



Native American Voices: Decolonial Perspectives on Selected Texts of Alexie and Momaday

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores the Native American voices through a decolonial reading of a range of selected texts of Sherman Alexie and Navarre S. Momaday. The aim is to understand indigenous culture as a prototype for retrieving the lost identity of American Indians. The decolonization of mind is realized through cultural resistance and counter-discourse that articulates the liminal experiences of the marginalized and the ostracized. Therefore, the literary representation of peripheral voices not only defies the dominant voice but also creates new avenues for cross-cultural communication with the mainstream discourse. This study employs the dialogic approach of Greg Sarris and Louis Owens as theoretical support for analysing the selected texts. The slippery frontier position of American Indians is not separatist but conversational that subverts stereotypes and, simultaneously, acknowledges difference. This essay principally explores how cross-reading Native American subversive texts can serve as a tool for cross-cultural communication. The indigenous writers with their lost identity (due to their living on reservations) write passionately about their past, traditions, and customs to make their voice heard in the mainstream discourse for their survival. This paper, therefore, proposes that the gap between Natives and Euro-Americans may be bridged through literary resistance for reconciliation instead of creating antagonism between them.

Keywords: Decoloniality, subversive texts, counter-discourse, dialogic approach, native identity

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(I)

The Native American perspective of decolonization may be understood in relation to postcolonialism. If we trace back to Ashcroft's (2001) explanation of postcolonial, we come to know that postcolonialism is not simply a linear marker denoting the demise of territory, it is also a conceptual idea that invites the readers to read texts related to other people's cultures apart from their own so that they may challenge the Eurocentric notions that enslave them. In this respect, postcolonialism as a conceptual and political idea helps comprehend the thoughtful works produced by indigenous people. It also encourages them to predict the future of a minimal group of people in America.

In this regard, the first question that we need to explore is the significance of postcolonialism and decolonialism for the indigenous people. The Native American perspective of decolonialism can be investigated on different levels in the selected subversive texts of Alexie (1966) and Momaday (1934-2024). For instance, Alexie's writings represent literary subversion while Momaday deals with subversion through his work based on oral tradition and storytelling. The purpose is to highlight the significance of Native voices and their discourse through a reading of an array of selected texts in four genres—poetry, short-fiction, novel, and autobiographical novel. We mention these texts in the analysis section. The aim is to see how Native writers exploit the potential of different genres to voice their claims for indigenous people's identity, culture, and history. The study intends to see how cross-reading of Native American subversive texts serve as a tool for cross-cultural communication.

Tracing decolonial perspectives of Native American selected texts is the major critical concern that allows to use the indigenous culture, narratives, and literary representation for deconstructing colonial discourse and power structures. The aim is to unveil and question colonial ideologies and representations that shape the identity of the marginal voices. In this context, a reading of the selected texts of Alexie and Momaday challenges not only power narratives but also amplifies Native American voices. Thus, decolonization becomes a reinterpretation of history through the lens of marginalized voices. In this regard, the importance of Indigenous culture and knowledge helps resist Euro-American discourse through Native American counter-discourse for promoting social justice. There are some prominent theorists who are known for their contributions to decolonial readings including Fanon (1963). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he favors the idea of independence and decolonization of the colonized people. For this reason, he investigates the impact of colonialism on the psychology and sociology of the colonized Indigenous people, and that demands that the Natives reclaim their past values and culture in their own voice.

The disturbing colonial subjugation and misrepresentation have robbed Native Americans of their social and cultural identity. The dominant belief system considers Euro-American sensibility as refined, learned, and superior while it considers Native American sensibility as violent, foolish, and inferior. However, the aboriginal discourse discovers a different kind of indigenous artistic appeal that serves as a counter-discourse. The purpose of native writers has been mainly to undo the marginalization, categorizing, and stereotypical behavior of the Euro-Americans. Further, the native counter-discourse questions the racial discrimination against the Native Americans in the colonizer's society and it also directs the indigenous people to a constant course of resistance, deconstruction, and modernization. The White missionaries have played a critical role in disseminating and publicizing Indians as heathens who, according to them, are required to be disciplined and cultured. The negative portrayal of Native Americans questions their native and tribal distinctive identity. To counter the controlling concepts of mainstream literature, many acculturated authors employ their writing as a tool to construct mythical as well as radical belief systems for asserting Native American voices. The quest for a unique native identity attempts to correct the misrepresented and distorted self-image of natives.

