

Colonial Epidermalization: A Thematic Study of Sherman Alexis's 'The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven'

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Abstract: Colonialism led to the fabrication of certain inferiority complexes on the part of the colonised subjects. The colonisers succeeded in doing so through the inclusive diffusion of racial stereotypes. This perpetuation made colonised nations like Native Americans lose their indigenous voices, and they soon assimilated themselves into the Euro-American world and its identities. The article scrutinises how the colonised subjects were not only physically persecuted, but their identities were also distorted, disfigured, and then misrepresented to the world. The colonisers shaped and sculpted these identities through an exploitive mechanism which Franz Fanon termed 'Epidermalization' in one of his famous works, *Black Skin White Masks*. The paper employs the conceptualisation of Epidermalization with reference to 'The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven' by Sherman Alexie. While using the concepts of Epidermalization of inferiority and internalisation, the paper highlights how the continuous confrontation of binaries and inferiority during the process of Colonialism caused a heightened sense of desperation and frustration among the Native Americans along with the internalisation of white supremacy.

▪ p-ISSN: 2663-3299

▪ e-ISSN: 2663-3841

▪ L-ISSN: 2663-3299

Key Words: Epidermalization, Franz Fanon, Identity Crisis, Native Americans, Sherman Alexie

Introduction

Indigenous people is a catch-all term for those who are thought to have been the 'first' on a given land before the 'settlers' arrived and were out-populated, enslaved, exploited, and murdered. However, the concept became a part of the modernist process and is reviled by many people that indigenous peoples, more than any other group, are at the forefront of the postcolonial struggle. They battle for their survival not only on physical

stature but also on cultural and economic grounds. In the book 'Questions of Cultural Identity' Stuart Hall asserts that the incessant struggles of the colonised race to unwind the binaries that are thrust upon them by Colonizers leads to brutalising their very own sense of identity in daily life ([Hall 97](#)). The reality and actual existence of native people has been usually shut down by the image that the western civilisation has forced upon them for the last few centuries. The preconceived

image of what an Indian should be like or how an Indian should behave is of major importance in the study of the stereotyping process that Native Americans have experienced for centuries i.e. these Indian stereotypes and images are artificially constructed under the influence of the Western genre.

Sherman Joseph Alexie's ([Alexie, S. 2013](#)) work "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" comprises 23 interconnected stories about the Spokane Indian Reservation. The tales manage issues like survival, demise, poverty, alcoholism, and identity crisis. Three main protagonists who appear throughout the entire book are Victor Joseph, Norman and Thomas-Builds-the Fire. In autobiographical aspects, Victor's life is the same as Alexie's. Like Alexie, Victor is one of a handful of Indians who got the opportunity to attend the school. Additionally, Victor fiddles with liquor abuse at a very young age, just like Alexie. Sherman Alexie stresses on the trauma and violence caused to Native Americans were not from a sudden unexpected catastrophic event. Rather it was something 'insidious', so does that also reflect that the traumatogenic effects of oppression that were not necessarily violent or threatening to the body did violate the souls and spirits of Alexie's characters in the short stories.

Nigel Gibson, in his book "Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination", states, "The internalisation of dehumanising and violent colonial relations destroys the natives' sense of selfhood" (3). The current study attempts to understand how the identity of a Native American is constructed through constant internalisation and systematic oppression. Likewise, it aims to highlight Fanon's explanation of the inferiority complex instilled among the native people, which he termed 'Epidermalization'. Alexie, through his protagonist, Victor, represents the destructive outcomes of racism, alcoholism, unemployment, high suicidal rate, and

neediness that plagued human existence on the Spokane Indian Reservation alongside the rage brought on them by the colonisers by the extermination and distortion of their authentic Native American identity.

