

## CHAPTER III

### **The Cultural Conflict on Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down***

In this chapter the writer wants to analyze *House Made of Down's* novel based on the statement problem. Based on the statement problem, it will start from analyze the novel through the cultural conflict as a social phenomenon. So, that is way the writer dealing with sociology theories by Soekanto that include social change and conflict theories by Perrine's, Roy Eidelson and Judy Eidelson to find the factors which happen between White men and Indian people that happen on Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down*. There are superiority, injustice, vulnerability, distrust, and helplessness and also from Perrin's theory. There are (1) man against man, (2) man against environment and (3) man against himself.

Besides that, the writer also uses cultural studies theory by Wilfred L. Guerin that involve scrutinizing a cultural phenomenon and drawing conclusion about the changes in that phenomenon over a period of time. Those all theories above are used to find the cause of cultural conflict in Momaday's *House Made of Down*. The last one, the writer tries to find the effect of cultural conflict on Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down*.

#### **3.1 The Factors that cause the cultural conflict in Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down***

Conflict operates on number of levels throughout *House Made of Down*. There are various conflicts in it. It makes the novel more exiting. Perrine divides

conflict in three groups: man against man, man against environment, and man against himself (Perrine 44). In *House Made of Down*, all those three conflict occur in the novel.

In the beginning of the novel, there is an obvious conflict between Abel's characters with himself (man against himself). This conflict begins when Abel return from the World War II to the reservation in Walatowa, New Mexico. The war has left him emotionally devastated and he arrives too drunk to recognize his grandfather, Francisco.

He heard the sharp wheeze of the brakes as the big bus rolled to a stop in front of the gas pump, and only then did he give attention to it. As if it had taken him by surprise. The door swung open and Abel stepped heavily to the ground and reeled. He was drunk and he fell against his grandfather and did not know him. His wet lips hung loose and his eyes were half closed and rolling. Francisco's crippled leg nearly gave away. His good straw hat fell off and he braced himself against the weight of his grandson. Tears came to his eyes, and he knew only that he must laugh and turn away from the faces in the windows of the bus (Momaday 8).

Abel's drunkenness is of importance because he cannot recognize his grandfather. He feels very troubles such as his inability to integrate with his own culture and his failure to be attuned to life neither in the reservation nor in Los Angeles is closely linked to his alcohol problem that dealing with the conflict of himself. Moreover, Abel attempts to solve his identity crisis with remember some events when he was young.

The following day, Abel remembers his brother Vidal and his mother, both of whom died of a disease years ago, when Abel was young. Abel never knew his father, who was Navajo and was considered an outsider by the rest of the Indians





From the explanation above, it still prove that Abel cannot find himself, he still confused after his return. He comes to his land to find himself in a conflict in feeling belonging to his Native self. This conflict is between Abel with himself (Man against himself) (Perrine 44). He cannot speak to himself. He is utterly speechless, even within himself.

His return the town had been a failure, for all his looking forward. 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 rhyme of the tongue, he was no longer attuned to it. (...) Not dumb-silence was the older and better part of custom still-but *inarticulate*" (Moamaday 53).

On the first of August, Father Olguin makes another appearance at the Benevides house, only to realize that Angela has no romantic intentions towards him. Meanwhile, within the village, the fiesta has begun. Abel's grandfather, Francisco, dressed in ceremonial garb and shuffling from his home towards the kiva. He seems to enjoy the spiritual atmosphere: "It made him glad to be in midst of talk and celebration, to savor the rich relief of the coming rain upon the rows of beans and chilies and corn, to see the return of weather, of trade and reunion upon the town" (Momaday 68). After the whole ritual, Abel and the Albino man walk together. The conversation between them is not revealed. There is been a tension between the two since the rooster game, even though they have had no argument.

Abel waited. The White man raised his arms, as is to embrace him, and came forward. But Abel had already taken hold of the knife, and he drew it. He leaned inside the White man's arms and drove the blade up under the bones of the breast and across. The White man's hands lay on Abel's shoulders, and for a moment the White man stood very still. There was no expression on his face, neither rage nor pain, (...) He seemed to look not at Abel but beyond, off

into the darkness and the rain, the black infinity of sound and silence (Momaday 73).

