

Reverence, Stewardship and Divinity: An Eco-spiritual Insight into Selected Novels

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Abstract

This research explores the attributes like reverence, stewardship and divinity in the selected novels under the theoretical influence of Joanna Macy's "Works That Reconnects" to scrutinize the pathways to self-discovery and the divine. The focus is to analyze the characters from diverse cultural and regional backgrounds in order to deal how each character's road leads inwards, with their spiritual alignment or indifference ultimately shaping their experience of despair and fulfillment. The influence of personal experiences and the signs from the environmental consequences makes one ponder into the deep reality of the world around him and the creator of this world. Macy deals with the individual experiences as well as the collective circumstances of the human relationship with nature and brings forward the practices like reverence, acceptance, gratitude and stewardship. The novels under evaluation are *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by a Pakistani author Khaled Hosseini, *Siddhartha* (1992) by a German writer Herman Hesse based on Indian culture and *The Meursault Investigation* (2013) by an Algerian writer Kamel Daoud highlighting Algerian take on the absurd situations. The research focuses on the contrast analysis of a character's journey towards self-actualization under the umbrella of Macy's defined stages of gratitude, honoring the Pain, seeing with new eyes and going forth. The individual struggle and the ecological influences on one's character development will be the center of the study whether their take on the experiences makes them close to or away from God. The research employs a qualitative, theoretical approach, utilizing close textual analysis guided by Macy's framework. The research provides a way to ponder on the individual experiences as well as the environmental contribution in shaping one's inner self. As the study deals with the experiences it will be open for all other perspectives.

Keywords: Reverence, Stewardship, Gratitude, Self-actualization, Ecology, Spirituality

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Introduction

In recent years, the interconnectedness of ecology, spirituality and literature has developed a wide scope. As the environmental crises increase, literature serves an exploration of the connections between the natural world and human consciousness. Central to this exploration are the themes of reverence, stewardship and divinity which focus on humanity's moral and spiritual responsibilities towards Earth and its inhabitants. The connection between nature and humans has been central to spirituality and philosophy. Different cultures and belief systems present diverse perspectives on how humans should deal with the environment as well as how they can take refuge within the environment. A field within Ecocriticism, Eco Spirituality serves as a framework for scrutinizing such themes in literature where the connection between environment and human internal growth is concerned. Eco-spirituality combines the elements of both environmentalism and spirituality focusing that human reverence for nature is crucial to the healing of both the planet and the human soul. By integrating ecological concerns with spiritual and religious concepts, eco-spirituality puts forward a holistic approach in understanding the interconnectedness of all life.

Joanna Macy's *Work That Reconnects* (WTR) offers a powerful theoretical and spiritual framework for addressing this crisis by guiding individuals and communities through a transformational journey of awakening. Rooted in systems theory, deep ecology, and engaged Buddhism, Macy's framework invites a reconnection with the web of life through a four-stage spiral: gratitude, honoring our pain for the world, seeing with new eyes, and going forth (Macy & Brown, 2014). This process is not only ecological and political but profoundly existential. It calls for a revival of three core values that have been suppressed by the dominant industrial growth society: reverence for life, stewardship of the Earth and one another, and a reimagined sense of divinity that affirms the sacred within and around us. In this light, *Siddhartha* (1922) by Hermann Hesse, *The Meursault Investigation* (2013) by Kamel Daoud and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini make for valuable stories to apply Macy's perspective. Though their settings and styles are all different, these novels feature characters who experience important inner and outer changes which lead them to a resolution in harmony with the spiral view. While their manifestations differ, these narratives collectively illuminate the core principles of Macy's philosophy. Rather than joining a religious order, *Siddhartha* gained deep reverence in the East by experiencing the world's unity for himself. *The Meursault Investigation* instead looks at a colonial narrative

to restore respect for those who were hidden and silenced, revealing what was lost because of mass dehumanization. Also, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* centers on the value of human relationships, mainly those built by women facing opposition in their society and during war, highlighting that resilience and love deserve great respect. Just like *Siddhartha*, Harun and Mariam and Laila, these texts also present stewardship as something that people do for themselves and the community, as well as for those suffering in the past. These novels, distinguished in their historical as well as cultural contexts, deal with the themes of reverence, stewardship and divinity bringing human responsibility toward nature under the conceptual context of ethical dilemmas and spirituality. This study employs a qualitative and interpretive methodology to explore how Joanna Macy's *Work That Reconnects* (WTR) framework—particularly the interwoven values of reverence, stewardship and divinity—can be fruitfully applied to the literary analysis of three culturally and thematically distinct novels: Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, and Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Joanna Macy's WTR offers a compelling theoretical lens through which to examine literature, especially narratives that deal with existential pain, transformation, and the human relationship with the natural and moral world. Originating from systems thinking, deep ecology, and engaged Buddhism, Macy's framework invites a reorientation of the self as fundamentally interconnected with all life. Her four-stage spiral—Gratitude, Honouring Our Pain for the World, Seeing with New Eyes, and Going Forth—provides a process of inner and communal awakening in the face of ecological and social crises (Macy and Johnstone, 2022).

