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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**“WINTER HAS GOT NO KING”:  
AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GEORGE R. R.  
MARTIN’S *A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE***

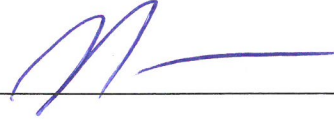
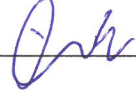
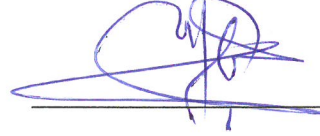
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Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Önder KÜÇÜKURAL	<u>kabul</u>	
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## ÖZ

### “KİŞİN HÜKÜMDARI YOKTUR”: GEORGE R. R. MARTIN’İN BUZ VE ATEŞİN ŞARKISI ROMANLARININ EKOELEŞTİREL OKUMASI

Yegin, Hatice Kübra

Medeniyet Araştırmaları Yüksek Lisans Programı

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Son yıllarda çevre sorunlarının ve bu sorunlardan kaynaklı iklim değişikliğinin parabolik bir hızla artması, sorunların sadece çözümüne değil kaynağına dair tartışmaları da beraberinde getirdi. Bu tartışmaların bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan çevreci eleştiri (ekoeleştiri), edebi metinlerde ekolojik sembollerin kullanımı ve doğa yazını aracılığıyla toplum psikolojisinde ve çevreye bakış açısında değişiklik yaratmayı amaçlar. Bu amaçla toplumsal dinamikleri anlamayı ve dönüştürmeyi hedefleyen ekoeleştirel metotlar geliştirilmektedir. İbn Haldun’un toplumsal dinamikleri anlamlandırmak için oluşturduğu, coğrafya, din ve asabiyet unsurlarına dayanan medeniyet metodolojisi, farklı medeniyetler ve toplumların çevresel perspektiflerini incelemek ve karşılaştırmak için gerekli sosyolojik verileri sunmaktadır. Bu tezde İbn Haldun’un medeniyet metodolojisi George R.R. Martin’in dünyaca ünlü fantastik kurgu eseri Buz ve Ateşin Şarkısına uygulanarak ve metne ekoeleştirel yakın okuma yapılarak, kurgusal bir dünya üzerinden medeniyetlerin çevresel perspektifleri arasındaki benzerlik ve karşıtlıklar incelenecektir. Böylece, medeniyetlerin coğrafya, din ve asabiyet gibi toplum yapısını etkileyen unsurlarının, bu toplumların doğaya bakış açısını etkileyip etkilemediği, etkiliyorsa ne yönde etkilediği gibi sorulara cevap bulunmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: çevreci eleştiri; ekoeleştiri; medeniyet; İbn Haldun; Buz ve Ateşin Şarkısı; George R.R. Martin.

## ABSTRACT

### “WINTER HAS GOT NO KING”: AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GEORGE R. R. MARTIN’S *A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE*

Yegin, Hatice Kübra

MA in Civilization Studies

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Over the last decades, an exponential increase in environmental issues and the climate change pertaining to it have generated discussion not only about how to tackle the problems but also about delving into the root cause of the matter. Having emerged as a result of these discussions, environmental criticism (ecocriticism) intends to create change in society’s environmental perspective through utilizing ecological symbols in literary narratives and nature writing. With a view to attaining this goal, methods that would help understand the society and transform it have been devised. Ibn Khaldun’s civilization methodology, which leans on pillars of geography, spirituality and asabiyah (group feeling), provide the necessary sociological data to analyze and juxtapose the environmental perspectives of different societies. In this dissertation, Ibn Khaldun’s civilization methodology is applied to George R.R. Martin’s world-famous fantasy fiction novel *A Song of Ice and Fire* whilst ecocritically close reading similarities and differences of environmental perspectives in civilizations via a fictional realm. In this way, this thesis will endeavor to answer questions such as whether pillars of civilization such as geography, religion and group feeling influence social structure and if such is the case, in what way.

Keywords: environmental criticism; ecocriticism; civilization; Ibn Khaldun; *A Song of Ice and Fire*; George R.R. Martin

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## INTRODUCTION

As climate change becomes a prevalent discussion in our world today, studies that analyze the sources, attributers and consequences of the climate change becomes more and more necessary every day. Climate change and in general environmental problems not only cause ecologic disturbance but it also deeply effects the human psyche. These effects are seen on TV, on social media, in music and most definitely in literature. Literature as one of the finest forms of human expression has a significant role in our daily life as it has in our history. In this regard utilizing literary forms and theories to understand what kind of social change environmental problems cause becomes important. Therefore in this thesis I will combine two methodologies; umran concept of Ibn Khaldun and environmental criticism to analyze George R.R. Martin's famous novel *A Song of Ice and Fire*. In this way I am hoping to find out how environmental symbolisms of animals, trees and nature are embedded in our cultural and civilizational make-up or it is altogether disregarded and replaced with other symbols. To be able to achieve that I will employ Ibn Khaldun's umran/civilization concept from his work *Muqaddimah* which bases civilization on to the pillars of geography, religion/spirituality and asabiyah/group feeling.<sup>1</sup> This categorization of civilization as a method gives me the necessary tools to examine civilizations ecocritically in *A Song of Ice and Fire* universe.

In chapter one I will lay out the primary subjects of Ibn Khaldun's umran/civilization concept to create a template to analyze civilizations. These primary subjects of geography, religion and asabiyah allows me to determine a method to analyze civilizations. Thus I employ Ibn Khaldun's umran concept as a methodology to understand the foundational pillars of a civilization. My analysis of civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire* depends upon the template that I create in the first chapter. This work does not analyze Ibn Khaldun's personal views on nature, animals and the environment or anthropocentric and biocentric views per se. But because of the strong emphasis he puts on geography and climate when I'm laying out the template for civilizations, it could seem that I'm analyzing Ibn Khaldun's own views. This is not so. Ibn Khaldun's years of observation of the ruling

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to this study, Fazlıođlu identifies these pillars in Ibn Khaldun's civilization methodology in a talk he gives. For more information see the reference in Works Cited.



class and the society combined with his experience in law granted him the ability to understand what a civilization is based on. My reading of the *Muqaddimah* combined with the broad literature on Ibn Khaldun and his works, allow me to identify what civilizations are based on. In chapter one I explain in detail how geography, religion and asabiyah functions as the building blocks of a civilization through Ibn Khaldun's narrative on human social organizations. These three core concepts form a template for the analysis of civilizations. The application of this template to *A Song of Ice and Fire* in chapter 3.1. yields five distinct civilizations.

I then move on in second chapter of this thesis to the environmental criticism schools. Each of these schools analyse the relationship between nature and human beings with a different ideological methodology. Ecofeminism focuses on gender discrimination while ecomarxism focuses on class discrimination. Environmentalism proves to be too shallow to explain the philosophical chasm that has grown between nature and human beings. Deep ecology comes closest to identify the problem of human vs. nature in a holistic manner but it also stands in a philosophical and abstract place. Analyzing the relationship of humans and nature on a grander scale through analyzing the relationship of civilizations with nature might prove to be a method both holistic and down to earth. The template of civilizations I modified from Ibn Khaldun's thought proves to be a civilization theory which can be employed to understand the relationship between human social organizations and nature. Thus I am suggesting a new ecocritical method based on this civilization theory as a contribution to the environmental criticism literature.

I have always been very fond of literature, particularly of sci-fi and fantasy fiction genres. My childhood was full of elves and hobbits, dwarves and orcs, wizards and dragons. However, the genre was looked down upon as a literary enterprise as much as it was disregarded in the academy. It was common to hear comments suggesting it was a waste of time and even worse it was "derided as escapist" (Vizzini 114). For a very long time this narrative encompassed the way literary critics and theorists approach the fantasy genre. It was regarded to be the toy of irresponsible man-child, an escape to uncharted lands but who could say William Blake at the epitome of romantic poetry didn't dream of an uncharted world when he reflected his criticism about the chartered Thames in his

famous poem London. Fortunately, post-modernism with all its troubles and intricacies introduced academia with a more flexible, diverse, multidisciplinary approach so that fantasy fiction could earn the long-deserved status as a respectable genre and critics have started to mingle with trolls and pixies (Nahornava 2).

There is a long line of fantasy fiction writing filled with giants like Tolkien, Le Guin, Carroll, Baum, Lewis and with *A Song of Ice and Fire* George R. R. Martin proved that he will be named in this list. Time magazine already dubbed him as “the American Tolkien” (Vizzini 114) and his books are not best sellers only in genre lists but also in general literature lists. The saga has been recently brought into the agenda of academia and there have been efforts to analyze and to write on certain topics such as gender, economy, history-writing and religion.

The reason for the success of the saga and the attention it received are the depth of characters, the ways they interact, the element of harsh reality that continuously reminds the reader that these books are not just superficial fairy tales. “Indeed, it is difficult to locate *A Song of Ice and Fire* within the fantasy tradition, because Martin’s novels have been celebrated for being precisely unlike most fantasy literature” (Johnston and Battis 2). O’Leary claims that “In reading Martin’s novels, we don’t escape from reality into some irrational fantasy; rather, we move from the mundane shell of reality into the inner core of its liveliness, to a world of invention and image” (8). In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the staple of fantasy fiction, magic, is inconsistent, scary, unknown and best eluded. Wife of King in the North, Dalla, reminds Jon Snow that “the short road is not the safest” and “sorcery is a sword without a hilt. There is no safe way to grasp it.” This is a close reminder to Ursula Le Guin’s “to light a candle is to cast a shadow” for the trained eye. The realms of fantasy fiction are full of magic, imaginary creatures and locations but the consequences of actions are still there. No one gets a get out of jail free card. Especially not in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. This is a saga of heavy consequences. A character might be the protagonist until they show a tiny bit of pride, naivety, stupidity, honesty, ignorance or mercy and this will definitely cost them their heads (or hands) as it did for Eddard Stark whom all readers thought was the lead character of the story.

There are other consequences of societal norms and life in general, one of which is the unreliable nature of seasons. In *A Song of Ice and Fire* universe, seasons are the ultimate unknown, there is not a certain cycle for winter or summer. A summer could last as long as a generation and the winter that follows will be as long as the summer did.<sup>2</sup> There are strong implications to the consequences of forgetting what winter is, letting your guard down and being naïve.<sup>3</sup> More importantly the change of seasons as an underlying theme becomes one of the most important themes that effects character and narrative development as the books unfold.

We are given a world where animal species are going extinct, famines eradicate city dwellers, climate is inconsistent and erratically changes, deforestation devastated the land and people living on it, food is scarce and rulers indifferent. “The Night’s Watch permitted the forest to come no closer than half a mile of the north face of the Wall. The thickets of ironwood and sentinel and oak that had once grown there had been harvested centuries ago, to create a broad swath of open ground through which no enemy could hope to pass unseen” (*AGoT* 213).<sup>4</sup> One frequently needs to fact-check: Are we reading fiction or is this the real-politic affairs of our very own world?

Martin-verse takes place in what could be a plausible medieval world, complete with the outrageous inequalities and prejudices that would have driven overlapping societies within the high middle ages. This commitment to realism is likely what makes the series attractive to readers (and viewers) who would normally eschew the fantasy genre, but Martin’s work is also replete with the uncanny and the marvelous (Johnston and Battis 3).

The consequences of global warming in our world are quite similar to ones that are told in *A Song of Ice and Fire* saga. We are facing a worldwide environmental catastrophe which has limits we cannot even estimate. Most climate scientists suggest the negative changes in atmosphere, ocean and land are the results of human activity. Only a marginal number of climate scientists suggest that the warming of atmosphere is due to natural occurrences and is not affected by human activity. Regardless, the amount of plastic in the

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<sup>2</sup> “When I was a boy, it was said that a long summer always meant a long winter to come. This summer has lasted nine years, Tyrion, and a tenth will soon be upon us. Think on that.” (*AGoT* 208)

<sup>3</sup> “When I was a boy,” Tyrion replied, “my wet nurse told me that one day, if men were good, the gods would give the world a summer without ending. Perhaps we’ve been better than we thought, and the Great Summer is finally at hand.” He grinned. (*AGoT* 208)

<sup>4</sup> *AGoT* stands for A Game of Thrones, go to Works Cited for full reference.

oceans and in the stomachs of animals are definitely an outcome of our actions. The way our society rejects global warming and consequences of our own actions is astonishingly similar to the way people in *A Song of Ice and Fire* react about the approaching natural phenomenon; winter and things that come with winter: Dark, bad, vile things that carry death with them. In an interview George R.R. Martin is asked if the unexpected seasonal changes in *A Song of Ice and Fire* draw a parallel with our very own climate change crisis: “There’s a certain parallel there,” Martin explained.

“The people in Westeros are fighting their individual battles over power and status and wealth. And those are so distracting them that they’re ignoring the threat of ‘winter is coming,’ which has the potential to destroy all of them and to destroy their world. And there is a great parallel there to, I think, what I see this planet doing here, where we’re fighting our own battles. We’re fighting over issues, important issues, mind you — foreign policy, domestic policy, civil rights, social responsibility, social justice. All of these things are important. But while we’re tearing ourselves apart over this and expending so much energy, there exists this threat of climate change, which, to my mind, is conclusively proved by most of the data and 99.9 percent of the scientific community. And it really has the potential to destroy our world. And we’re ignoring that while we worry about the next election and issues that people are concerned about, like jobs. Jobs are a very important issue, of course. All of these things are important issues. But none of them are important if, like, we’re dead and our cities are under the ocean. So really, climate change should be the number one priority for any politician who is capable of looking past the next election. But unfortunately, there are only a handful of those” (Chen).

The ignorance of kings and queens, maesters and septons alike in *A Song of Ice and Fire* show how little chance of survival they have in a world of consequences unless they change their approach to the matter as Lord Mormont of the Night’s watch claims. “These are old bones, Lannister, but they have never felt a chill like this. Tell the king what I say, I pray you. Winter is coming, and when the Long Night falls [...] gods help us all if we are not ready” (*AGoT* 208). But, what other approach there is to take?

Ecocriticism, as a fairly new field of study, was born out of this question. Its main focus is the study of ecologic themes and symbolisms of nature in literary texts. Ever since ecocriticism has emerged as a field of study in literary criticism, critics have been pondering on what is and should be the aim of ecocriticism. As a result of these discussions, there have been multiple aims for ecocriticism such as; restoring the bond that has been severed between human and nature, providing data about nature to make its

intrinsic value understood, giving a voice to the silenced nature. A number of academics found these aims out of the territory of literary criticism but renowned ecocritic and activist Scott Slovic claims that the mission of ecocriticism is exactly these. He opposes the miniscule role that has been given to literature in our lives and claims, “These days I think more than ever, that literature is more than an intellectual toy for the critic that is smart but “irresponsible” of the world’s problems. Literature as a field of study and in general is connected with people’s most basic values and behaviors”<sup>5</sup> (Özdağ 8). Literary theorist Lawrence Buell argues that positive effects of ecocriticism’s endeavors could be seen if only it surpasses the academic sphere (28).

This goes to show that, ecocriticism is not just a method of literary criticism, but it is also a new and different way of thinking, which could create change in society and human behavior towards nature. Turkish ecocritic Ufuk Özdağ believes that “ecocriticism, serves the literary texts to the reader with a different lens, helping spread the eco-consciousness horizontally and vertically in all segments of society through literature”<sup>6</sup>(Özdağ 13). To this end, ecocriticism utilizes hard sciences and social sciences together and aims to read the literary texts with a greener perspective. Ecological awareness comes from analysis of the literature in ecology and the ecology in the literature and close reading of the saga gives us ample data for ecological evaluation of the text. It hints at environmental norms of a society, gives insight about people’s interaction with its non-human environment and about the state of mind people have of the nature.

Although the field is being mapped each day, present literature on environmentalism provides us with several positions an ecocritic might take upon while analyzing a text. Some of these positions take economical inequalities as to the reasons of environmental degradation, some regard gender inequality the main reason. Some have an ecomodernist way of looking at the problem which means tackling the problem with clean and green technological advancements. Heideggerian eco-philosophy or Arne Naess’ deep ecology suggests taking the problem in hand as a philosophical problem. All these methods have fair points and ecocritics heavily employ these positions while attracting attention to the

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<sup>5</sup> The translation is my own.

<sup>6</sup> The translation is my own.

environmental crisis our world is going through. I, on the other hand, being a student of civilization studies have come to realize that these positions are isolating the problem as if we are dealing with it in the perfectly conditioned laboratory chamber. They do serve the purpose of attracting attention to global warming, alarming rise of toxicity levels, extinction of plant and animal species day by day, deforestation and so on but without a holistic approach to the problem. Ecocriticism literature and my approach to the matter will be taken into hand in detail in the second chapter.

Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory is drawn from his lengthy and essential work *Al-Muqaddimah*. This work was initially his introduction to *Kitab-ul Iber* which is the history of North African and Middle Eastern Regions. Ibn Khaldun saw it necessary to answer questions like; what a civilization is, what makes up a people/culture, where do civilizations flourish, what are the reasons to the beginning and ending of civilizations, what is the role of religion in all of these before writing this historical account. That attention to detail and methodology about sociological phenomena made the *Muqaddimah* a primary reference about civilization theories. Historians like Arnold Toynbee and Marshall Hodgson regard Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory still relevant.

The interesting and still relevant approach Ibn Khaldun provides, leans on three pillars. According to Ibn Khaldun the geography a group of people live in, religion these people believe and the group feeling (*asabiyah*) they have, provide a society with a distinct status of civilization. It is beneficial to state that when we talk of civilizations, we are not talking about The Human Civilization which is the collective accumulation of knowledge over thousands of years. What we are regarding as civilization here is distinct communities with differentiating social, geographical, religious identities. I will provide the literature around Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory in the first chapter. I'm suggesting a subsection of ecocritical reading based on civilization studies. Thus, I will be employing Ibn Khaldun's civilization (*umran*) theory as the template for civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, thus applying my sub-categorical ecocritical reading on the civilizations of Westeros in *A Song of Ice and Fire* realm.

Above mentioned definition of civilization resonates with George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* kingdoms. Geography has a major part in the way people are living and

behaving especially if we take into consideration of North and South contrasts when it comes to cataclysms that are threatening the realm. Whilst Northern people take these impending calamities very seriously Southern people has other agendas and motives of playing the game of thrones. Religion is another major source of differentiation between civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire* saga. We see four religions in Westeros which affect people's way of life and faith. But most importantly we see the group feeling of civilizations in the "House mottos" that resonate with the distinct nature of civilizations. These "House mottos" encompass not only the noblemen of the house but all people living under the rule of said houses. Ibn Khaldun mainly relates group feeling with lineage and ethnicity but with a lot of exceptions. These exceptions may be economic reasons like different modes of crafting, husbandry, agriculture or political reasons.

Both methodologies employed for this thesis, ecocriticism and civilization studies, are interdisciplinary methodologies which allows us to provide a new construct to the literature and to procure a deeper insight on the disciplinary spheres of literature, ecology, sociology and history.

In the first section of third chapter, I will classify the civilizations of Westeros in *A Song of Ice and Fire* according to Ibn Khaldun's civilizational template. This will demonstrate how each civilization has a different perspective about its non-human environment. Their behavior towards nature differ drastically. While some cherish nature and its inhabitants with a biocentric worldview, some are in complete ignorance of nature within their anthropocentric worldviews. Some are hostile, and some are pragmatic in their approach towards nature. These views are embedded in civilizational factors like geography, faith and certain group feelings. In the second section of third chapter I will present a close reading of ecological symbolisms and animalistic imageries such as; trees that watch the crimes of people, animals that run with human spirits, the undelivered oath for the protection of all the realm, the empty promise of a brighter day and the coat of arms of each House with a different animal on, which will enable for categorization of each civilization with its worldview towards its non-human environment. Thus, I aspire to raise the consciousness of the readers and hopefully steer them to examine environmental patterns of their own civilization in its core.

The main aim of my thesis is to reveal environmental perspectives of different civilizations based on their traits of geography, religion and asabiyah. Our civilizational makeup is the construct that conveys the way we relate to the nature and there are different ways of looking at it. However, to be frank, this realization is only beneficial if we also recognize the fact that survival of human and non-human alike depends upon creating a bond between our civilizations<sup>7</sup> towards the goals of a better and eco-conscious future. As Ned told Arya “When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives. Summer is the time for squabbles. In winter, we must protect one another, keep each other warm, share our strengths” (*AGoT* 222). Because, “Winter is coming” and the games of thrones, the international rivalries with its sudden bursts of destructive violence are beneath the fact that our world is facing the highest levels of carbon dioxide emissions in the last millennia (*IPCC Climate Change Report*) which clearly points to a climatic change caused by humans. Despite our differences we share a world and as the Northern wisdom of *A Song of Ice and Fire* reminds us “winter’s got no king” (*AGoT* 732).

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<sup>7</sup> See more on this in Recep Şentürk’s “Medeniyetler Sosyolojisi: Neden Çok Medeniyetli Bir Dünya Düzeni İçin Yeniden İbn Haldun?”, go to Works Cited for the full reference.



## CHAPTER 1: IBN KHALDUN'S CIVILIZATION (UMRAN) THEORY

In this chapter I will draw the lines of Ibn Khaldun's civilization methodology. His idea of umran leans on three very significant variables; asabiyah (group feeling), geography/climate and religion/spirituality. These variables when applied to civilizations create a template to analyze the environmental perspectives civilizations, which is the how I employ Ibn Khaldun's theory in this thesis. I am not trying to analyze Ibn Khaldun's personal point of view about the environment whether it is anthropocentric or biocentric is irrelevant to this thesis.

Ibn Khaldun was born in Tunis in the year 1332. He sat office as a statesman and jurist several times, he taught Islamic law, he was a scholar of history, historiography, philosophy, law and religion. But moreover, with his magnum opus the *Muqaddimah*, he came to be the father of sociology. His work is a systematic study of human society in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Arab world which places him as the first theoretician of modern sociology (Dhaouadi 10). As he is describing a medieval society it seems fitting to apply his theory to the mock-medieval realm of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. According to Irwin

The ideas of Ibn Khaldun have fed into other novels. The case of Isaac Asimov's Foundation trilogy has already been mentioned. In the Dune cycle of novels by the science fiction writer Frank Herbert (1920–86) the debt to Ibn Khaldun is implicit, but fairly obvious. *Dune* (1965), *Dune Messiah* (1969), and *Children of Dune* (1976) deal with medieval-style intergalactic politics. In an anticipation of *The Game of Thrones*, a lot of the plot swings around vendettas between noble households (200).

As a scholar of urbanism, before urbanism existed, in his first prefatory discussion to the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun argues that "Man is political by nature" (Khaldun 1:89). Which means that he needs a social organization; a cooperation for production, protection, and reproduction, thus a set of rules. The outcome of this need for gathering and working together is the city, "polis" as the philosophers put it. We see a similar urban structure in *A Song of Ice and Fire* cities, especially in King's Landing. According to Alatas Ibn Khaldun

saw nomadic civilization as naturally evolving towards sedentary civilization not in the sense that the one gives way to the other but rather in the sense that the organization of sedentary life, with its cities' relatively luxurious lifestyle and high

culture, is the goal of bedouin life. In other words, human societies tend to change from being pastoral nomadic to sedentary (1:22).

This does mean that Ibn Khaldun himself thinks the greatest form of civilization is the sedentary city life, however he also states that the fall of a civilization start at this point in which a civilization reaches the highest level of sedentary lifestyle.

Ibn Khaldun also argues that “The past resembles the future more than one drop of water another” (Khaldun 1:17), meaning histories of different ages and cultures hold ample resemblance to each other and studying them can lead to a clearer vision for the future. His method of historiography requires knowing or searching for the reasons to specific events in the history which differentiates him from his contemporaries (1:55-6).

He explains the main dynamics of civilizations in six chapters. In chapter one he gives information about the parts of the earth where civilization is found, which geographical conditions influence the founding of civilizations, the influence of climate upon human character, where food is in abundance and scarcity and how these affect the human body and character, human beings of supernatural perception and a discussion of inspiration and dream visions. These are the exact same topics George R.R. Martin builds and expands *A Song of Ice and Fire* on.

Chapter two of the *Muqaddimah* gives several basic and explanatory statements about tribes, Bedouin civilization and savage nations. Chapter three gives information on the details of urban civilizations like dynasties, the caliphate, government ranks. Chapter four tells about the cities and countries and the other forms of sedentary civilizations and Ibn Khaldun’s primary and secondary considerations of the conditions in sedentary civilizations. Chapter five is on the various aspects of making a living, such as profit and crafts. Chapter six concludes with various kinds of sciences and methods of instruction. It can be seen that Ibn Khaldun categorizes and considers the social network and life of civilizations in a multi-faceted way. He declares in his foreword that when he wrote the *Muqaddimah* he “followed an unusual method of arrangement and division into chapters. From the various possibilities, I chose a remarkable and original method. In the work, I commented on civilization, on urbanization, and on the essential characteristics of human

social organization, in a way that explains to the reader how and why things are as they are” (1:11).

For civilizations to form and flourish, I identified three core pillars in Ibn Khaldun’s theory that will be relevant to my discussion of *A Song of Ice and Fire*.<sup>8</sup> First of all, he puts strong emphasis on human nature, how and why humans interact with each other and with their environment. We see that the word he uses for the socialization of humans with each other based on different motivations is “asabiyah”, which is translated as “group feeling” by Franz Rosenthal in his 1958 translation. Secondly the importance of geography and the climate for civilization to form comes. He goes into detail about water sources, climatic zones which makes location and place, of high importance in his theory. He thinks of geographical effect not in unilateral but in bilateral terms. As geography and climate affects people, people affect and change the environment to build cities, to create means of production, which makes geography a pillar for his civilization theory. Thirdly, the spirituality aspect comes. He gives detailed information on supernatural knowledge acquirement. He argues that spiritual leadership in any tradition creates a vortex in history and enables civilizations to come forward which would not be born in the first place if not for this spiritual aspect. This does not mean that it is an absolute requirement to have a divinely chosen leader but more so a very human leader who encompasses the values of a society in a way that allows him to rule (1:93). Thus, when these pillars coincide civilization emerges.

In this chapter I will first explain where Ibn Khaldun places man and his spirituality in an anthropocentric world and then move on to the pillars of group feeling (asabiyah) and geography in detail with reference to the environmental perspectives the civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire* possess. I will use Ibn Khaldun’s views and position solely to describe the tools; religion, geography and asabiyah (group feeling) that I will use in my environmental analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> Prior to this study, Fazlıoğlu identifies these pillars in Ibn Khaldun’s civilization methodology in a talk he gives. For more information see the reference in Works Cited.

## 1.1. Place of Religion/Spirituality in Ibn Khaldun's Civilization

For a better understanding of spirituality, we must first deliberate where Ibn Khaldun positions mankind. What makes man different than the animal? It is its ability to think and reflect in causal relation. According to Ibn Khaldun

We notice that this world with all the created things in it has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless (Khaldun 1:194).

As I mentioned Ibn Khaldun's sense of evolution in section 1.2. above quotation gives a sense to his understanding of transformation and even mutation of life. In sixth prefatory discussion of chapter one, he explains this chain of transformation as follows,

One should then look at the world of creation. It started out from the minerals and progressed, in an ingenious, gradual manner, to plants and animals. The last stage of minerals is connected with the first stage of plants, such as herbs and seedless plants. The last stage of plants, such as palms and vines, is connected with the first stage of animals, such as snails and shellfish which have only the power of touch. The word "connection" with regard to these created things means that the last stage of each group is fully prepared to become the first stage of the next group.