Abel ends up with killing the Albino on a day of ritual is a climax of Abel's alienation from his heritage. It represents that Abel face conflict man against man (Perrine 44). The conflict is Abel kills the albino, deciding he is a witch and watches his blood drip in the rain. Abel is then found guilty of murder and sent to jail. This time he is alone in his inner struggle, and there is no quick fix for him to accommodate himself to either his Native traditions or life outside the reservation.

After seven years have already passed since Abel was jailed. After his release, he is now in Los Angeles. Abel finds himself in Los Angeles, under the care of Indian Relocation program and unites with local group of Indians. In Los Angeles, Abel face the problem with the environment (man against environment) because this is the first appearance of Abel in an urban and modern life after his release from prison is not favorable:

It was cold, it was dark and cold and damp, and he could not open his eyes. He was in pain. He had fallen down; that was it. He was lying face down on the ground, and it was cold and there was a roaring of the sea in his brain and there was a fog rolling in from the sea. The pain was very great, and his body throbbed with it; his mind rattled and shook, wobbling now out of spin, and he could not open his eyes to see. Something was wrong, terribly wrong. When he awoke, he tried to move; he was numb with cold, but the effort to move brought new pain, sharp, then massive pain. It was so great that he fainted, and the next time he knew better than to move suddenly. The effect of the alcohol was wearing off. In another moment he begun to retch, his whole body contracting, quaking involuntarily, and again the pain mounted and his mind was slipping away, he wanted to die (Momaday 87-88).

It is learned that he is lying on the beach. He does not know where he is and what he is doing. He can only feel the pain he is in. He starts to recall his experiences in pieces about what he has gone through after the murder. He thinks of the trial. However, he cannot remember much “there were charges, questions, and answers; it was ceremonial, orderly, civilized, and it had almost nothing to do with him” (Momaday 88). Abel, in the meantime, remains silent: “When he had told his story once, simply, Abel refused to speak. He sat like a rock in his chair, and after a while, no one expected or even wanted him to speak”(Momaday 90). It is most likely the Abel’s case. However, it is almost impossible for Abel to detect what his problem is: “He tried to think where the trouble had begun, what the trouble was. There was a trouble; he could admit that to himself, but he had no real insight into his own situation. Maybe, certainly, that was the trouble; but he had no way of knowing. He wanted a drink; he wanted to be drunk” (Momaday 93).

However, in his new modern environment, Abel feels of cultural estrangement and isolation. He is still in trouble with his mind; his mind again shifts back to old days. He cannot settle into this modern life. That Abel gets excited being drunk in the reservation. He is in a battle of self-expression and finding a way of being in step with his changing environment. As Ben Benally, who is Abel’s roommate in the apartment in Los Angeles implies, Abel would have recovered had he not been constantly disrupted and controlled by “the parole officer” or “the relocation people” (Momaday 139). He also believes that those people might be the reason of Abel’s getting muter: “And they can’t help you





is enraged and leaves Ben's place. Later on, Ben regrets what he said to Abel.

Abel does not appear for three days.

Three days later, when Ben awakes up to some noises at the door, he sees a body which is half dead. After Able recovers, he leaves for his home. Ben says that he wanted to pray for Abel. They go together on horseback to the hill and Ben retells what they will do once they meet again: "We were going to be all alone, and we were going to get drunk and sing" (Momaday 166). Then, Abel returns to the reservation to find his grandfather, Francisco, who fell sick and on the verge of dying. Abel tends to his grandfather for days, and the narration switches to the inner thoughts of the stricken old man. It is noticed that his grandfather's death opens new page in Abel's life.

In the end, Abel achieves a sense of Native self. Abel's running and singing has been inferred as his fundamental progress on the way to recover his Native identity. The running into nature and singing signify his coming to embrace his Native culture. From the explanation above, it is proving that Abel face conflict with new environment (man against environment), and it is compatibility with Perrine theory that states: conflict as a clash of action, ideas, desires, or the wills. He added that the main character may be pitted against some other persons or group of person (man against man); he may be in conflict some external force-physical nature, society, or fate (man against environments); or he may be in conflict with some element in his own nature (man against himself) (Perrine 44).

