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## NATIVEPHILIA AND ANGLOPHILIA IN SHARMAN ALEXIE'S RESERVATION BLUES

**Juliyanti Sidabutar**

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas

Email : Juliyantisidabutar5@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This study discusses the adverse effects of foreign cultural influences on local cultures and the repercussions faced by local cultures that adopt foreign elements. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, the research draws on primary data from Sherman Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues* (1995) and various scholarly articles relevant to the themes explored. The analysis is framed within two postcolonial theories proposed by Homi Bhabha and Tressa Berman, which provide distinct perspectives on identity and representation in a postcolonial context, specifically focusing on the concepts of nativephilia and anglophilia, closely linked to cultural appropriation and mimicry. The findings indicate that 1) Cultural appropriation contributes to the erosion of local customs and the loss of cultural heritage, highlighting the risks associated with the uncritical adoption of foreign cultural practices. 2) Mimicry leads to negative consequences for individuals and society, ing a sense of alienation and disconnection from one's cultural identity.

Keywords: nativephilia, anglophilia, cultural appropriation, mimicry

### **I. Introduction**

Nativephilia and anglophilia are social phenomena linked to globalism and cultural interaction. Anglophilia is a strong attraction to British culture, often causing people to prioritize British culture over local ones. Nativephilia involves Westerners influencing local people through their thinking and values, resulting in mental colonization. Both phenomena can lead to physical, economic, cultural, and intellectual colonization (Suweleh 2020).

Nativephilia refers to the act of Westerners displaying interest in local cultures, often from non-Western countries, but often exploiting them for commercial gain or personal influence. This can involve influencers using traditional elements to attract attention or build personal image. This can damage the essence of the culture, as it is repackaged to suit Western tastes, rather than being appreciated for its original value and meaning (Abdullah 2022: 10-23).

Nativephilia refers to an idealized fascination with indigenous cultures, while cultural appropriation is the act of borrowing elements from one culture by dominant members without permission or understanding. This can be seen as disrespectful, exploitative, or trivializing the original cultural context. Nativephilia is

rooted in genuine interest in learning about another culture respectfully, while cultural appropriation is driven by trends, novelty, or profit motives, often at the expense of the culture (Berman 2004: 383-397).

Anglophilia, or the love for British culture, is influenced by historical, social, and cultural factors. It includes influences from literature, music, media, education, English language, entertainment, fashion, and monarchy. Famous British bands, media like the BBC, and globally recognized fashion brands have global influence. Modern technology and the internet facilitate communication and understanding of British culture (Tamarkin 2000).

Anglophilia is a strong love or admiration for England, British culture, or anything related to England. Homi Bhabha discusses the concept of mimicry as a mechanism of colonialism, where a colonized subject imitates the behavior, language, and culture of the colonizer but is not entirely identical. This strategy destabilizes colonial power and shows the tension between domination and resistance. Anglophilia is seen as a form of imitation to admire and imitate British culture as a symbol of civilization and superiority, reflecting the psychological and cultural dilemmas faced by colonial subjects (Bhabha 1984: 125-33).



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## **II. Review Of Literature**

### **2.1 Nativephilia and Anglophilia**

Anglophilia is a concept that describes how colonial subjects imitate culture, often as an attempt to gain social status or recognition by adopting colonial language, lifestyle, and values. This phenomenon is influenced by factors such as the colonial education system, power and social status, and the colonial mentality. The colonial education system taught Western languages and knowledge, leading to an intellectually superior group that was not aligned with the colonial hierarchy. The colonial mentality emphasized the importance of being like the English, achieving dominance through law and culture (16).

Anglophilia can lead to signs such as using English as social status, idealizing the English lifestyle, considering local culture inferior, relying on colonial institutions, and experiencing identity dilemmas. Negative effects of Anglophilia include feeling alienated from their native culture, losing connection with their community, and perpetuating the colonial mentality even after independence. Post-colonial countries often follow the cultural, economic, and political standards of their former colonizers, such as using English in business and government, hindering fluency in the native language (17).

In Homi Bhabha's perspective, Anglophilia is part of a colonial strategy that traps colonized people in a state of mimicry, imitating the colonial culture but never fully recognizing it as part of it. This leads to identity dilemmas, cultural dependency, and the perpetuation of the colonial system even after independence (18).

