

T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



**DISABILITY AS A FORM OF EMPOWERMENT IN
POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVES: *THE BONE PEOPLE* AND
*THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN***

MASTER'S THESIS
Bilal ZAYOUN

Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature Program

AUGUST, 2024

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**Department of English Language and Literature
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Thesis Advisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Tülay DAĞOĞLU

AUGUST, 2024

MASTER'S THESIS DEFENSE REPORT

Istanbul Aydın University Institute of Graduate Studies Board of Directors
..... date and The thesis of
....., whose thesis defense exam was held on
..... before the jury members formed at the meeting no.
.....* and** decision was made.

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Istanbul Aydın University Institute of Graduate Studies Board of Directors
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(*) Unanimity/Majority vote will be written in writing.

(**) Acceptance decision will be written in writing.

DECLARATION

I herewith announce with respect that the research “Disability as a Form of Empowerment in Postcolonial Narratives: *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*”, which I submitted as a Master’s Thesis, has been achieved and exhibited through the regulations of academic rules and principled conduct. I have entirely cited and referenced all the material. (19/08/2024)



Bilal ZAYOUN

FOREWORD

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Almighty God (Allah) who endowed us with well-being and patience to accomplish such a pivotal task. Further, I would like to articulate my immense gratitude to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Tülay DAĞOĞLU, for her forbearance and patience. If not for her instructions, this research would not have been possible. I would like to express my special thanks to the head of English Language and Literature department, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gamze SABANCI UZUN, for her dedication, tolerance, and advice. Moreover, I would like to deliver warm appreciation to the rest of the department professors including Assist. Prof. Dr. Sanaz ALIZADEH TABRIZI and Assist. Prof. Dr. Hande KOLAT for their professionalism, dedication, and competence.

Last but not least, I want to manifest my genuine appreciation to my parents Faouzia BIOUTI and Mohammadi ZAYOUN. I would not have been able to reach this milestone concerning my education without their unwavering support. Moreover, I would like to convey heartfelt gratitude to my niece and sisters, Rawda, Fatima, Zainab, Sarah, and Alae. Their encouragement and love remained a major motive for me to manage such academic work. Additionally, I want to offer thanks to my friends for making such a journey delightful and full of enjoyment.

August, 2024

Bilal ZAYOUN

**DISABILITY AS A FORM OF EMPOWERMENT IN POSTCOLONIAL
NARRATIVES: *THE BONE PEOPLE* AND *THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY
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ABSTRACT

Before delving into the empowerment of disabled characters, the initial purpose of this research is to explore the post-colonial implications and legacies within Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* and Alexie Sherman's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to formulate their analytical association with the protagonists' psychological and physical impairments, accordingly, within the foundation of our argument, Edward Said's dichotomies are associated with the enablement/disablement duality to pinpoint an intersection that encompasses the thematic elements of postcolonialism and disability. Simultaneously, Mike Oliver's social model of disability is employed to generate an anti-thesis against the medical perspective of disability to shift the attention to the indigenous and the empowered model of it in the following sections. Post-colonial insights of scholars such as Frantz Fanon and Chinua Achebe are somewhat utilized too, and data about indigenous and pre-colonial culture and tradition are explored to manifest a contrastive investigation about the interpretation of disability. Furthermore, objective medical information about the impairments from the primary sources is investigated and scrutinized. Clare Barker's approach to the intersectional insight of disability studies and post-colonial studies is employed to enhance the intertwined nature of the argument. The theoretical frameworks in hand are primarily utilized to pinpoint the position of the concerned characters for the sake of a clearer representation within the postcolonial fabric of the novels. After the foundational section of each chapter, the prolific section of the research specifically handles the primary works' plot in a progressive pattern. It deductively associates the protagonists' disability with empowerment and redemption within the existing post-colonial context. Definitively, anti-ableist empowerment resides within the scope of character development favouring indigenous ideology

against Eurocentricism. Although the narratives and the backgrounds of each primary source depict a distinguished uniqueness, the implications and the manifestations of disability's empowerment from our lens exhibit a consistent relation to autochthonous cultural, contextual, and social elements.

Keywords: The Bone People, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Postcolonialism, Disability, Indigenous.



**SÖMÜRGE SONRASI ANLATILARDA BİR GÜÇLENDİRME BİÇİMİ
OLARAK ENGELLİLİK: *THE BONE PEOPLE VE THE ABSOLUTELY
TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN***

ÖZET

Engelli karakterlerin güçlendirilmesi konusundan önce, bu araştırmanın ilk amacı, Keri Hulme'ün *The Bone People* ve Alexie Sherman'ın *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* eserlerinde postkolonyal etkileri ve mirasları keşfetmektir. Bu, karakterlerin psikolojik ve fiziksel engelleri ile analitik ilişkilerini formüle etmek amacıyla yapılmaktadır. Argümanımızın temeli olarak, Edward Said'in ikilikleri güçlendirme/engelleme ikiliği ile ilişkilendirilir ve sömürge sonrası dönem ve engellilik çalışmaları tematik unsurlarını kapsayan bir kesişim noktasını belirlemeye çalışır. Aynı zamanda, Mike Oliver'ın sosyal engellilik modeli, engelliliğin tıbbi perspektifine karşı bir anti-tez oluşturmak için kullanılarak, dikkatleri yerli ve güçlendirilmiş modeline kaydırmayı amaçlar. Frantz Fanon ve Chinua Achebe gibi teoristlerin sömürge sonrasına dair içgörülerinden de kısmen yararlanır; yerli ve koloniler öncesi kültür ve geleneklerle ilgili veriler, engelliliğin yorumlanmasına dair karşıt bir araştırma yapmak amacıyla incelenir. Ayrıca, birincil kaynaklardan engellilik ile ilgili objektif tıbbi bilgiler araştırılır ve titizlikle incelenir. Clare Barker'ın engellilik ve sömürge sonrası çalışmalarının kesişimsel içgörüsüne yönelik yaklaşımı, argümanın iç içe geçmiş doğasını geliştirmek için kullanılır. Elimizdeki teorik çerçeveler, ilgili karakterlerin sömürge sonrası roman dokusu içinde daha net bir temsili sağlamak amacıyla temel olarak kullanılmaktadır. Her bölümün temel bölümünden sonra, araştırmanın verimli kısmı, birincil eserlerin konusunu ilerleyici bir biçimde ele alır. Bu, karakterlerin engelliliğini mevcut sömürge sonrası bağlamda güçlenme ve kurtuluş ile ilişkilendirir. Kuşkusuz, anti-ableist güçlendirme, Eurosentrikliğe karşı yerli ideolojiyi destekleyen karakter gelişimi kapsamındadır. Her bir birincil kaynağın anlatıları ve arka planları belirgin bir özgünlük sergilese de,

engelliliğin güçlendirilmesinin yansımaları ve tezahürleri, bizim açımızdan yerli, kültürel, bağlamsal ve sosyal unsurlarla tutarlı bir ilişki göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: The Bone People, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sömürge-Sonrası, Engellilik, Yerli.



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I. INTRODUCTION

No human utterance could be seen as innocent. Any set of words could be analysed to reveal not just an individual but a historical consciousness at work. Words and images thus become fundamental for an analysis of historical processes such as colonialism.

(Loomba, 1998: 37)

Due to the amelioration of awareness and consciousness, individuals in post-colonial societies are still developing an increasingly critical perspective about colonial repercussions, and they incessantly generate enthusiasm towards issues that are shared with similar nations concerning that matter. Individuals from post-colonized backgrounds are born with an eternal inner conflict and identity crisis, therefore, in literature, the portrayal of characters from similar backgrounds implies the presence of complexities, and they manifest concerns from tangible post-colonized and pre-occupied regions. Post-colonial literature as a body of literary canons requires careful investigation to reveal a relational bond between narrations, civilizations, and chronicles, and its camouflaged resistive and striving objective makes its valuation as a form of art. Undoubtedly, the essence of post-colonial literature calls for seeking resistance and criticism against colonial legacies as Edward W. Said claims that “we can not fight for our rights and our history as well as future until we are armed with weapons of criticism and dedicated consciousness” (Said, 2000: 233). As contemporary as it is, the embedded discourse in post-colonial texts handles concrete subjects and issues –particularly in post-colonized regions– that could be intersected with the analogous phenomenon, disability.

Aside from the diverse background of post-colonial works, scrutinizing them often brings forth platitudes and ubiquitous thematic elements within the field;

therefore, examining such works through a hybrid lens would reveal novel layers of analysis. Furthermore, such composite analysis would cover an understudied area as Cindy Lacom claims that “when considering the work of post-colonial scholars, it becomes apparent that missing from the list of the oppressed and marginalized are those who are doubly colonized with physical and mental disabilities” (Cindy, 2002: 138). This research will bring peculiarity in the form of a diverted analysis from foregrounding common post-colonial issues into redemption and empowerment of disabled protagonists within Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People* and Alexie Sherman’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Through this examination, atypical perspectives about handling the presentation of disabled characters in post-colonial contexts will be handled, additionally; the scrutiny will be shedding light on indigenous and non-medical approaches to disability. Concerning the indigenous perspective of disability, Puszka asserts that “the scholarly literature on Indigenous conceptualisations, experiences and practices of disability is still relatively underdeveloped” (Puszka et al., 2022: 2). Accordingly, by exploring the autochthonous vision of disability, we are simultaneously contributing to its insufficiency when it comes to its sectors.

The purpose of this study is to foreground the embedded colonial aftermath experienced by the protagonists and to manifest a distinctive perspective of how their disability can be perceived as an explicit and implicit source of empowerment and redemption. Additionally, from a broader overview, the research’s utmost aim is to promote the overall conversation about the intersectional analysis that lumps post-colonialism and disability. Such hybrid scrutiny remains unexplored and understudied, and concerning this academic disregard, Tsitsi Chataika claims that:

Disability, development and postcolonialism are critical tripartite intertwined discourses in the social construction of any country. Unfortunately, these discourses have always been approached as independent from each other, thus missing the critical analysis that informs critical disability studies research. (Chataika, 2012: 252)

Chataika stresses the idea of handling disability and postcolonialism collectively to uncover new layers of academic analysis within the literature. Correspondingly, our research will inevitably explore and promote such an atypical

analytical dimension that includes thematic elements related to postcolonialism and disability. It is endorsed that the research will strengthen the discourse of this analytical intersection in humanities, and without a doubt, will participate in adjusting the social perspective about disability. Within the literary canon, disability is ordinarily portrayed as deficiency and limitation rather than a ground-breaking ascendancy; and certainly, a book is a vantage to glance into the author's stance and consciousness, therefore, the medical and Eurocentric interpretation of disability in literature will be altered and rejected to substantiate an unorthodox perspective.

Europe's era of geographic exploration emerged during the 15th century as it matched the development of cartography, navigation, and shipbuilding. As the exploration went on, the Industrial Revolution brought Europe into a position of power and advancement in various sectors; as a result, the capability of invading and maintaining colonies became a viable option. The British joined the European imperialism movement to reach immense expansion as Sir John Seeley utters: "The sun never sets on the British Empire". During the first half of the 20th century, the World Wars and the rise of nationalism in the colonized regions affected the stability of European imperialism which led the colonies to acquire their spurious independence. The peace was in exchange for extended and discriminatory contracts between the ex-colonizers and the indigenous regions. Such agreements maintained the constant interference and manipulation of the ex-colonizer regardless of the claimed independence. Such a chaotic post-independence state is labelled as "neo-colonialism". Aside from economic agreements and political interference, the colonizer brought its art, language, and culture; therefore, following the independence, the post-colonised regions brought birth to authors that have used the colonizer's language as a medium of narration. The authors addressed issues mainly related to the neo-colonized state of the region and the explicit distortion that was brought upon the region during and after colonisation. The second half of the 20th century marked the independence of most of the colonized regions, simultaneously, the era carried the emergence of post-colonial literature. The post-colonial novel sprang up with works such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe and *The Dark Child* (1954) by Camara Laye from French and English ex-colonies, and the works go through experiences during the occupation that distorted the regions on cultural and social levels. *No Longer at Ease* (1960), a pivotal work of the literary genre, is the subsequent

novel of Chinua Achebe's renowned trilogy. The work marks the transitional period of Nigeria acquiring independence from the English occupation. The transition is exhibited through the grandson of *Things Fall Apart*'s protagonist, Okonkwo, to assert the intergenerational metamorphosis of Igbo land in southeast Nigeria. In the novel, Achebe expresses the rapid social and cultural change by claiming that "the Nigeria he returned to was in many ways different from the picture he had carried in his mind during those four years. There were many things he could no longer recognise, and others---like the slums of Lagos--- which he was seeing for the first time" (Achebe, 1960: 12). The earliest form of the post-colonial novel mostly explores the transitional period before, during, and after the colonisation due to the wake of the decolonisation movement that used to grapple with the origin of such complexities. While the primal form of the post-colonial literary genre revolves around immediate transitions, the following epoch is more about exploring individual issues that emerged in neo-colonized societies. For instance, the plot of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981) revolves around the complexities of post-colonial identity and the impact of historical events on individual life. In a paradoxical sense, J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) delves into traversing the circumstances of a white character in post-apartheid South Africa, and it handles themes of guilt, responsibility, and the legacy of colonialism to further exhibit an atypical perspective of the post-colonial novel. From portraying historical narratives and panoramic views of society to going through the detailed experience of individuals, the post-colonial literary genre proves to be flexible and vast in nature, additionally, it covers a wide-ranging ethnic, lingual, and cultural radius. Due to such diversity, post-colonial literature reached a pinnacle to being forth interdisciplinary genres such as post-colonial magical realism. The Colombian novelist, Gabriel Garcia Màrquez, authored pivotal works that immensely contributed to the interdisciplinary genre, and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is, without a doubt, one of them.

