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Intercultural Experience as a Transformative Paradigm: Reimagining Cultural Boundaries in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

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Abstract

This research explores how Alexi views cross-cultural interactions as a means of progress in the contemporary world of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India*. This qualitative study examines the benefits of acculturation by using the theoretical framework of post-colonialism. By amalgamation of different aspect of civilization, Sherman Alexi contributes significantly to the exposition of meaning and create different opportunities for the community members. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India* as a bicultural work provides a means for Native Americans to maintain their Indian identity while embracing the authoritative forms essential to their success in modern society. Alexi used this narrative to expose the Euro-American discourse through interdiscursivity, demonstrating how they initially exploited native cultures before attempting to preserve them. It is a response to Western fiction, and it serves as both a claim and a lesson for the capacity of Europeans to erase it and conceal it under practicality. All of Alexi's metaphors and words in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India* are like bullets. Unlike other English writers, he does not glorify Western civilization. Even though Alexie acknowledge that the assimilationist policies shown in Momaday's or Dove's works are torturous, he still believed that Indians had to employ masters' tools to reverse the binary. The protagonist in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India*, who suffers from hydrocephalus, does the same. Through hydrocephalus, Alexi challenges the stereotypical conduct of the Western community toward Natives and conveys the notion that native culture has very little chance of survival. The events in the novel are shown through drawings and tiny cartoons for the sake of life. Alexi use colonizer's language creatively on their own terms to resist the disruptive forces of colonialism. Alexi adopted and adapted writing as a discursive tool against colonialism and as a mimetic response to forced cultural assimilation.

Key Terms: Post colonialism, Acculturation, Assimilation, and Tribalism.

INTRODUCTION

This study revolves around two important queries. First, how does Alexei depict the alternative perspective about the amalgamation of whites and red Indians? Second,

how does multiculturalism leads toward the progress of society? The primary goal of this study is to illustrate the necessity of cross-cultural interactions, which were previously unacceptable in indigenous communities due to Westerns' assault or rampages. In 19th-century America, the colonists' initial portrayal of the Native Americans as primitive, illiterate and backward became part of the discourse. The concept of savagism was created in order to deprive Natives Americans of their individuality. According to Scott R. Lyons, Native Americans were portrayed as primitive people who could not coexist with the civilized world and "destined to vanish" (Lyons, 2010, p. 210). In addition to putting the traditional Indian identity in jeopardy, assimilated American Indians were perceived as the lowest members of society, depraved, and intoxicated alcoholics. The limitations of reservation kept them out of mainstream American culture by confining them to a certain geographic area. They were left disoriented and perplexed by the forced emergence caused by kidnapping and boarding school strategies, which deprived them of their identity and sense of place. Due to Euroamericans' constant marginalization of Native Americans by labeling them as a threat to civilization and seeing them as inferior race, historical cross-cultural exchanges are less evident. But as time passed on, they attempted to completely "white" them by challenging their traditional way of life (Brown, Hicks, p. 202). In the late 20th century Vine Deloria, N. Scot Momaday, Leslie Mermon Silko, and Gerald Vizenor opposed Euroamericans for their assimilationist policies and annihilation of Native identity. The only solution is a merger: "white people are only tools … we can deal with white people, with their machines and beliefs (Silko, 1977, p. 132). These writers showed aggression toward Western society. It emphasizes that the “Native American literary canon” is completely different from “Western American Canon” (Womack, 1999, p.7).

According to Homi K. Bhabha, cultural identities are dynamic and cannot be attributed to a historical, static, or predetermined cultural occurrence. The "colonized" and "colonizers" are not seen as separate entities (Bhabha, 1994, p.2). Instead, social and cultural acts are constantly exchanged and reciprocated, which might lead to mutual and mutable recognition in the face of cultural differences. Bhabha's concept of hybridity suggests that cultural identity should be relocated to the "liminal space," which lies in the dualities self and other, European and indigenous (Pulitano, 2003,

p.2). As a result, writers and scholars in the literary and critical domains proposed hybridity as a defensive tactic.

Sherman Alexie, a renowned Native American poet, author, and filmmaker, has made significant contributions to the development of the Native American voice in American society. He challenges the notion of the 'vanishing' 'noble savage' and proposes an actual perspective for Native Americans. Sherman Alexi is regarded a fascist author. He demonstrates assertiveness, mixed tradition, and historical responsibility by combining white and red. The post-contact native identity was shaped by past trauma, stereotypes, misrepresentation, alcoholism, ideological enslavement, and ethnic conflict. Alexie, a mixed-blood individual, was born in 1966 and raised on the Spokane Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. He was diagnosed with hydrocephalus at the age of six months. Surgery was the sole option with significant risks of death or mental disability. Although the procedure was successful, he had epileptic convulsions and disfigurement. In his early years, he had several medical treatments. After surviving the trauma, he determined to rewrite Native American history. Alexi portrays the genocide on American Indians, and offers a substitutive angle about the betterment of Native Americans. Moreover, Alexie's writings reflect the rewriting of Native American history. *Reservation Blues* (1995) depicts individuals from several tribes, including the Spokane, Lakota, and Flathead form the pan-Indian alliance. Through “The Search Engine” in *Ten Little Indian*, Alexi emphasizes the prospect of multiculturalism; that is, how Corliss and Atwater turn the tables and make things favorable for themselves, in colonizers' society. The protagonists' attempt to escape the community's past colonization and find solace in the White world. It proposes that migration, exile, and displacement are the main reasons of hybridity. Alexie's personal philosophy of literary creative aesthetics is somewhat reflected in Harlan Atwater’s interview in “The Search Engine” Corliss's uncle asks her hypothetically what those white people might teach her, anticipating a response: nothing (Alexie, 2003, p. 14). Alexi who was well-versed in Euroamericans literature contradict this statement. Atwater represents Alexie's ambivalent relationship with white authors: Jenny Shandy, his fictitious teacher taught him “white classical poets”, so he had to seek out “Indian, black, and Chikanos” writers (Alexie, 2003, p. 22). This allowed him to merge white classicism with dark-skinned rebellion.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India (2007), is not only a personal diary but an open ended novel with multiple meanings and stylistic interdiscursivity. As an aggressively experimental writer, Alexi rejects all Western civilization's rules and regulations. He rejects form and structure yet delivering a clear message: rules are for those who cannot make their rules. The legacy of literary criticism and theorizing, which spans more than two millennia of well-organized and reasoned activity, has concentrated on maintaining its purity and lack of political commitment, emphasizing pleasure over purpose. Alexie transforms it into a "war" to be waged "desperate[ly] and without reason", a war with a noble purpose than slavish conformity to arbitrarily formed tradition, forced by the genre structure and literary norms (Alexi, 2007, p.5). The potent White generalization of the vanishing Noble Savage is diminished by Alexie's counter-representation. Alexi states that 'My existence is my resistance. He claims that great art never comes from learning or western civilization it comes from "tribalism, and that if reading is a sign of civilization, then his mother ought to be more civilized (Berglund, 2010, p. 241). His concept of tribe includes racial discrimination, forced westward migrations, dislocations, Native American anti-colonial resistance, Ideological violence, sustained white dominance, and misinterpretation of traditional cultures are shared characteristics of all the tribes.

