A POEM BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF NATIVE AMERICAN PRIDE: I'M AN AMERICAN NATIVE BY SPIRITWIND WOOD

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Abstract

This article aims to develop a cultural production strategy that takes racism seriously. This research paper aims to examine Spiritwind Wood's poem "I'm Native American" from the perspective of ethnicity. In this article, the researcher employs a socio-cultural-historical approach. The literary works are examined using a socio-cultural and historical context-based socio-historical approach. The criteria for the examination are Spiritwind Wood's experiences with racial prejudice in the poem. Throughout the poem, he tries to express his thoughts on conflicts between white people and Native Americans. Native Americans receive poor treatment in society. The purpose of this article is to gain a deeper understanding of the author's experiences with racial prejudice, as depicted in his poem "I'm Native American." In this poem, the use of imagery by the poet is especially important in helping readers comprehend what he is trying to say.

Key words: Native American, Racial Prejudice, Socio-cultural-historical approach, Poems

INTRODUCTION

"I'm Native American," a poem by Spiritwind Wood, is a collection of modern English translations of Native American proverbs, poetry, and sayings (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020a), (Cahyaningsih & Pranoto, 2021), (Ivana & Suprayogi, 2020). Because the majority of his writings are based on stories told by Native Americans (Asia & Samanik, 2018), (Fakhrurozi & Adrian, 2021), I believe he was born there (Kardiansyah & Qodriani, 2018), (Qodriani & Wijana, 2021), (Afrianto & Gulö, 2019). Poetry and music were created by Native Americans prior to the arrival of the Europeans (Aminatun et al., 2021), (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019), (Oktaviani, 2018); Literature from the Mayans and Aztecs dates back to the first millennium BCE (Sartika & Pranoto, 2021), (Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020), (Afrianto & Ma'rifah, 2020). Even though she is specific, US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo asserts that the issues are typically widespread (Muliyah et al., 2020), (Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021), (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019b). The selected poets and poems demonstrate both the typical and unique approaches (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021), (Aguss et al., 2021). Native American authors take when writing about various indigenous cultures (K. Sari & Pranoto, 2021), (Suprayogi, Puspita, et al., 2021), (Kardiansyah, 2019).

According to (Fakhrurozi et al., 2021), in America, there are a huge variety of ethnic groups represented (Amelia, 2021), (Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021). Not just white Europeans, but also those from other nations (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Suprayogi, Samanik, et al., 2021), (Mandasari, 2020), such Asians or African Americans (Arpiansah et al., 2021), (Afrianto et al., 2021), (Septiyana & Aminatun, 2021). People, especially white Americans, frequently approach African Americans in an unacceptable way (Pranoto, 2021), (Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021), (Samanik, 2019). White people consider their dark skin to be unattractive and filthy (Aminatun, 2021), (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019a). This claim may also be used to illustrate how white Americans have responded to the prejudice (F. M. Sari & Wahyudin, 2019), (Oktaviani & Mandasari, 2020) that Native Americans now face on a regular basis (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021), (Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020b). Some literary works with topics regarding prejudice against Native Americans also portray the potrait of discrimination (Ngestirosa et al., 2020), (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021), (Fithratullah, 2021). The poem written by Spiritwind Wood (1960–2012) is one of the literary works with a prejudice topic (Setri & Setiawan, 2020), (Yulianti & Sulistiyawati, 2020),. He is Native American and enjoys writing poems with themes of prejudice towards white people (Samanik, 2021), (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020), (Nuraziza et al., 2021). Spiritwind said on his blog that he liked to express his feelings via poetry because he was unable to do it verbally or audibly in person (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2021), (Fakhrurozi & Adrian, 2020).

His poems are fascinating because his enthusiasm for writing poetry includes themes of equality, freedom, grandeur, and racial prejudice (Puspita & Amelia, 2020), (Neneng, Puspaningrum, Lestari, et al., 2021), (Ahmad et al., 2020). The man's enjoyment of being Native American and his experiences with white racism and discrimination are discussed in the poem (Suprayogi & Eko, 2020), (Suprayogi, 2019). He knows he was born into American culture (Aldino & Ulfa, 2021), (Neneng, Puspaningrum, & Aldino, 2021), but he doesn't feel treated well (Aminatun et al., 2019), (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018), (Oktaviani et al., 2021). The researcher is motivated to investigate any racial prejudice the poet in this poem may have personally experienced as a result of these difficulties. The researcher is brought to the poet's experiences of racial prejudice in his poetry by this phenomenon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies of ethnicity have done bu several researchers previously. These studies have been conducted in any different cases of social issues (Endang Woro Kasih, 2018), (Journal et al., 2021). In 2017, Faniran analysis "The Textual Analysis of Wole Soyinka's Poem: A Formalist Approach". Capasso (2016) also analyze "Ethnicity and Stress at Work: A Literature Review and Suggestions for Future Research". Then, Sharma (2014) doing a research on "The Concept of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Analysis" (Fithratullah, 2019), (Yulianti & Sulistyawati, 2021), (Gulö et al., 2021). These studies are shown below; Faniran (2017), the research explores the idea of formalism, the wisdom of its proponents, and its relationship to stylistics (S. N. Sari & Aminatun, 2021), (Styawati et al., 2022). The aesthetic study of Wole Soyinka's poem "Abiku" was conducted using the idea of formalism (Suprayogi, Pranoto, et al., 2021), (Pranoto & Afrilita, 2019). Last but not least, Soyinka exhibits a recognized hallmark of eclectic creativity with components resembling Aristotle's traditions and change (Kuswanto et al., 2020).