During the colonial era, imposing artificial borders regardless of linguistic and cultural divisions caused various conflicts after independence. Empirical findings about the Nigerian Civil demonstrate that "the regional borders were some 60 million people ... speaking a total of about 300 languages, united and separated by cultural traditions ... it was inevitable that the battle of the major ethnic groups for leadership at the centre should be matched equally by a disruptive struggle within their regional

areas” (Ikiddeh, 1976: 162). The preceding actualities reveal that the post-independence era marked the emergence of various internal conflicts such as civil wars and weak governance structures. Being the reaction to such tangible historical happenings, post-colonial literature intersects with genres such as historical metafiction, and Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) manifests the aspects of a novel from such calibre. The novel exhibits the experiences of three characters from different backgrounds during the Nigerian Biafran war; therefore, the plot’s structure serves to portray various perspectives of the civil war’s destruction and displacement. In this sense, post-colonial literature has an indispensable role to aim for achieving restoration and redemption; therefore, “in the essential war of purging values and of recreation in Africa, literature must be in the forefront of the battle or lose its social relevance and human purpose” (Ikiddeh, 1976: 174)

The severe lack of labour power struck Europe after the Second World War due to the loss of human resources, and the need for young employees ignited the temptation of individuals from the previously colonised regions. Knowing that the educational system of the pre-colonized regions was set by the colonizer, the language barriers were non-existent which facilitated the immigration. This phenomenon caused the emergence of diasporic authors, and it gave birth to post-colonial works from an entirely novel perspective. The novel *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) by Tayib Salih gives us a glance from the colonized and the colonizer social perspective, due to its dual setting, the novel forms an attitude about a previous and subsequent diasporic experience. The author, Tayib Salih, a tangible sample of a diaspora case, strongly outlines colonial diaspora through the complex character Mustafa Saeed. In this matter, Rimun Murad asserts that “*Season* is a transnational novel inasmuch as it involves crossing distinct national, geographical, and cultural boundaries. The transnational in this sense intersects with the diasporic as defined by Walter Connor ... who argues that diaspora is that segment of a people living outside the homeland” (Rimun, 2018: 216). In *The Namesake* (2003), Gogol Ganguli portrays diasporic experiences in a multi-ethnic society and she delves into the complexity of diasporic identity as the novel examines the challenges of straddling multiple cultures and the search for a sense of belonging. In this sense, diasporic post-colonial literature provides a substantial, peculiar, and detailed vision of individuals from previously colonized regions as it depicts that:

Postcolonial subjects are in a transitional state, not fully belonging in diasporic spaces that constrains their ability for self-definition and identity. Structural inequalities as they relate to race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, class, language, and dominant hegemonic ideologies continue to affect the ways in which postcolonial, transitional subjects struggle to adapt in new spaces of the diaspora. (Fongang, 2017: 138)

Accordingly, the position in which individuals find themselves restless and mismatched calls for political resistance and defiance. Concerning that, Paul Gilroy, a sociologist and cultural studies scholar who specializes in the study of race and racism, confirms in *The Black Atlantic*: “where racist, nationalist, or ethnically absolutist discourses orchestrate political relationships so that these identities appear to be mutually exclusive, occupying the space between them or trying to demonstrate their continuity has been viewed as a provocative and even oppositional act of political insubordination.” (Gilroy, 1993: 1). Gilroy’s post-colonial theory articulates a connection between diasporic local issues and imperialism. The reach of such issues extends to the manifestation of power and resistance against authority by being in the social grey area.

If we try to ascertain the inception of post-colonial literature, we would discover its emergence as a thematic category during the mid-20th century as a contribution to the social and political movement of decolonisation, and in humanities, the decolonisation movement did not reach its pinnacle until the crest of post-colonial criticism during the late seventies. Simultaneously, disability studies started to emerge as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry within humanities and social sciences to be critically examined in social, cultural, and literary dimensions. Such intensive engagement of disability discussions within humanities enriched its employment in literature as a critical tool, pertaining to that, Kruger articulates that:

Disability lends postcolonial fiction some of its most potent and pervasive images and metaphors: dismembered nation-states; silenced subaltern subjects; economies crippled by international debt; healing through decolonization and the reclamation of indigenous knowledge. As a trope, a narrative device, disability enables postcolonial writers to tell vivid stories about colonialism and its aftermath, stories that resonate outward from a character’s disabled

body to address “damage,” inequality, and power and its abuses in the postcolonial world. (Kruger, 2019: 136)

As per Kruger’s inspections, one can assert that disability as a thematic element adds more to the scrutiny and interpretation of postcolonial elements within a fictional work, as for that, Chris Abani displays such features in his renowned work, *Song for the Night* (2007), through the characterisation of the protagonist, My Luck. Abani portrays the loss of agency and identity through My Luck’s muteness, and the symbolism of muteness asserts the internalization of the post-colonial environment into an individual. The contemporary post-colonial novel fixates the heed on individual experiences; moreover, the compatibility of disability with such parameters brings forth a manifestation of the novel’s context and entourage. For instance, J. M. Coetzee’s *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) asserts the political unrest within Michael K’s speech impairment as crippling one’s capability to express is a priority for the oppressive regime, conversely, regardless of Michael’s speech impairment; the character expresses resistance through his refusal to be silenced even against overwhelming adversity. Ben Okri provides a relationship between magical realism, post-colonialism, and disability within *The Famished Road* (1991). The complexity of the protagonist Azaro calls for multi-layered interpretations, and the anonymity of the setting additionally expands the work’s symbolic nature. Within the novel, Ben Okri symbolically handles primitivism and superstition of African Folklore in a way that Azaro’s characterisation as a spirit child defies colonial legacies and calls for a return to tradition. *The Famished Road* is a critique that stands with primitivism and superstition to fight against modernism’s aspects that decay authenticity and culture. The colonizer’s claimed civilizing mission aims to demolish such rich cultural aspects by labelling them as inferior regardless of any external perspective, while in this regard, post-colonial literature demonizes colonial legacies for such underestimation. Concerning this matter, Ogunsanwo asserts in *Research in African Literature* that:

Everyone's reality is superstitious. It's a simple fact you can't get away from. The scientist's view of the world is superstitious because it is provisional and a description of reality. The atheist's is superstitious, just the same way because it excludes. The person who has got a very strong religious belief is superstitious because their belief constructs the universe. Everyone's universe,

everyone's perception of the world and of time is unique to them. It's a world in itself. It's a complete world. (Ogunsanwo, 1995: 40)

Ogunsanwo's ubiquitous approach to superstition normalizes it and labels it to stand against the Eurocentric civilizing mission of underestimating exotic cultures. Within Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, Azaro's abnormal behaviour is labelled as disability due to its irregularity within the novel's setting; additionally, it exhibits the Oriental agenda as it labels Azaro as the "Other" within his own community. Azaro's disability led him to various misfortunes and struggles; nevertheless, the narrative structure progressively leads to a climax that portrays Azaro as triumphant against colonial legacies and ultimately his disability.

Contemporary post-colonial literature focused more on the individual to delve into situational experiences; therefore, the genre's development shed light on particular characteristics such as disability. The modern setting of contemporary post-colonial novels is themed with strong individualism due to the globalisation of Western ideology; hence, the focus on the character became more prominent than on the aspects of entourage and environment. The last decade of the previous century witnessed the publication of Edwidge Danticat's collection of short stories that is titled *Krik? Krak!* (1996). Within the collection, the short story *Caroline's Wedding* provides an insight into a diasporic context in which one of the central themes is disability. Although Caroline, the protagonist, was born and raised on American soils, she and her family maintain strong ties to Haitian heritage and culture which perturb her identity and self-image. Furthermore, Caroline's disability –missing the left forearm- adds to her alienation within society, and it serves as a major symbol of betrayal to immigrants as Elizabeth Anker claims that "disability is explained as the by-product of a drug administered to her mother during her arrest in a "sweatshop immigration raid" while Caroline was a fetus" (Anker, 2014: 155). Caroline's disability of missing a forearm is a representation of a discriminated race in modern USA, and the current hegemonies' intention of harming a racial lineage in a supposedly diverse community is a body politic critique within the short story. This work provides a physical manifestation of the diasporic marginalization issue in the characterisation of Caroline as a cripple character; however, ultimately, Caroline exhibits independence as she is an educated and productive individual, and she furtherly gets married despite various obstacles.

By handling fresh thematic elements such as hybridity, syncretism, and reclamation of indigenous episteme, post-colonial authors commenced a trend of projecting tangible issues such as disability. Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* (1984), a Booker Prize winner, was the first work of its background to receive the honour of such a prestigious award, and it handles disability as a pivotal element to manoeuvre the events for a denunciation of authority. Keri Hulme excelled in formulating the protagonist's complexity as a disabled character, and such an aspect opened the door for numerous and distinct interpretations. Hulme embeds Simon's mutism as an ability to portray allegorical, implicit, and literalistic defiance against the colonial legacy. Similarly, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) by Alexie Sherman utilizes the protagonist's disability as an effective critique of social complexities from an indigenous perspective. Sherman characterized Junior's conduct as resilience against hydrocephalus symptoms and ethnic discrimination to eventually reveal him as a triumphant Native American with physiological difficulties. When it comes to the inventory of post-colonial works that manifest disability as a central theme, the catalogue is moderately diverse and large, however, the novels in hand navigate white-settled regions through disabled indigenous individuals during contemporary eras. This aspect of being contemporary adds more to the tangibility and the ubiquity of the argument to make it a discussion of a present-day issue, additionally, the fact that the novels are based on different cultural backgrounds adds more to the credibility and strength of the argument by making it relevant for various ethnic identities.

Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* and Alexie Sherman's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* will serve as portals for a deductive analogy of works with similar characteristics. The theme of disability will be mainly handled through the lens of post-colonial criticism; yet, the research will also draw upon various theories from other critical fields such as disability studies that are set to be relevant to this research. If we go back to the origins of postcolonialism as a field of criticism, following the publication of *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe authored multiple essays that contributed to the foundation of post-colonial theory. In *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness* (1978), Achebe formed a critique against the colonial representation in Western literature. Within this prominent essay, Chinua Achebe stresses the misconception and misrepresentation of the natives by the author of *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad, and the colonizer. Such a distorted and

underestimating image of the indigenous people is going to be outlined and employed within our research to elucidate the illustration of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*'s protagonist, Junior.

Frantz Fanon was the most influential anticolonial thinker of his time, and his most prominent works, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), examined the psychological and cultural influence of colonization on both the colonizer and the colonized. In the latter, Frantz argues that genuine liberation requires a rejection of colonial ideology and a reclamation of native identity and culture, and this idea added more to the purpose of decolonization in Africa. Fanon robustly expresses: "Nevertheless with all my strength I refuse to accept that amputation. I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest of rivers, my chest has the power to expand without limit" (Fanon, 1986: 140). Within the main analysis of the research, Fanon's insight about the inevitable resistive reaction against the colonial legacy is going to be implemented as a drive for *The Bone People*'s protagonist, Simon.

The body of notions that the primordial post-colonial thinkers formed have provided the groundwork for Edward Said's magnum opus, *Orientalism* (1978). The work is labelled as pioneering for post-colonial studies due to its revolutionary scrutiny of the relationship between power, knowledge, and representation that laid the basis for academics to examine upshots of colonialism on identity, culture, and discourse in previously occupied regions. The examined characters within the primary sources of the research will unavoidably be associated with the relational dualities of Edward Said's Orient and Occident, and the utilization of such dichotomy will further clarify the protagonists' position.

During the last decade of the previous century, Homi K. Bhabha published his pivotal work, *The Location of Culture* (1994). He introduced the concepts of "mimicry" and "ambivalence" in post-colonial society, and he greatly contributed to the theoretical development of the concept of "hybridity". Bhabha's conception of "hybridity" deals with ethnic integration as a tool of empowerment against social hierarchy, and this concept will be employed as a pillar for the main argument concerning the scrutiny of *The Bone People*. The new sociocultural reach of post-colonial theory has provided a tool of criticism for indigenous people, and its reach in

humanities influenced a vast radius of disciplines, hence, academics and authors started handling more complex topics within their texts.

