
Transnational Identity in Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie: An Analysis of Cultural Hybridity, Global Impacts, and Native Identity

Muhammad Rafiq (Ph.D. English Literature)¹, Muhammad Ismail (M.Phil. scholar)², Kamal Zai Gulalai (M.phil. scholar)

¹ Muslim Youth University, Islamabad.

² Muslim Youth University, Islamabad.

³ University of Malakand, Chakdara, Lower Dir.

Abstract

The present study comprehensively investigates transnational identity within Sherman Alexie's novel, "Indian Killer." the study revealed the intricate layers of cultural hybridity, global influences, and indigenous identity within the urban setting portrayed in the narrative, through detailed analysis. Using a qualitative research design incorporating textual analysis and thematic coding. The research sheds light on process of identity intervention faced by the characters. The study of cultural hybridity explores how characters deals with traditional Native American culture and global influences. The present study represent the universal impact of globalization on urban places as a central theme. The representation of indigenous identity show, resilience and flexibility in the face of urban challenges. The characters' engagement in activism and the incorporation of traditional myths into the urban tales, highlight the nature of indigenous identity. The narrative functions as a philosophical stance, capturing the complexities of existing identity, where individuals sustain their identities while directing the dynamic relationship of global influences. This research marks a significant contribution to the broader aspect of transnational identity. It also offers valuable understanding into how contemporary literature reflect and shape our knowledge of constructing identity in a globalized world. By investigating cultural hybridity, global influences, and indigenous identity within "Indian Killer," this study aims to enhance our knowledge of the difficult dynamics involved in the construction of transnational Identities within urban setting.

Keywords: Sherman Alexie, Indian Killer, transnational identity, cultural hybridity, Native American identity, globalization.

Introduction

Indian Killer (1996) by Sherman Alexie is part of a long and rich tradition of Native American literary fictions that addresses the intricacies of indigenous identity in the light of previous works characterized by cultural assimilation, colonization, and displacement. Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and N. Scott Momaday explored the theme in their works like; Identity crisis, cultural survival, and resistance. Categorizing these themes within the wider context of postcolonial philosophy. Sherman Alexie's Indian Killer focuses on the intersections of transnational identity, cultural hybridity and globalization. It also investigating how internal culture disintegrate and external global influences increasingly effecting Native American identity. When the novel arrived in the market, Native American communities were still

dealing with the consequence, from decades of federal policies including; forced adoption, assimilation schemes and displacement to finish their cultural identity. Thousands of Native American children were brought to non-Native homes under the Indian Adoption Project (1958–1967). Which caused generations to become alienated from their cultural heritage. This novel is significant to explore the long-standing effects of these policies, reflected in *Indian Killer* through John Smith's adoption by white parents. The story in this novel serves as a metaphor for the wider Native American experience of cultural displacement and identity crises in a society that still marginalizes Indigenous peoples (Weaver, 1998). Twentieth century also known for the rise in globalization, which exposed the true reality of indigenous populations to cultural domination. Globalization significantly impacted on Native American communities, put their cultural preservation at risk by commercializing Indigenous identities and traditions. Indigenous identity is frequently overgeneralized and fantasized as a result of this commodification, in which Native culture is endorsed and expended by non-Natives (Vizenor, 1999). These reservations are shown in Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer*, especially in the characters who fight against the mainstream society's arrogation of Native American culture. The theoretical framework of transnationalism provides a useful perspective for analyzing the problems presented in Novel. Analysis of Native American literature and its depiction of identity crises has advanced greatly from postcolonial literature, focusing on the effects of colonization on marginalized populations. Scholars like Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha have also worked on transnational theory, focusing on how identities are constructed by the connections of various cultures across national and cultural boundaries (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990). The intricacies of cultural hybridity, where identities are constructed in the spaces between overlapping cultures, could be better understood with the help of above mentioned theoretical frame work. Self-determination, identity crises, cultural commodification, and the effects of globalization are particularly relevant for Native American Identity. Showing the realities of a globalized community, Indigenous peoples in the postcolonial era progressively struggle for the preservation of their cultural legacy across the border. Many Native Americans experiencing the conflict between cultural adaptation and preservation. Alexie identifies the core problems regarding Native American identity in the face of ongoing cultural marginalization and globalization in his novel *Indian Killer*. Alexie's writing is a critical commentary on how Indigenous identity is constructed, challenged, and commercialized in modern world or post-colonial era. The depiction of characters in the novel are finding difficulty to balance the demands of mainstream society with their Native background. Showing the progressive difficulties in preserving cultural reliability in the present interconnected world. The concept of transnationalism provides an investigation of Native American experiences in the late 20th century and places *Indian Killer* within the broader discussions regarding post-colonialism, globalization, and the transnational construction of identity.

