



Indigenous Knowledge for Environmental Conservation: An Ecocritical Approach to Silko's *Ceremony* and *Gardens in the Dunes*

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Abstract

This paper examines the belief systems and ceremonies of the Native American people also known as American Indians or Indigenous tribal groups, exploring how their primitive ritual practices contribute to preserving the environment and maintaining the abundance of nature. The study argues that these people's traditional wisdom which is based on close observations, one-to-one contact with the environment, and the first-hand experience sharpened over millennia, empowers them to understand the self-regulatory and self-renewal patterns of the natural world and take necessary precautions for environmental sustainability. To prove this argument, the study has undertaken Leslie Mormon Silko's two major texts *Ceremony* and *Gardens in the Dunes* for textual analysis. Using ecocriticism as its theoretical framework, the study has borrowed insights from John Hannigan's typologies of environmentalism, and Winona LaDuke or Gerald Vizenor's concept of tribal wisdom. The finding of the study contends that indigenous knowledge plays a vital role in promoting natural balance and social equity. The study concludes that the conservation of natural environment ensures harmony, sustainable agriculture, development, and food security.

Keywords: Natural environment, ritual practices, indigenous wisdom, traditional knowledge

Introduction

Indigenous people's relationship with nature is grounded in reciprocity and reverence. They are the enclave of biodiversity (LaDuke 1). By protecting the ancestral wisdom and ensuring the right to perpetuate their beliefs and practices, they are contributing to the preservation of the entire ecosystem. They have the locality-specific knowledge gained over the centuries from their own experiences. The Native American teachings describe the relations all around animals, fish, trees, and rocks as the brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas of them (LaDuke 2). Such a relationship between the Native Americans and animals are honored through ceremonies, songs, and stories that maintain

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close ties to all species. Leslie Mormon Silko's *Ceremony* is a novel in which different characters perform specific rituals that contribute to preserving nature and maintaining co-existence. Her next novel *Gardens in the Dunes* is a story of a girl named Indigo, who struggles between the tension of reconnecting herself with her previous pattern of traditional life that connects her with nature, and the modern cherished manners of the White heritage. A thorough study of these texts reveals that the major characters of these texts pay high respect to their fellow creatures and the non-living world. They argue that the human feelings cause the plants to wither and animals to suffer from diseases. They explore remedies for every disease based on their traditional wisdom. However, these Indigenous groups are the victims of genocidal attacks and extermination. In this context, this paper aims to identify the indigenous patterns of gaining knowledge that connect humans with mute fellow travelers and the abiotic world. This paper analyzes how the application of tribal wisdom helps to promote natural balance and social equity.

In this paper, Arcadian discourse under ecocriticism has been employed as a theoretical perspective. Envisioned by John Hannigan, this discourse promotes a balanced co-existence between humans and nature. Associated with the romantic and spiritual celebration of the natural environment, it is concerned with pristine wilderness and an unmodified form of nature. It also uses Gerald Vizenor's, and Winona LaDuke's concepts of tribal wisdom, rejection of reductionism, and the fixed identity of tribal groups as defined by the imperial power. Highlighting the traditional wisdom of the indigenous groups, it analyzes the primary texts based on these concepts. It uses the hermeneutic method to gain an in-depth understanding of the Native American wisdom and practices to preserve nature. It is a discursive analysis that takes the primary texts as primary data, and the scholarly articles related to the issue raised as secondary data. This interpretative technique enhances a deeper understanding of traditional wisdom and the need to promote it for a harmonious relationship between humans and non-humans.

Literature Review

Silko's novels 'Ceremony' and "Gardens in the Dunes" explore the themes of interconnectedness between nature and humanity. Both works weave together the narratives about tribal wisdom and its role in healing individual or collective trauma. This literature review analyzes critical interpretations discussed by various scholars highlighting Silko's contribution to environmental conservation.