Literary criticism reached a complexity to craft a metaphorical association between social, cultural, and authoritative experiences of the characters and their disabilities since “disability pervades literature as "an opportunistic metaphorical device ... which differentiates characters from normative categories. The use of disability metaphors, they suggest, has been a "crutch upon which literary narratives lean for the representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight” (Sherry, 2007: 14). Handling physical or psychological impairment solely as a medical condition is certainly gullible. Accordingly, Mike Oliver, a prominent figure in disability studies, carefully approached the complexity of disability and developed a social model of it. Oliver highlighted the alternative magnitude of disability claiming that:

The medicalisation of disability is inappropriate because it locates the problems of disability in the wrong place; within the individual rather than in society. Further, once the true nature of the problems of disability are identified, it becomes clear that doctors neither have the skills nor the training to deal with them. Doctors and disabled people therefore, are both trapped in a set of unsatisfactory social relationships. (Oliver, 1990: 9)

For the sake of rejecting the medical model of disability, Mike Oliver’s social model of disability and other relevant insights concerning the allegorical aspects of disability are going to be implemented as salient analytical tools for both the novels in hand. CDS or Critique of Disability Studies is an approach that labels the grasping of disability as a cultural, historical, and political experience, and if we further stretch the circumference of it, CDS reaches metaphorical implications within literature. Concerning that,

Numerous scholars aim to use the writings to comprehend how images of disability and ‘normal’ bodies alter during the course of time, and they search for the methods that are demarcated within the parameters of historical or socio-cultural circumstances. Besides these, the scholars of CDS go into metaphors and portrayals of disability, including bias against people with

disabilities (ableism), to establish a prodigious spectrum of this scholarship. (Çakırtaş, 2018: 4)

Historical and sociocultural elements are the primary intrigue of post-colonial theorists; similarly, scholars of disability studies handle issues from similar attributes. The fabrication of these literary critical approaches manifests reciprocity and interconnectedness on a detailed level. Concerning that, Clare Barker, an associate professor from the University of Leeds who specialises in Indigenous literature and medical humanities, culminates that:

Postcolonial literary criticism, in turn, offers methodologies for the analysis of marginalized subject positions, which are attentive to culturally specific constructions of identity. The dual lenses of postcolonial and disability theory can therefore draw attention to the nuances of social, cultural, political and economic histories and their impact on the representation and administration of disability. (Barker, 2014: 2)

Based on Barker's concept of post-colonialism and disability studies' intersection as critical lenses, disability studies evidently reciprocate dualities similar to Edward Said's *Occident and Orient*. For instance, it is safe to perceive the dichotomy of the disabled and the able-bodied in relation to the colonized and the colonizer, due to that, the interaction of an indigenous disabled character with his societal post-colonial environment would expose new layers of analysis and interpretation. As previously stated, disability stands as a solid metaphorical tool for portrayals and implications; accordingly, dealing with this intersectional critical approach would uncover the symbolic nature of psychological and physical impairments and their relation to power dynamics. In *Postcolonial Studies Journal*, Esme Cleall confirms "that disability studies and postcolonial studies have been seen as related through the fact that both approaches deal with questions of power, engaging as they do with questions of marginality, exclusion, discrimination and outright persecution" (Cleall, 2024: 2). Convergence for both approaches checks multiple boxes; yet, "colonial studies and disability studies are essentially about power" (Cleall, 2024: 2). Knowing that the main argument of the research revolves around disability as a form of empowerment, such a power-based intersectional lens of critically handling disability and post-colonialism will serve as a foundation of our main

argument concerning *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.

Within disability studies, handling the issue of power remains distinct, and the field rejects the traditional discourses and assumptions about impairments, and this matter radically alters the perception of disability in a literary work thus the perception of power. Certainly, disability as a biological impairment is a weakness, however, overlooking the physical aspects of it, a position of weakness might shift into a position of empowerment. The social model of disability influenced various authors, for instance, Alison Gervais' novel, *The Silence Between Us* (2019), portrays the protagonist, Maya, as a resilient and powerful character to the point of neglecting her deafness. Maya's determination and her pride in using American Sign Language put her in a position of command and authority. Despite being a teenager, Maya has immense pride in being a member of the deaf community as she teaches and educates people about the ways of individuals with such disability. Eventually, Maya manifests absolute potency by refusing a cochlear implant to cure her deafness. The usage of disability's symbolism to exhibit marginalization and oppression is challenged by this revolutionary discourse of disability that outwardly portrays empowerment and resilience. To guide disabled individuals into a position of power, one has to oppose the nemesis that is Ableism. While this phenomenon is an individual mental framework, defying it remains intricate. Influencing one's mental framework is to affect one's consciousness through imagery, language, and a body of depictions, accordingly, film and literature stand as optimal disciplines to alter individuals' attitudes toward physical and psychological impairment. Concerning this matter, we notice the emergence of contemporary novels that mainly handle this issue such as *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* (2017) and *The Rosie Project* (2013). Additionally, we can find contemporary American drama shows such as *The Good Doctor* (2017) that defend the position of autistic individuals within Western society.

The intersectional critique of Ableism and colonial agency shows homogeneity and consistency as both of them exist in a relation of power with their opposition. When it comes to the authentic performance of resistance, indigenous individuals in post-colonized regions are in a constant state of resistance, and this resistance is manifested in various forms. Similarly, disabled individuals are in constant resistance

within an able-normative society. The reaction of resistance addresses one of Foucault's fundamental theories about power as he claims that "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978: 95). Again, the theoretical framework that handles the post-colonized and the disabled revolve around resistance therefore around power, and these elements happen to be significant aspects of the protagonists in *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. About *The Bone People*'s protagonist, Simon, Clare Barker confirms that "his disobedience and destructive behaviour are contextualised as resistance to the reductive policy of 'normalisation' that society's institutional representatives doctors, teachers, social workers, child psychologists, foster carers, the police are authorised to impose upon him" (Barker, 2006: 138). Accordingly, through the theoretical framework that we have generated for the research, Simon will manifest signs of seeking power and empowerment through seemingly haphazard behaviour, and the examination of such behaviour will be handled through the intersectional critical lens that we have in hand to further exhibit his empowerment over the course of the plot. Being a coming-of-age post-colonial work, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* manifests similar aspects when it comes to the protagonist, Junior. Concerning this work, Crandall claims that "literature provides a window into how cultures create power dynamics and roles for its people—roles deserving challenging questions and rethinking" (Crandall, 2009: 76). Accordingly, through its distinct aspects, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* creates a hierarchical structure of power through the cultural divergence within its settings, moreover; this hierarchy is open for reassessment and rework through the characterisation of Junior's disability.

Generally, critically examining disability within the post-colonial context serves as a database for the latter to form new perspectives concerning the prominent dichotomy, colonized and colonizer. In the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, this notion is plainly stated: "The primary implication of DS for the decolonial project is to provide epistemic resources for understanding coloniality as a process of enablement/disablement" (Dirth & Cramer, 2019: 276). The reciprocity of these fields' approaches will definitely reach the expectations intended to bring forth an effective analysis.

Through the theoretical framework that we have set to investigate disability, the narrative of disability is anticipated to be understood distinctively. The following sections of this research will hold an analysis that is governed by theories of criticism concerning both disability studies and post-colonial studies. Our intersectional critical lens will inevitably consist of primordial conceptualization of post-colonial literary criticism, namely, Chinua Achebe's perspective of condemning colonial ideology and misrepresentation of native culture. Works such as *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart* will serve as an assessment of Indigenous culture in colonial settler societies. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* will be constructive for more identification to draw a hierarchy within the novels. Without a doubt, this research will make use of Edward Said's Orientalism as a core theoretical framework, and throughout his approach, the research will generate a relation between his dichotomy and the enablement/disablement dichotomy of disability studies. The research will make use of Mike Oliver's Social Model of Disability to focus on the functional elements of the theme of disability rather than the irrelevant medical perspective. Additionally, the research will examine the disability of the protagonists in *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* through a metaphorical, social, and cultural perspective to explore the analytical layers in which disability prevails and reaches a state of empowerment.

Scholarly contribution to this intersectional analysis will be beneficial for the conversation about post-colonialism's relation to disability since the tangible association between the two is clear. Barker states in the international journal of *Review of Disability Studies* that:

One effect of these relations is the fact that traumatic, violent, exclusionary or impoverished environments and histories generate high levels of disability. Approximately 80 percent of the world's disabled population lives in developing countries ... see also Disability in the Majority World), and indigenous or "Fourth World" peoples living in supposedly "First World" societies experience higher levels of disability and chronic ill health than majority populations, signaling a causal link between colonialism and disability. (Barker, 2014: 1)

Barker pinpoints an unforeseen relationship between disability and indigenous people, and this matter urges research and investigation. One can only conclude that this relation is due to marginalization, and literature, while often showing their disenfranchisement, holds the tools to portray them as potent and influential. Clare Barker, a professor in medical humanities, consistently explores the marginalization within the hegemonic perception of disability before promoting her anti-ableist insights. Likewise, each of the chapters within the analytical part of the research will hold an initial section in which a foundation for the argument is set. This foundation will provide a clearer position and presentation of the disabled protagonists, Simon and Junior, within the post-colonial context of the novels; additionally, it will impart information about disabilities in general and in relation to the concerned central characters. This part of the research will make use of Edward Said's notions in relation to Disability Criticism's polarity, and ultimately, this association will be propelled in accordance with the primary sources. The quest of the initial sections is to align post-colonial thematic elements with the presentation of disability for a consequent alignment of empowerment and disability.

The subsequent part of both chapters will delve into the core of our argument, and it will navigate through symbolic and unadorned indications of empowerment within the novels. Regarding this, this section will certainly make use of the primary texts while stressing the demeanour of the protagonists, Simon and Arnold, as disabled individuals.

II. RESILIENCE AND DISABILITY IN *THE BONE PEOPLE*

A. Simon: Symbolism and Mutism

1985's Booker Prize witnessed numerous candidates, and Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* emerged victorious as the best novel of the year. If we return to the writing process of the novel, we will discover that the production of this work was prolonged and protracted. *The Bone People* was supposed to be a short story shedding light on a mute boy called Simon, however, the long making of the work led to a longer polished version of it that includes two additional protagonists, Kerewin and Joe. Hulme had various jobs before becoming a full-time writer; she worked as a journalist, a television producer, and a tobacco picker to provide for her writing career. She finished her novel after moving to the west coast of New Zealand, Okarito; however, *The Bone People* was either rejected or advised for abysmal editing. In *Strong Language: Very Quotable New Zealand Quotes* (2007), it is mentioned that "undoubtedly Miss Hulme can write but unfortunately we don't understand what she is writing about" (Weir, 2007: 58). The eccentric length, structure, and language of the work urged the publishers to circumvent it due to commercial purposes. At the end of the day, a reader is a customer, and making a profit out of *The Bone People*'s content seemed challenging. Eventually, Spiral publisher agreed to publish the work with a limited budget, unexpectedly, the novel reached outstanding sales and accomplished a global influence to win the first-ever Booker Prize Award for a work from New Zealand. The decision was controversial as two of the five judges condemned the work to be founded on unjustified violence, regardless of that, the essence of *The Bone People* reached the consciousness of the readers to be labelled as a masterpiece that manifests the complex cultural clash in New Zealand.

The Bone People consists of three protagonists, Simon, Kerewin, and Joe. Concerning narration, Kerewin is given priority alongside the third-person narrator. While Joe occasionally recounts, Simon is rarely given the role of a narrator. Generally, Simon's mutism and rare narration make him challenging to study as a

character, however, the purpose of this section is to examine the repercussion and symbolism of Simon's mutism and detect its function within the novel's post-colonial context as Kropiewska Kuśnierz expresses in an article about post-colonialism in *The Bone People*: "the muteness of the child has its symbolic meaning, too" (Kropiewska, 2019: 69). Additionally, Clare Barker, an expert in medical humanities, claims that "disability representation therefore often functions as the crutch that supports a text's figurative content and informs its critical interpretations" (Barker, 2006: 132). Pinpointing the symbolic relevance of Simon's mutism within the novel is a fundamental progression for the overall scrutiny.

The novel exhibits a factual setting and context, and we can perceive that Kerewin's characterisation is similar to the author, Keri Hulme, as they share similar sexual orientation, use of colloquialism, and ethnic background. Furthermore, the geographical aspects of the novel match the ones of contemporary New Zealand. Such empirical elements within the novel further prove the genuineness of the post-colonial critique within the text, and the interpretations of this critique are inevitably visible within Simon's mutism. Initially, the symbolic representation of Simon as a character is a crucial element to proceed with the scrutiny. Regarding that, despite Simon's Irish ethnic features, his origin remained secondary within the text to manifest him as a Maori delineation.