These subjects then start negating their own identities thinking that they don't have a viable identity, and start considering themselves as 'Sub-Humans'. This agonising psychological position causes a dilemma among them due to which they are neither able to celebrate their native culture nor can achieve equity with the colonial culture. Through Fanon's account of colonial racism, we gain a significant understanding of complex issues that the colonised subjects had to encounter in white-dominant cultures. The study focuses on the Epidermalization (internalised oppressions) and traumas that affected the Indian culture and their identities. Western culture marginalised these indigenous groups and justified negative stereotypes so that they were fully able to maintain their dominance and influence over the Native Americans residing on the Reservation. According to Fanon, the west, to perpetuate a hegemonic process in Subaltern groups, embraced a process of "Othering". This tactic was also implemented to justify the institution of slavery. Racist representational tactics were used to oppress African slaves by portraying black people as illogical, lustful, and forever cursed with deviant colouring. Under such conditions, blacks were prevented from making any significant contributions to the politico or cultural arenas simply because of their different skin tone ([Fanon 44](#)).

Frantz Fanon calls attention to the psychological impacts of racism on the colonised population. He asserts that racism eventually leads to an inferiority mentality in people of colour who see themselves as powerless and ineffectual individuals incapable of changing the unfair status quo. Correspondingly when black people were subjugated to racism, they were forced by

white dominators to adopt negative stereotypes about their own race, i.e. blackness as a symbol of iniquity and depravity. Fanon predicted that this would ultimately lead black people towards self-hatred and they would try to attempt to act like successful white people leaving behind their ingenious values and cultures, a process he called the 'Epidermalization of inferiority'. The aggravation that Alexie's characters encounter is a consequence of a 'Social and cultural void' that comes from the abuse and obliteration of Native social life by the colonisers. Franz Fanon in his book 'Black Skin White Masks' also announces that indigenous people, when colonised, are secured in darkness and ultimately white individuals with whiteness, this is how they are internalised with certain standards in a way that the colonised people themselves learn to equate blackness with evilness, sin, and immorality. Fanon asserts that the concept of inferiority complex is a result of the double process, out of which the primary process is that of economics that further leads to the Epidermalization of inferiority ([Fanon 33](#)). He similarly offers a sketch of the connection between philosophy and humanistic constructions, stating that they lock subjectivities into their racial classes.

Literature Review

In the past two decades, Sherman Alexie has portrayed a more truthful picture of a contemporary Native American identity that reflects the challenges of the vast majority of Native Americans during the times of colonisation. He represents despair, poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction, racism and alienation, and the search for one's cultural identity on the Indian reservation through his characters. [Daniel Grassian's \(2011\)](#) "Understanding Sherman Alexie" demonstrates how the trivial daily life actions of tribal life served as the inspiration for Alexie's short works and how he incorporated those minimal events on the reservation into

his stories and poetry. Grassian contends that his writings are a reflection of his first-hand experiences of the society that he has gathered throughout his life. He has been through a constant trauma of how his friends and family kept on succumbing to the repercussions of poverty and alcoholism ([Grassian 6](#)). Similarly, Lois J. Einhorn, in her book, "The Native American Oral Tradition: Voices of the Spirit and Soul", states that through the use of techniques of exaggeration, distortion, and caricature, the native Americans display the stories that are enriched with "commonplace details, vivid imagery and short, straightforward thought units" ([Einhorn 86](#)). Alexie's ability to mend and marry these fractured elements of cultural consciousness is made possible by his characters' ability to engage in the storytelling ethnocentricity that binds the present Native American identity with that of the past.

According to [Huminski and Timothy Brennen's \(2014\)](#) article, "Memory, Storytelling and the new Reservation: Sherman Alexie's Creation of a New Native American Identity", Alexie's stories attempt to piece together the cultural holes torn open by generations of self-destruction, oppression, and alcoholism. Throughout Alexie's stories, the Native American identity has been subjugated by a colonising and dominant White hegemony ([Huminski 2 and Brennen](#)). Colonisers left a devastating effect on the lives of Native Americans. They not only destroyed the societies but also annihilated their cultural values. They were sent to reservations where they were left to die. Native Americans have never been able to recuperate from the endeavoured annihilation.