This study reflects on the idea of presenting indigenous perspectives on Native American culture and history for the revitalization of the natives who are named by Euro-Americans as exterminated brutes. Peck (2021), in "Exterminate All the Brutes", examines the devastating effects of colonial imperialism on Native Americans and highlights the significance of exploring the history and culture of Native Americans. Native Americans have failed to present their identifiable written discourse despite having their distinguished oral customs with an exclusive past. The Indian American writers were silent in the mainstream literature until 1960; after that, the Indigenous people realized that they had been sidelined and silenced in the traditional and socio-political setup of America as well as in the literary settings. Consequently, the Native American writers challenge, nullify, and alter the Euro-centric notions of storytelling and introduce their native artistic forms and cultural consciousness.

Aamir and Younus (2018) also reinforce the idea of Native American voice for subverting the impact of "colonial authority when it comes to developing a sense of their own literary values and aesthetics." (p. 41). They explore that the Natives have been facing forced erasure for centuries and both try to see the possibility of seeing the natives speak for themselves and their cultural heritage. In this regard, Aamir and Younus (2021) emphasize the importance of reading and writing about Native American literature for both natives and non-natives. They talk about the need to define the "native experience that is generated by the people themselves" instead of the "colonialists" (p.3). For this reason, this paper is an attempt to provide a native perspective through the analysis of selected native literary works by invoking the lens of native theorists. We provide a rationale for our theoretical support in the next section.

(II)

Dialogic approach of Sarris and Owens

This paper employs the dialogic approach of Greg Sarris (1993) and Louis Owens (2001) for the analysis of selected texts. This study argues that the cross-reading of texts and bridging of cultures are dialogic. For Hymes, “cross-reading and cross-cultural communication” opens ways instead of “closing ideas in language” (qtd. in Pulitano, 2003, p.101). In other words, Hymes recommends careful listening to the narratives even if they have been deeply hybridized and have been influenced by European discursive standards. By doing this, we can consider the point of view of both the Westerns and as well as the Natives and thereby acquire new vistas of looking at things. Both theorists discover how people can “read across culture” (qtd. in Pulitano, 2003, p.101). They highlight the significance of “dialogue within and between people” and, in this attempt, they uncover the limitations that determine native and individual realities. Both theorists can be considered frontiers for Native Americans. They also refer to Bakhtin’s (1981) idea of “dialogism and heteroglossia” to read across lines of cultures and identity. In this context, their objective is to subvert the binary between Euro-Americans and Native Americans. By doing this, they attempt to liberate people from traditional ways of theorizing that enslave them. They are different from Allen, Warrior (1995), and Womack (1999), who promote “a tribal-centric” perspective of Native discourse (p.101).

Sarris and Owens further suggest a conversational mode that is hybridized, multidirectional, and multi-generic, whoever embraces this consequently subverts and restates the Western standards of writing. In this context, Sarris and Owens keep a “strategic location within the mainstream academy” (qtd. in Pulitano, 2003, p.101). Both believe in “tricksterish subversion” of the authoritative discourse through which Native Americans can survive as indigenous people and living human beings (p.102). In a similar vein, storytelling and oral tradition offer words that serve as a powerful tool to subvert the colonial discourse. In this respect, Postcolonialism as an archetype admits and celebrates the politics of difference that consequently appreciates diversity, difference, and uniqueness employing methods such as storytelling, symbols, imaginings, and dreams. Sarris and Owens consider language as a useful medium that ensures Native identity in contrast to the stereotypical representation and misrepresentation of the Natives by the Euro-Americans. Indigenous writers can find a place in the mainstream discourse through the mixing of diverse cultures through storytelling, theorizing, autobiography, and ecological considerations. Mixed-blood writers try to bridge the gap between cultures and in this attempt, they make it cross-cultural.