By accepting the National Book Award of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India* (2007), Alexie explained "it feels like validation of not only my work, but also of my choices" (Knoeller, 2008, p.25). This story is somehow, an autobiography, because Alexie lived on a Spokane Indian reservation for a long time. It is a fascinating narrative since it is described from the perspective of a fourteen year old narrator, a Spokane Indian who transferred to a powerful high school in a wealthy, white farm town that is close to the reservation. The narrator draws readers' attention to the cartoons, including a self-portrait: "Half Indian, half white", which the protagonist creates to escape his fear and grief (p.25). Arnold Junior, the main character in creates cartoons because, in the event of a language barrier, a certain portion of the audience would be able to comprehend him, but everyone would be able to identify a cartoon depiction of a flower. His goal is to preserve his "tribe" with this cartoonish clarity of comprehension: Junior views his cartoons as little lifeboats that will help him survive in a series of broken dams and floods (Alexie, 2007, p. 5).

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India (2007), chronicles the assimilation of Arnold Junior, into the white culture. Arnold fosters reciprocity between the Indian reservation and the white community by crossing social, political, and racial boundaries. Alexi himself loves reservations yet lives in a metropolitan city. He introduces the notion of tribe consciousness Metropolitan, which is dynamic and does not compromise identity. Sherman Alexi asserts that self-marginalization is not a solution. He accentuates that in order to become powerful, effective, or influential, we must integrate ourselves into the culture of others. He claims that when we learn the culture or civilization of others, we will be able to express our viewpoint more effectively or accurately. And we shall get our 'center' position by employing the master's tools. Euromericans have always subjugated or exteriorized Native Americans; in order to deal with this situation, Alexie portrayed a different perspective in which acculturation leads to their advancement, and Arnold's success in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India* (2007), both in education and sports, is an example of this ideology, in which the marginalized one occupies the center. Alexie, as a native writer, demonstrates the need of incorporating White's culture into their indigenous society, since doing so will prevent them from the intolerable behavior of colonizers. Alexi migrates from the periphery to the center; he uses humor to lessen the traumatic connotations and amicably makes peace between the two races through syncretism, which helps to reconstruct the Native American identity. Alexi's writings provoke the readers to understand their position in U.S. society, by adopting multifaceted or hybrid identities that challenge the U.S-constructed assumptions. Hybridization reverses colonizers' false binaries and suggests a strategy for settlement between colonizers and colonized. It promotes the nation of 'Bridging Borders' that fills the gap between different communities (Szeghi, 2015, p.88). This research is significant because it helps readers to comprehend how we can achieve the benefits in community when we leave our painful past behind and move ahead. It also examines how dominant people control history and oppress marginalized people. Furthermore, it explore struggle and resistance of marginalized people to reverse the binaries by adopting colonizer's language to give them clear message in their language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The writings of Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, and Albert Memmi from the middle of

the 20th century served as the foundation for post-colonial thought. While the studies on the cultural and psychological impacts of colonialism began with Fanon. Fanon addresses the 'abrogation of the imperial center within the text'. Fanon discusses several significant themes in *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) and *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) from a postcolonial perspective. Native Americans are given roles which undermine their traditional identity and tribal sense of belonging in order to assimilate them into the mainstream White society. Native Americans' traditional way of life cannot survive in the contemporary multi-cultural and multi-contextual situation of American society. Kent argues that the Dawes Act and boarding schools, funded by the government, dispossessed Amerindians of their land and culture. Kent identifies two institutions in American culture that have marginalized and misrepresented Native American identities for literary, intellectual, and constitutional purposes. The Indian Removal Act (1830), Dawes Severalty Act (1885), and other treaties aimed to remove Native Americans from mainstream American society. Many Native Americans in the modern era faced radical dislocation from homeland through the US Government forced dislocation of tribally held lands. Public policy toward Native Americans at this turn of the century period (1887-1934) focused on ensuring theirs disappearance through a denial of their cultures and forced assimilation. The experience of widespread dislocation and the denial of a unique culture past became the hegemonically imposed definition of modernity for Native Americans. In the mid-19th century, the American government established acculturation and re-education programs for Indians on reservations and at boarding schools. The passage of the Dawes General Allotment Act (1887) which granted 160 acre allotment, led to radical dislocation for Indian people in the modern era. This policy was designed to foster individual land ownership and assimilate Indians into the mainstream of American society through the inculcation of Euro- American values, including the veneration to private property, individualism and self-reliance. Dawes supporters believed they were saving Indians by offering them assimilation. In 1886, the Indian Right association asserted, the Dawes Act (1887), was a great advance toward the general policy of gradually making the Indian in all respects as the white man. An overtly expressed effort to rid Indians of communal values and end "tribal designation", the Dawes Act also signified the attempt to end Native American culture as distinct and

separate from American culture (Dippie, et.al., 1982, p.177). The underlying assumption of this act was the widespread belief that the Indians were a vanishing people and that only civilized Euro American values could save them. The advent of off reservation boarding school also aimed at assimilating Indians, served as another dramatic effort in modernity to force Native Americans to rid themselves of their distinct tribal culture. Throughout history, the vanishing Indian ideology has defined Native Americans' subjectivity and identity. The whole Euro-American discourse, encompassing history, media, literature, and literary criticism, has fostered the representation of Native Americans as noble savages condemned to perish. The Indians were viewed as objects of knowledge and discovery rather than subjects, and this discursive portrayal of them as either vanishing tribal people in need of preservation as objects or as primitive and barbaric cannibals left them with no scope for agency or subjectivity. The accusation that they were "dumb, drunken, dirty, and degraded" played a major role in justification and legitimacy of their genocide's on all levels (Kent, 2007, p. 78).

Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin) published several key works highlighting Native American culture and the hardships of assimilation, most notably the collection *American Indian Stories* (1921), featuring autobiographical childhood memories and tales. Other major publications include *Old Indian Legends* (1901), *Dreams and Thunder: Stories, Poems, and The Sun Dance Opera* (2001), *A Warrior's Daughter* (1902), *The Trial Path* (1901), *The Widespread Enigma of Blue-Star Woman* (1921), and *A Dream of Her Grandfather* (1921). Her stories documented the tension between her Yankton Sioux heritage and the Euro-American education system, highlighting the loss of identity in missionary schools. She describes her experience at boarding school, where she was taught to conform to white standards. Furthermore, she depicts force and violence were frequently used to convert Native American children to “Christianity” and Euro-American lifestyles (Rifkin, 2006, p. 12). The professors overlooked Native American cultures, languages, and traditions. Living in an atmosphere where Indians are unable to pursue their ambitions has a significant impact on their identities as young adults. At the end of 1920s in his portrayal of the Navajo country, Anthropologist Oliver Lafarge provides a compelling testimony of this view. In Oliver La Farge in Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Laughing Boy* (1929),

wrote "The Indian story had to end in tragedy. I saw our own Indian as inexorably doomed, I saw that they must come increasingly into contact with our so called civilization and that contact means conflict and disaster. I put this idea into the book, along with anger at certain evil things that I had seen, and then I let myself out by sending my hero, after the final tragedy, back into my own dreamland, untouched, undisturbed Navajo country where the white man was not a factor and would not become one within my time" (La Farge, 1929, p.177). American society constructed its vision of a traditional, authentic Indian culture through photography, film, ethnographic accounts, popular novels, and collection of Native American stories, which has little relation to modern Native American daily life. In 1979, Congress entered the business of Indian education by funding General Richard H, Pratt's boarding school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Soon after, Congress dramatically increased appropriation for Indian education, and an increasing number of Indian children were forcibly removed from their families to live at off reservation boarding school around the country. As Pratt told congress, "We accept the watchword, let us by patient effort kill the Indian in him and save them" (O'Brien, et al., p. 76). Contrary to Pratt's act rhetoric of saving Indians and preparing them for survival in mainstream society, the effect of boarding school on many was destructive. The values inculcated by boarding School deeply marked an entire generation of Indians who attended boarding schools all over the country. Denigration of the tribal identity, inherent in the teaching of Euro-Americans values, led to self-hatred and alienation for many. Euroamericans literature portrayed the exclusion imaginatively. White-influenced writings, such as *Waheenee* (1977), affirm Euroamericans social and epistemological structures. The protagonist of the memoir *Waheenee* (1977) reveals her "satisfying assimilation" into white American social structure, claiming she no longer remembers or believes in her old Native traditions (Colasurdo, 1997, p. 388). Greg Sarris's *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts* (1993), is deeply centered on Native American culture, specifically the Pomo and Coast Miwok traditions. This is a collection of eight essays that explore cross-cultural communication through American Indian oral and written storytelling. A central figure in the book, McKay was a renowned Pomo basket weaver and medicine woman who raised Sarris. He uses her stories and life to illustrate the holistic nature

of oral tradition. Sarris, who is of mixed heritage and was the Chairman of the Federated Coast Miwok tribe, uses his personal background to examine how indigenous knowledge is often misunderstood by outsiders. Sarris argues that storytelling is a living practice that provides a way to "know things about ourselves" and can serve as a process for healing and cross-cultural understanding. She explicates about "dialogism and heteroglossia" about intercultural communication (Sarris, 1993, p.102). He critiques how earlier scholars often stripped Native American cultural items, like Pomo baskets, of their spiritual and living contexts, treating them as dead museum objects.

Kimberly M. Blaeser argues Native literary text enact as Native aesthetic of literature and culture that differs from nonIndian literature, an aesthetic that demands a culturally accurate critical context to interpret them. He argues Native American literature differs from non-Indian literature primarily through its rootedness in oral traditions, the political necessity of its eco-traditions, and its active role in cultural survival (survivance) rather than mere aesthetic expression. Blaeser posits that Native literature often blends genres and focuses on community, memory, and specific sense of place, distinguishing it from Western literature's often linear and individualistic focus. Kimberly Blaeser observed that the colonization of literature cannot be extracted from the history of colonization of land or people, nor can the ongoing attempts at literary decolonization among the indigenous American writers be viewed in any amber-encased "pure" academic discipline. The poetry of indigenous America has both literary and supraliterary intentions (Blaeser, 1945, p.184). Louis Dean Owens in *Mixed Blood Messages* (1998) interrogates that, although, the works of Bhabha or are familiar to natives, but why natives' works are not familiar to that Western writers... (Owens, 1998, p. 130). Owens in *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (1992), argued that for Native American writers, "the novel represents a process of reconstruction, of self-discovery, and cultural recovery" (Owens, 1992, p.5). And yet, "the Native American novelist works in a medium for which no close Indian prototype exists" (p.10); this poses difficulties for "the very questions of identity and authenticity the new literature attempts to resolve" (p.11). Considering the five-hundred-year-long historical trauma for American Indians marked by the publication date of Owens's book (1492-1992), the near-genocidal,

extended colonial assault on indigenous peoples by the Europeans who would become Americans, it is easy to see why it seemed necessary for those who had not "vanished" but survived to consider just exactly what it meant to be culturally and individually Indian in the second half of the twentieth century. The government's policies to end Indian cultures through forced assimilation, which punctuated the rapid population decline of American Indian since contact, exacerbated the popularity held belief in the "Vanishing Americans". This long held widespread cultural construct, maintained by anthropologists and sustained in popular literature, held that American Indians would soon die out as a culture and as an individual. This view led to a flurry of academic interest in preserving traditional Indian culture.