Transnationalism

Transnationalism challenges conventional views of identity, and culture through migration of people, ideas, and cultural activities beyond national boundaries. Transnationalism accepts the continuous ties of people to have with several nations, cultures, or groups. In contrast to previous concepts of migration and diaspora, transnationalism emphasis on assimilating into a dominant national culture. In an increasingly globalized world, these relationships create poly identities that intersect national borders and promote flexible recognition of identity (Basch et al., 1994). By examining the experiences of people and groups, who live in culturally ambiguous areas and frequently interact with both domestic and international influences, transnationalism has played a significant role in literary studies in this regard. Transnationalism provides a lens to examine the intricacies of identity influenced by migration, globalization, and colonial legacies for many marginalized groups, including native peoples. The "third space," as defined by Homi Bhabha, is

essential to interpret international identity. According to Bhabha, identities are not fixed in stone but rather created at the places where cultures converge. Creating new and hybrid identities that subvert the conventional dichotomies of native and foreign, self and other (Bhabha, 1994). In this "third space," people live in a state of intervention and change rather than totally alienated from one culture or entirely integrated into another culture. Transnationalism emphasizes on how identity is fluid and how cultural limits are always reinterpreted. The protagonists in Sherman Alexie's novel *Indian Killer* navigate their native identities, largely white American society, reflecting the concept of transnationalism. The main character in a novel, John Smith, finds it difficult to find a balance Native ancestry. The protagonist adoption in a white family and his separation from his cultural heritage, placed him in a transnational environment, where he must manage several conflicting cultural identities. The novel also investigates on how globalization has effected Native American identity. The novel also demonstrating on how transnational pressures like; cultural appropriation and commodification are increasingly influencing Indigenous people and societies. Indigenous culture misplaces its significance and meaning as a result of this commodification and also deprives Indigenous people from the ability to establish their own identities (Weaver, 1998; Vizenor, 1999). *Indian Killer* holds the issues of transnationalism to emphases on how Native American identity is influenced by international factors and local tribal customs. Characters in the novel represent the wider experiences of Indigenous peoples in a globalized world. Native Americans in the light of transnationalism challenges conventional ideas of belonging and self-recognition to negotiate their identities in connection to their cultural history and the prevailing culture that surrounds them (Clifford, 1994).

Objective of the Study

1. To examine how Native American identity is depicted in *Indian Killer* written by Sherman Alexie, with a focus on cultural fusion, global forces shaping identity and indigenous identity an urban context.
2. To investigate the idea of transnational identity and cultural hybridity presented in the novel, with an emphasis on how characters draw the boundaries between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture.

Literature Review

Scholars of Indigenous studies have long focused on Native American identity and the effects of transnational influences on contemporary literature. A significant contribution to indigenous studies conversation is Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* (1996). Offers a comprehensive explanation of Native American identity in the context of contemporary America. The realities of Indigenous peoples in a postcolonial world requires an understanding to recognize the themes present in the novel like; cultural hybridity, the consequences of globalization, and Native Identity.

Native American literature is well known for highlighting identity construction and the conflicts that arise between maintenance indigenous customs and modifying to external influences. The resilience of Native peoples to protect cultural legacy against colonization and modernity are comprehensively explained in the works of renowned authors like Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, and N. Scott Momaday (Silko, 1977; Momaday, 1968; Erdrich, 1984). In addition to undertaking the problems of cultural displacement, these written works continuously presenting the importance of land, community, and storytelling as the important elements of Native identity construction. The experience of Native Americans who have alienated from their cultural history as a result of cultural fusion, initiatives like the Indian Adoption Project is reflected in the struggle John Smith a protagonist to readopt his Indigenous identity (Weaver, 1998; Trafzer et al., 2006). A very common problem in Native American literature is the sense of identity disintegration brought on by this hostility (Fixico, 2003). An important term in postcolonial theory is cultural hybridity, particularly in the works of Homi Bhabha, who familiarized the concept of the "third