Despite the developing body of literature highlighting ecological themes, there remains a gap in the specific application of eco-spiritual perspectives in postcolonial and modern literary works. While ecocriticism and environmental literature have garnered significant attention in recent years, the exploration of spiritual ecology in literary texts, particularly those outside of Western traditions, has been limited. This thesis seeks to fill this gap by analyzing *The Meursault Investigation*, *Siddhartha*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* through the lens of eco-spirituality, with a particular focus on the themes of reverence, stewardship, and divinity. This research focuses on the journey towards self-actualization. The influential themes like reverence, stewardship and divinity are studied under the theoretical umbrella of Joanna Macy's "Work That Reconnects". The characters of the selected novels are the key concerns of the study. Their individual experiences as well as the ecological

circumstances are scrutinized in order to highlight the importance of respect, duty and spirituality in the journey towards self-discovery and God.

The significance of the research is that it provides an insight into the way of perceiving one's life experiences and the ecological signs in order to reach self-actualization as well as the deep connection with God. As the study deals with diverse regional and cultural influences emphasizing on the importance of reverence and stewardship in one's character development. Through the experiences of the characters the future researchers and the audience can relate to their own life experiences and shape their character in order to take their life hardships and lessons as a ladder towards self-actualization. This research helps correlate diverse cultural and regional attributes in shaping one's journey towards self-actualization.

Review of the Literature

The literature review explores existing scholarship on the intersections between eco-criticism, spiritual ecology, and literary studies, focusing on the key themes of reverence, stewardship, and divinity. These themes are central to understanding how literature reflects human relationships with the environment, nature's sacredness, and the divine. This review discusses the foundational concepts of ecocriticism and spiritual ecology, followed by scholarly perspectives on each of the selected novels: *The Meursault Investigation*, *Siddhartha*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The world as a whole impacts all our connections, our inner thoughts, our interactions with others, our beliefs, and our connection to the surrounding natural environment we belong to. It perceives Nature as an object (the environment), as lacking in spirit, as a tool to be used for our needs, and as inherently separate from both humanity and God. Developing our connection, our fondness for the natural world is achieved by using our senses effectively. Therefore, a sensuous appreciation of Nature forms the strongest basis for an eco-centric religious practice. Our position in this physical world implies that focusing on compassion and repairing relationships, rather than sin and redemption, would be beneficial in ecocentric theology. This focus aligns better with the philosophy of an interconnected, evolving reality.

❖ **Eco-spiritual**

A comprehensive approach to mental health practice from an ecological standpoint involves more than just emphasizing the importance of practitioners being aware of environmental issues and community bonds. Instead, healers are encouraged to embrace a deep understanding of caring for the earth and fighting against oppression, based on reclaiming humanity's historic connection with the environment as well as with one another. In a changing global context that has witnessed a rise in interpersonal and cultural terrorism, the effects of global warming, and the global economic slump, it offers a distinct perspective and more comprehensive content to examine human potential.

The natural world was aware of the eternal life energy that drove all endeavours. Every element of nature was alive and comprehensible through direct experience; it was not merely a mental image. It is, in fact, fundamentally relationship-based. Our dreams, our cells, and our bones are all infused with nature. The ancients and traditional indigenous cultures understand that humans are simply a part of nature during their most profound moments of awareness. Eco-spiritual social work ESH acknowledges that individuals have a unified spiritual and physical connection with the planet (Besthorn, 2000b; Clinebell, 1996; Metzner, 1999; Walsh-Bowers, 2000).

