

Native American Identity in Euroamerican Academic Structure in Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

¹Ghulam Murtaza

²Shaheena Ayub Bhatti

³Qasim Shafiq

Abstract

*Text is the confluence of multiple social relations that take place in the context of available resources and constitute the identity of the participants under sociocultural rules. In Native American context, the available resources have been distributed and adjusted in the favor of the whites. To counter this hegemonic arrangement, Sherman Alexie's fiction imaginatively develops the situations in which the relationships of the Native Americans among themselves and with the Whites are readjusted through redistribution of social resources. Native American presence in the whitewashed contemporaneity of America forms intercontextuality seeking re-placement and re-situatedness of the Native subject in the active flow of the social life of today's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural US society. The school serves as a structure where academic practices are conducted according to Euroamerican norms of signification, and resources of allocation and authorization. This article explores how Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* shows the Native American subject performing prescribed socio-cultural functions in interaction with the whites in the academic environment of two schools, first at the Reservation school and then at the white school in Reardan.*

Keywords: Discourse, identity, Native American literature, pedagogy, structuration, discursive practices

1. Introduction

Discursive practices formulated within available social resources constitute the identity of the subject/s through prescribed roles. Euro-American social life assigns Native Americans the roles that undermine their traditional identity and their tribal sense of belonging for assimilation into the mainstream White society. Native Americans have to live in the modern

¹ Associate Professor of English, Government College University Faisalabad, Email: drgmaatir@gcuf.edu.pk

² Professor of English & Director, Women Research & Resource Center (WRRC), Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi

³ Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

multi-cultural and multi-contextual situation of American life wherein their traditional mode of life cannot survive.

Native Indians, in the pre-contact period, had an effective informal educational system or what Johnson and Johnson termed as “aboriginal education” (2005, p. 119). The system was organized for transmitting knowledge, skills, traditions, and attitudes and dispositions to the coming generation in the setting of the real world such as at home or on the hunting ground. Indian American education inculcated cultural needs to be successful in society (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) and education was taken as a way to shape the next generation and plan the true qualities of leadership. It was also to develop a positive attitude towards honesty, to develop a sense of belonging and to induce active contribution in community activities (Banks & Banks, 2003). The basic or foremost concern of education was to prepare the next generation for adulthood and to introduce society with all its taboos, traditions, and duties towards an individual and society. The boys were instructed by their male members and the girls by female members of their families. Often, both received instruction at the hands of either the male or the female elders (Yeboah, 2005). It was ensured by the community that every child obtained a full education. On the arrival of Europeans in the Native American lands, the formal education was primarily introduced by missionaries and private individuals until 1830s. For American Indians, Eurocentric education has been miseducation as it has been for other minority groups in the United States. A deep social, economic and political impact of this so-called formal education on Natives has “permeated into the Native American culture” (Yeboah, 2005). Historically, Native Americans have been getting the lowest educational facilities of all ethnic groups in the U.S. In the mainstream educational setting they have to face a lack of cultural relevance (Healey, 1995, p. 315). The lower standard of education of the Indians in comparison with other American minority groups is also responsible for their limited choices of occupations, squeezed opportunities of upward mobility and the resultant low income (p. 315) leading to the loss of both the material and allocated resources. This phenomenon affects badly the identity of young Native American adults. Extreme poverty, chronic underfunding and troubled marginalized history has resulted in very low

academic attainment of Native Americans, in comparison with the other ethnicities of America (Brown & Hicks, 2002, p. 202). Early education given to Native Americans was focused on assimilation, to make the Native American children "white". In boarding schools, children were taught white ways to make Native American children forget their ancestral past and assure their assimilation in white mainstream society (p. 202). The unwanted history of Native subjugation, withdrawal and resourcelessness has exerted a profound impact on the minds of the Indian youth.

