

Land Crisis in Mahashweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and Steve Hendricks *The Unquiet Grave*.

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Abstract—Land Ethic as envisaged by Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac*, asserts that we need to change our "human role from conqueror, to a member of the land community". This reinforces the dilemma of rendering the non-human world in language and poetic strategies that have historically commodified, personified, and claimed it for human consumption, occupation, and subjective consolidation. According to Leopold:

A land ethic ... reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility of the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity. (A sand county 221)

The anthropocentric and hubristic denial of the subalterns by the mainstream poses a radical questioning of the relationship between literature and ethics, thereby, establishing Wayne C Booth's assertion that Fictions are the most powerful architects of our souls and societies. This paper proposes juxtaposition of two literary masterpieces to highlight the authorial responsibility vis a vis issues of land crises and human rights violation in India and America. Mahasweta Devi, the prominent tribal voice of India and an unflinching champion of aboriginal communities has always felt a strong sense of commitment to raise issues of tribal life involving land crisis, national identity and human rights. In the novel *Mother Of 1084*, Mahasweta Devi has depicted the plight of tribal in India especially the Naxals who are driven off their basic necessities owing to the dominion of serfdom. Devi as a formidable tribal voice underscores how the zamindaars or landlords confiscate the lands of the poor tribals, and repeat in verbatim the age-old cycle of feudal brutality. Likewise Steve Hendricks, the American author, in the *The Unquiet Grave* has highlighted the causalities by feudalism which shifts to the tribal or American Indian natives of the USA, the upshot of which is the resistant American Indian Movement. To expose this historical slave labour

in contemporary society, we can substitute the singular tags of peasants and landlords with collective labels. i.e. instead of a peasant we have a tribe, and in place of landlords the purveyor of feudalism is the system of government be it central or local and its instruments of authority. This paradigm is seen repeated in the modern India in the form of Naxalbari movement and in the USA by the American Indian Movement (AIM). The cause of the Naxals is charted by Indian author Mahasweta Devi while that of the AIM is highlighted by American journalist Hendricks. This paper proposes to analyze how Land if analyzed by romantic ecology becomes a source of sensual aestheticism, and when perused by the tenets of social ecology becomes an embodiment of crisis and wars and retaliations against their commodification.

Turning the clock back and forth, Land has been a recurring bone of contention among people. From Feudalism to Invasion to today's euphemistically called Encroachments and Trespassing, Land has been a magnet for crisis since ever. It is property in literal sense, but speaking figuratively, it is power and belongingness in a more pronounced sense. This paper proposes to analyze how Land if analyzed by romantic ecology becomes a source of sensual

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aestheticism, and when perused by the tenets of social ecology becomes an embodiment of crisis and wars and retaliations against their commodification. I have perused Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084*, and Steve Hendricks, *'The Unquiet Grave'* to explore Aldo Leopold's assertion that we need to change our "human role from conqueror, to a member of the land community" reinforces the dilemma of rendering the non-human world in language and poetic strategies that have historically commodified, personified, and claimed it for human consumption, occupation, and subjective consolidation.

The tribal crisis in India, which falls under the rubric of feudalism has been the objective behind Mahasweta Devi's writings. In an interview conducted by Gayatri Spivak which also featured in the book, *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* by Mahasweta Devi, the author has asserted to the reasons behind the strife between the tribals and the government:

The tragedy of India at Independence was not introducing land reform. A basic feudal system was allowed to stay. A feudal land system can only nurture and sustain a feudal value system...is anti-women, anti-poor people, against toiling people. It is the landowners who formed the ministry..." (Chotti Munda And His Arrow)

The author intends to write a script about the tribals as people live in constant ignorance about their culture and they are misunderstood to be a violent community. She in the text that we have taken, has exposed the victimization of the Naxals, and the movement which erupted when these tribals retaliated in West Bengal. In May 1967, when a policeman was killed by armed tribals, who were fighting against their intrusion into their lands, it caused severe casualties and worked as a spark that instigated the Naxalite movement. Samik Bandyopadhyay in his introduction to Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* has traced out the genesis of this movement, and how it collapsed in 1971. The author has observed in this light, the

interconnectedness between land and the crisis of the tribals.