The discussion about conflict in society taken from the Perrine theory in *House Made of Down's* novel is interconnected with cultural conflict theory derived from Marc Howard Ross. He states that “cultural conflict happen when someone or people experienced unexpected changes surrounding them. He also explains: Cultural conflict the intensity of emotions surrounding culture expressions and enactments as well as their meaning often shift” (Ross 19). Through the main characters, namely Abel, Momaday in *House Made of Down* explores the problem of cultural conflict of Indian American young man generation. As a young man, Abel faces many conflicts after join a World War II under the U.S. government in which it takes a time for him to leave his community in the Indian American land. After finishing his duty as an US army, he goes back to his land, Indian American community. Here, Momaday uses Abel's returning home as a turning point of his story.

At home, Abel finds many differences in the world of his tribe community, such as confusing with himself (man against himself), society (man against man), and culture (man against environment) before and after his leaving for the war. In terms of the illustration of young Indian American generations in this fiction, this is representing the cultural conflict as the impact of adjustment problems. This result in deviant attitudes and behaviors represented by Abel and his Indian American friends. Culturally, Abel faces many differences the way of life in the city when he leaves his own community as Indian American people. It is hard for him to hold the Indian American way of life due to the changing of the environment where they live.

Besides the symptoms above, the writer also using theory of conflict based on Roy and Judy Eidelson. In this part, Conflict cannot happen if there is no factor or cause of conflict especially if it is happening in two groups. In *House Made of Down*, conflict happens between White men and Indian people. As Roy and Judy Eidelson (182) stated that there are five factors which make conflict happen. The five factors are superiority, injustice, vulnerability, distrust, and helplessness. Those factors also can be found in *House Made of Down*.

Now, the writer begins to analyze the reason of conflict in superiority point of view and it becomes the first and the main reason.

### **3.1.1 Superiority**

All people must have moral superiority. It is because they feel that they are better than the other. So, they will be considered that they can rule or authorize a lot of thing. In *House Made of Down* it can be seen that moral superiority is adhered to White people. White people feel superiority because they can control all of thing in Indian people. Moral superiority which is owned by White people, make them becomes arbitrarily with Indian People.

The coming of the White people from Europe in 1500s to America bring a new era, especially for Indian American people. The encounter between the White and the Indian people is unavoidable. Here, the European people phase in a modern life to the American Indian. Regular contacts between them begin in the early of 1500s and continue for a century (Hirscheelder 30).

The introduction to modern life begins when the Bureau Indian Affairs (BIA) introduce assimilation program to the Indian American people in the last nineteenth century, one of which is education. Carole A. Barrett (73) notes that the BIA is created by the U.S. government in 1824 as a means to control the Indian American people, and one of the duties of BIA is to support the assimilation program toward the young Indian American people through education. The education is a school, which has never been known by the Indian American people before, then attracts the young Indian American generation to go to school to get education as the consequence of assimilation program. One benefit of education program is that it is motivated many young Indians American to move to city by leaving their homeland in reservation area which is “held tightly” by the poverty and to improve their lives by education.

The second assimilation program is introduced in 1952 when BIA established a national program of relocation assistance towards the Indian American people in reservation. Kitano (152) explains that the program encourage the employment of Indians outside the reservation. This led the Indians American youth to move to the city to get a job and result in the rise of the number of the Indians in urban areas. Frederick E. Hoxie (294) notes that many Indian migrate to cities, enrolled to education, and get jobs. This program, however, also bring in another concern, the issues of stereotype. Some young Indians American was eager to go to city to look for a job after the BIA introduced the relocation program. Unfortunately, they find many difficulties to get a job in the city or get pay low since they were considered savage and lacking in skills by the white

people. As noted by Kitano, the Indian American meet many problems in urban life since they find themselves stigmatized by the white people (153).

The notable difference between the world of the Whites and that the Indians apparently raise problems to the Indian people, such as identity confusion and conflict of cultural values. Such problems are experienced not only by the Indian American who “fail” the assimilation program, but also face by those who succeed outside the reservation areas when they return home. They find themselves different or no longer adhere to their tradition and beliefs, as they have lived another culture, i.e. that of the Whites.

