



HYBRIDITY AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN THIRD SPACE SCHOOLING: A STUDY OF *THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN*

Hasnain Ahmad
hasnainmallana786@gmail.com

PhD Scholar, Department of English Muslim Youth
University Islamabad, Pakistan

Dr. Wajid Hussain
connectwith.wajid@gmail.com

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

Abstract

This paper discusses how Indigenous identity was negotiated in the educational setting as described in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. The formation of indigenous identity is subject to the influences of colonial history, cultural displacement, and the demands of assimilation into the mainstream social institutions, specifically Western school systems. Arnold Spirit Jr., the Spokane Indian teenager protagonist in the novel, leaves the reservation school to attend a high school where most students are whites, putting him between the two diverse cultural settings. In spite of the academic focus on the novel, there are very scarce works that will examine the role of schooling as a cultural Third Space wherein Indigenous identity is negotiated. To fill this gap, the current work uses the theoretical concept of hybridity and of Third Space created by Homi K. Bhabha to interpret the experiences of the main protagonist. The study is qualitative literature analysis that incorporates close textual analysis and thematic interpretation of voice of narrative, interactions and tensions between characters as well as cultural conflicts as depicted in the novel. The research results demonstrate that Arnold builds a hybrid identity because of ongoing dispute on the belonging to the Indigenous culture and the demands of the dominant society. Humor, mimicry and adaptive cultural practices are some of the strategies, which help him to overcome cultural conflicts of reservation life and mainstream education. The research finds that schooling in the novel is a third space characterized by the formation of hybrid identities, which underscores the strength and agency of Indigenous youth as they navigate several cultural worlds and still have a linkage to their cultures.

Keywords: *Cultural Negotiation, Hybridity, Indigenous Identity, Native American Literature, Postcolonial Theory, Schooling, Third Space.*

Corresponding Author: Hasnain Ahmad (PhD Scholar, Department of English Muslim Youth University Islamabad, Pakistan).

Email: hasnainmallana786@gmail.com

1. Introduction & Background

The analysis of cultural identity as constructed, negotiated and changed in complex socio-historical contexts are growing in the literature. In the case of Indigenous people, their identity is usually formed within the framework of colonial pasts, cultural displacement, and the force of assimilation in the mainstream social institutions. Traditionally, education has been a very important factor in this process because the schooling systems in the West were often structured in a manner that absorbed Indigenous people into mainstream cultural systems at the cost of traditional knowledge framework and cultural practice (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

In Native American literature, schooling is frequently a place where Native people experience the tension between their culture and the perspectives of mainstream society. Complex identity negotiations are often the consequences of such tensions whereby Indigenous students have to struggle with cultural allegiance versus social mobility and personal development. These dynamics are clearly depicted in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, a story that follows the experiences of Arnold Spirit Jr., a Spokane Indian teenager who leaves his reservation school to join the predominately white high school in Reardan (Alexie, 2007).

The choice that Junoir makes to study beyond the reservation puts in to two different cultural perspectives his experiences in the Indigenous culture of the Spokane reservation and the dominant white culture of the American educational system. When passing through these spaces, Junior feels alienated, confronted by different cultures, and divided in his allegiance. His story explains how Indigenous students struggle to achieve success in institutions that had historically been influenced by colonial white supremacies (Grande, 2015).

These experiences could be interpreted in terms of the theoretical construct of hybridity as developed by Homi K. Bhabha in his most impactful book *The Location of Culture*. According to Bhabha (1994) cultural identities are not located in a fixed position but as an entity created in a Third Space where various cultural regimes change into contact with each other. In this space, meanings, identities, and cultural affiliations are negotiated and lead to the creation of hybrid identities which borrow the contents of dominant culture and the marginalized culture.

Junior in the context of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* finds himself in this Third Space since he has to transition to the white educational setting and life on the reservation. His identity is hybrid since he is a part of one culture and is also out of place in the other cultural world. This stance makes him have to renegotiate the nature and meaning of community, belonging, and self.