Through the lives of Victor, Thomas, Junior, and other main characters, Alexie shows the cruel but true reality of Indian life while making references to his own life. "Sherman Alexie Reservation: Relocating the Centre of Indian Identity" by Tracey L.

Connette states that, by exposing the readers to his own life through narrating the past events in his writings, Alexie asserts that Western society and Western culture understand the world in a completely different worldview from rest of the societies and culture. Similarly, the same Western society attempts to impose its narrative upon the Eastern or non-western societies singlehandedly ([Connette 27](#)).

Racial prejudice and colonisation ensure that the colonised subject's future in terms of both social and economic development is as dim as possible. [İbrahim Mert Öncel, in his article \(2020\)](#) "Life on the Reservation: An Analysis of Sherman Alexie's The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven", narrated the crisis of Native Americans at the reservation in terms of poverty and alcoholism. He states that all of the characters in Alexie's work share a struggling and complicated relationship with their native culture and past. Although the protagonists are attracted to "their Spokane heritage", however, they are far from the place of their ancestors because of the constantly changing situation of America ([Öncel 3](#)).

Alexie's ambivalence regarding life on the reservation is highlighted in Tracey L. Connette's "Sherman Alexie's Reservation: Relocating the Centre of Indian Identity". Alexie was raised on a reservation but now resides outside of it in Seattle, Washington. In doing so, Alexie opens up the idea that Native Americans do not have to lose any cultural integrity as a result of their migration to a different society at large. Rather they should be strengthening their tribal values and community. While appreciating the aspect of hybridity, Connette proclaims that Alexie and his stories prove to be a source of information for the importance of hybridity, which does not take into account the shunning of native identity but acts as a strong ground for experiencing the identities of two different

cultures ([Connette 34](#)). For Connette, this stable hybrid identity never curtails an individual's choice of assimilating to two different cultures one at the same time. The goal of Colonialism as a system is to keep black people permanently dependent on the colonisers' race rather than fostering their development as autonomous and critical thinkers. Black self-consciousness cannot be deemed "free" in such circumstances ([Connette 22](#)).

Although all the mentioned studies' results are valid, we will further continue the study of the selected short stories in the light of 'Epidermalization' as the novel revolves around the lives of Indians and how they have internalised that they are fundamentally different and inferior which pushes them back to an agonising psychological position causing identity crisis among them.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

'Black Skin, White Masks' by Franz Fanon, looks into the psychology of Colonialism, provides light on the results of colonisation and the lived experiences of the native people. Using literacy analysis and critical perspectives Fanon looks into the colonisers internalised Colonialism and how a sense of inferiority complex is fostered in the subjects mind based on skin tone and cultural norms. Consequently through this system of racism, black people eventually end up imitating their oppressors. According to Ashis Randy, Fanon's sensibilities are the reason "we know something about the interpersonal patterns that defined the colonial position" ([Randy 2](#)).

Fanon stresses on the negative impact of internal Colonialism that leads to an inferiority complex. While trying to get away from the state of obscurity the native individual of color wears a white veil and starts considering himself an all-inclusive subject. Consequently, social and cultural qualities are disguised, or "Epidermalized"

making a basic disjuncture between the native individual and his body. Fanon notes how black individuals become inferior and simultaneously suffer from racial hierarchy, while also perpetuating it by internalising the idea of black inferiority. This internalisation appears as "Epidermalization" or the psychological internalisation of inferiority and expendability, an internal alienation from self that is also manifest externally through the settler's violence and spatial segregation. "The colonised man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa." ([Fanon 13](#)).

Fanon argues that colonisation was successful due to this 'internalised consciousness' and 'creation of a sense of inferiority' that made native people desire and crave dependency on white people. Further, he asserts that Colonialism is more interested in oppressing people, distorting, disfiguring, destroying, and misrepresenting the past of indigenous people. It never is convinced by holding its grip upon the native people but also changing their minds and perspectives towards life. Colonialism distorted and disfigured the native minds making indigenous people view the coloniser's norms and values as worthy and notable in comparison to their forming cultural hegemony ([Fanon 169](#)).