Through all the years when the Indian culture was under influence of the white culture, Native Americans probably experienced many different problems and, it makes Indian people mixing of cultures resulted to losing identity. Abel cannot display a good show: “When it came Abel’s turn, he made a poor showing, full of caution and gesture. Angela despised him a little” (Momaday 38). It indicates that Abel get the identity crisis as Native Indian. The identity crisis of Abel as the protagonist of this novel was caused by blending two different cultures, which was most significant during their military service. Abel in *House Made of Dawn* lost his identity because he found himself on an unstable ground between White and Native American culture, and returning to his tribal roots was the only way to find his lost identity once again.

He could see the canyon and the mountains and the sky. He could see the rain and the river and the field beyond. He could see the dark hills at dawn. He was running, and under his breath, he began to sing. There was a sound, he had no voice; he had only the words





stop us from being Indians. We were forbidden to talk our language or to sing our songs. If we disobeyed we had to stand in the corner or fiat against the wall, our noses and knees touching the plasters. Some teachers hit us on the hands with a ruler (Velie182).

Due to the issues arising from the implementation, the BIA assimilation program through education is not seen as satisfactory, especially from the Indian American point of view, as it bring about another problem for them, i.e. the loss of cultural value and identity.

Even, one of the duties of BIA is to support the assimilation program toward the young Indian American people through education. The education program, unfortunately, also bring negative impact to the Indian people, in term of identity and culture. In the schools, Indian people cannot do anything like White people. Indian schools are like jails and run along military lines. They are forbidden to talk their language or to sing their songs (Velie 182).

Besides that, White people also try to destroy culture and belief of Indian and White people think that the best way to teach Indian people was to stop from being Indians in order to drive out all of Indian from Walatowa. This reconsideration is evidenced by the historical approach to literary work. Certainly Momaday pretends not to be the defender of the Indian, but he acknowledges the fact that as long as the Natives do not tell their own history, the historical accounts about them will always be in favor of the colonists. That is why he writes: “it is imperative that the Indian define himself.....that he refuses to let others define him” (Momaday 197).



From all of Injustice's cases, it can be strengthened by Indians assumptions that White men have not been known yet about the exact settlement of Indians. But, actually White men always give attention to them. It is because Indians land is really potential to exploit. It is only trick from White men to make Indian feels disappear. So, Indian will be not suspicious to the White men. Besides that, White men also can do anything and authorize Walatowa like they want.

### **3.1.3 Vulnerability**

In this case, it usually happen is caused by one of groups or personality has bad experience such injury or violence until they will feels angry, worries, fear, and unsecure. Indian people as the marginal group in Walatowa always get oppression from White people with some ways. Of course it hurts them. Although the fact likes that, Indians only try to accept that injury and live in pain. Most Indians people must restrain their pain because they cannot do anything to fight White men. Because of there is not care with Indians people, it makes White men feels easy hurt Indian people. So, Indian people will be easy to get bad feeling such as angry, disappointed, and oppressed. It can be found from the attitude of Abel that angry to White men, Juan Reyes because Abel feel jealousy when the White men defeat Abel in traditional race.

Later, Abel's murder of Juan Reyes, the albino, is a dynamic narrative principle because it impressively participates in the construction of the story. The writer evokes it as the motif for which the protagonist is sentenced to seven year's imprisonment and later placed under the care of an Indian Relocation program in

Los Angeles. Beyond its consequences, the act of killing is an expression of the “savage” Indian’s resistance to the White adventure’s invasion.

In reality, Abel’s killing of Reyes may be construed as the Native’s retribution for their humiliation by the White man who has treated them with contempt and destroyed the wealth of their culture. The portrayal of Reyes is relevant to the White people who has brutalized the Indian. Momaday writes: “The White men was large and thickset, powerful and deliberated in his movement (...) Again and again the White men struck Abel, heavily, brutally, upon the chest and shoulders and head , and Abel threw up his hands” (38-39). Here the term “White men” refers to Reyes as to identify him with the Western insider. Besides, because of his unnatural whiteness and insatiable cruelty, the albino embodies the white culture, characterized by its brutality and scornfulness towards Indian people. It is in this sense that Abel sees him as an evil and fatally reacts to his attack. Abel’s reaction is justified in connection with the historical relationship of conflict between Whites and Indians. For, there is not the slightest compunction when a White man kills a native. In the trial following the murder of the albino, the narrator reveals Abel’s state of mind:

(Abel) had killed the white man. It was not a complicated thing, after all; it was very simple. It was the most natural thing in the world. Surely they could see that, these men who meant to dispose of him in words. They must know he would kill the white man again, if he had the change, that there could be no hesitation whatsoever. For he would know what the white man was, and he would kill him if he could. A man kills such an enemy if he can (Momaday 90-91).