2. Theoretical Framework

Text expresses multiple social relations and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches a text through the context of the culture rooted in socio-cultural dimensions of human activity. CDA believes that context has significant bearings on language use (Halliday, 1978, p. 35) and emphasizes that context should be based upon "some theory of social structure and social change": "If we observe the context of the situation in terms of ad hoc observations about the settings in which language is used, this could be said to be the 'social' account of language but not a 'sociological' one" (Halliday, 1978, pp. 34-35).

Giddens' theory of structuration provides a broad sociological basis of context for text analysis and its effect on social change. Jose Luiz Murer coined the term intercontextuality to denote multiple contexts that interact/overlap to determine and influence text and discourse and/or in turn to be determined and influenced by them. Significant aspects of structuration theory are role prescription, social practices and social structures which collectively constitute sociological foundations for 'the active flow of social life' (Giddens & Pierson, 1998, p. 76), and hence the connection between text/s and context/s. Structuration theory captures the dynamic organization of the flow of interconnected social practices which can, simultaneously, either

- i- reproduce existing relations, identities and worldviews (Fairclough, 1992), or

- ii- challenge these conceptualizations of relations and identities, constituting thereby a new flow of social patterns.

Role prescriptions conceptualize social identities and positions. A social position, according to Giddens (1994, p. 117), is a social identity that comprises a set of obligations and prerogatives which may be only very dimly particularized. An actor carrying that identity or role prescription is supposed to activate these obligations and prerogatives. Role prescriptions imply rights, duties, responsibilities and privileges associated with social identities according to socially defined criteria which include profession, relations and age, etc. (Giddens, 1994, p. 118), including other social specifications like political or religious affiliations, education, nationality, income, etc. These roles involve socio-cultural tensions that characterize identities as fluid and controversial. Rights, privileges and responsibilities attached with any dimension of identity, collective or individual, depend upon interconnected rules, resources and social practices. Social practices or activities – socially, culturally and institutionally supported endeavors, according to Gee (2011) – are defined by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 21) as habitualized patterns tied to the temporal-spatial, particularity wherein people employ their material and symbolic resources to interact to constitute various cultural practices. Chouliaraki and Fairclough argue that social practices must be incorporated in the analysis of human actions, including the use of text, because practices are a visible demonstration of abstract structures realized through socially approved mechanisms functional in social life (1999, p. 21).

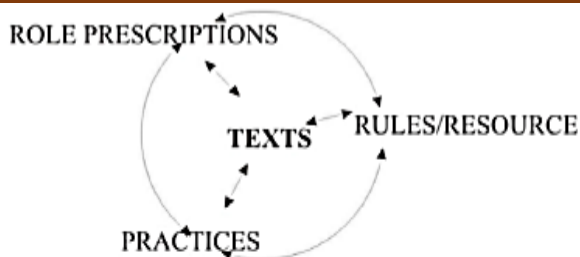


Figure 1: Interconnectivity of roles, rules and practices in a text

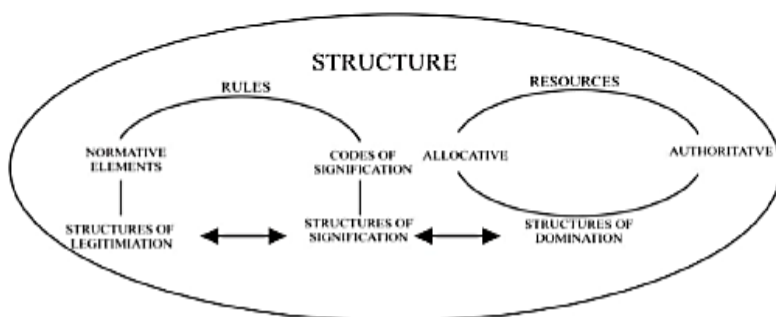


Figure 2: Murer's map of the interaction among role prescription, rules, resources and social practices, and the dialectical relationship between texts and these social dimensions (based on Giddens, 1994, p. 117)

This figure theorizes that social practices are not independent of social structures and role prescriptions. Like Bakhtin's 'chain of texts' (1986), Murer suggests that CDA incorporates 'chain of practices', interdependent and captured through inter-conceptuality. Different social practices and interdependent social structures implicate a variety of contexts.

