

## COMPASSION AND RESISTANCE:

an eco-conscious reading in *The Turquoise Ledge: a memoir*

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**Resumo:** No presente trabalho exploramos como a relação de cuidado na perspectiva feminista contribui para uma ética ecofeminista que transcende a universalização de um ideal de gênero a ser empregado nas práticas humanas e não humanas no meio ambiente. A obra não ficcional, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, apresenta uma narrativa polifônica, pois a autora, Leslie Marmon Silko, resgata os saberes de seus antepassados da etnia Laguna Pueblo condizentes à preservação da Terra e seus coabitantes. Neste sentido, *The Turquoise Ledge* retrata primordialmente a necessidade de harmonia entre os elementos que compõem a natureza, inclusive o ser humano. Assim, por meio das experiências autobiográficas de Silko apresentamos como a ética feminista do cuidado pode resguardar o compromisso com a sustentabilidade e a alteridade nas relações com os variados ecossistemas do planeta.

**Palavras-chave:** Cuidado; Ecofeminismo; Natureza; Memórias; Povos Tradicionais.

**Abstract:** This paper explores how the relationship of care from a feminist perspective contributes to an ecofeminist's ethic that transcend the universalization of a gender ideal to be employed in human and non-human practices in the environment. The non-fiction work, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, represents a polyphonic narrative, as the author, Leslie Marmon Silko, recalls the Knowledge of her ancestors from the Laguna Pueblo ethnic group regarding the preservation of the Earth and its inhabitants. In this sense, *The Turquoise Ledge* primarily portrays the need for harmony between the elements that make up nature, including human beings. Thus, through Silko's experiences, we present how the feminist ethic of care can safeguard a commitment to sustainability and otherness in relations with the planet's various ecosystems.

**Keywords:** Care; Ecofeminism; Nature; Memories; Traditional People.

## INTRODUCTION

We are beings who are always looking for something in our lives. We are capable to manipulate ideas into interesting projects. Our aspirations ultimately result in a sense of prosperity that is not satiating in contemporary consumerism. For a considerable period, we have been confronted with the issue of daily consumes.

This approach has been emphasized since the advent of modern technology, aimed at facilitating our daily lives. Despite the positive benefits, there are also negative consequences associated with this vision that according to Greta Gaard (1993) those issues may be found inside the context of ecofeminism theory: This philosophical aspect is also concerned to the environmental damage, as it follows:

*The scientific evidence of climate change should be alarming: since the Industrial Revolution (variously dated as beginning between 1760 and 1840), when the density of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was just 280 parts per million (ppm), humans began burning coal, gas, and oil to produce energy, provide Transportation, and fuel machineries. Carbon dioxide increased gradually until 1900, when greenhouses gases and global temperatures began to skyrocket (...) Fast forward to the summer of 2012, by which time Half of the Artic Sea ice had vanished. In May 2013, Hawaii's Mauna Loa Observatory recorded carbon dioxide levels at 400 ppm, exceeding all historical records, and continuing to increase at a pace exceeding 2 ppm per year (Gaard, 1993, p. 23).*

All this greed for the most modern and technological side of goods and the global market ends up destroying the sources of natural life, such as biological reserves and the Earth's ecosystems. These effects are explained by dynamic physics, which applies the principle of reciprocity to this order, which it is understood as the law of bodies. In this view, every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

Both entities exhibit divergent actions, they show no symmetry, and they do not cancel each other out, due to the intense force or reaction exerted on everyone. Even though these actions may seem insignificant, they will have effects on the external environment. There will be a reaction to the existence of a result, whether significant or almost insignificant, the main point is the result connected in each action.

The methodology adopted by this article is qualitative, using a bibliographic approach to analyze the memoir produced by the indigenous writer Laguna, whose reference point is the generational stories of her people, especially those of her matriarchs, the great-grandmother A'mooh and her aunts Susie and Alice.

Hence, our focus is on the impact of an action on the physical environment and its inhabitants, and we aim to establish a dialogue with the theory of care and its relation to both human and non-human beings. We aim to establish a path that unites and integrates these relationships from a perspective of complementarity, honesty, reverence, empathy, compassion, and ethical principles.

