



**THE POSTCOLONIAL NATIVE AMERICAN AND ESCAPISM IN
N. SCOTT MOMADAY'S *HOUSE MADE OF DAWN***



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ABSTRACT

Post Colonialism has for long left out the plagues of aboriginal people in Australia, and even America. Its focus has been on Africa and other ex-colonies without settlers. Momaday, however, reveals the destructive factors of colonialism and cultural juxtaposition in the lives of the Native Americans. Lost between the indigenous culture and Eurocentricity, Native Americans struggle to find a place in the American society. Whereas some hold on firmly to their roots, others are cut in between and this places them in a neurotic state. House Made of Dawn unveils how escapism has become a solution to many Native American who are caught up in this state of neurosis. The solid characters are those without a complex and an identity crisis. As the opposite group struggles to blend in both cultures, they destroy themselves in the escapist shut out processes they attempt. We thereby explore postcolonial notions like double, consciousness, self-hate, unhomeliness and others to see how, intoxication, sex, and violence have become escapist methods for postcolonial Native Americans.

RESEARCH PAPER

This work examines N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, to demonstrate with the Postcolonial approach that Native Americans are caught up in the aftermath of colonialism. They though autochthons of a settler's colony reside in their world and have their own experience of post colonialism, that defers entirely from the experiences of the settlers. As indigenes relegated to the background, they resort to different forms of escapism. These methods are, however, presented as a cosmetic solution, with regards to the above mentioned text and facing reality seems the only way out of the postcolonial trauma. Native Americans, American Indigenes or American Indians have a history and a culture of their own which rejuvenates and flourishes in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, but contrasts with the protagonist's psychological state. Momaday's ability to paint such a picturesque image of the reservation stems from his own childhood experiences.

Navarre Scott Momaday of the Kiowa tribe was born on the 27th of February 1934 in Oklahoma. His mother Mayme Natachee Scott Momaday was partially of the Cherokee Indian tribe whereas his father Alfred Momaday was from Kiowa. Momaday's love for art stems from his father's passionate painter and his mother an amazing writer. When his parents moved to Arizona when he was barely one year old, it was the beginning of a life time adventure. He was given the Kiowa name Tsoai-Talee meaning 'Rock Tree Boy'. This was an amazing natural rock known to the Kiowa community; one of the wonders of their natural environment. In the reservation where his parents had taken up teaching, he was exposed at such a tender age to that almost imaginary beautiful and natural world. It also was a school for acquisition of all that is Kiowa tradition, but also the Apache, Navajo and the Pueblo traditions. His paternal grandmother Aho with whom he spent countless hours fortified his foundation on oral tradition, through the Kiowa tales, songs and myths.

On the other hand, his mother was a beneficial reference with regards to reclaiming the Indian heritage. She chose an Indian boarding school- Haskell Institute. Momaday was impressed by her determination to identify with her own and thereby defining without blemish her identity instead of identifying with the dominant white culture as many would. This nurtured all of what became of Momaday and is boldly exhibited in his writings. Momaday with his family due to the Second World War found a gratifying job opportunity at New Mexico, so they moved and lived by the Army Base at Hobbs New Mexico. It's in Hobbs that Momaday got exposed to the issues of race. At twelve, he moved to Jemez Mexico found in New Mexico. There he studied at the University of

Mexico till he had his Bachelor's Degree in English by 1958. It's in Jemez that he embraces the Pueblo culture; taking pleasure in the corn farming and sheep herding as will be reflected in his works. With regards to the Navajo landscape he was totally in love. He spent hours riding horses through the enchanting landscape and it made him even more proud of his origins. Some years later he enrolled in a PhD at the Stanford University.

While in Stanford he was mentored on creative writing by Yvor Winters a famous critic and poet at the time. Momaday played a big role in the foundational exposure of the Indian tradition to the world, through his works. Some of which are *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), *The Names* (1976), *The Gourd Dancer* (1976) and others. It's his passion for a neglected and oppressed tradition in America that gets him to specialize in the teaching of Native American Oral tradition. Till date he works for a non-profit organization that preserves the Indian culture.