'Structure' in structuration theory finds expression in institutionalized regularity of events and practices (Giddens & Pierson 1998, p. 78). Like the girders of a building, a social structure is conceptualized as "rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction" (Giddens, 1984, pp.

16, xxxi). He also observes that rules and resources constitute structuring features that make social practices recognizable across time and space (1984, p. 17). Cohen thinks that social activity is constituted by loosely interconnected rules (1989, p. 239) with two dimensions: normative elements and codes of signification. The former consists of the sanctioning principles of social practices or “technologies are generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). Hence, these rules legitimize positive/negative sanctions for the actualization of social acts (Cohen, 1989, p. 67) and the codes of signification are concerned with the constitution of meaning (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). The signification dimension of rules ascribes tacit signification to members of the group and those of others, as well as to the social contexts (Cohen, 1989, p. 236). Murer observes that in structuration theory signification constitutes structure and interfuses with institutional and individual identities controlling and leading to actions. Identity and the activities are interdependent: "vocational identity (i.e. who we are) is an important function of what we do" (Krupat, 1996, p. xi).

3. Review of Literature

Gee observes that an oral or written utterance gets signification from its pronouncement of “a who and what” (Gee, 2011, p. 30), that refers to a “socially situated identity, ‘the kind of person’ one seeks to enact in specific space and time” (p. 30), the position termed as the prescribed role in this model. He says that the real Indian identity is practiced in the nexus of objects, times and places (Gee, 2011, p. 32). In this context, Kent remarks that the Dawes Act and the boarding schools were two academic and constitutional institutions that served to dislocate Amerindians from lands and culture with official funding (2007, p. 76). Kent has pointed out two institutions of American society but the entire Euroamerican discursivity has been marginalizing the Natives and misshaping their identities in the name of literary, academic and constitutional projects. The Indian Removal Act (1830), Dawes Severalty Act (1885) and other treaties were constitutional strategies that excluded the Native Americans from acceptable social structures of American life. Euroamerican literature reproduced this exclusion imaginatively.

The texts produced under the white influence – like Waheenee (1977), for instance – endorse Euroamerican social and epistemic structure. Waheenee, the protagonist of the biography, admits her ‘satisfying assimilation’ into white American social structure: she says that she cannot remember or believe that she ever lived her old Native ways (cited in Colasurdo, 1997, p. 388). Colasurdo exposes the politics of the text that consciously avoids any reference to her tribe’s removal to the reservation (p. 388). Goodbird is more painfully converted and adjusted into Euroamerican socio-epistemic structure: ironically, he feels pleasure in getting good white friends and getting closer to God (p. 389). Misrepresentative portrayals as in *Dances with Wolves* (1990), despite its sympathetic view of the Natives, treat them with no real problems in the present. Such representations deprive them of their resources of authorization. Although treaties between Euroamericans and Native Americans have been a long history of deceit which systematically snatched their material and allocative resources, towards the end of the 20th century, Natives exerted to recover their resources through political means: the lawsuit filed by the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot in 1972 is an example that gave the tribes partial control over their resources.

In the middle of the 19th century, the same situation prevailed in the reservations and the boarding schools when the American government began to establish Indian acculturation and re-education. Zitkala-Sa’s stories are a good example in this regard. She was taken to boarding school and taught to be white and she reports her own experience. Native American children were forced to accept Christianity and Euro-American ways of living very often through the use of force and violence. The teachers ignored Native American ways of living, languages and traditions. The identity of a young adult is strongly determined by living in such conditions and environment, where Indians are not allowed to realize their dreams (Rifkin, 2006, p. 12).