Sarris (1993) presents a “metadiscourse” that helps “to distance itself from the text and subjects it studies” (p.106). He calls for a polyphonic and diverse type of narrative that resists genres and welcomes “a myriad of voices”. Similarly, Krupat

(1996) calls this “in-between space a border intellectual” (p.107). It mediates differences and rejects dominating modes of discourse. This approach provides the readers with “a meditative” strategy that liberates them to make their own sense of meaning. This process of meaning-making is called reskilling and heartening people to welcome the discourses that are multi-dimensional and diverse in nature. In short, cultural communication provides us with a platform for multiple overlapping that reconciles various discourses. A literature review of relevant critical sources would be instructive here. We have reviewed some significant sources in the next section to contextualize this paper with the critical scholarship and find out gaps to intervene.

(III)

The aim of writing this review on Native American voices relates to the idea of peace and harmony by saying no to arms and affirming a purely mystic freedom. Native American decolonial sensibility differs from the Euro-American theoretical model. It is an excellent tool for getting fresh knowledge and identification that welcomes and recognizes differences to bring about universal harmony and coherence. The indigenous people strive and desire to return to their native customs due to their sense of mutual respect, reverence, unity, and persistence for survival. The Natives have realized that they cannot get political power in American society which is why they attempt to attain and earn internal independence and autonomy with separatist tendencies promoting their own exclusive brand, reflective of their socio-cultural identity in true letter and spirit. In this context Yazzie (1992) comments on the existence of natives in American land by saying that they have an autonomous postcolonial position because they have their uniqueness intact, all they need now is just to affirm their communal and mystical freedom by further taking a decolonial position. Yazzie elaborates on the function of native communal and mystical freedom by saying: “No tank, no smart bomb, and no colonial cop can penetrate” (p. 47). Moreover, he asserts the resilience of Native Americans against imperial powers by focusing on the spiritual and communal dimensions of native culture. But the analysis of Yazzie lacks the emphasis on the socio-political problems of natives in the contemporary world. Therefore, the present study is required for affirming Native American voices with reference to their communal freedom that further considers the decolonial perspective.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) developed the term “Indigenous people” in the 1970s to deal with the socio-political problems of Native Americans, as it denotes the struggles of the colonized against the invaders. Through this platform, the shared voices of colonized people can be articulated worldwide through this umbrella term as it enables societies to get together by rising above their colonized settings and backgrounds. Thus, it helps people to acquire, consolidate, share, and fight for independence locally as well as globally. Therefore, the ongoing work of decolonization is done by Natives. The idea of ethnicity and indigeneity complicates the postcolonial theory because the concepts of

marginality, colonization, uniqueness, difference, and race overlap ethnicity and indigeneity. For Hall (1996), ethnicity as an idea is going through a drastic transformation due to the problematic of depicting binaries between the colonizer and the colonized. Hall believes that the ethnic subject is available to multiple interpretations and interrogations (as cited in Williams & Chrisman 1994, p. 214). According to him, ethnic identity is not static but fluid and multifaceted, open to multiple interpretations based on history, culture, society, class, and gender. The concept of incorporating native voice against colonial narratives of ethnicity remains unexplored in the work of Hall. Therefore, the current reading of Native American voices from decolonial perspective is an attempt to disrupt colonial discourse.

The notion of ethnicity is extensively used to describe otherness and difference. Therefore, the idea of “Other” is significant because it helps us comprehend native voices and works written by native writers. The idea of “Other” is significant because it helps us in comprehending the works written by Natives. The questions of *mestizaje*, mixed-breed, liminality, and hybridity can be used as strategies of postcolonial resistance to decolonization. Hybridity and *mestizaje* can be considered self-conscious anti-colonial tactics. If we talk about hybridity, we refer to Bhabha (1994), who highlights that the colonizer/colonized are interdependent and they experience ambivalence in their interaction. Bhabha emphasizes that an ambivalent position assists us in dealing with exoticism and enables us to recognize hybridity to activate cultural differences. Bhabha takes help from Fanon when he sheds light on voicing the colonial longing for an association with the other. The ambivalent imperial position brings about a divide and offers a place for struggle and fighting back. The term indigenous is constructed by the colonizer and it makes healing of wounds (given to the colonized) difficult.

