



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RESISTANCE AND ASSIMILATION THROUGH FOLKLORE REVIVAL IN
SELECTED WORKS OF NATIVE AMERICAN POETS***

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IN SELECTED WORKS OF NATIVE AMERICAN POETS**

By

WIDAD ALLAWI SADDAM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Doctor of Philosophy**

March 2017

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DEDICATION

To the soul of my lovely mother

To the soul of my brave father



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2017

Chairman : Associate Professor Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya.PhD
Faculty : Modern Language and Communication

The coming of Europeans to the continent of America in the fifteenth century has brought in vast changes to the lives of Native Americans. It also led to centuries of conflicts and adjustment between the old and the New World. Although the Native Americans were rich with culture and tradition, they often were seen as barbaric by the colonizers. This study intends to show that the Native American Folklore in their poetry has remained a strong force that kept them connected to their ancestral heritage. The study uses Frantz Fanon's views to first illustrate the process of assimilation in general between the Natives. Then, it progresses to analyse each poem in the light of the post colonial theory in order to highlight how the selected poets gave evidence to the ongoing assimilation in their poetry. The final step further uses Fanon's theory to talk about the resistance and anti- assimilation poetry of the chosen writers. A lot of studies have been conducted on Native American Literature but very little dealt with folklore particularly in tackling poetry by poets like Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo and Luci Tapahonso. These poets grew in immigrant families in America which represents a challenge to them since they face the dilemma of abandoning their cultural identity through assimilation into the mainstream Anglo-American culture and they are often known for promoting assimilation between the Native Americans and white people. However, this present study argues that the poetry written by these chosen writers has other hidden motives seen in the light of post colonial theory through the concepts of resistance, assimilation, and hybridity. It will scrutinise how the mentioned folklore has been passed down from generation to generation through storytelling and daily education of the young by the elders. It will also investigate how the poets subtly show their resistance to assimilation of the Western culture, and how they used poetry as a tool for revival of their culture.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**RINTANGAN DAN ASIMILASI MELALUI MENGHIDUPKAN KEMBALI
CERITA RAKYAT DALAM SYAIR TERPILIH DARI KALANGAN
PENYAIR ORANG ASLI AMERIKA**

Oleh

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Kedatangan orang Eropah ke benua Amerika pada abad kelima belas telah membawa perubahan besar kepada kehidupan orang asli Amerika. Ia juga turut membawa kepada abad konflik dan pelarasan antara dunia lama dan baru. Walaupun orang asli Amerika kaya dengan budaya dan tradisi, mereka sering dilihat kejam oleh penjajah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bahawa cerita rakyat orang asli Amerika dalam syair mereka meninggalkan kuasa yang kuat sehingga mengekalkan mereka berhubung dengan warisan nenek moyang mereka. Kajian ini menggunakan pandangan Frantz Fanon pertamanya untuk menggambarkan proses asimilasi secara umum antara orang asli. Kemudian, ia dikembangkan untuk menganalisis setiap syair menggunakan teori Poskolonial bagi menyerlahkan bagaimana penyair yang dipilih telah memberi keterangan terhadap asimilasi yang berterusan dalam syair mereka. Langkah terakhir adalah dengan menggunakan teori Fanon untuk membahaskan mengenai rintangan dan syair anti-asimilasi dari penulis-penulis yang dipilih. Banyak kajian telah dijalankan ke atas kesusasteraan orang asli Amerika, namun kajian yang telah dijalankan masih kurang memberi perhatian terhadap cerita rakyat terutamanya dalam syair penyair seperti Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo dan Luci Tapahonso. Penyair-penyair ini dibesarkan dalam keluarga pendatang di Amerika yang melambangkan satu cabaran kepada mereka, ini kerana mereka menghadapi dilema meninggalkan identiti budaya mereka melalui asimilasi ke dalam arus perdana budaya Anglo-Amerika, dan mereka sering dikenali dari kalangan yang menggalakkan asimilasi antara orang asli Amerika dan orang putih. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini berhujah bahawa syair yang ditulis oleh penulis-penulis yang telah dipilih mempunyai motif tersembunyi lain, yang diperlihatkan melalui teori Poskolonial melalui konsep rintangan, asimilasi, dan hibriditas. Kajian ini akan meneliti bagaimana cerita rakyat tersebut telah diturunkan dari generasi ke generasi melalui penceritaan dan pendidikan harian bagi golongan muda melalui golongan tua. Kajian ini juga akan menyiasat bagaimana penyair secara halus menunjukkan tentangan mereka kepada asimilasi budaya Barat, dan bagaimana mereka menggunakan syair sebagai alat untuk menghidupkan kembali budaya mereka.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 7 March 2017 to conduct the final examination of Widad Allawi Saddam on her thesis entitled "Resistance and Assimilation through Folklore Revival in Selected Works of Native American Poets" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SC	Sand Creek
CB	Crazy Brave
OTS	Out There Somewhere
RC	A Radiant Curve
IMLAW	In Mad Love And War
WWFFS	The Woman Fell From The Sky
SHSH	She Had Some Horses
HWBH	How We Become Human
BHRI	Blue Horse Rush In: Poems And Stories
WMD	What Moon Drove Me To This
MTNW	Map To The Next World