Within the novel, Joe expresses in the second chapter:

Then I saw his hair... long then, even longer than it is now. He was thrown mainly clear of the water, but a high wave from the receding tide would drag at him. He was front down, his face twisted towards me as I ran skidding over the sand and weed. There was sand half over him, in his mouth, in his ears, in his nose. I thought, I was quite sure he was dead. (Hulme, 1984: 139)

Additionally, within the novel, doctors claim that the death of Simon should have been certain after all the hardships he went through, and it is mentioned in the second chapter as: "Shock, exposure, pneumonia, he should be dead, said the hospital, and enumerated the breaks" (Hulme, 1984: 140). Regardless of all of that, somehow, Simon was revived due Joe's cardiovascular resuscitation and it is mentioned in the novel as: "But I cleaned out his mouth and nose, and pressed water from his lungs, and breathed for him" (Hulme, 1984: 139) This matter calls for an interpretation of

Simon's reincarnation as a Maori, accordingly, Sabrina Nicole Sarver asserts in a research that:

What Joe doesn't see is the connection: by giving Simon his breath he gives him a new life, one that is inevitably tied to Maori roots... Simon's birth on the beach represents his death as a Pakeha invader and his rebirth as a Maori god whose role traditionally is to help the people of New Zealand. (Sarver, 2008: 72)

The CPR that was given to Simon stands as an injection of a Maori soul within him knowing his critical condition, and his revival led to a global portrayal of Maori within a mute individual. One has to keep in mind that *The Bone People* is a complex work that has severe abuse embedded within it; therefore, for fruitful academic scrutiny to be accomplished, one has to objectively single out the proper elements and maintain a distinguished vision. Concerning this matter, Anna-Marie Christiansen, a professor of Indigenous literature, associates Simon's characterisation with the Maori trickster demigod, Maui, while describing the students' attitude:

I am teaching Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* to students in an honors literature course.' Several of them find it an intense, sometimes painful, book to read, and they continue to focus our discussion on the child and alcohol abuse scenes. As we wrap up, I map the complex relationships of the three main characters on the board, outlining how Hulme inverts the colonizing dynamics of New Zealand history and detailing how the white character takes on the archetypal features of the Polynesian demigod Maui. (Christiansen, 2000: 187)

Through her lecturing experience, Christiansen furtherly portrays Simon as Maori but in a divine manner, additionally, she indicates that the initial attention of the reader will normally revolve around the struggles of Simon rather than his redemption.

Regarding Simon's mutism, the disability itself triggers an underestimation of Simon from the public, and the ignorance of one's condition leads to the misconception of him. In the novel, "he's either treated as an idiot, or deaf as well as mute" (Hulme, 1984: 83). In this section, Simon exhibited none of the flaws that were associated with him, and the sole missing element that led to this inequity is a typical communication that Simon cannot partake in. Simon's mutism in relation to the public demonstrates a relational duality similar to that of Edward Said; accordingly, it "leads to

misconceptions being created and to the Orient being seen as something mysterious, exotic, or inferior” (Karimi, 2021: 32). Concerning that, in *The Bone People*, Joe claims that “he’s bright. He can understand anything you put to him, Kerewin. He doesn’t need special care and attention. He just needs people to accept him” (Hulme, 1984: 85). Therefore, mutism, within the novel, spurs a misconception that triggers an opposition between Simon and everyone else similar to the opposition between the colonized Orient and the omnipotent Occident. Analogically, it is safe to state that Simon portrays the colonized indigenous Maori, and without a doubt, Simon is placed in such a position due to his mutism. However, this dual differentiation between Simon and the others does not necessarily mean his inferiority but rather a faulty conceptualization of him.

To conduct deductive scrutiny, pinpointing the symbolic positioning of mutism within the post-colonial context is a must, and it is manifested in multiple occurrences within the novel in hand. For instance, “The ENT bloke who examined him said there was no physical reason to prevent him from speaking. He’s got all the gear needed, eh. But if he vocalises, he throws up, and violently” (Hulme, 1984: 140). Within this section, it is mentioned that Simon’s mutism tends to be portrayed as a complex condition rather than a typical physical deficiency, and these body depictions allow the allegorical dimension of mutism. In fact, it is inaccurate to label disability as a mere physiological deficiency, regarding that, Mike Oliver’s social model of disability brings forth the social dimension of it: “Disability is a social state and not a medical condition. Hence medical intervention in, and more importantly, control over disability is inappropriate” (Oliver, 1990: 2). Accordingly, Simon’s mutism is navigating interpersonal dimensions and, without a doubt, it stands as a critique for the post-colonial agency while doing so. It is mentioned within the first chapter of the novel that “maybe all this is like a fine drawn duel to him, words against his miming” (Hulme, 1984: 55). This inner thought of Kerewin implies the clash of the Maori Simon’s mutism and the Western language which is English. Simon's competence is undeniable when it comes to language, and Joe asserts the matter by mentioning that “they shoved him in the special class to begin with, all the slow learners and near nuts and that. Patently ridiculous, because he can read and write as competently as kids twice his age.” (Hulme, 1984: 85). Simon is overly competent for his age when it comes to writing in English. In addition to BSL, Simon avoids the usage of written

English, and Joe places it in the second chapter of the novel: “One time we tried proper sign language. It got him good at spelling, but it was too slow. He likes to say things as fast as possible, preferably without having to write them down. All you need to know about his hand-language is that it’s mainly derivation” (Hulme, 1984: 82). Simon uses a very simple referral body language to establish communication, and he attempts to neglect writing notes in English or using proper sign language. Furtherly, Simon’s mutism spurs occurrences and attitudes within the novel that formulate a post-colonial critique, eventually, Simon labels himself as a symbolic embodiment of the colonized Maori.

Concerning Simon’s characterisation, “muteness is a form of resistance” (Sarver, 2008, p. 76). Certainly, resistance is a salient element of post-colonial literature, and Simon manifests it in various avenues. Simon’s mutism urges him to express resistance through gratuitous vandalism, and we can witness such occurrences in the first chapter: “I don’t think the police have come into it since Simon tramped all Mrs Hardy’s lettuces to death... “I don’t know. Can’t have liked their faces or something” (Hulme, 1984: 61). Simon had no valid reason to destroy Mrs Hardy’s lettuce other than showing resistance, similarly, Simon’s theft stands for implications as Joe states within the novel that “Haimona brings out this chesspiece, not to save himself the beating so much as to say something about you, you know” (Hulme, 1984: 83). Haimona or Simon commits acts of theft and vandalism to imply resistance knowing that he is mute. Clare Barker confirms the resistive behaviour of Simon as she expresses that “his disobedience and destructive behaviour are contextualised as resistance to the reductive policy of 'normalisation' that society's institutional representatives - doctors, teachers, social workers, child psychologists, foster carers, the police - are authorised to impose upon him.” (Barker, 2006: 138) So far, the characterisation of Simon as a mute individual generates a body of allegorical connotations ranging from repudiation of language to resistance to authority, and again, this puts him in a representative position as a resistant Maori.

In a sense, Simon’s mutism explicitly resists the Western ideology of social individualism; accordingly, Simon drove Kerewin out of her isolation and spurred her to re-establish novel ties with people rather than confining herself in her tower-like place, and Kerewin expresses such alteration by saying: “Ah, hell, a year of being the eccentric avoidable, and all of a sudden I’m in with the locals.” (Hulme, 1984, p. 155)

Clare Barker furtherly agrees that “the face-to-face contact necessitated by Simon’s muteness, combined with his insistence on physical proximity and touch, forces Kerewin to re-engage in reciprocal relationships.” (Barker, 2006: 135). The peculiar interaction of Simon with Kerewin directed a condemnation of Western individualism, and this matter concerns Simon’s mutism as it designates him in a polarity against Western ideology and ultimately against the colonizer.

Furtherly, the existence of Simon as a mute individual formulates an interpretation of him being the embodiment of New Zealand, and within this context, Barker claims that “Simon's disabled presence in the bone people has been interpreted, by Anna Smith among others, as the symbol of the frail and defective New Zealand nation” (Barker, 2006: 132). Simon’s constant abuse signifies the continuous exploitation of the land since the violation of the Waitangi Treaty. New Zealand manifests impairment the same as Simon manifests disability, and it manifests constant unrest the same as Simon manifests abuse and misconduct. Concerning that, Sarver also believes that “Simon represents *Aotearoa* itself: like an island born from the sea, he is alone, isolated, and hurt by those around him until they learn to live together, all of them.” (Sarver, 2008: 78). *Aotearoa* stands for New Zealand in the Maori language, and once again, the embodiment of it within Simon is valid. Certainly, Simon’s abuse also serves as a sacrifice for the people around him to reach comfort and peace. Without a doubt, this section’s purpose is to label the position of Simon’s mutism as an impetus within the post-colonial context of the novel; therefore, the objective is to form a criticism of Western hegemony that spurs hierarchical differentiation and cultural conflict. Accordingly, the interpretations of Simon’s behaviour that emerge from his mutism lead to unifying the Maori and the Pakeha, and this matter stands as empowerment in the sense of Simon’s mutism leading to improved conditions in New Zealand. Initiating from our ground argument of labelling Simon as a resisting power within the novel, the following section will serve to demonstrate the eventual empowerment of Simon through his mutism.

B. Simon: Empowerment and Redemption

The positioning of Simon's mutism within *The Bone People's* context manifests a symbolic resistance against post-colonial legacies, and without a doubt, resistance and defiance signify a struggle of power which leads to empowerment. Stephanie Clare deduces in *GEOPOWER: The Politics of Life and Land in Frantz Fanon's Writing* that "the object of power in this case is both life and land, and resistance involves both" (Clare, 2013: 62). Clare generates from Fanon's writings that resistance within the context of decolonization is associated with power. Furtherly, Elif Guvendi Yalçın defines that "it is through fashion choices that individuals express their cultural identity, challenge norms imposed by others, and resist the erasure of their heritage. It becomes a tool for empowerment and self-representation, allowing marginal communities to reclaim agency over their own narratives" (Yalçın, 2023: 727) Yalçın argues that in post-colonial contexts, resistance is associated with power and empowerment. In this sense, through his mutism, Simon exhibits various forms of resistive empowerment within the radius of Maori and disability representation. Concerning this matter, Barker conveys that "Grace and Hulme both characterise disability in ways that coincide with progressive notions of disabled social agency, and utilise strategies of representing disability that are politically enabling in terms of both disability and culture" (Barker, 2006: 130 -131)

Within the previous section, we have discovered that Simon's disability provides a solid symbolic aspect of labelling him as a critique against western ideology, additionally; Simon also proves defiance against the social norms and perception when it comes to disability. Clare Barker states about Simon that:

His identity 'is confirmed not through its difference to and separateness from others, but through his interconnection with them', therefore demonstrating the benefits of interdependence – a key concept in Hulme's vision of biculturalism – and simultaneously advocating the centralisation of disability in a re-defined notion of community. (Barker, 2006: 136)

Simon is reframing the concept of approaching disability in a community through his resisting behaviour, simultaneously; Simon generates a condemnation of the post-colonial social condition within the novel. Subsequently, Simon's characterisation creates an intertwined resistance against post-colonial agency and

social norms of disability, therefore; he reaches a state of empowerment concerning both of them.

The previous section of this research portrayed the orientation of Simon's mutism as a resistive drive against Western individualism. The epilogue of the novel portrays a time-skip scenario in which Kerewin is looking forward to her life with Simon and Joe in her renovated tower-like place: "It is dawn, indeed it is dawn, and bright broad daylight braiding our home" (Hulme, 1984: 656). The end of *The Bone People* marks a significant triumph against Western individualism and its upshots, and it was accomplished through Simon's characterisation as a mute individual. Simon reaches a state of authority and power for having such drastic influence over the social conventions created by Western hegemony. Moreover, this matter is "rendering Simon's muteness as a social ability rather than a communicational disability" (Barker, 2006: 135). Regarding that, Simon's mutism is labelled as a form of empowerment rather than impairment, and it delves into the reinterpretation of disability. Simultaneously, Simon's empowerment concerns both the contexts of disability and post-colonialism.

Certainly, Simon's tools of communication stand as a resistance and a rejection of English as an intruder language, and within the novel, Joe describes it as: "you know, from an object, or a way of doing things that is ordinary, or from ordinary things, or things" (Hulme, 1984: 82). Simon sticks to the sign language of his own creation. Barker indicates the implication of Simon's communicative tools as:

By way of contrast, as a performative and directly referential system, in which 'the language indicates directly by embodying, literally, the narrative ... Simon's own invented sign language is, to his mind, an improvement upon spoken language; a more accurate communication system than speech, which carries the inherent potential to deceive or betray: 'The metonymic nature of sign anchors [the signer] to the signified rather than the signifier. As such, sign can better express emotions and sentiments (Barker, 2006: 135).