Momaday fashioned his novel. He has further stated that much of the life in of Walatowa, Abel's home village, was based in great part on the life of Jamez Pueblo in New Mexico. A specific example is Abel's killing of the Albino. Momaday recalled that at his trial for shooting an Albino at point-blank range, "because he threatened to turn himself into a snake and bit me, and so I shot him. You know, anybody would have done the same thing" (Momaday 196). It becomes clearer when he is beaten in a game of horsemanship by Albino named Juan Reyes, described as "the white man." Deciding Juan is a witch, Abel stabs him to death outside of a bar. Abel is then found guilty of murder and sent to jail.

It interconnected with Roy and Judy Eidelson theory. They states one particularly problematic aspect of the collective vulnerability worldview is the impetus it can provide for a group to act aggressively in an effort to preemptively ensure its own safety. From that statement it can be concluded that marginal group try to survive in all situation and keep their live secure (Roy and Judy Eidelson 186).

In addition, an important manifestation of the vulnerability worldview is catastrophic thinking in which a group's imagined worst case scenario take on the inexorable logic of inevitability (186). In this case marginal group will perceive that the big events will happen in the future and it cannot be avoided by them. Sometimes, it is also because of experience in the past when there is threat from the other group. It must be underlined that vulnerability is more than expressive of

fear in their life because the group thinks about how to be surviving and omit fears of subjugation and annihilation.

#### **3.1.4 Distrust**

In a territory, trust is one of keys in order to make one group with the other group have a good relation. Furthermore, trust is one basic to build relationship among group. Trust will change into distrust when one of groups perceives that they have been lying. So, it will build a mindset that it is untrustworthy. Besides that distrust also happen when one group feel paranoid toward the others group's act in which they likely injure physically or mentally. Kramer and Messick (239) have defined it is collectively held beliefs, either false or exaggerated, that cluster around ideas of being harassed, threatened, subjugated, persecuted, accused, mistreated, wronged, tormented, disparaged, or vilified by a malevolent out groups.

Hence, Abel returns to his reservation in New Mexico after fighting in World War II. The war has left him emotionally devastated and he arrives too drunk to recognize his grandfather, Francisco. Francisco raised Abel after the death of Abel's mother and older brother, Vidal. Francisco instilled in Abel a sense of native traditions and values, but the war and other events severed Abel's connections to that world of spiritual and physical wholeness and connectedness to the land and its people. It makes Abel's confused about himself and distrust to other people even people in his own homeland, Walatowa.







### **3.2 The effect of cultural conflict on Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down***

Virtually, everything in this world is not always static and stuck on one certain destination. But anything in this universe will always spin for time to time through space and time which then appears a change. Even though that change itself sometimes is not expected at all- nevertheless there is nothing human can do if the change has showed up- because every gradation appearance always needs an adjustment and the adjustment itself is not easy to be handled. Yet that change is always bringing effect for one personality, community, society, or even socialization system.

Pointing to previous discussion, the effects of cultural conflict on Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down* have appeared. It is because Abel met many difficulties and confusing in understanding the way of life of his surrounding people. So that he faces many conflicts in his own community.

#### **3.2.1 Abel Being a Stranger in His Own House**

Through the main characters, Abel in Momaday's *House Made of Down* explores the problem of cultural conflict of Indian American young man generation. As a young man, Abel joins a World War II under the U.S. government in which it takes a time for him to leave his community in the Indian American land. After finishing his duty as an US army, he goes back to his land,



Indian American community. Here, Momaday uses Abel's returning home as a turning point of his story.

At home, Abel finds many differences in the world of his tribe community, such as tradition, ceremony, and culture before and after his leaving for the war.