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the past several decades, researchers and critics in literature have been keenly interested in the study of resistance as a concept, most probably because of its importance and close association with post-colonial history. Many scholars have voiced their opinions with regard to the effects and implications of resistance on the cultural history of colonized people. The current study seeks to identify the resistance of selected poets on how the Native Americans were colonized. Views of resistance are significantly related to the concept of Native American traditions which have transcended into contemporary Native American Literature (Lawson 11). The three Native American poets to be studied here are Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso, and Simon J. Ortiz.

The subject of the study implies Native Americans who are in total opposition to the concept of colonialism and they demonstrate their disapproval by resisting colonial doctrines. Native American voices have begun to reverberate through Native American writer's affiliation to their ancestral heritage. They refuse to assimilate into the cultures of their colonizers, choosing instead to revel in their cultural heritage. Their resistance to assimilation resonates in their writings which are thematic of their culture. Native American poetry is an ode to their rich folklore and history; it is penned not only for the new generation of Native Americans, but as a way of preserving their native and cultural identity from extinction.

Colonial masters have used educational structures such as boarding schools to separate Native Americans from their own culture. Up till now colonizers continue to reward Native Americans who detach themselves from their culture, to follow the colonizers' power and value system as represented by institutions such as government schools and churches (Tinker 46). This was a public policy as stated by John Collier, who was U.S. Commissioner for Indian affair during 1920s. Collier said that they sought to "proselyte the child and shame him away from his tribal setting" (Adams 331).

1.1.1. America is not an Empty Land

To express their dismay over the seizure of their land by colonizers, Native American elites have used poetry to fight back. For instance, Joy Harjo wrote, "We had our identities taken from us the minute Columbus arrived in our land." In the same vein, Wiget wrote, "Columbus didn't enter a silent world" (Wiget 23). At the time of European intrusion into North America, the country was occupied by an approximate population of ten million people from different political and religious backgrounds that can be summarized as 'Native Americans' (Wiget 21). The term 'Native American' was the widest and thinnest generalization of a society or nation (21).

Millions of lives were lost in the uneven battle with the western European invasion (Prace 10). Historical Evidence has shown that when the Europeans explored and invaded the lands of the Native Americans, they could not conquer the lands despite the more advanced technology, such as firearms and heavy military muskets, among other methods, in managing their conquests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Francis 15). One of these methods, for example, was to use wild dogs and bloodhounds to track, injure, and hunt the Natives across the lands; the technique they had learned from the Spanish invaders. They also spread the smallpox between the tribes by means of distributing infected blankets, which is an example of a biological war (Burns 109). Hence, they not only did settle on these lands but also invaded and displaced its original population (Francis 15).

Although the tradition of the Native American people was characterized by cross-border travels and hunting, the relocation policy of 1945 to 1960 had forced about two-thirds of them to migrate to urban areas. Consequently, Natives in diaspora had to carry their bonds of tradition and relationships from their homelands to the urban areas and also create new emigrant communities in the cities.