Vine Deloria, Jr. exposes the distortion of Native identity produced by colonial anthropology when he critiques the fabricated image of the "real Indian" constructed by outsiders rather than by Indigenous communities themselves (Deloria, 1988, p. 82). The Pan-Indian movement of the early twentieth century developed, in part, because Native students at off-reservation boarding schools encountered, often for the first time, Indigenous peoples from diverse tribal nations and established relationships that transcended tribal boundaries. As historian Hazel Hertzberg argues, the Pan-Indian movement provided "a psychological home, a place where they belonged", thereby replacing the physical and cultural homes from which they had been forcibly removed (Hertzberg, 1971, p. 18). Not only did boarding-school education create a shared experience of displacement and cultural loss, but it also equipped future Native leaders with a shared diasporic language—English—which enabled communication across tribal and regional linguistic differences. This linguistic access, combined with literacy and institutional knowledge, provided the practical tools necessary for Native intellectuals to initiate reformist and resistance-based movements. The irony is profoundly postcolonial: policies designed to assimilate Native Americans and erase Indigenous identities inadvertently produced a literate Native intelligentsia capable of turning the colonizer's tools against colonial domination. Historical studies of federal boarding schools confirm that these institutions were explicitly designed to strip Native children of language, kinship, and cultural memory. Armed with the very language and writing skills intended to eradicate their Indianness, many Native authors began documenting their lived experiences and contesting dominant colonial

misrepresentations. Through print culture, they rewrote the persistent stereotypes of Native peoples as primitive, violent, and vanishing. While the transition from tribal languages to English and from oral traditions to written genres undoubtedly entailed cultural loss and a partial erosion of tribal specificity, writing in English simultaneously emerged as a vital strategy of survival and resistance. D'Arcy McNickle captures this paradoxical appropriation of colonial discourse when he observes that "the white man's weapons, the written word, was being wielded by the Native Americans with enthusiasm" (McNickle, 1973, p. xxi). In Sherman Alexie's *Discursive Reconstruction of the Native American Subject* (2016), Murtaza and Bhatti observes that "Native American subject has to adjust itself in the globalized westernized Euro-American socio-cultural scenario" (Murtaza & Bhatti, 2016, p.37). Hybridity can assist individuals to meet "standards and requirements of modern civilization" despite the fact that they are not a part of mainstream culture (p.37). Arnold junior, the protagonist of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time India* (2007) decision to leave the red for Reardan, because of the twenty-year-old reservation books, illustrates cross-cultural identities or experiences. Arnold considers himself a hybrid of 'red and white' (PBS, 2009). He accepts his new identity by mingling with Europeans. Sherman Alexie's work is blending of two opposing cultures, for the survival of Amerindians. In this sense, Native American writers adopted and transformed writing into a mimetic and counter-discursive response to forced assimilation, using literary production as a tool to resist colonial epistemologies and reclaim Indigenous self-representation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs postcolonial theory to examine intercultural experience and identity formation in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie* (2007).The framework primarily draws upon the concepts of hybridity and the "Third Space" as articulated by Homi K. Bhabha, while also incorporating insights from Stuart Hall on cultural identity, Frantz Fanon on colonial psychology, and Mary Louise Pratt on the notion of the contact zone. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive lens through which the protagonist's intercultural navigation and identity transformation can be critically analyzed within a postcolonial context. Post colonialism seeks to address the ways in which non-European nations and culture

have been marginalized as an effect of colonial rule and to find the modes of resistance, retrieval, and reversal of their own pre-colonial past. "A degree of agency or a programmer of resistance, against cultural domination, signals the particular historical legacy ….a stage in a culture's transition into a modern nation state" (Gilbert, 1960, p.69). Post colonialism seeks to understand how oppression, resistance, and adaptation occurred during colonial rule. Colonialism is an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak people by large power. Colonialism cannot be seen merely as a political or economic condition in fact it was a cultural and epistemological conquest of the native populations. For Western territories, the native races were primitive, childlike, irrational, irreligious, criminal, and unreliable. Because the native race is incapable of self-care, the European must provide for it. Michel Focault in *History of Sexuality* (1976) talks about the theory of power and resistance. According to him, power always brings resistance and resistance is the source which heightens the power more. "When there is power there is resistance..." (Focault, 1976, p.55). According to Frantz Fanon, two phenomena occur in the colonial world: replacement occurs during both colonization and decolonization, and because settlers do not see natives as the same species, despite the fact that they are not animals, natives develop a sense of rebellion.

At the core of this framework lies Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which challenges the rigid binaries constructed by colonial discourse, such as colonizer/colonized, civilized/primitive, and self/other. Hybridity is the intermingling of two different cultures. It is a key concept in postcolonial literature. Hybridity encompasses transcultural manifestations. Bhabha argues that cultural identity is not fixed or essential but is instead produced through interaction, negotiation, and translation between cultures. This process occurs within what he terms the "Third Space," a liminal site where meaning is neither fully one nor the other, but something new and emergent. Hoogvelt (1997), Robert Young (1995) and Baktin (1981) describes hybridity in terms of the mixture. Homi K. Bhabha relates hybridity to cultural amalgamation. He describes this in-between as "it is the inter cutting edge of translation and negotiation that carries the burden of the meaning if culture'' (Bhabha, 1994, p.38). In the situation of in- betweenness, a person stands between two cultures. It is the association of two different cultures, as a result of continues interaction.

Bhabha called it the "Third Space", and asserts that; world is always flexible and transformable not transparent (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tifflin: 2004, p.118). Bhabha stresses that hybridity results from different practices of colonization and this hybridity leads to cultural contacts. In other words, hybridity represents multiracial people in the postcolonial world and includes several records of mixing. Hybridity, or interaction of different cultures leads to conflicts while also opening up new ways of thinking and forming identities. Rasheed Araeen responds to Bhabha's in between space. So he contends that Bhabha's concept of hybridity has created a line of separation between whites and non-whites. As a result, white people can adopt any culture of their choice and they do not need any sign of cultural identity. Nonwhites, on the other hand, must demonstrate their cultural identity in order to enter the superior culture (Araeen, 2000). In the context of Alexie's novel, the protagonist Junior inhabits this Third Space as he moves between the Spokane Indian Reservation and the predominantly white environment of Reardan High School. His intercultural experience exemplifies the formation of a hybrid identity that disrupts the notion of cultural purity and exposes the instability of colonial hierarchies. Thus, Bhabha's theory provides the primary analytical foundation for understanding how intercultural engagement functions as a site of both conflict and creative transformation.