Analysis

Indigenous people lost their voices and narratives, and found themselves to be imbalanced between two contradicting universes: the old reality where they now not had a place, and the new world where they would be labeled as settlers, consistently unfamiliar, continuously looking for acknowledgment. According to Fanon's

Black skin white Mask, the colonial world can be described in terms of two forces or binaries i.e. the indigenous population and the colonisers. Colonisers impose colonial control over the indigenous people to take control of the riches in the colonised regions. Fanon as a colonised subject himself described how the subjectivities of the colonised nations were constructed by the colonisers and contributed to white assimilation. Alexie's most grounded story voice comes from Victor. He is presented in "Every little Hurricane" as a nine-year-old youngster who wakes up from his sleep during the New Year's Eve party at his home. Victor was not exempt from the unpleasant aspects of life on the reservation. He was aware of his parents' alcoholism as he frequently discovered them "passed out on their bed in the back bedroom" (9). He observed his poor uncles fighting and bickering as he grew up.

Under colonial rule, the indigenous people are Epidermalized in a way that they must accept colonisers' social and cultural norms, if they refuse to do so they might end up having a deep sense of 'otherness' and 'alienation'. On the other hand, if they opt for the metamorphosis of their identities they face brutal consequences. Hence the colonised subjects are left hanging in between the two worlds. As a nine-year-old kid Victor had to deal with anxieties as a result of exposure to alcoholism, past traumas, shared suffering, cultural perplexities, and familial animosities. "He wanted to scream, wanted to pretend it was just a nightmare or a game invented by his parents to help him sleep" (46). The Native Americans on the reservation were tremendously angry because of the terrible repercussions of their daily lives. If not properly channeled anger can be self-damaging. At the New Year's Eve party, Victor could hear the voices of the people sharing their experiences of pain experiences while he lay in his bed. He soon felt as if the

ceiling had lowered down due to the weight of miseries and agonies that the Native people were carrying. "Victor made his way through the crowd, hated his tears. He didn't hate the fear and pain that caused them. He expected that. What he hated was the way they felt against his cheeks, his chin, and his skin as they made their way down his face" (50).

Racism

Alexie introduces its readers to the awful treatment of native people and the obscure climate of the reservation. Alexie calls to attention the concept of internalised racism and ingrained colonial oppression. Franz Fanon brings to light the same account and how anti-Black racism is internalised by Black people. Consequently, this internalisation by the colonisers adds complexity to the pathologies of living under colonial rule. He likewise depicted the comparative examples of racism at the time of colonialisation. For instance, racial remarks like "Dirty Nigger!" are thrown at black people on the streets. His previously carefree body of his race is transformed into a "Negro" body by racialisation. A white child saying "Mom, look at the Negro! I'm scared!" represents how the space is dominated by white norms ([Fanon 17](#)). The same standardisation of a 'culture of savagery' brought psychological traumas among the Native American individuals and no matter how hard they try to be equivalent they are again dragged to the state of inferiority "Think about it. Do white people remember the names of those guys who dove into that icy river to rescue passengers from that plane wreck a few years back? Hell, white people don't even remember the names of the dogs who save entire families from burning up in house fires by barking" (86).

The question of 'Native American/Indians' and race dominates Alexie's story too. Alexie's characters live under the constant burden of racism. In the

story, "All I needed to do was dance" Victor is depicted as an independent grown-up yet plagued by insomnia and his past. The racism embodied in these stories is supported by Alexie's personal experiences of discrimination. The two boys, Victor and Thomas, ask themselves 'What does it mean to be Indian' and 'Why it is so important to stay connected to their cultural roots?' (82). Fanon claims that colonial racism causes serious psychopathological harm to the colonised people and promotes mentally ill behaviors. Alexie's stories also reflect the same scenarios and how the indigenous people choose not to stick around their races as it was synonyms to substandard and inferior "We sat there beside Dirty Joe and watched all the white tourists watch us, laugh, and point a finger, their faces twisted with hate and disgust. I was afraid of all of them, wanted to hide behind my Indian teeth, the quick joke" (95).