space" as a space of negotiation and transformation for cultural identities (Bhabha, 1994). People in region live in a transitional state between two cultures rather than being fully acculturated in either one. John Smith, who lives in a third place between his Native origin and the dominant white culture in which he was cultivated, serves as an example of this in *Indian Killer*. Bhabha's claim that identity is flexible and ever-changing, his identity is influenced by worlds yet completely belongs to neither. The associations between the novel's Native American and non-Native characters further shows the issue of cultural hybridity. Indigenous identity is progressively commodified and controlled in mainstream society, as revealed by characters such as Dr. Mather, who make money off of their assumption of Native American culture (Weaver, 1998). A primary trouble in postcolonial research is the contradiction among cultural appropriation and renovation, especially within the context of Indigenous literature, where the pressures of globalization regularly clash with the need to hold cultural authenticity (Vizenor, 1999). Some other crucial problem in *Indian Killer* is how globalization impacts Indigenous traditions. Local American identity is encouraged by means of each local customs and external factors like the monetization of Indigenous culture. This commercialization occurs while non-local people take and devour aspects of local American way of life, such artwork, non-secular activities, and symbols, frequently for monetary benefit. Consistent with scholars, this appropriation is a form of cultural exploitation that turns local American tradition into a commodity that may be offered, depriving it of its inherent significance (Ziff & Rao, 1997; Vizenor, 1999). In *Indian Killer*, Dr. Mather, a white professor who blessings from his expertise of local American studies, is the right instance of the way native tradition has been commercialized. His art serves as an image of the way native identification is frequently idealized and oversimplified for preferred public consumption, which serves to boost to challenge preconceptions (Deloria, 1998). Globalization was led to the market for the consumption of Indigenous cultures in a method which can be regularly unfavorable to the communities themselves, that's at once answerable for this commodification (Barker, 2005; King, 2012). Transnationalism, as a theoretical framework, emphasizes the ways in which identities are formed by means of the motion of humans, ideas, and cultural practices across countrywide borders (Basch et al., 1994). The relationships between Indigenous peoples and global factors like capitalism, migration, and cultural trade are examples of transnationalism in local American literature. Because of native communities' engagement with worldwide networks at the same time as retaining their neighborhood cultural traditions, students together with James Clifford have claimed that transnational impacts are regularly shaping Indigenous identities (Clifford, 1994). The concept of transnationalism is proven in *Indian Killer* thru the methods wherein native identity is formed by outdoor, international influences, which include the monetization of Indigenous identification and the appropriation of native tradition by way of non-Natives. In keeping with Culford (1994) and Bhabha (1994), those transnational pressures produce a hybridized identification that contradicts traditional ideas of cultural authenticity. The native American protagonists inside the ebook are compelled to stand how both precise and bad international influences are reshaping their identities as they traverse those transnational places. In spite of the problems introduced approximately by commercialization, cultural appropriation, and globalization, themes of resistance and survival are frequently highlighted in local American literature. The concept of "survivance," which combines resistance and survival, has been emphasised by way of writers consisting of Gerald Vizenor as a function of local Literature on the american identification (Vizenor, 1999). This concept highlights the native American tribes' tenacity within the face of continuous colonialism and cultural exploitation. Within *Indian Killer*, From John Smith's fight to say his Indigenous identification to the radical's large condemnation of the exploitation of local lifestyle, resistance takes various forms. Like many different native American writers, Alexie locations a robust emphasis at the fee of storytelling in

maintaining cultural reminiscence and fending towards erasure (Bruchac, 2003). With a view to confirm Indigenous voices in a globalized global, Alexie and other local authors expand memories that defy preconceptions and tackle the intricacies of native identification. This contributes to a larger literary legacy.