For this to occur, we have selected care as the fundamental component for constructing healthy and welcoming environments. The ethic of care preserves the environment, diminish in the extinction of species. Unfortunately, the threaten is incorporated inside the human dominance especially by releasing radioactive and toxic overloads into the soil, water, and air. According to David L. Moore the poison land is seen around the indigenous Laguna reserve:

*She [Silko] turned to nonfiction memoir in The Turquoise Ledge, also set in her Tucson Mountains. This geographical and biographical pattern in a major writer's life reveals not only the rhythms of her creative energies, moving in a sense from epic to lyric, fiction to nonfiction, from text to image, from language to picture (Moore, 2016, p. 25).*

Therefore, we argue that feminist ethics of care is a way of moving beyond the conventional. We do not intend to guarantee that this theory alone constitutes the sole means of resolving the misfortunes committed against living beings and biosphere. We are not seeking an exclusive classification nor an epistemic trend to prevail over the present one, as this would entail adopting the same behaviors as patriarchy.

The act of caring, which involves a concern for both the other and oneself, is a manifestation of care. For so many years, care has been associated with women, a priori through motherhood. Care integrates the female figure in an emotional, moral, and ethical way. The relationships that come from caring are means of guaranteeing the existence of the order, the existence of the human being, and of the non-human.

It outlines the ethical theory of care from a feminist perspective and then establishes interlocutions in the work *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, written by a Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko (1948 -) who

belonged to the Laguna Pueblo culture. Furthermore, it emphasizes the nuances of the feminist perspective and its interconnections with environmental ethics, such as good living and the need to care for the common home. The importance of bio centrality in the preservation and maintenance of each place and its inhabitants<sup>1</sup>.

#### A BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT CARE

Nel Noddings (2003) elucidates that the act of care entails departing from one's personal framework to enter the other. We take into consideration the other person's desires and what they expect from us as caregivers. Both sides are absorbed in a mental, physical, and spiritual way. However, the greatest concentration must be the caregiver's willingness to focus on the other and for the other.

It is like deliberately practicing Newton's third Law Day after day, whether in the family or professional environment, or extending this exercise of solicitude into social settings. Our words, postures, tone of voice, looks, touches, and handling of objects are all infused with the psychic charge of care. This is in tune with the good will to be done and the well-being of the other. The key point is the achievement of healing something or someone.

In this view, an ethic is a philosophical distinction as Aldo Leopold observes that throughout the history of civilization, the concept of ethical conduct has been extended to encompass women, slaves, and other individuals who were previously excluded by the Greek philosophers. He declares that ethics can be viewed from both a philosophical and an ecological perspective. Barbara J. Cook points out Nel Noddings is appropriate to understand the relation of caring between humans and non-humans, she writes:

*Noddings, a feminist who has written prolifically about the importance of caring in education, emphasizes the importance of personal relationships as the foundation for ethical conduct. Her philosophical argument asserts that the basis for moral action is caring and the memory of being cared for. (...) Noddings proposes a realignment of education to encourage and reward not just rationality and trained intelligence, but also Enhanced sensitivity*

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Marmon Silko (1948-) is a native writer from Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico, United States. Her main works are *Laguna Woman: Poems* (1974), *Ceremony* (1977), *Storyteller* (1981), *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), *Sacred Water* (1993), *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999), *The Turquoise Ledge* (2010) and *Oceanstory* (2011).

*in moral matters. I see Nodding's relationships as an ecofeminist interconnectedness of self, others, nature* (Cook, 2008, p. 36).

Carol Gilligan (2016) argues that human practices are based on the logic of abstract justice, which is a morality chosen for its dynamic and objective orders of social action, but which it is disjointed, unjust, and inappropriate for dealing with the ethical being – self – and its vulnerability. This presents dilemmas that remain suspended, where the relationship of trust and dependency are not promoted to solve the problems of the individual or the community.

