

MIMICRY AND AMBIVALENCE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITY IN *FIRST INDIAN ON THE MOON*

Hasnain Ahmad

Ph.D Scholar, Department of English, Muslim Youth University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: hasnainmallana786@gmail.com

Dr. Wajid Hussain

Assistant Professor English, Department of English, Muslim Youth University Islamabad,
Pakistan.

Email: connectwith.wajid@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper discusses *First Indian on the Moon* (1993) by Sherman Alexie, with the elements of mimicry and ambivalence on the creation of Indigenous identity. Being a hybrid literary text that incorporates poetry, narrative prose and some characteristics of oral storytelling, the text represents the nuances of the Indigenous cultural expression in the profile of a postcolonial setting. Though the works of Alexie have been talked extensively in context of identity, trauma, and reservation life, there is a gap in understanding how the postcolonial concepts of mimicry and ambivalence are manifested in the formation of Indigenous identity as relates to the current work. Thus, this paper aims at examining how these concepts operate in the text to mediate over cultural identity and question the pre-eminent colonial discourses.

The study follows a qualitative approach to research, which entails a close examination of the texts and thematic analysis. The analytical terms based on the postcolonial views which inform the study include the formulated ideas of mimicry and ambivalence by Homi K. Bhabha. The analysis explores the ways in which the text interacts with Euro-American literary traditions and renews them both in terms of Indigenous thinking and narration practices.

The results suggest that the mimicry in the text functions as a strategic act where hegemonic forms of culture are reproduced but twisted to allow the Indigenous voices to interfere with the established literary and institutional practice. Meanwhile, the ambivalence represents the tension and contradictions that Indigenous people may face as they move between colonization and cultural preservation. Through these dynamics, it becomes evident that Indigenous identity in the text is non-fixed but fluid, and a hybrid and is in a state of constant negotiation.

This paper concludes that *First Indian on the Moon* is a creation of Indigenous identity based on the dialectical nature of mimicry and ambivalence, the identity is performative, resilient and historical. The research adds to Indigenous literary studies and postcolonial theory by highlighting these processes and proving that the cultural offensive through literary hybridity to survive, resist, and make official self is the strategy focused on survival and self-representation.

Keywords: Indigenous identity, mimicry, ambivalence, postcolonial theory, literary hybridity, cultural memory, Sherman Alexie.

Introduction & Background

First Indian on the Moon (1993) by Sherman Alexie holds a significant role in the modern Indigenous literature with its formal hybridity which is deeply occupied with the problems of cultural identity, historical memory, and postcolonial resistance. The poem is composed of a poetic and prose style, oral narratives, autobiographical references, and mythological echoes so that they cannot be assigned to traditional genre conventions (Pelky, 2023). The language, imagery, structure experimentation of the Indigenous subjectivity of the language generates an environment where the subjectivity of Indigenous forms of subjectivity is negotiated not

determined but enables a variety of voices, subject point of view, and cultural memory to dwell together.

Mimicry in postcolonial theory is described as the manner of how the colonized subjects emulate and adapt such aspects of dominant cultural forms not as blindly imitating them but as a negotiated power struggle as to identity (Bhabha, 1994). Mimicry is subversive of hierarchical binaries because it steals the instruments of the colonizer and puts them back in his mouth. On the same note, ambivalence in the postcolonial discourse is the co-existence of conflicting attitudes and feelings about dominant and marginalized cultural formations that creates fluid and unstable self (Bhabha, 1994). The ideas have been found helpful in examining Indigenous texts that do not easily lend themselves to essentialization but rather the identity is discussed as a relational, contingent and plural concept (Loomba, 2005).