If Momaday is obsessed with the Native American culture and its rejuvenation, it is actually because the culture had lost its sovereignty with the arrival of settlers and colonizers. There was a massive shift from a rich ethnic lifestyle to an oppressive white culture that lingers and is even more choking even after decolonization. It is well known that from the conquest era Bartholome Las Casas spoke of millions of Indians murdered in different dehumanizing ways. The consequences were expected; massive migration of entire clans and tribes of Indians to the interior, depreciation of the rich Indian mother tongue, and extinction of some clans, the Indian cultural oppression and the tagging on to the forcefully or skillfully presented Christianity. It took the White Schools for Native written literature to come into existence and the little of what was left of oral literature was salvaged.

The 4th of July 1776 independence did not in any way include the Autochthons of the territory. It's about 148 years later that the congress chose to grant the Indigenes born in America the right to vote through what was called Indian Citizenship Act. By this time the 1870 15th Amendment had already given African American males the rights to vote. By 1957 still some states did not respect the Indian Citizenship Act. Indigenes were still not permitted to assess their political rights. This notwithstanding, they fought to keep what was left of their culture and the right to freely exercise it in the reservations.

The particularity of Native Americans is the fact that they have an eternal situation like the Australians, Canadians, and South Africans to forever dwell with the Settlers and be partly seduced partly hassled by Eurocentricity. To this there have been counter-discourses as to if they are covered

by notions like post colonialism. Post Colonial studies and analysis have evolved over time as researchers keep defining and redefining its boundaries to better expatiate and encompass the various notions of marginality within cultures in the world. However its theory has been so extensively used in the discourses on colonial issues in Africa and non-settler ex-colonies most especially. But the marginalized aborigines in Native America and Australia are neglected in the process. Post Colonial analysis and theory however dwells on the oppression of indigenous peoples, by a super cultural power. It characterizes formally colonized people as people who have been or still are under the socio-political power of another group. In this case Native American experience qualifies absolutely and is easily enclosed in the post colonial world burdened with issues of identity, double consciousness, homelessness, trauma and others as will be sketched out in Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*.

House Made of Dawn has inspired critics and nursed so many different perspectives. To Daniel Thomieres the Indian Tradition especially the Pueblo culture is a complicated realm. He questions the understandability of a text like *House Made of Dawn* when one is not part of the Pueblo culture. In "Evil in Pueblo-Possibilities of Life in N. Scott Momaday's *House made of Dawn*" he declares that an outsider is automatically disconnected from some of the cultural rights; especially as Momaday intentionally shields the sacred part of their tradition to the readers. The symbols and significances of several scenes, settings, and animals are particular to the Pueblo culture. So unless acquainted with the culture one only understands the text after thorough research on the people and their culture. Thomieres values the fact that the coded aspect of the novel grants us the possibility of seeing life from different perspectives, and can equally reveal to the Western people something yet unknown and sacred about the Western culture.

J.G Ravi Kumar pictures Momaday's depiction of culture from a different point of view. To Kumar, *House Made of Dawn* is a display of Momaday's passion for his traditions. He creates a perfect marriage, a blend between the two aspects, showing off his artistic worth and his admirable culture. *House Made of Dawn* is an amazing piece of work that gained popularity in the dominant American literary world according to Jin Li. Jin Li sees the protagonist – Abel as plagued with issues of ego in "Struggling between Bi-Cultural World-The Protagonists Personal Structure in *House Made of Dawn*". Abel is said to be trapped in between two worlds. The result of which is depression and

frustration. In his struggle to assert his identity he, however, lets his ego hinder every form of maturity and integration. His healing of course comes from the Indian traditions.

Ivana Lacic shares this view in “The Influence of Indian Tradition in ‘*House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday”. To Ivana, Momaday’s priority is exposing the Indian tradition as different from that of the European and the American. In the Pueblo culture, man and nature form a symbiosis that should never be tampered with. Man’s life is connected and reflected in nature, like nature is in man. Any form of disconnectedness leads to disease, instability, destruction, alienation and the inability to integrate another society. Xiangmin Li focuses on the psychological point of view. To Li, the battle is between the Superego, the ego and the Id. ‘Prevalence of Superego in Abel: Sublimating in Homecoming.-Abel’s personality structure in “*House Made of Dawn*”, prioritizes the psychological transformation of a lost protagonist, whose Superego, through the ego gets him to overpower the id. Our study contributes to this scientific world by exposing Abel and other Native American characters in Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn*, as products of the Post colonial vice; an experience common to many Native Americans who have not been able to synchronize their oppressed culture and that of their oppressors. Escapism becomes often an unconscious way out trauma, expressed physically and psychologically through destructive channels. Momaday thereby implies that escapism will never be a solution to the neurotic Native Americans. Whether it is emotional, physical, geographical or psychological, reality alone liberates and overcomes the cancer of oppression. The mirage is not the safe way out, self-discovery and identity accommodation is the healing pill that Momaday presents in Abel’s rejuvenation at the end.