Simon finds superiority within his communicative tools and considers them more genuine and honest than the spoken language that is English. Simon asserts his rejection of English wording by claiming that "knowing names is nice, but it don't mean much. Knowing this is a whatever she said is neat, but it don't change it. Names

aren't much. The things are" (Hulme, 1984: 202). Overall, Simon's "ability to communicate without speech offers a direct exposition of the interrelational alternatives to spoken English" (Barker, 2006: 136). It is safe to claim that Simon reaches a state of empowerment through shedding light on alternative languages or mediums of communication, and his mutism stands as a proper tool for such empowerment.

Simon's attitude towards authority and especially doctors is predominantly an attitude of disapproval, knowing that he is mute; Simon implicates defiance against their authority through channelling unreasonable screaming or fighting whenever he is in contact with a doctor. For instance, within the fourth chapter, Joe explains that "he would either have fought all the way, or got hysterical. If he fought, he would have got hurt. If he started a screaming fit, well it doesn't just last for a few minutes. It takes hours for him to get over it" (Hulme, 1984: 329). The attitude of Simon toward doctors asserts a critique of the medical perception of disability and reinforces the social model of it as Mike Oliver expresses concerning this matter that "given that doctors have power now and disabled people don't, this inevitably implies that doctors must learn to give up some of their power and disabled people must learn how to empower themselves and what to do when they have" (Oliver, 1990: 6). In this context, Simon is manifesting restlessness through non-verbal interaction that seems to be immensely effective, consequently, he adapts to Oliver's social model of disability by explicitly exhibiting it within his mute behaviour. Additionally, Jeanne Hayes argues that when it comes to disability a "'Sick-role' status is associated with passivity and powerlessness. Assumptions associated with traditional definitions of medical therapeutic process reveal that the power differential experienced by people with disabilities may be intrinsic to how relationships between medical providers and patients have been perceived historically" (Hayes, 2007: 363). In this sense, Simon's behaviour towards the healthcare workers furtherly stands as an empowerment due to its rejection to their "sick-role" status that they attempt to assign to him. It is safe to deduce that Simon's mutism as an interactive tool limits the doctors' authority and disempowers them to proceed through empowering one's self within the social model of disability's context. Simon's empowerment within the context of impairment simultaneously brings forth empowerment within the post-colonial context of the novel. Simon's constant mute opposition to doctors also diminishes the status of

Western healthcare and demonstrates the Maoris' lack of trust when it comes to it, and we can notice such dynamics within Joe mentioning his late wife's disapproval of Western medicine: "You see, Nana was a great one for traditional medicine and avoiding Pakeha doctors. Or Maori doctors trained Pakeha fashion, come to that" (Hulme, 1984: 339). Additionally, Joe shows an immense difference in effectiveness when it comes to archaic Maori treatment within his conversation with Kerewin:

You would have come down with polio before the vaccine was out, and before they could treat it properly. How come you aren't mouldering away in an iron lung somewhere...Nana was a great one for traditional medicine and avoiding Pakeha doctors. Or Maori doctors trained Pakeha fashion, come to that. As far as she was concerned, the old ways and the old treatments were best, even for new diseases...Well, it was actually closer to four before the old lady got me walking' again. (Hulme, 1984: 339 - 340)

We can conclude that Simon, from the beginning, implied the incompetency of Western medicine through his mutism, and the later events of the novel confirm such imbalance in power dynamics to label the Maori's empowerment in medicine. Simon's mutism keeps unveiling his and the Maori's empowerment within the post-colonial and disability context.

Correspondingly to Kramer's dichotomy of enablement/disablement, Edward Said conceptualizes the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer as a dual opposition. However, Homi K. Bhabha's post-colonial vision stretches to embrace a revolutionary concept of "hybridity" that defies the discriminatory identities of authority. Hybridity is, without a doubt, a colonial product, and it delves into forming a reversal of colonial ideology and the residual of it within the post-colonial society.

At the instigation of Homi Bhabha (who was himself inspired by writers such as Salman Rushdie or Toni Morrison), postcolonial theory adopted the idea of hybridity to designate the transcultural forms that resulted from linguistic, political or ethnic intermixing, and to challenge the existing hierarchies, polarities, binarisms and symmetries (East/West, black/white, coloniser/colonised, majority/minority, self/other, interior/exterior...). (Guignery, 2011: 3)

Bhabha pinpoints the potential of resisting colonial legacies within the amalgamation of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic features in individuals and communities, and certainly, such hybridity tends to become more prevalent due to globalization and diaspora. Hybridity rejects the dual structure of power relations within the post-colonial dialogue, and it endorses the hybrid characterisation of individuals which is optimal for contemporary contexts. Achieving empowerment and redemption through heterogeneous presentation remains the goal for Bhabha's ideal post-colonial society. Without a doubt, *The Bone People* manifests such aspects, and it is noticeable within the representation of the protagonists, Simon, Joe, and Kerewin. As confirmed in the novel and the prior section of this research, Simon strongly exhibits physical aspects of a European person but he stands as the symbolic manifestation of the Maori people. On one hand, Kerewin happens to be mostly of European descent; on the other hand, Joe's ethnicity is mostly Maori. The Pakeha/Maori tension was portrayed on various occasions within the novel, e.g. resentment of Pakeha doctors, tension between Pakeha Australians and Kerewin in the bar, and the greed of a Pakeha merchant in the bar. Ethnic and racial tension is noticeable on multiple occasions within the novel, and regarding this matter, Simon has no actual voice to eloquently express his mind, therefore, his mutism leads him into a sacrificial position that accepts all the abuse in order to achieve unity and harmony between people from diverse background. Throughout the events of *The Bone People*, Simon considers the abuse he received as a cleansing process of the vices within the community; accordingly, he never expressed resentment as he embraced all of it: "Thank you for not holding grudges," his voice lower still, husky and shaking a little. "God knows I deserve your hate... but you don't hate," he says wonderingly, "you don't hate." (Hulme, 1984: 262) Judges from the Booker Prize Award and other critics condemned the explicit exhibition of violence which is completely valid, however, from a different analytical angle; Simon reached a greater achievement that is to form a unity between Pakehas, Maoris, heterosexuality, and asexuality. Eventually, regardless of the obstacles, Joe, Kerewin, and Simon reach a satisfying ending as a "hybrid" peculiar family. Simon's characterisation played through its mutism and redirected the physical abuse to challenge the social hierarchy through the unifying of different ethnicities and sexual orientations. Certainly, through the lens of

Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theory, such resolution transcends colonial legacies and secures empowerment.

If we delve again into disability studies as a discipline in humanities, we can notice a conflictual attitude between Orient and Occident ideology. Xuan Thuy Nguyen argues in *Decolonial Disability Studies* that “The uncritical transfer of Western disability studies from the North to the South has been problematic because it privileges theories and discourses from the Global North” (Nguyen, 2023: 111). Inevitably, one has to question the western application of disability studies' lens to perceive its issues within an entirely exotic and distinct region. Yet, again, the arrogance of Western ideology asserts itself and misunderstands the status of disability within an entirely different cultural expanse. Consequently, “disabled people in the South are usually known to the West through numbers or statistics (which focus primarily on their health condition, poverty, and impairments) and through representations of their victimhood (as illustrated in human and disability rights monitoring reports)” (Nguyen, 2023: 108). The imperial vision of the West associates disability with disparagement and pure disadvantage. Such vision tends to be detrimentally empirical and completely overlooks the social model of disability; consequently, it stands as an antithesis of visioning empowerment within disability. Simon, as a lucid representation of Maori, stands firm against such discriminatory insights and proceeds into empowerment through his mutism. Within an article published by Otago University, it is explained that:

Māori concepts of health are holistic in nature, locating individuals within the whānau¹ context and, therefore, emphasising interdependence, recognising determinants of health (including cultural and spiritual determinants), incorporating a focus on continuity between the past and the present, and viewing good health as a balance between interacting variables. (Ratima: 189)

Ratima indicates the relevance of spirituality, interdependence, and the notion of a whole community as a family - whānau - within the formulation of individual well-being. Accordingly, Simon empowers his state as a mute person by neglecting the physiological and psychological aspects of his mutism, and he resolutely associates his well-being with seeking community homogeneity. Indeed, Simon reached a state

¹ Whanau means family in Maori.

of interdependence with others and compelled the others to do so. Additionally, Joe accomplished a state of immense spirituality while confining himself as a hermit, and Kerewin broke through her isolated individualist shell. It is safe to deduce that Simon redeems and empowers himself against Pakeha's perception of disability, and in contrast, he urges a Maori vision of community and disability. Generally, the Maori discourse is blatantly firm within the novel as Hulme includes Maori words in numerous occasions. Excluding elements that only have a Maori signifier, Hulme often uses the Maori variation of addressing someone or mentioning something, e.g. Joe frequently addresses Simon as Haimona as an assertion of Maori culture. Also, Joe and Kerewin often engage in conversations using the Maori language for no other reason than expressing their Maoriness. Ultimately, Hulme felt the necessity to include an English-Maori dictionary at the end of the novel to facilitate the reader's integration and concentration. To infer, the empowerment of Maori is valid within numerous levels, and it is noticeable within the language, events, and characterisation.

Ultimately, *The Bone People* manifests complex characterisations due to complex issues that are chronicle-related, and such issues are tightly bound to the land itself. Varying from cultural clash, authority abuse, and language erosion, the New Zealand within *The Bone People* exhibits a resistance against the dominant facet through the enhancement of Simon as a mute individual. The sophisticated characterisation of Simon falls into the scrutiny of various critical perspectives such as; Mike Oliver's social model of disability, Homi Bhabha's hybridity, and Nguyen's north and south polarity of disability conception. In *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Antje M. Rauwerda sums up an observation that corresponds to Bhabha's decolonization through hybridity by formulating that:

Hulme's "inclusion of the Maori subverts the conventionally unitary voice of command traditionally associated with the English language." Thus, by "challenging the dominant Eurocentric vision of reality, the text offers an alternative voice, one that enfranchises multiplicity and undermines the authority of imperialism's homogenising linguistic imperative. (Rauwerda, 2005: 23)

Defying Eurocentrism through language is, without a doubt, one of Simon's crucial drives, and it is conspicuous from the manner he handles his non-verbal

communicative tools to manifest a form of homogeneity. Nonetheless, the novel also exhibits empowerment within a portrayal of the Maori culture's revival and sturdiness, and within Rauwerda's article, it is furtherly confirmed that:

Resistance may not “enfranchise multiplicity” so much as re-authenticate Maoriness and re-establish it as dominant in New Zealand: “The bone people [. . .] desires a postcolonial identity given to it in Maoriness. The heroine in rebuilding a marae, the hero, in guarding the remnants of the sacred ships of the tribe, heal their alienations by contact with a precolonial culture. (Rauwerda, 2005: 23)

Conversely, the Maoriness of this work becomes prevalent and strongly implied as a robust and superior against the colonial legacy by rejecting multiculturalism. The intricate essence of *The Bone People* allows abundant interpretations when it comes to the portrayal of empowerment against the colonizer's hegemony and the pernicious perception of disability. The reciprocal relation between power and disability made such intersectional analysis feasible, and simultaneously, it rendered the empowerment of a mute character a viable academic argument.

It is mentioned on the Booker Prize official website that:

It was not just the violence of the novel that stood out and puzzled people, but also its very Māori nature. A profile of Hulme in *Vogue* after the Booker Prize win, written by Antonia Williams, said the book was turned down by five New Zealand publishers, ‘all of whom, in their own, very European ways, wished to wrest its circling, Polynesian construction, its oddity, into something more linear and conventionally publishable (Shaffi, 2022: 1).

Apparently, *The Bone People* defied Eurocentric ideology outside its cover and brought Simon's characterisation into a tangible use and merit by winning the Booker Prize regardless of anti-Polynesian opinions. Keri Hulme's voice is evidently heard for a better condition for Maori culture and disability perception.