One day, he met a medicine woman whom he thought having strange accessories and attitude:

Abel was frightened by the old woman Nicholas tea-Whau. She was a Bahkyush woman and a witch. She once screamed at Abel a terrible curse and he had run away as fast as he could. Then he had tried to get the snake-killer dog to come with him because he was afraid. The dog wouldn't come for fear of something. He felt a strong sense of fear in the land always remembered this "particular sound of anguish." (Momaday 11-12).

In another occasion, he wonders at a traditional ceremony: He had seen a strange thing. "It was awful, holy sight, full of magic meaning" (Momaday 14). Seeing the phenomena, he is questioning the way of life in his own community, which he had never seen before. Momaday portrays Abel in confrontation with different values and traditions in his community after his absence for a period of time.

Abel walked into the canyon. His return to the tow had been a failure, for all his looking forward. He had tried in the days that followed to speak to his grandfather, but he could not say the thing he wanted; he had to pray, to sing, to enter into the old rhythm of the tongue, but he was no longer attuned to it (Momaday 53).

Then Abel confuses seeing his own community. Although he is an Indian American descendant, he has almost never seen the traditional way of life because he leaves the Indian American land when he is child. For this reason, his

grandfather Francisco introduces Abel a sense of native traditions and value, when he says, "you ought to do this and that", (Momaday 21). But, Unfortunately, the war and other events severe Abel's connections to that world of spiritual and physical wholeness and connectedness to the land and its people, a world known as a "house made of down".

However, Abel meets many difficulties in understanding the way of life of his people. One instance is when there was a traditional play held by a chief of one the tribes among Indian American. The traditional play encourages the young people to ride a race horse by attacking each other. The winner will get one of the daughter's chief as a wife. Abel's grandfather takes him to join the play and the rides the grandfather's horse. But, "Abel was not used to the game," (Momaday 39). It also makes him very nervous facing the game. "When it came to Abel's turn, he made a poor showing, of caution and gesture," (Momaday 38). As a result, he is defeated by a White young man but he dislikes being a loser. He kills the White man who defeated him in the traditional play. As a result, he is sent to jail and this event makes him thinking of his life as an Indian American man. He thinks that he fails to understand the traditional game held by the Indian American people. This led him to feel alone among his people around the Indian American community.

“And suddenly he had the sense of being alone, as if he were already miles and moths away”, (Momaday 21). Then, he feels alienation: "he was suddenly conscious of some alien presence close at hand", (Momaday 59). Having been released from jail, Abel moves to Los Angeles to begin a new life. Again, here he







It is obvious from the quotations above that Indian American people traditionally live with beliefs and practices on their tradition for a long time. When they move to the city, it is unavoidable that their culture is changing, and this makes them get confused and feel losing their identity.

Unfortunately, the changing of environment, in which the cultures of both places are different, frequently, produces the cultural conflict and the impact are deviant attitudes as can be seen through the characters of Abel in *House Made of Down*. The social problems also emerge in the cultural conflict because of the failure of social adjustment as shown through Abel's attitude in *House Made of Down*. The cultural conflict on the Abel then shown that traditional beliefs and practices of the Indian American people contain wisdom of live for themselves. They teach of harmony of life with universe, communal life and the relationship of the community which is built on respect to each other, especially between the old and the young people. On the other hand, the modern life introduced by the White people, in many cases, produces the loss of wisdom to Indian American people in their lives.

Todd Leahy remarks: Rural Indian frequently had major difficulties adjusting to urban life in big cities. Unaccustomed to such conditions, approximately one-third of the relocated Indian went back to their reservations (ixv). That is why the title the fiction *House Made of Down* is used by the Indian American writers to express the idea about Indian American wisdom. *House Made of Down* represents the universe where Indian American live, illustrating the richness of harmony between Indian American people with the universe



even bother himself to answer her questions about the wage. She is surprised and feels mortified: “His reserve was too much for her. She would have liked to throw him off balance, to startle and appall him, to make an obscene gesture, perhaps, or to say, ‘How would you like a white woman? My painted fingers and my feet?’ but it would have been of no use. She was certain that he would not even have been ashamed for her- or in the least surprised” (Momaday 31).