Thus, this paper analyses the functioning of hybridity in the learning especially in the context portrayed in the novel by Alexie and how the Indigenous identity is brokered

in this Third Space of learning in this school. Through examining the experiences of Junior as proposed in the theoretical framework presented by Bhabha, the research is aimed at illustrating how education forms a place in which cultural tensions, negotiation as well as hybrid identities are formed.

This theme of the depiction of the Native American identity has been a key issue in the Native American literature long since. The native authors often address the history of the effects of colonization such as the denial of the culture, of the place, and the assimilation that the colonizers imposed. The Western education system was one of the most influential instruments that were applied to enforce these policies, especially the boarding schools and the government schools that had the goal of transforming the Indigenous children into the dominant culture members (Adams, 1995).

These schools frequently tried to forget about Indigenous languages, customs, and cultural roles with a view to obliterate the assimilation into the Euro-American society. Consequently, the schooling was a disputed cultural arena, where the Indigenous students were subjected to conflicts between their identities as the community members and the demands encouraged by colonial educational frameworks (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006).

Native American writers often resort to education as a chance and a point of cultural clash in modern literature. Despite the fact that schooling can offer opportunities of social mobility and intellectual empowerment it can as well lead to the development of psychological and cultural distancing between Indigenous communities. Such a twofold identity of education frequently leads to hybrid cultural identities when a person is required to cope with several cultural frameworks at the same time (Grande, 2015).

In this background, the writings of Sherman Alexie can give unprecedented observations regarding the lives of the Native Americans of today. In his writing, Alexie tends to focus on issues of cultural displacement, poverty, historical trauma, and resilience to emphasize the compounded reality of the Indigenous people who find themselves within the modern society of the United States (Coulombe, 2009).

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is a particularly effective account of such problems with the story of Arnold Spirit Jr. Junior sets himself between two cultures by leaving his reservation school to join Reardan High School. He is considered a traitor in the reservation community as he tries to find opportunities outside the community, at the white school he is considered an outsider due to his Indigenous roots (Alexie, 2007).

This is an instance of dual marginalization which is a characteristic of the hybrid cultural position as considered by Homi K. Bhabha. The notion of hybridity, according to Bhabha (1994) exists in situations where different cultural outlines converge and give rise to identities that are not completely in tandem with dominant culture and equally so, are

not fully based on the traditional cultural paradigms. Third Space formed as a result of these intersections turns out to be an arena where new cultural meaning and identity are determined.

The experiences of Junior in the novel are an example of such a process. The education process opens up to him new possibilities and horizons and at the same time makes his perception of cultural dissimilarity and social disparity quite noticeable. Transiting between the world of reservation and the white educational world, Junior gets to understand how to mediate between several identities, which is how hybridity functions as a survival and survival tactic.

Using the theoretical context of hybridity and the Third Space theory to interpret the novel, this paper aims at pointing out how schooling is a significant location of Indigenous identity negotiation. The analysis shows that educational spaces are not only institutions of the transmission of knowledge but also cultural spaces where the relations of power and struggles of identities and the hybrid identities are produced and fought at the same time.

Finally, this study will add further to the general academic discourses regarding Indigenous identity, postcolonialism, and how education can shape cultural subjectivity. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* as perceived through the prism of hybridity is about the struggle of Indigenous people to maneuver in complicated cultural environments and keep the ties to their origins and community.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To analyze the ways in which Indigenous identity is negotiated in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie using the idea of hybridity.
2. To examine how the Third Space of schooling can affect the formation and change of Indigenous identity in the novel within the theoretical framework provided by Homi K. Bhabha.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What does hybridity mean in the negotiation of Indigenous identity in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*?
2. What is the relation between the Third Space of schooling and identity formation and cultural negotiation of the main character in the novel?