The criminalization of politics, letting the lumpen loose in the lower caste and tribal belts. Inhuman torture and oppression. That is the time (Emergency) when Naxal boys were harboured there, given shelter, allowed to escape. ..a continuing struggle...Yet after each rebellion-always related to land and labour-they were evicted from their home places. (Chotti Munda And His Arrow)

A radical green author Murray Bookchin, a radical green author and a champion of the tenets of 'social ecology has dealt with the human domination and exploitation of natural resources when correlates the apparently disparate realms of society and ecology:

Social ecology suggests that the roots of current ecological and social problems can be traced to hierarchical (or more specifically kyriarchical) modes of social organization... The complexity of relationships between people and nature is emphasized, along with the importance of establishing more mutualistic social structures that take account of this. (Post-Scarcity Anarchism, 85-87)

In this union of ecology with societal issues, Murray has dealt with the nitty-gritty of human domination and has neatly found its basis in the exploitation of natural resources. In the novel *Mother Of 1084*, Mahasweta Devi has depicted the plight and cause of tribal in India especially the Naxals who are driven off their basic necessities owing to the dominion of serfdom. Devi as a formidable tribal voice underscores how the zamindaars or landlords confiscate the lands of the poor tribals, and repeat in verbatim the age-old cycle of feudal brutality. Likewise the American author, in the *The Unquiet Grave* has highlighted the causalities by feudalism which shifts to the tribal or American Indian natives of the USA, the upshot of which is the resistant American Indian Movement. To expose this historical slave labour in contemporary society,

we can substitute the singular tags of peasants and landlords with collective labels. i.e. instead of a peasant we have a tribe, and in place of landlords the purveyor of feudalism is the system of government be it central or local and its instruments of authority. This paradigm is seen repeated in the modern India in the form of Naxalbari movement and in the USA by the American Indian Movement (AIM). The cause of the Naxals is charted by Indian author Mahasweta Devi while that of the AIM is researched by American journalist Hendricks. In the world of this turmoil, if we hark back to the founding words of social ecology as laid down by Murray, the intertwined echo of human domination and environment will become clear:

The notion that man must dominate nature emerges directly from the domination of man by man... But it was not until organic community relation ... dissolved into market relationships that the planet itself was reduced to a resource for exploitation. This centuries-long tendency finds its most exacerbating development in modern capitalism. Owing to its inherently competitive nature, bourgeois society not only pits humans against each other, it also pits the mass of humanity against the natural world. Just as men are converted into commodities, so every aspect of nature is converted into a commodity, a resource to be manufactured and merchandised wantonly.(for e.g. LAND in Mother Of 1084, and The Unquiet Grave) ... The plundering of the human spirit by the market place is paralleled by the plundering of the earth by capital(Post-Scarcity Anarchism 24-255)

Tribals have been drawing sustenance from the land, a fact which was observed by Mahasweta Devi in her travels in the rural areas. Aldo Leopold reinforces this sentiment by emphasizing on the philosophy of Land Ethic that clearly claims, " [A] land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such." In India, the

case of Naxals is the same but their lands are seized by their own democratic government. In an article covered by a leading newspaper, India has been pitted as among the ' top land-grabbing nations':

Increasing protests against land grabs is one of India's most pressing development challenges, said experts from international organizations working on natural resources, ecology, and livelihoods. ...have blamed the Indian government agencies and investors for the growing spate of violent clashes in the forest and tribal areas... Despite having legislations that could address the root cause of the conflicts, all states and tribal areas in the country are embroiled in these land disputes, said Arvind Khare, a global expert on land rights.(Chandel, Himani. 'India among top land-grabbing nations'. The Tribune.)