Silko's *Ceremony* has received a lot of scholarly gaze. Denise Cummings has described *Ceremony* as a novel that "immediately challenges readers with a new epistemological orientation while altering previously established understandings of the relationship between reader and text" (65). Cummings believes that the narrative is a shift in establishing a new relationship between the readers and the text. Joanne Lipson Freed has described *Ceremony* as the hybridity that stems from the mixed-race background of Tayo (219). Tayo is a half-white half-Pueblo Laguna Native American who wrestles with his identity following the tragic events he faced during the Second World War. He faces challenges in assimilating into his society as a Native American. Edith Swan mentions the matrimonial structure of the society in *Ceremony* and the Laguna culture (309). She understands Tayo's Grandama's or auntie's decision about his treatment of trauma as their highest hierarchy in the family. Before taking this decision, Tayo's medical treatment had not been successful in curing his illness. Describing Tayo's trauma, Karen Piper remarks that Tayo and his friends struggle to shape their identity between two different sorts of signifying realms, one the 'official' American identity, signified by the flag, and the other, that of the erased Native American, signified by the corpse (490). Piper takes Tayo's struggle as an attempt to balance his Native

American and an 'official' American identity. Thus, the opinions expressed by different scholars here pay attention to diverse aspects of the novel. However, they do not examine indigenous wisdom and its importance in caring for the earth. This paper concentrates on how traditional wisdom and ceremonies are helpful in healing diseases and ensuring the earth as a healthy home for all.

Like *Ceremony*, Silko's next novel *Gardens in the Dunes* has also been interpreted variously by scholars. When the Native American culture is blamed to rest on a traditional mindset, Angelika Kohler remarks that Silko's major characters in *Gardens in the Dunes* are in search of their individual homes, where the historical rootedness and modern awareness intersect (237). Kohler understands the journey of major characters as a process of perceiving highly complex systems and historical development. They experience both traditional Native wisdom and pre-world war predicament. This sets a ground for the Native people to intermingle science and tradition for the benefit of biodiversity.

Ellen Arnold reads *Gardens in the Dunes* from a feminist perspective. She argues that Silko, in this novel, examines the system of thoughts that underlie the Western patriarchal culture's oppression of women, indigenous people, animals, and earth and explores ways that exploited and powerless can join across artificial boundaries against the forces of destruction (103). For Arnold, Indigo, and Hattie are both oppressed women who unite to fight against patriarchy. Like Arnold, Terre Ryan argues, "Silko's gardens demonstrate that imperialism begins in our backyards" (115). Ryan regards Hattie's condition like a caged bird under the oppression of her husband Edward Palmer.

These reflections on the novels are about different aspects. Silko's *Ceremony* has been interpreted from a colonial perspective, and *Gardens in the Dunes* has been looked at from a feminist lens. However, these reviews have not paid an adequate attention to how the Native ceremonies and traditional wisdom can be used for healing personal and collective illnesses. This study explores this gap by paying adequate attention to how Native wisdom and practices can correct the wounds of trauma and preserve the natural environment.

Arcadian Discourse as an Ecocritical Perspective

John Hannigan classified environmental discourses into three major types: 'Arcadian' discourse, 'Ecosystem' discourse, and "environmental justice" discourse. The Arcadian discourse advocates for the "back to nature movement," and thirst for wilderness by celebrating nature's pristine wilderness (Hannigan 40). In the 1990s, environmental sociology experienced a "cultural invasion" (Rice 239). Therefore, Hannigan adopted a socio-constructionist perspective to conserve the environment. He claimed that wilderness has priceless aesthetic and spiritual value. However, it is being lost due to urban expansion, excessive noise, pollution, overcrowding and social problems (38). Hannigan stresses that preserving an unmodified environment is essential for ensuring its power to heal a person's physical and emotional well-being. Van Koppen describes three defining features of Arcadian discourse: externality, iconization, and complementarity (74-75). Describing these features, Hannigan claims that the externality refers to the idea that Arcadian nature is constructed as separate from human society.

Iconisation in the Arcadian tradition suggests that the depiction of wilderness is influenced by visual representations that shape a person's cultural consciousness. Finally, the Arcadian tradition is best understood within the context of its complementarity. In other words, it stands in a counterpoint to the urban industrial society and the social and environmental ills attached to it (39) to be indented Hannigan's concept of Arcadia can be achieved by preserving the bucolic aspect of

nature by distancing it from industrial and social intrusion. Simon Schama claims that there are two kinds of Arcadia: infused by lightness and bucolic leisure; and a place of 'primitive panic' (517). Despite the efforts by certain scholars to merge these concepts, Hannigan criticizes associating wilderness with social value.