As Native Americans were regarded as nature synonymous with “wilderness”, the only ‘just’ response to them was control and domination (Adamson, 2001, p. 85), and school was the platform to exercise it completely

and thoroughly. Nature in Euro-American understanding comprises the mythical landscape “untouched by human culture” (p. 85) and school was introduced as a panacea for ‘no-human evil’. Abel, in *House Made of Dawn*, is sent to live in the boarding school to learn European culture and lifestyle. They “gave him a lot of free haircuts” but he was too ‘primitive’ to be civilized (Momaday 1968, p. 131). Abel realizes “[s]omething was wrong, terribly wrong” (Momaday, p. 87) and in response to European teachings, he comes “back home” to his tribal culture and is not taken in by the European colonizing policy guided in “the colonialist/capitalist logic of accumulation and development” (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010, p. 100).

In response to “the greedy destroyers” (Silko 156) annihilation of the Natives’ relationship with nature, Silko presents the Native Americans as a civilized nation with its socio-cultural values and centuries-old rich history. *Ceremony* (1977) shows how the native people found themselves misfit, in the social, strategic and medical roles Euro-Americans assigned them. Silko’s protagonist Tayo, after his Euroamerican role as a warrior in WWII, is left repentant and disturbed, feeling tongueless, alienated and invisible in the hospital. He comes to his native family town and understands that only a medicine man can save him (Silko, 1977, p. 30). The Navajo medicine man, Betonie, guides him “to get on his way,” and to find “the cattle ... the stars, the mountain, and the woman” (p. 155) prescribing for him a traditional role in an indigenous context.

Deloria argues that Native Americans had been deliberately put on the reservation to separate them from their oral traditional roles in social hierarchy: “... biographies of proven fraudulent medicine men ha[d] been publicized” (2006, p. xvii) to make traditional roles unacceptable to Natives. The ‘misuse of traditional roles’ was encouraged to prove them fraudulent. For instance, the concept of ‘Mother Earth’ was misused and many poor red women were encouraged monetarily to play the role of ‘Mother Earth’. On the other hand, “[s]weat lodges were conducted for \$50, peyote meetings for \$1,500, medicine drums for \$300, weekend workshops and vision quests for \$500 ... The consumer society [wa]s indeed consuming everything in its path” (Deloria, 2006, pp. xvii, xviii). All this fuss made Indian traditional roles and their stories unreliable and pushed Indians to the back foot. They escaped from discussions and ceremonies and shifted to meaningless secularity from healthy norms that helped them for centuries (Deloria, 2006,

p. xvii). Even the most acknowledged-cultured reservations could not help sidelining the rituals which they once practiced with pride.

This context necessitates the reconstruction of the Native American identity and Native American literature has been working on this project. C. P. Maker (Cree) remarked in 1886: "Our old way of life is gone but that does not mean we should sit back and imitate the white man" (Kanwal, 2018, p. 77). In the actual world, it may not be workable now but Native American literature textually produces a world to counter the actual dominantly white American world whose rules and resources structure the entire social fabric against the Native American epistemology and social practices. Paula Gunn Allen says that Native American literature recovers them from death, person by person, and tribe by tribe (Coltelli, 1992, p. 19).

The subject of Alexie's works addresses the issue of despair with a buoyant approach to the Native roles in intra-tribal and inter-tribal settings. The emergent subject is better able to survive despite the soul deep wound the Amerindians have experienced in the five post-contact centuries.

4. Analysis: Euro-American Education as Deformative Structure

This analysis of Sherman Alexie's young adult novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) has been conducted on the study of the education of a young Native American in a reservation school and in an off-reservation white school. *Diary* (2007) is set around the 1980s in the Spokane Reservation and Reardan town in Washington, the two locales of Arnold Junior Spirit's constantly shifting identity. The conflict arises from the narrator's efforts to find acceptance in two dissimilar places, the Spokane Reservation School and Reardan High School, a white neighboring institution. The intercontextuality of these two academic places puts Junior into a conflicting set of structuration principles although he has the same prescribed role in both the places: a student.