The animal world then widens, its species become numerous, and, in a gradual process of creation, it finally leads to man, who is able to think and to reflect. The higher stage of man is reached from the world of the monkeys, in which both sagacity and perception are found, but which has not reached the stage of actual reflection and thinking. At this point we come to the first stage of man after (the world of monkeys). This is as far as our (physical) observation extends. (1:195)

It is clear that, humanity for Ibn Khaldun is not on an anatomical or atomic level, thus he does not regard human beings physically superior. The chasm that has been created between human and its non-human environment by "the great chain of beings" is usually referred as a bodily, physical difference whereas according to Ibn Khaldun and the Islamic Sufi teaching the difference is on an intellectual level which doesn't make human beings superior or put them in a dominating position. It regards human beings as the shepherd, as "the viceregent on the earth" (Quran 2:30). People who do not comprehend the world in a sensible way with their intellect are considered to be lower than animals. Ibn Khaldun does not draw red lines between species and leaves room for change, transformation and progress. These contrasting positions on the value of human beings, animals and nature in

general is relevant for the examining of different civilizational perspectives towards the environment in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. These will be analyzed in the third chapter.

In regard to above information, there must be something higher than the soul (corporeal life) that enables the soul to have abilities of perception and motion. Ibn Khaldun claims that essence of the soul should be pure perception and absolute intellection (1:195). Khaldun speaks of saints, soothsayers, yogis and Sufi dervishes who gain the ability to higher, supernatural knowledge and perception by constant concentration of the intellect. “For Ibn Khaldun, so far as Islamic culture and civilization is concerned, the role and function of Sufism is enormously significant. He sees and recognizes Sufism as one of the most important manifestations of Islamic culture. It is not only a social phenomenon or an everyday attitude to life, as it was in the early days of Islam, but also a philosophical and intellectual force which later gives rise to its own unique and exclusive literary tradition” (Zaid 9). There are levels to the intellect in the degree of ability to perceive things in the Sufi teachings. Some are able to go beyond two or three levels whereas some are not. Some might reach the highest degree of humanity (6<sup>th</sup> step) and even angelicity by way of strengthening their ability of concentrated thinking (Khaldun 1:203). Examples of supernatural knowledge acquirement in the way Ibn Khaldun explains it is seen in the skin changers and greenseer of *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

Thus, neither the level of thinking nor the level of humanity is a given. In a sense it can be said that we are not born human, but we become one. However, Ibn Khaldun tells us that some people, i.e. prophets, have an innate preparedness for higher state of perception (1:198). These people are more prepared than others to guide and rule. Likewise we see in *A Song of Ice and Fire* that, the characters who have dream visions and able to astral projection show a greater tendency and ability to rule people.

Thereafter, Ibn Khaldun’s study of the supernatural phenomena (dreams, prophecy, mysticism etc.) is not a deflection from his down to earth rational structure. Supernatural elements like dream visions, miracles, rituals, prayers, chanting and religious service are very important figures that are significant for the social life of a society (Dhaouadi 9). These elements of supernatural knowledge acquirement have a central role in *A Song of Ice and Fire* saga. Bran Stark in his comatose state attains knowledge about the upcoming

natural cataclysm, Daenerys Targaryen sees prophetic visions that point to future events like the rebirth of dragons. In the *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun points out the importance of these social elements of the supernatural in a sense scientifically and does not get carried on with religious feelings or superstition. In this regard the emphasis Ibn Khaldun places on spiritual leadership and role of divine belief in people's lives becomes a major factor which helps us identify the civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The formation of different civilizations based on their categorization of life and where they place man and religion in daily life will be explained in section 3.2.

### 1.2. Place of Group Feeling (Asabiyah) in Ibn Khaldun's Civilization

Asabiyah is without question the central concept of Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory. "as one of the most significant concepts in Ibn Khaldun's work and as the most important factor in the development of society, is derived from the Arabic root asab (to bind), i.e., to bind the individuals into a group" (Baali 43). Yet, it has proved difficult to translate and define. Western scholarship has not succeeded in finding its precise synonym. Group feeling, esprit de corps and solidarity are the three common terms used for the concept of asabiyah (Dhaouadi 12). What Ibn Khaldun specifically meant by the term asabiyah is difficult to decide. In spite of his great reliance upon this term, he never clearly defined it. Ibn Khaldun uses it to mean blood relationship in general, mutual partisanship and the common will of a tribe or group (Simon 72).

Asabiyah, then, is a social bond that can be used to measure the strength and stability of social groupings. This abstract concept conveys the idea of the bond that ensures the cohesion of a social group just as, analogously, the tendons ensure the cohesion of flesh to the bones. However, this bond, asabiyah, is not necessarily based on consanguinal relation. It is a social as well as psychological, physical, and political phenomenon, manifesting itself most clearly among, but not confined to, the nomadic or tribal people" (Baali 44).

In this dissertation, I will use Franz Rosenthal's translation of the word asabiyah as group feeling. This concept Ibn Khaldun weaves in his civilization theory is quite central for my analysis of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Thus, I will take the necessary measures to convey the intricate details of what group feeling is in Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory.

Ibn Khaldun's group feeling is similar to Durkheim's collective conscience. Ibn Khaldun claimed that in group feeling the individual's family, social status, race and even identity are normally "lost" to, or fused into, the group of which he is a member; "he thus becomes one of the others" (Khaldun 1:277). Such a group believes and acts with unitary nature. Individuality is only a function of the social construction. Even if a specific group has as many varied group feelings and belonging, still one group feeling is so strong to surpass all the others together, which brings about uniting and obedience. Without such a unity, discrepancy and trouble take place. Such a united group feeling produces the ability to preserve and defend oneself and when necessary gives the upper hand to a claim. People whose group feeling is sturdy do not usually fear oppression or aggression. In short, the ability to have this strength in group feeling makes the individual dedicate himself to his group and view the world through its perspective (Baali 44-5).

Then, it would be useful to give details to the specifics of Ibn Khaldun's group feeling and how it serves as a major pillar for the formation of civilization.

- Ibn Khaldun tells about group feeling being a prominent feature of nomadic people however sedentary people has group feeling as well. According to Ibn Khaldun with time the bond between people becomes looser in the city. The reason to the transitory humor of civilization from nomadic society to urban society and from the latter to the former is mainly because of the bonds of group feeling getting stronger or looser (Khaldun 1:276).
- Group feeling can be related to but not necessarily based on kinship. Humans are naturally inclined to help their relatives and relatives are important for the group feeling, not because of shared genetics but because they make the social sphere around the individual (1:294).
- Group feeling is universal. It is not a trait of Arab peoples only (1:295).
- It is related to the economic structure of society. Economic modes and crafts of nomadic and sedentary civilization are quite different which causes different levels of group feeling. In short, people who have more money have a looser bond with the community whereas when money is tight people stick together closely.

- There is a bilateral relationship between the group feeling and religion. Religion as a social institution and as a means of control strengthens group feeling. “Durkheim believed that religion provides a social solidarity, a cohesion, a "oneness"; it unites members of society together, hence maintaining the society itself” (Baali 46). However this does not mean group feeling depends solely on religion. Ibn Khaldun shows with examples that group feeling can exist and persist without religious unity (Khaldun 1:324-7).
- Group feeling depends highly upon political situation of a civilization. A state cannot be established without strong group feeling and if and when the group feeling is lost in a state great disintegration can be observed (Khaldun 2:301). This means leaders and rulers of a state are as strong as the group feeling of people in that society.

The aspects of group feeling in relation to polity may be summarized as follows:

Leadership exists only through superiority, and superiority exists only through group feeling. The citizen needs his group's (government's) help and conservation, because he shares the same group feeling of the group. Weapons may strengthen a group, but something else is also needed for defense against aggression, a strong sense of solidarity and loyalty to the group. Group feeling does not prevent injustice and aggression as these are parts of human nature. Group feeling is much more than just a social power. “Strong group feeling also indicates good character and high qualifications of relationship, such as the forgiveness of error, tolerance toward the weak, attentiveness to the complaints of supplicants, fulfillment of the duties of the religious law and divine worship in all details, and avoidance of fraud, cunning, and deceit” (Baali 47). A good leader knows about the state of group feeling and its strength or weakness in the society, respects the positions of the citizens. This brings mutual respect between the leader and the followers. The group feeling of society is closely related with the lifespan of the state. Thus, establishment of a civilization is the ultimate goal of group feeling. We cannot speak of group feeling where there is no will to establish a civilization or to preserve one.

For Ibn Khaldun a civilization’s foundation is the end result of strong group feeling and urbanism is the aim of nomadic people. As it is stated in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Ibn



Khaldun also claims that once people gain the bare minimum of necessities for their livelihood they start asking and looking for luxuries. City life comes with its comforts and meekness of sedentary culture. Because of this order in needs, to establish a state, urbanism is a must and urbanism always comes with sedentary culture.

In *A Song of Ice and Fire* I will discuss group feelings of two main worldviews in four different civilizations, how the group feeling affects them to go against their leader, when civilizations lose mutual trust and respect between the leader and the people and how these different group feelings characterize different civilizations.

In this light it is important to never forget that according to Ibn Khaldun, the downfall of every civilization comes at its greatest moment which creates a circular motion of civilizations succeeding each other while at the same time existing simultaneously at different locations.

### 1.3. Place of Geography in Ibn Khaldun's Civilization

Azadarmaki states that “the environmental view was a theme of much discussion in social thought during Ibn Khaldun's time. This view originated with the Greeks, but was further developed by some Muslim scholars who established a new intellectual stream of thought. They looked at geographical changes over time and their impact on humanity, society, and history” (142). In the *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun puts great emphasis on environmental conditions namely climate and geography for civilizations to emerge. It is also a central theme of my environmental analysis of civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

It is known that biogeographical features of the environment are the most important driving force for life to come about. First hominids (ancestors of humans) emerged because their environment changed from forests to savannah and grasslands in search of food. As a result, this line of hominids gradually attained larger brains, mental dexterity and bipedalism, thus being able to use tools (Cox and Moore 298). Climatic changes like glaciation and warming had tremendous consequences on the biosphere, on plant and animal species as it also caused change in geographical features namely forming of rivers,

plateaus and coastline. Thus, emergence of human civilizations is closely related to these factors.

Ibn Khaldun takes the matter into consideration in great detail. In chapter one, second prefatory discussion of the *Muqaddimah*, he starts by giving an account of the parts of the known world. He bases his geographical information on Ptolemy's *Geography* and al-Idrisi's *Book of Roger*. According to Ibn Khaldun;

“the earth floats upon the elemental water like a grape. God's plan for civilization and for the elemental generation of life resulted in making part of (the earth) free of water. The part that is free of water is said to constitute one-half the surface of the earth. The cultivated part is one-fourth of it. The rest is uncultivated. According to another opinion, the cultivated part is only one-sixth of it. The empty areas of the part which is free of water lie to the south and to the north. The cultivated area in between forms a continuum that stretches from west to east. There is no empty area between the cultivated part and the (Surrounding) Sea in these two directions” (1:110).

The information that the world has a circular shape and the land is surrounded by the ocean, the astronomical details of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, the seas, lakes and rivers, mountains and plains and their accuracy are stunning for the modern reader.

The land is divided into 7 climatic zones paralleling the equator. Each zone is divided into 10 sections regarding their differences. The climatic zones start from the equator and go up to the northern pole.

“The first zone runs along the equator, north of it. South of it, there is only the civilization to which reference was made by Ptolemy. Beyond that are waste regions and sandy deserts, up to the circle of water which is called the Surrounding Sea. To the north, the first zone is followed, successively, by the second through the seventh zones. (The seventh zone) constitutes the northern limit of civilization. Beyond it are only empty and waste regions, down to the Surrounding Sea as (in the south). However, the empty regions in the south are much larger than those in the north.” (1:111)

Ibn Khaldun deems third, fourth and fifth zones to be the most moderate and suitable for civilization to flourish because they are neither too cold nor too hot. He indicates that there is life in the other four zones as well but fertile lands, cities that are largely populated, commercial activities take place significantly in these three zones.

“We have explained that the cultivated region of that part of the earth which is not covered by water has its centre toward the north, because of the excessive heat in

the south and the excessive cold in the north. The north and the south represent opposite extremes of cold and heat. It necessarily follows that there must be a gradual decrease from the extremes toward the centre, which, thus, is moderate. The fourth zone is the most temperate cultivated region. The bordering third and fifth zones are rather close to being temperate. The sixth and second zones which are adjacent to them are far from temperate, and the first and seventh zones still less so. Therefore, the sciences, the crafts, the buildings, the clothing, the foodstuffs, the fruits, even the animals, and everything that comes into being in the three middle zones are distinguished by their temperate (well-proportioned character)” (1:167).

He later on moves on to tell about why these zones are temperate and by temperate what he means, in the third prefatory discussion. He then explains the character of different nations living in different zones and the relation between the climate and the people of that place.

“The human inhabitants of these zones are more temperate(well-proportioned) in their bodies, colour, character qualities, and (general)conditions. They are found to be extremely moderate in their dwellings, clothing, foodstuffs, and crafts. They use houses that are well constructed of stone and embellished by craftsmanship. They rival each other in production of the very best tools and implements. Among them, one finds the natural minerals, such as gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, and tin. In their business dealings they use the two precious metals (gold and silver). They avoid intemperance quite generally in all their conditions. Such are the inhabitants of the Maghrib, of Syria, the two 'Iraqs, Western India (as-Sind), and China, as well as of Spain; also, the European Christians nearby, the Galicians and all those who live together with these peoples or near them in the three temperate zones. The 'Iraq and Syria are directly in the middle and therefore are the most temperate of all these countries” (1:168).

It can be observed Ibn Khaldun argues that, the character and humor of people living in temperate climatic zones is closer to temperate humor whereas people who live in harsh environmental conditions such as cold weather and high terrain turn out to be harsher, sad and gloomy in character as well. People living in first and second climatic zones, which are very hot, turns out to be “characterized by levity, excitability and great emotionalism” (1:175) because compared to the people living in farther north, their spirit is hotter and more expanded. His deduction of environmental effect on the character of people hence on nations and civilizations is essential for my analysis of *A Song of Ice and Fire* in Chapter 3.

He also extends on to explain the racial differences such as black/white skin, blond/dark hair not only with ancestral descent but also with adaptation to climate and evolution.<sup>9</sup>

“The genealogists were led into this error by their belief that the only reason for differences between nations is in their descent. This is not so. Distinctions between races or nations are in some cases due to a different descent, as in the case of the Arabs, the Israelites, and the Persians. In other cases, they are caused by geographical location and (physical) marks, as in the case of the Zanj (Negroes), the Abyssinians, the Slavs, and the black (Sudanese) Negroes.<sup>10</sup> Again, in other cases, they are caused by custom and distinguishing characteristics, as well as by descent, as in the case of the Arabs. Or, they may be caused by anything else among the conditions, qualities, and features peculiar to the different nations” (1:173).

He argues, inferring that the common physical traits of inhabitants of a specific geographical location is just about their descent, would be disregarding the true nature of beings and geographical facts. It also is “disregard of the fact that the physical circumstances and environment are subject to changes that affect later generations; they do not necessarily remain unchanged” (1:173).

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<sup>9</sup> I’m fully aware that I am using this term anachronistically, however, section 1.1. shows the details of Khaldun’s thought on evolution of human beings.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Khaldun uses the word Zanj (Negro) for identifying the Africans but he also gives an out of his time, critical, explanation to the white hierarchy. “The inhabitants of the north are not called by their color, because the people who established the conventional meanings of words were themselves white. Thus, whiteness was something usual and common (to them), and they did not see anything sufficiently remarkable in it to cause them to use it as a specific term.” (1:172)

## CHAPTER 2: ECOCRITICISM AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

In this chapter, firstly I will try to define ecocriticism, its motivations and aims. It is a fairly new interdisciplinary approach, therefore I may not be able to cover all grounds, since the literature is growing each day. I will mainly focus on Greg Garrard's classification of ecocriticism positions in my literature review. By doing this I will try to show the transformation ecocriticism went through and what positions there are, what they provide and lack in terms of environmental criticism. Lastly, I will suggest a new method in ecocriticism based on Ibn Khaldun's civilization methodology which might be named Khaldunian Ecosociology. I will try to show why this new method is needed in ecocriticism by laying out ecocritical positions with some detail and applying it on George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. I believe that my suggestions based on Ibn Khaldun's methodology will contribute to the ecocriticism literature and cover ground that has not been covered by existing positions already.

### 2.1. What is Ecocriticism?

Ecocriticism is a critical approach to any text with consciousness for environmental, natural and ecological themes and to the ways in which these themes are used or misrepresented. Ecocriticism merges environmental sciences with humanities and puts the scientific data in use for a better understanding of the relation between humans and their environment; may it be a forest, a city or a desert. Ecocriticism is the study of the parallelism between literature and ecology, in way of taking narrative from an environmentally conscious perspective it discusses the implications and claims of a text.

Ecocriticism roots in Joseph Meeker's concept of "literary ecology" which is the study of ecological and biological themes in literary texts, in his 1972 book *Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology*. The term ecocriticism itself is used for the first time in William Rueckert's 1978 article "Literature and Ecology". According to Rueckert, ecocriticism is "the application of ecological principles to literature" (107). He sees ecology as the most important field of study for our perspective regarding the earth and also emphasizes the effect literature has on people. Thus, he lays weight on a new field of study which brings these two principles together. First definition of ecocriticism which is still widely used was made by Cheryll Glotfelty, a pioneer in the study of criticism. In the

introduction chapter to *the Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks of Literary Ecology* (1996) she edited with Harold Fromm, she defined ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). As it could be understood from Glotfelty and Rueckert’s statements, ecocriticism is the interdisciplinary field of study of the relation between literature and the environment.

Ecocriticism came to be considered a serious academic discipline in literary studies after Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was founded in Reno, Nevada, USA in 1992. In 1993 Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE) journal started to be published which till this day is considered to be the official journal of ecocriticism. Later on, academic spheres in English and American literature departments started to consider ecocriticism as a literary criticism method and many an academic started working in this field. The importance of ecology within literary, cultural, sociological and political studies and its relationship with environmental consciousness is understood better every day in the academic world.

First Turkish academic to be an ASLE member, Serpil Oppermann defines ecocriticism as:

“the only discipline in literary theory and criticism, which interprets literary and cultural texts with an environmentalist perspective, studies the relationships between literature and environment, ecology and culture. Ecocriticism studies the cultural and social effects of imbalances in ecology in the socio-cultural context. Representations of relationship between the organic and inorganic substances and their relations with their environment in literary texts, the approach to these multitude of relations in literature, language’s role in these literary and cultural narratives, modes and methods of expression are ecocriticism’s primary fields of interest”<sup>11</sup> (9).

## 2.2. Ecocriticism Literature

There is an ever-growing literature in ecocriticism and navigating through this fairly new field of study is difficult because its methodology is being shaped by ecocritics day by day. While Glotfelty was editing *The Ecocriticism Reader* and attempting to create a methodology and scheme of branding for the mass of articles she had in the book, Wallace Stegner (novelist, historian, literary critic) suggested she leaves the topic “large and loose

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<sup>11</sup> The translation is my own.

and suggestive and open, simply literature and the environment and all the ways they interact and have interacted, without trying to codify and systematize.” Glotfelty agrees on features of suggestiveness and openness but nonetheless she employs Elaine Showalter’s model defining the consecutive stages of feminism to describe the evolution of ecocriticism in three stages.

### 2.2.1. First Wave Ecocriticism

The first stage of ecocriticism concentrates on how nature and environment are portrayed in canonical literature. This effort in environmental literary criticism study shows various representations of nature in literature. The identification of certain stereotypes of nature in literature -Arcadia, Eden, miasmal swamp, virgin land, savage wilderness- and realization of absences where nature is not represented immensely serves for consciousness raising. Nature itself is not the sole focal point of ecocriticism. Other themes such as the frontier, cities, geographical regions, rivers, deserts, mountains, animals, first nations, technology, garbage and the body are studied in reference to ecology and literature as well.

### 2.2.2. Second Wave Ecocriticism

Second stage of ecocriticism serves the important function of raising consciousness as it takes into consideration so far neglected genre of nature writing which goes back to 1789’s England and Gilbert White’s nature-oriented nonfiction text *A Natural History of Selbourne*. This tradition of nature writings includes Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, John Burroughs’ *Wake Robin*, essays of wilderness preservationist John Muir, Mary Hunter Austin’s *The Land of Little Rain*, Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, Edward Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire*, Annie Dillard’s *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Barry Lopez’s *Arctic Dreams*, Terry Tempest Williams’ *Coyote’s Canyon* and many others. Nature writings bring together “a rich past, a vibrant present and a promising future” (Glotfelty xxiii) and allows ecocritics to feed off of a buoyant source of feminist, psychoanalytic, new critical, Bakhtinian and deconstructive literary theories in the aims of understating and propagating this body of literature. In an era, vertical urbanization continues to accelerate and the bonds between man and nature is severed

more than ever, nature writings play a vital role in reminding us the inherent value and beauty of the natural world.

Another effort of second wave ecocriticism is to identify notable ecologic themes in works of fiction and poetry manifesting ecological awareness. Figures like Robinson Jeffers, Willa Cather, W.S. Merwin, Wallace Stegner, Adrienne Rich, Mary Oliver, Gary Snyder, Ursula Le Guin and Alice Walker have attracted much interest in this regard. Ecocritics of this phase has also studied the environmental periphery of a writer's life to understand the living conditions and place which critics suggest might have given inspiration to the works of above-mentioned writers.

### 2.2.3. Third Wave Ecocriticism

Third stage of ecocriticism corresponds to a theoretical phase, which studies the complex relationship of man and its human and nonhuman surroundings. The binary oppositions and dualism of anthropocentric worldviews which place man higher than others is taken into question. Especially the Eurocentric dualisms like divide of meaning and matter, mind and body, self and the other, man and woman, human and nature has been major themes taken into consideration with scrutiny. The ontological level of said oppositions has been the field of study for ecophilosophy, ecotheology, ecofeminism and deep ecology. This theoretical framing of the chasm between man and nature is seminal for a better understanding of history, politics, economy, religion and sociological dynamics.

### 2.3. Why Ecocriticism? A Brief History of Major Environmentalist Positions

The discovery of steam engine power followed by the effects of the industrial revolution in the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century was also the beginning of speedy exhaustion of raw materials and resources of the earth. Geographical expeditions of 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe took a new turn with this need for more resources and European countries started colonizing African and Asian regions as well. Resources that come as cheap as free from these countries helped create a surplus of production and accumulation of goods which fueled the cornucopian position towards environment.<sup>12</sup> The accumulation of goods meant accumulation of by-products we later on named as pollution. As Greg Garrard puts it

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<sup>12</sup> I will give more information on this in section 2.3. where I lay out positions about the environment.



“pollution is an ecological problem because it does not name a substance or class of substances, but rather represents an implicit normative claim that too much of something is present in the environment, usually in the wrong place” (6). This gives the wider sense to pollution, being not only a problem in ecology but a socially constructed ecological problem. As a problem in ecology, these by-products that are not needed, become garbage and wrong storage of garbage, the mismanagement in waste management system in general, air pollution caused by industries using fossil fuel, waste water coming from factories and urban outlets that goes into the sea and the ocean without any process of decontamination became a major hazard to human and non-human life in general. The devastating result of the process of industrialization can be summed up as; mass deforestation, an increase of arid land, extinction of animal species, disturbance to all ecosystems of water, land and air. On a social level the ecological problem of pollution caused a discourse of fear, intimidation, survival and frustration. Reflections of this anxiety for ecological problems find voice on a cultural level in literature, arts and entertainment. Social acceptance of the reality of an ecological problem does not derive from the actual problem in ecology but its cultural reflections on people.

As a result of rapid industrialization and consumption habits of capitalistic modes of production, we are left with environmental problems that cannot be dealt with temporary fixes. The melting of the ice caps in the North Pole caused ocean levels to rise which meant more catastrophic and frequent tsunamis and typhoons for the Southeast Asian coast. The increase in humankind’s development in the last three centuries came to mean the damage has been done to earth, to animals, to natural life and to human lives has increased simultaneously. In 1952 toxic smog in London caused 4000 people to die in 3 days and left thousands with and prone to several illnesses. This event caused a public outcry and industries of developed countries moved to developing third world countries where both labor force and life was and is cheaper. On this note, it must be said that the damage that has been done to earth is a damage done to peoples of less fortunate parts of the world. Deforestation, desertification, pollution of water resources, decreasing biodiversity, climate change, soil erosion, toxic waste accumulation, acid rains and environmental disasters of this sort blighted not only the non-human environment but also humans that aren’t able to protect themselves from these.

As the grip of environmental crisis gets tighter, elites of developed countries live with impunity. John Gladney of DeLillo's 1986 novel *White Noise* is an English literature professor who watches the natural disasters affecting people on TV and says "These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and manmade disasters. People in low-lying areas get the floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornados. I'm a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don't happen in places like Blacksmith" (114). but as the novel progress we see him being a victim of an airborne toxic event. This goes to show differences of class, culture and status doesn't immunize anyone from environmental disasters and everyone should pitch in the effort to better understand and solve the ecological problem. This brings us to the environmentalist movements of 20<sup>th</sup> century and some major positions which influenced and might continue to influence ecocritical approaches with specific literary and cultural closeness and distance.

### 2.3.1. Cornucopia

Despite ample evidence that proves the role of humankind's industrial and technologic developments in environmental pollution, cornucopian position suggests that the resources of earth are abundant and capitalist economies will create new technological solutions to environmental problems. This argument arises against the environmentalist movements suggesting minimization of consumption. The key positive claim of cornucopian position is that the health and welfare of humans has been increased immensely in the last three centuries which suggests whatever the outcome, technological advancements helped significantly decrease child and mother mortality, outbreaks of deathly diseases while adding decades to life expectancy. It is clear that this position is not environmentalist at all and in some cases, it is known to be financially supported by companies and lobbies that are involved in anti-environmentalist industries. Advocates of this position are in general free-market economists and global warming denying scientists. The argument that capitalist market will find solutions to arising problems for reasons of continuity is not bulletproof. In fact, whatever green technological advancements has been achieved in the last five decades was a result of environmentalist efforts and legal bodies

putting pressure on industries and not a result of market requirements. For the cornucopian approach, nature is valuable as long as it is useful for human endeavors.

### 2.3.2. Environmentalism

The main body of environmentalists are people who care for wildlife preservation, support laws that regulate industrial activities, address global warming and pollution, subscribe to mainstream environmental organizations, value rural ways of life, camping, hiking etc. For environmentalists, solutions to environmental problems should derive from green technologies and not from radical social and lifestyle change. In terms of theoretical orientation, environmentalists still regard Eurocentric values of humanism, liberal democracy, human rights, Christianity and notions of historical and social progress as valuable. This goes to show environmentalist way of life and belief is still very anthropocentric. Most of the people in developed countries can be considered under the category of environmentalists. Martin Lewis' *Green Delusions* combines a vigorous attack on radical environmentalism with a reformist program that emphasizes the role of science, technology and government policy change. Against the 'Arcadian' approach of radicals advocating de-urbanization, use of non-synthetic products and low technology solutions, Lewis's 'Promethean' environmentalism promotes the 'decoupling' of human economy and natural ecology as far as possible, in order to protect nature. He points out that cities are not only centers of cultural vitality, but less environmentally costly than suburban sprawl or exurban flight and argues that capitalism guided by educated voters and consumers can provide technological solutions to many problems of resources and pollution. (Garrard 19-20)

Environmentalist endeavors helped restore the ozone layer however, as global warming does not hit the break, it is safe to say this position is shy of offering a solution to the problem.