Such negotiation is represented in *First Indian on the Moon* with its poetic hybridity and thematic overlap with the epistemologies of Indigenous. Fragmented lines, non linear form as well as the interweaving the mythic and everyday voices demonstrates the complications of Indigenous subjectivity within the colonial structure of power (Ali, Amin and Akram, 2024). The repetition of motifs in the collection, such as animals, fire, roots, dreams, and cultural memory, is an indicator of historical trauma and survival and how identity is created by contrast, negotiation, and continuity instead of belonging in an individual sense (Pelky, 2023). The mimicry of the poem by Alexie is performed on several levels: on the narrative form, language level, and the level of intertextual allusion. Through his involvement of the Euro American literary traditions, but adding to it the elements of the Indigenous worldviews, Alexie carries out a simultaneously critical and adaptive poetic maneuver (Pelky, 2023). Ambivalence also infuses the text where hope and loss, laughter and grief, tradition and modernity coexist in the experience of the Indigenous people (Mishra, 2012). This ambivalent stratification is antagonistic to binaries and foregrounds and subordinates the Indigenous consciousness as a complex site of negotiation, co existence and cultural assertion.

Accordingly, the construction of Indigenous identity in *First Indian on the Moon* cannot be perceived as something fixed and unifaceted. Rather, it becomes known in the form of mimicry as an act of tactical interaction with the prevailing forms and in the form of ambivalence as a form of reflective and relational self hood. In this paper, the research analyzes the functioning of these mechanisms in the text of Alexie to reflect a hybrid Indigenous identity that is conscious of history, strong, and culturally responsive in politics.

Indigenous identity in literature has also been studied by increasingly using the idea of postcolonialism to comprehend how the colonized people represent subjectivities that are both resistant and represented within the dominant cultural discourses (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002). In the North American Indigenous practice, this participation can entail a working out of the historical memory, cultural survival and linguistic decolonization, where writers negotiate through the history of colonial violence as well as cultural erasure (Weaver, 2010). The literary production of Sherman Alexie has been the focus of this discussion, with particular attention to his work with hybrid forms to represent diverse Indigenous experience.

First Indian on the Moon is especially important, as it does not follow the traditional narrative styles, instead, it incorporates poetry, prose, myth, and oral narration into one, which is gathered together in a representative voice. This formal experimentation exemplifies bigger issues of identity formation in Indigenous literature where Western concepts of literature do not tend to be sufficient to define the full scope of Indigenous epistemologies and lived experiences (Rafiq, 2024). The hybrid writing of Alexie questions the monolithic forms of Native life through embracing fragmentation, multiplicity, and polyvocation.

This interpretation of such texts is supported by the notion of mimicry theorized by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, as he focuses on how language and the forms of the dominant culture

can be the means of negotiation and subversion used by the colonized (Bhabha, 1994). Instead of merely aping the Euro American shapes, Indigenous authors, such as Alexie, have modified and reused them to express other world views, social commentaries, and cultural memory. As such, mimicry is a cultural survival and self definition strategy in literature (Loomba, 2005). Ambivalence as a complement of mimicry helps to represent an emotional and epistemic spectrum of Indigenous lives during the colonial setting: Indigenous subjects can also adopt some elements of the dominant culture and have an attachment to traditional values, which makes it a wavering and contradictory identity (Bhabha, 1994). In his text, Alexie can be seen as guilty through the balancing of the comedic and tragic, historical reference, and everyday life, irony and honesty respectively, which show the indigenous mind incapable of being canalized (Mishra, 2012).

The hybridity of language and form of the *First Indian on the Moon* is also indicative of a larger trend of indigenous writings of the language as a region of identity re-building. Alexie disrupts the mainstream linguistic rules and foregrounds Indigenous communicative speech through the inclusion of a vernacular, re framing orally occurring rhythms, and non traditional syntax (Ali, Amin and Akram, 2024). This language cross-pollination supports the idea of mimicry and ambivalence as both strategies that construct the meaning of the texts and the cultural manifestation.

In this background, the study of *First Indian on the Moon*, in terms of two dual perspectives of mimicry and ambivalence on Indigenous identity as a living, contested, and negotiated phenomenon is productive. Unpackaging the use of these strategies by Alexie, the paper will not only add to the accepted scholarship of his work, but also to the wider discussion of postcolonial identity, form, and cultural agency in the context of Indigenous writing.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the ways mimicry manifests in *First Indian on the Moon* as a negotiating and presenting strategy of establishing an Indigenous identity.
2. To examine the ways in which ambivalence in the work of Alexie embodies the ambiguities and contradictions of Indigenous consciousness.