i- Role Prescription

In the analysis of a novel, it is unrealistic to ascribe one monolithic role to a character because one character is involved in many sub-roles being performed in the same capacity and in parallel positions. However, for delimitation of this article, the focus is on Arnold Junior's prescribed role as a student at Reservation High School, who needs the social resources of pen and brush. He "feels important with a pen in [his] hand" because it makes him resourceful to "talk to the world" and get the attention that will place him in a better position. In the tutor-taught relationship with Mr. P, he is supposed to be obedient and respectable to him. But he behaves contrary to the prescribed role: he throws the book at the old teacher whose nose is broken and he is dismissed from the school. This is a violation of the normal social practice but is in line with the context of Mr. P's role as a teacher who is so 'weird' that "sometimes he forgets to come to school" (Alexie, 2007, p. 28), and "shows up in pajamas and slippers" (p. 29). Mr. P tried to start a Reservation Shakespeare Theatre Company but miserably failed at that attempt to establish Euroamerican rules and signification for the school. This is an example of the imposition of white discourse upon the Red history through the school where a Native American child's prescribed role is just that of a learner but it was a project of cultural and historical unlearning, as Mr. P confesses that his role was to make Indian children forget their language and dancing, songs and stories, to make them forget their culture and Indianness (p. 35). He confesses that his assigned role as a teacher was meant for eroding the Indian code of signification, the role prescribed for Euroamerican social structuration of pedagogy and socio-cultural, historical and epistemic erasure of indigenous signification. Healey observes that "[u]ntil the last few decades, schools for Native Americans were primarily focused on "civilizing" and Americanizing the children, not on educating them" (1995, p. 230).

From the poorest Indian reservation context, Junior plans to shift to Reardan where Junior's role is the same - a student - but here the unbridgability of two opposing contexts grows more marked because here all the positive values - magnificence, beauty and smartness (Alexie, 2007, p. 50) - in comparison with his miserable poverty, are assigned to the white students. While living on the reservation they scorn the white outgroup and are better able to preserve their culture because reservation context assigns them single-dimensional Native American role: at home, they "speak their tribal

language" (Snipp, 1989). But in school Junior is an outsider because of his skin color and his lack of knowledge to interact with a white society that makes him more alien. Because of his "reservation accent", that is "funny", white children make fun of him and feel his accent "sound[s] like a bad poem"; he remains silent for six days (Alexie, 2007, p. 61).

The school apparently doing pedagogy in an institutionalized way is practically contributing to planned disempowerment of the Natives, depriving them of their authoritative resources at their disposal in the reservation, although reservation too was a white-manuevered world in comparison with their pre-contact world when they lived in a harmonious, horizontal relationship with Nature. Junior is placed into two clashing epistememes, the traditional and modern, out of which he emerges as an apple, "red from outside and white from within" (Alexie, 2007, p. 132), the consequence of two incommensurable roles. The school subjects Junior to white values such as internalization that "whites have most hope" (2007), the feeling that leads him to the assimilationist tendency and closer to Gordy who taunts him for his primitivism. Rowdy, Junior and Gordy make a "superhero trio fighting for truth, justice and the Native American way" (Diary, 2007, p. 131). Non-assimilative Rowdy follows communal aims antipodal to the Euroamerican values while Junior's prescribed role necessitates for him to follow the school's institutional rules for the smooth performance of academic discipline that give him individualistic identity at the cost of his communal roots.

ii- Social Structures: Rules and Resources

a- Rules: Normative Elements and Codes of Signification

Cohen observes that in structuration theory, "any given practice involves an overlapping and loosely connected set of rules" (1989, p. 239) which consist of normative elements and codes of signification. The former denotes generalizable procedures for reproduction of social life (in this context, academic life which is one segment of social life) and the latter refer to the "constitution of meaning" (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). Activities have their

positive/negative sanctions according to the rules of social reproduction. Junior's attitude to Mr. P, the white teacher at reservation school, has negative academic sanction but his anger is inspired by his lack of resources, both allocative and authoritative.