1.3. Significance of the Study

The research is relevant as it helps to interpret the concept of Indigenous identity and cultural hybridity in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. It discusses the process of negotiating Indigenous identity in educational contexts where Indigenous and Western cultures are produced and thus providing a complex multi-layered place of identity construction and cultural acculturation.

The theoretical importance of the research is that it uses the concept of hybridity and Third Space created by Homi K. Bhabha. By this approach, the study explores that identity is not absolute but constantly is formed by cultural negotiation, interaction and lived experiences in the institutional sphere, i.e., schools.

In scholarly practice, the research paper fills in a gap in the body literature by specifically examining the aspect of schooling as a Third Space in which the Indigenous identity is refurbished and negotiated. The research can be used in discussions in the field of postcolonial studies, Indigenous literature, as well as in identity formation, as well as in offering insights into the cultural and psychological lives of Indigenous youth working between several cultural worlds.

1.4. Literature Review

Indigenous identity negotiation practices in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* indicate a hybrid and performative sense of oneself that is formed and molded by reservation life as well as mainstream school setting. According to scholars, Alexie is not a rigid category of Indigenous identity, but rather presented as dynamic, relational and negotiated (Pelky, 2023). The main character of this novel Arnold Spirit Jr. represents this type of hybridity, as he lives on the Spokane reservation and a high school, which is dominated by whites, off the reservation. His intercultural transgressiveness establishes what postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha describes as a Third Space, where identity is debated through its experience and not an inherent and largely fixed construct (Bhabha, 1994).

Hybridity in academic circles is the term that denotes cultural interstices where cultural identities are neither Indigenous nor Western as they arise by negotiation between two opposing cultural constructs (Loomba, 2005). In the context of the work by Alexie, the concept of hybridity underlines the way in which characters have to balance Indigenous roots and the requirements of formal education and mainstream culture (Evans, 2005). The scholars point out that such hybridity is not only structural but represented by linguistic practices, humor, as well as social interactions, with identity being processual, fluid, rather than decisive (Pelky, 2023; ResearchGate, 2025).

Performative negotiations of identity are important factors that incorporate humor, irony, and vernacular speech. Arnold in the context of schooling pays humor as a tactic to challenge the systemic inequalities and challenge cultural stereotypes yet adjusting to the social norms of the Euro American society (Mishra, 2012). This is performative humor connected to the concept of survivance- coined by Gerald Vizenor to describe the persistence and resistance by Indigenous cultures than a sort of passive survival (Vizenor, 1998). Researchers emphasize that the employment of humor allows Alexie to help his characters survive the experience of historical trauma and subjective muscle, as its coping

mechanism and protest against the narratives that undermine Indigenous subjectivity (Ali, 2024; GRR Journal, 2023).

The educational environment presented in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* is a Third Space in which cultural meanings do not separate, diverge, or conflict, but rather the meanings are renegotiated. In the case of Arnold, the white school in Reardan is not merely a place of academic education but a disputed cultural space where identity is self-constitutionally being rebuilt (Pelky, 2023). According to scholars, the schooling in Indigenous is generally an institution that is driven by the colonial relations and the forces of assimilation, but it gives Indigenous youths an occasion to be mobile and agentic (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006). In the story of Alexie, the school turns out to be a space where Arnold will need to reconcile community demands with individual ambitions, which supports the notion that negotiation of hybrid identity can be achieved by participating in institutional mechanisms (Ali et al., 2024).

The adolescence in the work of Alexie is a much more important period in the process of identity negotiation. Having Indigenous adolescents experience marginalization and empowerment in the transitional stages between the reservation schooling system and a mainstream setting, where social factors (gender, race, class) intersect (DergiPark, 2023). The identity struggle by Arnold has social and cultural tension embedded in the real life of most Native youths (Weaver, 2010). Younger characters are depicted between cultural persistence and education and social mobility desires, which indicates the influences of hybridity by relational and intersectional power (Pelky, 2023).