The migration of Europeans to America led to centuries of conflict and adjustments between Old and New World societies in the 15th century, old being the Natives and the New World being the European Colonizers. Upon arriving in the North American continent, the first colonizers concluded that the New World was uninhabited, only to realize that the new land had already been occupied for a long time. But as the early colonizers did not know how to co-exist with the Native Americans, the latter generations too were clueless about how to establish good relationships with Native people. This apparent lack of social skills appears to be a shared heritage of American Indians and European Americans throughout the history of the United States. A series of historical events and governmental strategies contributed to the current phenomenon of identity crisis among Native Americans. To preserve their culture, tradition identity, the Natives resisted the ways of the colonizers who considered them inferior. Fanon opined that the colonizers have dishonorably regarded the Natives as enemies to the values and doctrines of the European Americans and are conniving to destroy and deform the morality and beauty of their world (Fanon 170).

In spite of the fact that the Native Americans tribes adopted various ways of life, they were strongly similar to each other in their conventions and traditions. Their lifestyles were essentially primitive. They also held primitive religious beliefs, such as Animism, which is based on the idea that all human beings and everything in nature, including animals, plants, mountains, and rain are spiritually united. Accordingly, they worshipped animals and natural phenomenon. They also performed certain religious rituals to gain the support of the universal spiritual powers. According to Vine Deloria, Americans observed and acted towards Indians from outside, because they knew little about these traditions. They perceived the Indian society as a self-made one, built on fixed ideas, joined with an innate superiority towards those who are different (265) and this is what they did not like.

1.1.2. Assimilation of Native Americans: Civilizing Mission

Throughout the 19th century, the Manifest Destiny ideology became an essential part of the American nationalist movement. This increased the European-American population and their exodus toward the west. After the establishment of the United States of America, President George Washington and Henry Knox considered the idea of "civilizing" Native Americans in preparation for assimilation, as U.S. citizens (Caldwell). Assimilation became a consistent policy of the American administrations. Assimilation means "to absorb immigrants or members of a culturally distinct group into the prevailing culture" (Berkin, 590). The French writer Alexies de Tocqueville, through his visit to the United States had commented on the irony that while exterminating Native Americans, the United States had adopted easy, quiet, peaceful, and legal policies, without violation to any principles of morality. They also respected the laws of humanity across the whole world (Tocqueville 397).

After the American Revolution, pressure on Native American lands led to warfare and increased tensions between groups. Assimilation seemed a convenient and ideal phenomenon since it rested on two assumptions: First, the savage nature of Native Americans would not enable them to coexist in the civilized world of the white man. Second, assimilation could possibly destroy this savagery and turn Natives into believers in order to expand the civilized world of Christianity. Assimilationists thus proceeded to show that once they were converted into Christianity and taught the English language and American ways, Native Americans could assimilate into the American society, and that it was also possible to assimilate people who spoke different languages (Henry 35).

The intrusion of colonizers into the Native American continent had caused major territorial and social upheavals to whole Indian tribes. A large number of children had lost contact with their parents because they were taken to boarding schools exclusively meant for their assimilation into the cultures and values of the colonial masters (Trilkova 22).

The rationale for these policies, was explained by then US Boarding School Movement, founder Richard Henry Pratt by stating "Kill the Indian and save the man" (Hirschfelder, 129). In other words, destroy the identity of the Native Americans and then assimilate them into the white society. "Kill the Indian" came to represent a slogan towards efforts to transform the Indians specifically their children, into Euro-American clones. In the same vein, Sherman Alexie cites Pratt's words: "...That's how we were taught to teach you. We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child...We were supposed to make you give up being Indian. Your songs and stories and languages and dancing - everything. We weren't trying to kill Indian people, we were trying to kill the Indian culture" (Alexie 35). Because of what the Native Americans had gone through, they felt that they had not only lost their land but also lost their connection to their culture (Carpenter 8). Among the consequences suffered by the Native children was that they had to cover long distances to reach their schools. In addition, they had to change their appearance and names to Anglo or Christian-based, thereby losing their identities (Friesen, Archibald, and Jack 64).

Assimilating Indians into the American population gradually posted problems relating to nationality, government, and subordination. Since the Native Americans were of different backgrounds, it became difficult to synchronize them into a unified society. The sudden invitation to include the Native American literary heritage in education then raised suspicions that the aggressive majority of the colonizers wanted to eventually abolish the Natives' culture. This absorption was what the Natives had been resisting all the while, even with the conflict within themselves (Berkin 590).