Research Questions

1. What are some ways Sherman Alexie uses the element of mimicry to articulate that Indigenous identity and critiques dominant cultures in the paradigms being the dominant culture?
2. What is the role of the ambivalence in the text that depicts the multidimensional, conflicted, and dynamic nature of Indigenous identity?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in the following aspect; it is occupation of untapped concerns of mimicry and ambivalence of one role in the construction of Indigenous identity in the novel *First Indian on the Moon* by Sherman Alexie. Though much of the scholarly work connected with Alexie is occupied in the trauma, adolescence, and reservation life issues, much of the work has been done without paying much attention to the literary practices which have been deployed so as to negotiate identity in an ethical, political, and cultural manner. The presented study has contributed to the Indigenous literary domain and has signified that Alexie sells the device of mimicry as not only a tool of imitation, but also of performance and functionality in responding the Euro-American literary and institutional norms, in addition to them coercing the epistemologies and the agency of the Indigenous groups (Bhabha, 1994).

In addition, the paper also determines the role of ambivalence in depicting the multidimensional and ambiguous nature of Indigenous consciousness. The idea of ambivalence used in the text allows considering identity in a nuanced manner that oscillates between the

ideas of hope and despair, oppression and strength, personal and shared experience and thus, bewilders the reductionist or one-dimensional approaches to the definition of the Native lives (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002).

With an emphasis put on all these strategies, the research gives the insight into the ethical, political, and aesthetic facets of the Indigenous literature to prove that the place of the culture can be literary form. It is also an effective approach to methodology used in analyzing the hybrid participant of literature in postcolonial and Indigenous literature due to its calculability to the learners and readers studying the issue of postcolonial identity, literary hybridity and politics of narrative voice. Altogether, the research illuminates the dynamic between mimicry and ambivalence as two prominent mechanisms that enable Alexie to present, critique, and re-use the concept of the Indigenous identity and contribute to the literary theory and the general vision of the Native cultural manifestation.

Literature Review

Mimicry and ambivalence are two major concepts of postcolonial theory in which the construction of Indigenous identity in literature has been extensively examined. These are some ways that these authors shed light on how the Indigenous authors negotiate the conflict between the colonial dictations and cultural survival to determine identity, voice, and literary form. This literature review explores theoretical underpinnings, Indigenous literature manifestations, and uses of this theory in the book by Sherman Alexie, *First Indian on the Moon*, with the gaps in the research and the critical stance.

According to Homi Bhabha (1994), mimicry refers to a tactic that the colonized subjects may co-opt the behavior, language or cultural practices of the colonizer. Such adoption is built in a state of ambivalence the mimic is not exactly the same, but close enough, producing a conflict that questions colonial power. In this regard, ambivalence indicates the dual stance of the colonized, being in between assimilation and resisting (Bhabha, 1994).

According to Ashcroft (2002), ambivalence enables the subaltern voices to bargain over identity by cultural hybridity to create fluid and dynamic subjectivities. Loomba (2005) explains that ambivalence presents a crucial postcolonial instrument since it enabled authors to move between historical, social, and cultural pressures which is why Mishra (2012) emphasizes its importance in conveying humor, irony, and conflicting emotional facts.

Indigenous literature has been addressed on mimicry as a strategy of cultural intervention. According to Rafiq (2024), Indigenous authors use dominant literary conventions not to comply with them, but to defy Euro-American literary hierarchies. Weaver (2010) describes the use of mimicry in Native American writing whereby authors can implement Indigenous epistemologies within their Western practices to re-take the narrative control.

Pelky (2023) notes that the words of Sherman Alexie are frequently a reflection of Western narrative standards, e.g. of linear plot development or of tall-tale tropes, but inundated with Indigenous insights, irony and with moral issues. This is a dual movement of mimesis and subversion characteristic of Indigenous literary mimicry, which is a wise adherence to as well as rebellion against colonial systems.

Language is another area where mimicry is also present. Code switching between informal and formal language used by Alexie depicts how mimicry can be used as an aesthetic and political weapon (Rafiq, 2024). Alexie thereby exercises agency by mixing institutional language with his normal Indigenous speech in order to satirize the structures of domination (Pelky, 2023).