Such hybridity is also evident in the form of the narrative. The hybrid natures of the Indigenous adolescents trying to balance diverse cultural demands are reflected in the narration by Alexie, fragmentary narration, and bouts of vernacular language use (ResearchGate, 2025). According to scholars, such linguistic and narrative hybridity is the manifestation of identity formation processes in which the voices of Indigenous people challenge a single definition and instead articulate the possibilities of an overlapping and multiple set of identities (Pelky, 2023).

Post-colonial structures offer powerful means in terms of the analysis of these identity negotiations. In the conceptualization of Third Space, mimicry, and ambivalence, Bhabha points out that the situation of the colonized subjects is to absorb the first culture and remodel it to the express needs of the former (Bhabha, 1994). Mimicry in the situation of schooling that Alexie worked on reaches when the characters assimilate and adapt educational norm without giving up entirely native cultural structures and it portrays how the identity negotiation would operate against simplistic ideas of assimilation (Evans, 2005). Ambivalence A simultaneous attraction and repulsion to mainstream schooling and dominant norms are apparent in Arnold who was both involved in reservation-life and

mainstream schooling and displays creature of hybridity within personal preferences and cultural placement (Mishra, 2012).

The association of hybridity with Indigenous theories like survivance is crucial because it highlights how hybrid identities may be centers of power, as opposed to power loss. Survivance views the agency of Indigenous peoples and continuity of culture instead of their symbolic disappearance (Vizenor, 1998). When asking the question of what survivance, in turn, is paired with postcolonial hybridity, scholars demonstrate that the narrative approach of Alexie denies any form of victimization but preempts the ways of Indigenous flexibility and cultural persistence in the conflict zone of the formal education (Amin et al., 2021).

Intersectional analysis is also important as noted in the literature. Cultural negotiation influences the identity bargaining of indigenous adolescents, which is determined by gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location (Weaver, 2010; GRR Journal, 2023). Schooling experiences are analyzed to demonstrate the way hybrid identities have to negotiate various axes of marginalization to confirm that identity is produced within the constellation of social, cultural, and institutional constraints (DergiPark, 2023).

Altogether, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* is a representation of Indigenous identity as hybrid, negotiated and performed, particularly in the education environment, as one of the Third Spaces. The studies show that hybridity operates in nature of linguistic negotiation, humor source of resistance and narrative structure and how learning environments turn out to be a significant domain of cultural negotiation. The postcolonial theoretical frameworks and especially the Bhabha one renders valuable information about these processes as they are dynamic and negotiated in a sense of Indigenous identity in the contemporary Indigenous literature (Bhabha, 1994).

1.5. Research Gap

Though Sherman Alexie in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* has been already analyzed in the context of adolescence, trauma, and the reservation life; very little literature exists on how the identity of the Indigenous occurs in negotiation on a school environment. Limited research examines attitudes of students in transitioning between reservation and mainstream schooling, where the cultural beliefs and Euro-American ideals are collided.

Hybridity, language negotiation, and performative identity in educational "Third Spaces" are not studied properly. In addition to this, mechanisms of reconciliation through which Indigenous adolescents manage their personal, communal, and cultural identities by attending non-reservation schools has not been examined comprehensively.

This research fills this gap by speculating on how Indigenous hybrid identities have been constructed and enacted in liminal learning spaces and points to the interaction of cultural continuity, social mobility, and identity negotiation.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The research design to be used is a qualitative, interpretive, and literary analysis on *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie with the aim of comprehending how hybridity and Indigenous identity negotiation takes place within schooling as a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994). With the qualitative approach, it is possible to discuss in detail the narrative forms, the interactions between the characters, language structures, and symbolism, which will reveal the cultural negotiation of the protagonist in the learning context (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The design is focused on close textual analysis because it is important to recognize that intricate processes of identity in literature can be best perceived with more analytical involvement in voice narration, dialogue, and thematic development as well as representational strategies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). It is in such analysis that one can gain the finer modes in which Alexie signifies the internal and external bargaining concerns in the development of hybrid identities, particularly when mediated through schooling relations that creates a juxtaposition in the Indigenous cultural identities and dominant cultural beliefs.