It seems that “Abel longs to integrate himself within traditional life” (Konevich, 237) after a longtime separation. Thus, he joins a game that takes place in his town. Some men including Abel are depicted on horseback because of this game. Those men enter the Middle and each rider, by turns, gallops to seize a rooster which is half buried in the ground Abel cannot display a good show: “When it came Abel’s turn, he made a poor showing, full of caution and gesture. Angela despised him a little” (Momaday 38). Another competitor, the albino, who is “large and thickset, powerful and deliberate in his movements” (Momaday 38), skillfully grabs the rooster from the ground. After some time, the albino starts to hit Abel with the rooster in his hand until it dies: “Abel threw up his hands, but the great bird fell upon them and beat them down. Abel was not used to the game, and the white man was too strong and quick for him” (Momaday 39). Interestingly enough, this game is a part of Native American convention from which Abel seems detached, and it is outraced by a non-Native. The narrator lets reader know about how Abel feels after his return. He comes to his land only to find himself in a psychological struggle in feeling belonged to his Native self. He cannot speak to himself. He is utterly speechless, even within himself:



His return to the town had been a failure, for all his looking forward. He had tried in the days that followed to speak to his grandfather, but he could not say the things he wanted; he had wanted; he had tried to pray, to sing, to enter into the old rhythm of the tongue, he was no longer attuned to it. [...] Not dumb silence was the older and better part of custom still- but inarticulate. (Momaday 53).

Able, again, goes to Benevides house to cut off wood. Later on, the old man Francisco is described alone “among the rows of corn” (Momaday 58), and he senses the presence of evil, which foreshadows the forthcoming murder. Francisco has recognized that “evil plays as great a part in the circle of life as good” (Konevich, 237) unlike Abel who “is shut off from a comprehension of his tribe and the manner in which they view the world” (Konevich, 237). Such a discord between Abel and his grandfather, who has raised him, undermine Abel’s sense of belonging to his origin and leave him alone in his struggle.

August 1st is the day of ritual. “The crippled old man”, presumably Francisco, “in leggings and white ceremonial trousers” (Momaday 67), seems to enjoy the spiritual atmosphere: “I made him glad to be in the midst of talk and celebration, to savor the rich belief of the coming rain upon the rows of beans and chilies and corn, to see the return of weather, of trade and reunion upon the town” (Momaday 68). He feels much attuned to each part of the ritual. He goes to shrine and kneel before Our Lady of the Angels. He performs every spiritual action with all his heart and soul. As a part of the ritual, a show with a horse and a bull takes place. While horse is regarded as a “beautiful, sensitive thing” (Momaday70), bull is recognized as “a kind of a victim, an object of ridicule and hatred” (Momaday 71). Francisco easily relates the show to his experience. This show takes him back

to the footrace in which he overtook Mariano. He also comes to acknowledge that he has been the bull several times. However, he believes that “it was done honorably and well” (Momaday72), which indicates that Francisco, Abel’s grandfather, feels at ease about his past.

After the whole ritual, Abel and the albino man walk together. The conversation between them is not revealed. There has been a tension between the two since the rooster game even though they have had no argument. Abel ends up with killing the albino man. It seems there is not sound motive for Abel to commit murder. His killing the albino on a day of ritual should not be a coincidence since a ritual is a climax of Abel’s alienation from his heritage. As Konevich states, “Although the albino may be a symbolic representation of White culture, Abel does not kill him out of a sense of righteous vengeance, but rather as a result of his own disassociation from tribal customs” ( 236). If he could speak out his feelings he would have told the albino high words to revenge his sense of otherness and disunity among his own people. He is unable to verbalize whatever he deals with inside.

Therefore, this act of murdering might have been his unique way to break his numbness. He is now in another fight after World War-II in which he voluntarily fights with his fellow soldiers for the good of their country. This time he is alone in his inner struggle, and there is no quick fix for him to accommodate himself to either his Native traditions and or life outside the reservation.