Undoubtedly, European colonialism deeply influenced the original culture of the Native Americans. It actually led to many problems from which the Native American continuously suffered. The domination of Western culture rendered loss of identity and a sense of inferiority. As expressed by Fanon, colonialism was a renunciation of all cultural and historical values of the colonized; a systematic negation of the other person (Fanon). Moreover, the industrial and materialistic progress, accompanying colonialism, drastically altered the face of native cultures. A large number of Native Americans lived in their societies as hunters who used oral tradition to clarify their histories (Rivkin, 1088).

It has become glaringly apparent that the appearance of the white colonizers in native-dominated America destroyed many aspects of the daily lives of Native Americans. The White men looked down on Native Americans, and considered them primitive and barbaric. Many tribes were completely destroyed. Those who survived were denied the privilege of practicing their religious sacraments which would have been hard to practice anyway because of relocation and deportation. The colonizer could not understand the Native points of view and ways of life. They could not find beauty in their traditions. From the very beginning, they looked at Native Americans as enemies and just wanted to abolish them (Maczak). The difference in culture between the established Native Americans and the immigrant Europeans, as well as shifting alliances among different nations of each culture through the centuries caused extensive political tension, ethnic violence, and social disruption. Native Americans suffered high fatalities from contact with Eurasian diseases to which they had not acquired immunity. Smallpox epidemics were thought to have caused the greatest loss of lives for the indigenous people and even estimates of the pre-Columbian population show a significant drop in the Native population.

Overall, relocation accompanied by the federal government's termination policy was an attempt to assimilate the Native Americans and to steal their identity. As a result of being forced to learn the colonizer's language, the Natives fell into a deep identity crisis because they had lost the very essence of their being and were left without a cultural compass to navigate an alien world. Without their tribal language, they were unable to express their ideas and opinions (Abel 9).

In the Indian (Native Americans) worldview, words and imagination have great healing power. Their oral literature is the key to the survival of their culture and spirituality. Through storytelling, tribal people preserve and revere the roots of their cultures. Words relate them to the world that they live in (Abel). Native Americans

live spiritually through the ideology of imagination, but it is not enough to have an ideology within them, they must materialize their ideologies in words, in their own language so that they can live both physically and spiritually.

There are two cultural pillars of Indian life that form their identity: first is the sense of place and Indians' affection for their land, which they regard as the center of the universe and a sacred place. Second is their oral tradition. Many Native Americans understand the need to know and pass on their traditions from generation to generation; they have strong affiliation to their culture and religious worship. Most of the Native American writers are primarily Native Americans to the core and just then American. They have to struggle with their sense of belonging, because many of them have to work outside the reservations, so they also have to survive in the white men's culture as natives. However, many Native Americans are very proud of their heritage which they try to maintain through writing and storytelling. Oral tradition is important for them as a way to express themselves and pass on all of their ancient stories, beliefs and historical events (Maczak 80).

Lloyd Lee (2006) asserts that people through 'Tribal stories' have understood the complicated bonds, which included what is in the earth and universe. By their stories people know and love each other. In addition, they create their own worldviews that allow them think differently than Euro-Americans do. Native people had only two possible options to deal with the Europeans and Americans, either to adopt and adjust themselves to the ways of the newcomers or to resist them (99). However, historical evidence has shown that these options have often overlapped with each other. In other words, the history of assimilation is also the history of creative adaptation as well as the history of resistance.

According to the terms mentioned in "Manifest Destiny," Native people in the United States were expected to 'pass away'. This is how Americans perceived the Native American. The latter had only two options: they had to either abandon their cultures and adopt the ways of the newcomers or perish in the quagmire of disease, warfare, and degeneration. American leaders often accepted the underlying assumption that the native people were passive beings, incapable of directing their own destinies. Thus, the frequent portrayals of Indian defeat in the American culture was probably a justification of their melancholy (Glass). Growing up in an immigrant family in America is challenging for individuals, for they face the dilemma of abandoning their cultural identity through assimilation into mainstream Anglo-American culture (Folklore). Cronon points out that the Natives considered America as the story of a land that has been stolen and transferred aggressively, by destroying its political institutions, religions, and language. In the same vein, the story of America is described as 'outright slaughter' (Hendrix, 773).