Noddings (2003) warns that the act of caring should not be primarily attributed to women. For many years, the belief in motherhood and the exercise of daily domestic tasks have been extensively correlated with the female gender. Indeed, it is inherent in human beings to care for and provide for others. Therefore, it is incumbent upon both men and women, without distinction, to exercise it without the necessity of adhering to the guidelines and obligations formulated by the Western moral philosophy of life, in other words the act of caring represents *“this direct linking of the meanings of love for a person and a love for a place leaves no room to doubt humanity's responsibility for caring for our ecological systems”* (Cook, 2008, p. 37).

Considering that, we shall examine how the ethics of care from a feminist perspective alleviates the void that arises from the desire to resolve choices through treaties and morally rational principles, as embodied by the unilateral current of universal morality. We seek to establish this dialog with excerpts from *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, which support the position of Laguna writer Leslie M. Silko in the face of men's attacks on the Tucson biome and her concern for keeping animals and plants protected, these also are clearly exposed and *“it also underlines this key structure in her work, as in her life, of witness and the testimony of vivid, vitalizing language, watching and speaking the truth, each as necessary steps to justice”* (Moore, 2016, p. 25).

#### TRACES OF RESISTANCE, COMPASSION, AND ACTIVISM IN *THE TURQUOISE LEDGE: A MEMOIR*

During the years of her literary masterpiece *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), Leslie Marmon Silko, who resides in Tucson, devoted a significant portion of her time outside the ranch to observing the peculiar desert, landscapes, plants, and animals that inhabit the area. *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* (2010) is a non-fiction work, that portrays the author intrinsic connection to the ecosystem and the spiritual realm. Mary Ellen Snodgrass points out that this book represents some parts of Silko's biography and



family's history. It is a kind of exercise that Silko does to bring back memories of the culture of her ancestors and their relationship with nature:

*Publication of her memoir introduces a more settled phase of her writing career in which she treasures the bits of turquoise emerging from ancient lava flows and the snakes that guard her residence west of Tucson. A touch of grace accompanies her discovery of griding stones left under a tree by ancient desert dwellers. To protect the sacred presence of past generations, the author puts a hex on a bulldozer driver, raining down on him the curses of star Spirits that she paints in tempera on rocks. The memoir rounds out the periods of artistic unrest and humanistic drive that place Silko in the vanguard of the Native American Renaissance (Snodgrass, 2011, p. 342).*

In *Rattlesnakes*, the second part of the book, Leslie M. Silko recounts her first encounters with the natural inhabitants of the place, especially the rattlesnakes, and recalls her mother's teachings not to fear these wonderful creatures:

*(...) my mother's grandma Goddard, who taught my mother that the black snake in the cellar was their friend. The Cherokees revered snakes before Christianity arrived. So my mother taught me to respect but not to fear snakes (Silko, 2010, p. 37).*

Silko's perspective initiates the creation of her narratives, which are akin to a diary, wherein she explores the region on foot or on horseback: "I rode horseback in those days. The view of the land from horseback is a high and wide expanse, good for distance but not so good for small things on the ground" (Silko, 2010, p. 81). She describes the landscape, including dunes, cholla cacti, undergrowth by stones, and blue and green pebbles. She also mentions turquoises and the path that the ants take to their palace. She is constantly mapping the area, taking notes, taking photographs, and collecting items such as pieces of arrowheads and turquoises for her study desk. According to this, Leslie describes her relationship with the snakes around her ranch as it follows:

*At sundown as I walked toward the old corrals from the road, out of the corner of my eye motion caught my attention. About forty feet away, a rattlesnake three feet long was on the move through the desert – the most graceful of creatures, sinuous as flowing water, the snake gliding smoothly and silently as if it were floating a little above the ground between the jojoba bushes and palo verde by the*

*old corral. The biggest rattlesnake I ever saw was a dirt road in the high grasslands east of Elgin. The grasslands are full of food and water is plentiful so a rattler can grow quite large. This snake was nearly five feet long and as big as my forearm. It crossed the road in front of the car, swift and sinuous, its head high through the tall grass and sunflowers. As it headed west it seemed almost a golden apparition as the afternoon sunlight glittered off its scales (Silko, 2010, p. 109–110).*

Through her narration, we understand the importance of interaction and integration with the biome: *“Today I discovered a wonderful ant palace in the dark basalt bedrock below the blue gray limestone; it was outlined in small stones in a semicircle”* (Silko, 2010, p. 149). The author’s eyes capture the routine scenes of numerous species, as well as the behavior of plants and animals. She also has an attentive and precise eye for rocks and clouds.