The concept of ambivalence is used to reflect the conflicting aspects of the Indigenous identity. Bhabha (1994) postulates that the ambivalent subject swings between obedience and disobedience, and these represent the tensions in the postcolonial and the Indigenous

communities. Ambivalence in literary form possesses a humorous nuance with grief, satire with reverence and fantasy with historical particularity (Weaver, 2010; Mishra, 2012).

Ambivalence in text is supported by such structural strategies as fragmentation, non-linear chronology, and used by having multiple narrators. DergiPark (2023) stresses that the fragmented narrative forms of the Indigenous poetry are a historical overlay and a question of culture. Ambivalence therefore acts as a thematic and formal concept where it entails lived complexity among the indigenous communities (Loomba, 2005).

The example of Alexie *First Indian on the Moon* is the combination of mimicry with ambivalence that creates a polyphonic and multimodal voice of the poem by the author because the work combines the use of Indigenous vernacular, Western poetic forms, and narrative motifs. This novel type of form, which mimicry and ambivalence can operate concurrently, is a hybrid form of mimicry and ambivalence, i.e. mimicry as engagement in dominant literary norms, ambivalence as alternation of tone, emotion, and point of view.

The fact that hyperbole and grotesque imagery are found in the poetry of Alexie helps create ambivalence, resulting in humor, irony, and pathos to reflect the Indigenous lived experience (Pelky, 2023). Non-linear structure, polyphony, and hybrid language make Indigenous identity develop and become dynamic, relational, and historically based (Rafiq, 2024).

In both strategies language is major. The application of the code-switching and semantic layering helps Alexie to have various epistemologies living together in a piece of writing. Vernacular, formal and historical registers each have ethical, social, and political connotations, showing that Indigenous consciousness is multidimensional (Weaver, 2010; Mishra, 2012).

Mimicry and ambivalence are strengthened by linguistic hybridity. According to the scholarly views, a combination of colloquial, literary, and institutional registers creates a textual space, in which Indigenous knowledge, historical memory, and cultural negotiation meet and encounter (Rafiq, 2024). Repetition, non-standard syntax, and rhythm convey the traditions of oral storytelling and interact with the Euro-American literary standards (Pelky, 2023). According to this fusion, Indigenous epistemologies are acceptable and there is a critique of those systems which marginalize.

Ambivalence is underpinned by formal experimentation, which consists of fragmented lineation, textual spatization, and disturbance of time by flattening Euro-American linearity and narrative hierarchy (DergiPark, 2023). By using all of these, Indigenous consciousness is performative: identity, memories, and ethical thinking are modeled in the text (eCommons, 2025).

Both mimicry and ambivalence have political connotation. The tactics of Alexie reveal the structural inequalities and domesticates the Indigenous agency (Rafiq, 2024). Mimicry can be used to express criticism of colonial institutions, and ambivalence can be used to conduct alternative perspectives of the contradictions in Indigenous lives- hope/despair, agency/constraint, grief/humor (Bhabha, 1994; Mishra, 2012). These literary practices mediate historical trauma, cultural survival, resistance, and it is aesthetically novel and socially engaged (Weaver, 2010).

Although the idea of mimicry and ambivalence has been examined in works of postcolonial literature on general grounds, little research has been done on Alexie in relation to her poetic constructions of Indigenous identity in the book, *First Indian on the Moon*. The majority of the literature is dedicated to prose by him (Pelky, 2023; Weaver, 2010), which creates a gap in comprehending how Indigenous identity is made through the use of hybrid forms of poets, vernacular language, and experimentation with the structure. Indigenous consciousness has been expressed in subtly crafted strategies that can be identified by an intensive study of the processes of mimicry and ambivalence in poetry written by Alexie.

Research Gap

Although concepts such as mimicry and ambivalence have been widely discussed in postcolonial and Indigenous literary studies, there is limited scholarship focusing specifically on Sherman Alexie's poetry, particularly *First Indian on the Moon*. Most existing research has concentrated on his prose works, analyzing themes of adolescence, trauma, and reservation life.