Junior's identity is determined by Unofficial Spokane Indian rules of fisticuffs that he has got from his reservation context, not acceptable in mainstream white society. At school Junior is the only Indian who faces several stereotypical insulting remarks such as a chief, red-skin, warrior, tonto, or squaw boy. This kind of insult appears on the list regarding stereotypes in the handout on books about Native Americans. *'I Is Not For Indian: The Portrayal of Native Americans in Books for Young People* (1991) questioned the demeaning vocabulary used in books about Native Americans (Dowd, 1992). When Junior joins Reardan High School, Reardan codes of signification clash with those of the reservation. Junior enumerates a manifesto of eleven principles under the heading "The Unofficial and Unwritten Spokane Indian Rules of Fisticuffs" and the first rule is: "If someone insults you, then you have to fight" (Alexie, 2007, pp. 61-62). And ironically he - the only Red Indian boy at school - receives repeated gestures of disrespect declining him his allocative resources: all the "pretty white girls (and also) the Indian girls ignored" him. The most violent blow to Native signification comes in the form of a racist joke:

"Hey, Chief," Roger said. "You want to hear a joke?"

"Sure," I said.

"Did you know that Indians are living proof that niggers fuck buffalo." (Alexie, 2007, p. 64)

This was the moment for him to decide that he had to defend not only himself but also Indians, black people, and buffalo (Alexie, 2007, p. 65) and, therefore, he punched Roger in the face. Roger, a heavy class fellow, responds as if he, and not Junior, had been wronged because the racist joke was normal for him. The normative rule of behaving with Indians - as Euroamerican discourses have established (Murtaza & Bhatti, 2016) - is insulting them but now he wants to "tell the world that [he] was no longer a human target" (Alexie, 2007, p. 65). The rules of the reservation and the rules

of the school are incompatible because these two contexts have opposing sets of signification. After giving a punch, Junior asks 'innocently' "what's the rule?" and gets no response because the discipline of the school cannot signify fistfight as a rule-based 'normal' activity.

b- Resources: Allocation and Authorization

The allocation includes produced goods, means of material production and material features of the environment and authorization includes the organization of temporal-spatial contours, re/production of human and bodily relations and mutual associations and organization of the life chances, of self-expression and self-development. Allocation, the authority on objects, is miserably missing for the Native American students in reservation school: Arnold Junior's Spokane tribe is so poor and under-resourced that they have to study the books their parents studied from (Alexie, 2007, p. 31). That "old, old, old, decrepit geometry book" that hits his heart like a nuclear bomb shows institutional maneuvering to keep the school and the community underfunded, to give the community the least command over objects. Junior, reading a 30 years old geometry book that carries his mother's maiden name, feels that his reservation white teachers are impediments rather than support to his self-development. In frustration, he throws the 'ancient' book onto Mr. P's face. Symbolically, it is tantamount to throwing the white sources of allocation into the face of Euroamerican academic practices. The institutionally assigned role prescription is imaginatively reversed from respect to revulsion: Mr. P admits, "You threw that book in my face because somewhere inside you refuse to give up" (Alexie, 2007, pp. 41-43).

The educational settings served to mix young adults of many tribes in a "melting pot" (Nagel, 2005, p. 116) to melt rigid tribal, regional and personal identifications of Native Indian identity and produce an acceptable blend. The purpose of the Indian boarding school was to assimilate and break up the Indian family, but it served as the opposite by strengthening the Indian identity (Alexie, 2007, p. 117). Removed from their Indian families the students lost the only familial resources of allocation and authority available

to them and as an outgroup in the new white setup they were subjected to white Euroamerican cultural and religious authorities, leaving them with nothing to give them a sense of self-respect.