Walking for Silko entails transcending the apparent appearances of the trails, requiring patience and acclimatization, while also providing a connection between the authentic spiritual realms. The encompassing perspective of the world enables her to comprehend her own inner self and leads her to observe the sustaining essence of the living beings present in that location, namely, care, in other words, she states: *“it is this sort of respect their old believers have in mind when they tell us we must respect and love the earth”* (Silko, 1996, p. 40).

As per the author’s own account, the experience of living alone, for more than thirty-two years on a ranch, situated on a desert hillside, with the place and its natural inhabitants as her companions, imparted valuable lessons to her: *“that they [the land and the creatures] in a sense is part of us and that they can really give us sustenance and hope when nothing else in the human world can”* (Silko, Interview).

In this regard, the term care reflects significant values to bring out the affective experience that Silko outlines with her animal and plant friends. While hiking in Tucson, the maturation of these relationships between humans and nature embodies the ideal of complementary. The author elucidates how the extensive and incorrect exploration of uranium contaminated the region, particularly some significant rocks, with a poisonous substance:

*Carnotite is the vivid yellow or green powdery mineral that coats the sandstone where uranium chiefly occurs. It is a secondary mineral formed by the change of primary uranium–vanadium minerals through intense heat and exposure to water, possibly during volcanic activity. Pure carnotite contains about 53 percent*

uranium and 12 percent vanadium minerals. Carnotite is radioactive and easily soluble in acid and in acid rain (Silko, 2010, p. 71).

It may be inferred from Silko's words that she laments the level of aggression displayed towards the environment. The deteriorated biome elicits in the author a sense of revolt and dissatisfaction with the human beings who infringe upon the land, infringe upon its natural resources, and undermine its ecosystem. The author herself recalls that the reciprocity of actions can be observed in the fact that Nature has different response to this practice, as the author acknowledges that the desert, as Nature, has its own methods of coping with death and life.

Nonetheless, we know that Newtonian law explicates the physical dynamics of actions on bodies, resulting in a shift in space. We observe this phenomenon with the "palo verde", which upon its removal, resulted in a modification of the surrounding area, not only in the plants natural physical structure but also in the lives of those who depended on it, as it is pointed out by Carolyn Merchant: "*all living things, as integral parts of a viable ecosystem, thus have rights*" (Merchant, 1983, p. 293).

Getting back to the analyzed non-fiction work, we have the option to select certain conditions that are essential for preserving the natural order of things. The "palo verde", in addition to its inherent significance as a habitat for certain animals, such as birds or snakes, serves as a source of energy for the ants that rely on its leaves, and is a crucial component in the detoxification of atmospheric air through photosynthesis. According to Sarah E. McFarland, the writing of this type has the potential to exert a significant impact in the reader through the description:

*These American cultural and narrative histories continue to have a significant influence on recent nature writing. The typical construction of nature writing today imagines the first-person narrator as a questing hero who abandons the city to create a new, more humble relationship with the natural environment and its inhabitants, in hope that readers will gain interest in environmental preservation and an awareness of the effects of its degradation and destruction (Mcfarland, 2008, p. 42).*

We can observe how those aspects were previously associated with *The Turquoise Ledge*, the self-awareness of the fundamental values of nature and its eco-centricity, as exemplified in Silko's narratives, as well as the denial of the progressive government model that perpetuates its exploitative political conduct and disregards environmental laws. We discover through the



narrative, that legal norms become empty in the face of monetary profitability that the construction market promotes by manipulating the environment.