After Abel releases from the prison, he is now in Los Angeles. Abel becomes quit and more get complicated with himself. It is the first appearance of Abel in an urban and modern life after his release from prison is not favorable:

He was in pain. He had fallen down; that was it. He was lying face down on the ground, and it was cold and there was a roaring of the sea in his brain and there was a fog rolling in from the sea. The pain was very great, and his body throbbed with it; his mind rattled and shook, wobbling now out of a spin, and he could not open his eyes to see. Something was wrong, terribly wrong. When he awoke, he tried to move; he was numb with cold, but the effort to move brought new pain, sharp, then massive pain. It was so great that he fainted, and the next time he knew better than to move suddenly. The effect of the alcohol was wearing off. In another moment he began to retch, his whole body contracting, quaking involuntarily, and again the pain mounted and his mind was slipping away. He wanted to die. (Momaday 87-88)

It is learned that he is lying on the beach. He does not know where he is and what he is doing. He can only feel the pain he is in. Later on, he starts to recall his experiences in pieces and thus letting reader know about what he has gone through after the murder. He thinks of the trial. However, he cannot remember much. "There were charges, questions, and answers; it was ceremonial, orderly, civilized, and it had almost nothing to do with him" (Momaday 89). Father Olguin seems to understand Abel when he defends him in the trial: "I believe that this man was moved to do what he did by an act of the imagination so compelling as to be inconceivable to us" (Momaday90). Abel, in the meantime, remains silent: "When he had told his story once, simply, Abel refused to speak. He sat like a rock in his chair, and after a while no one expected or even wanted him to speak (Momaday 90).

It is most likely the Abel's case. However, it is almost impossible for Abel to detect what his problem is: "He tried to think where the trouble had begun, what he trouble was. There was trouble; he could admit that to himself, but he had no real insight into his own situation. Maybe, certainly, that was the trouble; but he had no way of knowing. He wanted a drink; he wanted to be drunk" (Momaday 93). Then, Milly comes along. She is one of those who are meant to be instrumental to improve Native Americans' lives. She occasionally brings questionnaires to Abel:

"No test is completely valid," she said. "Some are more valid than others". But Milly believed in tests, questions and answers, words on paper. She was a lot like Ben. She believed in Honor, Industry, the Second Chance, the Brotherhood of Man, the American Dream, and him- Abel; she believed in him. After a while he began to suspect as much, and... (Momaday 94).

After some reminiscences he has thought of, he wants to pull himself together: "He had to get up. He would die of exposure unless he got up. His legs were all right; at least his legs were not broken. He brought one of his knees forward, then the other, and he managed to get to the fence." (Momaday 110). When he stops to rest, his mind again shifts back to old days. He imagines Milly and Ben coming towards him on the beach. Ben narrates in his narration, it is easy to see his sincerity towards Abel. He really wants to help him settle into this modern life.

He mentions a plan that he has made up to tell Abel when he is in the hospital. They would get drunk and sing the old songs. Ben speaks to him of "those old ways, the stories and the sings" (Momaday 129). He tells him what he thinks about what they mean, which indicates that the connection between him

and his culture is active. Abel listens to him enthusiastically and he believes this fake plan and asks questions about details.

That Abel gets excited about being drunk in company with their stories and songs might suggest silver lining to come out. Abel and Ben have grown up in the reservation. They are now in a battle of self-expression and of finding a way of being in step with their changing environment. It seems Ben has not as great difficulty as Abel in achieving this. He accounts for Abel's deterioration over time from his point of view: "But he was unlucky. [...] And it would have gone all right after that, too, if they had just let him alone. The parole officer, and welfare, and the Relocation people kept coming. They were always warning him, you know? Telling him how he had to stay out of trouble, or else he was going to wind up in prison again (Momaday139). As Ben implies, Abel would have recovered had he not been constantly disrupted and controlled by "the parole officers" or "the Relocation people" (Momaday139). He also believes that those people might be the reason of Abel's getting muter: "And they can't help you because you don't know how to talk to them. They have a lot of words, and you know they mean something, but you don't know what, and your own words are no good because they're not the same; they're different and they're the only words you've got" (Momaday 139). Ben feels that "he was getting all mixed up" (Momaday 140) because of people around him.

At the end, Abel faces the social problems also emerge in the cultural conflict because of the failure of social adjustment and it makes him loss identity as a Native Indian American in *House Made of Down*. Abel gets identity crisis.