The interpretive emphasis is required because the identity in the postcolonial literature is not given but is created within and around the context of five cultural, social and political constructs like cultural, social and political structures (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002). This paper thus contextualizes the work by Alexie in the context of postcolonialism and Indigenous paradigm with regard to the Third Space of schooling as a site of conflict and negotiation of hybrid subjectivities (Bhabha, 1994).

2.2. Research Methods

The paper involves the use of qualitative interpretive approaches involving close reading and some involvement of theory. Close reading enables great attention to the narrative moments, linguistic decisions and dialogues of characters within the text, identifying instances of hybridity and identity negotiation which cannot necessarily be observed in the superficial readings (Barry, 2009).

Practically, the researcher will study:

- **Narrative voice and point of view** as expressions of hybrid subjectivity.
- **Dialogue and linguistic choices** that reflect cultural negotiation between Indigenous identity and mainstream norms.
- **Motifs of education, belonging, and marginalization** as recurring markers of identity development.

- **Character interactions** that highlight the cultural tensions embodied by Third Space schooling.

The thematic analysis is used to supplement the close reading technique, in which patterns are identified and interpreted concerning hybridity, identity negotiation, cultural transition, and resistance. This dual-level technique allows exposing some concealed narrative techniques and associative language expressing Indigenous cultural bargaining in educational setting (Yin, 2018).

Moreover, the paper does not only consider the Third Space of schooling as a narrative location but as a theoretical prism through which the tension of culture and education is viewed. This conforms to postcolonial investigation wherein institutional space, including schools, is perceived as a place where power relations and cultural representations are discussed (Loomba, 2005).

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This research based on the theoretical concept of the postcolonial theory and Indigenous identity concept. The main lens of analysis of identity negotiation is constituted by Bhabha and his concept of hybridity and Third Space. Bhabha (1994) views hybrid identities as developed in the unstable cultural space where the dominant and subordinate worldviews come into contact with each other, creating multidimensional structures of self-identification instead of fixed identities.

This framework is enhanced by Indigenous theoretical perspectives which stress on cultural continuity, surviving and lived experience. Indigenous scholars believe that identity is not only social but connected to historical memory, community practices, and cultural systems of knowledge (Grande, 2015). These viewpoints have served as protective measures against the reductive interpretations of hybridity as cultural watering down but have placed it as an arena of agency and movement of self.

Intersection of identity negotiation, societal expectations and educational pressures make adolescence as developmental and cultural stage to be understood. The school as Third Space center of attention marks the presence of Indigenous students at the cultural and linguistic borderlands of directing several claims regarding identity that are negotiated, resisted, and re-conceptualized.

2.4. Data Analysis

The experience of Arnold Spirit Jr. presented in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007) is a bright example of the formation of hybrid Indigenous identity under the umbrella of Third Space schooling. Arnold has occupied a distinctive cultural stance that makes him both within and without both the Indigenous people and dominant white community. The Spokane reservation, with its close bonds of community, common history, and culture, is symbolic of a place of belonging, continuity, and identity based on the history. On the contrary, Reardan High School is a representation of a

westernized educational system which imposes euro-american norms, values and ranks. Arnold does not just move between these two spaces and do so physically, but symbolically of the intricate bargaining of selfhood involved when Indigenous people deal with the dominant structures of culture. It is in this interface between worlds that his hybrid identity is constructed, and the idea of the Third Space developed by Bhabha (1994) is relevant, where two and even more cultural systems are in conflict and intermingle to create new lives. This hybridity is not presupposed or predetermined but an active practice that is created by Arnold in his experiences, socialization and self-contemplation of belonging, loyalty and ambition within conflicting cultural landscapes.