Moreover, the formal and linguistic ways in which mimicry and ambivalence operate in Alexie's poetry remain underexplored. Studies have not fully examined how his hybrid poetic forms, code-switching, and multiple voices create spaces for Indigenous knowledge, ethical reflection, and political expression.

Additionally, the interaction between mimicry and ambivalence as intertwined strategies—how mimicry of dominant literary and linguistic forms is combined with ambivalent tones of irony, humor, and critique—has received little attention. Analyses often treat these concepts separately rather than investigating how they work together to shape Indigenous identity, consciousness, and historical memory.

This study addresses this gap by focusing on mimicry and ambivalence in *First Indian on the Moon*, showing how Alexie's poetic strategies construct Indigenous identity, mediate historical trauma, and assert cultural and ethical agency.

Methodology

Research Design

This study has a qualitative, interpretive, literary-analytical research design that centers on *First Indian on the Moon* by Sherman Alexie. The paper seeks to examine the role of mimicry and ambivalence as literary techniques in Indigenous identity formation. Qualitative approach will make it possible to study the structures of narratives, poetic language, linguistic patterns, and thematic techniques in detail, which is crucial to learn about the subtle ways, in which the theme of Indigenous consciousness and identity is articulated in the text (Creswell, 2018).

The design focuses on a close reading of the text because the complicated dynamics of mimicry and ambivalence can only be interpreted with a deep emphasis on the language, narrative voice, and poetic means and experimenting with the structure (Barry, 2009). Using this method will allow the research to examine how Alexie conclusively negotiates indigenous identity, challenges colonial discourse, and uses ethical, cultural and historical consciousness as a production of the poems (Bhabha, 1994).

This interpretive emphasis is essential as Indigenous identity in postcolonial literature is not immutable but formed in the contests of movement of cultural, social and political forces (Ashcroft, 2002). The research locates the study into the paradigms of postcolonial and Indigenous literary to comprehend the text as a site of interaction between mimicry and ambivalence to mediate power, the past, and cultural perspectives (Grande, 2015).

Research Methods

This research utilizes a qualitative interpretative approach in terms of close reading and thematic analysis. By close reading the researcher will be able to study carefully:

- Voice of the narratives and poetic voice as costs of Indigenous identity and consciousness.
- The linguistic means, such as code-switching, the use of vernacular, ironic or ambivalent phrasing.
- Poetic forms and devices, such as hybridity of structure, repetition, and lineation, as vehicles for ambivalence and mimicry.
- The motives of a thematic meaning such as colonial history, cultural survival and social critique.

- Intertextual allusions, mythic references and historical structures that interact with the common Euro American cultural forms.

Thematic analysis is a complement to close reading in the sense that it shows such recurring patterns of mimicry and ambivalence and the ways the two manifest alongside each other to project Indigenous subjectivity, challenge the colonial authority, and negotiate between the historical and cultural memory (Yin, 2018). Such a two-pronged approach enables the discovery of minor plot and language techniques some of which could remain invisible during lighter interpretations.

The paper also believes that the text itself is a location of ethical, cultural, and political negotiation, in which mimicry and ambivalence are not of style but are modes of performance that produce Indigenous agency, criticism, and survival (Grande, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach is both postcolonial and Indigenous epistemology. It was through the lens of postcolonial studies, particularly Bhabha and mimicry and ambivalence that can be used to comprehend the manner in which Indigenous identity is articulated in connection to the Euro-American cultural worldviews (dominant) (Bhabha, 1994). The concepts of mimicry as imitation and subversion, and ambivalence as a destabilizing strategy by Bhabha are exploited in this study to investigate how Alexie can playfully participate in and challenge the colonial forms at the same time by using poetic form and language.

Lived experience, historical memory, and cultural continuity are the focuses of indigenous theoretical approaches (Grande, 2015). All these attitudes make sure that mimicry and ambivalence can be understood not only as aesthetic means, but as the way to survive in a culture, to reflect morally, and to criticize politics (Smith, 2012). The framework focuses on the identification that identity is relational, multi-layered and historically situated, which fits the complex representational strategies in the work of Alexie (Ashcroft, 2002).

