

THE LEOPOLD WRITING PROGRAM

2020 ALDO LEOPOLD WRITING CONTEST AWARD WINNER

AKANSHA NANDA HONORABLE MENTION, GRADES 8-9

My family's roots are from a village in rural Tamil Nadu, India. Whenever I visit, the experience is out of the world I am used to. I wake up to sounds of crows flying above fields of coconut tree farms spreading to the horizon. On evening strolls through there, I see the villagers going home with their animals, mainly cows. During the daytime, these cows graze with chickens and goats on the farms. The manure produced by the animals fertilizes the soil, from which the trees grow strong and healthy producing perfect coconuts. These delicious coconuts are used in every dish with no part wasted. Even the hard husk is burned to heat bathing water. In turn, the manure also fertilizes the cow's grass and the coconut trees. Every part of this cycle is dependent upon each other, moving in a circle.

Here, the relationship between the environment and people is so exceptional that they sustain themselves just using the environment, existing in a circle involving a high understanding of ecology but a low economy. Their economy isn't strong compared to other cities, yet they live contentedly, sustaining themselves with just the local environment.

In contrast, wherever the economy receives the most attention, like New York City, nature isn't significant. The economy is thriving, unlike the environment. One cannot exist without the other. Reuniting our understandings of the two words, from our roots and the root with "Oikos" -the whole home, involves our home, our relationship with our home, and the economy of the people's government in the home. When we unite ecology and economy using natural materials but spreading them to gain a wealthier economy, our environment will prevail. Many problems such as pollution of the air and water will improve from our sensitivity to our surroundings. Using resources coming from the economy will help reconstruct our past damage to the environment.

As implied in the chapter "Thinking like a Mountain" in the Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold, we and the world need balance to overcome adversities. Like the mountain understands the mournful howl of a wolf, we need to understand our surroundings. With too large of an economy, but a disregard of the environment, the economy would be so overpowering, which will destroy our planet, and eventually, itself. The economy cannot exist without the environment. This relationship is portrayed in this chapter as a hunter and the animals. According to Leopold, if hunters kill too many animals, boosting themselves and their accounts at the bank, fewer animals will remain for them to hunt. The hunter will thereafter face red ink at the bank and will have destroyed themselves and their surroundings.

To prevent this from happening, we need a proper relationship with what we are trying to understand: the environment. We cannot emphasize the economy without ecology; one cannot exist without the other. This understanding will improve our surroundings by promoting our sensitivity to our surroundings, supporting the economy's balance and understanding of ecology, and numerous environmental problems will improve in the process. Only then we can come to a consensus with nature, completing the circle of the dependence of the ecology and economy of our planet.



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