Silko's *Ceremony*: Critical Analysis

Silko highlights the importance of Native American wisdom, spirituality, and their profound connection to nature in her writing. She honors the indigenous oral traditions as a means to preserve nature and safeguard their cultural heritage. She captivates the reader by highlighting the characters, their beliefs, and ceremonial practices. The following discussion brings to light how indigenous communities persistently strive to protect Mother Earth for future generations across the Native nations by using their age-long traditional knowledge inherited from their ancestors.

Silko's *Ceremony* presents an account of the traditional wisdom of the American Southwest Pueblo and Navajo communities. These people practice different ceremonies and transfer their knowledge to posterity through an oral tradition. In the narrative, Tayo, a boy born from a Pueblo mother and a white father, experiences battle fatigue, a trauma, after he returns from the Second World War. At the same time, the Pueblo community suffers from a long drought which is taken as a punishment given by the Almighty to the Pueblo people for taking an interest in a practitioner of witchery. Both the people and the Pueblo nation experience drought and illness. Tayo is first treated by Ku'oosh, a medical man, and later by Betonie, who suggests performing certain ceremonies for the recovery of his own and the Pueblo community. These ceremonies put an end to Tayo's health-related problems and the evils brought out by the drought in the Pueblo nation. John Hannigan's Arcadian discourse advocates for the "back to nature" movement (40) to preserve the unique power of wilderness. Tayo is advised to walk on this path for his recovery. His return to Arcadia, ultimately makes it easier for him to cure his fatigue and trauma of the war.

Silko uses a specific language in her novel as a tool to take care of the natural world and establish human beings' age-long relationship with nature. *Ceremony* is a blend of both prose and poetic forms. The novel weaves different stories that are oriented to communicate the importance and power of rituals over humans and non-humans. Besides their role in storytelling, words are very important for the Laguna oral tradition. Silko strategically employs language to tell stories that emphasize the responsibility of Laguna and Pueblo people to care for themselves and the natural world. Tayo's grandmother tells various stories that emphasize people's responsibility for caring for the natural environment. Edith Swan describes that a severe drought occurs after Tayo curses the rain (230). It shows that words that people vocalize are so powerful that they turn into reality. This event inspires people not to think and utter anything bad about the phenomena of the environment. Otherwise, they face consequences for making negative comments or harboring unkind attitudes towards animals, plants, or any species worldwide. Despite their close ties with nature and species of animals and birds, Native people have been massacred, cheated, and robbed of their historical lands. Today, their lands are subject to some of the most invasive industrial interventions. Reservations have been proposed as sites for the nuclear waste dumps. The sacred sites have been disturbed through resource extraction and development activities. Their struggle to survive has been surrounded by a world bent on destruction. Despite everything, these indigenous people are the ones who stand against the exploitation of land and trees. LaDuke describes:

Native environmentalists sing centuries-old songs to renew life, to give thanks for the strawberries, to call home fish, and to thank Mother Earth for her blessings. They live off the beaten track, out of the mainstream in small villages. They often drive old cars, live in old houses and mobile homes. They seldom carry briefcases and rarely wear suits. They have meetings in a local community center, outside camping, or in someone's house than at a convention center or at a \$1,000-per-plate fundraiser. (3-4)

The Native Americans have continued their sacred ceremonies of renewal and their caring relationships with land, water, animals, plants, and other human beings. They are the true preservationists of the natural environment. In *Ceremony*, too, Grandmother's stories teach Tayo to connect himself with the ancient wisdom of his tribe and understand the value of customs and rituals for healing the individual as well as community illness. They emphasize a deep connection of the Pueblo and Laguna people with the natural environment. Describing the Laguna people, Sean Kicummah Teuton writes, "The Laguna people believe that every place, object, landscape or animal relates to stories of their ancestors" (2). Therefore, taking care of animals, objects, or land is associated with their cultural identity. This is the reason, for Sharon Holm, that by taking care of the cattle, Tayo begins to take a more active and creative role concerning nature and his people which supports the development of his cultural identity (248). Josiah, a character in Silko's *Ceremony*, reminds Tayo of the importance of animals, plants, and streams thus:

"The sound of the water trickling out of the hose into the empty wooden barrel, "there are some things worth more than money." . . . "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 22)

The language Josiah uses depicts that once human beings forget their responsibility for the natural world and show cruel behavior, it starts hitting them back badly.