III. HIERARCHICAL INTERACTION AND DISABILITY IN *THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN*

A. Junior: Surmounting Marginalization: Relation of Disability and Ethnic Conflict

Alexie Sherman's novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, was published in 2007 as a work that sheds light on a Native American experience during the contemporary United States of America. Despite the work being categorized as a coming-of-age novel, it was predominantly banned from high school curriculums due to its explicit sexual content, racial vilification, and the portrayal of alcohol abuse. Nevertheless, the novel stands as pioneering modern Native American work for its genuine, pragmatic, and symbolic manifestation of Indigenous experience within the soils of the land of the free. Joshua B. Nelson states that "time and again Alexie offers metaphorical escapes, as from patterns of substance abuse, cycles of violence, and other received and unexamined ways of understanding the world." (Nelson, 2010: 46). Furthermore, the novel consistently demonstrates a strong relation to the author's lived experiences through the protagonist, Junior, for instance, both the protagonist and the author are Native Americans who were born in the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington, also, they both moved to an all-white high school to resume their studies. Overall, the autobiographical nature of the novel asserts the validity and tangibility of Junior's experiences as a Native American, and without a doubt, this matter adds more to the argument's relevance that is conducted within the research. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature in 2007 which labelled it as the best coming-of-age novel of that year. The novel consists of excessive colloquial language that produces a realist reflection of Junior as a teenager who is writing his memoir, and the graphic additions to the novel further express the content of each section within it. It is safe to consider the work as a light novel due to the presence of caricatures, and this element is related to the protagonist's passion for being an artist. The novel is certainly contributing to

the awareness and understanding of the Native American experience and it is targeting a wide range of ages regardless of the novel's explicit content. Christian P. Knoeller, a professor of English at Purdue University, stresses the role of Native American writers by claiming that "contemporary Native American writers have been lionized for their unvarnished portrayals of Indian characters and communities, whether present-day or historical" (Knoeller, 2008: 25). Knoeller praises contemporary Native American literature for resisting stereotypical assumptions that underestimate and misunderstand Native American culture.

This section of the research will serve to scrutinize the characterisation of Junior as an individual who was born with a diagnosis of hydrocephalus, and this particular disease has harmed Junior's brain to make him experience physical and mental impairment. For instance, Junior developed a noticeable lisp and stuttering that affected his teenage experience and correlated with his entourage. The position of Junior as the narrator opens a portal for the reader to meticulously explore the protagonist's inner thoughts and emotions, for instance, the following passage from the novel in hand states Junior's attitude and received treatment concerning his speech impairment:

You wouldn't think there is anything life threatening about speech impediments, but let me tell you, there is nothing more dangerous than being a kid with a stutter and a lisp. A five-year-old is cute when he lisps and stutters. Heck, most of the big-time kid actors stuttered and lisped their way to stardom. And jeez, you're still fairly cute when you're a stuttering and lisping six-, seven-, and eight-year-old, but it's all over when you turn nine and ten. After that, your stutter and lisp turn you into a retard. And if you're fourteen years old, like me, and you're still stuttering and lisping, then you become the biggest retard in the world. Everybody on the rez calls me a retard about twice a day. They call me retard when they are pantsing me or stuffing my head in the toilet or just smacking me upside the head. (Alexie, 2007: 4-5)

The case of Junior's lisp and stuttering outlasted his childhood to not be classified as a transient one, and it remained present during his adolescence which triggered hardships and struggles for him. Within The Spokane Indian Reservation, the pressure imposed on Junior because of his difference from the others is stretching

to be practiced by adult individuals too. The initial pages of the novel hold a violent interaction of Junior with adult residents of the reservation:

I fell down. One of the brothers picked me up, dusted me off, and then kned me in the balls. I fell down again, holding my tender crotch, and tried not to scream. The Andruss brothers laughed and walked away. Oh, by the way, did I mention that the Andruss triplets are thirty years old? What kind of men beat up a fourteen-year-old boy? (Alexie, 2007: 18)

Evidently, within the reservation, difference is rejected as the harassment of Junior from his fellow Native Americans remained consistent and he was exposed to it by individuals of various ages. This matter signifies the magnitude of having impairment or being different from any aspect, and we can pinpoint that it extends to stressing the differentiation of race and perception of Caucasian Americans within the novel. Junior contemplated the position of Native Americans in contrast to Caucasian Americans by claiming that “no matter how good I was, I would always be an Indian. And some folks just found it difficult to compare an Indian to a white guy. It wasn't racism, not exactly. It was, well, I don't know what it was” (Alexie, 2007: 149). The idea of the Native American's inferiority to the Whiteman is engraved within the minds of Junior and the people in the reservation to the degree of considering such a groundless tenet a universal fact but not ethnic discrimination. Similarly to their attitude of ethnic differentiation, the reservation people explicitly finger-point the differentiation between disabled and abled individuals through their interaction with Junior. This matter proves an intersection of ethnic and disability rejection. Similarly to how Junior is rejected and underestimated by the Caucasian Americans due to his ethnicity, he is rejected by his fellow Native Americans due to his disability.

It is mentioned in the *Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity* that “this elevation through racial degradation was core to the formation of Whiteness. That is, at the center of Whiteness was the demeaning of People of Color” (Cabrera, 2017: 83). Whiteness remains a relevant disposition when examining an interaction of the white with other races, and this matter, without a doubt, indicates the consideration of the Whiteman's dominance in post-colonized societies. Furtherly, Melissa Schieble argues that “Third-wave whiteness researchers view white identity construction as complexly located within an assemblage of Discourses implicated by

race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability” (Schieble, 2012: 214). Schieble clarifies that the differentiation that is projected from white identity additionally lies within the constitution of race and ability, consequently, the representation of Junior as a Native American appears to be analogous to his representation as a disabled individual, therefore, within the post-colonial hierarchy, as a disabled Native American, Junior is placed beneath the abled Caucasian Americans as whiteness doctrine articulates, and this matter furtherly clarifies the position of Junior within the post-colonial fabric of the novel. Furthermore, there is an explicit remark within the novel which additionally associates being autochthonous with physical anomaly, for instance, Junior expresses:

My teeth got so crowded that I could barely close my mouth. I went to Indian Health Service to get some teeth pulled so I could eat normally, not like some slobbering vulture. But the Indian Health Service funded major dental work only once a year, so I had to have all ten extra teeth pulled in one day. And what's more, our white dentist believed that Indians only felt half as much pain as white people did, so he only gave us half the Novocain. What a bastard, huh? (Alexie, 2007: 3)

The dentist considers Native Americans as abnormal and handles their treatments through absurd measures such as having abnormally high pain tolerance. Typically, such authoritarian behaviour from the dentist would be seen as an explicit harassment of indigenous people, however, it is also safe to claim that this occurrence symbolises an implicated critique of the whiteness ideology. Concerning that, it is mentioned in the *Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity* that “whiteness relies on an inverted epistemology or an epistemology of ignorance. Epistemology of ignorance is a structured way of White people not knowing the realities of White supremacy that serves to leave this oppressive system in place” (Cabrera, 2017: 79). Accordingly, similarly to the engraved inferiority that Native Americans feel, the superiority of the Whiteman is engraved within the white dentist’s mind as he genuinely views Native Americans as different species who only need half the dosage of anaesthesia for the tooth extraction to be done. In this occurrence, it is plainly evident that the dentist views indigenous people as lesser due to ethnic differentiation, additionally; the dentist’s demeanour as an act of ableism due to Junior’s abnormal physical condition is certainly valid since Junior has forty-two teeth

instead of normal thirty-two due to his hydrocephalus. The encounter of Junior with the dentist produces various interpretations concerning ethnic conflict and disability condemnation, and hitherto, the revelations in hand exhibit an intersectional point in which the physical and psychological impairment of Junior is associated with his ethnicity as a Native American. The portrayal of Junior as a lesser persona is demonstrated within the initial sections of the novel, and such inferior exhibition is associated with his ethnic characterisation and his impairment. Such intersectional scrutiny is necessary to be pinpointed in order to set a foundation for Junior to redeem and empower as a disabled Native American. Furthermore, the second section of this chapter will delve into Junior's redemption through the ethnic discrimination in modern United States of America as an indigenous individual who suffers from hydrocephalus.

The condition that Junior has, hydrocephalus, almost made him lose his life as a kid, and this occurrence stresses the significance of hydrocephalus as a medical condition. Native Americans' limited access to health care is explicitly articulated within the work in hand, and due to this inaccessibility, Junior's condition was neglected to reach the complications of the end-stage hydrocephalus which causes "permanent brain damage, long-term complications such as autism, learning difficulties, speech and vision problems, physical coordination deficits, memory problems, and attention deficits may occur" (Gazioğlu, 2023: 1). In addition to Junior's speech impairment, he further mentioned that he has vision issues due to his condition: "My brain damage left me nearsighted in one eye and farsighted in the other, so my ugly glasses were all lopsided because my eyes were so lopsided. I get headaches because my eyes are, like, enemies, you know, like they used to be married to each other but now hate each other's guts" (Alexie, 2007: 4-5). Without a doubt, Junior would not have reached such radically changing conditions in his life if his family had proper reach for decent healthcare. Within the novel, Native Americans are confined within their reservation; therefore, they are attending health institutions that are exclusive to the Spokane Indian Reservation. Peeking from Junior's outlook, it is clearly manifested that the quality of healthcare that they are receiving is below mediocre and insufficient. Accordingly, it is safe to deduce that conditions such as severely weak eyesight, speech impairment, learning issues, and abnormal amount of teeth are ramifications of the Native American marginalization within the American

territory. Additionally, The marginalization of the Spokane Indian Reservation is further expressed in numerous passages such as: “If the government wants to hide somebody, there's probably no place more isolated than my reservation, which is located approximately one million miles north of Important and two billion miles west of Happy” (Alexie, 2007: 24-25). Overall, the neglected healthcare sector within the reservation formulates an association of the existing hierarchy within American soil to Junior’s physical and psychological impairment as it takes a significant culpability for his disability. Evidently, such resolution aligns with Barker’s uncovering of disability’s association with being indigenous, furtherly, within the post-colonial context, this matter adds more to the idea of disability as an effective tool to highlight “nuances of social, cultural, political and economic histories and their impact on the representation and administration of disability” (Barker, 2014: 2). Overall, the sustained exploration of Junior’s characterisation pinpoints a bilateral relationship between disability and the hierarchical ethnic situation of Native Americans. Ultimately, the thematic reach of disability in such post-colonial contexts explores the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the novel and its historical context. Again, Sherman proves reciprocity between disability and post-colonial elements within the novel, and for such an intersection to be pinpointed, Junior vulnerability before his symbolic migration outside the reservation has to be exhibited to properly indicate his position before delving into his journey of empowering against hierarchical framework.

Hierarchy within a post-colonial context has to do with power and its inequitable division due to corruption, economic disparity, or ethnic conflict. In this sense, if we consider the intersection of Junior’s physical and psychological impairments with hierarchy, we can consider the perception and the condition of Junior’s disability as an apparatus to indicate his position in the hierarchical fabric and eventually designating his redemption and empowerment. Evidently, empowerment spurs from the domination of one part to another to ascend within the hierarchy; therefore, before Junior’s redemption within the later sections of the novel, we notice his shortcomings in various sectors, e.g. Junior has access to a substandard level of education before moving to Reardan High School:

The absolutely weirdest thing about Mr. P is that sometimes he forgets to come to school. Let me repeat that: MR. P SOMETIMES FORGETS TO COME TO

SCHOOL! Yep, we have to send a kid down to the teachers' housing compound behind the school to wake Mr. P, who is always conking out in front of his TV. That's right. Mr. P sometimes teaches class in his pajamas. (Alexie, 2007: 24)

Junior's education was below mediocre due to the unprofessionalism of the teachers, additionally, in Spokane High School, students had very limited access to instructional resources, and it is mentioned within the novel: "but my lips and I stopped short when I saw this written on the inside front cover: THIS BOOK BELONGS TO AGNES ADAMS Okay, now you're probably asking yourself, "Who is Agnes Adams?" Weill, let me tell you. Agnes Adams is my mother. MY MOTHER! And Adams is her maiden name" (Alexie, 2007: 25). This passage exhibits Junior's surprise about handling thirty years old book that used to belong to his mother, and this occurrence denotes the scarcity of instructional resources.

So far, the representation of authority within the novel is associated with the Caucasian ethnicity, e.g. the ethnicity of the doctor and the teacher. And without a doubt, the one on which this authority is used to exploit is the Native American ethnicity. For a better representation of Junior's position within the hierarchy, the binary markers within the novel are denoted through an extension of the ubiquitous fundamentals of post-colonial theory, accordingly, Bill Ashcroft's *Post-colonial Studies: Key Concepts* frames that:

Binary oppositions are structurally related to one another, and in colonial discourse there may be a variation of the one underlying binary – colonizer/colonized – that becomes rearticulated in any particular text in a number of ways, e.g.:

- colonizer : colonized
- white : black
- civilized : primitive
- advanced : retarded
- good : evil
- beautiful : ugly
- human : bestial
- teacher : pupil
- doctor : patient

(Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013: 19)

If we observe the binaries in hand, we can easily identify that Junior always falls within the inferior and the demonized side of the binary, and within the novel, we can also distinguish that all the representatives of the superior side of the binary are of Caucasian American ethnicity. For a solid foundation for our argument to be made, identifying the conflicting parts of binaries within the novel is an essential labelling, and the characterisation of Junior and his interaction with any aspect of authority within the initial sections of the novel happens to match the structure of these binaries.

Junior stands as a representative of the Native American community in the Spokane Reservation, and his development as a character portrays the justified Native American dissent. This section of the research pinpoints an analytical relation between Junior's disability and the post-colonial legacies of ethnic conflict. Moreover, labelling Junior as an insubstantial and inadequate individual happens to be essential for comparative scrutiny to illustrate his empowerment. The upcoming part of this chapter will handle a throughout demonstration of Junior's experience after moving to the all-white high school, Reardan. Also, the section will serve to track Junior's advancement within the hierarchical ladder and therefore eradicate it in various aspects.