Robert JC Young in his work, 'Post Colonialism: A Very Short Introduction' claims and makes a very striking comment on why democracy doesn't rid this landlessness, as it clearly can't in the actual case of the Naxalbaris.

He remarks:

...in countries with well defined, different ethnic groups where one in the large majority, democracy can become a form of popularity, democratically agreed tyranny and oppression. In such countries, the minority (like in India the Adivasis and Dalits) have no legitimate political means of resistance against the tyranny of the majority. (Post Colonialism 60)

In America, the case of American Indians fits the bill of colonialism as Robert asserts while drawing ideas from the political theorist Benedict Anderson:

It always was assumed to become a nation, the people of a nation should resemble each other as closely as possible. if they looked different, spoke a different

language, followed a different religion, this was considered a threat to what the political theorist Benedict Anderson has characterized as 'imagined community' of the nation...The United States, nation of immigrants, makes an interstin test case... the US has something in common, that they or their ancestors came as immigrants-though...this doesn't apply to the first nations of native Americans who were displaced or exterminated in order to make room for the new arrival.(Post Colonialism 60)

Naxalbari movement shaped and provoked writers and activists to debate the voice of the marginalized tribes or Naxals. Mahasweta Devi has in most of her novels dealt with the issue of tribal life involving Land crisis and I find her works giving a new dimension to the practice of eco-criticism. The way French revolution played a huge role in modeling the Romantics like Shelly, Byron and Coleridge etc, I see the Naxalbari movement inspiring Mahasweta Devi as a writer and an activist to voice the predicament of the tribals and uphold their rights.

In an interview to show her resolute support to the indigenous community, she lambasted the government as:

I condemned police atrocities against the naxalites in the '70s and I am not scared that by supporting the right cause I will be labeled a Maoist."
(news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=681320)

Likewise in the USA, the indigenous tribes known as the American Indians have long been subjected to the brazen treatment dealt by the government. This however has not gone unnoticed by the slew of writers and activists who have exposed the reality behind this crisis. Hendricks in his radical novel which I have studied has picked a singular event which in a chain reaction started many explosive question marks on the conduct of the US government and its furtive home security. Steve Hendricks in the epigraph to the book writes:

I wrote this book for the Lakota Nation, who deserve better than my nation has given them.
(The Unquiet Grave)

Mahasweta Devi in her work *Hazar Chaurasi Ki Maan* has mapped the Naxalbari movement from a family's personal journey through it. How the movement lost its cause to perversion and hijacking and distortion of a public unrest, into becoming a mere tool of personal feuds and rivalry, that is the question she intends to answer. The emergency in Mahasweta Devi's novel depicting the angst of the characters can be empathized in the tragic backdrop of Naxalbari movement. What Naxal crisis? Its origin? Causes to it? Its manifestations? Retaliation tactics against it? What resolutions and aftermath? The social relevance of her work doesn't only serve as a history chapter but also renders a substantial resolution of the contemporary crisis before us. In one of her essays, Devi writes her objective behind writing this novel;

In the Seventies, in the naxalite movement, I saw exemplary integrity, selflessness and the guts to die for a cause. I thought I saw history in the making and decided that as a writer it would be my mission to document it. As a writer, I feel a commitment to them, to mankind and to myself. I did not consider the naxalite movement an isolated happening...in the Naxalite movement I saw only a further extension of the movement of the past, especially the Tbhaga, Kakdwip, and Telenga uprisings. ..in the Hazar Charasi Ki maan I portrayed the naxalite movement in its urban phase in 1971-74; and against that and a generation gap, I set an apolitical mother's quest to know her martyred Naxalite son to know what he stood for: for she had not known the true Brati ever, as long as he had been alive. Death beings him closer to her through her quest(Hearing 'subaltern' Voices of Resistance in the Works of Mahasweta Devi, Taslima Nasrin and Monica Ali, 80)