Fanon's dissertation on Epidermalization represents how Colonialism limited the potential for the existence of colonised subjects. Victor and his friend Adrian discuss a 15-year-old Julia Windmaker, a reserved basketball star. They wanted him to use his talents to pursue a successful life but like the many talented athletes at the reservation, he became a victim of alcoholism and soon they watched him being arrested for throwing bricks from a car window. Through these repeated experiences of racism, people are forced to feel the burden of being ingenious. They are reduced to a superficial and homogeneous expression of the "Inferior Race". Being a product of constant internalisation and systematic oppression these native people continue to live in a volatile environment and this internalisation of racism affects them even if they choose to leave the space. Victor had to go through similar accounts even when he decided to move to Seattle, "He (7-11 clerk) knew this dark skin and long, black hair of mine was dangerous. I had potential" (242)

The structure of binaries that creates a black-and-white hierarchy in colonial culture basically "Seals white man in his whiteness & the black man in his blackness" (3) which is essentially caused by the acceptance of white rule. In the first grade, Victor is introduced to the harsh reality of racism. At the school level, Victor's teachers claimed the privileges of their race. In fifth grade, Victor scented certain actions as a punishment for doing nothing. This injustice was done to him based on the race to which he belonged "Indian boy". In the third year of middle school, Victor's teacher thought he was drunk as he passes out from diabetes at the high school prom. "What was the boy drinking? I know all about these Indian kids. They start drinking at a very young age" (236). Alexie portrays how the Native Americans were considered to be second-class citizens based on negative stereotypes that were constructed by the colonisers. The practice of this colonial racism then also appears in the form of physical abuse over the oppressed communities as Alexie mentions Victor remembering "his father was being spat on while waiting for the bus in Spokane" (8). The development of certain pessimistic ideas regarding a particular race was soon internalised and Native Americans were locked up in rat holes.

They internalised to equate themselves with evil as Western popular culture equates itself with purity. As a result, these indigenous people started showing the tendency to get inclined toward the values of their colonial masters. A feeling of alienation rose among the Native Americans and they couldn't decide who to identify with. Victor's white friends would fix him to the ground and bury him in the snow until he couldn't breathe. They would take off his glasses and would call him names like 'Bloody Nose'. As soon as Victor would fight back he would get punished by his teachers. "She said and made me stand straight for fifteen minutes, eagle-armed with books in each hand. One was a

math book; the other was English. But all I learned was that gravity can be painful" (230). The racial hierarchy of colonisation forces the subjects into a state of rejection at the basic level of human consciousness.

Alcoholism

Alcoholism being one of the distinguished troubles and a stereotype connected to Native Americans turned out to be a staple to the Native American's identification. Fanon asserts that colonisation has destroyed humans' capacity to understand the ontology of blackness i.e. The colonised subjects started assuming that to be black is to be "Sub-human" and to dispose of this bodily and psychological suffering, alcoholism can act as the source of escapism. This continued to happen and was internalised by the Native Americans as the whole community on the reservation was burdened by the intergenerational trauma and being a source to cut loose from a collective trauma even for a specific period alcoholism surpassed down through many generations.

Colonial culture teaches that the only way to become a civilised and cultured human being is to be white. The subjects assimilate the idea but this deeply ingrained message puts them in a painful psychological position as they fail to become so. This agonising position leaves them with no choice other than to find a way of relief or a temporary escape. Alcoholism acts as a bolt of freedom for them since it helps them get detached from reality and their failures. "He thought one more beer could save the world. One more beer and every chair would be comfortable. One more beer and the light bulb in the bathroom would never burn out. One more beer and he would love her forever" (134). The illustration of alcoholism within the short stories brings to the spotlight a stereotypical social image of the drunken Native Indian Victor's parents along with his other family members were no exception. Victor's physical frustration also

appears in the form of his alcohol consumption. His pitiful alcoholic mother and father mirror the social troubles confronted by the Indian people. The degree of people's indulgence in cigarette smoking is described by Alexie as, "Who does have money on a reservation, except the cigarette salespeople?" (99).