Complementing Bhabha's framework is Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity, which conceptualizes identity as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a fixed essence. Hall distinguishes between two ways of thinking about identity: one that views it as a shared cultural background and another that sees it as constantly "becoming" through historical and social experiences. This latter perspective is particularly relevant to Junior's journey, as his sense of self evolves through his exposure to different cultural contexts. His identity is shaped not only by his Indigenous heritage but also by his interactions within a dominant white society. Hall's emphasis on identity as fluid and constructed allows for a nuanced understanding of how intercultural experiences contribute to the reconfiguration of selfhood in postcolonial settings. It also highlights the role of representation and narrative in shaping individual and collective identities, which is crucial in analyzing Junior's storytelling as an act of self-definition. Identity refers to one's personal style of representing oneself. Identity is an overwhelming and powerful force for the

characters or any human, and it drives every action of the characters. Identity can be cultural, societal, or emotional. Culture and identity are explored in postcolonial studies. Every individual or character suffers from a lack of direction in their life. Essentially, these persons or characters suffer from an identity crisis, which occurs in the absence of traditional culture. This identity reflects some rehearsals from a distant past that the characters cannot recall. Cultural identity "belongs to the future as much as to the past" so it "undergoes constant transformation" (Hall, 2003, p.336). Postcolonialism also refers to the effort to separate a palace from a colonial-formed society, which is the goal of all postcolonial characters. Essentially, it is the desire for separation and freedom from the constraints of postcolonial social structures. Frantz Fanon derives the concept of 'Recognition by Other' from the work of Hegel, arguing that a sense of one's self is produced how they are perceived by others. This implies that identities are always produced through interaction and relationship between different social positions.

The Double Consciousness was introduced by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay *The Transcendentalist* (1842). This idea was firstly presented by W.E.B.Du Bois in his seminal book *The Soul of Black Folk* (1903). W.E.B.Du Bois defined it as the action of viewing one's self through the eyes of others and measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Dubois, 1903, p.8). Double Conciousness is the state of internal conflict in the minds of colonized, which split their subjectivity into two parts. In addition to these cultural perspectives, Frantz Fanon's exploration of the psychological effects of colonialism offers critical insight into the internal conflicts experienced by colonized subjects. In *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), Fanon gives the concept of Double Consciousness, which describes the internal conflict experienced by the subordinate groups in an oppressive society. Fanon says double consciousness eventually leads towards Colonial Alienation, which means colonial entity is the internalized attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by the people as a result of colonization. In the novel, Junior's awareness of his socio-economic marginalization and racial difference reflects this psychological burden. His initial feelings of shame and inadequacy can be interpreted through Fanon's lens as manifestations of internalized colonial oppression. However, Fanon also emphasizes the potential for resistance and self-assertion, which becomes evident as Junior

gradually reclaims his agency through education and intercultural engagement. By incorporating Fanon's theory, this study addresses the emotional and psychological dimensions of intercultural experience, thereby enriching the analysis of identity formation. Frantz Fanon also give concept of Cultural Hegemony, which is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of the society in order to normalize their own so called civilized culture. This cultural hegemony leads towards the inferiority complex. Fanon says, Blacks do not naturally feel inferior instead their sense of inferiority is produced by racist societies.

Furthermore, Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone provides an important spatial dimension to this theoretical framework. Pratt defines contact zones as social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of asymmetrical power relations. Reardan High School can be understood as such a contact zone, where Junior encounters the dominant norms, values, and expectations of white American society. This environment not only exposes him to new opportunities but also subjects him to discrimination, cultural dislocation, and identity conflict. Pratt's framework helps to contextualize intercultural experience as a site of negotiation and contestation, where power dynamics are both reinforced and challenged. It underscores the complexity of cultural interaction, highlighting that it is not merely a process of assimilation but also one of resistance, adaptation, and transformation.

Stereotypes refer to the generalized and often reductive views constructed by colonizers or dominant cultures about marginalized communities. Such assumptions are usually negative, humiliating, and based on what Homi K. Bhabha terms fixity, where colonized identities are frozen into simplified and repetitive images. In the case of Native Americans, these stereotypes often circulate through romanticized binaries such as the "noble savage," the violent primitive, or the vanishing Indian. Sherman Alexie deliberately challenges these colonial misrepresentations in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), by presenting the harsh realities of reservation life, particularly poverty, violence, and alcoholism. Regarding the depiction of alcoholism in the novel, Alexie was directly asked in an NPR *Morning Edition* interview whether he felt he was reinforcing stereotypes about Native Americans. He firmly rejected that assumption, stating: "It's not a stereotype.

Stereotype implies that it's not real, and it's absolutely real. On my reservation, in my family, alcoholism was epidemic… So anybody who thinks it's a stereotype—alcoholism among Native Americans—is a romantic fool" (Alexie, 2017, 5:05). This statement is critically significant because it distinguishes colonial stereotyping from lived historical truth. Alexie's response makes it clear that his representation does not emerge from prejudice but from an authentic attempt to narrate the material conditions of contemporary Native life. What makes this portrayal powerful is that it unsettles the traditional literary image of Native Americans found in texts such as the *Little House* (1932) series or works like *The Indian in the Cupboard* (1980) where Indigenous peoples are frequently reduced either to threatening intruders or idealized "noble savages." In contrast, Alexie's novel compels readers to move beyond these inherited cultural myths and confront Native people as complex human beings shaped by systemic injustice, historical trauma, and survival. His use of humor is especially important in this regard, as it functions not merely as comic relief but as a subversive literary strategy that exposes racism, dismantles bias, and destabilizes romantic assumptions about Indigenous identity. The novel light-heartedly yet critically opens readers' eyes to the ongoing cycle of struggle, dispossession, and injustice that continues to affect Native American communities. Through Junior's voice, Alexie reveals how stereotypes obscure real issues such as unequal access to education, family insecurity, and generational trauma. Becca's comment appropriately confronts the issue of cultural bias in the classroom: We need to put our students face-to-face with these issues so that they can see these cultural groups as people just like us, who want the same things we do: access to jobs, education, housing, plenty of food, and security for your family (López-Robertson et al., 2012). This observation highlights the pedagogical importance of direct engagement with difficult conversations around race, stereotypes, and cultural misunderstanding. Raising awareness, deconstructing racial barriers, examining misconceptions, building relationships, and celebrating differences emerged as some of the most significant strategies for addressing racial tensions in the classroom. In response to Bruce's (2003) argument that awareness of racial misconceptions helps reduce prejudice, Amber further observes: If we make sure our students are aware of the stereotypes about all different individuals, they will become more knowledgeable and sensitive when they are put in these situations.