The Native American resistance can be documented through a study of their history and struggle for cultural survival. Even contemporary American literature comprises the revived myths and rituals of Native literature which tends to view the importance of Natives in terms of the occupation of their lands (Prace 5). Landscape occupies a

place of great importance in Native Americans' poetry. Land symbolizes their rootedness and tribal identity. This is certainly true of poetry from a region as clearly defined as the Southwest, from which springs the work of Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo and Luci Tapahonso. These poets are displaced from reservation life and do not speak the language of tribal inheritance. Therefore, while they want to hang on to the lands that gave birth to them and gave them an identity to begin their life with, they also want to survive and tell the story of their survival. Lands for the Natives is more than just a piece of ground; it is sacred and it connects them to their ancestors and holy spirits. They are compelled to create a bicultural identity in art, through a foreign tongue. Therefore, it can be said that the poetry of these contemporary Indian writers provides us with invaluable personal and cultural insights on issues of great importance (Wiget 599-600).

According to Susmita Paul, 'Native American' is a term that has been coined in reference to the Indians or the original inhabitants of America. In fact, it is not more than an indicator to those people whose ancestors were the primary residents of America and who by the time of naturalization, were forced gradually to move to areas called 'reservations', which were demarcated from the 'arrival populations'. However, in spite of replacing the term 'Native-Indian' with 'Native American' in administrative usage, 'Native Indian's is still prevalent in academic circles. Consequently, problems might arise in approaching a comprehensive academic perception about the lives and cultures of the original inhabitants of America because the academicians' memory continues to carry forward the faulty narrative of a homogeneous culture (Paul).

The current study shows the revival of Native American culture by Native American writers who attempt to regain their own culture as a means of resistance to their forced assimilation. Native American culture is rich in rituals, prayers, and spiritual beliefs which are collectively termed under Native American folklore.

1.1.3. Native American Folklore

Historically, folklore was used to connect ancient traditions, customs and beliefs (such as in ghosts and demons, fairies and spirits stories) together. Folklore as a concept materialized in Europe in the mid nineteenth century (Ben-Amos 11). However, over time folklore became a means of expressing resistance, especially among Native Americans. The spiritual values of a nation can manifest themselves in the folklore of its past. Along with this, folklore intensifies the bond between people through different generations and brings about unity among people because it tells the story of a shared past. (Hassan)

Since folklore and culture are closely related to each other and they are nourished by one another, it is important to define culture at this stage. Odetola defines culture as:

a man's entire social heritage- all the knowledge, beliefs, customs and skills acquired as a member of a society. Thus, people become distinctively human by the acquisition of culture; culture presumes the existence of a human society and provides the skills for making society work. Culture is, therefore, a large part of what is transmitted in the process of socialization. It is through the acquisition of culture that groups, however, simple, have solved the problems of group life in their own way. Culture can be material or non-material. Material culture includes clothing, utensils, work of art. Non-material culture includes ideas, languages, norms, mores and beliefs (1)

Folklore is the traditional knowledge of culture, and the word 'traditional' implies things that are established through time. Folkloric elements are those customs, stories, and traditions that pass down from one generation to another. People look at what has come to them from the past and try to keep the "old ways" alive, usually by word of mouth, which by itself is an old-fashioned method. Folklore gives remarkable perspectives of events, beliefs, customs, ceremonies, traditions, materials and skills of a particular group (Untiedt vii). Benjamin Botkin, folklore editor for the WPA Federal Writers' project, defined folklore as body of traditional beliefs, customs, and expressions, handed down mainly by word of mouth and circulating outside commercial and academic means and instructions. Accordingly, Botkin stated that every group bound together by common interests and purposes, whether educated or uneducated, rural or urban; if it possesses a body of traditions, it may be called folklore. Traditions comprise many elements: whether individual, popular, and even literary ones, all are absorbed and assimilated through repetition and variation into a pattern which has value and continuity for the group as a whole.

1.1.4. Role of Folklore in Preserving History

It is enigmatic that people often want to deeply explore their past to discover some common features of their early beginnings. These common features are not just the physical similarity of relatives but the links that connect the past and present. This connection is the inherited folklore which represents family traditions in oral lore as proverbs, sayings, songs, tales and riddles, routine rituals, customs, and domestic practices which are transferred through continual repetition. Folklore according to Leach is handed down and preserved by generations orally and not written through memory and practice (403).