The Pueblo and Laguna people perform different rites and rituals as tools to keep their relationship with the natural world intact. These ceremonies, for Nancy Gilderhus, are for the transformation of diseased ones to healing (70). Toni Flores remarks that the rituals also help Tayo to deal with turning away from witchery (54). Tayo appreciates these rituals and believes that they have the power to heal his emotional trauma. Sean Kicummah Teuton adds that Betonie helps Tayo to recover through ceremonies that relate Tayo's American identity to his Laguna identity and therefore combine his past with his present (150). After Tayo learns the Pueblo and Laguna ceremonies and practices them with faith, his illness vanishes. When he covers the deer's dead body at the deer-hunting, which is a gesture performed out of respect, he shows that he initiated Laguna myths, because Laguna mythology connects all living creatures (Fouad and Alwakeel 48). By connecting himself with the Laguna culture and rituals he begins to heal his disease. Throughout the novel, Silko emphasizes the need to blend modern medicine and ancient rituals for the cure of illness.

The Native Americans take animals as the prudent companions that possess a keener sense and heightened awareness of ecological events. In Native American culture, the Spider-Woman is taken as one of the most foundational figures. She is the creator of the universe and is often attributed to bringing wisdom and social values to her people (Teorey 2). Like Spider-Woman, all animals are like brothers and sisters to the Native

American people. They do not like cattle being sold for domestic purposes or meat. Tayo's Auntie does not like the cattle business; she is pleased to know that Tayo has begun to think that this cattle deal is bound to be no good (Silko 52). Teuton Sean Kicummah explains that through *Ceremony*, Silko invites the reader to take a look at the witchery within everyone, and points out the steps one can take to create healing and wholeness (32). This kind of respect paid to mute creatures depicts that Laguna culture embraces cosmopolitanism throughout their lives. Gerald Vizenor describes that the Native indigenous people's attachment to biodiversity is quite intricate. They know each species and the cycles of life. They form stories of their attachments with them and their empathies for them. Here, Vizenor writes:

Native stories of survivance are prompted by natural reason, by consciousness and sense of incontestable presence that arises from experiences in the natural world, by the turn of seasons, by sudden storms, by migration of cranes, by the ventures of tender lady's slippers, by chance of moths overnight, by unruly mosquitoes, and by the favor of spirits in the water, riny sumac, wild rice, thunder in the ice, bear, beaver and face in the stone. (9)

These people's grounded experiences and intricate attachment to nature are so unique, depicting them as they are dedicated to preserving it for the sake of perpetuating a harmonious relationship between the biotic and non-human world for millennia.

Silko's *Ceremony* reveals that Tayo's health condition alienates him from the Whites. As he witnesses and engages himself in the battle in the Second World War, it brings him a sense of pessimism and anxiety. As the doctors cannot diagnose his disease, he returns to his Native Pueblo town, where his family suggests that "the boy needs a medicine man, otherwise, he will have to go away" (Silko 30). After this, Tayo is suggested to visit a Navajo medicine man, Betonie, who suggests him to perform specific ceremonies. He suggests him to "get on his way, telling him that . . . there were the cattle to find, and the stars, the mountain, and the woman" (Silko 155) to retrieve his health and the rain for the Laguna and Pueblo. Betonie tells Tayo about the ways he needs to perform these ceremonies. He informs him of the four patterns and their sequence: a specific pattern of stars, the speckled lost cattle of Josiah, a mountain, and a woman (Silko 155). To search for the specific pattern of the stars, Tayo travels to the north as he had seen them in the north in late September. After several days, when he is on his way to the north, he stays at the home of the Montano, Ts'eh. At night he thinks of the stars: "He got up from the table and walked back through the rooms. He pushed the porch screen door wide open and looked up at the sky: Old Betonie's stars were there" (Silko 167). The first ceremony of finding the stars leads Tayo to another magical woman named Ts'eh, who like Betonie, also helps him in his ceremony by teaching him the harmony of natural elements and his role in the natural harmony. She guides him to the mountain to retrieve the speckled cattle. Following Ts'eh, Tayo searches for Josiah's lost cattle as the second pattern of his ceremony. In search of the cattle on the mountain, he confronts a lion that disappears into the trees. In Silko's words: "He rode the mare west again, in the direction the mountain lion had come from . . . he saw the spotted cattle, grazing in a dry lake flat below the ridge" (182). When Tayo completes all four steps of the ceremonies, there are rain clouds followed by rain that wet the whole land. Tayo thus recovers finally.