### 2.3.3. Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is one of the four radical environmentalist movements and it has been the most influential one amongst ecocritics. Deep ecology suggests a shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism and biocentrism. It argues that the emphasis that has

been placed on mankind is the main cause of the distorted chain of values. Arne Naess who is the founder of deep ecology movement lists key points of deep ecology platform in George Sessions's 1995 anthology *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. In a nutshell it suggests an intrinsic value to the well-being and flourishing of non-human and human life alike. This value is independent of the usefulness of non-human life to human needs. For the flourishing of non-human life on earth a smaller population of humans is necessary. Because of the statement for a need of diminishing in human population deep ecology has been accused to be misanthropic. Deep ecology separates itself from shallow ecological approaches on the basis that these shallow approach bases the value of nature on human needs for natural resources whereas deep ecology bases the value on nature's intrinsic, innate value of Being. Furthermore, ignoring our dependence to outside factors, non-human and human, establishes a master-slave role that contributes "to the alienation of man from himself" (Naess 152).

"Deep ecologists often reaffirm the conventional priorities they criticize in environmentalists, not least because they risk the charge of misanthropy if they do not. Moreover, it seems likely that any given concerned individual will probably have both eco- and anthropocentric attitudes at different times, under different conditions. At the same time, it is important to distinguish both perspectives from the animal rights philosophy that argues for the extension of the moral consideration accorded humans to certain higher mammals" (Garrard 22).

Deep ecology derives from Eastern traditions and religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Franciscan Order of St. Francis de Assisi and from modern reconstructions of Native American, shamanistic, animalistic beliefs. Likewise, George R.R. Martin claims he was inspired by Celtic lore on druids when he was writing on children of the forest in *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

#### 2.3.4. Ecofeminism

For deep ecology the cause of human/nature dualism is anthropocentric whereas for ecofeminism man/woman dualism is androcentric. While the former is placing human superior to nature, the latter places man superior to woman. Ecofeminists suggest that patterns of anthropocentrism and androcentrism overlap in a way that places nature and as the wild, the uncanny, the emotional, the Other in many cultural forms and traditions in the history. However, embracing the female nature means to embrace the reproductive

capacity of the female biology which places biological womanhood higher than the socially constructed gender roles. Radical ecofeminists have been criticized because of this argumentation by ecofeminists from a sociological perspective.

A more philosophical school of ecofeminism suggests that a comprehensive critique of gender roles includes both femininity and masculinity with its relation to nature and does not embrace just one. The problem is not distinguishing man from woman or nature from human. It is the opposition, the alleged superiority and dominion of one over the other. We see the effects of cartesian duality of mind and body and the problem in their hyperseparation. Hyperseparation is a term Val Plumwood coined in her *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* for the radical exclusion of the other. “Because the other is to be treated as not merely different but inferior, part of a lower, different order of being, differentiation from it demands not merely distinctness but radical exclusion, not merely separation but hyperseparation. Radical exclusion is a key indicator of dualism” (49).

The radical difference between human and animal in terms of the ability to reason and to think which was suggested by Descartes lies at the heart of the ecological and patriarchal problem.<sup>13</sup> Separating man and woman with thick red lines create an opposition of hierarchy which also appears in the separation of human and animal. Accepting that humans are a form of animal and rescuing “reason” from androcentric philosophy can bring forth acknowledgement and respect for “the other”. This position rejects both cornucopian dualism of privileging rational economic subject above all else and simplistic ecofeminist and deep ecological monism in which human species become submerged into an apolitical ecosphere. Ecofeminism with its insight to cultural and biological diversity emphasizes environmental justice to a far greater degree than deep ecology (Garrard 26). Ecofeminists such as Gaard, Murphy, Warren and Plumwood bring sociological and philosophical perspectives into ecofeminism which give the position a stronger, more powerful edge. This position due to its critical point of view regarding globalization, free trade and economic development holds a political point of view while ethically it is closer to spiritually oriented deep ecology (27).

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<sup>13</sup> George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* points to the unity of human and animal minds through the wolf-human relations of wargs and dragon-human relations.

### 2.3.5. Social Ecology and Eco-Marxism

The positions discussed here suggest that environmental problems are not caused by just anthropocentric attitudes. The inequality, domination, oppression and exploitation of humans by other humans creates a situation which is very similar with the environmental problem. Deep ecologists suggest a system where every being has the same value in an ethical accord which eco-Marxists find utterly individualistic and mystic and they argue it causes a retreat to an apolitical life. Eco-Marxists and social ecologists find the monism of deep ecology to be factitious, on the basis that even if humans are part of nature, most of their acts are still unnatural. This brings about the dualism that Marxists have been trying to defeat. The only way to defeat this dualism of human versus nature is through seeing the relationship as a transformative and ever-growing one.

Social ecology and Eco-Marxism share the same belief with cornucopian economists that the ecological “limits” of pollution and earth resources is an exaggeration of the situation. For social ecology and Eco-Marxism, scarcity is not caused by the ecological limits but by the capitalist modes of production where perpetual growth is the key. A change in the political structure of the society would help with meeting the real needs while curtailing the accumulation of wealth in certain classes, thus scarcity would not be an issue. Although this theory makes sense in terms of mineral sources and what not, pollution and problems of diminishing biodiversity and fresh aquifers would not be solved with a change in the political system.

Their arguments as to the inseparability of environmental problems with social problems gave strength to environmental justice movements. While Eco-Marxists suggest a centralized system with an economy based on need rather than greed, social ecologists, as their guru Murray Bookchin does, advocate for a decentralized society, running on non-hierarchical bonds between the individuals of an anarchistic community. While Eco-Marxists see the class conflict as the main problem, for the social ecologist hierarchy and power relations are in the core of the problem. Despite their differences they are on the same page about the economic and political change for a solution to the environmental problem.

### 2.3.6. Heideggerian Ecophilosophy

Martin Heidegger's philosophy has inspired many ecocritics as his critiques of the industrial modernity is a "poetic awe before the Earth's being, with a savage deconstruction of the death-denying project of world mastery that we are taught to call progress" (Garrard 30).

Heidegger suggests that "A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world, but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked. The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings" (Heidegger 170). What he meant is a Being may or may not be disclosed and it is up to humans to let things emerge rather than obliging them into "meanings and identities that suit their own instrumental values" (Garrard 31). Properly letting beings disclose themselves is only possible through poetry, Heidegger is dismissive of everyday chatter because it discloses both meaning and instrumental value of beings. In this sense poetic language is the house of the Being. Heidegger's philosophy of beings is crucial on an existential level. As it is in deep ecology, value of beings cannot be disclosed by their usefulness or instrumental capabilities to us, but it stands for itself as its own poetic being. Through poetry "the essence of beings, their autonomy and resistance to our purposes is disclosed" (31), and we learn that "Man is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of Being" (Heidegger 245).

These summarize the positions in contemporary environmental discussions. I will explain why a subfield of ecocriticism which is based on civilization studies would bring a new perspective and provide a much-needed addition to the ecocritical literature.

### 2.4. A New Ecocritical Approach Based on Civilization Studies

As it could be seen in section 2.3. the positions in contemporary ecocritical literature and environmental discussions focuses on either on a monism of all beings or dualism of human against nature. Some of these positions pin the environmental injustice in gender injustice, some pin it in class conflict. Some of the positions still regard nature on merit of its usefulness to human activities. These positions hold opinions on economic, politic, spiritual, religious basis. However, none of them offer a systematic value set which

corresponds to the approach to the environment and position of a society towards its human and non-human environment.

Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory as it has been explained in Chapter 1 in depth is a system, in which political belonging and opinion as in the concept of *asabiyah*, religious and spiritual beliefs on human's place amongst beings and effects of ecological forms and geography are taken into consideration together. In this regard Ibn "Khaldunian Ecosociology" might be a new position in ecocritical discussions in which societies are classified on different sociological specifics. Every civilization holds a different worldview according to its political, economic, religious, philosophical shape that has been established differently due to varied dynamics. Ultimately every civilization holds a unique position towards and against nature. Studying these civilizational worldviews of environment allows us to compare and contrast societies and find civilizational patterns that could work in tackling the environmental problem.

In this dissertation I will mostly employ Opperman's definition of ecocriticism in the sense that ecological disturbances cause socio-cultural change. I'm also employing Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory where sociological groupings and group feelings decide what kind of a group it is. In *A Song of Ice and Fire* a particular civilization's attitude towards nature may it be positive, negative or neutral is one of the major defining characteristics of that social group, based on their belief systems, geographical location and most importantly the foundations of the group feeling in said society. I will make an ecocritical reading of *A Song of Ice and Fire* in Chapter 3, based on different civilizations and their respective worldviews.



## CHAPTER 3: ECOCRITICAL READING OF *A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE* WITHIN IBN KHALDUN'S CIVILIZATION THEORY

### 3.1. *A Song of Ice and Fire* in Fantasy Fiction Genre

Fantasy-fiction is the realm in which people are able to think beyond the scientific and natural boundaries of reality. It creates an imagined reality set by the rules of what is “known” to humans and inquire into what kind of “unknown” the imagination of the human being can bring into this world. This imagined reality, without doubt, reflects the passions, dispositions and orientations of human nature and like a mirror reflects us as our “imagined self”. The real world with its social, political, gendered construction is engrained in the novel as overtly as the society’s pressure and social construction projected on the created “self” of the human being in the Lacanian sense. What I mean is that, the characters in a novel are as real as the people in real life get to be, even when it is a fantasy fiction novel.

It has been a method writers and poets has used since ancient times to place the story in a faraway land. Shakespearian plays set in Italy and Denmark, marked with strong criticism for English monarchy and politics is a clear example of said method. Creating a world in a land of magic<sup>14</sup> and with magical elements like dragons is similar to that. It allows the author to bring together certain symbolisms and imageries which help enhance the structural foundation of the created realm. Thus, an ecocritical analysis of social structure, history, culture and politics of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* is not only possible but it is necessary since it reflects the real-world events in a timeless frame; bringing past, present and future together.

As it was mentioned in the introduction and the second chapter, ecocriticism aims to go beyond being an academic field of study for the understanding of nature in social constructs and its best outlet, literature. It aspires to inform and change society, challenge our behavioral patterns through the powerful narrative of a literary piece and its analysis.

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<sup>14</sup> It was Dalla who answered him, Dalla great with child, lying on her pile of furs beside the brazier. “We free folk know things you kneelers have forgotten. Sometimes the short road is not the safest, Jon Snow. The Homed Lord once said that sorcery is a sword without a hilt. There is no safe way to grasp it.” (ASoS 1019)

The importance of *A Song of Ice and Fire* intercedes exactly at this point. It is important to seize the moment and zeitgeist of the age to spread the message of ecocriticism in every sphere, class, nationality of masses. With its rising popularity by being translated to 30 different languages, sold 90 million copies, with TV adaptations past/present/future airing in 170 countries, ecocritical approaches to and in *A Song of Ice and Fire* has the possibility to attract attention to the environmental crises of our world. The major factor that has made the series this famous and loved is G. R. R. Martin's neatly created, rather realistic characters and plot in a fantasy world with strong emphasis on motifs of environment and nature. Through the publicity of the TV adaptation, George R.R. Martin's text gained exorbitant attention. However, the text is richer than the TV adaptation and the three-dimensional character creation is distinct. Storylines of these works of art breaks up at a point, so I must make it clear that I will solely depend upon the books and not on the TV series in my analysis.

Another factor that makes *A Song of Ice and Fire* an important text for ecocriticism is G.R.R. Martin's interest and care in environmental problems. Being merged fantasy and science fiction with ecoconscious writing in his previous creations, G.R.R. Martin ties the novel to global warming and environmental crises with the inconsistent seasonal changes and high influence of climate change in the novel. G.R.R. Martin's first novel *Dying of the Light* published in 1977 and *Tuf Voyaging*<sup>15</sup> in 1986 are exemplary novels full of environmental motifs, showing that Martin doesn't take the matter lightly.

G. R. R. Martin's first novel *Dying of the Light* is set in a dying planet, Worlorn. Worlorn is a rogue planet which follows not the orbit of a planet or a star but the whole galaxy. Coincidentally it has been straying into the cold and lonely parts of the universe, away

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<sup>15</sup> G. R. R. Martin's sci-fi novel *Tuf Voyaging* is a series of adventures of Haviland Tuf in the space. Haviland Tuf is failed merchant who is extraordinarily tall, a bit overweight, bald, loves cats but doesn't like other living creatures much and enjoys being alone. He is the captain of "Ark" which is a spaceship that requires no captain, created by humans on earth millions of years ago and equipped with advanced ecologic and genetic technologies. Tuf provides his services to the planets that are going through environmental crisis and deals with problems like contagious diseases, famine, toxic poisoning, genetically improved species killing other species. He does all these with the special properties of the spaceship in return of a small fee. In this series Martin creates a comical character who is less than adept to deal with a universe swarming with ecological problems. His point in ironic diminution of these problems and Tuf's inadequacy is a sarcastic conspicuousness to the environmental problems we are facing for the last century and our inadequacy even philistine approach in solving these problems.

from the stars and planets surrounding it. 14 city-states(civilizations) that are on the planet are built in memory of the past 14 galaxies that have perished. As Worlorn gets away from light sources, population and life of these cities continue to decrease and cities are deserted to rot. In *Dying of the Light* Martin draws the picture of a world which is losing its most crucial source of life, sunlight. He shows us what kind of psychosocial, societal and physical changes are to follow when light is taken out of the story. The environmental impact of absence of light and its eco-social counterpart is the focus of his novel. Besides this main focus, another overarching theme is the memory of cultures obliterated. 14 city-states that are built in memory of perished galaxies with their distinct languages, races and religions, reflects the differences and similarities of civilizations in terms of understanding the world, human relationships and assimilation of cultures. Martin brings cultures of distant galaxies on one planet and it is quite meaningful and relevant for this era of globalization and multiculturalism. We are living in a time and place; identity politics and assimilation policies of nation-states play a huge role on placing ourselves in the context. In this regard Martin's first novel *Dying of the Light* is another candidate for eco-sociological analysis which I'm suggesting.

In short, *A Song of Ice and Fire* is the very text that comprises environmental motifs like deforestation, climate change, ignorance towards climate change, cities growing vertically, animal and plant species going extinct. The novel opens with a heavy rain of said environmental incidents and this is another indicator of the importance environmental issues have in the novel.

### 3.2. Formation of Civilizations in Westeros in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

This study reveals an analysis of human beings vs nature in *A Song of Ice and Fire* universe while juxtaposing value sets of different civilizations and cultures, towards or against nature. Hence, there is a two-fold analysis; while the dualistic nature of human as an entity in nature and against nature is dissected, the varying traditions and values of biocentric or anthropocentric worldviews are contrasted on a broader sense. This allows us to see a multiplex system to study how human beings are distanced from their non-human environment. The contrast between the human that considers itself a part of nature and the human that considers himself the owner of nature is not the result of just a divide

of religion or class or culture or race but it is a civilizational worldview encompassing all these aspects of a society, of a land, of a people, that creates the said divide. Existing ecocriticism literature depends on, deep ecology and its monism of value for living things, or on the dualisms based on gender, class and language as ecofeminism, ecomarxism, ecophilosophy focuses on. However, these approaches do not effectively analyze the multiplex nature of societal confrontation of humankind with nature. The conflict that has emerged out of this divide, should be analyzed from cover to cover with a civilizational perspective for which I will employ Ibn Khaldun's civilization methodology. "The fourteenth-century Islamic diplomat and historian, Ibn Khaldun, built his theory of historical change around an oscillation between two cultures: the nomadic and the urban" (Cox 143) Henceforth, first, I will examine factors of geography, group feeling/asabiyah and spirituality/religion to understand the formation of civilizations according to Ibn Khaldun in *A Song of Ice and Fire* saga. Then, I will provide a close reading of the text based on symbolism and imagery of nature in each civilization.

*A Song of Ice and Fire* as of now is an unfinished book series. In the first five books there is sufficient information about Westeros as a continent, in terms of geography, culture and history. However, information about other continents like Essos and Sothoryos is not yet completed. As a result, I will limit my analysis to Westeros and its civilizations in a detailed manner for the purposes of this thesis and use information relating to Essos and its civilizations as supplementary information to better understand Westerosi civilizations. Complementary books written by G. R. R. Martin that give more information of the history of this created realm such as; *The World of Ice and Fire*, *Fire and Blood: 300 Years Before A Game of Thrones*, *The Lands of Ice and Fire*, *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms* will be employed as needed.

### 3.2.1. The Part Geographical Factors Play in Formation of Civilizations

George R. R. Martin sets up *A Song of Ice and Fire* in a mock-medieval world where magical creatures and seasons are possible. There are giants and dragons, elves and white walkers and inconsistent seasons. Winter and summer have no set period of time and while sometimes winter lasts for 3 years there has been long winters which lasted a generation. The inconsistent character of seasons is studied by the archmaesters of the Citadel in

Oldtown and the Others that come with the winter is stopped by a magical wall and the Night's Watch in the North. The archmaesters of Citadel measure days and watch temperature changes to decide for the turning of seasons and according to their measurements they recommend people on what to plant. When they are certain that the winter has come, they send out white ravens to all the lords of Westeros, letting them know about the season's change (*ACoK* 116).<sup>16</sup> These maesters deem themselves the most knowledgeable of people in the realm, however time and again they are proved wrong. "Even the most learned inhabitants of Westeros—the maesters—have little to no understanding of how the supernatural functions within their world" (Johnston and Battis 3). They are represented with their firm clutch on to a dry positivist approach about the world. Denying that species like direwolves, dragons, mammoths, giants, children of the forest, the Others that come with winter exist. This denial becomes a staple of their ignorance on matters that require a different knowledge than theirs. The maesters hold on to the histories that former maesters wrote as the sole truth and deny any information, new or ancient, that has not been told by maesters.

Their ignorance and denial of the magical beasts and the Others are the reasons for the manifold fear around these creatures. These creatures of the land and passages relating to their extinction will be examined in the animals section. But firstly, I will lay out a description of the land, and geographical conditions of Westeros. Weather changes and landscape north to south is also a key element of the means of living, crafts and architectural preferences for the castles. These factors relating to climate and geography will be examined to better understand what kind of role geography plays in the formation of a civilization. Lastly, I will examine the character of people to see if there is any correlation between climate and character as Ibn Khaldun suggests.

#### 3.2.1.1. Climate and Landscape

Westeros is at the western end of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* realm and has a narrow shape reaching from north to south. The continent has a neck right in the middle which is called Moat Cailin. This pass separates the north from the south geographically. There used to be a passage connecting land of Essos and Westeros through Dorne but after Children of

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<sup>16</sup> *ACoK* stands for A Clash of Kings, go to Works Cited for full reference

Forest used the Hammer of Waters this land was covered by water, creating Dorne's Broken Arm and The Stepstones (*TWolaf* 378).<sup>17</sup>

However, even there are magical beings and random seasonal changes it is important to notice that North is still shown in the upper end of the map and the realm is set up in the way the Northern hemisphere is. North is cold and the at most Southern part of Westeros, namely Dorne, is the hottest place of the continent.

If we think of geography in Ibn Khaldun's design of climatic zones, in Westeros while there are scarce kingdoms in the very northern and southern parts, it can be seen that the moderate zones are swarmed with kingdoms. Moderate climate and geography consisting of mostly fertile valleys with abundant water resources which gives the lowlanders and highlanders of the mid-Westeros the chance to build cities and cultivate land. The riverlands, the vale, the reach, the stormlands and the westerlands are the regions of the middle climatic zones in the Westeros. These places differ on their terrain and their resources. For example; while the vale is a mountainous region, the riverlands is mostly alluvial lowlands of the Three Forks, a network of rivers, suitable for crop production. While westerlands is the source of gold with its valuable mines, the reach is where grains, fruits and vegetable come. These small feudal states with a few differences have the same climate which is moderate in spring.

However, if we consider the North and South of the continent, namely Winterfell, Dorne and the Iron Islands, we see extreme weather conditions and geographical features. On the upper Northern part there is a wall built in 8000 BC to keep winter and its side effects away from the people. Yet there are people called the wildlings, living in the northern side of the Wall. They call themselves the Free Folk and pride themselves with not kneeling to kings but essentially, they are distant relatives of Northerners, both being descendants of the First Men (*ASoS* 103).<sup>18</sup> While mid-southern kingdoms strive on agriculture, Northern part of the continent subsists on fishery and hunting most of the time.

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<sup>17</sup> *TWolaf* stands for *The World of Ice and Fire: The Untold History of Westeros and the Game of Thrones*, go to Works Cited for full reference

<sup>18</sup> *ASoS* stands for *A Storm of Swords*, go to Works Cited for full reference

When it comes to the extreme South, there are deserts and caves beneath mountains in Dorne region. Noble families live in castles, but lowborn tribal people live in the desert and in the caves. Dornish grow spices, olives, lemons and exotic fruits. They are known to use various poisons on their weapons. They also breed fast, stout and beautiful steeds (*TWolaf* 385). Water resources are slim in Dorne which makes Dornish people zealously protect any well and small stream, considering it more precious than gold and jewels.

Westeros is also home to Ironborn of the Iron Islands. Iron Islands is an archipelago of thirty-one islands situated in the Sunset Sea off the midwestern coast of the continent. These islands are composed of small, barely fertile rocks as land. The weather is very harsh with frequent storms, strong winds and waves swashing on the rocky islands. There are iron mines on the isles which gives the islands and the islanders its name. The land is not suitable for farming and there is very small land for grazing animals. Lack of forests makes the need of firewood a problem. The inhabitants of these isles are seafarers and pirates, mostly due to the infertile geography they are living in. Priests repurpose driftwood for shelters near the sea. They also present the drowned men with a driftwood cudgel when they come back from death by drowning ritual.

“You belong to the god now,” Aeron told him. The other drowned men gathered round and each gave him a punch and a kiss to welcome him to the brotherhood. One helped him don a roughspun robe of mottled blue and green and grey. Another presented him with a driftwood cudgel. “You belong to the sea now, so the sea has armed you,” Aeron said. “We pray that you shall wield your cudgel fiercely, against all the enemies of our god” (*AFfC* 25).<sup>19</sup>

Repurposing of driftwood is a result of the barren nature of these islands, as trees do not grow on the thin soil.

#### 3.2.1.2. Animals

It is understood through one of the Children of the Forest that, in Westeros there is a problem of species extinction.

“The great lions of the western hills have been slain, the unicorns are all but gone, the mammoths down to a few hundred. The direwolves will outlast us all, but their

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<sup>19</sup> *AFfC* stands for A Feast for Crows, go to Works Cited for full reference

time will come as well. In the world that men have made, there is no room for them, or us” (*ADwD* 527-8).<sup>20</sup>

This foresight tells a lot about the manner man has for animals. The way people treat and give meaning to animals has definitely changed lately in Westeros. For example; House Lannister’s banner has a lion on it, reflecting the westerlands. However, Lannisters has slain the great lions of the western hills, which lessens the symbolism of the banner, and their claim to being like lions. When species of lion goes extinct, the representation of a lion on a banner becomes vain.

Almost all of the great families of Westeros have animals represented on their banners. Another example is House Stark. Their banner shows a direwolf and when Northmen come across a direwolf’s dead body near Winterfell it surprises them. Theon Greyjoy says, “There’s not been a direwolf sighted south of the Wall in two hundred years” (*AGoT* 18). which proves how scarce the direwolf species has become in Westeros. The return of the direwolf however is a positive sign for the Northmen, showing that the animal they identify with is not extinct. The direwolf litter that is adopted by Stark family is central for understanding the Northmen’s approach to nature.

Dragons are another animal species that is thought to be extinct in the novels. Although we see the return of the dragons through Daenerys Targaryen’s point of view, the people and maesters of Westeros consider dragons to be extinct. This is the reflection of another animal representation. House Targaryen died out in Westeros as the dragons on their coat of arms and through Daenerys there is a chance of rebirth for House Targaryen.

The relations drawn between people and animals is seen in Dorne region as well. Dorne is a place poisonous animals like snakes, scorpions, ants and spiders of extreme hot climate and desert are seen. Oberynt Martell is a prince of Dorne and he is named the Red Viper making a reference to the fact that he often dips his spear in a deadly poison and uses that on his enemies.

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<sup>20</sup> *ADwD* stands for A Dance with Dragons, go to Works Cited for full reference



There are all sorts of symbolism in the banners of great houses and the animal metaphors that indicate their character and manner towards the non-human environment. These will be examined later in this chapter.

Another creature that is thought to be extinct and makes a comeback is the White Walkers namely the Others. In *A Game of Thrones*, we are told that these creatures are a fabled species that supposedly comes with the cold of the winter and bring death with them however they have been extinct for almost eight thousand years. They are described with skin the color of milk, with eyes glistening ice blue, with bones gleaming pale blue through the white skin. They are soft on their foot, move without making any sound, like the wind. Use swords that look like icicles that hang from the branches of trees. This description gives the creatures an untellable quality, making them a mirage in between the wind and snow of the dark night.

Will saw movement from the corner of his eye. Pale shapes gliding through the wood. He turned his head, glimpsed a white shadow in the darkness. Then it was gone. Branches stirred gently in the wind, scratching at one another with wooden fingers. Will opened his mouth to call down a warning, and the words seemed to freeze in his throat. Perhaps he was wrong. Perhaps it had only been a bird, a reflection on the snow, some trick of the moonlight. What had he seen, after all?  
(8)

Later in the saga wights, an army of living dead that are raised by the White Walkers are introduced. Wights are rotten dead bodies with ice blue eyes that rise in the dark of the night and move with cold. When they touch human skin the coldness of their hands burns the skin like ice. They are the embodiment of cold weather's side effects, like frostbites and can only be defeated with fire.

The imagery around the White Walkers and the wights is one of winter, coldness, darkness, famine and death which clearly hints at the climate change that is the cataclysm the Northmen warns against.

#### 3.2.1.3. Castles and Crafts

North of Moat Cailin is recognized to be the territory of Starks which is directed from Winterfell, the ancient castle and seat of Northern kings. In the North weather is always cold, snow does not melt in most of the upper Northern parts and mountains even in

summer. Seashore is less snowy due to the sea effect, but it also is open to harsh winds. Fishing, hunting and husbandry are the ways of livelihood for Northerners, thus even though the noble families live in castles lowborn people migrate with seasonal changes. In winter, smallfolk move to the winter town of castle Winterfell.

The castle had been built over natural hot springs, and the scalding waters rushed through its walls and chambers like blood through a man's body, driving the chill from the stone halls, filling the glass gardens with a moist warmth, keeping the earth from freezing. Open pools smoked day and night in a dozen small courtyards. That was a little thing, in summer; in winter, it was the difference between life and death (58).