Command over persons and objects is reversed again when at Reardon countering the teacher, Mr. Dodge, in geology class, Junior observed that “petrified wood is not wood” (Alexie, 2007, p. 84). Dodge with his face “red with anger” looked at a ‘primitive’ Red Indian’s courage to snatch his resource authorization, and asked him to explain what he meant. He explains how buried wood becomes mineral while maintaining the shape of the wood. Mr. Dodge with his official authority to coordinate, ridicules the Native American signification: “Yes, we all know there’s so much amazing science on the reservation” (p. 85). But ironically, when the entire class was raising fingers giggling at him, Gordy, a white boy, the genius of the class, raised his hand and seconded Junior. Mr. Dodge went “from blood red to snow white in about two seconds” but had to accept it now with a heavy heart as if even scientific facts were culturally and racially managed. A Red student’s observation on an object is ridiculed and a White student’s endorsement of the same statement is honored as though only whites are authorized to exercise command over objects.

Another tragic situation that results from and leads to intercontextual overlap is the death of Junior's pet dog, Oscar, who falls ill but his parents are too poor to take it to the vet. His father decides to kill it, the best and easiest solution they have got: “A bullet only costs about two cents and anybody can afford that” (Alexie, 2007, p. 14). Dog, buffalo, coyote and porcupine, like many other animals, have been best friends of Native Americans who believe in the horizontality of the relationship among all beings instead of the chain of being that is based upon verticality of the relationship among various beings. The Native American signification of relationships is massacred by the Euro-American resources: the pistol and bullet; in the pre-contact period, the Native Americans had very simple weapons and did not even know the sword, says Columbus (Zinn, 1980). Native Americans are even now the poorest community in America. Till 1991, 32% of Indian families fell below the official poverty income line (Healey, 1995, p. 322). Resultantly, their economic resourcelessness snatches

their allocation and hence authorization rights. Junior in a 5-working day cartoonist description of the experience, enumerates his allocative deprivation as follows: "MON: No gas. I hitchhike; TUES: Gas Money; Car isn't running; WED: Dad gives me a ride. Car breaks down 1 mile from school; THURS: Mom gives me a ride, Dad too hung over; FRI: No gas money: nobody stops to pick me up" (p. 88). Alexie adds: "NEXT WEEK: Start over (but in a different order!)" suggesting that the whole of Native American academic life is marred by the miserable lack of allocation resources that lead to the lack of authorization resources.

5. Conclusion

Native Americans in the Euro-American education system have no prerogatives but one obligation of submission to the hegemony that is meant for replacing the Red Indian tradition with white 'civilization'. Education is an ambivalently transformative phenomenon for Native Americans. Pedagogy at a reservation school is so miserably flawed that Red Indian children are supposed to 'die' there. Moving to a white school offers better life chances but the Native students are bound to follow all the normative rules and codes of signification against their culture, since the resources are in the hands of the whites who offer no hortatory exposition to Native practices, culture and history. Rob Thomas points out Alexie's "self-imposed geographical and cultural limitation" (Alexie, 2003, n. page) which is, in fact, his imaginative conception of the structuration of the textual world in which the Native American characters speak on their own terms in the inter-contextuality of Euroamerican and Native cultures. The intercontextualized subject in *Diary* performs his family and pedagogical practices crossing the limits and forms of appropriation which in Locke's terms are "who has access to what discourses" (Alexie, 2007, p. 30). These rules define the institutionalized relationship between discourse, speakers and the audience. Gee says that being real Indian "rests on one's being able to be in sync with other real Indians and with objects (e.g., the material items of the culture) in

the appropriate times and places” (2011, p. 35) but the Natives as per their role in dominantly white America have to be in sync with both the Indian and the white rules and resources resulting in a mixed/compromised identity i.e. a part-time Indian, in a world where whites control discursive and non-discursive resources.

