance poetry of West Indian origin.



**17. Henry VIII:** he succeeded his father Henry VII to become the second Tudor monarch and king of England in 1509. He was well known for his numerous marriages. His conflicts with the Pope led him to launch the English Reformation which aimed at eliminating the pope's control over the Church of England and making Henry VIII the Supreme Head of it. He was an extravagant king who believed in the divine right of English kings.

**18. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:** is James Joyce's first novel and one of the best English language novels of the 20th century. It was published in a serial form in 1914–1915 and based heavily on the author's life. The protagonist of the novel, Stephen Dedalus, challenged the religious and social constraints of his community and decided to leave the country to develop his career as an artist. The novel also includes references to the political and religious life of Ireland during the early 20th century.

**19. Protestantism:** the denomination of Christianity originated emerged as a result of the Reformation and which is not under the authority, surveillance and supremacy of the Pope.

**20. Catholicism:** is a denomination of Christianity, which is under the authority and surveillance of the pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

**21. Alexander VI:** his Spanish name is Rodrigo de Borja y Doms. He was a corrupt and ambitious Pope, whose only interest was power and wealth. He did not show any interest in spirituality or theology; therefore, he proved to be a secular and not a religious pope as it is supposed to be.

**22. A Papal bull:** is a patent or charter issued by the pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

**23. Walter Jackson Ong:** an American religious and cultural philosopher and historian who was largely interested in studying the effects of the transition from orality to

the written tradition on cultures. He was the elected president of the Modern Language Association in 1978.

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