Cappaso (2016), in his analysis, he stated that because they have not been given adequate consideration in studies of work stress, ethnicity and culture research is a novel issue in the literature on stress and wellness at work. This paper seeks to give a critical assessment and analyze new papers researching ethnicity in the literature on stress and wellbeing at work in order to uncover shortcomings of prior research about all the issues linked to the cultural dimensions in this research field. The studies were separated into the following three categories: ethnicity and job stress; ethnicity and occupational physical health; and ethnicity and occupational mental health. Finally, Sharma (2014) In terms of culture, they examine the borders and ethnic composition of Sindh and Pakistan. The study focuses on ethnicity, which is defined as a distinctive group of people's shared cultural traits, including language, history, values, and rituals. The idea of race, which is concerned with physical similarities, contrasts with ethnicity. The Indus, which runs across Sindh and is a vital component of Pakistan, gave the region its name.

The distinctions between this study and those the researcher has conducted in the past are as follows: The distinction is that no research of any type has yet been done that looks at the racial discrimination in Spiritwind Wood's poem. This inspires the researcher to write an essay that uses a socio-cultural-historical perspective to examine racial prejudice.

METHOD

When obtaining the object from the references, the researcher conducted qualitative research. The researcher obtained the poem's transcript, titled "I'm Native American," from the author's website, specifically allpoetry.com: https://allpoetry.com/spiritwind, which showcases the author's entire body of work. The researcher employs a sociocultural-historical framework in this article. A socio-cultural-historical approach is used to examine the literary works in light of their socio-cultural and historical context. A socio-cultural-historical approach is used to examine the literary works in light of their socio-cultural and historical context. It is frequently used to investigate connections between works by other authors on related topics and those by the same author that were written at different times. This point of view holds that literary works serve as representations of the customs and culture of a particular population of a society. It is also used to investigate the connection between the poet and the poem. The researcher employs this strategy to shed light on Native Americans' perceptions and concepts of racial prejudice by analyzing Spiritwind Wood's poetry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Explanation of *I'm Native American*

This poem was published in 2012. It was included in Spiritwind Wood's blog in allpoetry.com. The researcher believes that the poem reflects Spiritwind wood's experiences to live a life as a Native American. Spiritwind said on his blog that he liked to express his feelings via poetry because he was unable to do it verbally or audibly in person. Spiritwind describes me as a laid-back, kind person who is very spiritual. Making poetry is a lot of pleasure for me! It helps me deal with the happiness and grief I experience every day. Whether it's via myself or someone else, I write to express myself instead of speaking. The poet spiritwind claimed that he could easily convey his ideas through words when he first set out on his trip to create a poem. He genuinely composed many poems on the experiences of native Americans, and he poured his emotions into them, according to what I've read of some of his works.

Every poem attempts to construct a magnificent, significant, and singular statement for each stanza by carefully selecting and combining words. I'd want to examine and make an effort to comprehend each word and verse in the poem below in this article.

You can judge me for who I am

try to change my point of view

only if you think you can

but I can see right through you

and know just who you are

You can say my religion is wrong

still I am going to stand strong

to all that I believe in

for I am a Native American

These verses provide compelling evidence that white people struggle to appease Native American pride. It demonstrates that insensitive remarks or demeaning behavior from white people cannot be used to marginalize Native Americans. According to Wood, Native Americans do not take offense at any negative treatment that is shown to them. However, he points readers that while it is entirely up to white people to live in harmony with native Americans, they must not interfere with their way of life. The goal is to prevent pointless issues that will arise in the end.

I was born into the world of White man

their ways they would try to teach

many words I heard they would preach

trying to change me from within

from a path that has taken me far

This demonstrates the author's attempt to convince readers that native Americans were the original inhabitants of the region who were wiped out by European settlers. It breaks my heart that they have been judged by white folks. With the exception of treating all men equally and enforcing the same rules across the board, they expect to be treated the same as everyone else. They seek the right to exist and develop. This lyric demonstrates the Native Americans' great will and commitment to struggle against social injustice on their behalf.

But my veins flows with my pride

of who I am deep inside

with the wisdom that you need

that of the American Indian

Regardless of ethnicity or tribe, they want to treat everyone equally, apply the same rules to everyone, and offer everyone an opportunity to live and develop. They are yet proud of the blood in their veins despite the volatility and equality for all races. which indigenous American group. Wood's delight in passing on his ancestor's blood to the following generation is evident in the poem. He claims to be an American Indian, not just an American, in this poem. This demonstrates that he is still steadfast in holding onto his pride in his race, which may be unaffected by anything.