❖ **Stewardship**

Together with the emphasis on biophysical processes impacting soil health and dynamics, it is essential to consider the soil-human connection that promotes the preservation and responsible management of this limited and delicate yet valuable asset (Peterson 2016; Piggott 2021). Increased focus is required on spiritual practices linked to bio dynamics and site-specific practices, which prioritize soil biota by combining spirituality and scientific thought (Steiner 1924). The utilization of spiritual practices and beliefs could help individuals cope with intense feelings and existential inquiries regarding human-induced climate change (Pihkala 2018). Spiritual practices also help alleviate eco-anxiety, which involves experiencing challenging emotions and mental states due to environmental factors and human knowledge about them. (Pihkala, 2018). In the context of religion, stewardship refers to the act of looking after God's creation. Simply, having legal ownership of land does not grant the owner the ability to manipulate it solely for their own benefit without considering other interests. In simple terms, land cannot be owned absolutely because it ultimately belongs to God and not to any individual. Nevertheless, owning land comes with the obligation to use it wisely and take care

of it so that its capacity to produce ecosystem services is maintained indefinitely. Stewardship involves understanding that ecosystem services provided by soil are a gift from God for both current and future generations, and that soil should be passed onto future generations in a better condition than it was received from previous generations (Lal, 2013). Capra emphasizes the importance of understanding life as a complex web of interactions, rather than focusing on individual components. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependencies within living systems. “The Web of Life” has been widely read and influential in shaping discussions around systems thinking, ecology, and sustainability. Overall, “The Web of Life” offers a thought-provoking exploration of the nature of life and living systems, encouraging readers to adopt a more holistic and ecological perspective.

Methodology

To study this subject, a qualitative, interpretive and interdisciplinary approach, joining ecocritical theory, spiritual ecology and literary criticism is used. The goal of this research is to see how Macy’s concepts and ideas from WTR are embedded in the novels *Siddhartha*, *The Meursault Investigation* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The readings chosen had a deep influence on philosophy, came from a variety of cultures and were closely related to Macy’s ecological-spiritual philosophy. As a result, this field’s approach is guided by looking at how literature portrays and reshapes connections between humans and the sacred, their inner feelings and the land around them.

❖ Research Design

This study is qualitative research as the main focus of the study is to analyze the text of the selected novels and the novella, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *Siddhartha* and *The Meursault Investigation*. By implying the theoretical aspect of ecology and spirituality mainly Macy’s “Work That Reconnects” the study aims to highlight the attributes of reverence, stewardship and gratitude in order to understand one’s relationship with his Creator.

Discussion and Analysis

This chapter Analyses the characters’ life journey (4.1) in the selected novels; exploration of the elements of reverence, stewardship and divinity (4.2); analysis of

the eco-spiritual concerns in relation to characters (4.3) and interconnectivity of the selected novels providing a nuanced approach towards sustainable living(4.4).

❖ Analysis of the characters' life journey

In the selected three novels, *The Meursault Investigation*, *Siddhartha* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, this research examines reverence, stewardship and divinity through the theory of eco-spirituality. The section examines how humans and nature are linked. The researcher's concern for the protagonists' views on the world and faith describes the higher social and spiritual needs in the texts. Looking closely at main symbols and characters makes it easier to understand how spirituality, people and nature relate to each other. In an era increasingly marked by ecological crisis, spiritual disconnection, and cultural fragmentation, Joanna Macy's *Work That Reconnects* (WTR) offers a vital framework for ecological and spiritual renewal. Drawing on systems thinking, deep ecology, and engaged Buddhism, Macy outlines a transformative spiral process consisting of four stages: gratitude, honoring pain, seeing with new eyes, and going forth (Macy and Brown, 2014). This framework invites individuals and societies to reawaken their sense of interconnection with all life and to move toward compassionate, life-sustaining action. Though literary texts are not explicitly written for ecological purposes, they often portray the emotional and moral shifts Macy describes. The themes of reverence, stewardship, and divinity in Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922), Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* (2013), and Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), manifest through the lens of Macy's WTR. Despite their differing cultural and historical contexts, each novel presents a journey from alienation toward reconnection, embodying Macy's vision of inner and collective healing. The theme of reverence, a deep respect for life and being, is central to Macy's philosophy and appears in diverse forms across the three novels. In *Siddhartha*, reverence is cultivated not through religious doctrine, but through direct, embodied experience. The protagonist's spiritual journey begins with a rejection of rigid Brahmin rituals and ends in a profound unity with the river, symbolizing the eternal and interconnected flow of life (Hesse, 1922). *Siddhartha* listens to the river and eventually hears the sacred syllable "Om," recognizing that every part of existence—joy, sorrow, time—is divine and interconnected. This mirrors Macy's belief that reverence arises from perceiving the world as a living whole rather than a collection of isolated parts (Macy, 2007). In contrast, *The Meursault Investigation* presents reverence as something tragically absent and in need of recovery. Kamel Daoud reimagines the events of Albert Camus's *The*