Tayo's family gives credit to the medicine man, Betonie. They believe that "old Betonie did some good after all, as Tayo is "all right now" (Silko 200). These ceremonies reveal that they are scientific and can ensure the health of people and the planet. Though the Whites regard these indigenous people as wild and hate their ceremonial practices as weird, Silko strongly resists them with her mythic consciousness.

She uses an ironic metaphor to do so. She denounces these White people in *Ceremony*. She mentions that these people are the descendants of a hardhearted witch:

The old man shook his head. "That is the trickery of the witchcraft," he said. . . They want us to separate ourselves from white people, to be ignorant and helpless as we watch our own destruction. But white people are only tools that the witchery manipulates; and I tell you, we can deal with white people, with their machines and beliefs. We can because we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place. (132-33)

This distinctive metaphor resists the White people's dominance and victimization. Silko keeps their position below a witch. She glories the Natives for their paternalistic attitude and firmly believes that their traditional ceremonies are not black arts. They are very powerful and scientific.

Silko's *Ceremony* highlights the Indigenous peoples' connectedness with nature, their tribal wisdom and their profound capacity to ensure physical and spiritual well-being. Through Tayo's journey, the novel depicts the significance of traditional knowledge and rituals in recovering and healing the individual and the community.

Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*: Critical Analysis

Silko's next novel *Gardens in the Dunes* is a story of an 11-year-old Native American girl named Indigo, who is separated from her culture and heritage and is expected to adjust to a new environment for her public acceptance. Hattie, a traditional white woman keeps her and teaches the standard ways of her culture. But Indigo longs to seek her home where she can connect herself with her historical roots. When her plan to escape is disrupted, Indigo begins to adjust to her new life by finding solace in gardening. As she was born and raised in a tradition where her elders taught her to make connections with the natural world, Indigo rediscovers her own cultural roots and spiritual heritage playing with the plants. Grandma Fleet and Sister Salt had taught her that plants are like siblings. Describing Robert J. Brulle's "preservation," "reform environmentalism," and "eco-theology" typologies of discursive frames adopted by the US environmental movement, John Hannigan claims that wilderness and wildlife must be protected from human incursion because they have inherent spiritual and aesthetic value (37). He stresses that humans must preserve and protect nature since it is divinely created. He also focuses that ecosystems must be protected for human health reasons (37). The following lines from *Gardens in the Dunes* by Silko describe how the indigenous people treated plants:

After the rain, they tended the plants that sprouted out of the deep sand; they each had plants they cared for as if the plants were babies. Grandma Fleet had taught them this too. The plants listen, she told them. Always greet each plant respectfully. Don't argue or fight around the plants, hard feelings cause the plants to wither. . . . Sand Lizard, a relative of Grandma Fleet warned her children to share: Don't be greedy. The First ripe fruit of each harvest belongs to the spirits of our beloved ancestors, who come to us as rain; the second ripe should go to the birds and wild animals, in gratitude for their restraint for sparing the seeds and sprouts in earlier the season; give the third ripe the bees, ants, mantises, and others who cared for the plants. (14-15)

These lines describe that showing gratitude to all species is the core way of life of the indigenous people. They treated all living and non-living with respect. Billy Danny, in an interview with Winona LaDuke, assures, "When we talk about saving our rights, we are protecting the animals and birds, too. We are the caretakers of the Creator's creation" (qtd. in LaDuke 39). These people's commitment and tenacity spring from a deep

connection to the land. Their cultural lifestyles and survival are connected with ecological preservation (Dahal 128). Their knowledge of the medicinal plants, foods, and forest animals, the intricate relationship between flora and fauna, creation stories, culture, and way of life have uniquely helped to restore the original ecosystem. They always cry and pray that their trees will not be taken from them. ~~And~~ This way of life alone can make them happy rather than being selfish and cruel. Their brotherhood and sisterhood with all species could ensure harmony in the entire environment rather than ensuring this earth as the home of human beings only.