Nativephilia, in the context of cultural appropriation, refers to an excessive interest in indigenous cultures that often leads to the borrowing or imitation of foreign cultures by indigenous people themselves. Tressa Berman (2012), an academic who studies indigenous arts and culture, said that this phenomenon is part of the power imbalance in cultural exchange. A phenomenon where Westerners take or use elements of local people's cultures without permission, understanding, or sufficient respect. This often occurs in various

aspects such as fashion, art, music, food, and spiritual practices. Many elements of local culture are taken and sold by large companies or individuals in the West without providing benefits to the original community (20).

Local communities are often unaware that they are being exploited because this process is carried out in a subtle, covert, and gradual manner. The negative impact of this is that the community becomes laborers on their own land, while large profits are enjoyed by foreigners who come as investors. Local culture becomes merely a product that loses its original value, while native communities lose control over their own heritage. Local communities feel they do not have equal opportunities on their own land because economic benefits are enjoyed more by foreigners. Communities become dependent on foreign investors and lose the ability to build their own economy. Communities lose pride in their own culture and begin to adopt Western culture as the main standard. Local communities lose rights to their own land and resources, while foreigners enjoy large profits (22).

### **2.2 Theory and Method**

This is a narrative qualitative research proposed by Creswell (2007) stating that narrative is a kind of qualitative in which the investigator illustrates the lives of characters, accumulates and tells stories about individuals lives, and writes narratives of characteristic experiences. Using this method, data is gathered through the collection of stories (54).

This study applies postcolonial criticism is a theoretical study that analyzes the impact of colonialism and imperialism on society, culture, politics, and identity in former colonies. This theory highlights how colonial legacies still influence power structures, cultural representations, and social dynamics in the postcolonial era. Postcolonial culture is the result of a mixture of colonizer and indigenous cultures. Mimicry as a form of covert resistance, where colonial subjects imitate the colonizer's culture with differences that create instability. Postcolonial theory is used in various disciplines such as literature, history, politics, and cultural studies to



understand how colonialism continues to influence the modern world and how former colonized societies can reconstruct their identities. This opinion is supported by Lois Tyson postcolonial theory.

### III. The Analysis

*Reservation Blues*, a novel of 320 pages written by Sherman Alexie's, is a story about a group of young people who form a band called Coyote Springs. They are invited here and there because they are already famous, and they win a competition and finally an invitation from television comes to make a recording but in between two white women always follow them and come to the reservation and treat the two men and also introduce the checkers who love father Arnold, each member has personal struggles that reflect the challenges of native life in contemporary America, including a sense of loss, alcoholism, poverty, and the search for identity. As the band gains popularity, they face major audition offers and off-reservation travel, which brings internal and external conflicts related to historical trauma, exploitation, and neglect of their culture by society at large. The Coyote Springs band experiences disunity due to the various conflicts they experience, both external and internal. After facing a disappointing audition in New York City, the band suffers a major failure, and the members begin to face the harsh reality of their constant exploitation, prejudice and injustice. The ending depicts the harsh reality of the native American community, of their endless struggles, but also the strength to survive, maintain their identity, and preserve their cultural heritage in an often unjust world.

The main characters are Victor Joseph, Junior Polatkin, Betty, Veronika, the Cavalry Records, Chess, Checkers, Father Arnold

In *Reservation Blues*, Betty and Veronik, The Cavalry Records, Father Arnold reflect nativephilia as they admire the local culture just to take advantage of it romantically without understanding the real suffering. Meanwhile, Checkers, Viktor, Junior represents anglophilia as he is attracted to Western culture and begins to abandon

traditional values. Both attitudes show the influence of cultural inequality due to colonialism.

### 3.1 Nativephilia

The novel follows the journey of the band Coyote Springs, a group of local musicians trying to make it in the mainstream music industry. However, they face exploitation, discrimination, and failure as the outside culture is more interested in exploiting the local people than accepting them as genuine artists.

In Sherman Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues* (1995), the character Betty is a white woman who reflects an attitude of cultural appropriation in the context of Native American culture. She wants to help and guide Native Americans, but actually shows an attitude of superiority and exploitation of the culture.

"Why you come in here, then?" Victor asked.

"Because I like you."

"You're the best. I mean, you're an Indian and a guitar player. How much better could you be?" (43).

"White people want to be Indians. You all have things we don't have. You

live at peace with the earth. You are so wise" (168).