These conversations will only make the group stronger and more aware of what is going on around them (López-Robertson et al., 2012). This reinforces the idea that classroom discussions around literature and cultural representation can foster critical awareness, empathy, and intercultural sensitivity among students. All group members agreed that making an effort to bring all aspects of a particular culture to the surface creates a more inclusive learning environment and makes students feel more comfortable in the classroom. Therefore, Alexie's novel does not reproduce stereotypes; rather, it deconstructs them by replacing romantic fiction with social realism. His portrayal of alcoholism, instead of perpetuating prejudice, forces readers to recognize the structural and historical conditions behind Native suffering. In this sense, the novel becomes an important postcolonial text that transforms stereotype into critical awareness and turns literature into a space of ethical confrontation.

ANALYSIS

This research analyzes the role of intercultural experience in shaping the identity, consciousness, and resistance of the protagonist in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) by Sherman Alexie. Drawing upon postcolonial insights—particularly those of Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, and Mary Louise Pratt—this analysis demonstrates that intercultural engagement functions not merely as a narrative device but as a transformative strategy through which colonial hierarchies are negotiated and redefined. It also investigate the elements of post colonialism and how Alexi through stylistic interdiscursivity challenges the western civilization. Alexie in his *Diary* (2007), by using the first person narrative from the perspective of Native American teenager Arnold Spirit Jr. also known as Junior a 14 year old Cartoonist reinforces the cultural hybridity or amalgamation, as a source of progression in the protagonist world. The novel foregrounds the stark divide between the Spokane Indian Reservation and the white-dominated world of Reardan High School. This divide reflects what postcolonial theorists identify as the colonial binary, where Indigenous spaces are associated with poverty and marginalization, while white spaces signify power and opportunity. Junior's decision to leave the reservation marks the beginning of his intercultural journey, one rooted in both aspiration and alienation. This graphic novel includes sixty five comic illustrations. The novel also has been the subject of controversy, which stems from how it portrays alcohol, poverty, bulling,

violence, sexuality and bulimia. It is an epistolary and Chronicles of Junior life from the start of school year until the beginning of summer. It includes both junior's written chronicles of his life and his cartoon. The drawings and tiny Cartoons are for life sake. Some of the drawing are amusing comments on his situation while others are more serious depictions of important people in his life.

The protagonist, born with hydrocephalus and undersized for his age, suffers from seizures, poor eyesight, stuttering and lips, making him a regular target for bullying from others on reservation. Alexi himself suffers from hydrocephalus, an illness with very few chances of survival. Through hydrocephalus, Alexi conveys the notion that native culture has very low prospects of survival and critiques the western community's stereotypical behaviour towards natives. Alexie via the character of Gordy demonstrates that everyone struggles to balance being their true selves and being someone who is accepted by community. Being a member of victimized community, Junior sees the world in terms of stark dichotomies: white vs Indian, friends' vs enemies, rich vs poor. Leading a dual life in Reardan and on the reserve, he feels "like a magician slicing himself in half, with Junior living on the North side of the river and Arnold living on the South" (Alexie, 2007, p. 118). This statement encapsulates the fragmentation of identity experienced by colonized subjects. It aligns with Frantz Fanon's assertion that colonialism produces a "divided self," where the individual is caught between incompatible cultural expectations (p.119). Junior's displacement is not merely geographical but deeply psychological, reflecting the internalization of colonial hierarchies. Junior family is extremely poor and has limited access to opportunities. Poverty is equal to empty stomach and empty refrigerator. Indians are considered as bullet and every bullet worth is two cent and everyone can afford.

On the first day of school, fourteen-year-old Arnold Spirit ("Junior") opens his math book only to find his mother's maiden name written inside the front cover and realizes how old the book must be and the reservation is so poor it cannot afford new textbook. After realizing that he would get a second-class education at the reserve high school, Junior violently throws the book, in inadvertently hitting his teacher Mr. and breaking his nose. This incident symbolizes that Alexi is thronging every book and smashing it in the face of whites. Although Alexi has not denied the oppression,

violence and suppression that natives faced as a result of European colonization. He understands the struggles of all Amerindians, yet he encourages others to accept Western policies, for the preservation of their tribal heritage. While visiting Junior at home Mr. P convinces him to transfer to another high school, sensing a degree of precociousness in him. Mr. P's interaction with Junior, was the first step in his journey towards hybridity. Reardan High School functions as a contact zone, a concept theorized by Mary Louise Pratt to describe spaces where cultures meet under unequal power relations. At Reardan, Junior encounters both opportunity and exclusion, illustrating the ambivalence of intercultural spaces. It reveals the internalized oppression that Fanon associates with colonial subjects. The contact zone, rather than being a neutral space, reproduces social hierarchies while simultaneously offering the possibility of transformation. Junior decides to attend school in the nearby town of Reardan, “Whose mascot was an Indian, thereby making [him] the only other Indian in town” (Alexie, 2007, p.56). Junior was previously living on the margins with other natives struggling with life's challenges, but when he realized that no opportunity existed here, and he leaves the “rez”, and moves to Western school. He creates dual consciousness (p.57). Alexis basically used this notion to depict Junior's confused nature, but in the end, he balances his two worlds. The occurrence of replacement and rebellion may be traced back to when Junior had the opportunity to succeed and leave the reserve, but doing so would also mean losing his family and friends. If he stayed on the reservation, Junior would retain the respect of his friends and family, but he would never leave and be doomed to be unsuccessful. As junior talks to rowdy regarding this; “I have to go. I’m going to die if I don’t leave.” At that point, he realizes how marginalized his society is, not only politically and economically, but also educationally. "I was staring at a geometry book that was at least thirty years older than I was." (p.31). Arnold always believed that, the white men are complete in all aspects. He was surprised when he finds that Whites, too, felt same experiences of loneliness, rejection, carelessness and anxiety. His successful integration into white school causes estrangement from his own community. He was humiliated in “Wellpinit”, due to his illness. But after going to the Reardan, he was treated as a traitor especially by Rowdy (p.8). Alexie portrayed hate of community, in the form of Rowdy, who lives in past and Arnold, who are trying to move-on, by mixing with new