The mainstream discourse and system cultivate damaging images or stereotypes about Native Americans. It shows their widespread prejudgment, bias, branded uniqueness, and undesirable arrogance. White people’s schools and their religion’s unequal distribution of wealth have deprived Native Americans of their uniqueness, dignity, pride, and confidence. Eurocentrism considers the indigenous people as inhuman, and it dehumanizes them. It also focuses on the cultural and political superiority of the Europeans throughout the world. Colonialism uses religion, socio-political mutiny, violence, and diseases to destroy everything Indian. Racial discrimination places Native Americans as poor, and low-grade due to their biology. They are categorized as a foolish, dirty, unrefined, submissive and low class in contrast to Euro-Americans who are regarded as intelligent, clean, refined, authoritative and high class. According to Memmi (1965), prejudiced conversational tactics all the time believe in analysis of dissimilarities. As a result, it is a discriminatory and biased challenge to put a cost on Natives (p.188). Thus, the racial discriminatory tactic permits imperialists to emphasize Euro-centric rights and freedom, and, in this attempt, they exploit and manipulate native people

insensitively. Native identity is in danger due to assimilationist activities and stereotyping.

Contrary to the strategies (discussed above) used by imperialists to subjugate natives through misrepresentation, the sense of community on the part of natives is so strong and divine. Indianness is in danger due to assimilationist activities and stereotyping. Sanches (1996) elaborates that an Indian is supposed to be divine, colourful associated with the land and soil (p.163). For Native Americans, nothing is separate, everything is related and belongs to something else. In other words, everything is part of the whole and the whole contributes to the parts. In a similar manner, King (1992) puts forward that for Natives, everything is connected into a living chain in which animals and environment are included. King further explains that everything is an organic whole (p.116). The present research aims to address the issue of misrepresentation and stereotyping of Native Americans but from a different angle by highlighting the inclusive nature of native culture and tradition in which they also welcome the colonizer to have a dialogue with them.

The act of resistance for Native Americans is done through writing which gives them empowerment. LaRocque (1993) elucidates her basis of command and power, according to her, it comes from her history which is woven into a lovely tradition of storytelling. She remembers the creative and imaginative skills of her mother and grandmother in storytelling and she calls it a source of her inspiration (p.183). In a similar way, the Native American authors show their strong affiliation with the mother figure. As Native Americans believe in a gynocratic-circular and harmonious way of being in the world, the indigenous people write back to preserve their culture, and native beliefs. For this purpose, women hold an extraordinary position in redefining the cultural and communal values of Natives. The gnososophical perspective of Native Americans serves to settle and neutralize the concerns and problems of racial and gender disputes. The role of women and storytelling is dominant in Native American culture and literature, but the topic under study focuses on need for a cross-cultural dialogue that is not restricted to the culture of one country based on gender, religion or race, and is all-inclusive.

Silko (1977) demonstrates the importance of memory for natives and their rituals, in her groundbreaking novel *Ceremony*. She further weaves a native and tribal sense of connectivity and community through remembering as she expounds and highlights the significance of narration, past, and memory as tools of resistance against the powerful master. The stories and culture of natives are so much strong that even the powerful evil of colonialism cannot stand up to them. This resistance is reverted to destroy their stories (p.2). Silko focuses on the hidden manner of semi-resistance through assimilation with the mainstream culture to give them the false impression that they are no more resisted. Moreover, in *Ceremony*, Silko (1977) pens down the significant role of past stories as she further emphasizes the literary projection through narratives which is not for the sake of entertainment, rather it projects a strong social message through playing a role of the reformist aiming at

producing a politically correct society. Natives are so marginalized and unarmed that they do not have any other powerful tool to question the authority except the cultural retaliation and literary rebuttal. Native Americans weave memory and past values in discourse and thereby trick with their stories to preserve their cultural voice they had been robbed of long time ago. But the existing scholarship does not give much importance to oral stories of Native Americans for resilience or cultural revitalization. Therefore, the current study is an endeavour to uphold the slogan of a cultural dialogue between the colonizer and the colonized by using the oral tradition to advantage.

Trickster discourse is used for creating harmony and stability in the lives of Native Americans for their existence, observation, and action. In the play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* (1989), Highway defines the Trickster as an “extraordinary figure” without whom “the core of Indian [native] culture would be gone forever” (p.13). It helps the indigenous people in survival, perseverance, and growth. According to Highway, Trickster may have several titles and various appearances as he can choose any guise and gender. In most of the cases, Trickster is a witty comedian. His character aims to communicate to the readers not only about the significance of living and survival on this Earth but also of nature and the environment. Trickster can also play the role of a teacher or Christ-like figure and in this way, he becomes an enigma that himself/herself needs to be resolved sometimes. There are many Native American writers, who have used trickster discourse or figures to bring harmony in the lives of Natives. The present paper attempts to bring into light the cultural diversity of Native Americans that can be a reason for a cross-cultural communication between the colonizers and the colonized.