These anthropocentric practices turn nature into working capital and its ecosystems into natural resources that can be manipulated. In Silko's words, it is imperative to expose the devastation to educate future generations about the state of the landscape during a specific period, and the alteration of its beauty due to man's indifference, as the way Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies (2014) declare in their ecofeminism studies:

*Nos encontramos en medio de una contienda épica, la contienda entre los derechos de la Madre Tierra y los de las multinacionales y los estados militarizados que, mediante cosmovisiones y paradigmas obsoletos, aceleram la guerra contra el planeta y las personas. Este combate se libra entre las leyes de Gaia y las del mercado y la guerra. Es un enfrentamiento entre la guerra contra el planeta Tierra y la paz con él. La guerra planetaria está teniendo lugar con geoingeniería: creando volcanes artificiales, fertilizando los mares con limaduras de Hierro, colocando reflectores en el cielo para impedir que el sol brille sobre la Tierra, desplazando el problema real de la violencia del hombre contra el planeta y la ignorancia arrogante a la hora de afrontar (Mies and Shiva, 2014, p. 25).*

Feminist philosophical ethics expands its moral action, since one of its purposes is to resolve the dichotomous designations rationality and irrationality reported by reason and emotion. This theory is based on the experiences, places, and stories of women who have lived through certain dualisms that come from patriarchy. Our understanding of them is that they are social subjects who are fully capable of their rationalities and who also add multiple meanings to their realities, their decisions, and their actions, as Karen Warren points out: *"the dysfunctionalities of patriarchy are culturally constructed, historically molded, economically fashioned, politically nurtured, and socially engineered"* (Warren, 1995, p. 130).

When Silko reveals through an interview what kind of things she is really worried about, it is clear as the following passage: *"Things about relationships (...) That's all I'm interested in. You must come to terms, to some kind of equilibrium with those people around you, those people who care for you, your environment"* (Fischer, 2000, p. 27). We can observe this demonstration of care and otherness in Silko's actions and discursive recollections. The author reveals that ancestry is a means of never feeling alone, and it is a method of avoiding the loss of her references. It outlines the indigenous wisdom of

men's reciprocal engagement with nature, revealing that: "*I never felt alone or afraid up there the hills*" (Silko, 2010, p. 45).

It is essential to note that care cannot be delegated to the female gender, as women are naturally responsible for the well-being of others. This conduct serves to reinforce the dominance of patriarchy and contributes to the extinction of the rights of nature. We are aware that this dominance is a contributing factor to the social issue that perpetuates gendered roles that render women deemed inferior and fosters the exploitation of the environment. Because feminist philosophy has its own morality, there is no theoretical neutrality.

However, it serves as a critique and reflection on the asymmetrical and unequal relations between men, women, animals, and plants. *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* reintroduces the critical awareness of the interdependent relationships between human and non-human beings, highlighting the need to make moral choices without the constraints of rigid and abstract norms, rules of a unilateral justice that favors the interests of capitalist enterprises driven by anthropocentric practices. Silko was outraged when she encountered a scene of destruction and disregard for nature during a hike near the stream, like it follows:

*Small stones and rocks were gouged out of the center of the Arroyo to make a level yard for the ridiculously huge house. Boulders and rocks, the fine sand and the pebbles that formed the sandbars along the edge and Middle of the Arroyo to slow the erosion were gone. The gaping hole left the young mesquite tree and its roots vulnerable to flash floods. The owner of the grotesque house could have easily afforded to buy rock and sand excavated legally from a quarry. Instead he acted out what he saw as his manifest destiny: to destroy whatever he wanted to destroy willy-nilly no matter the impact on others or himself – that's the credo of Southern Arizona, and much of the West (Silko, 2010, p. 170).*

It is evident from this excerpt that to depart from the prevailing global utilitarianism is to acknowledge the existence of distinct values within the environment, which, along with the living beings, serve as moral agents. The ecosystem possesses multiple intrinsic values, and its biome possesses the ability to recognize all forms of life and their inherent characteristics in an equally encompassing manner. These issues are presented in Greg Garrard (2004) when "*the metaphysical argument for biocentrism is meant to sustain moral claims about the intrinsic value of the natural world, which will in turn affect our attitudes and behavior towards nature*" (Garrard, 2004, p. 176).