Leopold notes how "An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from antisocial

conduct. " (A Sand County Almanac 202)", and in the works of Mahasweta Devi she has fought against the absolute privileges of the authority, that borders on the anti-social conduct against the tribals. She was the first and foremost activist to have filed the initial public interest litigation against the state on behalf of the natives in 1998. The Naxals are considered far-left radical communists, loyal to Maoist political outlook and ideology. Devi in her interview with Spivak asserted that in most of her travels in the remote locations of the India, she has come across various tribes like the Sabars, and in her own words she has observed,

They are basically gentle, polite, highly civilized, and this innate blood civilization runs back thousands of years. A tribal lives in harmony with the nature around him, with human beings, even intruders...If we think of what Gandhi means, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, tribals have it. The way they suffer us is because they have a very ancient civilization. They can do it, we cannot. We get angry, lose our tempers, become beats, they do not. When they do it, one must understand their extreme desperation. (Chotti Munda And His Arrow)

In Naxalbari village, a section of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)(CPM) led by Majumdar, and others initiated a violent uprising in 1967. It adopted offensive stance to reallocate Land to the landless. Mahaweta Devi has in the novel without using aliases or pseudonyms named one of the leaders of the movement, 'Live Long Comrade Mazumdar! Revolutionary Comrade...the killers who killed our youth will never be forgiven!' EN Rammohan in the magazine Outlook India has disclosed the primal discrepancy that led to Naxal insurgency:

'the failure of implementing the 5th & 9th Schedules of the Constitution of India. In theory these Schedules were to provide for a limited form of tribal autonomy with regard to exploiting natural resources on their lands and also limiting the Land to be possessed by landlords and distribution of

excess Land to landless farmers & labourers.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naxalite>)

But this schedule though in letter was written but in spirit was shamelessly out of action. This barefaced discrepancy is meticulously mentioned by Mahasweta Devi in the second part of her novel where she lucidly chronicles the start of the Naxal cause to its final stages:

The opposition had always pulled a majority of votes in the region. The government had taken its revenge by denying the region the simple comforts of a decent road, a health centre an adequate number of tube wells, or a bus route. (Mother Of 1084, 33)

Mao Zedong, the Chinese dictator and communist leader provided ideological headship for the Naxalbari movement. He advocated that Indian peasants and lower class tribals oust the government and the upper classes by violence. Vicious rebellions were organized in several parts of the country, which led to many divisions and partitions and fragmentation of the original CPM party into Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI(ML)), then Maoist Communist Centre, further still partitioning into Communist Party of India (Maoist). The tactics to regain their pilfered lands were violent aggression pursued by Majumdar who in this model declared an "annihilation line", a dictum that Naxalites should assassinate individual "class enemies" (such as landlords, businessmen, university teachers, police officers, politicians of the right and left) and others. Throughout Calcutta, schools were shut down. Naxalites took over Jadavpur University and used the machine shop facilities to make pipe guns to attack the police. Their headquarters became Presidency College, Kolkata. The Naxalites found supporters among some of the educated elite, and Delhi's prestigious St. Stephen's College became a breeding ground of Naxalite activities.

Brati in *Mother of 1084* represents the youth who yearned to be part of this movement and were passionately sensitive to the marginalization of

the tribals hence they were an easy prey to be abused and manipulated by the party's supremos to run their dirty errands. He serves embodies the social cause of the as he is not only close to the cause via patriotic passion but being in the direct line of prejudiced unfairness of the government. Brati falls among the many youths who recruited themselves in the cause to redress the pervasive inequality faced by them and their neighbors. Their Land is infiltrated in the name of law, and absolute power, and to top it the lawful amenities and privileges, the right every citizen, are deplorably annexed as well. Aldo brings out this discrimination by stressing that, " land is a community is the basic concept of ecology...that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics."(A Sandy County 14)