In his novel *Tracks*, Erdrich (1989) employs trickster discourse as Vizenor uses it. Nanapush, the protagonist, plays the role of a trickster. For Erdrich, gambling serves as a means of addressing and bringing change. In her works, medicine is used as a metaphor. For American Indians, medicine is a way of living and it connects them to their land and environment. Her main characters struggle hard and endeavor to gain back control over the lost lands by means of gambling and trickstery. In *Tracks*, Fleur, to get back her lost home, plays games and gambles. She involves herself in European gaming and gambling and thereby attempts to trick the whole imperial plan. She also plays for her stillborn baby girl so that she may survive. Nanapush relates the catastrophe to colonization and believes that it is a result of imperial oppression. He also cures many characters by telling stories to them, by using his good sense of humor, and by constantly striving to develop attachments among people and their families. Pauline represents Windigo, she copes with her jealousy and envy for Fleur by becoming a sister in the Church, which traces back connection to Erdrich's life as a raised catholic. The coping strategies used by Natives show their desire to retrieve their own culture by understanding the culture of the colonizer. The rich cultural heritage of Native Americans invites Euro-Americans for a cultural dialogue which is the major gap in

the previous studies that the present research attempts to explore. Further, this intervention seeks to amplify decolonial frameworks for fostering indigenous voice that have been historically silenced. This research also highlights the need for cross-cultural communication because it is always either about the cultural glorification of the colonizer or of the colonized, but the urgency of bringing both into a dialogue remains unexplored. We have attempted to analyse the selected texts in the forthcoming section to substantiate our argument and vindicate how this study intervenes in the existing scholarship.

(IV)

Emotion and wit as tools of subversion

In *Reservation Blues* (1995), Sherman Alexie, as a revolutionary author, writes with a sense of responsibility and speaks as an ear and eye of Native Americans. He speaks of the harsh realities of colonization with emotion and wit. For him, Indian education is “Poetry = Anger multiplied by Imagination” (p.3). Alexie’s works signify literary subversion in his short story “The Search Engine” (1993), Alexie through Corliss shows his concern for a lost Native writer. Corliss goes on a quest to explore the misplaced and vanished writer to exalt and eternalize him like any renowned Western writer by means of appreciating and recognizing him.

In the poem “The Powwow at the End of the World” (1996), Alexie seeks to question and subvert stereotypical representations of Native Americans. The term savage can be defined as one who is inhuman and can also be linked with American Indians, who shriek, roar, and butcher White men and women. Therefore, by interpreting the normal social frame of mind, sentiments, activities, and responses of Indigenous people, Alexie endeavors to bring back the vital, however disremembered civilization of the Native American people. Similarly, Alexie’s portrayals are living examples of anger, anguish, wrath, and revenge that Indigenous people carry for White invaders. Alexie (1996) in “The Powwow at the End of the World” embodies all these moods of subversion by saying that: “I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall” (p.98). In this way, he retells Native Americans that they should forgive the white Europeans but must not forget their cruelty, oppression, and torment. For Alexie, the colonial accounts are just bogus pretensions that rob the legal possessors of their lands and culture.

Getting it back acre by acre

In the short story “Bob’s Coney Island” (1993), Alexie sees the place, land, soil, and nature as one, and he wishes to get back his land acre by acre. He also desires that some Indians must learn rightly the Ghost dance. By doing this, Alexie presents through his work his love for indigenous animals and nature by aspiring that: “all the salmon and buffalo return/ and White men are sent back home” (p.138). He truly announces that his entrance into the mainstream has changed the

mainstream. Alexie shows a lifelike image of Native Americans when he presents an unmatched significance and meaning of Native American tribal unity and wholeness. He promotes a consciousness of belonging, sharing, caring, and relating the soil, place, land, earth, and nature in an organic whole that weaves individuals and communities into a web of collective beings.