Stranger from the perspective of Harun, the brother of the unnamed Arab killed by Meursault. Through Harun's voice, the novel mourns the dehumanization and silencing of Algerians in colonial discourse. Reverence here is not innate but must be reclaimed through the act of naming, storytelling, and restoring moral weight to the victim's life. Harun's journey reflects Macy's practice of "honouring the pain of the world," acknowledging suffering as a doorway to deeper awareness and connection (Macy and Brown, 2014). While Harun grapples with bitterness and moral ambiguity, his testimony ultimately seeks to restore sacredness to a life erased, reflecting a painful but necessary reawakening of reverence. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, reverence arises through the intimate, often painful bonds between women. Mariam and Laila, shaped by war and patriarchy, find in each other a sanctuary of care and mutual respect. Mariam, in particular, reclaims her own worth through her sacrificial love, culminating in her choice to give her life for Laila's safety (Hosseini, 2007). Her reverence is not grounded in institutional religion, which is often used in the novel to justify oppression, but in lived compassion and relational presence. This aligns with Macy's view that reverence is rooted in relationship and attention, especially in contexts of suffering and resilience. The notion of stewardship taking moral and spiritual responsibility for the well-being of others and the world is equally vital in Macy's work. In *Siddhartha*, stewardship manifests as spiritual humility and service. By the end of his journey, *Siddhartha* becomes a simple ferryman, guiding people across the river not only physically but symbolically, helping them traverse the waters of suffering and confusion (Hesse, 1922) His stewardship is quiet, relational, and attuned to the rhythms of nature. This reflects Macy's idea of stewardship as participatory care, grounded not in dominion but in deep listening and interdependence (Macy and Johnstone, 2022). In *The Meursault Investigation*, stewardship takes the form of narrative responsibility. Harun, disillusioned by both colonial injustice and post-independence hypocrisy, sees his act of remembering his brother as a form of moral caretaking. By speaking his brother's name, Musa, and recounting his story, Harun attempts to bear witness to both personal and historical violence. This act aligns with Macy's emphasis on reclaiming silenced truths as a pathway to transformation. While Harun struggles with contradictions and unresolved anger, his testimony enacts a form of ethical stewardship that honours the dead and challenges systems of erasure. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, stewardship emerges powerfully through maternal care and social commitment. Laila's decision to return to Kabul after the Taliban's fall signifies a conscious choice to take part in the country's healing. She works at an orphanage and participates in rebuilding a war-torn society, driven not by ideology

but by compassion and hope (Hosseini, 2007). Similarly, Mariam's ultimate act of sacrifice is a form of moral stewardship that ensures the future of the next generation. These acts exemplify Macy's call for the Great Turning, a societal shift from destruction to life-sustaining practices (Macy and Brown, 2014). In the face of trauma, both women become stewards of memory, love, and reconstruction. The theme of divinity, as reframed by Macy, is not confined to formal religion but refers to the sacredness inherent in the web of life. *Siddhartha* offers the clearest articulation of this view. For Hesse, enlightenment involves realizing that the world is not an illusion but divine in its multiplicity. *Siddhartha* sees all beings as part of a single cosmic flow, embodying what Macy calls "interbeing" the deep interconnectedness of all existence (Macy, 2007). His final smile represents a transcendent peace born of spiritual integration. Joanna Macy's *Work That Reconnects* provides the framework to understand these writings to show various routes to spiritual and moral recovery, using nature, memories or love. This approach reveals more about these narratives and views literature as important for promoting ecological and emotional changes. Because our world is broken such stories remind us what caring, mourning and reconnecting are all about.