Methodology

The present study adopt qualitative research approach for the interpretative aspect of literary interpretation. Qualitative methods are chosen to thoroughly examine the challenges of cultural hybridity in transnational context. Textual analysis and thematic coding are used for the research design to present the elements of cultural hybridity, global influences and indigenous identity that can be find out in Indian Killer written by Sherman Alexie. Indian killer by Sherman Alexie serves as a primary source of data collection for the present study. Textual analysis and intensive reading is the best option for identification and comprehension of transnational identity, cultural hybridity and global influences. The issues of research addressed through the analytical identification of pertinent statements, and extracts. The fundamental technique for mining meaning from the narrative is still textual analysis. The researcher looked at themes that contribute to identification of transnational identity. Characters discuss events in the urban setting the cultural heritage in reaction to global influences are highlighted. Episodic themes relating to indigenous identity, global influences, and cultural hybridity are analyzed and categorized while using thematic coding. Codes are created based on emerging patterns in the text, to identify the main ideas and how they involved throughout the narrative.

Analysis

1. Cultural Fusion in Indian Killer

a. Fusion of Tradition and Modernity

The characters in Indian Killer by Sherman Alexie negotiate the challenging environment of cultural fusion, where significant influences from modern global civilization collide with traditional Native American traditions. The conflict and harmony between the past and the present are explained in a vivid detail in numbers of scenes. The characters set out their cultural activities against a city backdrop in the story. The main character John Smith is a moving picture of experienced blending of cultures. He struggles with his Native American identity while thinking carefully about his ancestry in a contemporary civic environment, and the significance it grips in his life. In a particularly effective moment of likeness, he says:

“I dances at the pawwow, my moccasins pounding the pavement instead of the earth, but the drumbeat echoed the same.”

This passage captures the contrasts in his experience. The transferring line "my moccasins pounding the pavement in place of the earth" captures the alienation and displacement that many Native Americans enjoy as they adjust to existence in cities. The pavement is a representation of the current, industrial world, which often appears alien and cut off from the herbal settings which are essential to Native American way of life and identity. It stirs emotions of loss and longing for the floor, as well as a tangible and mystical hyperlink to ancestors' customs. The phrase "however the drumbeat echoed the same" inside the 2nd phase of his perspective but provides a sense of consistency and resiliency. A critical issue of Native American lifestyle, the drumbeat represents the community's lifeblood and the continuing spirit of lifestyle. Smith finds energy and comfort on this rhythmic reminder of his beyond regardless of the modern environment, implying that even as the instances can also have modified, the core of his cultural identification has not. Alexie skillfully shows the complex strategies of cultural hybridity via the voyage of John Smith. The person's war serves as a window into a larger story of ways people can also live many identities while reconciling their conventional ancestry with modern fact. The protagonists on this diffused examination of cultural fusion paintings to preserve their past at the same time as adjusting to the

problems of present day lifestyles, illuminating the intricacies of belonging. In the long run, Indian Killer is a monument to the local American culture's tenacity inside the face of globalization and urbanization, displaying how subculture can survive within the unexpectedly converting context of modernity.

b. Fusion of Language in Hybrid Identity

Sherman Alexie explores in extremely good element how language shapes and manifests combined identities in his characters in Indian Killer. The story illustrates how language is an important tool for navigating cultural identity in a world and this is changing quickly, further, to being a technique of communication. The characters exhibit the intricacies of their cultural contexts and the ongoing interplay between tradition and modernity by way of switching among their native American languages and English comfortably. John Smith and other characters reflect on their reports in a discourse that serves as a transferring instance of this linguistic duality:

“We speak two languages, sometimes in the same sentence. It’s like living on the border of the two worlds.”

The process of code-switching or changing between languages, becomes a significant display of cultural hybridity, and this remark captures the fundamental of their dual existence. The linguistic blending of characters shows the complex relationship between the Native history and modern world. The linguistic diversity of novel is evidence that capacities of characters are to move across many cultural boundaries. Every linguistic variation shows their identity negotiation which enabling the character in the novel, to interact with the globalized world around them, while also accepting the richness of their traditional Native American culture. The dual context of language offers a more philosophical comments on how people create their identities in a multicultural societies by maintaining a balance between the demands of current life and their tradition. Furthermore, the deep influences of globalization on identity crises are highlighted by Sherman Alexie’s investigation of linguistic hybridity. The presence of global commodities and cultural exchanges, characters are both consumers of modernity and active contributors to the continuous discussion of transnational themes in an urban environment. Global culture establishes how the amalgamation of native and English languages create a bridge across world. Characters in this novel are able to engage with larger global narratives and declare their hybrid identities because to this dynamic relationship.