Alexie (1993) criticizes White European's cruel attitude towards nature. For Indians, ecological congruence is important while Euro-Americans are callous and indifferent to environmental harmony. In *Haibun*, Alexie explains that due to the tyrannical dealing of Europeans with the land, place, and environment, the marginal Natives acquire and utter the word "cancer" just like they utter the words "oxygen" and "love" (p.29). He does not acknowledge Native Americans who surrender without complaint and start living as Euro Americans want them to live. Alexie highlights this issue in the following words: "[T]heir collective grief makes them numb and they are waiting for the construction of their museum" (p.119). His work is full of anger, he is annoyed on the unfair and unequal allocation of money between Natives and White Europeans. In "The Search Engine", Alexie (1993) considerably realizes the importance of money for the Native American Indians. In this context, Corliss plays as Alexie's spokesperson, when she articulates: "In an Indian world, everybody weighs 150 pounds" (p.49). This description demonstrates how poverty has affected Indigenous people.

Alexie (1996) feels sick of poverty in his poem "Reading Harvey Shapiro While Standing in Line to See Tom Hanks in Apollo 13", when he inquires "[S]hould we be spending billions to send men and women into space when there are people starving" (p.123). In the short story "Can I get a Witness?", Alexie consciously realizes the double standards and false humanity of White Americans when he addresses that "your games do not have one meaning" (p.89). It illustrates Alexie's thoughtful comprehension of American politics against Indigenous people. He struggles hard to subvert the discrimination and intolerance and destroys misrepresentations of the Indians. Alexie also supports Native Americans through the symbol of "Sasquatch" when he asserts that "I believe in Sasquatch just as much as I believe in God" (p.103).

In his poem "Song of Ourselves", Alexie (1996) addresses Whitman and writes: "While Walt Whitman sang about his body, the still body/ of an Indian grew into two, then ten, then multitudes" (p.20). This poem shows the resistance and survival of Native American people which can be coined as "Survivance" in the words of Vizenor. Further, Alexie (1996), in *The Summer of Black Widows*, highlights the significance of stories for Indians:

Stories in our cereal boxes.
 Stories in our firewood.
 Stories in the pockets of our coats (p.12).

Assimilation as a strategy of resistance

Alexie's purpose is to get back the lost positive image of Native Americans through his literary subversion and he is very much successful in his attempts. In the beginning, the White school teachers made every effort to make the Indian children surrender being Indians. In this attempt, they robbed them of their rituals, stories, songs, tales, dancing, ceremonies, and language. It was supposed to be like saving the Indian adolescent by taking out of him his/her Indianness. In a similar vein, we read Alexie (2007), and in his novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, he criticizes the similar notion that "Kill the Indian to save the child." (p.35). Arnold acquires to perceive himself as a multi-tribal wanderer, he knows the importance of leaving home to discover the real self. In this attempt, when he leaves the reservation, he tries to carry on with his cultural past that had long gone. He assimilates and becomes nomadic to preserve his past values, and he does not do it to leave his culture and westernize himself.

If we talk about race, it means that we are also talking about class because these are interlinked. Arnold considers himself as half-White and half-Indian. For Alexie, being an Indian means being unfortunate and deprived that is why being an Indian Arnold contests for an improved life expectancy. He remains optimistic and retains his hope for an upright revolution. He does not leave his native identity by bidding farewell to the reservation. But he exits not to quit, and he gets courage from his communication skills to leave the reservation. Mr. P raises the spirit of Arnold to cultivate faith in him when he suggests Arnold saying: "You are going to find more and more hope the farther and farther you walk away from this sad, sad, sad reservation." (p.43). Momaday has his own subverting strategies to claim a respectable place for the natives. We discuss Momaday's work under the next subheading.

Oral tradition, storytelling, and Native identity

In autobiographical accounts, the native authors explain the treatment of White invaders with the indigenous people of America. Mostly, these writings share with the readers the journey of mixed-breed Indians who were striving to get a respectful place in White society. N. Scott. Momaday uses autobiography as a medium of remembering Native American oral storytelling tradition. According to Momaday, storytelling is an act in which imagination is involved. In *Storyteller* (1981), Silko is meticulously influenced by Momaday, when she aims at constructing her story to express the significant role of oral demonstration, but she is irregular in this act of oral presentation through her autobiography. The contemporary Native authors request to know indigenous people and their characteristics as presented in Native American literature. In this respect, the inclusion of oral tradition helps the natives redefine indigenous perspectives in a better way.