Escapism from the word ‘escape’ is “to get away from a place where you are kept as prisoner or not allowed to leave/ to get away from unpleasant and dangerous situations” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 1999: 446) With the suffix ‘ism’, it means “an activity, a form of entertainment, etc that helps you avoid or forget unpleasant or boring things.” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 1999: 446). Actually it refers to the denial of reality by indulging in some consoling activity; a struggle to divert ones thoughts from what is real by focusing on other short-lived joy giving activities. It can be physical, psychological and even emotional. Psychologically, escapist do not often know their state; they do not often see themselves as victims of the process. It becomes difficult for them to retract and face the overwhelming truth. They become unfit for the

society as the most pleasurable forms of distraction could be a stress factor to their acquaintances. Consequently they hurt others in the process and could become a weak spot in a society.

In the Indian culture where men are the pillars of families and the society at large, the loss of a prospective male pillar is a major disappointment to the family. However, it takes a level headed male, with an unwavering sense of the self to fit into that position. This turns out not to be the case with the protagonist Abel. In spite of the rich Indian culture and the comfort of the reservation, Abel seeks a superior life experience, a taste of another lifestyle. He lives amongst the Pueblo with his grandfather but is disconnected from them. This stems from the fact that his father was of an unknown tribe. "He did not know who his father was a Navajo, they said or a Sia, or an Isleta, an outsider anyway, which made him, his mother and Vidal somehow foreign and strange." (11) Though the Pueblo people did not molest or maltreat them, they were all conscious of the fact that there was something different about Abel and his family. Such is very common to indigenous societies. This was enough for Abel to feel different. Not knowing his father equals not knowing his origins; for in the patriarchal system as is with the Indian tradition, a man's identity is primarily built by his father's cultural heritage. His father's origins is his legacy, his true identity. Abel lacked that foundation. Abel's complex begins with his difference in the society. He views his difference as handicap, even when the society does nothing to suggest that. The Albino unlike Abel fully accepts his difference and uses it for fame.

With the death of his mother when he was still a boy and the death of his brother Vidal, he was left with no one of his estranged type. The little left of his constructed notion of home was gone. Instead of accommodating himself in the indigenous society that had accepted him, he escapes. The only way out seemed to be the search for another home and new experiences - hence his hunger to explore the white world known for its *superior culture*. Volunteering to participate in the war, is just a struggle out of unhomeliness.

Lois Tyson explains Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness with regards to Post-colonialism in *Critical Theory Today* when he says "To be unhomed is to feel not at home because you are not home in yourself. Cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refuge, so to speak". (421) Peculiar to ex-colonials, 'home' which is a sense of stability at the level of identity becomes 'unhomed' as they try to situate themselves within the dual cultural society characterized with the dominant and the oppressed culture. The dominant culture which is that of the colonizers, especially

in a settler society as America, definitely intrudes and destabilizes the foundational culture, and the identity of indigenes. Abel ironically escapes to war, in spite of his grandfather's denial. He escapes further by trying to integrate the city life after leaving prison. All of these attempts are drastic failures. The popular outcome is alienation, depression, disillusionment and double consciousness.

It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others... one ever feels his twoness,- an American, a negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

(Edles and Appelrouth 351-352)