Betty represents how colonial culture creates false images of local people and fetishizes them without understanding their realities. As Berman (2004) explains that outside cultures often claim to love local cultures.

Thomas wanted to protect Chess and Checkers from the music on this cassette tape. He held it in his hands for a while, studied its design, then walked over to the tape player he'd hidden away, dropped the cassette into place, and hit the play button. Thomas heard a vaguely Indian drum, then a cedar flute, and a warrior's trill, all the standard Indian soundtrack stuff. Then Betty's and Veronica's beautiful voices



joined the mix (295).

This quote depicts Veronika taking over the music world and making a profit while the indigenous people are marginalized and do not benefit.

The Cavalry Records, run by George Wright and Phil Sheridan, was interested in Coyote Springs not because of their talent, but because they were local. They saw the band as an exotic object to be marketed to a white audience that loved the authenticity of the natives, without really caring about their experiences. When the band didn't live up to the locals' fantasies, they were crushed and abandoned.

"Well," Sheridan said, "there's been an upswing in the economic popularity of Indians lately. I mean, there's a lot of demographics and audience surveys and that other scientific shit. But I leave that to the boys upstairs. What I'm talking about here is pure musical talent. That's you. Pure musical talent shaped and guided by me. Well, I mean, under the direction of Mr. Armstrong, certainly" (272).

Cultural appropriation in the context of postcolonialism is often using colonized culture as a commodity without understanding or respecting it. Using culture without giving benefits or recognition to its original owners. Expecting colonized groups to live up to the image created by the colonizer. Cavalry Records saw indigenous music as exotic, but only accepted versions that fit their colonial fantasies.

Checkers patted the sheet beside her, and Father lay down close to her. She felt his heat, his smell. He smelled like smoke and Communion wine. You know I love you, Father said (155).

Father Arnold had waited tables in a restaurant and sung in a rock band for a few years after he graduated college, before he received his calling into the priesthood. They'd played mostly fif ties songs, like "Teen Angel"

and "Rock Around the Clock" with Father Arnold on lead vocals. He'd had a good voice, still had a good voice, but now the music he sang was in church and was much more important than the stuff he used to sing at American Legion dances and high school proms (32).

This quote shows Father Arnold nurturing the local community so that he loves the local community so that Father Arnold can convert the local community to Catholicism. Father Arnold in *Reservation Blues* is an example of how Catholicism has become a tool of cultural appropriation of native American communities. Although he does not necessarily have bad intentions, he hopes as a missionary that reflects a long history of religious coercion and the erasure of native culture. The novel highlights how Native Americans must struggle with their identity in the face of cultural colonialism, including through religion.

### 3.2 Anglophilia

In *Reservation Blues*, Viktor's character reflects Bhabha's (1984) concept of mimicry. Mimicry in this context refers to an attempt to imitate an outsider's culture in order to be similar to the outsider's culture, but mimicry cannot be similar to the outsider, mimicry actually creates alienation and feelings of helplessness.

Victor tries to be white, independent, and aggressive but this is not a reflection of his true identity. This is a response to colonial trauma, where the oppressive system has shaped the mindset that meekness and dependency are weaknesses. For example, Victor always wants to appear strong and invincible, similar to the white male figure often idealized in pop culture. He uses violence and cynicism as a means to assert his dominance, not because he is truly strong, but because the system has taught him that this is the only way one can survive. However, no matter how hard he tries to be this figure, he is still considered an outsider in the wider society.

Victor knocked Thomas over, pressed his face into the wet



cement, and left a permanent impression in the sidewalk (13).

Victor pulled Thomas into a quick headlock (14).

This line shows how Victor has internalized violence as a means of survival. He is not only fighting against individuals, but also against a system that always puts him at a disadvantage.

Junior is a more reserved character than Victor, but he also reflects aspects of mimicry in his struggle to be accepted in the outside world. Junior often tries to fit in with the norms of the outside culture, but he still feels unwelcome. His attempts to imitate the outside world's way of life are often not appreciated, and this creates a deep sense of alienation. Much like Victor, Junior also uses alcohol as an escape from the trauma and stress of life on the reservation. This shows how he tries to cope with his pain in a way that he deems socially acceptable.