Note: Postscript

A clearer distinction needs to be made between the colonial, genocidal past and the more recent past represented in these novels. Of course, indigenous peoples of the Americas like Spokane, Laguna Pueblo, and Kiowa suffer intergenerational trauma because of genocide and colonization. Nonetheless, these literary texts are not merely condemning a tragic past; they represent creativity and resourcefulness with aesthetic creations and rewritings of history. The assertions of binary categorizations about the incompatibility of indigenous peoples of the Americas could be proven about the past [and this is the focus of this article], making such claims today fails to acknowledge the agency of contemporary Native Americans. Most indigenous people currently negotiate hybridity, and such negotiations do not necessarily compromise their complex identities. These texts beg for a more nuanced interpretation. For example, at the end of *Ceremony*, Tayo is able to reconnect with Laguna Pueblo stories and begin healing from the PTSD and Anglo violence. These characters are not mere victims: they enact changes on an environment scarred by settler colonialism but still rich with indigenous knowledge and realities. This research can be extended through the theoretical frameworks of hybridity and multicultural overlaps to view how the indigenous identity has been reshaped in contemporary Native American fiction.

Acknowledgement

The evaluators’ insight has contributed to the maturation of this article and has suggested the preferred dimension for future researchers.

References

Alexie, S. (2003). *Ten little Indians*. New York: Grove Press.

- Alexie, S. (2007). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. New York: Hachette Book Group.
- Adamson, J. (2001). *American Indian literature, environmental justice, and ecocriticism the middle place*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*, trans. by Vern WW. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.). (2003). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives: New feature on American Muslims*. New York: Wiley.
- Brown, E. F., & Hicks, S. (2002). Harvard project on American Indian economic development. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Project_on_American_Indian_Economic_Development retrieved on 23/8/20.
- Chouliaraki, L. and Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cohen, I. J. (1989). *Structuration theory – Anthony Giddens and the constitution of social life*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Colasurdo, C. (1997). "Tell Me a Woman's Story": The Question of Gender in the Construction of "Waheenee, Pretty-Shield," and "Papago Woman" in *American Indian Quarterly*, 21(3), Summer 1997.
- Coltelli, L. (1992). *Winged words: American Indian authors speak*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Deloria, V. (2006). *The world we used to live in: Remembering the powers of the medicine men*. USA: Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing.

- Dowd, F. S. (1992). We're Not in Kansas Anymore: Evaluating Children's Books Portraying Native American and Asian Cultures. *Childhood Education*, 68(4), 219-224.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gee, P. J. (2011). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1994). *General problems in sociological theory*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. & Pierson, C. (1998). *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making sense of modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Huggan, G. & Tiffin, H. (2010). *Postcolonial ecocriticism: Literature, environment and animals*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Healey, J.F. (1995). *Race, ethnicity, gender, and class: The sociology of group conflict and change*. California, London, New Delhi: Pine Forge Press.
- Johnson, R. T., & Johnson, D. W. (2005). Cooperative learning, values, and culturally plural classrooms. In *Classroom Issues*, pp. 29-47. London: Routledge.
- Kanwal, A. (2018). Native American racial identity in Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Unpublished thesis submitted to the Department of English, Government College University Faisalabad, 2018.
- Kent, A.A. (2007). *African, Native, and Jewish American literature and the reshaping of modernism*. New York: McMillan.
- Krupat, A. (1996). *The turn to the native*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

- Murtaza, G., & Bhatti, S. A. (2016). Sherman Alexie's Discursive Reconstruction of the Native American Subject *Journal of Critical Inquiry*, 14(I), 163-201.
- Momaday, N. S. (1968). *House made of dawn*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Nagel, C. R. (2009). Rethinking geographies of assimilation. *The Professional Geographer*, 61(3), 400-407. DOI: 10.1080/00330120902941753
- Rifkin, M. (2006). Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education and Zitkala-Sa's American Indian Stories. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 12(1), 27-59.
- Silko, L. M. (1977). *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin.
- Snipp, C.M. (1989). *American Indians: The first of this land*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Yeboah, A. (2005, February). Education among Native Americans in the periods before and after contact with Europeans: An overview. In *Annual National Association of Native American Studies Conference*. Houston Texas. February 14 to 19, 2005.
- Zinn, H. (1980). *People's history of the United States: 1492-present*. New York: HarperCollins.