The conflict between individual desire and civic commitment is the major theme of Arnold in his hybrid identity. Arnold is perceived with doubt, disapproval, and even ostracism among the members of the Spokane reservation because people think he has betrayed his culture by dropping out of the local school. The fact that he prefers to take the path towards the improved educational opportunities is perceived as the abandonment of the communal norms, the process of putting Indigenous young people under pressure in order to be in line with the mass. Arnold faces a similar but different marginalization process at Reardan High School. His racial and cultural background causes him to appear different, as he has to deal with subtle forms of racism, stereotyping, and social exclusion. These two forces of being an outsider and an insider make the process of identity negotiation as an elaborate one where Arnold has to strike a fine balance between his commitment to his community and the need to conform to mainstream society. The tools used to mediate these tensions are humor, sarcasm and narrative playfulness, which enable him to manage cultural alienation whilst claiming his own agency. In this constant negotiation, Arnold then represents the performativity of hybridity and the evidence that Indigenous identity is neither fixed nor primarily predetermined, but multilevel and multidimensional and relies on cultural encounters, institutional pressure, and individual choice.

Reardan High School can be seen as the exemplification of the idea of a Third Space which is a cultural and social liminality as the dominant and subordinate worldviews are in the intersection and result in the creation of hybrid identities. Arnold is exposed to new educational practices, social norms, and institutional expectations in this space and do not have any significant similarities with what the reservation is used to. Such experiences offer chances to experience intellectual development and social mobility and at the same time also create a sense of cultural dislocation and alienation. Third Space helps Arnold to play with identity by partly assuming adoptee mainstream culture by school related behavior like academic performance, sports involvement, and social mannerisms without completely forgetting his own Indigenous identity. This unceasing bargaining of assimilation and cultural faithfulness proves that the Third Spaces as places

of possible empowerment and of cultural antagonism are the same. The development of identity and the concepts presented through the framework of this location can also demonstrate the fact that the identity of Indigenous people is constructed in the context of the interaction and interaction with other cultural models, not intrinsic or inherited.

The critical nature of humor, irony, and ambivalence in negotiating hybrid identity can be proved by the narrative voice of Arnold. Humor is a coping strategy and a less aggressive means of cultural resistance, in which Arnold is able to talk about racism, poverty, and marginalization without losing his self-respect or cultural background. The irony and self-mental commenting help him to criticize the norms of the dominant culture without losing the sense of agency. Ambivalence--which occurs in the form of guilt, pride and alienation--also prevents him to manoeuvre between various cultural expectations even further. This ambivalence is especially observable in the relationships with the family and peers whereby Arnold wants to be accepted, but at the same time the teenager fears elements of cultural alienation. This emotional complication shows that hybrid identities cannot be reduced to easy compromises between cannotions and are delicate, emotionally laden, and performance-based which need to be continually negotiated.

The example of Arnold working with Reardan High School is also a case of strategic mimicry, the other aspect of Third Space identity negotiation. Through conforming to the variations of the dominant culture in terms of behavior, language, and learning, Arnold opens the door to both educational opportunities and integration into society to the extent that he is conscious of his adaptation to the institutions. Nonetheless, this impersonation is discriminating and oppositional; he does not abandon practices of reservation, jokes, and values completely. As an illustration, Arnold applies reservation humor and narrative in Reardan situations, which signifies that his cultural relative has been mediated by the critical consciousness of his cultural standpoint. Such selective imitation emphasizes the fact that hybrid identity is a place of limitation and agency where Indigenous adolescents will transact the issues of survival, acceptance and self-development in cultural hegemonic formations.

The hybrid identity of Arnold is supported by the narration techniques used by Alexie. Mirroring the hybrid thinking of a sociable negotiator of several cultures, the first-person episodic pattern, interwoven with cartoons and vernacular language, follows. The fact that Arnold blends reservation colloquialism with Standard English is demonstration of the linguistic aspect of the identity negotiation in that he is capable of moving around and bridging the worlds of two different cultures. Humor and tragedy of the story reflect the emotional multiplicity of the hybrid identity, it is the conflict between the chance and rejection, inclusion and alienation. Language also becomes a means and a locus of identity formation, which entails a continuous bargaining between traditional cultural knowledge and based behavior acquired by the dominant society.