❖ Interconnections between Reverence, Stewardship and Divinity

Each text reflects a unique version of reverence, stewardship and divinity under the influence of diverse cultural, religious and geographical contexts. However, the core themes of eco-spirituality reflect in each of the works, emphasizing the universal importance of humanity's connection to nature, spirituality, and the sacred. In *The Meursault Investigation*, Kamel Daoud's description of the Algerian landscape and the connection between the characters and their environment is significantly profound. The narrator's journey to gather the truth about his brother's murder in the shadow of his mother's apathy also represents a spiritual search for meaning in a post-colonial world. The novel's central theme of reverence is closely connected to the land itself, Algeria's desert and its harsh beauty serve as metaphors for the narrator's internal struggles and philosophical questions about existence and justice. Reverence is symbolized in the novel's depiction of the relationship between humans and the land. The narrator's quest for meaning is not just a personal one but a spiritual endeavour, where nature plays a pivotal role. The desert, in particular, is not just a physical space but a spiritual realm that demands respect. In the novel, Daoud proposes that understanding the land's sacredness and recognizing it as part of a divine order is crucial to understanding one's place in the world. The protagonist's sense of reverence for the land and its history is intertwined with his

search for justice and understanding of existential questions. It is crystal clear that the spiritual void left by colonialism and the alienation from the sacred are central to the emotional and psychological landscape of the characters. The narrator's relationship with the Algerian environment reflects eco-spiritual themes of respect for nature as both a physical and sacred force. While the landscape may seem harsh and unforgiving, it is imbued with a deeper significance. As the narrator progresses in his search, the land offers clues to the spiritual awakening he ultimately experiences, suggesting a renewal of reverence for both life and death. In *Siddhartha*, Hermann Hesse crafts a story of spiritual awakening deeply embedded in the natural world. The novel's eco-spiritual themes are most evident in its portrayal of nature as a source of wisdom, balance, and transcendence. The river becomes a central symbol of the interconnectedness of life, as it flows constantly, transcending time and death. At the beginning of his journey, *Siddhartha* rejects all material and natural attachments, believing that to be spiritually free, he must detach from the world. However, as the novel progresses, he comes to realize that true enlightenment involves not just personal transformation but a profound respect for the world in all its forms, but about understanding and preserving the natural balance that is integral to life itself. This theme of stewardship, therefore, extends beyond the personal to the collective. *Siddhartha's* final realization that he is part of an eternal flow mirrors the eco-spiritual belief that humans must act as stewards of the Earth, maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature and recognizing the sacredness inherent in the natural world.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini explores the lives of two women, Mariam and Laila, whose enduring struggles with love, loss, and violence unfold against the backdrop of Afghanistan's natural and socio-political landscape. While the novel focuses primarily on human resilience and the social injustices faced by women, it also presents deep eco-spiritual themes through its depiction of nature as a source of healing, hope, and divine presence. Hosseini uses the garden as a powerful symbol of the sacred. Despite the oppressive conditions in which the women live, the garden becomes a place of spiritual refuge, representing a space where divine presence can be felt. It is within this garden that Mariam and Laila find solace from their hardships, suggesting that moments of divine connection can occur even in the most difficult circumstances. The garden, much like the river in *Siddhartha*, is a symbol of renewal and spiritual harmony, linking the personal to the divine and the natural world. In the case of Mariam, her ultimate act of sacrifice is marked by a moment of divine grace. Her understanding of divinity is rooted in

the idea of selfless love and sacrifice for others. Mariam's ability to transcend her own suffering and act in service of another reflects a divine-like quality, underscoring the novel's eco-spiritual argument that divinity is not solely a religious concept but also a practice of compassion and stewardship. The act of tending to the garden, preserving its beauty, and nurturing life becomes a symbol of divine stewardship, where the natural world and human existence are intimately connected in the sacred. If *Siddhartha* explores the personal and spiritual arc of reconnection, *The Meursault Investigation* (2013) by Kamel Daoud situates Macy's themes within the political and postcolonial sphere. Daoud's novel is a response to Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1942), in which the unnamed Arab murdered by Meursault is never given identity or voice. In Daoud's narrative, the murdered man is named Musa, and his brother Harun narrates the story from the margins, reclaiming agency, memory, and moral complexity. At the heart of the novel is a demand for reverence, not of nature, as in *Siddhartha*, but of human life that has been devalued through systemic colonial violence. "He [Meursault] killed a man and made him into a word. Just a word," Harun says (Daoud, 2015: p. 4). In challenging this reduction, Daoud's novel performs what Macy calls "honouring our pain for the world." Harun's grief is not only personal but collective, rooted in a history of silencing. Reverence, in this context, is an ethical obligation to remember, name, and mourn. Stewardship here takes on a political dimension. Harun becomes the reluctant custodian of a legacy of violence and resistance. His voice, bitter yet articulate, embodies the burden of bearing witness. Unlike Macy's idea of joyful "going forth," Harun's stewardship is marked by alienation, illustrating the psychic toll of unresolved trauma. Still, the novel insists that even painful truth-telling is a form of care, of refusing erasure and insisting on moral accountability. Divinity in Daoud's text is complex and ambivalent. Harun is disillusioned with formal religion, particularly in its authoritarian expressions in post-independence Algeria. Yet, he expresses a longing for a sacred order: "I don't believe in God, but I miss Him" (Daoud, 2015: p. 135). This paradox echoes Macy's notion that divinity is not necessarily institutional but emerges from relational depth. Harun's longing for divine justice and human dignity gestures toward a spiritual reawakening that defies dogma. Ultimately, *The Meursault Investigation* enacts Macy's spiral not through serenity but through reckoning. Its reverence is fierce, its stewardship bitter, its divinity haunted—but all are necessary for healing historical and existential rupture.