Double consciousness was first used in 1903 by W. E. Du Bois, in his demonstration of blacks caught in between the dominant culture and theirs. They are caught between asserting their identity as black people, though considered inferior, and being led by the already internalized white dominant culture. This puts them in a difficult position as their actions become erroneous for they find difficulties integrating either society. Though a concept attached to African Americans and their experiences; all of which totally differ from that of Native Americans, we find Momaday's Abel blatantly representing these same tendencies. Participating in the World War was supposed to be not just a way of escaping the Pueblo society but also to build a new home, a place to fit in. Serving and risking his life for a people that did not consider his Indian people American citizens was an error. Exposed to the dominant culture, Abel returns a deformed person, worse than before he left. Burdened with two cultural identities, the issue of double consciousness plagues him at every level. Momaday raises this in the peculiar attachment to some fashionable oversized shoes. Though he looked ridiculous in a Pueblo community where shoes were believed better without conspicuously high heels said not to respect their mother earth, he refused to be moved by their impression and wore them anyway. Having been away from the reservation for so long, he had lost the passion for their cultural activities. In their ceremonial contest, he knows not how to excite the villagers. As his rival the Albino charismatically animates the crowd, he comes in with the superior air of the white dominant culture and is later defeated as he had lost his fighting skills. His struggle to reconnect with the Pueblo culture is a failure. "He had tried in the days that followed to speak to his grandfather; but he could not say the things he wanted; he had tried to pray, to sing, to enter into the

old rhythm of the tongue, but he was no longer attuned to it.” (139) His spirit is torn between two conscious cultures that are not compatible as one strives to dominate the other.

The Christian name ‘Abel’ for a ‘longhair’ considered savage Indian is an irony. His name however symbolizes the inevitable aftermath of colonialism. It also reminds us of Adam cut off from the Garden of Eden to toil and suffer, like Abel’s cutting off from his culture almost destroys him. Abel is not the only character in this state. Pastor or Priest of the Sun, Rev John Big Bluff Tosomah has a peculiar approach to his Christian sermons. He runs the Pan Indian rescue mission. His sermons though they carry Christian themes or headlines are usually submerged in his depiction of the Indian culture. He will talk about their traditions and mingle Christianity with some unknown rites. Momaday presents a character whose body is caught up in the Los Angeles white world but the white religion has been unable to uproot the Indian foundational religion or tradition within him. Though he believes he is psychologically stable, his agony and arrogance testifies to his instability. His disconnection from the Indian tradition hinders his connection to Abel. With his Christian notion of charity and love, he is ironically the first to call for Abel to be deserted or ostracized from their little community in Los Angeles. Ben Benally who like Abel had been in both worlds, understands Abel better, and struggles to help him overcome his identity crises. Father Olguin the Walatowa priest in the same light is an adept of the Indian culture in the reservation. His love for the Pueblo culture is obvious though trained in the white religious sphere. While some characters seem to have made a blend of both cultures in their spirits and are unperturbed by the situation, Abel turns out to be one of those characters that can simply not blend the two.

He was unlucky. You see that right away. You could see that he wasn’t going to get along around here. Milly thought he was going to be all right. I guess, but she didn’t understand how it was with him. He was a longhair, like Tosomah said. You know, you have to change. That’s the only way you can live in a place like this. You have to forget about the way it was, how you grew up and all. Sometimes it’s hard but you have to do it. Well, he didn’t want to change, I guess, or he didn’t know how. (104)

The inability to be homed, psychologically stabled, and integrated into a society, creates a sense of failure and leads to self-hatred. Tyson explains that “...ex-colonials often were left with a psychological “inheritance” of a negative self-image and alienation from their own indigenous cultures, which had been forbidden or devalued for so long that much pre-colonial culture, has been

lost.” (417). This drives us deeper into the psychological notion of escapism. Abel like Ben Benally and many of the psychologically deformed indigenes in Los Angeles got solace from drinking. While drinking in the reservation is presented as a form of cultural celebration, in the city it is simply another form of escapism. In the article ‘Risk of Alcoholism Among Native Americans’ it is explained further:

The rate of past month (35.9%) and past year (54.3%) alcohol use among Native Americans is significantly higher than other ethnic groups.

The rate of Native Americans with an alcohol use disorder (7.1%) is higher than that of the total population (5.4%).

3 in 10 Native American young adults (age 18-25) report binge drinking (consuming 5 or more drinks in 2 hours), 1 in 11 report heavy alcohol use (binge drinking on 5 or more days in the past month), and 1 in 10 have an alcohol use disorder.