B. Junior: Eradicating Hierarchy

It is certain that for hierarchy to be eradicated; one's capability to ascend it is required, and Junior's novel experience outside the reservation is manifesting numerous signs of such achievement. Initially, Junior's position within the novel manifested a binary structure in which he was tenuous, and this aforementioned position formed a hierarchy of dominance in which Junior is labelled as vulnerable. Bill Ashcroft expounds that:

The binary logic of imperialism is a development of that tendency of Western thought in general to see the world in terms of binary oppositions that establish a relation of dominance. A simple distinction between centre/margin; colonizer/colonized; metropolis/empire; civilized/primitive represents very efficiently the violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013: 19)

Within the previous section of this chapter, Junior's characterisation was examined to assign his stance within the fabric of this imperialist hierarchy. Furthermore, his physical and mental impairments were pinpointed and associated with various post-colonial thematic elements within the novel. To ascertain, Junior's empowerment and ascension as a Native American in such a hierarchy will be simultaneous to his enhancement as an individual with disability.

If we trace back the foremost signs of Junior's attempts to resist and enhance his position as a Native American, we would discern events in which he expresses such matters in violent behaviour. The entourage in which Junior was born was brimming with violence and abuse, and Junior's spontaneous attempt to seek empowerment was through a vulgar manner. Without a doubt, violence as a form of resistance against a contemporary post-colonial ideology is impermissible; however, this occurrence happens to be the ignition of Junior's opposition. Within the novel, "Hope against Hope" chapter holds a conversation between Junior and Mr. P, a teacher in Spokane High School, after the former hit the latter and broke his nose using a book:

But I do forgive you," he said. "No matter how much I don't want to. I have to forgive you. It's the only thing that keeps me from smacking you with an ugly stick. When I first started teaching here, that's what we did to the rowdy ones, you know? We beat them. That's how we were taught to teach you. We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child. (Alexie, 2007: 29)

Mr. P, a symbolic representation of the colonizer's authority, manifests an apology for the Native Americans as he forgave Junior for such violent behaviour. Furtherly, Mr. P confessed the horrible intentions of instructors within the reservation as he explained that "We were supposed to make you give up being Indian. Your songs and stories and language and dancing. Everything. We weren't trying to kill Indian people. We were trying to kill Indian culture" (Alexie, 2007: 29). Junior's incident with Mr. P spurred a motivation for Junior to weigh a course of empowerment to subdue the dominance of colonial authority. Moreover, the incident with Mr. P was initially triggered by Junior's disappointment in Spokane Reservation High School for their shortage in instructional resource and lack of professionalism. Consequently, Junior made a decision to move to Reardan High School that is situated outside the reservation to prove himself through his disability. Mr. P asserted that Junior's transfer

to Reardan would simultaneously be a fight against his physical disorders: "You've been fighting since you were born," he said. "You fought off that brain surgery. You fought off those seizures" (Alexie, 2007: 29). Junior has been fighting against his disability since his birth, and by transferring to Reardan, he will additionally stretch his defiance against his impairment by establishing his competence. Junior started manifesting dominion the moment he stepped out of the reservation, and this matter stands as a rebellion against the colonizer's authority. Concerning that, Joshua B. Nelson pinpoints that:

In the reservation era, the United States created rural ghettos where Indians could be contained, surveilled by the state-kept in reserve with all due legality and beneficence. This is the historical legacy confronted at the end of Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, when Arnold Spirit's best friend, Rocky, muses approvingly about "old-time Indians, about how we used to be nomadic . . . people who move around, who keep moving." Here and throughout his poetry and prose, Alexie's metaphorical invocation of travel through time, space, and all sorts of in-between, ephemeral moments like flight and dancing reclaim the idea of exploration as resistance against boundaries physical and imaginative. Embedded in exploration, too, is a sense of return. Like exploration, return in and of Alexie's work offers less a homecoming than a report back, an example of the potential of a challenging curiosity. (Nelson, 2010: 44)

Moving and travelling are associated with resistance and defiance against the confinement that is set in reservations. Additionally, Junior's transfer to a high school that is outside his home town stands as a paradoxical element that manifests a sense of returning since Native Americans were supposed to be nomadic before the colonial period. The figurative immigration of Junior is portrayed in the novel as a reversal to the old ways of Native Americans: "My grandmother is so wise" and "My grandmother is so kind" and "My grandmother has seen everything." And, yeah, my grandmother was smart and kind and had traveled to about 100 different Indian reservations" (Alexie, 2007: 127-128). Within the novel, the protagonist's grandmother represents the unaltered Native American heritage, therefore, the growing aspects of Junior that are similar to his grandmother's embody the reclamation of Native American fortitude which was long lost after the colonial influence. Furthermore, Junior discovered more

about how his own people used to be, and it turned out to be the exact opposite of what he was observing:

So, anyway," he said. "I was reading this book about old-time Indians, about how we used to be nomadic." "Yeah," I said. "So I looked up nomadic in the dictionary, and it means people who move around, who keep moving, in search of food and water and grazing land." "That sounds about right." "Well, the thing is, I don't think Indians are nomadic anymore. Most Indians, anyway. (Alexie, 2007: 191)

Overall, within the novel, Junior's relocation as a high school student marks a shifting point concerning the framework of power dynamics, moreover, this explicit defiance of the settler's reservation programme works against the limitations that were forced on Native Americans. Ultimately, the protagonist, Junior, formulated an eradicating manoeuvre against the post-colonial hierarchy.

As mentioned before, the protagonist's condition, hydrocephalus is associated with learning difficulties that classify an individual as inferior to his peers, however, subsequent to his transfer to Reardan High School, Junior surpassed the majority of his class. This matter is mentioned within the "Slouching toward Thanksgiving" chapter as: "First of all, I learned that I was smarter than most of those white kids. Oh, there were a couple girls and one boy who were little Einsteins, and there was no way I'd ever be smarter than then I but I was way smarter than 99 percent of the others. And not just smart for an Indian, okay? I was smart, period" (Alexie, 2007: 70). In due course, Junior reached a pinnacle of considering himself as superior to most of his Caucasian American peers within Reardan High School. Such realisations within the novel subsequently established a dual empowerment for Junior as a differently-abled Native American individual. Sherman brought forth a solid character development concerning Junior's education and this matter is explicitly portrayed and remains a salient part of his journey as a Native American with physiological difficulties. Supposedly, Junior's later experiences would be replicated from the author's background due to the semi-autobiographical nature of the work, therefore, despite Junior's fondness of visual arts, he is meant to be a writer similar to the author. By showing academic excellence, Junior symbolizes a future Indigenous scholar. Concerning that, Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that: "It is from within these spaces that

increasing numbers of Indigenous academics and researchers have begun to address social issues within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization and social justice” (Smith, 1999: 4). Junior’s educational achievement stands as an ignition for a decolonizing movement that is intertwined with his empowerment over his disability. Eventually, the hierarchical system that was imposed on the reservation’s people is continuously challenged through Junior’s unanticipated capability. Junior’s pre-existing and foreshadowed academic excellence proves his competence as an Indigenous individual who is outshining his Caucasian American peers while adapting to his disability.

Junior’s introductory interactions in Reardan High School included a violent interplay with one of the students, however, Junior developed a thriving personality that made him flourish and excel. One of the first observations of Junior when delving into his experience as a Reardan student displays an absence of Native Americans within his entourage, and the only Native American element within the school was an Indian Mascot. If we look at this occurrence from a farther scope, it stands as a critique of the imaginative and faulty image of indigenous people. Chinua Achebe initially mentioned such phenomenon in his renowned essay, *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*: “As I said earlier Conrad did not originate the image of Africa which we find in his book. It was and is the dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination and Conrad merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on it” (Achebe, 1977: 11). The presence of such imaginative but not genuine representation of indigenous culture remains an intact element within the western imperial arsenal. Additionally, this element was explicitly mentioned in the novel as: “They stared at me, the Indian boy with the black eye and swollen nose, my going-away gifts from Rowdy. Those white kids couldn’t believe their eyes. They stared at me like I was Bigfoot or a UFO. What was I doing at Reardan, whose mascot was an Indian, thereby making me the only other Indian in town?” (Alexie, 2007: 47). Junior’s imminent sentiment of being an intruder dominated his initial attitude about his entourage, and his perception of the Indian mascot developed a racist remark about the school that he had recently transferred to. It is mentioned in the digital platform of *Global Sports Matters* podcast that:

The social science research and literature on this is pretty overwhelming that the use of these caricatures is bad for everyone. Particularly, it’s bad for

children,” said Bryan Brayboy, President’s Professor of Indigenous Education and Justice in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. For native kids, it damages their self-esteem, he explained. “For non-native kids, it largely inures them toward racism toward native people. It ends up giving them the sense that native folks and peoples are a thing of the past or are to be caricatured, so they are less likely to have empathy with native peoples, and they come to see us as these relics of the past and stereotypes rather than vibrant, viable, productive human beings. (Burtka, 2018: 1)

The article in hand stresses the detrimental significance of an Indian mascot within a youth social group. Knowing that the only signifier for Native Americans within Reardan High School was a mascot, the mental image of Native Americans that Reardan students had was distorted and falsely stereotypical. To infer, the mere arrival of Junior to Reardan's all-white high school stands as a solid amendment to the Native American image, consequently, it enhances the Natives’ position and impression due to the contrasting image that Junior is providing to his Caucasian entourage.

After a prolonged scrutiny of Junior’s characterisation, this development of him displays a form of archaic Native American reincarnation, and this matter is noticeable through his intense and special fondness for his late grandmother. Within the novel, it is mentioned that his “grandmother's greatest gift was tolerance.” (Alexie, 2007: 128). Unlike his reservation peers, Junior explicitly manifested forbearance and acceptance of others regardless of their features, and we can discern such tolerance within Junior’s two-folded life that exposes him to ethnically and ideologically diverse individuals. The work in hand points out the significance of the cultural damage that colonisation has caused: “Of course, ever since white people showed up and brought along their Christianity and their fears of eccentricity, Indians have gradually lost all of their tolerance. Indians can be just as judgmental and hateful as any white person” (Alexie, 2007: 128). This passage explains the chaotic and hostile environment that people in the reservation live in, and evidently, such a state remains an upshot of the colonial legacy. Junior manifests and admires the pre-colonisation features that Native Americans had:

Now, in the old days, Indians used to be forgiving of any kind of eccentricity. In fact, weird people were often celebrated. Epileptics were often shamans

because people just assumed that God gave seizure visions to the lucky ones. Gay people were seen as magical, too. I mean, like in many cultures, men were viewed as warriors and women were viewed as caregivers. But gay people, being both male and female, were seen as both warriors and caregivers. (Alexie, 2007: 128)

Junior's progressive journey to merge and tolerate revolves around a reversal to the authenticity and originality of Native American culture, and without a doubt, such tolerance involves the rejection of post-colonial discourse that drove Native Americans away from their original traits and features. Concerning the Indigenous perception of disability, Jaclyn Campbell argues that:

Within Indigenous cultures there is an emphasis on spiritual ties and connection of how the community engages with all members. Those born with disabilities are treated no different. There are a few different perspectives that come into play regarding disabilities occurring and may vary by tribe, clans within the same tribe, and regions. One spiritual view is that the person born with a disability is viewed as gifted and differently-abled vs the negative connotation of disabled. (Campbell, 2022: 6)

Overall, such resilience simultaneously aligns with an ascension that enhances and accepts differences, e.g. the call for a more authentic Native American culture leads to the normalization and even a glorification of homosexuality and disability. Ultimately, Junior's defiance against post-colonial legacy concurrently ascends him as a disabled Native American, and consequently, he is challenging the current hierarchy within the novel.

Throughout the novel, Junior was indicated as a physically frail individual; however, the commencement of "In Like a Lion" chapter bears a progressive milestone for his athletic capabilities:

I'd never guessed I'd be a good basketball player. I mean, I'd always loved ball, mostly because my father loved it so much, and because Rowdy loved it even more, but I figured I'd always be one of those players who sat on the bench and cheered his bigger, faster, more talented teammates to victory and/or defeat. But somehow or another, as the season went on, I became a freshman starter

on a varsity basketball team. And, sure, all of my teammates were bigger and faster, but none of them could shoot like me. (Alexie, 2007: 147).