When Indigo was forcefully taken away from her home to a modern school where the Whites read, it was hard for her to adjust to the new atmosphere. Her classmates who were brought there from the same settings as hers would be jealous of her ability to pronounce English words. Since they had arrived a little earlier at the boarding school and had learned to be a good Christian, they thought they knew more than Indigo, they hated her (Silko 67). Indigo experienced several other harassment and discomforts in the school and Hattie's home where she stayed. At such times when she visited Hattie's garden, she relieved herself. Indigo draws attention to the transformative influence of nature and the curative qualities inherent in the natural environment. Her deep connection with gardens provides her with comfort and a sense of spiritual contentment. Describing a conversation between the people of Orion and Belladonna, a native girl, Belladonna explains that the tribal people are the children of dreams and visions. Their bodies are intertwined with Mother Earth while their thoughts soar high among the clouds. Their voices are the living breath of untamed wilderness. She explains ahead:

I am different than a white man because of my values and my blood is different. . . . We are different because we are raised with different values. . . . Tribal people seldom touch each other. . . . We do not invade the personal bodies of others and we do not stare at people when we are talking. Indians have more magic in their lives than white people. . . . An Indian is a member of a recognized tribe and a person who has Indian blood. . . . My tribal blood moves in the circles of Mother Earth and through dreams without time. My tribal blood is timeless and it gives me strength to live and deal with evil. (Vizenor 198-204)

Indigenous people's way of living is traditional in the eyes of postmodernists. However, their wisdom connects them with Mother Earth fostering harmonious co-existence with all the species of the earth. Like Belladonna, Indigo also draws strength from the wilderness of nature.

Gardens in the Dunes is also a story of a White woman Hattie, who suffers from a traumatic experience due to her first and present husband. She also gets relief from her trauma when she links her with the gardens and flowers. Angelika Kohler describes:

In the course of their journey, Hattie goes through the traumatic realization of having been objectified by her husband, of having been abused as an alibi companion to cover up her husband's criminal practices. When she reclaims her right to independence, she must face the fact that her ex-husband has also ruined her financially. Hattie has to build up an entirely new existence for herself. This is an experience she shares with Indigo. (240)

Hattie's husband Edward a botanist seems to experiment to enrich the species of plants. But inwardly, he aims to ultimately destroy the plants he claims to preserve. This becomes an agony to Hattie. Her ultimate attachment to Indigo and their attachment to the natural environment gives them both a solace to live.

To sum up, Silko's novel *Gardens in the Dunes* is a sweeping tale that wrestles with the tension between the Native American traditions and the encroaching White

culture. The story revolves around Indigo, a young Native American woman who faces the challenge of reconciling two worlds that stand in stark opposition. It also unfolds that nature reveals a hidden truth that by embracing it, there is a haven for healing and growth. Similarly, Silko's *Ceremony* highlights the indigenous peoples' connectedness with nature, their tribal wisdom and their profound capacity to ensure physical and spiritual well-being. Through Tayo's journey, the novel depicts the significance of traditional knowledge and rituals in recovering and healing the individual and the community.

Conclusion

As this paper, through an interpretive approach, engages in exploring how indigenous wisdom contributes to preserving nature, the indigenous culture emphasizes a holistic comprehension of existence, shaped by millennia of experience. While the modern Western worldview prioritizes the scientific approach, the Native American approach seeks a broader connection among species to safeguard the earth as a habitat for all. Silko's two novels *Ceremony* and *Gardens in the Dunes* reveal that the application of ancient wisdom can effectively promote natural balance and social equity. It has stressed that humans can appreciate the earth's generosity only when they can understand the language of fellow creatures. By analysing different Native American rituals, events, and characters, this paper has highlighted the importance of traditional Native wisdom and emphasized the need to maintain harmonious relationships with the environment. It has stressed the need to utilize indigenous culture and its vast archive of knowledge for the harmonious co-existence of all species on this earth. It has revealed that all people need to acknowledge, appreciate, and celebrate human being's interconnectedness and reciprocal relationship with the broader ecosystem.

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