Brati being a native to this crisis is enmeshed/embedded to the cause by birth and by proximity. The readers however are alienated in being and are unclear and in the dark regarding the emergency of the crisis. They might understand on the level of human empathy but as to the knowledge of the fact of who the culprit is and who is not, or to put it straight who should they vote and who should they not, that knowledge they are estranged from. The environment in the novel is the field of Land crisis, and the characters working in this environment encourage public opinion by their relationships with the victims' family, friends, colleagues and other members of the party etc. Brati's father and his rest of family except Sujata are depicted as the representatives of the bourgeoisie values of pretences, extravagance, indifference and decadent lifestyles. Brati's resentment at his father's dishonest value system makes him connect to the movement which he sees as the same bourgeois system crippling the rights of the tribal. Brati dies at the hands of the traitors in the party, who selfishly abandoned the cause for their personal interests. Sujata receives a call to identify her son's body that is labeled by the number 1084. It is from that moment Sujata is provoked to tread down into the underbelly of the Naxalbari movement even when her family is adamant to erase the existence of their criminal son and his death. In the first parts of the novel Mother Of 1084 the role of Sujata as a romantic

can be discerned. She is concerned for Brati as a reader who doesn't know the reality behind Brati's death but only that his son died. It's only in the course of the novel, when she finds out about the movement and her son's dedicated involvement in it, she becomes aware.

In a vengeful satire at the society and her family, she exclaims:

(Brati) is charged with a crime...that he lost faith in the social system itself. Brati had decided for himself that freedom could not come from the path society and state followed...Brati and those like him were such anti-socials that their corpses would lie at the Kantapukur morgue.

Mahasweta Devi also ventures to expose the bourgeois system of belief that undermines the sensibility of the youth, and she attacks by it representing Sujata's husband as an emblem of this system. The husband is depicted as a typical believer in man's virility and reveres rather than abhor the immoral act of promiscuity to demonstrate his manliness via it. His own mother's approval over this distorted belief and the unscrupulous action out of it, dissuades Sujata to confront her husband red handed. Even his family except Sujata and Brati is indifferent to this extra-marital affair suggesting the deep pockets of their own colorful sins. Sujata's angst is that in the face of this heinousness, why still Brati was a criminal and a disgrace to his family:

(Brati was a criminal because) killers in the society, those who adulterated food, drugs and baby food had every right to live. the leaders who led people to face guns of the police and found for themselves the safest shelters under police protection had every right to live. But Brati was a worse criminal because he had lost faith in this society ruled by profit-mad businessmen and leaders blinded by self-interest. ...so death was his portion. death was the sentence reserved for everyone of them, those who had rejected a society of spineless, opportunist timer-servers masquerading as artists, writers and

intellectuals...anybody was permitted to kill them. (Mother Of 1084, 19)

Connecting the private feeling as the rationale behind a public action I find in the novel *Mother Of 1084*, the protagonist Sujata as the mouthpiece of this claim. She registers her ire at a system of beliefs, which is the culture of her family, and she finds in it a cause to revolt against the similar beliefs in many other bourgeois families that result in the dehumanization of the youth. Sujata hence through a private angst against family, is in fact rebelling against the system of beliefs pervasive in the public/society at large. Sujata believes if Brati had adhered to this corrupt system of beliefs, he would have been cherished and applauded by his family as one of their own. *"If Brati drank like Jyoti, if he could go about drunk like Neepa's husband, if he could flirt with the slip of a typist the way Brati's father did...then they could have accepted Brati as one of them" (Mother Of 1084).*

Sujata's son like the youth was maliciously exploited in the cause. Their demise instead of a martyr's became a 'scandalous death'. Bourgeois families like Dibyanath had to bury this ignominious existence of their sons instead of being dragged into the mire with them. A cause of the tribals was distorted by the cr em de la cr em of the political system while the youth incited to serve it, were betrayed of their trust, ambition and dream of a better home! What a 'programme of betrayal'.