Folklore presents itself and emerges unconsciously in people's minds on the basis of the values, traditions, and practices taught among the people. In both its oral and non-verbal items, folklore represents the individual, the family, and society materially, spiritually, and socially. Practicing folklore is very important, especially the immigrants because it honorably adjusts and preserves their own ethnicity and life styles in foreign countries. It is an essential link among generations and a spirited force for the existence of Hispanic and American culture. Folklore penetrates naturally and deeply through storytelling and domestic practices such as gardening, farming, rituals,

traditions, home therapies, proverbs, sayings, beliefs, and superstitions. According to Archer Taylor, folklore consists of innate and natural materials that traditionally transform from one generation into another without constant outside interference (quoted in Leach 402).

Native American oral tradition, teeming with rituals and ceremonies is one form of transmission that revived their cultural heritage. Mary Lewis pointed out that oral literature is a useful resource among Native American poetry, fiction, and drama. These oral traditions include prayers, speeches, and storytelling used for sharing experiences, knowledge, and information (226). James Ruppert stated that poets and singers showcase their oral traditions through sacred stories, oral history, personal memories, names of places, prayers, animals, and the likes (88).

Overall, folklore is the only form of oral tradition that enables people to locate the native elements of their own roots. It reveals the nuances of any community. The study of folklore is important because it paves the way to learn about one's own culture and society. As the world becomes a global village comprised of people of different nations, the need for studying folklore becomes even more fundamental to relate the roots, culture, and sense of belongingness of different communities (Jayalaxmi). People can precept their history by folklore more than by knowledge of facts and traditions. Therefore, many people much prefer folklore's interpretation of a historical event, over the actual facts of the event, and this forms their opinion of and sets the standard for the "truth" of an event (Untiedt 5).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A number of studies (e.g., Konkle, 1997; Stiger, 2005; Sandler, 2003) has been conducted to investigate Native American literature. However, folkloric poems have been paid little attention. The few studies that dealt with folklore in literature do not explicitly delve into Native American poetry, especially those penned by selected poets for this study (Seiler, 2002). Researchers have investigated the existence of resistance in poetry but the relationship between resistance and assimilation in poetry has not been well investigated (Lawson, 2006). While studies have been conducted on these selected poets; none have dealt with the role of folklore in maintaining resistance against assimilation in their poetry (Dunn, 2010; Montgomery, 2009).

Many studies on Native Americans show that there is assimilation among those writers, but this study is concerned with examining resistance against assimilation in the poetry of the selected poets. Assimilation, disturbance, and displacement are inseparable aspects of colonialism and the current research will highlight and analyze all these aspects in detail.

Although earlier studies focused on the role of folklore in maintaining the national identity or heritage, the current study deals with the utilization of folkloric aspects as tools against assimilation into the white culture which deprived Native American

people of their homes, culture and their freedom. The study problematizes this profound sense of loss experienced by natives at some point in their history, which contemporary Native American poets wish to negate through their poetry. These selected Native American poets strive to make their past come alive by narrating their ancestral stories and ceremonies of their tribes to imbue readers with their artistic passions, values and traditions.

In addition, this study will also focus on native folklore traditions in the works of selected poets who resisted the White American colonial invasion, in the light of post-colonial theory. Postcolonial writing addresses the issues and outcomes of the decolonization of a nation and a country, particularly the political and social autonomy of these people. Hardly any research has dealt with the selected poets in the light of Fanon's views about the Natives. The study uses Fanon's framework in analyzing post-colonial works through three main processes: namely, assimilation, disturbance and resistance. How these poets embrace their traditions and folklore in their writings to oppose assimilation will be examined here.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Post-colonial Theory is considered suitable for explaining the concept 'Resistance of Assimilation'. It embraces the historical myths and realities of colonized cultures and focuses on the relationships that provided the most important creative impetus in resistance literature. Post colonial theory has come to be used to discuss the different cultural effects of colonialism.