It is important to notice that Winterfell is the largest of all castles in Westeros because it was designed not for defense from a siege but to protect the Northerners and nourish them during long and harsh winters. Constant strife against the cold and seasonal migration results in having dull trade and craftsmanship in the North. This characteristic of little to no craftsmanship is common in Dorne and in Iron Islands as well, because of the tough environmental conditions. In that sense, Ibn Khaldun's explanation of Bedouins (nomadic people) and sedentary people (city-dwellers)<sup>21</sup> is quite relevant in *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

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<sup>21</sup> Some people adopt agriculture, the cultivation of vegetables and grains, (as their way of making a living). Others adopt animal husbandry, the use of sheep, cattle, goats, bees, and silkworms, for breeding and for their products. Those who live by agriculture or animal husbandry cannot avoid the call of the desert, because it alone offers the wide fields, acres, pastures for animals, and other things that the settled areas do not offer. It is therefore necessary for them to restrict themselves to the desert. Their social organization and co-operation for the needs of life and civilization, such as food, shelter, and warmth, do not take them beyond the bare subsistence level, because of their inability (to provide) for anything beyond those(things). Subsequent improvement of their conditions and acquisition of more wealth and comfort than they need, cause them to rest and take it easy. Then, they co-operate for things beyond the (bare) necessities. They use more food and clothes, and take pride in them. They build large houses, and lay out towns and cities for protection. This is followed by an increase in comfort and ease, which leads to formation of the most developed luxury customs. They take the greatest pride in the preparation of food and a fine cuisine, in the use of varied splendid clothes of silk and brocade and other (fine materials), in the construction of ever higher building sand towers, in elaborate furnishings for the buildings, and the most intensive cultivation of crafts in actuality. They build castles and mansions, provide them with running water, build their towers higher and higher, and compete in furnishing them (most elaborately). They differ in the quality of the clothes, the beds, the vessels, and the utensils they employ for their purposes. Here, now, (we have) sedentary people. "Sedentary people" means the inhabitants of cities and countries, some of whom adopt the crafts as their way of making a living, while others adopt commerce. They earn more and live more comfortably than Bedouins, because they live on a level beyond the level of (bare) necessity, and their way of making a living corresponds to their wealth. It has thus become clear that Bedouins and sedentary people are natural groups which exist by necessity, as we have stated (Khaldun 1:249)

There are castles in Dorne and in Iron Islands as well, but these are not city-castles. Sunspear in Dorne is a tower complex that has been heavily influenced by the architectural background of the Rhoynish immigrants. Before coming to Dorne they lived in the lush and fertile plains of River Rhoyme and delivered best examples of bronze and steel craftsmanship. However, their forced immigration to Dorne, a desert with little water resource has changed their lifestyle. Still “beautiful towers bearing all the hallmarks of Rhoynish fashion” shed light on the cultural transmission of aesthetics. Sunspear is a castle for the protection of the noble lords and family members in Dorne. Smallfolk lives in the shadow city, “Though the Dornish may call it a city, it remains no more than a town, and a queer, dusty, ugly town at that” (*TWolIaF* 392). Most people tend to live near the desert oases and wells because of the extreme hot weather conditions and scarcity of water in Dorne. Husbandry of sand steeds that run on sand like the wind and growing of fruits that require little water and plenty of sun is the main livelihood of the Dornish.

Likewise, castle Pyke is situated in the harsh geography of Iron Islands. The Pyke is the seat of House Greyjoy, “a collection of towers connected by bridges. Pyke is a dreary and uncomfortable place. It's constantly wet, storms are roaring around it, and to cross from one tower to the other, you have to brave the weather outside, since the bridges are small and not exactly protected against the elements” (Stefan). Although there are the iron mines on the islands, the Ironborn are not famous for the craftsmanship of iron or steel. They only extract the raw material and sell it in exchange of timber that they need for the building of their ships. The Ironborn are pirates and looter which we can call the Bedouin of the seas, taking into consideration that their castle Pyke provide little to none of the comforts and luxuries of Southern castles. They mostly live on their ships, like the Dornish live on their sand steeds in the desert.

In contrast with these three castles, the castles of the temperate climate zones are extravagant. All of the populous and large cities of Westeros are situated in this area and they have a lively trade, commerce and high-end craftsmanship. For example, Lannisport, third largest city of Westeros, grows around Casterly Rock, the seat of House Lannister. These lands in addition to having moderate climate, have plenty of gold resources and gold craftsmanship and trade in Lannisport is one of the most important incomes of the

city. Likewise, King's Landing and Oldtown in the Reach are densely populated, and they have a dynamic commerce scene. Catelyn describes King's Landing in all its commercial density.

Now the city covered the shore as far as Catelyn could see; manses and arbors and granaries, brick storehouses and timbered inns and merchant's stalls, taverns and graveyards and brothels, all piled one on another. She could hear the clamor of the fish market even at this distance (*AGoT* 168).

Oldtown and King's Landing are competitors in terms of their riches and grandeur. Pate, an acolyte in the Citadel of Oldtown compares the two cities in a way showing the competition between these cities.

Pate had never seen King's Landing, but he knew it was a daub-and-wattle city, a sprawl of mud streets, thatched roofs, and wooden hovels. Oldtown was built in stone, and all its streets were cobbled, down to the meanest alley. The city was never more beautiful than at break of day. West of the Honeywine, the Guildhalls lined the bank like a row of palaces. Upriver, the domes and towers of the Citadel rose on both sides of the river, connected by stone bridges crowded with halls and houses. Downstream, below the black marble walls and arched windows of the Starry Sept, the manses of the pious clustered like children gathered round the feet of an old dowager (*AFfC* 17-8).

House Targaryen and its Valyrian ancestry is pivotal in construction of prosperity in King's Landing. Valyria was famous for its technological advancements in craftsmanship, building cities and making very durable beautiful roads and buildings. They used magic for the creation of these architectural masterpieces and crafts. Valyrian steel is the finest steel that could be found in the world and it is not produced anymore, after the Doom of Valyria.

As it can be seen all these castles, cities and differing craftsmanship in the cities develop according to the climate zones. Where the climate is temperate and mild, cities grow populous and crafts flourish which leads to a sedentary civilization. In contrast with that, where the climate is harsh, people live scattered around the small resources they have, therefore cities, arts and crafts do not appear. People living in those lands have a nomadic Bedouin civilization according to Ibn Khaldun.

#### 3.2.1.4. Temperament

As it has been touched upon in Chapter 1, according to Ibn Khaldun, geography and climate affect not only peoples' livelihood but also their character, which can be seen in Westeros as well. The Northerners are depicted to be harsh, solemn and rigid as ice.

“Damn it, Ned,” the king complained. “You might at least humor me with a smile.”  
“They say it grows so cold up here in winter that a man’s laughter freezes in his throat and chokes him to death,” Ned said evenly. “Perhaps that is why the Starks have so little humor.”  
“Come south with me, and I’ll teach you how to laugh again,” the king promised (*AGoT* 48).

The cold of North makes people forget how to smile. This is strong indication of climate’s effect on people’s social groupings and psychology. The climate makes people of the region adapt to the needs of the place and this is strong indication of how civilizations are established according to environmental conditions. Thus, Stark House’s family motto “winter is coming” does not come off as surprising. Ned Stark makes the connection of facing fears, a psychological process with upcoming seasonal change when he talks of his youngest child; “He must learn to face his fears. He will not be three forever. And winter is coming” (24). The power climate has on people’s character and experiences is reflected in more than one way.

“I should have thought that heat ill suits you Starks,” Littlefinger said. “Here in the south, they say you are all made of ice, and melt when you ride below the Neck.”  
“I do not plan on melting soon, Lord Baelish. You may count on it.” Ned moved to the table (192).

This dialogue between a Southerner lord, Lord Baelish and the Lord of the North, Ned Stark again makes an indication of place and character. Ned Stark claims he does not plan on melting however shortly after this, he is beheaded because his rigid character does not suit the airy, unstable court life of the King’s Landing. Starks are direct in their speaking and their actions. One can see through their character and actions as easily as one can see through ice. The only Targaryen ruler to ever visit Winterfell, Queen Alysanne, has written that the Northmen were neither niggardly nor humorless once the frost between

two sides thaw, which points to the withdrawn character Northern people have (*Fire and Blood* 262).<sup>22</sup>

However, when it comes to lords of middle regions, we see the plotting, secretive, dissembler nature with the soft, mild and political character. As the weather softens, the character and speech of people soften, and their attitude becomes courtly. Prince Joffrey from Sansa Stark's perspective tell a lot about the rules of courtesy and how Starks are oblivious about them, considering Joffrey's horrible treatment of Sansa later on.

Joffrey was the soul of courtesy. He talked to Sansa all night, showering her with compliments, making her laugh, sharing little bits of court gossip, explaining Moon Boy's japes. Sansa was so captivated that she quite forgot all her courtesies and ignored Septa Mordane (*AGoT* 299).

The description of King Robert's brother Renly Baratheon is also a very neat example to the character of milder climate.

A man near twenty whose armor was steel plate of a deep forest-green. He was the handsomest man Sansa had ever set eyes upon; tall and powerfully made, with jet-black hair that fell to his shoulders and framed a clean-shaven face, and laughing green eyes to match his armor. Cradled under one arm was an antlered helm, its magnificent rack shimmering in gold (144).

The riches, comfort and bountiful wealth is reflected through both Renly's clothing and his laughing eyes.

The character of people in Iron Islands is determined by the geography and climate as well. Theon Greyjoy, the heir to the Iron Islands seat, says Pyke is "Windy and cold and damp. A miserable hard place, in truth . . . but my lord father once told me that hard places breed hard men, and hard men rule the world" (*ACoK* 166). However this proves wrong as we see hard men winning the wars but failing to rule the world. Land use is another determining factor of temperament as can be understand from the following quotation.

"Aegon the Dragon had destroyed the Old Way when he burned Black Harren, gave Harren's kingdom back to the weakling rivermen, and reduced the Iron Islands to an insignificant backwater of a much greater realm. Yet the old red tales were still told around driftwood fires and smoky hearths all across the islands, even

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<sup>22</sup> *Fire and Blood* stands for *Fire and Blood: 300 Years Before A Game of Thrones*, go to Works Cited for full reference.

behind the high stone halls of Pyke. Theon's father numbered among his titles the style of Lord Reaper, and the Greyjoy words boasted that We Do Not Sow" (170).

As it can be seen in the above quotation, the family motto of the Ironborn "We Do Not Sow" reflects the effect of the conditions of the island on their way of life. There is little land to sow seeds and grow crops, therefore the ironmen reap what they haven't sow by pillage and plunder. The absence of fertile land creates a cruel and relentless people depending on violence and loot of piracy.

The at most Southern region of Westeros, Dorne is the hottest place in all the continent. As it would fit, Dornishmen has a reputation of being hot-blooded. The region is dry and arid with a terrain of rocky mountains and deserts. Red Mountains that stretch from east to west on the border of Dorne separates the land from the Stormlands and the Reach both geographically and culturally. Inland water resources are as valuable as gold and guarded zealously. Protection of water shows itself on Dornish people's temperament as well: "She did not shed a tear. Arianne Martell was a princess of Dorne, and Dornishmen did not waste water lightly" (*TWoW* 30).<sup>23</sup> This zealous behavior towards things they value upholds when it comes to human relations as well. Oberyn Martell keeps an ancient grudge for the murder of his sister Elia Martell and wants revenge more than anything. He is described as "ever the viper. Deadly, dangerous, unpredictable" (*ADwD* 596). This qualities of Dornish people highly resemble the environment they are living in. Even the Dragonlords could not conquer Dorne for more than 150 years because of the harsh environmental conditions and likewise harsh and stubborn character of Dornishmen.<sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup>This stubborn nature of the people is represented in the house motto; "Unbent, Unbroken, Unbowed" of Nymeros Martell. Majority of the Dornishmen came from the river Rhoyme in Essos with warrior princess Nymeria and "Like Dornish food and Dornish law, Dornish speech was spiced with the flavors of the Rhoyme" (17).

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<sup>23</sup> *TWoW* stands for The Winds of Winter, go to Works Cited for full reference

<sup>24</sup> You should not say such things." Remember, she is Dornish. In the Reach men said it was the food that made Dornishmen so hot-tempered and their women so wild and wanton. Fiery peppers and strange spices heat the blood, she cannot help herself. (*AFfC* 271)

<sup>25</sup> We Dornish are a hot-blooded people, quick to anger and slow to forgive. It would gladden my heart if I could assure you that the Sand Snakes were alone in wanting war, but I will not tell you lies, ser. You have heard my smallfolk in the streets, crying out for me to call my spears. Half my lords agree with them, I fear." (*AFfC* 267)

As it could be seen geography and climate effects the social lives, characters and behaviors of people in Westeros to an extent that it creates cultural and civilizational differences between them. They have differing perspectives and worldviews on their non-human surroundings. It effects the way they value and use raw materials that are available in their environment, thus effects the arts and crafts of their civilization. Climate effects the food they consume, the way they irrigate and work the soil, geographical landscape effects the way they build their castles and towers which is where the culture breeds. Castles and towers of the noblemen in Westeros is a reflection of their House lineage, their culture. Its shape and purpose serve the needs of that particular civilizational repository. It is very striking that architectural design also depends highly on environmental conditions like geographical landscape and climate. Thus, the connection between climate/geography and civilization is clear. As Ibn Khaldun states in the *Muqaddimah*, climate also effects the temperament of the people. Depending on the landscape and weather a people might be a sullen one due to extreme coldness, a fiery one due to hot weather, a deceiving one due to the moderate climate and court-life that has been formed under these circumstances. The examples to the effects of geography and climate given in this section makes it possible to say that geography is a major factor that effects the way a civilization is formed.

### 3.2.2. The Part Spirituality/Religion Plays in Formation of Civilization

*A Song of Ice and Fire* is a narrative that is in many ways reminiscent of the middle-ages. Religion, theology and spirituality is the corner stone of people's lives even when they are not practicing their religion. The social dimension of hierarchical religious orders is pivotal and definitely a major indicator of differences in worldview. In this section I will give necessary background information on religions in Westeros and how they affect social, political, cultural life of civilizations in a way that makes the religion almost the basis of these civilizations. I will follow the chronological order of these religions emerging in Westeros but by no means this means that one died when the other emerged.

There are four major religions in Westeros that we should analyze in this section. The wide variety of theologies of these four religions stretch from monotheism to Manichean dualism and paganism. The Old Gods belief seems to be the most primordial one in all of them, however it is also the only one that has a spiritual link to inherent value of every



being. There are also elements of dream interpretations. The Faith, being the most institutionalized of the four has grown corrupt due to its close relationship with positions of politics and power. Its impact on social organizations is sizeable. The religion of Drowned God lacks any theology other than pagan sea deity worship. The religion of R'hllor is based on the duality of the good and the bad gods and their eternal fight. These gods are colored differently by the red priests, but a close reading reveals that the good and the bad use the same methods of fear and destruction in their eternal quarrel. These distinctively different religions have significant role in giving each civilization their color and shape. "The value of the implications of the religious systems in Martin's world, which include these and several others, lies not in the ways we might attest to an allegory at hand but rather in the verisimilar ease with which Martin includes religion as an essential cosmological fact in the narrative project of his world building. Put another way, while it's compelling to think about the ways religion is involved in Martin's series of fantasy novels, it's more interesting to think about what Martin's imaginary world tells us about religion." (O'Leary 5) Therefore, there needs to be a detailed explanation for each of these religions, to be able to identify the ways in which they form civilization and a perspective about nature.

#### 3.2.2.1. Old Gods

"They were a people of the Dawn Age, the very first, before kings and kingdoms. In those days, there were no castles or holdfasts, no cities, not so much as a market town to be found between here and the sea of Dorne. There were no men at all. Only the children of the forest dwelt in the lands we now call the Seven Kingdoms." (*AGoT* 737)

Old Gods of Westeros is the religion Children of the Forest (Singers), First Men, Wildlings (Free Folk) and House Stark follow. In general, it is the religion of Northern Westeros but before the arrival of the First Men, in the Dawn Age, Children of the Forest were spread throughout the whole continent as their spiritual belief did. The gods of this belief are nameless, they are the gods of stream, stone and forest. However not in the pagan sense, where an anthropomorphic god lives in the streams and rules them. The stream, stone and forest itself are the gods. The children draw faces on the weirwood trees to communicate, to see through the eyes of the trees and eventually they become one with the trees, stones

and streams, they become gods. ““Where are the rest of you?” Bran asked Leaf, once. “Gone down into the earth,” she answered. “Into the stones, into the trees.”” (716) Becoming one with gods, becoming the god itself, the unification of soul and God in this sense reminds us of Ibn Khaldun’s description of spiritual rising and knowledge acquirement. In that sense teachings of Old Gods can be regarded a spiritual doctrine that provides a worldview based on oneness of everything. Weirwood trees are a very important part of this faith.

At the center of the grove an ancient weirwood brooded over a small pool where the waters were black and cold. “The heart tree,” Ned called it. The weirwood’s bark was white as bone, its leaves dark red, like a thousand bloodstained hands. A face had been carved in the trunk of the great tree, its features long and melancholy, the deep-cut eyes red with dried sap and strangely watchful. They were old, those eyes; older than Winterfell itself. They had seen Brandon the Builder set the first stone, if the tales were true; they had watched the castle’s granite walls rise around them. It was said that the children of the forest had carved the faces in the trees during the dawn centuries before the coming of the First Men across the narrow sea. In the south the last weirwoods had been cut down or burned out a thousand years ago, except on the Isle of Faces where the green men kept their silent watch. Up here it was different. Here every castle had its godswood, and every godswood had its heart tree, and every heart tree its face (23).

Even if the trees have carved faces on them, the gods are faceless are more than the trees. The heart tree or weirwoods in general are the medium of communication between the old gods and human beings. Henceforth deforestation of these trees by the Andals is not only a crime against nature but it is also desecration of sacred ground.

The faces on the trees functions as a medium of communication, knowledge gathering, preservation and protection. The greenseers of the children of the forest, a group of talented people who could bond with trees and animals in a way that lets them to see through their eyes and could watch over the realm. However, even though the trees have faces on them the gods are faceless (23) which denies them being anthropomorphic gods.

When the First Men arrived in Westeros, crossing the Arm of Dorne, they brought their own gods and beliefs. Children of the Forest and the First Men warred for two thousand years. Many of the weirwood trees with faces on them got felled, due to suspicion of spying through the trees. Both sides fought over forests and trees. In this process Children

of the Forest called upon the gods of stream and storm and using the Hammer of Waters they broke the Arm of Dorne, changing it to Dorne's Broken Arm and created the swamps and bogs around Moat Cailin which later on protected the North from Southern invasion for thousands of years. The elements of earth, fire, water and air are forces of power which could be used by persons knowing them. Knowledge of these elements and powers is not written in a textbook, it cannot be learnt by going to a school or being a student of alchemy, magic etc. To tap the well of this knowledge one requires a certain biocentric worldview. It is based on a value system in which every being walking on earth is equal.

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies," said Jojen. "The man who never reads lives only one. The singers of the forest had no books. No ink, no parchment, no written language. Instead they had the trees, and the weirwoods above all. When they died, they went into the wood, into leaf and limb and root, and the trees remembered. All their songs and spells, their histories and prayers, everything they knew about this world. Maesters will tell you that the weirwoods are sacred to the old gods. The singers believe they are the old gods. When singers die they become part of that godhood" (*ADwD* 526).

It can be seen that humans, animals, trees, stones, streams and winds are parts of a united oneness. Their value does not depend on their species. Each spirit is valued on the same level, they are equals, and equals can communicate. This enables the greenseers to communicate with these elements of nature and convey their help to protect the harmony of life on their land.

After two thousand years of bloodshed Children and First Men came to terms and made a pact in the Isle of Faces which takes its name from the many weirwood trees on the island with faces on them. The trees stood witness and Children and First Men promised not to harm each other as long as the remaining woods belong to the Children and open plains to the First Men to settle. The agreement was upon not putting any more weirwood trees to axe. This pact provided the two races four thousand years of peace until the Andals arrive in Westeros. In the meantime, First Men converted to Children's religion. They still built castles and ruled kingdoms as kings. When the Long Night came, they protected the realm together against Others. They built the Wall with help of magic to protect cities and people from creatures of the night which are described no other than cold, ice, snow,

famine and death. This magic could be understood as knowledge of elements and climate. Their religions and rituals became one and after the Andal invasion pushed Children and First Men to the North, they kept their ground and faith preserved.

They have godswoods in every Northern castle where important events like taking an oath, getting married, promising, thinking takes place. The weirwood trees become witnesses of these events. Stark children are able to see this sacred bond from on a very early age.

“Bran had always liked the godswood [...] The gods were looking over him, he told himself; the old gods, gods of the Starks and the First Men and the children of the forest, his father’s gods. He felt safe in their sight, and the deep silence of the trees helped him think. Bran had been thinking a lot since his fall; thinking, and dreaming, and talking with the gods” (*AGoT* 572-3).

However, Catelyn Stark of Riverrun (a Southern castle) sees this tradition differently:

The gods of Winterfell kept a different sort of wood. It was a dark, primal place, three acres of old forest untouched for ten thousand years as the gloomy castle rose around it. It smelled of moist earth and decay. No redwoods grew here. This was a wood of stubborn sentinel trees armored in grey-green needles, of mighty oaks, of ironwoods as old as the realm itself. Here thick black trunks crowded close together while twisted branches wove a dense canopy overhead and misshapen roots wrestled beneath the soil. This was a place of deep silence and brooding shadows, and the gods who lived here had no names (22).

In the *A Song of Ice and Fire* storyline House Stark and the wildlings are the contemporary representation of this pact and religion. Their ways, beliefs and gods are “queer” to the Southern lords. After the peace was established between the Andals and the First Men, Andals built godswoods in their castles as well. However, they keep a godswood different from the Northern version.

Catelyn had never liked this godswood. She had been born a Tully, at Riverrun far to the south, on the Red Fork of the Trident. The godswood there was a garden, bright and airy, where tall redwoods spread dappled shadows across tinkling streams, birds sang from hidden nests, and the air was spicy with the scent of flowers (22).

The contrast of wild and tamed nature is clearly an overarching theme between the Northern and Southern civilizations. This contrast will be explored from an ecocritical perspective later in the chapter.

The wisdom of Children of the Forest and their spiritual ways of Old Gods is very much alive and continues through the descendants of First Men, Free folk and House Stark. Maester Luwin who serves in Winterfell is from the south, from Oldtown in the Reach and even though he has impressive knowledge on many sciences, he lacks the foresight to see that the Stark children are all wargs and Bran is a greenseer like the children of the forest were. He says, “The children are gone from the world, and their wisdom with them” (ACoK 440). When in fact the children of the forest merely went away from men are doing and the wisdom is passed through generations of Northmen and still continues even if it is not very overt. Wargs are skinchangers that can see through the eyes of wolves and dogs. There are other kinds of skinchangers who can see through the eyes of crows, ravens, bears, wildcats, etc. Greenseers on the other hand has the ability to see through the weirwood trees in addition to being able to wear the skin of any beast. Watching the world and history through an everlasting weirwood tree’s eyes is significant in the sense that time dissolves and everything becomes eternal. This fits perfectly with the unity of God and human.

The unity of human beings with nature is the core of Old Gods religion and the wisdom of Children of the Forest is quite essential for the Northern civilization. Because I am only exploring what kind of a role religion is playing in the establishment of civilizations in this section I will go into details of symbolisms of nature, animalism and elements of climate in the ecocritical analysis in section 3.3.1.

#### 3.2.2.2. New Gods

Faith of seven gods, commonly referred as the New Gods to differentiate them from the Old Gods, are the gods of the religion Andals brought from mount Andalos in Essos when they invaded Westeros. Over time it became the main religion of the land.

The Faith taught that the Seven themselves had once walked the hills of Andalos in human form. “The Father reached his hand into the heavens and pulled down seven stars,” Tyrion recited from memory, “and one by one he set them on the brow of Hugar of the Hill to make a glowing crown.”

“The Maid brought him forth a girl as supple as a willow with eyes like deep blue pools, and Hugar declared that he would have her for his bride. So, the Mother

made her fertile, and the Crone foretold that she would bear the king four-and-forty mighty sons. The Warrior gave strength to their arms, whilst the Smith wrought for each a suit of iron plates” (*ADwD* 91).

Followers of the Faith are mostly from the South where Andals settled. Their belief is based on the worship of the Seven Who Are One. It is a single deity with seven facets of the Mother, the Father, the Smith, the Warrior, the Maiden, The Crone and the Stranger. The number seven is considered to be holy.

“Catelyn had been anointed with the seven oils and named in the rainbow of light that filled the sept of Riverrun. She was of the Faith, like her father and grandfather and his father before him. Her gods had names, and their faces were as familiar as the faces of her parents. Worship was a septon with a censer, the smell of incense, a seven-sided crystal alive with light, voices raised in song. The Tullys kept a godswood, as all the great houses did, but it was only a place to walk or read or lie in the sun. Worship was for the sept (*AGoT* 23).

These seven faces of the deity are very anthropomorphic in the sense they have faces and bodies of humans. These faces of the seven are depicted in sculptures or drawings in every sept of the Faith. Septs are the places of worship where followers burn incense and pray to the face of the God they need. When they are looking for protection and mercy they pray to the Mother, and to the Father for fair judgement. They pray to the Warrior for courage, to the Smith for strength, to the Maiden for safeguarding of innocence, to the Crone for wisdom and guidance. The Stranger is the face of death, it is neither male nor female, people who feel outcasted might light a candle for the Stranger but most of the time this face of the God is disregarded. It is important to realize that the prayer places of the Faith are men-made architectural masterpieces where materials like crystals, gold and silver are heavily used and stained-glass windows adorn the septs. Worship take place in these closed spaces in contrast with Old Gods belief. It can be seen in the next quote that believers of the Faith find the religion of First Men and Starks very curious and odd. The godswood Starks pray in and their belief is different and unpredictable for a Southern person. However, still they intermarry and live under the rule of the same king which is a sign of Northern civilization’s being open to other civilizations. “For her sake, Ned had built a small sept where she might sing to the seven faces of god, but the blood of the First Men still flowed in the veins of the Starks, and his own gods were the old ones, the

nameless, faceless gods of the greenwood they shared with the vanished children of the forest” (23).

Anthropomorphic gods with names, humanlike bodies, genders and roles define the extreme separation of humans from animals as the subjects of gods. This is the theological essence that separates two religions.

Septons and septas are the intermediary of worship in the septs, between Seven and humans. Jon Snow, who believes in the Old Gods thinks “The southron had it easier. They had their septons to talk to, someone to tell them the gods’ will and help sort out right from wrong. But the Starks worshiped the old gods, the nameless gods, and if the heart trees heard, they did not speak (774). Contrarily Daenerys Targaryen finds the Faith confusing: “Westeros had seven gods at least, though Viserys had told her that some septons said the seven were only aspects of a single god, seven facets of a single crystal. That was just confusing” (*ASoS* 978).

Septons perform marriages, funerals, holy services like crowning and forgiving sins. According to the High Septon “In The Seven-Pointed Star it is written that all sins may be forgiven, but crimes must still be punished. Osney Kettleblack is guilty of treason and murder, and the wages of treason are death” (*AFfC* 932). People who repent their sins can be absolved and gain entry to heaven but still they must be punished for their crimes. The Seven-Pointed Star is the most important book that explain the religious code to the followers. They also hold the number seven holy and believe in afterlife of Seven Heavens and Seven Hells. People also swear to Seven Hells when bad things happen and swear by the Seven to make people believe them:

“Swear it by the Seven,” urged Ser Illifer the Penniless.

“By the Seven, then. I did no harm to King Renly. I swear it by the Mother. May I never know her mercy if I lie. I swear it by the Father and ask that he might judge me justly. I swear it by the Maiden and Crone, by the Smith and the Warrior. And I swear it by the Stranger, may he take me now if I am false.”

“She swears well, for a maid,” Ser Creighton allowed.

“Aye.” Ser Illifer the Penniless gave a shrug. “Well, if she’s lied, the gods will sort her out” (87-8).

The High Septon is the head of the Faith and is selected by a council of high ranking septons and septas. He gives up his name when he is elected to office for life as he becomes the avatar of the Seven, he does not need a name. Septons and septas generally done white robes and High Septon wears a crown of crystal. There are also holy brothers and sisters who are basically hermits and monks living in septries, sometimes begging on the streets, wandering the realm for search of penance. Another organizational unit of the Faith is Faith Militant which is an armed military force under the rule of High Septon. Following quotation is a summary of their actions “The Andals burnt out the weirwood groves, hacked down the faces, slaughtered the children where they found them, and everywhere proclaimed the triumph of the Seven over the old gods. So, the children fled north” (*AGoT* 739). The Faith used to have the right to hold trials and judge sinners but after the Targaryen invasion Faith Militant was disbanded and this portion of ruling was undertaken by the Crown.

The Faith’s teachings are against incestuous relations. The only exception to this is the Targaryen lineage. They were allowed to intermarry with family members for the purposes of keeping their Valyrian blood pure and people of Westeros believe that angering the Gods with their incest was the reason House Targaryen perished.<sup>26</sup> In return, Targaryen family did not impose their belief of R’hllor on Westerosi and converted to the Faith. Thus, The Faith has not only religious but political power on matters concerning the subjects of the realm.