Naxalbari movement in the novel is exposed by the epithet 'Decade of Liberation'. The cause was just. How abortive it is to realize that the youth couldn't see the decadent and despicable perversion of it. Lives lost. Martyrs turned into criminals. Defiled. Shamed and families held accountable even after the deaths and kept bereft of jobs and proper education. The dishonor and stigma of it passed to the living. And with their lives blotched, the grief of the bereavement is worsened with the hatred against them. "Sujata could see the weird design of an absurd play unfolding relentlessly' such is how Devi voices her satire at the bizarre turn of events after the death of Brati. It is a fact that is meticulously

proved by Dr. Dailen Debnath, in his methodological study of the movement that the ruling congress party had stealthily infiltrated spies or moles inside the unguarded Naxalite organization to gather information about its secret bases and arrest its supporters. Besides this strategy, the party itself was bi-tri and sundry times fragmented into disparate and antagonist sects. One party didn't shake hands with the other, even when the cause was singularly the same for everyone. Except few most of the members had no allegiance to one party and with this rising infidelity the party and its people wavered in their agendas and fell. This is what is in fact the tragic reason behind Brati and his friends' death. One of their party members, Anindya, the turncoat, betrayed their secret location to the hostile opponent party, who lynched them to death. The Naxal parties had majority of the recruits coming out of an urban-frustrated-middle class background without any Revolutionary teaching and zeal, and who were fraught for irrational clashes. Brati for instance was disillusioned with his father's blatant promiscuity, his mother's servility in the face of it, his relations' insulting and pretensions lifestyles, and so he sought a remedy in this movement against his problems. All these factors Devi surmises through her mouthpiece Sujata;

That was how they died. by trusting too many people. Brati and his fellow workers never realized that those they trusted could be tempted with offers, jobs for some, security for others, a happy life still for others...there were many who had joined them with the aim of betraying them. They had not realized that the system against which they fought had the capacity to contaminate even the child in the womb. (Mother Of 1084, 40)

In the novel *Mother Of 1084*, the young recruits in the CPI party belonged to such destitution and broken families which Lawrence implores us to see by the continuous refrain of his word 'ugly'. The nineteenth and today's 21st century, and still the melody of malady continue like a tradition to the present. What must be done? Dismantle the machines and the inventions of industrialization to retreat back to the old times? Leavis strongly

suggests the opposite:

there can be no going back: it is useless to think of ...scrapping the machine in the hope of restoring the old order...it is important to insist on what has been lost lest it should be forgotten; for the money of the old order must be the chief incitement towards a new...(The Green Studies Reader 75)

The cause of the Naxals in India and the AIM in America is tantamount to a place of their own. There is not any disgust with technology or education but an equitable distribution of it as stated in the just laws. There is also not any revulsion with modernity but the condition in which it is presented depriving the tribals/natives of their rights and deserved livelihoods. Finally the natives are not against the development schemes and rehabilitation plans as long as that doesn't involve annexing their lands in the name of country or its private proprietors' profits.

Anne Mae in the novel *The Unquiet Grave*, serves as a mouthpiece of this social malfunction. She from her grave just like Brati exposes the unsavory nitty-gritty of fulsome operations of an unremitting government which is bent either by ineptitude, revenge or greed to loot the poor of their lands. In the wake of such hostilities, these characters develop an aura of a vision which implies the set of goals and demands the victims have in mind in starting a revolution. This vision either can be these demands or the characters themselves who personify a cause through their personal trials and tribulations.

It is interesting to note, the comments of Mahasweta Devi on the crisis of the American Indians. In her interview she observed:

I have read about the American Indians, when small pox and other diseases came, they had no resistance against it, and these people had no resistance against the cultural invasion that took place. It is cultural, it is economic, it is connected with the land, with everything, they want to rob of the tribal of everything. (Chotti Munda

and His Arrow xii)