Ecofeminists believe that the world governed by anthropocentric ideas includes attitudes of subjugation towards species of animals, plants, and human beings, especially women. This is since men possess the ability to judge and establish moral standards that prioritize their volition, cognition, and rationality, thus claiming their ability to judge and establish such standards, and so, “a particular logic of domination is involved in justifying the domination of nature by humans and makes explicit just what that logic is” (Warren, 1995, p. 11).

*The environmental impacts are devastating, serious, and many are irreversible. Silko presents a significant historical instance of soil contamination resulting from nuclear tests in the New Mexico region. The subject outlines the exposure of the populace to the noxious fumes and chemical waste deposited in the soil, resulting in the formation of plants and the extinction of other species:*

*The Anaconda Company was not required to dispose of the radioactive tailings or store them safely to prevent contamination of the air or groundwater. For years the Mountain-like piles of radioactive tailings remained there, blowing east toward Albuquerque, percolating radiation into the water table with every rain-and snowstorm. No plants ever grew on the tailings though sometimes around the base of the piles, a few hardy tumbleweeds appeared. A few years ago the tailings were finally buried beneath piles of clean dirt, and now the weeds grow there profusely (Silko, 2010, p. 70).*

It is widely acknowledged that the imminent extinction of additional species is very soon, and that the effects of climate change are already being observed in the modification of the phosphorus and nitrogen cycle, as well as in the rise of marine acidification. These global climate changes are accelerating the end of many lives. The International Panel on Climate (IPCC, 2023) identifies an imminent imbalance in the natural structure of the biosphere:

*Climate change has caused substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater, cryosphere and coastal and open ocean ecosystems. The extent and magnitude of climate change impacts are larger than estimated in previous assessments. Approximately half of the species assessed globally have shifted poleward or, on land, also to higher elevations. Biological responses including changes in geographic placement and shifting seasonal timing are often not sufficient to cope with recent climate change.*

*Hundreds of local losses of species have been driven by increases in the magnitude of heat extremes and mass mortality events on land and in the ocean. Impacts on some ecosystems are approaching irreversibility such as the impacts of hydrological changes resulting from the retreat of glaciers, or the changes in some mountain and Arctic ecosystems driven by permafrost thaw. Impacts in ecosystems from slow-onset processes such as ocean acidification, sea level rise or regional decrease in precipitation have also been attributed to human-caused climate. Climate change has contributed to desertification and exacerbated land degradation, particularly in low lying coastal areas, river deltas, drylands and in permafrost areas. Nearly 50% of coastal wetlands have been lost over the last 100 years, as a result of the combined effects of localized human pressures, sea level rise, warming and extreme climate events (IPCC, 2023, p. 46).*

Are human beings capable of enjoying nature while respecting its biocapacity without promoting a utilitarian stance? However, there is an urgent need to shift political and legal thinking towards alternative and sustainable developments that guarantee a substantial transformation of forces operating on natural resources. We must first recognize that there are intrinsic values in nature and that every source of life is linked to them. Silko comprehends that a life has a significant impact when it is not preserved. In this regard, the author aims to rescue a rattlesnake that has become entangled in a web of nylon mesh: *“The snake didn’t react. I exhaled (...) when he felt his fat midsection cut free, the big diamondback glided away gracefully and I felt blessed”* (Silko, 2010, p. 86).

The concept of diversity is regarded as a fundamental tenet for the upkeep of the ecosystems that comprise both human and non-human species as a shared habitat. It is an alternative to development to exercise good living and to expand the relationship of complementarity and the ethics of caring for one another. Assumptions that the philosophy of good living embodies collective ways of living in harmony with nature are interpreted as *sumak kawsay* (kichwa), *suma qamaña* (Aymara) or *nhandereko* (Guarani).

This philosophy is an amalgam indigenous peoples who apply their worldviews to life practices with living beings. Hence, good living is an alternative development stance in favor of or recognizing nature’s own values. It also seeks *“the vision promoted by Buen Vivir strongly supports the need to explore alternatives to development beyond conventional Eurocentric knowledge”* (Gudynas, 2011, p. 445).