It is clear that the Faith in A Song of Ice and Fire takes after the institutionalized religions of our world where religion not only serves the beliefs of people but is also a very prominent economic, political and military power. Before Targaryen invasion, the seven kingdoms of Westeros were separate. The Starry Sept in Oldtown was the religious center of Faith and its status was above all the kingdoms who abide by the rules of Seven. This changed after the Targaryen control over Westeros. The Faith and the ruling of the land was separated. Even after this separation of Church and State, the Faith played a major role in the social organization and order of the society. Every noteworthy life event; funerals, naming the babies, marriages, takes place in the septs foreseen by the Faith.

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<sup>26</sup> Tthe gods hate incest. Look how they brought down the Targaryens.” (*ACoK* 260)



Bearing children out of wedlock thus bastardy and prostitution are sins by the Faith. The low station of bastards is the result of this social order. Protection of family, lineage and birthright is very significant. People who have low birth have little to any chance of being someone.

Although there are couples who live separately<sup>27</sup> divorce is not a notion for the Faith. However, marriages that are not consummated can be annulled under certain circumstances as can be seen in the following quotation:

“Do I need to remind you that a marriage that has not been consummated can be set aside?”

“By the High Septon or a Council of Faith. Our present High Septon is a trained seal who barks prettily on command (*ASoS* 437).

However, above quotation gives us clues about how the Faith is corrupt and subject to manipulation of the Crown or the ruling elites as well. The separation of Crown and Faith gives the Crown the chance and power to manipulate the Faith and to use religion as a tool. The corruption of Faith is a result of Targaryen interference. This situation changes after long duration of wars and cruelty and indifference of the rulers weary the common people and they turn towards religion. They follow a holy brother who names himself sparrow because it is the most common and humblest of birds and he is a humble commoner.<sup>28</sup> People in King’s Landing listen to his preaches about how corrupted the Crown and the Faith have become. The commoners protest and riot. Following these events Queen Cersei makes the sparrow High Septon and reinstates Faith Militia in *A Feast for Crows*. Later on, the same High Septon wants Cersei tried “before a holy court of seven, for murder, treason, and fornication” (*AFfC* 936).

Knighthood is another social status that the Faith organizes. People who deserve to be knighted spend the night before their dubbing in vigil in the sept. It’s how they are purified from their past life and given a new one. In this new life they are expected to abide by a certain code of honor, be the protector of the Crown and the Faith and serve the houses

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<sup>27</sup> Prince Doran and his wife Mellario is an example. Mellario lives separately in Norvos despite being married. (*ADwD* 1035)

<sup>28</sup> “The sparrow is the humblest and most common of birds, as we are the humblest and most common of men.” (*AFfC* 91)

they belong to. However, it can be clearly seen in the novels that this organization is corrupt as well. And not only the organization itself but the values it has been built on are questioned by knights: “What do you think a knight is for, girl? You think it’s all taking favors from ladies and looking fine in gold plate? Knights are for killing.”

All in all, it could be said that the Faith and its religious doctrine has a tremendous influence in the way Southern live their lives. Not only their afterlife and personal belief is related to their religion. Their everyday life, organization of family, heritage, income, status in society has been decided by the rules of the Faith. It encompasses their daily routine and is very significant in the formation of Southern Civilization.

### 3.2.2.3. Drowned God

Drowned God of the Iron Islands and the Ironborn is the pagan deity of the sea who is “opposed by the Storm God, a malignant deity who dwells in the sky and hates men and all their works. He sends cruel winds, lashing rains, and the thunder and lightning that bespeak his endless wrath” (*TWoIaF* 288). Drowned God sacrificed himself and drowned for the Ironborn. From this act, derives the unique ritual of drowning men. Priests of the Drowned God conduct baptismal ceremonies of the devout:

Standing waist-deep in the surf, Aeron seized the naked boy by the shoulders and pushed his head back down as he tried to snatch a breath. “Have courage,” he said. “We came from the sea, and to the sea we must return. Open your mouth and drink deep of god’s blessing. Fill your lungs with water, that you may die and be reborn. It does no good to fight” (*AFfC* 23).

and later bring them back to life through a blow of breath from the mouth which they name the “kiss of life”.<sup>29</sup> Each person that comes back to life is congratulated saying “You have drowned and been returned to us. What is dead can never die” (*AFfC* 25). Every returnee is considered as a favor of the Drowned God. The phrase of coming from the water and going back to it is of essence for the Drowned God religion. In this sense they have a divine connection with the sea. However, drowning is a fearsome and excruciating

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<sup>29</sup> He pried apart the boy’s cold lips with his fingers and gave Emmond the kiss of life, and again, and again, until the sea came gushing from his mouth. The boy began to cough and spit, and his eyes blinked open, full of fear. (*AFfC* 25)

experience and sometimes people do not return from death. These people are considered to go to the Watery Halls of the Drowned God to feast and sit beside him. It is also said that; “the Drowned God needed a strong oarsman” (*ACoK* 382) when someone passes away. These qualities of the Drowned God who has need of men or drinks and feasts with the Ironborn is an anthropomorphic deity.

The priests also bless people with saltwater that they carry around in a waterskin:

Lifting the skin, his uncle pulled the cork and directed a thin stream of seawater down upon Theon’s head. It drenched his hair and ran over his forehead into his eyes. Sheets washed down his cheeks, and a finger crept under his cloak and doublet and down his back, a cold rivulet along his spine. The salt made his eyes burn, until it was all he could do not to cry out. He could taste the ocean on his lips. “Let Theon your servant be born again from the sea, as you were,” Aeron Greyjoy intoned. “Bless him with salt, bless him with stone, bless him with steel. Nephew, do you still know the words?”  
“What is dead may never die,” Theon said, remembering.  
“What is dead may never die,” his uncle echoed, “but rises again, harder and stronger” (175).

“The Drowned God has no temples, no holy books, no idols carved in his likeness, but he has priests aplenty.” Priests of the Drowned God never live far from the sea. They are

“Ill clad, unkempt, oft barefoot, the priests of the Drowned God have no permanent abode but wander the islands as they will, seldom straying far from the sea. Most are illiterate; theirs is an oral tradition. Wherever they might wander, lords and peasants are obliged to give them food and shelter in the name of the Drowned God. Men from other lands often think them mad, and so they may appear, but it cannot be denied that they wield great power (*TWoiAF* 288).

These details show how deeply these priests and the Drowned God is revered and influential amongst the Ironborn. Priests of the Drowned God particularly Aeron Damphair state that “Ironborn must not spill the blood of ironborn” (*AFfC* 32). But drowning is considered to be acceptable on the basis that dying in the sea is a good death for a believer of the Drowned God.

Priests repurpose driftwood for shelters near the sea and some of them only eat fish. They also use driftwood as the material for crowns of their Iron Kings which are “not so easily won” compared to the golden crowns that come with birthright. The Iron and Salt Kings

of the Iron Islands are chosen in a kingsmoot which is called by a priest of the Drowned God. “The power wielded by these prophets of the Drowned God over the ironborn should not be underestimated. Only they could summon kingsmoots, and woe to the man, be he lord or king, who dared defy them” (*TWolIaF* 294). This important role given to the priests makes their position higher than everyone. The kingsmoot is the wish of the drowned god so whomever chosen there, is chosen by the divine. Nonetheless, Aeron Damphair do not approve of women or ungodly men becoming kings. Being the elder has no significance in this regard (*AFfC* 40).

The measures people take for their faith as being drowned show how important a role their faith play in their lives. Being able to call for a kingsmoot, the political and religious status given to the priests, also shows the high position religious men of the Drowned God have in the Iron Islands. The belief of the Drowned God is intricately knit into the Iron Islands Civilization and definitely plays a huge role.

#### 3.2.2.4. Red God

R'hllor, commonly referred to as the Red God in Westeros, is the God of the dualistic belief system from Essos.<sup>30</sup> The belief is that Lord of Light, R'hllor and the Great Other, who represent cold, ice and death are in a constant war. Believers of this faith consider fire as something pure, cleansing and holy.<sup>31</sup>

There are few priests of the Red God in Westeros, and fewer Red temples. The priests that we have knowledge of are Thoros of Myr, Melisandre of Asshai and number of red priests

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<sup>30</sup> The red priests believed in two gods, she had heard, but two who were eternally at war. Dany liked that even less. She would not want to be eternally at war. (*ASoS* 978)

<sup>31</sup> “The Horn of Joramun?” Melisandre said. “No. Call it the Horn of Darkness. If the Wall falls, night falls as well, the long night that never ends. It must not happen, will not happen! The Lord of Light has seen his children in their peril and sent a champion to them, Azor Ahai reborn.” She swept a hand toward Stannis, and the great ruby at her throat pulsed with light. “FREE FOLK!” cried Melisandre. “Behold the fate of those who choose the darkness!” The Horn of Joramun burst into flame. It went up with a whoosh as swirling tongues of green and yellow fire leapt up crackling all along its length. For half a heartbeat the runes graven on the gold bands seemed to shimmer in the air. The queen’s men gave a heave and sent the horn tumbling down into the fire pit. (*ADwD* 156)

in Dorne. There is only one red temple in all of Westeros which is in Dorne. Dorne is the only place the Red God is worshipped however loosely.

The priest and priestesses of the Red God lead prayers, conduct lighting of the night fire when sun goes down and salute the rising sun every morning. “The night is dark and full of terrors.”<sup>32</sup> is a common phrase used by the priests and believers of the Red God, pointing to the fight with the Great Other whose name shall not be used, which represent the night, darkness, cold and death (*ADwD* 646).

Fire is not only considered to be the source of life, but it is also a material used for fortune-telling. Priests that are trained in the Red Temples spend years learning how to watch the flames and read the messages of their God in the images and visions that are shown to them. These images and visions, even though hard to read, supposedly gives the red priests an idea about what will happen, what might happen or what is happening. According to Melisandre it is tricky to tell something certain about the timing, even after years of training.<sup>33</sup>

Followers of the Red God believe that;

“...there will come a day after a long summer when the stars bleed, and the cold breath of darkness falls heavy on the world. In this dread hour a warrior shall draw from the fire a burning sword. And that sword shall be Lightbringer,<sup>34</sup> the Red

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<sup>32</sup> “Lord of Light, preserve us from this evil,” they prayed, led by the deep voice of Ser Godry the Giantslayer. “Show us your bright sun again, still these winds, and melt these snows, that we may reach your foes and smite them. The night is dark and cold and full of terrors, but yours is the power and glory and the light. R’hllor, fill us with your fire.” (*ADwD* 651)

<sup>33</sup> “... I shall pray for the Lord of Light to send me guidance. When I gaze into the flames, I can see through stone and earth, and find the truth within men’s souls. I can speak to kings long dead and children not yet born, and watch the years and seasons flicker past, until the end of days.” “Are your fires never wrong?” “Never... though we priests are mortal and sometimes err, mistaking this must come for this may come.” (*ADwD* 66)

<sup>34</sup> The gory story behind the sword resonate with the actions of the Red Priests so I find it necessary to give the details of it. “Do you know the tale of the forging of Lightbringer? I shall tell it to you. It was a time when darkness lay heavy on the world. To oppose it, the hero must have a hero’s blade, oh, like none that had ever been. And so, for thirty days and thirty nights Azor Ahai labored sleepless in the temple, forging a blade in the sacred fires. Heat and hammer and fold, heat and hammer and fold, oh, yes, until the sword was done. Yet when he plunged it into water to temper the steel it burst asunder. Being a hero, it was not for him to shrug and go in search of excellent grapes such as these, so again he began. The second time it took him fifty days and fifty nights, and this sword seemed even finer than the first. Azor Ahai captured a lion, to temper the blade by plunging it through the beast’s red heart, but once

Sword of Heroes, and he who clasps it shall be Azor Ahai come again, and the darkness shall flee before him” (*ACoK* 148).

This leads Melisandre to seek Azor Ahai in her fires and she thinks Stannis Baratheon is this legendary hero.<sup>35</sup> Dragonstone, being the lordly seat of Stannis Baratheon seems to fulfill the other parts of the prophesy.

“...Stannis is the Lord’s chosen, destined to lead the fight against the dark. I have seen it in the flames, read of it in ancient prophecy. When the red star bleeds and the darkness gathers, Azor Ahai shall be born again amidst smoke and salt to wake dragons out of stone. Dragonstone is the place of smoke and salt” (*ADwD* 759).

This prophesy, and its acceptance by one of the prospective kings in the game of thrones, makes the religion of the Red God significant for the timespan we are witnessing in the plot.

Another practice of the red priests is seeing after the funeral preparations. Believers of the Red God are not buried but burned. Priests give the dead “the last kiss” (*ASoS* 537) which consists of blowing fire through the mouth to the lungs and body cavity of the dead. Thoros of Myr who travels with the Brotherhood without Banners, which is a band of outlaws in Riverlands, gives the last kiss to Beric Dondarrion, bringing him back to life in doing so. Later on Catelyn Stark who has been killed in the Red Wedding is brought back from

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more the steel shattered and split. Great was his woe and great was his sorrow then, for he knew what he must do.

A hundred days and a hundred nights he labored on the third blade, and as it glowed white-hot in the sacred fires, he summoned his wife. ‘Nissa Nissa’ he said to her, for that was her name, ‘bare your breast, and know that I love you best of all that is in this world.’ She did this thing, why I cannot say, and Azor Ahai thrust the smoking sword through her living heart. It is said that her cry of anguish and ecstasy left a crack across the face of the moon, but her blood and her soul and her strength and her courage all went into the steel. Such is the tale of the forging of Lightbringer, the Red Sword of Heroes.” (*ACoK* 154-5)

<sup>35</sup> “It is night in your Seven Kingdoms now,” the red woman went on, “but soon the sun will rise again. The war continues, Davos Seaworth, and some will soon learn that even an ember in the ashes can still ignite a great blaze. The old maester looked at Stannis and saw only a man. You see a king. You are both wrong. He is the Lord’s chosen, the warrior of fire. I have seen him leading the fight against the dark, I have seen it in the flames. The flames do not lie, else you would not be here. It is written in prophecy as well. When the red star bleeds and the darkness gathers, Azor Ahai shall be born again amidst smoke and salt to wake dragons out of stone. The bleeding star has come and gone, and Dragonstone is the place of smoke and salt. Stannis Baratheon is Azor Ahai reborn!” Her red eyes blazed like twin fires, and seemed to stare deep into his soul. “You do not believe me. You doubt the truth of R’hllor even now ... yet have served him all the same, and will serve him again. I shall leave you here to think on all that I have told you. And because R’hllor is the source of all good, I shall leave the torch as well.” (*ASoS* 349)

death as Lady Stoneheart. The people who have been brought back from death describe it as losing a part of their soul, memories and self each time.

Nonetheless fire is offered with its purifying, holy qualities the reality of its destructive nature is prominent as well. The Red God require lots of sacrifices for the little guidance he gives. Stannis Baratheon has sacrificed his gods, the old gods, his brother in law and several other people for the Red God's grace<sup>36</sup> (*ACoK* 751). Yet it is clear that he did not gain enough in return if we consider how he lost the battle.

These visions and powers resemble the things Ibn Khaldun says about soothsayers in *Muqaddimah*. People of knowledge and training by God's grace can read the path that is shown to them. It is stated by Thoros that, the miracles he performs are not something from him but it are something from the Red God: "It was not me who raised him, my lady. It was the Lord. R'hllor is not done with him yet. Life is warmth, and warmth is fire, and fire is God's and God's alone" (*ASoS* 537).

The religiosity of the priests of the Red God is beyond question and people who witness the miracles either fanatically believe in the Red God or question the righteousness and ethical side of these events (347). Even in a world of fantasy and magic tearing the curtain of death and bringing dead people back is known to yield no good. The Great Other, Red God is fighting against is known by the name of the Others or White Walkers to the people of Westeros, also raise dead people as wights and use them as their puppets. From an ethical point of view, these two sides of an eternal fight seem to use different weapons as ice and fire but the methods they follow in raising death people, seeding fear in people's hearts and feeding off of this fear is the same.

To sum up, religion of Red God has been first brought to Westeros from Essos when Nymeria immigrated with her ten thousand ships, yet due to marrying into the existing culture in Dorne, faith of Red God has been assimilated. The second time was when Targaryen dragonlords invaded Westeros by fire and blood, they brought the Red God

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<sup>36</sup> "He made a great pyre of the trees as an offering to his new god. The red priestess made him do it. They say she rules him now, body and soul. He's vowed to burn the Great Sept of Baelor too, if he takes the city."

which is widely worshipped in Essos. However, for the sake of gaining more power they set aside and converted to the Faith. The third time was when Thoros of Myr was sent to the court of Robert Baratheon to gain more followers for the Red God which turned out to be hot air. The last attempt is made by Melisandre through contesting king Stannis Baratheon, which is too recent to be judged fairly. However, it could be seen that the faith of Red God never managed to root in Westeros. Either the seed is not very strong or the soil is not proper for the seed.

#### 3.2.2.5. River Goddess

The Rhoynar in Essos, before their great immigration to Westeros, lived near the River Rhoyme and held it holy. “The Rhoynar had grown rich off the bounty of their river; Mother Rhoyme, they named her” (*TWolaF* 47). They believed that Mother Rhoyme would warn them against threats and protect them from dangers. This is the main reason why Rhoynar were not keen on expansion. Like the priests of the Iron Islands they did not want to be away from the source of their means of living and existence. But contrary to the Ironborn, the Rhoynar was open to share the bounty of the Mother. The opposite character of two water deities in opposite genders tell a lot about the character this way of belief indoctrinates the people to. The Rhoynar were a people who believed in gender equality. They were also lenient to homosexuality and was not as keen on marriage as the other religions in Westeros are. They believed that the bounty of Mother Rhoyme does not discriminate between man and woman, straight and queer, high-born or base-born. Therefore, keeping paramours and not getting married was very common amongst the Rhoynar.

In the river, old and huge turtles lived. These were called the Old Men of the River by the Rhoyme and considered to be the consorts of Mother Rhoyme, therefore sacred. When Valyrian settlers moved to the riverside and started colonies the Rhoynar did not mind because they believed the bounty of the Mother is enough for everyone. “Legend claims that the clash began when the Valyrians netted and butchered one of the gigantic turtles” (47). The war between the Rhoynar and the Valyrian ended to the detriment of the former. The Rhoynar ended up immigrating to Dorne in Westeros. Dorne not being quite the climate and geography they are used to, the Rhoynar were separated from their means of



life and means of belief. Some of them found the River Greenblood in Dorne and named themselves “Orphans of the Greenblood” (53) and kept worshipping Mother Rhoyme but because their religion is bound by landscape and limits of River Rhoyme in time it was forgotten.

This religion is not like the anthropomorphic pagan religion of the Iron Islands since the Mother Rhoyme does not have human attributes. It is closer to the Old Gods belief, where the Northmen use the weirwood trees as a means of communication with gods. However, the Old Gods belief has a deeper level of holism, regarding the merging of the souls of humans, trees, animals in gods alike. That is probably the reason when the Rhoynar loses the connection to the material river, they gradually lose their faith. This loss has a significant role in the Dornish civilization. Their godlessness and loss of connection with their river goddess shape their civilization in a way that their civilization treats the environment differently from other civilizations. This difference will be examined in chapter 3.3 in depth.

### 3.2.3. The Part Group Feeling Plays in Formation of Civilizations

As it has been told in the second chapter Ibn Khaldun uses the concept of group feeling in different contexts for different meanings which makes us believe that group feeling may derive from different sources. One of the most important sources that it derives from is lineage and kindredship. Blood relations and familial affairs have the at most importance and power to create a bond between people. This social phenomenon applies to *A Song of Ice and Fire* realm as well. Killing of the kindred is regarded to be the worst abomination and biggest sin ever possible. Social organization of society is seen to by feudal noble Great Houses which have their own motto in addition to religious authorities. Mottos of each house show where their allegiance lie.

Some of the Southern houses have very similar mottos. This is because they live in the same climatic zone, believe in the same religion and also have the institution of knighthood as a social organization. In this case blood relations and the importance of lineage is surpassed by the honor code of knighthood. The code of chivalry in knighthood creates a greater group feeling amongst these houses which brings them together under the same civilization.

In this section under five categories I will examine the house mottos and coat of arms of these civilizations. The color of their banners, the animals on their heraldry, knowledge of the geography they live, societal rules and values they abide by will be taken into consideration while defining the group feeling.

#### 3.2.3.1. House Stark

House Stark is one of the oldest houses in Westeros. It existed long before the arrival of Andals. Starks trace their lineage to the First Men and Brandon the Builder. The coat of arms is “a grey direwolf racing across an ice-white field” (*AGoT* 14). Starks identify with wolves, especially the direwolf which is larger, stronger and more intelligent than the regular wolves.

Their motto is quite different than the other houses as can be seen in the below quotation:

The words gave her a chill, as they always did. The Stark words. Every noble house had its words. Family mottoes, touchstones, prayers of sorts, they boasted of honor and glory, promised loyalty and truth, swore faith and courage. All but the Starks. Winter is coming, said the Stark words. Not for the first time, she reflected on what a strange people these northerners; were (24).

These words are engrained in Starks in every aspect. They live in the North which gets colder, so this might be the reflection of geography but moreover these words are used as a warning against war and suggestive of togetherness:

“...you are also a Stark of Winterfell. You know our words.”

“Winter is coming,” Arya whispered.

“The hard cruel times,” her father said. “We tasted them on the Trident, child, and when Bran fell. You were born in the long summer, sweet one, you’ve never known anything else, but now the winter is truly coming. Remember the sigil of our House, Arya.”

“The direwolf,” she said, thinking of Nymeria. She hugged her knees against her chest, suddenly afraid.

“Let me tell you something about wolves, child. When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives. Summer is the time for squabbles. In winter, we must protect one another, keep each other warm, share our strengths (222).

This understanding of solidarity encompasses the Northern mentality. Winter is a reality of their lives. It is not seen as an enemy but being ready when the winter comes is urged.

It is also noteworthy to realize that Stark words are one of the few that relates to nature. It shows their strong connection with the place they live. When leaving Winterfell for King's Landing "...Eddard Stark was filled with a terrible sense of foreboding. This was his place, here in the north. He looked at the stone figures all around them, breathed deep in the chill silence of the crypt. He could feel the eyes of the dead. They were all listening, he knew. And winter was coming" (48). Instead of preparing for the winter he has to go to South, which makes Ned Stark uneasy. When Arya feels alone in King's Landing and is reminiscing about home, she remembers;

Back at Winterfell, they had eaten in the Great Hall almost half the time. Her father used to say that a lord needed to eat with his men, if he hoped to keep them. "Know the men who follow you," she heard him tell Robb once, "and let them know you. Don't ask your men to die for a stranger." At Winterfell, he always had an extra seat set at his own table, and every day a different man would be asked to join him. One night it would be Vayon Poole, and the talk would be coppers and bread stores and servants. The next time it would be Mikken, and her father would listen to him go on about armor and swords and how hot a forge should be and the best way to temper steel. Another day it might be Hullen with his endless horse talk, or Septon Chayle from the library, or Jory, or Ser Rodrik, or even Old Nan with her stories (217).

As it can be seen Eddard Stark is good to the people who work for him which is another strength that provides a stronger group feeling for the House Stark. Another example of this allegiance by the subordinates is seen when the Reeds, crannogmen of the swamps and bogs, come to visit Bran Stark:

Meera took Bran by the hand. "If we stay here, troubling no one, you'll be safe until the war ends. You will not learn, though, except what my brother can teach you, and you've heard what he says. If we leave this place to seek refuge at Last Hearth or beyond the Wall, we risk being taken. You are only a boy, I know, but you are our prince as well, our lord's son and our king's true heir. We have sworn you our faith by earth and water, bronze and iron, ice and fire. The risk is yours, Bran, as is the gift. The choice should be yours too, I think. We are your servants to command" (*ASoS* 132).

This level of submission and loyalty only comes through a very strong group feeling. Reeds commit their services and lives to House Stark without expecting anything in return.

Ned Stark values the guest right which is considered to be sacred. Mance Rayder, who styles himself as the King beyond the Wall once infiltrates Winterfell and sees the Stark

family. “Though once I had eaten at his bread, I was protected by guest right. The laws of hospitality are as old as the First Men, and sacred as a heart tree” (*ASoS* 102).

Men’s relationship with its non-human environment is actually a reflection of their relations with other humans. Stark family is connected with its natural environment and this reveals itself on their motto. This connection with the non-human is indicator of the connection with the human. That is why guest right means everything to Ned Stark of North while it doesn’t mean anything to lords of South. They are not ashamed to break the sacred rule of hospitality as will be seen in the following section.

### 3.2.3.2. Southern Houses of Lannister, Baratheon, Tully, Arryn, Tyrell

Southern Houses are the houses who rule the vast majority of fertile land in Westeros. The land reaches from Moat Cailin in the North to the Red Mountains of Dorne. These lands are portioned out as the Westerlands, the Vale, the Riverlands, the Reach and the Stormlands according to their geographical qualities. Great Houses of these regions are rich noblemen living in boisterous castles and maintaining a lavish lifestyle.

House Lannister trace its descent to Lann the Clever of the First Men from their mother side. When the Andals came to Westeros House Lannister intermarried with Andal noblemen and reinstated their house as a strong Andal House. Their coat of arms is a golden lion on a field of red (*AGoT* 607). Their family words are “Hear Me Roar!”<sup>37</sup> and reflect the pride and power of the family. The seat of House Lannister, Casterly Rock is also known for the gold mines in the area. This craft reflects on their psychology and what they care about is reflected on its material merit:

Behind came fifty Lannister guardsmen in gold and crimson. Tommen peered through the drapes at the empty streets. “I thought there would be more people. When Father died, all the people came out to watch us go by.” “This rain has driven them inside.” King’s Landing had never loved Lord Tywin. He never wanted love, though. “You cannot eat love, nor buy a horse with it, nor warm your halls on a cold night,” she heard him tell Jaime once, when her brother had been no older than Tommen (*AFfC* 141-2).

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<sup>37</sup> “The honor of our House was at stake. I had no choice but to ride. No man sheds Lannister blood with impunity.”

“Hear Me Roar,” Tyrion said, grinning. The Lannister words. (*AGoT* 612)

Like House Lannister, House Baratheon's words being "Ours is the Fury!" are based on pride and power. House Baratheon descent from Andal kings of the Stormlands and rumored half-brother of Aegon Targaryen. After the sack of Targaryen family by Robert Baratheon Storm's End in Stormlands, Dragonstone on the eastern shore and King's Landing are the seats House Baratheon holds. King Robert Baratheon's sigil is a crowned stag on a field of gold. However, his son Joffrey Baratheon carries the lion of his mother's House on his arms too: "The arms were divided down the middle; on one side was the crowned stag of the royal House, on the other the lion of Lannister. "The Lannisters are proud," Jon observed. "You'd think the royal sigil would be sufficient, but no. He makes his mother's House equal in honor to the king's"" (AGoT 73).

House Arryn of the Vale is a family whose descent is pure Andal noblemen. Their seat The Eyrie is a sky castle on top of a high peak. Their sigil is falcon flying against a white moon on a blue field (359). Suitably, as high as their family seat is and the falcon flies, their words "As High As Honor" reflects how much honor they have for their family name and when reminded by Tyrion Lannister, Lysa Arryn keeps her promise to him, to honor the house pride.

"I presume that House Arryn remembers its own words," the Imp said. "As High as Honor."

"You promised I could make him fly," the Lord of the Eyrie screamed at his mother. He began to shake.

Lady Lysa's face was flushed with fury. "The gods have seen fit to proclaim him innocent, child. We have no choice but to free him." She lifted her voice. "Guards. Take my lord of Lannister and his. . . creature here out of my sight. Escort them to the Bloody Gate and set them free. See that they have horses and supplies sufficient to reach the Trident, and make certain all their goods and weapons are returned to them. They shall need them on the high road" (443).

