



THE ILLUSTRATION OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE WRITINGS OF SHERMAN ALEXIE

Benazir Z.¹, Mahalakshmi S.²

¹Research Scholar, ²Assistant Professor

^{1,2}Department of English

^{1,2} Chikkaiah Government Arts and Science College, Erode - 638004

^{1,2} Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

The illustration of Native Americans in the writings of Sherman Alexie is a significant contribution to American literature. The collection of stories *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, published in 1993, made a remarkable contribution to Native American literature. The characters constructed by Alexie mark an outstanding representation of the Native American, which is vivid through the character, Thomas, a voiceless individual in the oppressive white supremacy. Alexie is found with his identification of the forefathers and the generation that lost the hope of living due to the continuous tormenting of the European settlers in America, as if the land was theirs. Having fed the Native Americans with drinking addiction and the use of drugs, the continuous torture against them is well planned to annihilate the origin of the Natives. This article attempts to unearth the hidden collisions of cultural destruction.

Key terms: representation, Native American, annihilating etc.

The Native Americans underwent a long and nonstop attack by the European settlers in America through their technological advancement and the creation of enmity. The condition of the Native Americans who had been living for thousands of years has been conditioned by the upper hand settlers who did not have the human mind to accept them as equal fellow beings. This complicated condition led the Native American writers like Sherman Alexie, who accuse the foreign intervention of being a crime against the Native people. Through the character Thomas, Alexie maintains a traditional storytelling habit that brings to life the long-established values of nature in their lands. Yang finds the struggles of the Native Americans as the future shock created, and he explains that,

Alexie focuses on the realistic portrayal of life on the reservation in America. Through analyzing the bleak, surviving reality of the native Indians, the bitterness of the protagonist Arnold's struggle to achieve social success, as well as the native Indians' fear, hope, and expectations about the future. The bleak, surviving reality of reservation life highlights the uneven development of Native Americans in American society.

Through the character Thomas, when he was measured by the white settlers as a threat to the Whites, he was sentenced to death. This injustice is a selected example of how the Native American culture had been a well-planned annihilating quality to erase the memories of the people who owned their lands throughout the years. Thomas has been found to have a subaltern awareness of himself: he is part of an inferior group whose voice would never be heard, so he chooses to renounce himself, remain silent, and indeed quietens

himself for 20 years. His decision to keep the truth to himself does not mean he is frightened by the court's results. However, he is fully aware of the domination scheme of the political hegemony in court, which is still controlled by the dominant groups (whites). Amir Hossain explains in detail in his article how the Native American culture was destroyed as,

Alexie is a postmodern author in the United States of America. He is very popular among his Native American society as well as the community for representing the social reality of his age. This paper is divided into several sections; each section presents a benchmark of the 21st-century social landscape of Native Americans in light of Alexian Literary Works. It also scrutinizes stories and novels with a view to highlighting a faithful picture of Native Americans in the light of everyday social issues, including poverty, alcoholism, unhealthiness, racism, and suicidal acts.

Fairy tales reveal a relationship between the past and the present of the indigenous people, recounting the earlier triumphs of Native Americans. On the other hand, fairy tales have been misinterpreted by European settlers, as if they had not explicated the truth through chronicles and historical evidence, marking them as a contrast to the new identity of Native American ethnicity. Interpreting the dominance of white hegemony, an environment that has been formed with force, Alexie handles the traditional method of storytelling as the means to communicate native traditional values with a modern interpretation to the readers.

Alexie, as a reflective writer, works as a universally known revolutionary. His bold writing is known for its realistic portrayal of Native Americans. His poetry is a reflection of the suffering experienced by the forefathers. His experiences with the Native ancients, living with their own chronology, have made him a writer of the natives. His short stories capture the essence of a sparkling past that reflects the modern achievements of Native Americans. Carroll identifies the root cause supporting Alexei's thought process as,

In Native American culture, storytelling is part of a tradition that plays an essential role in the continuation of their culture. The arrival of European immigrants and the establishment of colonial rule by a new power often cause changes and the destruction of traditions. That is triggered because migrants have no understanding of indigenous culture and traditions. Thomas conveys the strain, fear, and suffering these horses feel in his testimony. This implicitly implies that Thomas tries to communicate what the horses have encountered by becoming a part of the horse group. The oppression encountered by the herd of Native American horses is shown again through Thomas' voice. This short story, through a subaltern character, Thomas, seeks to grant a space for the oppressed groups, who are incapable of revealing things in the fight between Native Americans and whites, including the horse that is part of a struggle of Native Americans, to survive the invasion of whites.

Alexie's fiction has been praised by critics, scholars, and reviewers for its realistic portrayals of Native American experiences of resistance to the contemporary American mainstream. Alexie is cited by reviewers as a writer whose expression lies in his ability to juxtapose humour with tragedy. His historical figures, suited to modern situations, are modelled on real people and fictional characters whose works have reached non-Native American readers, earning bestsellers and award-winning status, with clear evidence.

Choosing the character Thomas, in his short story and also in the independent movie, the analysis describes him as "a rather complicated character," defining him as "the closest to his Indian heritage." In the story "Hall," published in 1997, the author states that "representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture."

Alexie explains how meaning is produced and exchanged through language, signs, and images. *Hall* of Alexie does not display anything about the sacred but demonstrates how Native Americans live in the postmodern world. Alexie has an inclination toward depicting the darkest environments. Displaying hatred through the characters, rage with the supporting characters, and violence to resist any opposing environment, Alexie has portrayed the protagonists in the novels. Very conspicuous in *The Indian Killer*, he represents social reality through his writing.

The everyday happenings of Native American society are carefully crafted by Alexie, with the imagination visible in the verse of his poetry. Since his first novel, *Reservation Blues*, he has had more metaphoric presentation. On the other hand, the novel *Flight* explores the transformation of historical figures. The

poetry explores despair, the short stories and novels explore more themes, such as poverty, violence, and alcoholism among the Native American people. Shara thinks differently and proposes, “Alexie asks three questions across all of his literary works: 'What does it mean to live as an Indian in this time?' 'What does it mean to be an Indian man? Finally, what does it mean to live on an Indian reservation?’”

Sherman Alexie reflects the reality of how the lower class (as the American white society considers) becomes the subject of hegemony from the ruling classes (the whites). The race of Native life is towards the lower-class group, which will become the oppressed group, and at the same time has no access to hegemonic power or is distinguishably known as the subaltern group. All subaltern groups are included among the oppressed groups, though not all oppressed groups are subaltern.

The political representation for the people of America, the real natives, is vivid in the writings of Alexie, and his speaking for the natives of America is portrayed in his genuine writing with the stand he has taken to write for the people whose roots he possesses.

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