According to Fanon, the negative racial perceptions drag people of color towards miserable conditions. This conflict with the "white" gaze makes the colonisers incapable of developing their sense of identity and soon they try to let go of their indigenous recognition. Native Americans started considering alcohol as one of the ways to obliterate what it means to be a Native American. All people searched for at the reservation was a glass of 'good beer'. For Victor, it was also quite hard to remain optimistic on the reservation. "I'd only played one game drunk. I'd been drinking the night before and woke up feeling kind of sick, so I got drunk again. Then I went out and played a game. I felt disconnected the whole time". (89). Even when Victor moved out of the reservation he couldn't let go of his alcoholic addiction. This continuous usage of alcohol was also one of the underlying reasons for his abusive relationship with his white girlfriend. In the short story, 'Amusement' Victor comes across Dirty Joe in an amusement park who fallen drunk. He thought it would be fun if he makes Dirty Joe ride the roller coaster. This highlights the 'prevailing internal racism' among the colonisers. Victor himself was an alcoholic and was called out by names like 'Drunken Indian' if he treats Dirty Joe that way it shows he also deserves to be treated that way. It indicates how the Indians at the reservation were willing to hurt their fellows more than the white people.

Alexie believed that colonisation was one of the root causes of alcoholism among Native Americans as his characters constantly struggle to escape from life on the reservation. Instead of working for the betterment of their condition on the

reservation Native Americans' internalisation of failure made them choose to rely on alcoholism for a temporary escape. These victims of alcohol then become emotionally, economically spiritually helpless and of no use for the better of the community.

Poverty & Abandonment

Through the phenomena of Epidermalization, the colonised subjects' soon learned to equate themselves with failure and started assuming themselves as a race incapable of growing financially or economically. Poverty brought resentment and negativity to the lives of people living on the reservation. Poverty was also intergenerational for Native Americans as they have been encountering it constantly, and they were not making any efforts to bring about a change. "Victor was fancy dancing. Eight, maybe nine years old, and he was fancy dancing in the same outfit his father wore as a child" (132). Victor as an adult, also encountered a severe financial crisis. However, unlike the rest of the characters, he tries to seek independence from poverty. He decides to work at Seattle 7-11, as "the arch still hurts", and he wanted to get rid of the painful cavity wounds. His cavities were not treated well by the doctor at an early age as his parents couldn't afford them. The colonisers, through the phenomena of Epidermalization, made sure that the subjects did not become financially sufficient. They internalised that they were not capable of gaining any economic stability except for the helping hands of their colonial masters. Epidermalization as a colonial mechanism makes the colonial subjects defenceless and unarmed, causing them to be unable to stand up for their basic rights. After Victor's father died, the council couldn't even provide him with enough money so that he could take back his father's dead body to the reservation. They simply refused to provide him with any aid, "Victor, we're sorry for your

loss and the circumstances. But we can only afford to give you one hundred dollars" (100).

Fanon explains how oppression forces minorities to internalise the normality of physical torture and inferiority complexes. On New Year's Eve, an emotional storm evokes memories of suffering, poverty, and humiliation in Victor when there is no food to satisfy hunger. Poverty caused shame and a feeling of dehumanisation in Victor's father too. "Sometimes he feels like he wants to buy a motorcycle and ride away. He wants to run and hide. He doesn't want to be found" (101). Victor had a flashback of how his father had no money to even buy a present for Christmas, and he could do nothing but see his father in despair and tears. Victor watched his father reinserting his empty wallet into his pocket and then taking it out again, only to find that "it was still empty." Victor witnessed his father performing it repeatedly as if repetition could bring about the desired outcome. The condition for the rest of the Native Americans was no different as Junior inquires Thomas, "Why is the refrigerator always empty?" (12).