Lord of Riverlands is from House Tully. Tully is a house established after the Targaryen invasion and does not descent from a noble origin, so as much as they resemble the other houses their words "Family, Duty, Honor" reflect how they are feeling dutiful to other great houses which granted them their status (173). Their sigil is "a leaping trout, silver, against a rippling blue-and-red field" (785). This again reflects the tame nature House Tully has. While other great houses have animals of strength and danger on their banners, House Tully choses to go with a trout. When Jamie Lannister Threatens Ned Stark in

King's Landing, Ned claims his wife Catelyn would kill the captive Tyrion Lannister if Jaime killed Ned. But Jaime answers. "Would she? The noble Catelyn Tully of Riverrun murder a hostage? I think. . . not." He sighed. "But I am not willing to chance my brother's life on a woman's honor" (383). This is a great example of what honor means to these houses.

Much like House Tully, House Tyrell has a milder approach on how their family is represented on the banner. The Tyrell sigil is a golden rose on a grass-green field. Their words are Growing Strong" (824). In general the land of the Reach is very well cultivated, and agriculture has a strong contribution on the family riches. Additionally, milder southern climate might be the reason they prefer a rose as their sigil. But as the rose has its spikes Tyrell's have their sharp sides. The dowager matron of the family Lady Olenna is called Queen of Thorns for a reason. House Tyrell, as the other southern great houses, is a very proud Andal family which has almost as big a fleet as the Royal Fleet of King's Landing.

As it can be seen pride of power and honor of family is the common trait all of the Southern houses share in their respective ways. But what creates the group feeling amongst these families is the chivalric code which has its connections with the Faith of Seven, thus knighthood is not seen in the North, in Iron Islands and in Dorne.

Highgarden in Oldtown is the seat of House Tyrell and also considered to be the heart of chivalry in Westeros (*TWolaf* 347). The knighting may include a ceremonial recitation of words "In the name of the Warrior I charge you to be brave. In the name of the Father I charge you to be just. In the name of the Mother I charge you to defend the young and innocent. In the name of the Maid I charge you to protect all women"<sup>38</sup>. Or while touching the shoulder of the knight-to-be "Do you swear before the eyes of gods and men to defend those who cannot defend themselves, to protect all women and children, to obey your captains, your liege lord, and your king, to fight bravely when needed and do such other tasks as are laid upon you, however hard or humble or dangerous they may be" (*ASoS* 540).

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<sup>38</sup> *AKotSK* stands for *A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*, go to Works Cited for full reference.

Knights are expected to be courteous, courageous, lawful, and protect the women and children, in general the weak from harm's way and unjust treatment. However, there is crucial evidence to the ways of Southern chivalry rotting from the inside.

For example; making of knights at war time is not based on moral compatibility but physical ability to fight. People that have showed courage and fought on Blackwater Bay Battle have been knighted all in one day regardless of their character or ethical understanding of chivalry.

More than six hundred new knights were made that day. They had held their vigil in the Great Sept of Baelor all through the night and crossed the city barefoot that morning to prove their humble hearts. Now they came forward dressed in shifts of undyed wool to receive their knighthoods from the Kingsguard. It took a long time, since only three of the Brothers of the White Sword were on hand to dub them. ... Once knighted, each man rose, buckled on his swordbelt, and stood beneath the windows. Some had bloody feet from their walk through the city, but they stood tall and proud all the same, it seemed to Sansa (*ACoK* 911).

Another indicator that their honor, pride and chivalry is just a façade is the fact that they can be bought easily.

“Ah, but when the queen proclaims one king and the Hand another, whose peace do they protect?” Lord Petyr flicked at the dagger with his finger, setting it spinning in place. Round and round it went, wobbling as it turned. When at last it slowed to a stop, the blade pointed at Littlefinger. “Why, there’s your answer,” he said, smiling. “They follow the man who pays them” (*AGoT* 513).

There are also examples of marriage of the underaged, killing of babies, marital rape and beating of the women which one would think wouldn't be a reality if the chivalric code of honor was recognized. We see a small example of it below when Joffrey Baratheon is addressing Sansa Stark:

“Mother says I’m still to marry you, so you’ll stay here, and you’ll obey.”  
“I don’t want to marry you,” Sansa wailed. “You chopped off my father’s head!”  
“He was a traitor. I never promised to spare him, only that I’d be merciful, and I was. If he hadn’t been your father, I would have had him torn or flayed, but I gave him a clean death.”

Sansa stared at him, seeing him for the first time. He was wearing a padded crimson doublet patterned with lions and a cloth-of-gold cape with a high collar that framed his face. She wondered how she could ever have thought him handsome. His lips were as soft and red as the worms you found after a rain, and his eyes were vain and cruel. “I hate you,” she whispered.

King Joffrey's face hardened. "My mother tells me that it isn't fitting that a king should strike his wife. Ser Meryn."

The knight was on her before she could think, yanking back her hand as she tried to shield her face and backhanding her across the ear with a gloved fist (743-4).

Being from the North, Sansa neither expects nor understands the masked cruelties and plotting of court life. She does not understand that marriage is not about love but it is a business affair.

The bestiality we see the knights committing such as beating little girls and killing babies on command, remind us of what knights are really for.

"What do you think a knight is for, girl? You think it's all taking favors from ladies and looking fine in gold plate? Knights are for killing" (*ACoK* 756).

"There are no true knights, no more than there are gods. If you can't protect yourself, die and get out of the way of those who can. Sharp steel and strong arms rule this world, don't ever believe any different" (757).

Moreover, sacred rules of hospitality are betrayed by the Southern lords. The killing of Robb Stark and Catelyn Starks in the Twins by lesser lords on command of Tywin Lannister is a striking example of what the state of honor and chivalry is in these lands.

It may be said that the group feeling of the Southern Houses is failing them with this internal rotting. This may be the reason why Stannis Baratheon gradually abandons his house's coat of arms, words and religion, dedicating himself to a new group feeling which is alien to Westeros.

As he neared, she saw that Stannis wore a crown of red gold with points fashioned in the shape of flames. His belt was studded with garnets and yellow topaz, and a great square-cut ruby was set in the hilt of the sword he wore. Otherwise his dress was plain: studded leather jerkin over quilted doublet, worn boots, breeches of brown roughspun. The device on his sun-yellow banner showed a red heart surrounded by a blaze of orange fire. The crowned stag was there, yes . . . shrunken and enclosed within the heart. Even more curious was his standard bearer—a woman, garbed all in reds, face shadowed within the deep hood of her scarlet cloak. A red priestess, Catelyn thought, wondering. The sect was numerous and powerful in the Free Cities and the distant east, but there were few in the Seven Kingdoms (472-3).

All of these show that southern great houses share a group feeling that at first sight seems honorable, trustworthy and romantically chivalrous. During the war of five kings, southern lords have united forces under the same king however the disengagement of Stannis



Baratheon from this group feeling and tradition with other errors in knighthood and rules of hospitality show that southern group feeling may fail the Southern Civilization.

#### 3.2.3.3. House Nymeros Martell

House Nymeros Martell differs from the other houses and civilizations of Westeros for several reasons depending upon their ancestry. They descend half from Princess Nymeria of the Rhoynar and half from Mors Martell of the Andals.

The Rhoynar were a people living by the network of River Rhoyme in Essos. They dwelled in independent city-states filled with arts, culture, literature, beauty, architecture, bountiful food and resources. The “Rhoynar had grown rich off the bounty of their river; Mother Rhoyme, they named her. Fishers, traders, teachers, scholars, workers in wood and stone and metal, they raised their elegant towns and cities from the headwaters of the Rhoyme down to her mouth, each lovelier than the last” (*TWolAF* 47). The Rhoynar also had a different sovereignty system. Women and men had equal right to the throne. Their religion that is built upon fertility of Mother Rhoyme gives the Rhoynar a more feminine character (47).

When at first, Valyrian expansion reached their borders, these peaceful city-states welcomed the new settlers. However, a short period of time showed that the Valyrian expansion is an aggressive one that doesn't permit other cities or cultures to flourish. When the Rhoynar warred with the Valyrian Freehold, it left most of their cities decimated. Princess Nymeria collected the living children, women and elderly and set sail for a new land. Four years later, after much calamity they finally anchored on Dornish waterfront where Nymeria burned her ten thousand ships to declare that they are going to stay. They merged families with Mors Martell and gained the control of Dorne. The quite different character Dornish people have arises from Rhoynar custom. The equality of man and woman and the relaxed morality surrounding matters of homosexuality, bastardy and prostitution make Dornish custom and group feeling one of a kind.

As it was already mentioned in chapter 3.2.1. geographical challenges of Dorne affect the character of the people in a similar manner, making them a stubborn and fierce people. Ancestors of the Dornish, The Rhoynar are also depicted as a fierce people.

By and large a peaceful people, the Rhoynar could be formidable when roused to wrath, as many a would-be Andal conqueror learned to his sorrow. The Rhoynish warrior with his silver-scaled armor, fish-head helm, tall spear, and turtle-shell shield was esteemed and feared by all those who faced him in battle. It was said the Mother Rhoyme herself whispered to her children of every threat, that the Rhoynar princes wielded strange, uncanny powers, that Rhoynish women fought as fiercely as Rhoynish men, and that their cities were protected by “watery walls” that would rise to drown any foe (47).

This stubborn character of Dornish people is reflected on their family motto “Unbowed, Unbent, Unbroken” (*ACoK* 1004). Their group feeling derive from this stubborn way of life, which is developed by the harsh conditions of desert life and the memory of being exiled, orphaned from the Mother Rhoyme. This group feeling is so strong in Dornish people that, when Targaryens wanted to add Dorne to their kingdom it took them more than a century to achieve that even with their dragons. And even that didn’t come through bending the knee to the power of Targaryens, but House Targaryen made a political move of arranging a royal marriage with a Dornish prince. The Dornish also kept their local rules of passing the seat to the eldest child, no matter what gender and styling themselves as princes and princesses. Dornish banner is an impaled red sun with an upright golden spear on a field of orange. This banner is the only banner that does not have an animal on it, of all the great houses. The environmental connotations of this banner will be examined in chapter 3.3.

As for this section’s purposes it is clear that Dornish people and Dornish civilization has a distinct character which is supported by a very strong, unflinching group feeling of the exile and the outcast.

#### 3.2.3.4. House Greyjoy

According to the maesters, House Greyjoy of the Iron Islands descends from the First Men however, priests of the ironborn claim that: “We came from beneath those seas, from the watery halls of the Drowned God who made us in his likeness and gave to us dominion over all the waters of the earth” (*TWolAF* 287). What might their descent be, it is clear that the Ironborn stand apart from the others in Westeros with their “customs, beliefs and ways of governance” (287). They live on arid and infertile lands of Iron Islands, believe in a water deity named Drowned God and follow the Old Way as their social custom. The

Old Way is a bloody, violent way which includes raiding and plundering of unprotected cities, burning fleets, taking women captives as salt wives and men as thralls. This lifestyle is the basis of Ironborn group as it can be seen in the below quotation by Theon of House Greyjoy.

When we still kept the Old Way, lived by the axe instead of the pick, taking what we would, be it wealth, women, or glory. In those days, the ironborn did not work mines; that was labor for the captives brought back from the hostings, and so too the sorry business of farming and tending goats and sheep. War was an ironman's proper trade. The Drowned God had made them to reave and rape, to carve out kingdoms and write their names in fire and blood and song.

Aegon the Dragon had destroyed the Old Way when he burned Black Harren, gave Harren's kingdom back to the weakling rivermen, and reduced the Iron Islands to an insignificant backwater of a much greater realm. Yet the old red tales were still told around driftwood fires and smoky hearths all across the islands, even behind the high stone halls of Pyke. Theon's father numbered among his titles the style of Lord Reaper, and the Greyjoy words boasted that We Do Not Sow (*ACoK* 169-70).

Living by killing people, instead of working or mining the land and taking people captive is the greatness an Ironborn brags about. Words of House Greyjoy "We Do Not Sow" is quite the opposite what other civilizations on Westeros champion. Richness through sowing seeds and reaping crops turns into sowing nothing and reaping heads for plunder and raid in the Old Way. This life of piracy values paying the iron price which means killing of a man with an iron axe to have the right to seize that man's belongings, be it jewelry, weapon or woman.

The rest of his men were looting the corpses. Gevin Harlaw knelt on a dead man's chest, sawing off his finger to get at a ring. Paying the iron price. My lord father would approve. Theon thought of seeking out the bodies of the two men he'd slain himself to see if they had any jewelry worth the taking, but the notion left a bitter taste in his mouth (539).

It can be seen that Theon Greyjoy who lived with House Stark most of his life as their ward, do not belong to this group feeling anymore.

"That bauble around your neck-was it bought with gold or iron?"

Theon touched the gold chain. He had forgotten. It has been so long . . . In the Old Way, women might decorate themselves with ornaments bought with coin, but a warrior wore only the jewelry he took off the corpses of enemies slain by his own hand. Paying the iron price, it was called.

“You blush red as a maid, Theon. A question was asked. Is it the gold price you paid, or the iron?”

“The gold,” Theon admitted.

His father slid his fingers under the necklace and gave it a yank so hard it was like to take Theon’s head off, had the chain not snapped first. “My daughter has taken an axe for a lover,” Lord Balon said. “I will not have my son bedeck himself like a whore.” He dropped the broken chain onto the brazier, where it slid down among the coals. “It is as I feared. The green lands have made you soft, and the Starks have made you theirs (183-4).

Ironborn are a seafarer people and the longships are more like home than the thin land they have on the archipelago of islands. Every captain has their own ship as their land which makes them rulers of their own accord.

Ironborn captains were proud and willful, and did not go in awe of a man’s blood. The islands were too small for awe, and a longship smaller still. If every captain was a king aboard his own ship, as was often said, it was small wonder they named the islands the land of ten thousand kings. And when you have seen your kings shit over the rail and turn green in a storm, it was hard to bend the knee and pretend they were gods (166-7).

Royal blood or divine right to rule is not a notion they are familiar with. This is the reason the elections in the kingsmoot is very important and acts as a complementary factor to the group feeling of the Iron Islands civilization.

#### 3.2.3.5. House Targaryen

House Targaryen descends from the Valyrian blood of Essos. Once, the strongest empire in the world, the Valyrian Freehold was governed by the dragonlords. These lords were masters of dragons and they reigned over the volcanoes of Fourteen Flames. “If dragons did first spring from the Fourteen Flames, they must have been spread across much of the known world before they were tamed. And, in fact, there is evidence for this, as dragon bones have been found as far north as Ib, and even in the jungles of Sothoryos. But the Valyrians harnessed and subjugated them as no one else could” (*TWoIaF* 34).

The dragonlords deem themselves the blood of the dragon and kin. Their claim to be the blood of dragon and the desire to keep their blood pure is the strongest part of their group feeling. This pride comes with an arrogant and controlling behavior. “Valyria had used spells to tame the Fourteen Flames for thousands of years, that their ceaseless hunger for

slaves and wealth was as much to sustain these spells as to expand their power, and that when at last those spells faltered, the cataclysm became inevitable” (55). After the Doom of Valyria (which was the cataclysm ruined the Valyrian Freehold) a few Valyrian families and even fewer dragonlords survived.

The proudest city in all the world was gone in an instant, its fabled empire vanished in a day, the Lands of the Long Summer scorched and drowned and blighted. An empire built on blood and fire. The Valyrians reaped the seed they had sown. — thoughts of Tyrion Lannister (*ADwD* 519-20).

Aegon Targaryen and his sisters were the dragonlords that migrated to first Dragonstone then to Westeros to conquer the seven kingdoms and merge them under one king. Aegon married with his sisters, starting the tradition of intermarriages in House Targaryen in the absence of other dragonlords. The rule of House Targaryen lasted for 283 years and was terminated by Robert Baratheon.

For centuries the Targaryens had married brother to sister, since Aegon the Conqueror had taken his sisters to bride. The line must be kept pure, Viserys had told her a thousand times; theirs was the kingsblood, the golden blood of old Valyria, the blood of the dragon. Dragons did not mate with the beasts of the field, and Targaryens did not mingle their blood with that of lesser men (*AGoT* 32).

Quite differently from the other houses of Westeros, power and group feeling of House Targaryen does not derive from the social organizations of the Southern houses or the ability to adapt to the environment like Starks and Dornish people. Their power derives from terror and unrelenting destruction caused by dragons. Dragons existed in Westeros long before the rule of House Targaryen, but it was “the Valyrians, who learned to tame dragons and make them the most fearsome weapon of war that the world ever saw” (*TWoIaF* 34). The blatant image of destruction and violence of fires throughout cities and castles in Westeros has left a mark. Targaryen banner with a red three-headed dragon on a black field and their words “fire and blood” reflect what kind of a group feeling Targaryens/Valyrians built their civilization upon. Decades of wrecking down cities, using dragons as the most brutal weapons, House Targaryen made it clear that the only allegiance they ever wanted was through utter power. However, not long after two hundred years of Aegon’s conquest, all dragons were dead and the eggs that remained turned into stone and did not hatch. This brought the end of House Targaryen as they built their authority mainly on their dragons.

Daenerys Targaryen walked out of her husband's funeral pyre unburnt and with three dragons suckling on her breasts. She, like her ancestors, is establishing all her power through her dragons. People obey her and pledge allegiance to her only because she has the power of dragons. "“We follow the comet,” Dany told her khalasar. Once it was said, no word was raised against it. They had been Drogo's people, but they were hers now. The Unburnt, they called her, and Mother of Dragons. Her word was their law” (*ACoK* 189). After one of her dragons kills and eats a four-year-old girl, Daenerys hesitates.

Bones they were, broken bones and blackened. The longer ones had been cracked open for their marrow. “It were the black one,” the man said, in a Ghiscari growl, “the winged shadow. He come down from the sky and... and...” No. Dany shivered. No, no, oh no. [...] “Reznak,” Ser Barristan said quietly, “hold your tongue and open your eyes. Those are no sheep bones.” No, Dany thought, those are the bones of a child (*ADwD* 50-1).

She chains the dragons in a pit but by doing this she chains her power and the group feeling she has founded in that pit as well. She starts to lose power and authority and questions herself. Her adamant effort to finish slavery and her innate feeling of justice brings her to a brink.<sup>39</sup> In the end she decides that she is a monster and makes the conscious choice of ruling with fire and blood. “He would make a monster of me,” she whispered, “a butcher queen.” But then she thought of Drogon far away, and the dragons in the pit. There is blood on my hands too, and on my heart. We are not so different, Daario and I. We are both monsters (*ADwD* 335).

Mother of dragons, Daenerys thought. Mother of monsters. What have I unleashed upon the world? A queen I am, but my throne is made of burned bones, and it rests on quicksand. Without dragons, how could she hope to hold Meereen, much less win back Westeros? I am the blood of the dragon, she thought. If they are monsters, so am I (185).

This decision does not come easily to Daenerys, but when it comes, it is final and she is at a turning point as a queen. The actions and decisions we see onwards this point are driven by the Targaryen group feeling. She owns what she is, what she has as a weapon and rules with fire and blood as her family motto suggest. Of course, people may choose

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<sup>39</sup> Dany folded her hands together. “Words are wind, even words like love and peace. I put more trust in deeds. (*ADwD* 347)

a different group feeling and diverge from their allegiances, but this would change the civilization they belong to.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the group feeling of a civilization is one of the deciding factors of a civilization's lifespan. As long as the leader or the people of a civilization have a strong group feeling that civilization does not falter even if it is the winter that is coming their way.

### 3.3. Westerosi Civilizations and Their Relations with Nature

Up until this point in this chapter we have seen how literature especially popular literature like *A Song of Ice and Fire* plays a very significant role in the way society is constructed. Then we established that *A Song of Ice and Fire* indeed has an ecologically conscious undertone. This tone analyzed with an ecocritical eye provides us with a strong case to raise the awareness of public about the environmental crisis our world is going through. However, raising awareness by itself is not enough and fulfilling therefore I set out to examine the sociological reasons of the environmental retrogression in *A Song of Ice and Fire* and realized that a people's behavior towards its non-human environment is determined by the cultural structure of that society. Moreover, I realized links to the geographical conditions of the said land, the means of living and crafts of the region have an effect on economy which deeply influences the environmental demeanor of a society. This led me to look at the peoples of *A Song of Ice and Fire* with Ibn Khaldun's civilization methodology. Ibn Khaldun suggests that every civilization's character is based on its geographical conditions, its religion and a certain group feeling that holds together said people like mortar holds up a wall. This methodology applied to different groups of people in *A Song of Ice and Fire* helps us to see that there are indeed five different civilizations in Westeros with different perspectives about nature and their non-human environment. These perspectives for some civilizations fall under opposite sides and for others differ only nominally.

In this last section of the chapter I will examine what kind of perspectives each civilization in Westeros have about nature and the non-human environment. Hence, I will employ animal and plant metaphors that people identify with and the symbolisms of nature. Architectural design choices, technological advancements and ethical value of living

beings have an important part in how people tend to comprehend their surroundings. Therefore, these factors in different civilizations will be taken into consideration as they were examined in geographical and religious factors sections.

### 3.3.1. Northern Civilization

Northern civilization's representatives in *A Song of Ice and Fire* are Starks and the Free Folk as we have already established. Geographical reality of the North, the Old Gods belief and the cataclysm of winter hanging over their shoulders like a sword, serving them with a group feeling brings Free Folk and Starks together under the same civilization. To be able to understand this civilization's environmental perspective, it is important to examine the beginnings of this civilization and its starting point. Therefore, we need to look at the Children of the Forest and their customs as the precursor of the Northern Civilization. There are two different narratives surrounding the same people. The narrative below is the account of the victors i.e. Southern maesters about the Children of the Forest.

“They were people of the Dawn Age, the very first, before kings and kingdoms,” he said. “In those days, there were no castles or holdfasts, no cities, not so much as a market town to be found between here and the sea of Dorne. There were no men at all. Only the children of the forest dwelt in the lands we now call the Seven Kingdoms.

“They were a people dark and beautiful, small of stature, no taller than children even when grown to manhood. [...] Their gods were the gods of the forest, stream, and stone, the old gods whose names are secret. Their wise men were called greenseers, and carved strange faces in the weirwoods to keep watch on the woods. How long the children reigned here or where they came from, no man can know.

“But some twelve thousand years ago, the First Men appeared from the east, crossing the Broken Arm of Dorne before it was broken. They came with bronze swords and great leathern shields, riding horses. [...] they cut down the faces and gave them to the fire. Horrorstruck, the children went to war. [...] The wars went on until the earth ran red with blood of men and children both [...] Finally the wise of both races prevailed, and the chiefs and heroes of the First Men met the greenseers and wood dancers amidst the weirwood groves of a small island in the great lake called Gods Eye.

“There they forged the Pact. The First Men were given the coastlands, the high plains and bright meadows, the mountains and bogs, but the deep woods were to remain forever the children's, and no more weirwoods were to be put to the axe anywhere in the realm. So the gods might bear witness to the signing, every tree on the island was given a face, and afterward, the sacred order of green men was formed to keep watch over the Isle of Faces.



“The Pact began four thousand years of friendship between men and children. In time, the First Men even put aside the gods they had brought with them, and took up the worship of the secret gods of the wood” (*AGoT* 737-8).

The perception of the Children of the Forest by Maester Luwin of Winterfell is at best problematic. Firstly, this narrative identifies a people by a name that said people itself did not choose and assigns a race other than human. The dehumanization of this people despite the knowledge that they were intelligent beings and demeaning naming as children proves the standpoint of Southern Andal tradition of invasive colonization. For “Underestimating or ignoring the uncivilized other has been a common tactic for placing certain people outside the master narrative” (Zontos 103). Secondly, the reason of demeaning does not only come from the petite figure but also from the fact that the children lived in supposedly primitive conditions of forests. They did not tame animals to ride, they did not work the land to gather metals, they did not live in cities made out of wood and stone. They lived in the depths of forests, kept their clothing simple as leaves and branches from trees and they used obsidian as weapon when they hunt which is actually a stone hardened by fire. Not digging through the belly of the earth for raw materials and blending into the forest shows how they are one with nature. Frederick Johnson Turner’s frontier approach is a repository reflecting the colonizers in Westeros. “Turner believed the Indian was important only insofar as he contributed to the ‘environment’ of the frontier—the pioneer’s environment.” More or less, the Indian “was part of the landscape” (Nichols 386).

In the last novel of the saga we get to see the point of view of these people, The Children of the Forest:

“The First Men named us children,” the little woman said. “The giants called us woh dak nag gran, the squirrel people, because we were small and quick and fond of trees, but we are no squirrels, no children. Our name in the True Tongue means those who sing the song of earth. Before your Old Tongue was ever spoken, we had sung our songs ten thousand years.

I was born in the time of the dragon, and for two hundred years I walked the world of men, to watch and listen and learn. I might be walking still, but my legs were sore and my heart was weary, so I turned my feet for home.” “Two hundred years?” said Meera. The child smiled. “Men, they are the children” (*ADwD* 203).

Even in this study, the name that I used for this people is the name their colonizers and oppressors gave them and not the singers of the earth, for practical reasons of quotation.

Every bit of history that is written in and about this realm refers to these people as the Children of the Forest, the Children for short. Although disappointing, this proves once again that the subaltern is not heard even when they speak.<sup>40</sup> However, it is surprising that after peace was settled First Men integrated into the lifestyle of the Children to some degree. They still lived in their makeshift cities instead of forests but by abandoning their gods and adopting the Children's, it is clear that their perception of their environment has changed.

Another misunderstanding about the Children is that the maesters thought; "The First Men believed that the greenseers could see through the eyes of the weirwoods. That was why they cut down the trees whenever they warred upon the children. Supposedly the greenseers also had power over the beasts of the wood and the birds in the trees. Even fish" (*ACoK* 440). Yet from what the Children reveal later on to Bran Stark we understand that they did not have power *over* the beasts, but the beasts and people are like two sides of a coin, *they live in each other*. One of the best examples of this is given by Haggon, a wildling from north of the Wall, with abilities of a skinchanger. He tells his pupil Varamyr that:

A man might befriend a wolf, even break a wolf, but no man could truly tame a wolf. "Wolves and women wed for life," Haggon often said. "You take one, that's a marriage. The wolf is part of you from that day on, and you're part of him. Both of you will change" (*ADwD* 9).

This connection between humans and animals in the North is shown for hundreds of times. For example, Bran's love of climbing walls stirs his father Ned Stark to liken his son to a squirrel. "As angry as he was, his father could not help but laugh. "You're not my son," he told Bran when they fetched him down, "you're a squirrel. So be it. If you must climb, then climb, but try not to let your mother see you"" (*AGoT* 80). Here we must remember that the Children of the Forest were named the squirrel people by the giants. Bran's affinity to the Children and especially to the greenseers is foreshadowed quite early in *A Game of Thrones*. Not only Bran but all Stark children have a connection with the beasts of the land, particularly with the direwolf. The discovery of a direwolf litter in the first chapter of the saga is a major event that sets the tone for the affinity Starks have with their

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<sup>40</sup> "Can the Subaltern Speak?" by Gayatri Spivak is the article I am referencing here.

environment. It is revealed that, “There’s not been a direwolf sighted south of the Wall in two hundred years” (18). However, there they are and the wolf pups they find are both in their number and their gender fit perfectly for the Stark children as their coat of arms is a grey direwolf.

“There are five pups,” he told Father. “Three male, two female.”

“What of it, Jon?”

“You have five trueborn children,” Jon said. “Three sons, two daughters. The direwolf is the sigil of your House. Your children were meant to have these pups, my lord” (19).