Hendricks in his novel *The Unquiet Grave* exposes this conduct of the US government which falls in the purview of a cultural and economic invasion. Author notes that America during their settlement allowed the American Indians a 'sovereign title' to south of Dakota, and some other large shares of lands called as the Great Sioux Reserve. In letter it was a fair agreement between the Indians and the American government of the old, 'to guarantee (lands) for all times-as long as the rivers shall run and the grass shall grow' but in spirit it was hacked and slashed to suit the avaricious appetites of government officials who desired lands and more lands. The Reserve was blatantly looted leaving its remnants as small plots, of which Pine Ridge was the biggest. The author quotes;

BIA(Bureau of Indian Affairs) program that moved Indians from reservations to cities...the benevolent idea behind the program was that since the efforts to bring the jobs to Indians had consistently failed, Indians would be brought to jobs. But the program also had a sinister motive, which was to get Indians off the lands that whites wanted. For centuries America had pushed Indians onto unwanted lands, only later to decide those lands were desirable for one thing... uranium or coal...farmland. So the BIA paid the Indians bus fare to cities-sometimes on threat...set them up in dismal apartments ... most eventually returned...their Land had been bought or leased by the whites.(The Unquiet Grave 31)

Of course the Lakotas filed court cases to retake their lands which however got delayed for a long period, till the federal appeals court finally decreed in 1975, 'A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealing will never, in all probability be found in our history.' Keen remarks which were assented by the Supreme court however it decided to pay the Lakotas than return their Land. It was a furtive offer which Lakotas declined by ridiculing this deigning judgment, 'A used car for every Lakota' The author lists more 'Land thefts'

which continued to the modern age, with 'still more artful dodges for acquiring the Indian Land.' The stringent and bleak aspect of Feudalism is charted by the author in understanding the treatment of the Indians by the government and its laws;

Indians even in 1970's, were children-legally wards of the state. ...laws of America and the government sought to protect Indians from rapacious whites and to keep Indians in submission...their lands were held in trust...Indians could not use their lands as collateral for loans...no capital to buy the tools, supplies, and animals...only recourse was to lease the Land, sell it to non-Indians or leave it be...Corruption in matters related to Land flourished. (The Unquiet Grave, 36)

The offshoot of this maltreatment of the American Indians resulted in the decisive building of the American Indian party. In various part of the country the Indians fought for their mutual cause to redress the 'broken treaties', and their 'repatriation'. AIM was not the only agitator, but it became the singular most savior of the Indian's cause:

We're the landlords this country, the rent is due and we' are here to collect... That was the power of the cause we were working for, the heritage we were reclaiming...for the generation that had it stolen from them (The Unquiet Grave, 30-70)

It is to this prevailing exploitation, Hendricks has put forth a simple solution to end the crisis, and bring about a reconciliation between the warring sides. In the post script, he concludes the work in decisively giving a solution to this crisis;

There is only one honorable solution to the privation of the Lakotas: to return the Land we stole from them-at least to return what is returnable. I use the word 'we' rather than our ancestors because if we know of the (Land) theft, as we do, yet do not right it, we are as guilty as our forbears. (The Unquiet Grave, 369)

A death by murder, and the atrophied corpse exposing the trail by which it ended in the mortuary, is a connecting link between Mother of 1084 and The Unquiet Grave. Mother of 1084 was a universal theme of Naxalbari Crisis, and even with the plot fictional, its premise is a real story of every youth embroiled in it. Devi has depicted the political strife using the exact names of political figures and places and only using fictional ones as Sujata and Brati to serve as models for many Sujatas and Bratis struggling and lost in the movement. The attention of the facts is hence called to us by a narrative of a family that is a model or representative of every family enmeshed in it. Hendricks exposes the mentality of the corrupt government exemplifying the collective hate of it and its forces against the natives:

They're conquered nation, and when you're conquered, the people you're conquered by dictate your future. (The Unquiet Grave)

In conclusion, if one is to consider the founding words of Land Ethic as envisioned by Aldo Leopold, the solution to this crisis is to return the lands to the tribals, and harbor respect and love for it than abuse it as a commodity.

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. (Sand County Amanac vii)

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