The current study deals with resistance to assimilation as a problem identified by Native American poets who are determined to employ their Native American folklore through their writings. They try to restore the Native tales of creation, sagas of their fathers and ancestors, and their overall native attitude towards life and society. The current study shows the Native American folklore tradition that has been well represented in the works of Luci Tapahonso, Joy Harjo and Simon Ortiz who tried to resist the white American colonial invasion in the light of post-colonial theory. Postcolonial writing addresses the issues and consequences of the decolonization of nations and countries, particularly the political and social autonomy of the people. Hybridity is a byproduct of this assimilation. the present Native's culture is a mixture of their tribal traditions with the white cultural traditions. The two cultures have been in contact from the time the European colonizers set foot on the newfound continent of North America. Hybridity means both the inclusion and exclusion of the white cultures in the Native culture. By forcing their own values and cultures, the settlers wanted to subjugate the natives. The Natives tried to preserve their own traditions but at the same in order to survive, they needed to learn the language and mindset of the colonizers to be able to deal with them. In the same vein, disturbance that occurred among the Native Americans due to the mix of cultures, past and present and the tribal word and the colonial world, has been used as a tool to resist the lingering effects of assimilation.

The way these poets presented their writings have demonstrated the process and ways by which they oppose colonialism. Frantz Fanon was a prominent figure in the field of post colonialism and his work is central to anti-colonial resistance discourse. His work has been used as a means of conceptualizing the construction of identity under colonialism, and as a way of configuring the relationship between literary representations and the construction of national consciousness during the struggle against colonialism. He described colonialism as a denial of all cultures, history, and value outside the colonizer's frame - a systematic negation of other persons (Fanon 200).

The theoretical framework of this study is based on postcolonial theory. It addresses the concept of resistance and connects it to the concept of assimilation (*the reason behind resistance*). The study supports the view points of theorist Frantz Fanon who had contended that colonizers have dehumanized and oppressed the Native Americans (*The Wretched of the Earth*). In addition, the study highlights the concept of 'hybridity' and its attendant issues of assimilation in the Native American Folklore. Post-colonial literature has been selectively reviewed to explain the effects of colonialism on indigenous people.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The limitations of the present study are highlighted as it only focuses on three concepts of post-colonialism theory namely: resistance, hybridity and assimilation in Native American poets. The study has been predominantly based on the views of Frantz Fanon regarding Native Americans.. The study is limited to the folklore in the works of three poets, namely- Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso and Simon Ortiz. It covers some selected poems from these three poets, who together have penned fifty two folkloric poems. Furthermore, the scope of the study is limited as it focuses on only these three Native American poets whose strong voices have created an awareness of and glorified their native culture.

1.5 Methodology

The study employs common strategies from postcolonial literary studies. These strategies are appropriate and effective in the context of Native American cultural and literary studies. The study primarily started by reading different contemporary literature contributions that are related to the cultural traditions of the Native American people – who are the subjects of the study. In order to highlight Native American folklore, the study has attempted to show a vivid image of Native American history. The analysis is based on the comprehensive reading done on the contributions of Native American writers who documented the historical events that led to the loss of their cultural heritage. Logical conclusions have also been drawn from previous works that focused on Native Americans studies. By highlighting Frantz Fanon's views about the Natives, the study clarifies its aim. First, the study shows that the Natives are assimilated and they give the evidence to new generations in the poems of the selected poets. Then, the study shows the disturbance caused the Natives to lose their land and culture and their ways of life. All these aspects are shown in chapter four.

Chapter five depicts the third phase of Fanon's views about the Natives. It refers to folklore as means of resistance that selected Native American poets used to resist assimilation which deprived them of their own culture and tradition. Folklore has become the weapon against the colonizer's culture since it is used to teach the new generation about the glorious culture of their ancestors that had been ostracized by the colonizers. The analysis chapters are also divided into subsections that discuss these views through Native American folklore, like family ties, folklore in education, and Native American characters as preachers who bestow their wisdom to the coming generations. The chapter also covers fairy tales and memories.

Overall, the current study focuses on the revitalization of Native American folklore and culture through resistance to assimilation. It concentrates on three Native American poets, namely: Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso and Simon Ortiz all chosen for their excellent contributions to Native American folklore.

1.6 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the role of folklore in establishing a sense of resistance assimilation in the poetry of three Native American poets. These poets seek to preserve their oral traditions and keep them relevant in the present times. They attempt to reflect their native culture through their poetry by employing folklore – an idea that will be illustrated thoroughly in chapters four and five of this study. The study objectives are further classified as follows:

- i. To explore assimilation and hybridity as problems that lead to resistance, in the selected Native American poems.
- ii. To relate disturbance with assimilation when analyzing the selected poems.
- iii. To examine the instances of resistance and assimilation in relation to different aspects of folklore in the selected Native American poems.
- iv. To investigate folklore as a tool for resisting assimilation and cultural revival.