Jon Snow, the bastard son of Ned Stark is the one that insists upon the connection of direwolf pups and the Stark children. Later on, they find another pup that has been pushed away. “His fur was white, where the rest of the litter was grey” (21). Because Jon is not a Stark but a Snow, he gets to have a white direwolf while the trueborn children get grey direwolves. This detail of bastardy is important for understanding how the Northern customs are tainted by the Southern customs of social hierarchy to a degree. Even so, the connection of humans and their non-human environment is overt. This codependency is ingrained in every sentence we read about Stark children. For example; when Bran is pushed down from the tower by Jaime Lannister, he enters a state of comatose. About this time Tyrion Lannister says,

“I would swear that wolf of his is keeping the boy alive. The creature is outside his window day and night, howling. Every time they chase it away, it returns. The maester said they closed the window once, to shut out the noise, and Bran seemed to weaken. When they opened it again, his heart beat stronger” (90).

Likewise, when an assassin is sent to kill the boy in comatose his direwolf saves Bran and his mother Catelyn. This incident drives Ned Stark to a very late realization. “Bran’s wolf had saved the boy’s life, he thought dully. What was it that Jon had said when they found the pups in the snow? Your children were meant to have these pups, my lord. And he had killed Sansa’s, and for what? Was it guilt he was feeling? Or fear? If the gods had sent these wolves, what folly had he done” (198). This realization had actually come to him before, when he sets out to kill Lady, Sansa’s direwolf on the demand of the queen and the king.

He left the room with his eyes burning and his daughter’s wails echoing in his ears, and found the direwolf pup where they chained her. Ned sat beside her for a while.

“Lady,” he said, tasting the name. He had never paid much attention to the names the children had picked, but looking at her now, he knew that Sansa had chosen well. She was the smallest of the litter, the prettiest, the most gentle and trusting (158).

The name Sansa Stark chose for her direwolf reflects Sansa herself. She is a pretty lady with a gentle and trusting manner on the contrary to her sister Arya. Arya names her wolf pup Nymeria,<sup>41</sup> which is also a reflection of her willful character. Even when Arya and Nymeria are separated in different continents, their bond is kept intact through the wolf dreams Arya have. She slips into the wolf, hunts and runs in the forest with her pack when she is asleep. This bond between Nymeria and Arya is the reason Arya survives under the worst conditions and speculatively will be able to return back to her home one day. On the other hand, because Lady is murdered, Sansa’s connection with her lands and her already loose bond with Northern tradition disappears. To be able to return to her home she needs to find this connection again.

There are many more examples to how Stark children and their wolves are connected and fated in the same way. For example; when Robb Stark is murdered in the Red Wedding his head is severed and his direwolf Grey Wind’s head is sewed into his neck. This disrespect and mortification of his dead body is a blatant example of Southern people’s cruelty and vain hubris in breaking the sacred guest right. Another example is how Shaggydog becomes restless as Rickon Stark becomes bad-tempered due to his separation with his mother and father.<sup>42</sup> Jon smells with his direwolf Ghost’s olfactory senses<sup>43</sup> and Bran eats while in Summer’s skin. When a lady dresses Arya in a clean dress and says that she looks like a proper lady, Arya thinks “I’m not a lady, Arya wanted to tell her, I’m

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<sup>41</sup> Arya had named her after the warrior queen of the Rhoynish, who had led her people across the narrow sea. (*AGoT* 71)

<sup>42</sup> His baby brother had been wild as a winter storm since he learned Robb was riding off to war, weeping and angry by turns. He’d refused to eat, cried and screamed for most of a night, even punched Old Nan when she tried to sing him to sleep, and the next day he’d vanished. Robb had set half the castle searching for him, and when at last they’d found him down in the crypts, Rickon had slashed at them with a rusted iron sword he’d snatched from a dead king’s hand, and Shaggydog had come slaving out of the darkness like a green-eyed demon. The wolf was near as wild as Rickon; he’d bitten Gage on the arm and torn a chunk of flesh from Mikken’s thigh. It had taken Robb himself and Grey Wind to bring him to bay. Farlen had the black wolf chained up in the kennels now, and Rickon cried all the more for being without him. (*AGoT* 573)

<sup>43</sup> Ghost nuzzled up against his shoulder, and Jon draped an arm around him. He could smell Horse’s unwashed breeches, the sweet scent of Satin combed into his beard, the rank sharp smell of fear, the giant’s overpowering musk. (*ADwD* 546)

a wolf” (*ASoS* 305). After she is separated from Nymeria and went to Bravos, Arya trains with the Faceless Men. During her training she is named Cat of the Canals and maimed by the priests. Through her artificial blindness Arya realizes that “for a time it seemed that she could see them too, through the slitted yellow eyes of the tomcat purring in her lap” (*ADwD* 702). This choice of animal also draws a line to the appearance of Leaf as Bran describes her;

It was a girl, but smaller than Arya, her skin dappled like a doe’s beneath a cloak of leaves. Her eyes were queer—large and liquid, gold and green, slitted like a cat’s eyes. No one has eyes like that. Her hair was a tangle of brown and red and gold, autumn colors, with vines and twigs and withered flowers woven through it. “Who are you?” Meera Reed was asking. Bran knew. “She’s a child. A child of the forest” (203).

We see that both Bran and Arya gain their abilities to connect with animals after they go through an experience where they are not able to use their sensual perception to the fullest. Arya is artificially blinded and Bran after his fall stays in a comatose state. Even after he wakes up, he is crippled for life and lost the ability to use his legs. Both of these examples remind us the description Ibn Khaldun uses for people gaining supernatural perception through exercise. According to Ibn Khaldun these people,

[...] attempt an artificial (state of) death through self-mortification. They kill all corporeal powers (in themselves), and wipe out all influences of those powers that color the soul in various ways. This is achieved by concentrated thinking, and doing without food for long (periods). It is definitely known that when death descends upon the body, sensual perception and the veil it constitutes disappear, and the soul beholds its essence and its world. (These men) attempt to produce, artificially before death, the experience they will have after death, and to have their soul behold the supernatural. (1:221)

Likewise, Bran and Arya lose their sensory abilities for a while which provides them with the knowledge of the greenseers and skinchangers. This knowledge is part of their initiation. In that sense all Stark children especially Bran can be considered a prophet of the Old Gods belief. His initiation to this knowledge comes through the last greenseer, the three eyed crow, legendary ancestor of the Targaryens, Lord Brynden, in the far north of the Wall. After his learning period, “Bran will oversee and caretake a vast collective memorious power; though his physical powers will diminish, his supernatural powers will augment steadily, prolonging his life indefinitely. Jojen explains to Bran that what books

are for humans, the trees, especially the weirwood trees, are for these ancient powers: repositories of knowledge and memory” (O’Leary 13). Bran’s prophetic visions reflect on approaching winter as well. In his comatose state he views the realm from a bird’s eye perspective: “He could see the whole realm, and everyone in it” (*AGoT* 162). Being able to see the past, the present and the future events garbed in heavy allegory, all at once, he turns his gaze northward.

Finally he looked north. He saw the Wall shining like blue crystal, and his bastard brother Jon sleeping alone in a cold bed, his skin growing pale and hard as the memory of all warmth fled from him. And he looked past the Wall, past endless forests cloaked in snow, past the frozen shore and the great blue-white rivers of ice and the dead plains where nothing grew or lived. North and north and north he looked, to the curtain of light at the end of the world, and then beyond that curtain. He looked deep into the heart of winter, and then he cried out, afraid, and the heat of his tears burned on his cheeks.

Now you know, the crow whispered as it sat on his shoulder. Now you know why you must live (163).

This dream vision is how Bran wakes up from his comatose state. Through his ability of looking beyond the curtain of day to day reality, he is able to see the bigger picture of climate change. This knowledge requires him to live and act like a prophet about the coming cataclysm. Through his greenseer ability he can have “A thousand eyes, a hundred skins, wisdom deep as the roots of ancient trees” (*ADwD* 525-6). The wisdom of seeing everything as a whole, with its connection to other living and dead things gives one the ability to see how mundane and insignificant human efforts for fighting the course of nature is. Leaf, a Child of the Forest tells Bran that “The gods gave us long lives but not great numbers, lest we overrun the world as deer will overrun a wood where there are no wolves to hunt them” (527). Northern Civilization is engrained with this realization of harmony and balance. That is why their utterance of “winter is coming” matches with the realization that “winter’s got no king” (*AGoT* 732). Their holistic understanding of ecology and its transformation from summer to winter and back to summer, from death to life and from life to death, equips the Northmen with a trust for this natural cycle. When it is summer, White Walkers, wights and dead things regress, but when winter comes, they turn to life, rising from death. Even at the heart of the winter, conquering winter is a vain attempt and all people can do is to prepare, protect, and trust the natural occurrence of things.

### 3.3.2. Southern Civilization

Southern civilization comprised of lordships in moderate climatic zone of Westeros is heavily influenced by the Andal tradition and religion in its environmental perspective. Building cities high, isolating humans from other beings is the result of an anthropocentric worldview. This distance from nature roots partly from the Faith, partly from the walled city life and partly from the deficient knowledge the maesters of the Citadel pump on the society. Even if it is established by many accounts from the maesters themselves that they don't know much about the history of Westeros or how seasons or magical animals work, they are still revered by the Southern civilization as the most knowledgeable men.

The carelessness of the rulers towards the seasonal change is heavily influenced by the trust they put in maesters. Furthermore, when first Andal invaders came to Westeros, it is known that they cut down forests, overhunt animals, build cities without planning and build walls around their cities so people are separated from nature and isolated not on a territorial level but also their mental and spiritual connection with their non-human environment is severed. The phrase non-human environment is actually a reflection of the isolation of humans from nature in our world. For people in the North animals, trees and humans are not separated on their value and the differentiation between human and non-human entities is not a clear cut. The lines of demarcation around being human is rather ambiguous. However, in the Southern civilization, the lines are drawn with a tyrannical authority. The representation of anthropocentric gods as figure of mother, father, maiden, warrior, smith and maiden organizes the interactions of humans with humans, leaving out the interaction of humans with nature completely unexplained. This isolation of humans in their anthropocentric worldviews creates problems in and out of cities.

City life, with walls for protection, creates the first level of separation from nature. Then the acquirement of food from markets, butchers and water from fountain taps creates a higher level of artificiality. People lose the connection with the source of their livelihood when they live in the city and do not see the fields of wheat, orchards, forests and rivers. Meat, bread, water lose their relationship with nature and become solely material items. Losing the connection of furniture with tree and pottery with clay/soil changes the way a person sees the environment. This separation of human from nature is reflected in

language as well. For example, the word “soil” itself means land, area, place c.1300s but as of 1600s it is laden with the new meaning of filth, dirt, sewage. This new attribution to the word soil is coined in a city like much of the language does and it reflects how people come to define a source of their livelihood and their bodily excrements with the same word.

This isolation from nature is seen through family coat of arms in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Each of the southern houses have a symbol of nature on their heraldry and ironically enough they are the doom or the domesticator of that particular nature. For example, House Lannister has a lion its banner, because westerlands are where mountain lions are found, however we are informed by Leaf that “The great lions of the western hills have been slain” (*ADwD* 527). They have been hunted down or caged by Lannisters. Cersei remembers the last two lions caged and domesticated in the dungeons of the Casterly Rock.

Cersei paced her cell, restless as the caged lions that had lived in the bowels of Casterly Rock when she was a girl, a legacy of her grandfather’s time. She and Jaime used to dare each other to climb into their cage, and once she worked up enough courage to slip her hand between two bars and touch one of the great tawny beasts. [...] The lion had turned his head to stare at her with huge golden eyes. Then he licked her fingers. His tongue was as rough as a rasp (987).

Obviously, this treatment of lions shows how far and isolated Lannisters have become to hunt down and cage the animal symbolizing their house, the animal that they take pride in. House Baratheon is quite similar in this regard with the Lannisters. Robert Baratheon who has a crowned stag on his banners enjoys his hunting trips more than holding court with his people. It is almost a mock on George R. R. Martin’s side and divine justice from my point of view that Robert Baratheon dies while hunting a white hart.<sup>44</sup> It shows how little House Baratheon identifies with the stag and how removed they are from the animal symbolizing their family. It is revealing that both stag and lion has been considered to be the king of the forest, noble, beautiful entities of honor and pride. However, the mistreatment of these animals is also foreshadowing of these characters. Cersei Lannister is caged like the lion she is, and Robert Baratheon is hunted down like a hart by a feral

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<sup>44</sup> A white hart had been sighted in the kingswood, and Lord Renly and Ser Barristan had joined the king to hunt it, along with Prince Joffrey, Sandor Clegane, Balon Swann, and half the court. (*AGoT* 482)



hog. It also foreshadows the downfall of both houses for their complete disengagement from their nature. Whereas Starks did not kill the direwolf pups they have found in the snow which shows they are true to their heritage and their connection with nature stands intact which hints at their possible role at leadership.

Other Southern houses, Tyrell, Arryn and Tully has natural symbols that are tamed on their husbandry. For example; the symbol of House Tyrell being a rose, points at the tamed garden against the uncontrollable wilderness with an ecologically distanced perspective. House Tully's symbol is a trout, a fish that is harmless, meek, mostly a farmed fish with no backbone. Lastly House Arryn's symbol falcon itself once a ferocious wild animal, tamed into hunting other animals for people.

The design of the cities in the Southern Westeros is also telling. Three largest and most populated cities of all Westeros; King's Landing, Oldtown and Lannisport are built upon land that has been cleared through deforestation.

King's Landing slid into view atop its three high hills. Three hundred years ago, Catelyn knew, those heights had been covered with forest, and only a handful of fisherfolk had lived on the north shore of the Blackwater Rush where that deep, swift river flowed into the sea. Then Aegon the Conqueror had sailed from Dragonstone. It was here that his army had put ashore, and there on the highest hill that he built his first crude redoubt of wood and earth.

Now the city covered the shore as far as Catelyn could see; manses and arbors and granaries, brick storehouses and timbered inns and merchant's stalls, taverns and graveyards and brothels, all piled one on another. She could hear the clamor of the fish market even at this distance. Between the buildings were broad roads lined with trees, wandering crookback streets, and alleys so narrow that two men could not walk abreast. Visenya's hill was crowned by the Great Sept of Baelor with its seven crystal towers. Across the city on the hill of Rhaenys stood the blackened walls of the Dragonpit, its huge dome collapsing into ruin, its bronze doors closed now for a century. The Street of the Sisters ran between them, straight as an arrow. The city walls rose in the distance, high and strong (*AGoT* 168).

The at rare bat population rise brings problems of health, food and clean water shortages. While city life brings a degree of comfort, a rich lifestyle to the dwellers, when unexpected sieges causes the city to seal her gates, famine, disease, theft and murder rates increase. These are all consequences of urbanization as Ibn Khaldun explains it in the *Muqaddimah*. Arya Stark, escaping the castle after her father's death, scrambles to find food on the mean streets of King's Landing.

Often as not, she went to bed hungry rather than risk the stares. Once she was outside the city, she would find berries to pick, or orchards she might raid for apples and cherries. Arya remembered seeing some from the kingsroad on the journey south. And she could dig for roots in the forest, even run down some rabbits. In the city, the only things to run down were rats and cats and scrawny dogs. The potshops would give you a fistful of coppers for a litter of pups, she'd heard, but she didn't like to think about that (*AGoT* 719).

Even during the worst moments of her hunger, Arya Stark does not want to think about selling a dog to be soup. The closeness of animals and Starks, but especially the dogs being a friend to humans makes her uneasy. Being trapped in a city, does not only cause hunger, but poverty and crime rates equally skyrocket as Tyrion Lannister witnesses.

Tyrion Lannister was not pleased by much of what he saw. [...] A naked corpse sprawled in the gutter near the Street of Looms, being torn at by a pack of feral dogs, yet no one seemed to care. Watchmen were much in evidence, moving in pairs through the alleys in their gold cloaks and shirts of black ringmail, iron cudgels never far from their hands. The markets were crowded with ragged men selling their household goods for any price they could get... and conspicuously empty of farmers selling food. What little produce he did see was three times as costly as it had been a year ago. One peddler was hawking rats roasted on a skewer. "Fresh rats," he cried loudly, "fresh rats." Doubtless fresh rats were to be preferred to old stale rotten rats. The frightening thing was, the rats looked more appetizing than most of what the butchers were selling (*ACoK* 63-4).

As it could be seen urban life not only causes a mental disengagement from nature but also a physical one. Growing apart from what used to be mother earth and coming to consider the earth with a word like soil, with the constructed morality upon the verb, tells us a lot about the paradigm shift in environmental understanding of people. In this regard what was once dear and near to humans' heart comes to be considered unnatural. Examples of this estrangement is seen on Cersei Lannister quite clearly. After Bran Stark is pushed down from the tower by her brother, Cersei wishes that he does not wake up. And when she hears that Bran's wolf is what keeps him alive: "The queen shuddered. "There is something unnatural about those animals," she said. "They are dangerous. I will not have any of them coming south with us." Jaime said, "You'll have a hard time stopping them, sister. They follow those girls everywhere"" (*AGoT* 90).

What Cersei thinks unnatural about the direwolves is the connection Stark children have with them, which is in fact the most natural of relationships. A natural occurrence like rain is normally a blessing for agriculture in a temperate climate zone civilization, as Ser Jorah

tells Deanerys Targaryen “The common people pray for rain, healthy children, and a summer that never ends” (*AGoT* 233). However, living in a city, in a castle all her life distorts Cersei’s perspective of rain. She tells her son “Rain is rain. Close the curtain before you let any more in. That mantle is sable, would you have it soaked” (*AfC* 141). What is a mercy, a source of life for a person living on the land becomes a spoiling thing for a city dweller. Rain ruins a precious fur. It is important to differentiate that people in the North wear animal furs as well for protection from cold. The difference is, one uses the fur for a need and the other fur luxurious purposes only. This divide from nature in city dwellers is neatly drawn by Ibn Khaldun when he tells about the differences of city civilizations and nomadic civilizations.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to realize that Southern civilization with its agricultural, sedentary city life, is far removed from nature and regards it as wilderness.

Sansa shuddered. They had been twelve days crossing the Neck, rumbling down a crooked causeway through an endless black bog, and she had hated every moment of it. The air had been damp and clammy, the causeway so narrow they could not even make proper camp at night, they had to stop right on the kingsroad. Dense thickets of halfdrowned trees pressed close around them, branches dripping with curtains of pale fungus. Huge flowers bloomed in the mud and floated on pools of stagnant water, but if you were stupid enough to leave the causeway to pluck them, there were quicksands waiting to suck you down, and snakes watching from the trees, and lizard-lions floating half-submerged in the water, like black logs with eyes and teeth (*AGoT* 141).

The way Sansa describes the bogs of the Neck is perilous and wild. The unexpected dangers of natural wetlands do not serve the needs or wishes of a city dweller. In this regard Sansa over and over again shows that she is more Southern than Northern. Her appearance is the striking image of her mother Catelyn Tully of the riverlands. She likes lemon cakes and beautiful gowns with delicate fabrics. She is good at her courtesies and

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<sup>45</sup> As one knows, sedentary culture is the adoption of diversified luxuries, the cultivation of the things that go with them, and addiction to the crafts that give elegance to all the various kinds of (luxury), such as the crafts of cooking ,dressmaking, building, and (making) carpets, vessels, and all other parts of(domestic) economy. For the elegant execution of all these things, there exist many crafts not needed in desert life with its lack of elegance. When elegance in(domestic) economy has reached the limit, it is followed by subservience to desires. From all these customs, the human soul receives a multiple coloring that undermines its religion and worldly (well-being). (It cannot preserve) its religion, because it has now been firmly colored by customs (of luxury), and it is difficult to discard such coloring. (Khaldun 2:292) This means the end of that particular civilization’s life span and brings about its corruption.

needlework. She wants to marry a knight and becoming the queen of love and beauty at a tournament is the best thing that has ever happened for her. However, her closeness to the norms of Southern civilization's group feeling ends there. She doesn't know the cunning, manipulative manners of the court life. In comparison with Sansa's description of the Neck as a horrible place, Meera Reed's account of the Neck seems marvelous:

“Once there was a curious lad who lived in the Neck. He was small like all crannogmen, but brave and smart and strong as well. He grew up hunting and fishing and climbing trees, and learned all the magics of my people.”

“[...] he could breathe mud and run on leaves, and change earth to water and water to earth with no more than a whispered word. He could talk to trees and weave words and make castles appear and disappear” (*ASoS* 337).

People of the land connect with the land, learn its secrets and adapt to its ways. It is quite like the difference between a Northern godswood and a Southern godswood. While the godswood in King's Landing is a garden with beautiful flowers, fountains and sweet scents, the godswood in Winterfell has an eerie image with the weirwood trees, a stagnant pond and dense trees. The difference is the environmental perception. The way Southern civilization regards the wilderness, the frontier through its geographical, religious and sociological ways creates the chasm between human and nature. This isolation from nature creates the ignorance towards the seasonal change, probably causing the perish of Southern civilization in winter.

### 3.3.3. Dornish Civilization

“Only a Dornishman can ever truly know Dorne, it is said. The southernmost of the Seven Kingdoms is also the most inhospitable ... and the strangest, to the eyes of any man raised in the Reach or the westerlands or King's Landing. For Dorne is different, in more ways than can be told” (*TWoIaF* 375).

Dorne's geography lined with Red Mountains to the north and surrounded with The Summer Sea and the Sea of Dorne from three sides differentiates it from the lordships of the Southern Civilization. Harsh conditions of scalding sun on the arid desert makes Dorne a hard place to live. People living in Dorne came to be a hard people because of these conditions. According to the maesters' accounts, those are the people “who saw a beauty in that stark, hot, cruel land and chose to make their homes there. Most of them settled

along the banks of the river they named the Greenblood. Though meager when compared to the Mander, the Trident, or the Blackwater Rush, the waters of the Greenblood are truly the lifeblood of Dorne” (376).

Half of Dorne’s population being the descendants of the Rhoynar immigrating a thousand years ago, Rhoynar tradition and worldview still has a strong influence on the Dornish Civilization. The importance of water in a desert region becomes significantly sorrowful when we think about from where these people originated. Their motherland was the city-states through the coast of River Rhoyme. They called it Mother Rhoyme and believed in its fertility and its bounty. “Though united by blood and culture and the river that had given them birth, the Rhoynish cities were otherwise fiercely independent, each with its own prince ... or princess, for amongst these river folk, women were regarded as the equals of men” (47). The egalitarian practices of the Rhoynar reflects a Mother Goddess society. The agrarian communities of these kind of society knows the value of earth, water and sun. They are connected with their surroundings even if they live in cities, because the river runs through the city as a constant reminder of nature’s moving and transitory manner. It is also very central that these people not only connect with the land on a utilitarian principle, but they hold earth and water sacred. They showed little interest in expansion because “the river was their home, their mother, and their god, and few of them wished to dwell beyond the sound of her eternal song” (47).

However, after the wars and terrible defeat against Valyrian Freehold, the Rhoynar followed Nymeria across the Narrow Sea to Dorne and there, she burnt her ten thousand ships, declaring Dorne home. The Rhoynar never truly recovered from the shock of finding a complete opposite geography in Dorne than they are used to and the trauma of bereavement from Mother Rhoyme. According to the attachment theory, loss of a parent if traumatic and not recuperated in a lenient manner, causes people to have trust issues and difficulty at building successful intimate relations. The Rhoynar by way of Nymeria’s marriage to House Martell, seems to successfully settle relationships in Dorne. However, this is not true. These people never really got over the trauma of being ripped off of the breast of a fertile river and left on dry sandcastles. The scarcity of water resources causes them to lose connection with land, sort of passive-aggressively resisting to building a

connection with earth. “Some of the Rhoynar mourned the loss of the ships, and rather than embracing their new land, they took to plying the waters of the Greenblood, finding it a pale shadow of Mother Rhoyme, whom they continued to worship. They still exist to this day, known as the orphans of the Greenblood” (53).

However, we also see that their alliance with House Martell taught some of the Rhoynar to love the land and join their different traits for survival. Martell sand and Rhoynar water combined, created the Dornish mud. Barristan Selmy’s account of Quentin Martell is an example of this trait.

That one is his father's son. Short and stocky, plain-faced, he seemed a decent lad, sober, sensible, dutiful ... but not the sort to make a young girl's heart beat faster. And Daenerys Targaryen, whatever else she might be, was still a young girl, as she herself would claim when it pleased her to play the innocent. Like all good queens she put her people first—else she would never have wed Hizdahr zo Loraq—but the girl in her still yearned for poetry, passion, and laughter. She wants fire, and Dorne sent her mud. You could make a poultice out of mud to cool a fever. You could plant seeds in mud and grow a crop to feed your children. Mud would nourish you, where fire would only consume you, but fools and children and young girls would choose fire every time (*ADwD* 914).

Dornish mud is a significant material used in building huts that protect from the relentless sun in addition to being effective on Dornish character. Although, this is not the only type of people Dorne has. Oberyn Martell with his short and hot temper, and his poisonous spears is the striking image of a viper or a desert scorpion, as was mentioned in former chapters.

The banner of House Nymeros Martell is merger of the two coats of arms; Rhoynish sun and Dornish spear are worked together. This banner reflects the cruel reality of Dornish deserts. According to the Targaryen kind Dorean “The arms of House Martell display the sun and spear, the Dornishman's two favored weapons, but of the two, the sun is the more deadly” (*AFfC* 438). Any enemy coming to the vast wastelands passing the Red Mountains, encounters the dangers of the poisonous desert animals, thirst and more importantly the sun burning like a fireball on the clear desert sky, “for every man who stumbled on a well, a hundred must surely have died of thirst beneath the blazing Dornish sun” (*TWoIaF* 376). Ironically for Dornishmen who know the crevasses of desert caves

and shadows of the rocks, this barren land is not an enemy after getting used to it. They blend in wearing mostly yellow and orange silk clothing.

“Moving from desert oasis to desert oasis, crossing the sands with the aid of what wells they know of in the midst of the wastes, raising their children along with their goats and their horses. It is the sandy Dornish who are the chief breeders of the famed sand steeds, considered the most beautiful horses in the Seven Kingdoms. Though light-boned and unable to easily bear the weight of a knight in armor, they are swift and tireless, able to run through a day and a night with no more than a few drinks of water. The Dornish love their sand steeds almost as much as they love their children (385).

As it can be seen, the loss of Mother Rhoyme is somewhat redeemed with the gaining of their distinct culture and beautiful steeds that they love. It could be said, even though living in quite horrible conditions, Dornishmen blend in with earth and stay connected with their environment however they are traumatized, and will always be, to a degree because of their bereavement.

According to Archmaester Brude Dorne and Northern Westeros have much in common.

“One is hot and one is cold, yet these ancient kingdoms of sand and snow are set apart from the rest of Westeros by history, culture, and tradition. Both are thinly peopled, compared to the lands betwixt. Both cling stubbornly to their own laws and their own traditions. Neither was ever truly conquered by the dragons. The King in the North accepted Aegon Targaryen as his overlord peaceably, whilst Dorne resisted the might of the Targaryens valiantly for almost two hundred years, before finally submitting to the Iron Throne through marriage. Dornishmen and Northmen alike are derided as savages by the ignorant of the five ‘civilized’ kingdoms, and celebrated for their valor by those who have crossed swords with them” (375).

However, growing apart from the nature that used to be a nourishing mother and coming to a hostile land is not an easy wound to heal. In this regard what was once comely and familiar becomes a stranger therefore uncanny for people. This change and loss of religion causes Dornishmen to never establish a religious bond and they do not consider anything sacred. As Arianne Martell tells Ser Balon Swann “Even death is not sacred to a Dornishmen” (*ADwD* 588). This is where the Dornish Civilization differs from the Northern Civilization. The Dornish as it can be seen have a deep connection with nature but not a sacred and prophetic one like the Northmen have, because of their traumatic experience of forced migration and exile.