1 in 6 Native American adolescents (age 12-17) engage in underage drinking, the highest rate of alcohol use of all racial/ethnic groups. (American Addiction Center)

Alcoholism is a particular plague to the Native American society. It stems from childhood and gets worse by adulthood. It is obvious that though the Native American community is relatively small with regards to other ethnic groups, the issue of alcoholism is higher than other communities. The first time we meet Abel he is in an awfully degrading state such that he cannot recognize his grandfather Francisco. The reality of his rejection at war and his inability to face the disappointment on his grandfather`s face was enough for him to seek a short termed solution in drinking. The memory failure is an attempt escape reality. Out of the reservation alcoholism persists due to hardship:

Native American communities suffer from high rates of unemployment and over 20% of Native Americans live at or below the poverty level, a rate more than double that of Caucasians.¹ Native Americans have below average rates of high school and college completion, with less than 1 in 5 earning a bachelor’s degree. The Native American population is also less likely to have health insurance and access to adequate medical care. The overall economic disadvantage of Native Americans, characterized by poor education, poverty, and limited resources, likely contributes to the prevalent abuse of alcohol among this ethnic group. (American Addiction Centers)

The above clearly depicts Momaday's Los Angeles. Los Angeles is presented as the addiction ground for depressed Native Americans. Ben and Abel are clearly victims of drinking disorder. The Relocation system for Native Indians has as burden to integrate them into the society especially financially, but their efforts are minimal. The description of Ben's home is pathetic, "Well it's the only window in here, you know and it gets pretty stale if you don't keep it open"(100). Their jobs are degrading and their lives monotonous. Their conversations show no sign of ambitions. They are economically stagnant - turning round in circles during the day and drinking at night '...there's always some Indians, drinking and fooling around. You can get drunk in there and as long as you don't get sick or start a fight or something, nobody says a thing.'" (99) Momaday relates this experience to Native Americans as the Caucasians -Milly and Angela though with their issues are not victims of drinking disorder.

The more Abel is beaten by the unyielding city the deeper he drowns into alcoholism. Contrary to the praiseworthy Indian traditional tenets of hard work, pride, productivity and genuineness, alcoholism gets Abel to lose his job, and become a financial burden to his comrades. Milly is constantly milked off her petty money for the purchase of alcohol. The indigenous patriarchal notion of men being the provider is shattered in their relationship. Abel makes fruitless attempts to regain control of himself but is instead deprived of his pride and every traditional ethical value.

Colonialism plays a major role alcoholism "... the brutality and loss experienced by Native Americans after Europeans colonized the United States led to this historical trauma. The loss of population, land, and culture caused unresolved grief to be transmitted across generations of Native Americans, likely leading to the development of negative coping mechanisms such as drinking." (American Addiction Centers)

Oral Literature had the power of transmitting the trauma of colonization. The destruction of their culture, their land and mass murder by the colonialists, have left gap that is constantly and tentatively filled with alcohol. Disillusionment is transmitted from one generation to the other and the pill of alcohol served just by it. Native Americans cut in between their cultural values and the Eurocentricity find difficulties asserting a stable identity. In a situation where they are margins and cultural stereotypes cannot be met, disappointment and self-hatred becomes inevitable. Abel's neurosis is at its peak with the murder of the Albino under the influence of alcohol.

Critics have long given controversial reasons as to why he kills the Indian Albino. Some say it's a mystery, others relate it to spirituality and claim the Albino as in the Indian culture had the power to mysteriously transform into a snake. The snake symbolizes evil like in the Bible. The imagery of the eagle crushing the head of the snake represents power to the Eagles Hunter Society, freedom to Abel and symbolizes God 'Wings like eagle'. The snake is equally evil to the Indian culture, like in the Garden of Eden. When Abel says he thought he was killing a snake, it could be a representation of what the Albino was to him. It is rather obvious that the Albino 'whiteman' is a representation of white oppression to Abel.

His victory over Abel in the traditional contest is not equal to the humiliation of white men but worse. In the war considered to be the white man's world, Abel had been so traumatized by denial and alienation. In Pueblo considered his home, another humiliation could not be allowed. Abel seeking solace in vengeance resorts to murder. The Albino is said to be weird, with an expressionless face when he dies, void of emotions. The slain Abel in the Bible is the murderer in this novel, a brilliant twist in events. The Albino represents Cain when they say "The whiteman raised his arms, as if to embrace him, and came forward." The 'embrace' is a deadly one, that of betrayal. Betrayal is generally attributed to colonizers by the colonized. They came with religion, putting God first, then power later, fueled by destruction. Like the devil they came 'steal, kill and destroy'. The Indians in Columbus writings were naïve, generous and simple minded. Same is the description in the writings of Bartholome de Las Casas. Las Casas details their love for the Christian religion their eagerness to learn. He also presents the terrifying ways in which they were murdered by whites.