The combination of these lenses allows the research to show that mimicry and ambivalence are both artistic and epistemic instruments mediating the individual, communal, and historical aspects of Indigenous identity as well as challenging the Euro-American narrative authority (Bhabha, 1994).

Data Analysis

First Indian on the Moon by Sherman Alexie introduces the concept of Indigenous identity as a negotiation that resulted in a historical, cultural, and linguistic interaction with dominant Euro-American accepted norms. The work exists at the cross-border of literature, oral storytelling, and social commentary and it establishes a hybrid literary environment where Indigenous identity becomes not only acted but questioned. Mimicry, which is both strategic adoption and subversion of the dominant cultural forms, and ambivalence, which is tension created in converting multiple, and often conflicting, cultural expectations, are the central systems by which this identity is created.

Mimicry of the work by Alexie is a strategic and performative tool, a literary and cultural tool which enables Indigenous voices to work within a hegemonic Euro-American framework, and still remain critically independent. Mimicry allows us to determine the Indigenous identity as responsive and adaptive, an awareness of the power distribution inherent to colonial and postcolonial institutions. Through the selective use of forms of language, narrative structure, and institutional discourse, the text of Alexie establishes a space where the restrictions and contradictions of mainstream society are highlighted, and Indigenous agency is declared.

This is a multidimensional mimicry. Alexie uses vernacular words, code-switching, and idiomatic expressions linguistically, which are both signs of the day-to-day lived experience of Indigenous communities and an interaction with the institutionalized language forms. Formally, the ways in which the text combines prose with poetry, breaks down the narrative,

and plays with concepts of time are reflections of the hybridized, non-linear experience of becoming Indigenous. The use of symbols is a reinterpretation of the history and religion, reclaiming the canonical stories and turning them back onto an Indigenous epistemological focus. This tactic undermines the power of dominant culture and, at the same time, negotiates its impact on the identity of the Indigenous population.

Indigenous identity in the form of ambivalence is a major phenomenon in the work of Alexie that reflects the cultural and psychological complexities of the process of making peace and peace with a colonial legacies. Ambivalence is a manifestation of repelling forces the presence of opposing forces, inclusion and exclusion, assimilation and resistance, historical trauma and cultural pride. This dual consciousness shows how identity is not self-grounded, absolute, or ephemeral, but non-coherent, ritualized, and contextual, being shaped by individual experiences and social preservation in the memory.

The ambivalence is defined in *First Indian on the Moon* in relationships between traditional and modern experiences, individual and collective vision, and past and present reality. It is this ambivalent stance that is represented by the very character of the hybrid narratives that makes their appearance into the world in the form of oral narratives, modernist experiments, and poetic forms. The work is tension-filled on various levels that assimilate the reality of Indigenous people that they lived through the forces of culture that are imposed on them externally by dominant society and internally, within their communities.

The strategies of mimicry and ambivalence are supportive of each other in the development of Indigenous identity. Mimicry gives Indigenous subjects a chance to interact with large issues of dominant cultural forms without losing an agency and ambivalence provides that this interaction does not lead to passive absorption. Rather, ambivalence provides a tension-filled atmosphere in which identity is constantly negotiated, challenged and rearticulated.

Such interdependence is specially noticeable in the manner of operation of the linguistic and structural hybridity. The time-traveling between the formal and vernacularity, linear and discontinuous time, individual and collective memory is the reflection of the conscious maneuvering between two cultural logic. This becomes represented through mimicry: it will be possible to enact ambivalence as the incorporation of dominant forms permits critique, and ambivalence guarantees that Indigenous identity will continue to have its own cultural and epistemic complexes.

The language is where mimicry and ambivalence both work significantly. The language technique of code-switching, un-educated language, and informal expression is a calculated exercise of cultural and linguistics negotiation on the part of Alexie. Linguistic hybridity allows the text to show that the Indigenous is informed by the Euro-American structures and at the same time deeply embedded in the Indigenous epistemologies.

This dualism enables Alexie to establish the space where the Indigenous voice can have an epistemic authority. The linguistic strategies repetition, rhythm, and oral cadences focus on continuity with previous knowledge but they are communicating with contemporary and institutionalized language. This tentative playfulness is indicative of some ambivalence the Indigenous subject is conscious of the prevailing cultural codes, but retains a culturally-based voice of her own.