1.7 Research Questions

- 1) How do assimilation and hybridity lead to resistance in Native American poems?
- 2) How are disturbance and assimilation related to the resistance in the selected poems?
- 3) What are the instances of resistance and assimilation in relation to the different aspects of folklore in the selected Native American poems?
- 4) How is folklore used as a tool for resisting assimilation in the selected Native American poems?

1.8 Significance of the Study

The employment of folklore in poetry allows the incorporation of stories, ritual, songs, and ceremonies that are inherently connected to the historical and authoritative role of culture bearer. Folklore also allows cultural traditions and values to be integrated into

stories to generate a sense of continuance and survival among a particular group of people and this in turn is necessary to preserve the identity of the indigenous people. When one reads Native American poetry, one can obviously see the indispensable features that reoccur in their works, like their using of different elements of folklore which allow them to fetch their own culture and tradition in their present life . Whereas previous studies have dealt with these features separately, this study aims to unite these features into a single component that combines all elements of folklore. Moreover, these elements add to the richness of this field of literature and academic studies.

Another element that this study brings to light is related to resistance; the Natives used the pervasive effects of colonization- assimilation and disturbance- in their favor, to raise awareness among their fellow native citizens. Most of the Native intellectuals, and especially the selected poets, were not totally assimilated into the white culture. They used it to sow the seeds of resistance and deliver their message not only to the indigenous people but to a much wider audience.

Joy Harjo, Simon Ortiz and Lucy Topahanso's works lend themselves to intensive analysis of elements of ancient folklore and how they have inspired resistance generation after generation. These poets focus on how to preserve the Native identity and accept the new self through resisting assimilation, thus turning exploitation into personal and cultural triumph.

The study proves that the failure of assimilation was panacea for ending the Native's problems. To show this failure, different aspects of the Native American resistance - against assimilation, disturbance, and displacement- are analyzed in detail in the body of work of three selected poets and Native writers who have tried to resist colonialism in general. Artists and writers employed stories to fight assimilation and disturbance. By turning to their source of nourishments- stories of the ancestors- the Native poets tried to fight against colonizers.

The present study, moreover, sheds light on the role played by folklore in maintaining the sense of resistance in the poetry of selected Native American poets. No previous studies have looked into the elements of folklore in Native American poetry of these selected poets, in terms of the role of folklore in the creation of resistance to assimilation. This study contributes to the understanding of folklore as a ritual strategy to fight back; to resist the colonial discourse represented by the white man's policy of assimilation in the light of post-colonial theory.

Thus, by applying Postcolonial Theory on Native American folklore, this study sheds light on how folklore plays an important role in shaping the identity of the Natives. The theory will also help to address the consequences of cultural exploitation and control of the Native people, their lands and their heritage. It also scrutinizes the effects of colonialism on the colonizer's cultural aspects such as body of literature, language and its treatment of women and children.

1.9 Conclusion

The subjugation of the Native people in late sixteen century had dire consequences for people. Mass killings, sickness due to lack of immunity toward new diseases, strategies that aimed to separate old and young generations and families from each other such as forced relocation either in faraway towns or reservation camps, assimilation, and forced religious conversion imposed a heavy burden on the Native Americans, their identity and their culture and exposed them to the threat of cultural erasure.

Thus, it is a shared responsibility between contemporary Native American poets to resist this cultural annihilation and try to restore or recreate what has been lost during hundred years of destruction. Through their poetry, they attempt to reserve native cultures and traditions. Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso, and Simon Ortiz are among prominent Native Poets who have dedicated their life to make a contribution to the survival of the Native American nation economically, culturally and spiritually. These poets reveal the truth of their past and the experiences of their present in the modern Indian and American societies since they do not deem themselves separated from the society they live in. Native American people's suffering and pain in modern America are part of their lives and so is the grandeur of their historical and cultural past life.

The current study includes a close analytical examination of a number of folklore poems written by the aforementioned Native American poets. The focus of the study is to observe the role of these poems in helping the Natives to resist assimilation. Each poem will be discussed on the merits of elements used to express Native Americans resisting assimilation. Overall, Native American poetry is not only a record of their experiences, but also an ode to the Native American dream for a better future.

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