Junior has moments where he tries to get off the reservation and live a more normal life, but he always comes back to a sense of despair regarding his identity as a local. As their band gains attention from the outside world, Junior feels uncomfortable with the expectations placed on them, especially because of the stereotypes attached to them as locals. Junior Polatkin's character in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues* reflects Bhabha's (1984) concept of mimicry. Mimicry deepens Junior's alienation and reinforces his position as an outsider in both the community and society. Junior tries to adapt to the outside world and mimic the norms of the outside culture, but he always feels unwelcome. He wants to have a more stable and normal life like people outside the reservation, but every time he tries, he comes back to the fact that the system does not give him a place as a local. His efforts to emulate the outside culture were never fully appreciated, which made him even more frustrated and alienated from his own identity.

Junior's father had owned a couple hundred acres of wheat that he rented out to a white farmer. Every harvest. Junior's father made

enough money for a family vacation in Spokane. They stayed at the Park Lane Motel, ate Kmart submarine sandwiches, and watched bad karate movies at the Trent Drive-In (24)

In Bhabha (2023) postcolonial theory, it creates an identity gap where Junior cannot be fully Westernized, but he also becomes increasingly distant from his native culture. He continues to try to adapt to the norms of the outside world, but is still seen as different from the natives, rather than as an equal individual.

Checkers who is so obsess with foreign culture to the point of admiring figures like Father Arnold can be associate with the concept of mimicry, with foreign culture to the point of admiring figures like Father Arnold can be associate with the concept of mimicry by Homi Bhabha's (1984). In this context, Checkers may feel that by adopting the attributes of the culture he admires, he will gain social validation or a certain status. However, this process also shows the complexity of identity and power relations between local and foreign cultures.

Checkers walked to the Catholic Church early Saturday to meet Father Arnold She wanted to join the choir. Enough of the rock music. She needed to reserve her voice for something larger. She braided her hair, pulled on her best pair of blue jeans, red t-shirt, and white tennis shoes. Nike running shoes. Checkers always bought expensive tennis shoes, no matter how poor she was (136-137).

"I wanted to be just like them, those white girls, and I'd follow them around town while Mom and Dad shopped. Chem was always telling me I was stupid for doing it. Chess said we were better than those white girls any day. But I never believed her."

"How does that make you feel now?" Father Arnold asked. "I don't know. I just looked at that blond hair and blue eyes and knew



I wanted to look like that. I wanted to be just like one of those white girls. You know, Father James even brought his little white nieces out to visit the reservation, and that was a crazy time" (140).

Chekers' actions of wearing foreign goods and admiring outsiders are forms of mimicry. Bhabha (1984) says mimicry is often an attempt to resemble the colonial culture, but in the process there is still an imperfection or irony that creates ambivalence. Chekers may try to be like outsiders, but are not fully accepted as part of the culture.

#### IV. Conclusion

By employing a postcolonial theory proposed by Homi Bhabha (2023) dan Tressa Berman (2004) Sherman Alexie's work in his novel *Reservation Blues* describes the phenomenon of cultural appropriation and mimicry of local communities. Criticizing colonialist attitudes towards local communities, especially in terms of Anglophilia and mimicry. The novel features characters such as Victor Joseph, Junior Polatkin and Checkers who oppose the idea that locals must adopt Western culture to achieve success. Cavalry Records labels them as an Indian band but not Indians. On the other hand, mimicry is a group that views local culture as a strategic lifestyle but not as a separate culture. The novel explores the paradox of local communities denying their status as residents, even though they try to join the mainstream music industry. The novel highlights the failure of the colonial system to recognize Native Americans as outsiders and the need for local communities to maintain their identity and connection to the wider world.

*Reservation Blues* explores the concept of local culture as a fetishistic and exploitative force in the Western world, especially by local communities. The novel explores themes of native philia and cultural appropriation, focusing on the belief that the Western world is primarily influenced by the spirituality and spirituality of Native people, but not their actual lives. The characters, Betty and

Veronica, are depicted as being influenced by the culture of the local people, but not their actual lives. The novel critiques the idea that native American culture is distorted and distorted, while cultural appropriation is seen as a form of appropriation in which the culture of a local people is used without proper recognition or understanding. The novel also emphasizes the desire of the Western world to incorporate the culture of local people, while not intending to understand or support the people who are influenced by it. The novel also highlights the postcolonial challenges that communities face, particularly in terms of sensitivity, traumatized, and exploitation.

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