There is a wide dialogue with interculturality. The multifaceted approach to comprehending communities is embraced and the upholding of

a sound ecological equilibrium is consistently upheld. *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* presents an account of the harmony between humans and non-humans, presenting a rhythm of life that is based on the simultaneous well-being of both humans and the environment.

The author's proposal for a sustainable and ethical lifestyle bolsters her determination to safeguard the internal harmony of her long-standing ancestral identity formation with the contemporary influences. Spiritual latency can be achieved by appreciating the beautiful deserts. Silko expresses her inner edification with a poetic glance: "*the early morning air of the desert is incomparable – it is delicious – the air is cool with the least hint of moisture that holds the scents of clay and stone and even the perfume of the late-blooming catclaw bush*" (Silko, 2010, p. 225).

The fervent concern for safeguarding and preserving the environment is firmly rooted in the philosophy of good living, as well as the advocacy for the preservation of our planet, thus resembling the theory of feminist care ethics. Both thoughts converge towards the conservation of species and their habitat. Carol Gilligan (2016) encourages us to consider such arbitrary questions as the morality of care, which are relegated to the condition of gender. Gilligan (2016) reveals us the disparity in social relations that insist on promoting the masculine reason to the feminine emotion. About these aspects Greta Gaard (1993) concludes:

*It is tempting to conclude that aboriginal peoples, exquisitely cognizant of their place in an ecological web, possessed an intersubjective awareness of themselves and of non-human life that offers an alternative to the highly self-aware, blind-to-others consciousness that characterizes the most dangerous forms of modern identity* (Gaard, 1993, p. 95).

Leslie Marmon Silko brings the intentionality of care close to her and within her. The author's attitudes towards the living beings of the region are always constant. She cultivates friendships with all of them, treating them with utmost respect and utmost integrity. In this relationship, there is no dualism or any categorization. When she cares for others, the author seeks internal healing. Self-giving is present, as admiration gains a tender place in her heart: "*Now the misty breeze smells just like the ripe prickly pears boiled for syrup. The rain smells of wet cactus. The wind came from the east and there was little thunder or lightning. It was a gentle rain that soaked into the ground*" (Silko, 2010, p. 230).



## CONCLUSION

In this sense, the feminist ethic of care does not tend to become a theory that overrides dominating morality or the philosophy of good living, but both come up with guidelines that complement and integrate relationships broken by the patriarchal system. To understand all beings, we must extend the feminist ethic of care and the good living all beings, both human and non-human to understand them and help them in their vulnerabilities. It is essential to preserve them in order ensure their natural state and ensure their sources of life. David L Moore (2016) elucidates that Silko has suggested: “[it] is compassion, because compassion drives an individual effort toward change” (Moore, 2016, p. 59).

By adhering to the ethics of care, we can attain a greater understanding of the true significance of safeguarding our most precious resource: life. This entails the elimination of contemporary rationality and the unrestrained utilization of natural resources, which leads to the fragmentation of nature and tragically contributes to the extinction of species, pollution, environmental imbalances, climate change, and the demise of centuries-old landscapes. In the context of this ideological conflict, the ethics of care emerges as a viable alternative for reevaluating certain traditional ethical norms.

The principles that form the primordial basis of feminist ethics of care are based on the dialog of overcoming and redefining feelings that are not to be disregarded when making choices or decisions. Since they are inherent to the human being, they cannot be neglected by the male gender.

In this regard, the concepts of care and compassion are crucial for the safeguarding of the Earth, knowing as The Great Home, as a common place for all the beings that comprise the stories of life. The lack of care and compassion perpetuates the stigma of loss of any living being. In the indigenous worldview, care and love serve as a favorable balm for shifting from preservation to conscious respect for everything that lives on earth as Silko (2010, p. 319) asserts: “Venus is a night sun brighter and larger each night. This is a good place to end. Gratitude to all of you beings of the stars”. That it serves as a means of reconnection with the eternal, promoting the enduring nature to many, and demonstrating benevolence towards the well-being of both humans and non-humans.

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