community, and in the end, Junior succeeds with the support and cooperation of his new friends at Reardan. His report card is an example of this. Rowdy, like Junior's sister Mary, is a struck character who confines himself to his own native world. "I realized that, sure, I was a Spokane Indian. I belong to that tribe. But I also belonged to the tribe of American immigrants. And to the tribe of basketball players. And to the tribe of bookworms. And the..... And it was a huge realization" (p.217). This moment represents a crucial shift from fragmentation to synthesis. Rather than choosing between cultures, Junior embraces a plural identity that challenges the rigidity of colonial classifications. Bhabha's theory suggests that such hybridity destabilizes dominant narratives, creating space for alternative forms of belonging. As a result, Arnold's duplex exposure let him recognize that he is both a Spokane native and an American immigrant. Aside from Rowdy, several Indians also supported him, including Eugene, who praised him for his understanding of acculturation with whites as a step toward development or proficiency. His interaction with the white teachers, especially with MS. Warren and basketball coach made him realizes his true existence. They mourn for him and lend a helping hand to make his life clear among whites. His academic and athletic achievements demonstrate his success in the white world. Junior's journey also reflects Stuart Hall's notion of identity as a process of "becoming." His identity evolves through continuous interaction with different cultural contexts, rather than remaining fixed. Hope becomes a mechanism through which Junior reconstructs his identity, moving beyond the limitations imposed by his socio-cultural environment. His intercultural experience thus facilitates a redefinition of selfhood, aligning with Hall's view that identity is shaped by historical and social forces.

Junior's friendship with Gordy is extremely symbolic in terms of biculturalism. Both belong to different worlds, yet support each other in times of need, especially Gordy's revolt in front of Dodge and Mrs. Jeremy. When she mocked him, not only Gordy but also his classmates, including Rowdy, rose up and left class (Alexi, 2007, p.175). It was a moment when he realized that black, white, and Indians are nothing, and this world is divided into those who are assholes or those who are not. Although they do not share their secrets with each other but they study together. Identity refers to one's personal style of representing oneself. When he decides to leave his tribal

land in search of greater opportunities, he loses his sense of identity. "...at Reardan, I became something less than Indian" (p.83). He first feels 'other' in there, but as time passes, he becomes more integrated with them, particularly after his confrontation with Roger. His arrival at Reardan is equally fraught with surprises. Clearly, he did not have a lot of prior interaction with white people until this moment. “These kids weren’t just white,” he says. “They were transparent. I could see the blue veins running through their skins like rivers” (p.56). His portrayal is nearly hyperbolic, intended to underline the contrast between Arnold's life on the reservation and life in Reardan, which is exceedingly white and non-Indian. Arnold learns to navigate his way both through the hallways of Reardan High and the reservation with conviction, humor, and (at times) sheer courage. While intercultural experience exposes Junior to marginalization, it also enables resistance. Education becomes a key site of empowerment, allowing him to challenge colonial narratives that equate Indigenous identity with inferiority. Furthermore, Junior’s success at Reardan challenges stereotypes about Native Americans, disrupting what Edward Said would describe as reductive representations of the “Other.” His achievements demonstrate that identity is not predetermined but can be reshaped through agency and resilience. Despite its transformative potential, intercultural experience is not without its costs. Junior’s journey is marked by loneliness, guilt, and a sense of betrayal toward his community. His success at Reardan creates a rift between him and his peers on the reservation, who perceive his departure as an act of disloyalty. He fails to realize that nearly everyone on the reservation views his choice as a defection, a rejection of the reservation, Indian life and culture, and themselves. They take his choice personally, especially his best friend Rowdy: Rowdy stopped screaming with his mouth but he kept screaming with his eyes. “You always thought you were better than me, he yelled.… What kind of idiot was I? I was the kind of idiot that got punched hard in the face by his best friend. Bang! Rowdy punched me. Bang! I hit the ground. Bang! My nose bled like a firework. I stayed on the ground for a long time after Rowdy walked away. I stupidly hoped that time would stand still if I stayed still. But I had to stand eventually, and when I did, I knew that my best friend had become my worst enemy” (pp. 52-53). Such feelings resonate with Fanon’s analysis of the colonized subject, who often experiences alienation from both the colonizer and the colonized

community. Junior's struggle illustrates the emotional complexity of navigating multiple cultural identities, highlighting the sacrifices inherent in intercultural engagement. Even though this book is meant to be fictional, readers who are familiar with Sherman Alexie will notice that it is actually fictionish—parts of it closely mirror his own story. They will also be able to identify his lighthearted language, his unapologetic depiction of alcoholism, and his insistence on speaking the truth. One of the issues addressed in this book is Arnold's need to navigate two different cultures, a topic that many white readers will be unfamiliar with and hence may struggle to appreciate. "Junior" is used in the same way as "dude" or "guy" are used in English-speaking communities, or as "ese" or "vato" are used in Spanish-speaking communities. It represents Arnold's Indian identity, which he loses when the teacher calls out his "name" (p.60). "My name is Junior", I said. "And my name is Arnold. It's Junior and Arnold. I'm both." I felt like two different people inside of one body. "No, I felt like a magician slicing myself in half, with junior living on the north side of the Spokane River and Arnold living on the south"(p.61). Arnold's attempt to preserve his Indian identity and his struggle to fit into the white culture at Reardan is a dichotomy of paradox. "How to pretend you're not poor" and ''Are You Poor?' Possible Responses" summarize Arnold's attempts to fit into the white culture at Reardan (pp.120-128). Later, when the Reardan basketball team (of which Arnold is now a member) defeats the Welpinit Redskins (the reservation team) Arnold says, "I whooped. We had defeated the enemy! We had defeated the champions! We were David who'd thrown a stone into the brain of Goliath!" (p.195). Arnold has completely subsumed his identity into the white culture of Reardan, by identifying with the white team which was viewed as an underdog. "And then I realized something. I realized that my team, the Reardan Indians, was Goliath. I mean, jeez, all of the seniors on our team were going to college. All of the guys on our team had their own cars. All of the guys on our team had iPods and cell phones and PSPs and three pairs of blue jeans and ten shirts and mothers and fathers who went to church and had good jobs.

Okay, so maybe my white teammates had problems, serious problems, but none of their problems was life threatening" (p.196). Arnold proceeds to recount a lengthy list of the challenges that the Welpinit team encounters, some of which are

life-threatening. He concludes that they are "ashamed of my anger, my rage, and my pain" (p.196). Alexie is not making an essentialist argument that "Indian is good" and "white is bad", but he is showing us that Arnold has fallen, as many young people do, into the trap of black and white thinking; in this case that "Reardan Indians=Good/Welpinit Redskins=Bad" (p.126). Arnold learns that the world is far more complex than this, and he is unsure how he will manage it.