Results and Conclusion

The analysis of *The Meursault Investigation*, *Siddhartha*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* demonstrates the significant role of eco-spiritual themes in literature. Each novel explores the relationship between humanity and nature through the concepts of reverence, stewardship, and divinity, offering insights into the ethical and spiritual dimensions of environmental responsibility. By examining these works in a comparative framework, this study highlights the universal significance of eco-spirituality and its potential to inspire both personal transformation and collective action toward a more harmonious relationship with the Earth. The lost connection between himself and others reflects his lost connection with God and leads him towards spiritual apathy. Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* has been a timeless classic that explores the themes of spirituality, human nature and self-discovery. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the connection with nature is structured around a sense of sacrifice, acceptance and going forth as presented by Macy's four stages of *Work That Reconnects*. The garden, as a symbol of divinity portrays the spiritual refuge and the transformation through the natural world. Hosseini's novel represents the role of the women as a caretaker for both of the home and the sacred Earth, emphasizing the intertwining of all forms of life and the divine in maintaining life and hope. The river symbolizes both life's journey and how things are connected in the novel. During his contemplation, *Siddhartha* hears the river which seemed to change from day to day (Hesse, 1922: p. 150). It shows that the river represents changes, impermanence and the way life keep happening in cycles. The protagonist's spiritual growth is helped by nature which acts as a guide. According to Hesse, it was the connection with nature that let the boy learn and grow (Hesse, 1922: p.100). Here, the author mentions that Half-Human and the series as a whole place value on learning from nature and recognizing its knowledge. There is an emphasis throughout the book on how everyone and everything is linked to each other which is also an important point in eco-spirituality. After reflecting, *Siddhartha* believes that "Though I am not a drop in the ocean, the ocean is in every drop" (Hesse, 1922: p. 180). This part of the novel clarifies that everything connects and that recognizing our link to the world is important for everyone. During the many ecological and existential crises, we face today, Joanna Macy's *Work That Reconnects* provides a guide to help us remember what we share with the Earth and each other. The Macy framework guides environmental action while also promoting a major shift in our view of the world toward fostering community, practicing gratitude and reevaluating spiritual obligations. Through her approach to narrative,

her model makes clear that stories about suffering, awareness and relationships help enact the four sections in Macy's spiral: gratitude, honouring anguish, changing how we look at the world and moving ahead. Using Macy's structure to compare, *Siddhartha*, *The Meursault Investigation* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* all allow for the restoration of reverence, stewardship and divinity in life. The main idea behind Macy's vision is to develop reverence, a devoted respect for all kinds of life. The entire novels look at reverence as something gained through facing our links to one another. Macy believes that gratitude helps us become aware of just how wonderful it is to be alive. Macy imagines the "Great Turning" by having these characters act on ways to support life during disastrous times in culture and history. Divinity in all the novels mirrors Macy's idea that the sacred is not something beyond life, but is formed from life itself. *Siddhartha* demonstrates that the world's unity can be discovered by allowing ourselves to become closer to everything around us. The story in *The Meursault Investigation* does not offer answers to spiritual questions, but Harun's refusal to be fake and his search for ethics suggest that the relentless pursuit of truth constitutes a form of sacred practices. Macy's model acknowledges that the Golgotha moment can actually bring the sacred into our lives. The Author uses a more physical and visible form of spirituality in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Being God is shown here, mostly through offering, forgiving and quietly connecting in times of hardship. This is like Macy's idea that the sacred is expressed in how we are connected to and affected by the world. All these books, put together, show his *Work That Reconnects* and take it further. They exhibit that literature forms a type of inner ecosystem by expressing emotions that lead to reunions. As a result of the narrative, characters overcome being apart, gain insights, find relief from pain and earn dignity

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