Apart from alcohol, Abel seeks distraction in sexual relationships with white women. Apart from a teenage love affair that is granted little detail but for the fancifulness of it, Abel's most detailed sexual relationships are with white women. It could be said that it's an extension of Momaday's marriage to a German-Irish wife, but in this case and unlike in Momaday's life Abel's relationships were both sexually and not emotionally inclined. Angela St John a mysterious lady that came for relaxation and Milly a social worker are both means of escapism for Abel. In order to deviate from the reality of his rejection by white soldiers, and his estrangement in the reservation, he finds solace in the brief sexual experience with Angela. The relationship had nothing emotional, neither for Angela nor for Abel. Their conversation is direct and detached:

“Abel” she said after a moment, “do you think that I am beautiful?”...

“No, not beautiful,” he said.

“Would you like to make love to me?”

“Yes.”

She looked evenly at him, no longer musing.

“You really would, wouldn’t you? Yes. God, I’ve seen the way you look at me sometimes”

There was no reaction from him. (43)

With her it was not just some outburst of desire. Sex seemed a safe place for him, where he was in control and was sure to impress and be wanted. Angela stood before him as a challenge, especially with the history of white rejection. The lady’s shuddering under his touch was a victory and change in roles. He was no longer the subjected one but the master. It was a meticulous presentation of his capacities, as though consoling himself that he could be in control, and good at something-hence deviating from the self-hate that plagued him. If Angela is his challenge, Milly is a safe harbor in their relationship. A worthy distraction:

That night-he could not remember how it came about; he had got a little drunk-he made love to her... She was always coming around when he and Ben were at home. There was no shyness in her...She was always laughing-from the very first. Easy laughter was wrong in a woman, dangerous and wrong. But she had yellow hair, and her body was supple and ripe...her hips were full and rolling. She has big breasts.(75)

Milly’s description depicts Abel’s cultural notion of the virtuousness of womanhood. Milly does not fit the criteria in this passage. Her constant visits reveal irresponsibility. It was not proper for a maiden or unmarried woman to constantly be in the company of men who are not her relatives. Next she was too bold for a woman. Lastly she laughed a lot. Laughing which to Abel is not right represents a shameless process of flirting. However what qualifies her first is the yellow hair, a clear representation of Caucasian beauty. Then her body and the big breasts-completely qualifies her for his sexual escapist move.

Milly represents the favorable reception he had so longed for when he had gone off to war. She was a symbol of the love and acceptance so desired from whites. Though from a broken past, she has more control over her life than he does. Like with Angela, their sexual activities are vividly portrayed. Unfortunately, she is the only one in love and optimistic about their relationship.

Momaday does not present such vivid sexual activities with Indian women. White women were a consolation for white rejection. Milly is his drug from the realities of Los Angeles. She is equally his provider. She nurtures him like a child, hoping to see him get out of his intoxicating cocoon. He depends on her approval of his sexual performances to construct the little left of his ego. "Did you like it, Milly? It was good again, wasn't it Milly?" Her positive responses flattered him enormously. Her longing for his love was his pain killer. Alas, true healing comes from within and Abel's trauma was persisting. Like with all addictions, the satiating effect of the sex is short-lived and he constantly rolls right back to reality and loneliness.

Ben Benally like Abel has a drinking disorder, and also like Abel overwhelmed with reality dwells in the past. Abel's appearance in his life is like a blessing. Afflicted with urban racial conflicts, disillusionment and loneliness, Abel is his distraction from a monotonous life. More to it is, Abel reminds him of his past, his origins, and his culture. With Abel, he could reconnect to the wild life, the cultural rituals, superstitious beliefs, some of which were scary. Abel reminds him of freedom. He was like a bear that could not be tamed, could not be bound- a 'longhair' as proud and as wild as they were in the reservations. Though Abel's ways were a luxury he could not afford, he enjoyed every moment of cultural reconnection with him. He was happy to know that he was from Navajo, and kind of related to Abel. In the hospital he sings the song of *House Made of Dawn* and makes plans to someday explore the wild with Abel. They understood each other. Abel was the family he missed in Los Angeles. In spite of Tosomah's warnings, he would not let go of Abel. He didn't want Abel to forget his origins, but to be able to fit into the white world for reality sake.