The performance of identity through hybridity of literary techniques used in the work by Alexie evidences the fact that the concept of identity is performative. Through oral, written, formal and colloquial navigations of the registers of identity, indigenous identity is practiced through literature performance. Mimicry is a manner in which the Indigenous subject is able to interact with the dominant cultural expectations and ambivalence is the key to maintaining the identity dynamic, resistant and critically conscious.

In this piece of performative building, Alexie stresses that identity is not merely a mirror of the external forces but a continuing dialogue between cultural, historical and social realities. But the mimicry, coupled with the ambivalence shows the strength and adaptability of the Indigenous identity under the conditions of historical trauma and structural oppression today. Finally, it is the combination of mimicry and ambivalence that allows culture to be reclaimed. Strategic adaptation of the prevailing forms in conjunction with the conflict of ambivalent negotiation allows Indigenous voices regain control over the talking of the narrative, history, and representation. Identity is therefore not built only in reaction to colonial commanding but an active reassertion of Indigenous knowledge, traditions and moral structures.

Throughout *First Indian on the Moon*, Alexie reveals that cultural reclamation cannot be expelled, as the industrialization and ambivalent and mimicry-filled mechanisms of identity formation. The text demonstrates that Indigenous identity is persistently renegotiated in the forms of performing, resisting, and reclaiming the spaces of agency both in the past and the present.

It becomes obvious in the analysis of *First Indian on the Moon* that the work by Sherman Alexie is built on the interplay of mimicry and ambivalence to create the identity of Indigenous people. Mimicry is used as a form of tactical interaction with the hegemonic cultural status quo and ambivalence as a mechanism of encompassing the contradictions and dual awareness of Indigenous experience. Combined, the approaches support the hybrid, performative, and resilient formation of Indigenous identity, which emphasizes the forces of colonial histories and cultural re-assertions of Indigenous peoples and their agency.

Conclusion

The discussion of Sherman Alexie *First Indian on the Moon* shows that Indigenous identity is a complex, negotiated, and hybridized phenomenon that is determined by the continuous collision of Indigenous cultural systems with dominant Euro-American systems. The mimicry and ambivalence strategies, as the literary and socio-cultural means of taking ownership of the agency, repelling marginalization, and cultural dominance reclamation are central to this negotiation.

Mimicry enables Indigenous voices to interact with dominant narrative, linguistic and institutional forms, as well as subvert them and critique them. It emphasizes the tacit incorporation of colonial and mainstream form towards unveiling discrepancies, confronting enforced power and establishing epistemic domination. Nevertheless, ambivalence describes the ambivalent reality of identity negotiation which reflects the dual consciousness of Indigenous people moving through the cultural, historical and social demands and expectations. Collectively, these processes highlight how complex and fluid Indigenous identity is, as they demonstrate it as a performance, context-sensitive, and one that is not easily categorized.

Linguistic hybridity, structural experimentation, and intertextuality used by Alexie show how literature may practice cultural reclamation. The text explores both Indigenous epistemologies through vernacular expression, code-switching, and performance narrative styles, and is also interested in the historical trauma, cultural memory, and social realities of the present day. Mimicry and ambivalence interact to make sure that the Indigenous identity is not passive, as well as to make sure that it is not assimilated; on the contrary, it turns out to be resilient, adaptive and perpetually renegotiated.

On the whole, *First Indian on the Moon* assumes that the school of literary production is a place of cultural negotiation, in which Indigenous identity is produced, challenged, and enacted. The study confirms that Her work is not a literary work alone because it is also a socio-political and cultural intervention, which enhances the understanding of how Indigenous

communities engage with the frameworks of their colonizers and impose their agency, memory, and cultural survival.

The present research adds to the cognizance of the Indigenous identity, encompassing the dual mechanisms of mimicry and ambivalence as the key strategies of the cultural survival and self-representation. It shows that identity creation is multi-dimensional and based on history, language, and culture which is not only resilient, but also constructive in terms of Indigenous futures in contemporary society.

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