### 3.3.4. Ironborn Civilization

Yet however the ironborn arose, it cannot be denied that they stand apart, with customs, beliefs, and ways of governance quite unlike those common elsewhere in the Seven Kingdoms... These cold, wet, windswept islands were never well forested, and their thin soil did not support the growth of weirwoods. No giants ever made their homes here, nor did the children of the forest walk what woods there were. The old gods worshipped by these elder races were likewise absent. And though the Andals did reach the islands eventually, their Faith never took root here either, for another god had come before the Seven: the Drowned God, creator of the seas and father of the ironborn (*TWoIaF* 287).

Ironborn with their religion, the harsh conditions of the islands they live in and the way of life they pursue, definitely has a separate civilization in *A Song of Ice and Fire* realm. Their complicated love-hate relationship with the sea marks an entirely different environmental perspective as well.

Ironborn lives on the archipelago of Iron Islands, where the soil is “thin and stony, more suitable for the grazing of goats than the raising of crops. The ironborn would surely suffer famine every winter but for the endless bounty of the sea and the fisherfolk who reap it (290). Trees are not a frequent sight, and the land is separated to many small islands. Roaring waves wash the shore with saltwater, “the ancient stones slick with spray and spotted by lichen, the sea foaming under their feet like some great wild beast, the salt wind clutching at their clothes” (*ACoK* 181) make it a harsh place to inhabit. These harsh environmental conditions make the Ironborn a harsh people as well. “Some say that the Iron Islands are named for the ore that is found there in such abundance, but the ironborn themselves insist that the name derives from their nature, for they are a hard people, as unbending as their god” (*TWoIaF* 288).

Ironborn believe that the sea is the source of life. Stranded on infertile land the sea is the only place they find food and means of living. But the sea is also the place they find their ending. Their religion is based on a water deity, the Drowned God, who himself was drown by the Storm God. This reflects to the Ironborn tradition with the drowning ceremonies. The Ironborn believe that "What is dead may never die, but rises again, harder and stronger" (*ACoK* 175). This belief causes them to be fearless seaman and cruel reavers.



The relationship of Ironborn with the sea fluctuate. It is their god, an inseparable part of their lifestyle and it means freedom to the Ironborn. When Theon Greyjoy, feels the fresh sea wind on his face after ten years on green lands he thinks:

The sea meant freedom to the men of the Iron Islands. He had forgotten that until the Myraham had raised sail at Seagard. The sounds brought old feelings back; the creak of wood and rope, the captain's shouted commands, the snap of the sails as the wind filled them, each as familiar as the beating of his own heart, and as comforting. I must remember this, Theon vowed to himself. I must never go far from the sea again (170).

Ironborn feel at home when they are at the sea or near it. Some families on the Iron Island live on the inland areas of the isles and they work mines but Aeron Greyjoy, priest of the Drowned God feels that living away from the sea makes these people people feeble and queer.

His keep was in the Hardstone Hills, as far from the Drowned God's realm as any place in the isles. Gorold's folk toiled down in Gorold's mines, in the stony dark beneath the earth. Some lived and died without setting eyes upon saltwater. Small wonder that such folk are crabbed and queer. (*AFfC* 29)

For a true Ironborn's life and death is bound by the sea and religious liturgy reflect this reality. Aeron declares "We were born from the sea, and to the sea we all return" (36). This sentence ostensibly reflects a belief rooted in nature yet, as we look at their approach towards other parts of nature, we see a different manner.

He did not like this Isle of Cedars either. The hunting might be good, but the forests were too green and still, full of twisted trees and queer bright flowers like none his men had ever seen before, and there were horrors lurking amongst the broken palaces and shattered statues of drowned Velos, half a league north of the point where the fleet lay at anchor. The last time Victarion had spent a night ashore, his dreams had been dark and disturbing and when he woke his mouth was full of blood. The maester said he had bitten his own tongue in his sleep, but he took it for a sign from the Drowned God, a warning that if he lingered here too long, he would choke on his own blood (*ADwD* 867).

Bright green colors and foreign plants of jungles make Victarion Greyjoy uneasy. He feels in danger in nature and he misses the familiar comforts of his manmade ship. Ironborn live more on their ships than they do on the shore and it is repeated several times in the narrative that every captain is a king in his ship (*ACoK* 166). This demonstrate the mindset

of the Ironborn and their relationship with power. Captains feel like kings on board of their ships and they want to extend this power to greenlands.

“The lords are gone south with the pup. Those who remained behind are the cravens, old men, and green boys. They will yield or fall, one by one. Winterfell may defy us for a year, but what of it? The rest shall be ours, forest and field and hall, and we shall make the folk our thralls and salt wives.”

Aeron Damphair raised his arms. “And the waters of wrath will rise high, and the Drowned God will spread his dominion across the green lands!

“What is dead can never die,” Victarion intoned. Lord Balon and Asha echoed his words (395-6).

This conferral on the side of the Drowned God reminds us of the Biblical interpretation of God’s permission for mankind to rule over other creation. “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”” (Genesis 1:28) Although some theologians argue that ruling over can mean stewardship and not dominion, it can be seen in history that medieval Christianity and Puritan ideology are not based on a discipline of stewardship. It is also proved by Ironborn actions that their understanding of dominion is one that inflicts destruction, pillaging and plunder.

To be able to understand Ironborn Civilization’s perspective on nature one needs to understand the concept of *paying the iron price*.

All that the islands lacked the reavers found in the green lands. Little and less was taken in trade; much and more was bought in blood, with the point of a sword or the edge of an axe. And when the reavers returned to the islands with such plunder, they would say that they had “paid the iron price” for it; those who stayed behind “paid the gold price” to acquire these treasures or went without (*TWolF* 290-1).

At first sight harsh conditions of the islands seem to be the reason for the Ironborn to set sail to greenlands. Yet, the condemnation on paying gold to buy something and glorification of reaping wealth and victory through blood and iron makes it clear that lack of resources cannot be the reason behind this hunger for dominion over nature and other people. It seems to stem from the ego of a bloodthirsty warrior for glory. When Robb Stark offers a kingdom to Balon Greyjoy on Iron Islands in return for his support in the war Balon declares “I am the Greyjoy, Lord Reaper of Pyke, King of Salt and Rock, Son of the Sea Wind, and no man gives me a crown. I pay the iron price. I will take my crown,

as Urron Redhand did five thousand years ago” (*ACoK* 186). This malevolent character of the Ironborn is symbolized on House Greyjoy’s banner as well. The kraken with its tentacles and enormous size, is a mythical creature known as the horrid grim reapers of the sea, metaphorically pointing to the bloody reaping of the Ironborn.

Another significant part of the pride Ironborn take in themselves is their unrelenting want of freedom. This is part of the reason Aeron Greyjoy condemns maesters.

Send your women away, my lord. And the maester as well.” He had no love of maesters. Their ravens were creatures of the Storm God, and he did not trust their healing, not since Urri. No proper man would choose a life of thralldom, nor forge a chain of servitude to wear about his throat (*AFfC* 30-1).

“Too long have the ironborn listened to you chain-neck maesters prating of the green lands and their laws. It is time we listened to the sea again. It is time we listened to the voice of god” (33).

As it can be seen, the Ironborn does not like the green land law or their ravens that they deem the creature of the Storm God. This distrust towards maesters, ravens and green land laws proves that the Ironborn Civilization is a closed one even though they are out on the sea by the mist of morning to reave, ravage and reap. This “close civilization”<sup>46</sup> with its limited utilitarian perspective on nature, uses the resources of the earth as much as they want and need, without a connection to nature or gratitude for what nature offers. Their understanding of ecology is very limited and basic as can be seen in the dialogue between Theon and Aeron:

“I have been half my life away from home,” Theon ventured at last. “Will I find the islands changed?”

“Men fish the sea, dig in the earth, and die. Women birth children in blood and pain, and die. Night follows day. The winds and tides remain. The islands are as our god made them” (*ACoK* 176).

Aeron’s suggestion that the islands are as their god made them lacks the wisdom to understand the fluid nature of ecological balance and the blatantly repeated inconsistent seasonal changes of Westeros. There is constant strife against nature and its difficulties but in contrast with the Northern Civilization, which is situated in the tough terrain of the North, the Ironborn have little clue about connecting to, living in and with nature.

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<sup>46</sup> See more on this in Recep Şentürk’s *Civilization and Values, Open Civilization*

### 3.3.5. Valyrian Civilization

As it has been mentioned in the previous sections in this chapter, Valyrian Civilization has been established on utter power through fire and blood. They had excelled in arcane arts and this helped the Valyrian to build magnificent cities and a great web of roads.

During one stop, he used the time to have a closer look at the road. Tyrion knew what he would find: not packed earth, nor bricks, nor cobbles, but a ribbon of fused stone raised a half foot above the ground to allow rainfall and snowmelt to run off its shoulders. Unlike the muddy tracks that passed for roads in the Seven Kingdoms, the Valyrian roads were wide enough for three wagons to pass abreast, and neither time nor traffic marred them. They still endured, unchanging, four centuries after Valyria itself had met its Doom. He looked for ruts and cracks but found only a pile of warm dung deposited by one of the horses (*ADwD* 88).

Their advanced ability in working materials like steel, gold and silver made the crafting of Valyrian steel world famous. Before the Doom of Valyria every noble lord and king was trying to get their hands on Valyrian steel to make a family heirloom. Valyrian knowledge about the elements of the arcane gave them the chance to control fire both in volcanoes of Fourteen Flames and on dragons. “Sheltered there, amidst the great volcanic mountains known as the Fourteen Flames, were the Valyrians, who learned to tame dragons and make them the most fearsome weapon of war that the world ever saw” (*TWolaF* 34). Their knowledge of these elements carried the technology Valyrian Civilization uses to a level beyond belief.

The candle itself was three feet tall and slender as a sword, ridged and twisted, glittering black. “Is that ....”

“...obsidian,” said the other man in the room, a pale, fleshy, pasty-faced young fellow with round shoulders, soft hands, close-set eyes, and food stains on his robes.

“Call it dragonglass.” Archmaester Marwyn glanced at the candle for a moment. “It burns but is not consumed.”

“What feeds the flame?” asked Sam.

“What feeds a dragon’s fire?” Marwyn seated himself upon a stool. “All Valyrian sorcery was rooted in blood or fire. The sorcerers of the Freehold could see across mountains, seas, and deserts with one of these glass candles. They could enter a man’s dreams and give him visions, and speak to one another half a world apart, seated before their candles (*AFfC* 973-4).

The level of technology they achieve is so great that, people have no chance but to think it was sorcery, magic or the arcane. What the Valyrian did was, in its essence, knowing the elements and the workings of the Earth and using it at their attainment of political and

economic power. To that end, Valyrians exploited the minerals of the earth, dominated the elements to their wish and used slaves for labor without any limitations. This limitless exploitation and colonization on the basis of not having a rival equal to their power created the egotistical Valyrian pride of racial supremacy.

For centuries the Targaryens had married brother to sister, since Aegon the Conqueror had taken his sisters to bride. The line must be kept pure, Viserys had told her a thousand times; theirs was the kingsblood, the golden blood of old Valyria, the blood of the dragon. Dragons did not mate with the beasts of the field, and Targaryens did not mingle their blood with that of lesser men (*AGoT* 32).

The kinship they find in the dragons was a result of this boastful pride and glorification. They assumed superiority over other people, other animals and nature in general to a great level. “The dragon kings had wed brother to sister, but they were the blood of old Valyria where such practices had been common, and like their dragons the Targaryens answered to neither gods nor men” (*ACoK* 497-8). This quality of not answering to gods or men hint at a lack of common ethics. Their pride in their power that has been established through the usage of fire for destruction sets the tone for their actions and lack of morality from a Southern Civilization point of view. However, the blood that spilled under the fiery power of the Valyrian, unaccounted for a very long time, is what brings the downfall of Valyrian Freehold in Essos.

It was written that on the day of Doom every hill for five hundred miles had split asunder to fill the air with ash and smoke and fire, blazes so hot and hungry that even the dragons in the sky were engulfed and consumed. Great rents had opened in the earth, swallowing palaces, temples, entire towns. Lakes boiled or turned to acid, mountains burst, fiery fountains spewed molten rock a thousand feet into the air, red clouds rained down dragonglass and the black blood of demons, and to the north the ground splintered and collapsed and fell in on itself and an angry sea came rushing in.

The proudest city in all the world was gone in an instant, its fabled empire vanished in a day, the Lands of the Long Summer scorched and drowned and blighted. An empire built on blood and fire. The Valyrians reaped the seed they had sown. — thoughts of Tyrion Lannister (*ADwD* 519).

No one knows what the real reason of the cataclysm was, if the explosion of the volcanoes was a natural cataclysm that has been approaching for too long, as a result of extracting minerals without precautions. But some suggest that the slaves that had been toiling under the earth, in the mines of gold and silver are the ones that removed the spells that prevent the volcanoes from going off. In any case one might say what happened to the Valyrians

was well deserved because of the atrocities they committed. Only one family of Valyrian dragonlords survived the Doom, Targaryens.

The Targaryens were far from the most powerful of the dragonlords, and their rivals saw their flight to Dragonstone as an act of surrender, as cowardice. But Lord Aenar's maiden daughter Daenys, known forever afterward as Daenys the Dreamer, had foreseen the destruction of Valyria by fire. And when the Doom came twelve years later, the Targaryens were the only dragonlords to survive (*TWolaf* 63).

Daenys Targaryen's dream vision, as it always does in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, indicate a connection with nature, with the invisible matrix of mystical web George R.R. Martin is weaving. But, most of all it is a sign of knowledge and wisdom.

These prophetic dreams reflect a deep level of knowledge on how nature works and how the consequences of actions affect people. Targaryen dragonlords' survival from the Doom is quite like the survival of Northmen and the Children of the Forest from the Long Night, the winter that lasted a generation. However, to what end this knowledge is used differs between the Valyrian and Northern Civilizations in terms of their environmental perspective.

Daenerys Targaryen being the runaway princess (and last living member) of the Targaryen family, grows up under the influence of being an immigrant. She spends her life on the run with her brother Viserys. She is wed to a Dothraki horselord at the age of sixteen and through her journey in the Dothraki Sea we see the character development of Daenerys Stormborn. She starts off as a timid girl, unable to ride a horse. Her experience outside a city is close to none. However very quickly she gets used to the customs of tribal life of nomads and starts to enjoy her journey.

As the riding became less an ordeal, Dany began to notice the beauties of the land around her. She rode at the head of the khalasar with Drogo and his bloodriders, so she came to each country fresh and unspoiled. Behind them the great horde might tear the earth and muddy the rivers and send up clouds of choking dust, but the fields ahead of them were always green and verdant. [...] For half a moon, they rode through the Forest of Qohor, where the leaves made a golden canopy high above them, and the trunks of the trees were as wide as city gates. There were great elk in that wood, and spotted tigers, and lemurs with silver fur and huge purple eyes, but all fled before the approach of the khalasar and Dany got no glimpse of them (*AGoT* 229).

She realizes that wherever the human beings touch, they spoil the beauty of nature. She also has a deep connection with her horse, gifted to her by her husband. She feels as if she has wings while riding the filly and she thinks “She had never loved anything so much” (229). She also has a very prominent connection with the dragon eggs that have been gifted to her for her wedding. When she touches them, she feels a throb like a heartbeat in the fossilized dragon eggs. All of these indicate her deep connection with elements of nature.

Valyrian Civilization is more than anything based upon fire and until this point we have seen the destructiveness, the pride, the power of fire. Yet with Daenerys we start to see the cleansing, purifying and rejuvenating qualities of fire.

Yet when she slept that night, she dreamt the dragon dream again. Viserys was not in it this time. There was only her and the dragon. Its scales were black as night, wet and slick with blood. Her blood, Dany sensed. Its eyes were pools of molten magma, and when it opened its mouth, the flame came roaring out in a hot jet. She could hear it singing to her, She opened her arms to the fire, embraced it, let it swallow her whole, let it cleanse her and temper her and scour her clean. She could feel her flesh sear and blacken and slough away, could feel her blood boil and turn to steam, and yet there was no pain. She felt strong and new and fierce (228).

These dream visions Daenerys frequently has, foreshadow her rebirth from the funeral pyre of her husband with her hatched dragons. However, fire and power, even when it is used with the best of intentions, has its consequences. The biggest of Dany’s dragons, Drogon kills a girl and eats it.

“I am the blood of the dragon,” she told the grass, aloud. Once, the grass whispered back, until you chained your dragons in the dark. “Drogon killed a little girl. Her name was... her name...” Dany could not recall the child’s name. That made her so sad that she would have cried if all her tears had not been burned away.

“I will never have a little girl. I was the Mother of Dragons.”

Aye, the grass said, but you turned against your children.

Her belly was empty, her feet sore and blistered, and it seemed to her that the cramping had grown worse (*ADwD* 1094-5).

This incident shakes Daenerys deeply. Even after locking up her dragons in a pit, her conscience does not let her off. However, time and time again she realizes the heavy price one needs to pay for power. She asks herself “What sort of mother lets her children rot in darkness? If I look back, I am doomed, Dany told herself... but how could she not look back? I should have seen it coming. Was I so blind, or did I close my eyes willfully, so I

would not have to see the price of power” (183). The decision she has to make between owning her dragon blood, her dragons and her Valyrian heritage with all its heavy prices or losing her power all at once, pushes Daenerys to think back on her motivations.

“I had to take Meereen or see my children starve along the march.” Dany could still see the trail of corpses she had left behind her crossing the Red Waste. It was not a sight she wished to see again.

“I had to take Meereen to feed my people.”

You took Meereen, he told her, yet still you lingered.

“To be a queen.”

You are a queen [...] In Westeros.

“It is such a long way,” she complained. “I was tired, Jorah. I was weary of war. I wanted to rest, to laugh, to plant trees and see them grow. I am only a young girl.”

No. You are the blood of the dragon. The whispering was growing fainter, as if Ser Jorah were falling farther behind. Dragons plant no trees. Remember that.

Remember who you are, what you were made to be. Remember your words.

“Fire and Blood,” Daenerys told the swaying grass (1096-7).

However, Daenerys realizes if one establishes their power through fire and blood, it is a one-way road that does not allow nurturing and nourishing others than the dragons. Much like the colonizing superpowers of our world, if a civilization’s foundations are based on the exploitation, colonization and suffering of people, without changing their methods it is almost impossible for them to establish a just rule even with the best of intentions. Ecocritic Glotfelty points out that regarding nuclear “better than coal” is the first step of acceptance against environmental justice (“Reclaiming Nimby” 196). The tool that Daenerys unknowingly uses to establish power, her dragons, are a mass destruction weapon much like the nuclear power that harmed and continues to harm the world in more than one way. In his 2015 thesis Benjamin M. Garner touches upon the contrast between the destruction Smaug causes (47) in *Hobbit*, and the peaceful and renewable way of life the hobbits lead (43).

The accounts of *A Song of Ice and Fire* historians claim that “The Doom is estimated to have killed millions of people in the space of a single day, with millions more dying in the following months from starvation and exposure. Strange vapors drifted across the water, and if a man breathed them in he would die on the spot” (Werthead). This indicate the Doom to be a catastrophe more than a mere earthquake or volcano explosion. Mantarys, a city near the heart of Valyria and at the periphery of the event horizon of the Doom is described as “a place where the men are said to be born twisted and monstrous”



(*TWoIaF* 57). These are all indications of radioactive poisoning. It is stated that Valyrians were “who learned to tame dragons and make them the most fearsome weapon of war that the world ever saw” (34). All of these references to Valyrian power acquirement through deadly weapons resemble nuclear warfare in a way we cannot dismiss. It is important to remember that dragons existed in the realms of *A Song of Ice and Fire* long before Valyrian dragonlords have tamed them to be their weapons. Their existence by themselves does not make them a mass extinction weapon, quite like the existence of radioactive elements on earth does not. But the efforts of the Valyrian and their ways of using scientific or supernatural knowledge to gain power turns the dragons into a threat.

If we think about this from the beginning, Daenerys through her rebirth from fire, wants to open a new page in the history of Valyrian Civilization. She wants to end slavery and gender inequality. She wants to establish a just social order. She wants to plant seeds, root and nourish her people. But to her great disappointment she realizes she cannot do any of these with the power she achieves through her dragons. “She was the blood of the dragon. She could kill the Sons of the Harpy, and the sons of the sons, and the sons of the sons of the sons. But a dragon could not feed a hungry child nor help a dying woman’s pain. And who would ever dare to love a dragon” (*ADwD* 174).

Likewise, the neo-liberal economic super-powers of our world which accumulated their wealth through colonization and slavery, which gained power with the utilization of nuclear and chemical weapons and cutting-edge technologic advancements, cannot claim to offer a sustainable and holistic environmental perspective. Pretending to be the environmental saviors through renewable energy methods, hybrid seeds and green innovations will not work unless these institutions strip of the power and wealth that have been attained through their atrocities. As it can be seen in the example of Valyrian civilization, power that has been built upon the blood of the oppressed and exploitation of nature cannot offer an environmental perspective as much as it wants to.

## CONCLUSION

Climate change, without discussion, is the biggest universal problem our world confronts. Rising amount of greenhouse emissions in the atmosphere cause a film in the atmosphere to form and to trap heat in the world causing global warming. This film in the atmosphere, if not eliminated, hampers the sun light from reaching earth in the long run. As a prolonged result of this process glaciation on earth and even an ice age might be the end result. The dangerous track our world is on, through deforestation and rising amounts about carbon emission release prognosticate a natural cataclysm, climate change and a glaciation period. Likewise, George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* opens on an ominous tone about change of seasons. "Winter is coming" becomes the cautionary phrase hinting at the ambiguous and disastrous climate change which does not have a definitive starting or ending. I find it rather important that George R.R. Martin choses this topic as the underlying plot of his voluminous scheme. That is why an ecocritical analysis of *A Song of Ice and Fire* was necessitated.

When we look at *A Song of Ice and Fire* and at additional history and background on this realm that George R.R. Martin provides us, we see a world that is built on medieval values like chivalry, etiquette and religious organizations of this fictional world function quite like the medieval religious organizations of our world. That is why Ibn Khaldun, a 14<sup>th</sup> century historian dubbed as the father of sociology, and his civilization theory becomes fairly relevant as a tool to analyze *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Ibn Khaldun is the author of *Kitab-ul Iber*, a history book of the North African peoples and their relations with their contemporaries in nearby regions. Ibn Khaldun writes the *Muqaddimah* as an introduction for this history, to lay out what civilization is and how it functions. Because he wants to create a template to analyze civilizations. In Chapter 1, I discussed his civilization methodology and tried to show it is a plausible method that lays out a ground suitable for an ecocritical reading. His perspective and methodology to analyze civilizations leans on three pillars; geography, religion/spirituality and asabiyah/group feeling. But out of these three Ibn Khaldun choses geography as the most important element that has immense influence on both how religion is lived and how group feelings and solidarity is formed. This is partly the reason why I named civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire* based on their location such as Northern, Southern, Dornish, Valyrian and Ironborn as opposed to

designating them through the names of the respective houses ruling over them. The other reason why I chose to name these civilization with their geographical location is the importance George R.R. Martin puts on place. His references on how Southern and Northern peoples differ makes geographical placement of peoples on the map one of the most important differentiations.

This differentiation of civilizations relating to the geographical environment they live in also paved the way to a very clear ecocritical analysis. In chapter 2, I discussed what is ecocriticism and what are the existing ecocritical methods. In light of this literature review I suggested a new ecocritical approach based on Ibn Khaldun's civilization theory. My analysis of civilizations in Westeros tries to answer questions such as; how the environmental perspectives of civilizations differ according to their respective religions, group feelings and geographical location, how they regard the non-human environment around them due to said environmental perspectives and where do they place themselves in this environment?

In the first part of chapter 3, I analyzed the geographical, religious and social situations of each civilization which enabled me to analyze the environmental perspectives of these civilization in the second part of Chapter 3. As a result I found that the civilizations in Westeros have differing attitudes towards nature.

Northern Civilization descending from the Children of the Forest and First Men is represented by the Free Folk and House Stark in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. They believe in the Old Gods religion and even though their political customs differ as a result of the Wall that separate the same people, their asabiyah is built around the geographical conditions of the north. Their strong connection with nature derives from the ancient spiritual wisdom Children of the Forest established. Through this wisdom greenseers and skinchangers of the Northern Civilization walk inside animals and see through the weirwood trees. Their relationship with nature is not based on the worth and superiority of human beings. Instead, it is a biocentric worldview which allows them to exist in holistic integrity with nature.

Dornish Civilization located in the opposite end of the continent still has the elements that resemble the northern counterpart the most. Their Rhoynar roots are embedded in the

naturalistic religion of Mother Rhoyme based on worship of River Rhoyme. Yet, forced exile of the Rhoynar to Dorne and subsequent merger with the locals of Dorne resulted in the loss of their religion. Such a loss of the material source of the traditional belief transformed the newcomers' relationship with the nature from a sacral bond to a more materialistic and secular one. Their new environment is an arid climate located in a harsh desert, therefore they adjust their connection with nature accordingly. Their environmental perspective adjusted to economizing and preservation of the limited resources such a challenging environment offers while this seemingly hostile environment, once adapted to it, has become their protectors against outside threats.

Likewise, we see the challenging effects of the harsh environment in Iron Islands. The land is unsuitable for agriculture leaving a livelihood from the sea surrounding them as the only option for the people. This slim survival found in the sea manifests itself as a religion of pagan sea deity. However, this religion based on Drowned God indicates the harsh reality of seafaring life, drowning. On the basis of being attacked by nature from all corners, their religion propagates looting and plundering of other lands. The most prominent feature of their environment, the sea, defines not only their material livelihood, but of all the meaning they attribute to their existence as a people. Thus their environmental perspective is shaped by the constant strife in a challenging nature combined with striving through nature.

Valyrians are told to keep nature and volcanoes of the fourteen flames under control and using fire as a weapon of destruction. The weaponization of dragons and usage of slave labor for the accumulation of wealth demonstrate the Valyrian perspective for their non-human and human environment as a means of attaining ultimate power. Thus their asabiyah is characterized by the pride that comes through the instrumentalization of elements of nature for the sake of power. The knowledge they employed as the means of achieving these ends pertains to a level of technology not any other civilization has been able to achieve. Thus, the lack of such knowledge leads the Southern maesters to characterize these means used by Valyrians as magic. Valyrians have never faced the geographic challenges other civilizations are limited to because of this technology and

knowledge they have. Exploiting nature and human beings to attain power defines the environmental perspective of Valyrian Civilization.

Contrary to all these civilization which have a connection with nature to some degree, even if it is a hostile one, Southern Civilization is completely isolated from nature. The Faith of Seven which is an anthropomorphic, institutionalized religion, disregards nature with its living and inert entities. Symbolic representations of house heraldry show us that Northern Starks, Valyrian Targaryens, Ironborn Greyjoys and Dornish Martells all have a degree of connection with the natural symbols on their banners, in contrast with the Southern houses which have moved away from symbolic representations of nature by turning against it.

The analysis of Westerosi civilizations in *A Song of Ice and Fire* prove that their environmental perspectives are constituted around the civilizational worldviews they have. While some are hostile to nature, some live in harmony with nature. The question this analysis brings along is; what does this mean for Westerosi and for our world? What kind of tools this analysis provides us with to solve the environmental problems of our world. Will the civilizations of *A Song of Ice and Fire* be able to make the comparison and adopt a more harmonious way of living seeing that the Northern are the only civilization which seems to overcome the results of winter thus the climate change. Or else are they going deny the reality of the climate change and press on with the harmful and boastful technologies their civilizations are centered on? These questions are left unanswered, as they are not the subject of this thesis but it can be speculated by the looks of my analysis that George R.R. Martin favors the civilizations that nurture a harmonious way of living with nature and the exploitative and extractive civilizations will pay back in time. We clearly see that the game of thrones is futile in light of the approaching environmental cataclysm because the “winter’s got no king” (*AGoT* 732).

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