Tosomah is a rootless character in *House Made of Dawn*. He is said not to have grown in the reservations and his hideous character seems a result of such emptiness. His dependence on the white world attests to cultural barrenness. To fill up the cultural emptiness, he entertains himself with using his white education to dominate the other Indians. As the indigenes try to integrate the white world, he prides himself with being fully integrated, nurturing his cultural complex with a superiority complex. He can be contrasted with Father Olguin who unlike Tosomah, had a grip on their culture. Tosomah represents sterility among rootless Native Americans. For a Pastor, he was endowed with revolting manners, a repulsing appearance and an unruly tongue. He recounts the story of Abel's crime and prosecution with disdain like a white racist would. To Tosomah, it was an honour for a Native American (rejected as an American citizen) to be taken for the war. He does not

understand the cultural bond between Abel and Ben. He carries no brotherhood or solidarity spirit, a grand virtue of indigenous culture—a virtue unknown to Martinez.

Martinez comes in there sometimes and then everybody gets real quiet. You know, they call him *Culebra*. He's a cop, and a bad one. He's always looking for trouble, and if he's always looking for trouble, and if he's got it in for you—if you make him mad—you better look out.

But Henry always gives him a bottle—and money too, I guess. (104)

Martinez is the extremist of them all. Coming from a marginalized society, he projects his complexes on the downtrodden. He is dreaded by the Indian community. Ironically as a cop he spreads fear than security especially toward his own people. They reside to bribe and gifts to appease him. He exploits rather than assist his people. Like a school bully, Martinez refuses to face the reality about his race. Abel reminds him of himself, and the realities about their race. He struggles to dissociate himself from the baseness, weakness and neurosis represented in Abel like many others. The violence he exerts on Abel represents a struggle against the turmoil of his identical issues. He is an archetype of Freud's projection and violence is his escape zone.

The most stable character is Abel's grandfather Francisco, through whom is depicted the power of rootedness in culture and identity. He is presented as a level headed character who fully enjoys the bliss of the reservation's routine and envy's no other culture. Healing from escapism is therefore asserting the reality of whatever confrontations dreaded. It is letting go of the short-lived solution and facing the truth about the hell faced with. The characters that attempt this solution turn out victorious like Ben. From the start Ben is bent on holding on to Abel, indirectly holding on to his past. It so blinded Ben that he was ready to tolerate Abel and his predicaments even as it gradually destroyed his life. His attachment to Abel is first of all a means to resolve the issue of loneliness—a common urban characteristic. For a long while he was ready to swallow the pill of Abel's recklessness in exchange for some company. The moment he acknowledges Abel as a superficial solution to his problems and that keeping him was ruining both of them, he lets Abel go. Abel equally finds solace in admitting the power of his indigenous culture. The death of his grandfather, reminds him of his responsibility as the only male left of his lineage. It also clears off the cobwebs of the identity crisis. He fulfills the cultural rights of his people at the end with a famous running activity that symbolizes freedom.

If Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* is globally studied as one of the foundational works of Native Americans, it's because of its capacity to represent the person and the place. We are introduced to two different worlds, the reservation and the urban city Los Angeles and how both societies play a role in the identity of the Native American. *House Made of Dawn* paints an almost conspicuous image of the reservation-a dreamland, a paradise conducive for every spiritual, cultural and moral growth. Los Angeles is the Sodom and Gomorrah where life ends at barely existing. Los Angeles represents the white world and the reservation the indigenous world. Abel's inability to make the necessary efforts to integrate the Pueblo society that accepted him is an excuse that Momaday condemns. Rootedness is a foundational virtue to the psychological stability of a person. Abel like the confused prodigal son hungers for more out of life in the journey to the Eurocentric world. Momaday portrays Native Americans as post colonial victims. Cut between both cultures, under the dominant notion of centre and margin, they get disoriented. Their lives are characterized by unhomeliness, self-hatred, double consciousness, trauma, complexes and identity crisis. In the chaos, escapism becomes a superficial solution through intoxication, sexuality, violence and religion. However, the fact that the protagonist finds a way out through cultural assertion proves that there is still hope for the lost. Rootedness is the unfailing way out.

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