Language and Literature, orally transmitted tales, or written texts are the ways through which meaning is shared. In his semi-autobiographical novel *House*

Made of Dawn (2004), Momaday suggests that storytelling is an imaginative and creative act. It is a process in which man tells stories to understand himself and his community. He affirms a strong connection between “what a man is and what he says” (p.204). He also gives importance to language in terms of formulating meanings with the help of words. For Momaday, the storytellers and singers bring about change in themselves, in people, and in nature. The words are significant both in a song and in a tale because they attempt to heal, cure, ward off evil, and frustrate death (p.205). Momaday, in *House Made of Dawn*, discovers through Abel the restorative power of the songs and Abel also recovers his past through the recollections of his grandfather. Alcoholism creates a sense of displacement. It is a disease that separates individuals from family, community, and a sense of place. Abel stumbles due to drunkenness. In *Reservation Blues* (1995), Alexie portrays his characters emotionally crippled due to excessive drinking.

In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986), Allen gives importance to the loss of memory because she considers it an integral part of the course of colonial subjugation. She claims that “the roots of oppression are to be found in the loss of tradition and memory because that loss is always accompanied by a loss of a positive sense of self.” (p.210). The invaders were aware of the significance of the past and memory in Native American tradition and cultural practices which is why colonial discourse was imperative in disturbing the memories. Remembering and recalling the past play an important role in decolonizing the mind, past, and history. According to Fanon, Decolonization remains a violent act for the oppressor and the oppressed as well. But passion in writing and recalling for the preservation of culture and identity is a positive feeling if it is done through counter-discourse.

Momaday, in *House Made of Dawn*, and Erdrich in *Tracks*, perform the roles of native communal storytellers. The collective and mutual voice is a proper polyphony, it means that there is no single voice and absolute account of a story. Erdrich employs different storytellers to narrate stories and communal tales. For instance, in the novel *Tracks*, there are two narrators and in *Love Medicine*, there are six narrators. Diverse or polyphonic voices turn out to be mutual and communal expressions thereby articulating a collective story. In a similar vein, Erdrich and Silko (1981) attempt to tell stories through multiple communal storytellers. Silko extends the traditional narrative style by using a multi-textual strategy in which songs, movements, stories dance, up and down levels of tones, and communication are combined to execute a story. In *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon* (1989), Krupat briefly reviews the memoirs of Silko and Momaday. According to Krupat, Silko’s memoirs are concerned with conversation, dialogue, and polyphony whereas Momaday’s autobiographical texts are concerned with monologue (p.182). Silko moves towards a collective expression while Momaday communicates his personal voice. For Krupat, oral tradition differentiates between European and indigenous authors.

Momaday, in *House Made of Dawn*, tries to come back to his past stories, culture, and Indianness. The concept of time for Native Americans is chronological but cyclical. Therefore, their stories have no ending and these move in a circle and connect to further. No one can step outside one's tradition; everyone sticks to their past and does not abandon it for the so-called civilization. In Native American tradition, the circle is associated with the cyclical movement of seasons. In this context, the Native American concept of time differs from the Western notion of time which is aesthetic. *Sacred Hoop* by Allen and *Love Medicine* (1984) by Erdrich start in June and culminate in June as well.

(V)

The key findings of the study highlight the significance of studying and writing Native American literature from the perspectives of indigenous writers by using native voices through critical literary analysis. Eurocentric discourse is idiosyncratic and separatist while native discourse integrates the individual with community. In a similar vein, Deloria, in *God is Red* (1973), highlights a complex "rift between spiritual owners of the land, the Indians, and the political owners of the land, the whites" (p.415). This paper proposes through its findings that Native Americans own their indigenous culture (that is gradually vanishing) by writing back and taking pride in it for their survival. The analysis of the texts concludes that split between the culture and discourse of Natives and Euro-Americans needs to be resolved, otherwise things would fall apart, and cultures would be extinguished. In this connection, literary resistance and cross-cultural communication can pacify the situation of unrest between the colonizer and the colonized by acknowledging cultural differences and uniqueness instead of creating an air of antagonism between the two parties. Moreover, this paper anticipates the possibility of seeing a future through the lens of Natives that may help revitalize American Indian culture employing native voice and praxis for the decolonization of minds and institutions.

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