2. Global Forces Shaping Identity

a. Influence of Globalization on Urban Landscape

The urban environment of Indian Killer serve as a dynamic picture where local identities and foreign impacts collide, highlighting the extensive results of globalization on cultural identity. The novel vividly depicts individuals navigating a placing that is both rich in traditional Native American traditions and crawling with effects of the modern-day world. The characters represent the intricacies of surviving in a society that is converting fast through their interactions with several globalized artifacts, inclusive of media, era, and customer merchandise. The core of this transition is encapsulated in a single powerful paragraph, in which the protagonist muses on the transferring metropolitan panorama:

“Skyscrapers replaced totem poles, and city lights outshone the stars.”

Globalization brought extreme changes, is captured in the above mentioned imagery. The difference between "skyscrapers" and "totem poles" both shows how modernity is occupying traditional societies. Emphasizing how physical environment of the city reflects a wider cultural displacement. The spiritual importance of totem poles in the mentioned statement, which are fixed in Native American folk tales and local history, distinctions abruptly with the tall skyscrapers that are a representation of urban progress and economic growth in the region. Additionally, the phrase "city lights outshone the stars" shows how artificiality saturates urban life and indicates an alienation from the natural world and customs brought from ancestors. The protagonists must deal with the trouble of identifying themselves in the face of overwhelming presence of globalization as they negotiate this chanced landscape. The representation of stars, which is represented for spirituality, the history of culture and a sense of inclusion in a wide cosmic universe are hidden in the dazzling lights of the city, which can also be a source of attraction and opportunity. Sherman Alexie reveals that how globalization is changing the urban environments and, in turn, the identities of those, who is living there with these striking pictures. The characters in the novel progressively interact with global forces, navigating identities in an atmosphere, where traditional ideals progressively collide with modern realities with zeal and spirit. They are rethinking to the changing impact of globalization, that it creates a difficult balance between privileging their Native past and accepting modernity. Indian killer is important that it give attention to the complex interrelationship between urban identity construction and globalization. Characters fight with the possible and problems brought out by this amalgamation of cultures as they involve with globalized mechanisms and negotiate the altering urban environment. The novel offers an analysis of how external factors influence both individual and societal identities of a person, highlighting Native American culture of adaptability to swift change.

b. Transnational Dynamics

The protagonists in Indian Killer are transnational identities that navigate and shape the intricacies of globalized urban environments. The forged of the novel is varied, with a range of reviews and backgrounds that collectively capture the multicultural cloth of city lifestyles. This various array of identities demonstrates the manner wherein globalization influences private memories and the interconnections of cultures. Marie offers a clear example of a multinational worldview.

"Marie spoke of her journey from the reservation to the city, a migration of identity that mirrored the changing skyline."

The above statement shows journey of Marie from a rural reservation to the busy urban environment, seizing her multifaceted perspective. The trip of Marie is more than just a physical but it is a deep shift of migration in her identity as she navigates the opportunity and difficulties. The metaphorical reflection of her journey of "changing skyline" shows that how self-development and urban environment are dynamic in shaping identity. Many characters in the novel faces the global journey of identity are powerfully They encounter the difficulties of shaping an identity in a world that is becoming more interconnected as they navigate the diverse cultural environment. The characters in the novel must negotiate several identities in the urban environment, the urban environment is a testing ground for these changes since modern influences frequently colliding with traditional values. Furthermore, by showing how these journeys are not only physical but also intricately linked to issues of self-determination and belonging? The experiences of Marie shed light on the larger problems of migration. There is an intricate interaction between the history of Marie and present, as she adjusts herself to the urban setting and to balance her Native American

origin with the demands of urbanization. This contradiction is a reflection of the changing urbanization, where the pressures of globalization are continuously reconstructing cultural identities. Sherman Alexie reveals that how people deal with the difficulties of a multicultural urban environment, highlighting the complicated dynamics of migration and identity via journeys of Marie. At the end, the book highlights how resilient and adaptive these characters are, as they construct their identities in the dynamic environment of globalization.