Victor's abandonment by his father was the deepest wound he carried. It also acted as a hurdle during his identity formation. Victor's father's fidgety, insecure and reckless habits created rifts in the family. He couldn't meet or see his father in years. He only got to talk to him once or twice via telephone. The pain of the abandonment for the victor was hurtful and real as that of a 'Broken Bone' (99), but as soon as he receives the horrific news of his father's death and he also thinks of the extreme unhappiness, poverty, and isolation his father must have faced. Victor found himself in a state of the pendulum moving back and forth between the past and the present. He lingers in his memories of being cruel to Thomas and Dirty Joe. He feels guilty for abandoning the people of his race that made him no different from his father.

The Epidermalization of certain aspects of his race caused Victor to carry his

traumatic childhood into his adulthood. He managed to become independent as an adult, but his mental state remained confused, frustrated, and undirected. The frustrations that led to the identity crisis and conflicts within Victor's personality made him question his native identity and his role as a Native American in society. The further he tried to move away from his roots, the more irritated and non-directional he became. The same financial crisis and racism in Seattle made him question his identity as a Native American. "I worked graveyard for a Seattle 7-11 and got robbed once too often. The last time he locked me in the cooler. He even took my money and basketball shoes" (241). He then decides to return to the reservation. He started interrogating his values, spirituality, beliefs, interests, and career paths; hence the internalised repression formats the projection of "I can" in a suppressed form. "He'd been back home on the reservation for one hundred days after being lost in the desert for forty years" (135).

In a nutshell, where Alexie brings to light the demolition of a real Indian's identity, Fanon also refuses to recognise the unequal order of colours and cultures. Both posit that there is no white world, there is no white ethic, and there is no white intelligence being. Being a victim of Colonialism, they emphasise ethnic identities, traditions, and values. They portray the sort of agony and bitterness indigenous people had to go through because of both physical and psychological oppression by the colonisers.

Conclusion

As a result of the history of family separations, children being forced to attend boarding schools, and entire tribes being relocated to reserves designated by the government, the identities of Native Americans encountered a significant change over the past two decades. Authors like Sherman Alexie have painted a more accurate representation of modern Native Americans,

which reflects the struggles and epidemics that inflict a vast majority of the population even today. He uses intricate characters to discuss the daily struggles that Native Americans face on reservations. Each of the analysed characters had a complicated relationship with their culture and past. Even though they feel some kind of connection to their Spokane heritage, they are still very different from their ancestor because of the internalisation done by the colonisers. Alcoholism serves as a temporary diversion from these struggles. Likewise, poverty is one of the major factors that push the younger generation in that direction.

Victor Joseph uses violence as a way to express his anger which is backed by poverty, injustice, trauma, and desperation. He is trapped in the cycle, and as a boy, he takes it out on other children, gaining a reputation as a bully. As a representative of the current generation of reservation, he experiences both external pressure and internal struggle and continues to survive under brutal circumstances. The instability of Victor's family weakens his transition from adolescence into adulthood and further disorients his identity formation. Under this coercive pressure, Native Americans ended up in a complete situational neurosis which made clutch to alienation, and they ran away from their individuality.

Although Alexie's works can be anticipated to be dismal and hopeless, given the background of despair, deprivation, and racial discrimination, his protagonists manage to maintain their optimism. For Fanon "anticolonial violence" is one of the necessary evils to fight back against the colonial powers and an essential part of the local population's journey toward self-realisation and the creation of a truly colonial-free national identity (77). Alexie stresses the importance of reviving indigenous American traditions and heritage for the sake of maintenance of their native identity and cultural survival. According to Alexie, Native Americans can only survive through the strength of their traditional beliefs and ceremonial practices. In Alexie's work, racial segregation, unemployment, the crippling effects of alcoholism, suicide, a lack of competent healthcare, and extreme poverty are all shown. Following Fanon's concept of Epidermalization, despite the severe economic and social conditions on the Reservations, a source through which Native Americans might uphold their indigenusness without seeking refuge from the dominant colonisers is by retaining their cultural and social values. This nativeness aids them in the construction of their raw and organic identities.

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