Though I am only a mix breed

the blood of my Ancestors I bleed

their Spirits are a part of me

that shows me my visions I see

on this Red Road that I must be

for this is who I am

a true Native American

-Spiritwind 2014

In the final stanza, the author's objectives reveal the route they finally couldn't take. They are the result of their ancestors' blood and soul. They refuse to give in to the circumstances. They continue to put the things they've done and embrace them instead. They have the hope how one soon they will be in the same position as everyone else. No more racist behavior, backseat seating, or bullying.

This poem is directed against white Americans in particular. According to the poetry, one cannot judge somebody by their appearance or skin tone alone. They must also consider their attitude, demeanor, and character. The phrase "Red Road" describes his journey, which was as agonizing as walking on a pavement covered with his ancestors' blood. Or, it could be explained by the fact that the bad deeds and disparaging remarks of the white population peeled his tears from his body.

2. Theme of *I'm Native American*

The researcher comes to the conclusion that this poem is about racism and prejudice against Native Americans after reading and understanding it. However, Native Americans remain unwavering in their opposition to all wrongdoing and proudly assert their citizenship-related rights in American culture. Despite the poet's protestations to the contrary, he is nonetheless identified as an American Indian. He thinks that all Americans share the same previllage, including Native Americans, according to Constantakis (2009), "one of the advantages is the ability to eat at the same table as other Americans. The poet seeks to define himself and his race's identity in this poem." (p.100-101).

You can judge me for who I am
try to change my point of view
only if you think you can
but I can see right through you
and know just who you are

You can say my religion is wrong
*still I am going to **stand strong***
*to all that **I believe in***
for I am a Native American

By stating that he still holds firm in his convictions and won't be rattled by disturbances, the poet declares at the opening of the poem that he has his own right and thus cannot be disturbed by others.

I was born into the world of White man
their ways they would try to teach
many words I heard they would preach
***trying to change me** from within*
from a path that has taken me far

Even though he is capable of accepting his difficult path, society is always seeking to manipulate him though they can accept the fact that he is Native American and hence unique from other people.

> But **my veins flows with my pride**
> *of who I am deep inside*
> *with the **wisdom** that you need*
> *that of the **American Indian***

Despite facing discrimination due of his color, he is able to put everything else before his pride. He asserts that he wants white people to reconsider supporting his views and American Indian rights in society. He still asserts his citizenship of the United States despite white Americans' denial of his status as an Americans.

> **Though I am only a mix breed**
> **the blood of my Ancestors I bleed**
> **their Spirits are a part of me**
> *that shows me my visions I see*
> *on this **Red Road** that I must be*
> *for this is who I am*
> **a true Native American**

He claims to be a mixed breed, but it does not make him a strange person who belongs in the back seat. He carries the pride of his race while walking over the sacrifice of his people to demonstrate that he is a real Native American.

3. Racial Prejudice Experienced by Spiritwind Wood as Reflection in His Poem *I'm Native American*

A Native American author is Spiritwind Wood. He authored poems, was well-known as a poet, and is a leading figure among Native Americans. Through his poetry, he conveyed the Native American perspective. He is renowned for how well he captures Native Americans' struggles in his poetry. Spiritwind never pleaded for the liberation of Native Americans in his poems; instead, he exalted the way in which society views them and their

denial of American citizenship. Native American voices, thoughts, feelings, and spirits are rendered in wood.

a. **You can judge me for who I am**

In line 19 of the poem *I'm Native American*, the phrase "Though I am merely a mixed breed" appears. By identifying Native Americans as outsiders in society, this statement alludes to racial prejudice towards them. Even though I am only a mixed breed, the phrase "Though I am only a mixed breed" implies that Native Americans have no place, particularly in society. They are constantly put in the back seat, and since they cannot be embodied, they cannot be seen. They are entitled to the same rights as white Americans since they are American-Indians. Even whether they are "a mixed breed" and are socially acceptable as Americans, they want to be treated equally.

b. **Racial Prejudice through Inappropriate Manners**

The poem *I'm Native American* contains instances of inappropriate behaviours. It demonstrates some improper language and behavior. The phrase "on this Red Road that I must be" implies that Native Americans must accept their fate and be made to acknowledge it as well as their need to believe in the superiority of white people.

White Americans discriminated against American Indians by acting improperly. Inappropriate behaviors are extremely harmful and can occasionally cause divergence.

> their ways they would try to teach
>
> many words I heard they would preach
>
> trying to change me from within

The reader is informed that Native Americans had poor manners in those three sentences from lines 11 to 13. Although he has the freedom to make that decision, white people regard him in an offensive manner. They changed, judged, tortured, and preached to Native Americans in an extremely brutal way.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, the entire poem "I'm Native American" by Spiritwind Woods describes the pride of native Americans, or members of the US Tribe. Native Americans' efforts to survive in society are the source of their pride in the white man's world. Rather, despite the fact that they are still dealing with everything and simply want peace, they continue to interact with and criticize the judges. They only ask for something that other people have taken from them.

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