Roger insults Junior, but he shows resistance by punching him on his face. The youngster who was often crying in Wellpinit suddenly became bold and confident in Reardan as a result of the change in environment and culture. Later, in the novel, this resistance earned him Roger's respect and friendship. "I couldn't believe he was so nice. He was, well, he was POLITE!" (Alexi, 2007, p.126). This scenario reinforces the essentialism of intercultural blending. Natives has long been stereotyped as primitive or fixed in nature. However, Arnold's interaction and participation, particularly on a basketball team and around Halloween, demonstrated his modernity and broke all of whites' preconceived notions about natives. Furthermore, he contributes equally in his thanksgiving ceremony, demonstrating that, while living among Europeans, he remains connected to his tribal lineage. Although, Arnold was native, his affair with Penelope; his contributions to the Basketball team with Reardan, and his late-night party with Roger and Western friends demonstrate his hybridity. Despite his reputation as a bully on the reservation, Rowdy often take stands for Junior. Alexie's novel depicts the struggle to balance assimilation. Alexie's main character, Junior, describes racial inequality between Whites and Indians in the following words: "We get beat up. At least once a month. Yep, I belong to the Black-Eye-of-the-Month-Club" (p.130). Junior experiences the notion of double-consciousness, when he looks at his image. For example, the size of his head and feet are qualities that people on the reservation notice when they look at him. Another example of double-consciousness based on one's appearance occurs when Junior expresses a more racial feeling of double-consciousness. Junior states, "They call me an apple because they think I 'm red on the outside and white on the inside" (p.131). "I felt like two people inside of one body" (p.61). These two quotes connect to Junior's double-consciousness since he has heard what people on the reservation say about him and he himself believes it. However, this simple experience of double-

consciousness differs from what Junior conveys later in the book. Junior's vision of himself and who he is grows significantly, as he realizes that he is not a member of one group. Junior says, "I that, sure, I was a Spokane Indian. I belonged to that tribe. But I also belonged to the tribe of American immigrants. And to the tribe of basketball players. And to the tribe of bookworms. And the tribe of cartoonists. And the tribe of chronic masturbators. And the tribe of teenage boys" (p.133). Sherman Alexie, a native Indian writer, depicts the hyper-consciousness of his status within any social group in his novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007). He depicts the phenomenon of 'double consciousness' and 'colonial alienation' via Junior internal struggle for identity, who enrolls in a white school and begins to experience identity conflicts. Junior perceives himself as having two identities: Junior, an outcast from the reservation, and Arnold, a white high school student at Reardan. He states, "Travelling between Reardan and Wellpinit, between little white town and the reservation, I always felt like a stranger. I was half Indian in one place and half white in other" (p.135).

The novel's whole plot explores the reconciliation between two different selves. Junior's transfer from Wellpinit to Reardon highlights the struggles of colonial nations, when they moved from one place to another place in the search of a better life. However, this exile also make them aware of different traditions and Enlightenment policies of the world. Arnold's interactions with Reardan make him aware of the sufferings and pressures of white children (Penelope) in their respective society. This conjunction of the West and the Rest (natives) raises awareness in society, ultimately leading to the success of the proponent (Arnold). Junior's affection for Penelope and Roger exemplifies biculturalism. Although they initially perceive him as an outcast, Junior's courage earns the admiration of Roger. Roger assists him financially as well as in basketball matches. In the same way, Penelope accepts him, even though she is aware of his financial situation; in trick-or-treating, she makes a donation in his or her name; and Alexie portrays the protagonist's interaction with his coach in a hilarious way; the coach is presented as a father figure to him, and he even consoled Junior, in the beginning, when he lost. "It's just a game.....it's not worth all this" (p.148). Even he praises him by calling him "the best shouter who'd ever played", and reinforces his success in the end, as he wins the competition (p.142). Cultural Hegemony is depicted

when White teacher Mr. P himself admitted that their goal is to exploit native culture for their own dominance. He states: "We were supposed to make you give up being Indian" (p.250). Throughout his work, Alexie emphasizes the acculturation approach, which is a necessary tool for the meaningful development of the world. Although, Momaday's plays are critical of the Western life-style, due to colonizers' excessive violence or assimilationist policies. But Alexis portrayed here the obligation of Western tools, because such mechanisms will make the peripheral-one stronger by giving them a voice, and they will not only progress, but also protect their tribal-lineage/ ancestry, as Junior did; he never left Rowdy (his tribe) and adopted Euro-American values/ strategies. Momanday said that there is no metropolis, whilst Alexi stressed the significance of integration. Alexi stated that coexistence is possible, but first it is necessary to ensure existence. White people posed a threat to existence, which has been going on for five centuries. Sherman Alexi demonstrates developing a national culture is a stage toward greater international solidarity. The struggle for national culture induces a break from the inferior status imposed on the nation by the process of colonization, resulting in a national consciousness. This was the narrative of Alexie, who improved his lifestyle in contrast to his community members and expressed his views as a successful novelist to the Western world.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the novel positions intercultural experience as an effective approach for personal and cultural transformation. Junior's journey demonstrates that engagement with multiple cultures can lead to the development of a more inclusive and dynamic identity. The interaction between natives and whites allows indigenous groups to exist with dignity in mainstream American society. Alexie stresses the same point by using the example of Junior. The transcendent aspect of the narrative is that Junior does not abandon his Indian identity when he enters the white world. He achieved tremendous success in Reardan, but he is first and foremost a Native American; as we can observe throughout the narrative, Rowdy was always his top priority, and at the end of the narrative, he wanted to spend time with Rowdy alone. Through the lenses of Bhabha's hybridity, Hall's cultural identity, Fanon's colonial psychology, and Pratt's contact zone, it becomes evident that Junior's journey is both a site of conflict and a space of creative transformation. Intercultural engagement exposes the protagonist to

marginalization and psychological strain, yet it also provides the tools for resistance, self-definition, and empowerment. By occupying the Third Space, Junior constructs a hybrid identity that challenges colonial binaries and redefines the boundaries of belonging. Thus, the novel not only critiques the enduring effects of colonialism but also offers a hopeful vision of identity as fluid, inclusive, and transformative. In addition, although this study primarily focuses on the influence of dominant white culture on the development of Junior's identity, the text also opens up the possibility of exploring cultural exchange from a reciprocal perspective. The extent to which members of the dominant culture engage with, adapt to, or are influenced by Indigenous cultural values remains an area that warrants further critical attention. Such an approach contribute to a more balanced understanding of intercultural dynamics by moving beyond a unidirectional model of influence.

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