3. Indigenous Identity in an Urban Context

a. Flexibility and Adaptation

The Native identities of the characters in *Indian Killer* are shown with a strong feeling of flexibility and perseverance in the face of the difficulties presented by metropolitan life. As the story progresses, scenes that emphasize the individuals' involvement in urban activity show how dedicated they are to defending Native rights and conserving their cultural legacy. This involvement is a strong declaration of their identity in a contemporary setting, not just a reaction to the stresses of city living. The character's declaration exemplifies this tenacity in a particularly powerful way:

“Our drums echo not just in the pawwow but in the city council chambers.”

This phrase perfectly captures the characters' will to apply activism as an essential tool for empowerment and war which will amp up their local identification against the background of metropolitan existence. In a context that often marginalizes Indigenous voices, the sight of drums—traditional trademarks of local American tradition—echoing in the metropolis council chambers represents a reclaiming of space and voice. It symbolizes their steadfast will to make certain that their cultural identity is pondered in municipal governing frameworks, bridging the distance among customs and innovative campaigning. *Indian Killer's* examination of Indigenous identity gives a story of oldsters navigating the problems of city lifestyles thru adaptability and resiliency. They make contributions to the tale of the metropolis and verify their identities via community organization and interest. The concept that native identification is not constrained to rural regions however may flourish within the middle of metropolitan environment is bolstered by using their lively engagement, which allows them to include traditional beliefs and customs into the city context. The narrative offers as an instance of ways native identity can endure and find expression in the busy and on occasion chaotic surroundings of metropolitan existence.

b. Myth and Tradition in an Urban Narratives

Moreover, Alexie skillfully includes traditional local American mythology with urban storytelling, growing a unique surroundings that fosters ethnic identity. Tradition and urbanity combo together in scenarios when parents congregate to tell memories around a metropolis campfire. As stated in one passage:

“We told Coyote stories, and the city listened, its skyline a silent audience.”

This artwork successfully illustrates the resilience of Indigenous identity with the aid of implying that traditional stories undergo in spite of the presence of metal and urban. As a social ritual, storytelling over a campfire facilitates people connect to their urban surroundings and support their ties to their lineage and cultural background. Personified as a "silent target market," the metropolis

emphasizes the idea that Indigenous voices and tales can also coexist in urban locations with older and newer narratives. *Indian Killer* uses those times to show the complexity of Indigenous identity and how it interacts with metropolitan environment. The characters' ability to reclaim their narrative electricity by sharing classic testimonies among the contemporary cityscape asserts that their cultural legacy is critical in defining the city experience, further, to being contemporary. This fusion of modernism and fable highlights the adaptability of Indigenous identity, displaying that it is able to flourish regardless of the demanding situations of present-day city lifestyles.

Conclusion

The complex tapestry of cultural hybridity, global influences, and transnational identity explored in Sherman Alexie's *"Indian Killer"* has been navigated by way of this research experience. Indigenous identity as visible from a city viewpoint. The study has proven the tricky dynamics at play within the narrative, shedding insight on the ways people assemble their identities and interact in discourse in response to the interaction among worldwide influences and cultural nuances. This research contributes to the wider communication of transnational identification. The researcher is able to expose the nuances buried in the e book and affords a deeper expertise of ways characters inside the books direct their identities inside an urban environment and a transnational framework with the aid of basing their observation on a qualitative research technique. Looking at affords a attitude thru which to view the challenges associated with contemporary identification building in a global society. The examination of indigenous identification, international impacts, and cultural hybridity in *"Indian Killer"* goes past the bounds of literature. It serves as a helpful representation of the problems humans have inside the actual world, even as negotiating numerous cultural jurisdictions and claiming the power in their particular identities. The radical's protagonists grow to symbolize the more human experience in a time of pass-cultural communication and connectivity. This studies has crucial ramifications for literary and cultural studies because it emphasizes how literature shapes and displays societal awareness. *"Indian Killer"* evolves from a narrative right into a contemplative piece that demanding situations readers to reflect on consideration on who they are in the face of a world this is changing unexpectedly. The eBook provides a big voice to the discussions occurring proper now on the relationships among globalization, identification, and culture.

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