The aspect of hybrid identity construction in the life of Arnold is informed by not only the cultural differences but also overlapping structural conditions. The stresses of living between two cultures are exacerbated by socioeconomic problems, historical trauma, and isolated geography. These structural disparities impact the context Arnold views and enacts his hybrid identity, and that identity negotiation depends on context-dependent social and economic facts. Intersectional analysis proves that hybrid Indigenous identities have various differences based on factors like class, geography and community expectations, and that Third Space schooling experiences are neither universal nor homogeneous, rather mediated by various social axes.

The information presented shows that identity of Arnold Spirit Jr. in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is constructed through multifaceted contact in the Third Space of schooling where hybridity is acted upon, negotiated, and is felt emotionally, linguistically, and socially. The main strategies that allow him to negotiate between one leadership style and the other are humor, mimicry, ambivalence and linguistic blending which help him to negotiate the cultural clash of reservations life and mainstream education. The Third Space of Reardan High School is a dynamic location where the reconstruction of the indigenous identity is not erased, but remains incompletely assimilated but instead, the hybridity is performed and reconstructed through relations, performances and adoptions. This analysis places schooling in an important position to analyze the impact of opportunities, constraint, and cultural negotiation, and will inform us about how adolescents can negotiate between contrasting cultural demands and maintain ties to community and heritage.

3. Conclusion

This paper has discussed negotiation of hybridity and Indigenous identity in the Third Space of schooling manifested in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. It has been demonstrated through a qualitative interpretive analysis that what Arnold Spirit Jr. went through was a complex interaction between the cultural allegiance, the desire to achieve personally and the societal language. His travel between the Spokane reservation and Reardan High School actually places him in a liminal zone between dominant and subordinate cultural structures which result in the creation of hybrid identities that are dynamic, performative and relational as opposed to fixed.

The results show that Third Space schooling is both a place of opportunity and conflict. On the one hand, it gives Arnold entry to education progress and more wide global experiences but, on the other hand, it introduces him to marginalization and cultural clash, as well as alienation. In this shifting area, hybrid identity is constructed by a bargaining process, imitation, ambivalence, and adaptability policies like jokes and language mixing. These are the processes, which demonstrate how Indigenous adolescents operate across

the conflicting cultural demands preserving the links of affiliation to their heritage and community.

The paper goes further to indicate the importance of narration form and the linguistic tool to depict the concept of hybrid identity. The performance aspect of identity creation evident in the first-person narration, episodic narration, and vernacular language used by Alexie can be seen as an evidence of how Indigenous youth deal with their cultural worlds on a daily basis. The status of the society, historical trauma, and communal expectations are also intersectional factors, that are known to influence the manner of identity negotiation and how hybridity is shaped based on the situation at hand, as it is diverse and changing.

In sum, this study highlights the value of considering schooling as an urgent venue of the elaboration of Indigenous identity. Using the notions of hybridity and Third Space, as provided by Homi K. Bhabha, and the Indigenous view of resilience and cultural continuity, the provided study shows that hybrid identities are not indicators of cultural degradation but the indicators of adaptability, agency, and creativity. The analysis leads to further knowledge of postcolonial identity, indigenous literature and educational space as spaces whereby cultural meanings, subjectivities and identities are being contested, negotiated and transformed.

Conclusively, Arnold experience is a good example of how Indigenous adolescents tend to negotiate tensions of two cultural world through adulthood which shows that identity is a process by which experience, context and agency influences identity. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* can therefore be taken to be a strong literary expression of the hybrid identity-making and the transformative power of the Third Space of Education in the development of a self as well as the negotiation of a culture.

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