Once again, Junior keeps excelling and outperforming his peers in various aspects including sports, and this pre-eminence happened to overcome his physical deficiency knowing that hydrocephalus causes physical coordination deficit as a symptom. Evidently, Junior is, to a greater extent, proving his merit and competence while being challenged by his Caucasian American peers, and by doing so, he improves his position within the fabric of hierarchy within the novel.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian provides a multi-layered experience that keeps being altered in accordance with the reader's analytic lens, age, and perspective. The book ought to be a coming-of-age novella but it keeps changing shapes to become a significant portal to efficiently explore the Native American experience. Knoeller asserts that "the book portrays the harsh realities of oppression, poverty, alcoholism, violence and, death; and some of the raw, quick wit may be tricky for some struggling readers to understand" (Knoeller, 2008: 28). The work in hand provides both explicit and implicit critique of disability marginalization and colonial legacy in various aspects; however, the character development of Junior gradually exhibited empowerment within the framework of disability and post-colonialism. Overall, the enhancement of Junior's position led to a broad empowerment of the Native American position, therefore, Junior, as an ambassador of Native Americans in an all-white entourage, broke the layers of hierarchy to be labelled as a capable Native American individual who has a disability. Without a doubt, the work produces an apparent critique and opposition to the Western hegemony and its influence on the Native American culture and living conditions, however, our analytical intention and the implicit elements within the book spur an idea of tolerance and even-handed opportunities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The academia of post-colonial criticism urges a meticulous and attentive observation to familiarize one's analytical vision with the entrenched multi-layered continuation of the post-colonial legacy. The analytical process of our research called for unpacking the metropolitan genres of thought within which the global power of the colonizer is embedded, also, handling the non-western forms of knowledge that date way before the colonial era deemed relevant, additionally, exploring forms of knowledge that arose as a reaction to the metropole's power, among the intellectuals of the colonised, was significant (Connell, 2011: 1372). The findings of our scrutiny were certainly based on Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, and Frantz Fanon's insights on the critique of colonialism, representation, and power. The following insights were handled through an intersection alongside indigenous knowledge and its interaction with Western hegemony in the post-colonial contexts in hand. Such theoretical frameworks and factual elements about indigenous knowledge formed a solid foundation for disability to be studied within the radius of the novels in hand; accordingly, pinpointing the correspondence of physical and psychological impairment within the post-colonial fabric was feasible and examinable. The interwoven nature of our research required a multifarious implementation of post-colonial insights and indigenous knowledge, and such applications happen to be intriguing explorations and findings.

Clare Barker and Mike Oliver's insights about disability studies in humanities shed light on the sociocultural magnitude of disability's perception. While the prior offers a distinct perspective of disability as markedly relatable to post-colonial cultural and social issues, the latter labels disability as a predominantly social issue rather than exclusively physiological. In *The Bone People*, the characterisation of Simon's disability urged the implementation of Mike Oliver's social model of disability since it "aims to address issues of marginalisation, oppression and discrimination while trying to denounce and remove the disabling barriers produced by hegemonic social and cultural institution" (Terzi, 2004: 143). Barker's perspective on the political,

social, and cultural influence on the label of disability opened a new layer for the argument to handle disability differently within the context of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. When handling disability within the post-colonial fabric of the novels, the elimination of physiological shortcomings of it deemed to be crucial due to the favourable insights of disability within our main argument. Initially, indicating the antagonism of disability within the Western colonial ideology happened to be necessary as a critique against colonialism and its upshots. During our study, we discovered that the post-colonial setting within the works in hand projects a Western authoritative misconception of disability, and this paradigm is exhibited through various auxiliary characters and social manifestations. For instance, the community members within the settings of *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* exhibit a severe misconception and demonization of disability. Moreover, an assembly of elements which were based on ethnic and racial marginalization was deemed to be adjacent to the misconception of disability; therefore, the argument's intersectional nature was possible and even academically productive. Overall, a critique of post-colonial legacy within literature led to the honest and candid representation of it, correspondingly; the representation of indigenous experience and culture acquired a voice of strength and empowerment, and evidently, the adverse paradigm of disability was dismantled and rejected. To outline, the progressive nature of the research's argument called for an intersectional foundation that associates the colonial aftermath within the context to the representation of disability, initially, such connection necessitated an exhibition of post-colonial and disability marginalization as a substratum of the analysis. The productive part of our scrutiny followed an analysis of disability's empowerment and its potential to eradicate hierarchy within the post-colonial setting. As an individual delving into literary academic research, substantiating disability empowerment guided me into revealing new possibilities and pushed my rhetorical and creative limitations.

Overall, handling the thematic elements that are related to disability is definitely a contemporary thing, and such understudied examination within humanities rose as an antithesis of the detrimental physiological handling of it. Accordingly, our research was found to exhibit tangible intentions of rebelling against the hoary medical model of disability. Handling issues of postcolonialism and disability studies evidently address questions of misrepresentation and underestimation of marginalized voices,

correspondingly, our research delves into a literary analysis with tangible purposes that seek the correction of issues within our commonplace; therefore, handling such issues within the radius of humanities provides an overall contribution to humanitarian causes such as the improvement of disability's predicament. Concerning that, Connell proclaims that "indigenous social knowledge is capable of development, and disability politics may find resources here that are not available from the metropole or from international agencies" (Connell, 2011: 1379). Accordingly, the research furtherly navigated indigenous perspectives of disability and its representation within the fictional aspect of literature, on that account, our paper provides a historical and cultural vision of the everyday witnessed phenomenon, disability.

The theoretical framework of the research was mainly based on post-colonial criticism, and it addressed the approaches of various scholars. Post-colonialism remains a relatively novel school of thought, therefore, the research contributes to a form of revolutionary thinking that serves the decolonization movement in various sectors. Within the *Economic and Political Weekly Journal*, it is stated that "to be postcolonial is to break the cycle of reproduction of these colonial structures and seek to construct new ways of teaching and learning (which are not new on the surface of the earth, only in the colony)" (Majumdar & Kumar, 2003: 3049). From a post-colonial aspect, the research in hand positively aims to aid the social and cultural restoration within the paradigm of pre-colonized regions by exploring the native social and cultural aspects within the novels in hand. The principle of postcolonialism urges and seeks a right to reclaim the lost relics of indigenous culture that were astray due to the counterfeit imperial civilizing mission, and such movement happens to be contingent on directed intellectual processing within literature and humanities as a whole.

The research uncovers that the cognition of disability definitely differs from an Indigenous perspective to a Western one; therefore, the upshots of identity crisis within the post-colonized regions distorted the perception of disability to become a Western one due to colonial interference. The research's terminal objective specifically targets the theme of disability within contemporary works of indigenous production to promote the deteriorating indigenous anti-ableist attitude toward disability. In general, the examination of disability in post-colonial literature happens to be neglected, therefore, through the mere consideration of such thematic element; the research offers a significant contribution to the body of postcolonial criticism. Moreover, the

intersectional nature of the research promotes postcolonialism and disability studies criticism as an innovative and overlapping lens of criticism. Our paper propels Clare Barker's insights into such critical intersection through handling her ideas within *Interdisciplinary Dialogues: Disability and Postcolonial Studies* (2014) and *From Narrative Prosthesis to Disability Counternarrative: Reading the Politics of Difference in Potiki and the Bone People* (2006). Mike Oliver's social model of disability was promoted within the research and handled as a fundamental tool to forge a different perspective on disability. Knowing the contemporary nature of such a distinct vision about disability, to endorse these pioneering approaches is deemed to be necessary for an overall contribution to modern disability studies within humanities. Ultimately, within the research, the novels and the theoretical approaches of choice were directed and scrutinized to reach the utmost level of tangibility and effectiveness regarding the postcolonial and disability radius. While studying the novels, the theoretical frameworks of choice were found to be remarkably compatible with our main argument, and certainly, further digging within such discussions will inevitably contribute to the discipline as a whole.

A prominent finding within the research is that culture's manifestation turned out to be a pioneering element within literature. The anthropological aspects of *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* indicate and formulate entirely different perceptions and definitions of the elements they contain. For instance, the apprehension of disability within Maori culture contains a spiritual understanding, and the authentic Native American culture glorifies disability to portray it as the opposite of its contemporary consideration. Handling fiction with a directed consciousness and attentive scrutiny brings forth a considerable understating of archaic civilizations and heritages. Moreover, the research shed light on various implications such as the western label of disability and its relation to post-colonial hierarchy. "Western or modern gestures to rescue people with disabilities in non-Western or "pre-modern" locations strategically function to produce hierarchies between different societies and nations" (Kim & Jarman, 2008: 53). *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* are works from different indigenous backgrounds; however, while examining their disabled protagonists, they both manifested empowerment against disability and post-colonial legacy in a simultaneous aspect. By dismantling the post-colonial label of disability as a weakness

and deficiency, the protagonists exhibited empowerment against the post-colonial legacy as a whole. The dual scrutiny within the research implies the universal and the ubiquitous characteristics of western colonization especially while handling disability as a thematic element. This paper produced a positive insight about critical intersection and its practicality within literature, beyond this; such diversity within the research did not affect its homogeneity and articulation which makes it valid for future study.

Concerning the obstacles that I have come across during the research, the theoretical approaches to the intersectional critique of disability and post-colonialism happened to be too contemporary which made data collection somewhat challenging. Usually, handling disability within a post-colonial context concerns the previously colonized indigenous regions; accordingly, literature of the marginalized and non-Western cultures provides limited information. Both *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*'s primary language is English, however, they address issues of minorities, therefore, finding information that is compatible with our main argument is deemed to be moderately challenging. Additionally, due to the peculiar representation of disability within our research, vintage readings about such representation were limited; also, medically reliant data about the topic was irrelevant due to its western thought orientation. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* was originally created as a coming-of-age novel; therefore, the representation of disability was superficial and shallow to fit the criteria of its genre, accordingly, the scrutiny of disability within it was halted and moderately lacked a symbolic and profound significance, however, the analysis of disability within it relied more on explicit narratives.

Based on this academic experience, future studies concerning the topic in hand would definitely append more to the research, and, without a doubt, using the lenses of different post-colonial thinkers would tremendously develop the study of disability. Examining different works as primary sources of the research would open more possibilities of scrutiny and such diversity would further clarify the position of disability in indigenous and post-colonial contexts; also, such diversity would be additionally enriched by handling works of different languages.

During our study, realizations have been spurred about how immensely expendable the fields of post-colonialism and disability studies are, moreover, salient

elements such as cultural, historical, and autobiography elements added tremendously to the distinction of the research. For instance, empowerment through disability had to be an inevitable outcome; however, its perception within two different indigenous perspectives made each empowerment unique and distinct, correspondingly, this specific matter reveals culture as a salient element when scrutinizing the empowerment of disability in a fictional work. Throughout the research, historical occurrences were deemed crucial to the perception of disability within settler colonial communities. As an example, within *The Bone People* and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, historical occurrences such as colonization made native and archaic concepts of disability perish. Autobiographically speaking, Junior, the protagonist of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, is characterised as an exact replica of the author, Alexie Sherman and all the main events of the novel match the ones that Sherman experienced during his teenage including being born with hydrocephalus. Throughout the novel's scrutiny, the semi-autobiographical nature of it added more to the tangibility of disabled individuals' empowerment since, within the novel; Sherman is figuratively illustrating how he became a renowned writer despite his hydrocephalus. The semi-autobiographical nature of the novel can, without a doubt, stand as an advocacy for a motivational movement for overcoming disability. The ultimate finding within my research proves to be the unforeseen flexibility of disability as a thematic element within post-colonial fiction and as a critical lens when interwoven with post-colonial theory. Surprisingly for a physiological tangible issue, the representation and magnitude of disability as a theme are influenced by cultural, social, autobiographical, and historical elements. In addition to that, one more major finding is that the blueprint of disability as a critical framework notably matches the one of postcolonialism concerning the representation of fictional characters.

Without a doubt, the research mainly contributes to a gap within the disciplines of literature and critical theory. The obstacles that I have overcome throughout the research would be one of the two salient contributions; therefore, the research contributes to the lack concerning the overall discussion about the intersection of postcolonialism and disability within humanities. Contributing to such synthesis critical lens is hoped to enhance post-colonial studies as a whole. The research's subsequent contribution is the promotion of indigenous culture concerning the

perception of disability. Doing so serves as a critique against the nemesis of postcolonial ideology and the ableist attitudes simultaneously.

Post-colonial criticism stands as a tool to patch rather than to condemn and despite the constant reprimand of postcolonialism to Eurocentrism, the ultimate intention of such criticism is to seek equal opportunity and impartiality. Contemporary times call for stipulations of indigenous culture preservation while tolerating the already imprinted Western aspects in society. Disability studies can be directed as a tool of mediation and consideration of hybridity, regarding that, Cindy Lacom expresses that “the incorporation of a disability studies perspective in post-colonial and feminist critiques can enrich our understanding of the dialectic between colonizer and colonized and refigure our consideration of hybridity” (Lacom, 2002: 138). Evidently, hybridity was never the issue for the previously colonized regions; however, neo-colonialism and discrimination in a post-independence era remain a bitter pill. Upon completing this research, it is safe to claim that misrepresentation, underestimation, economic manipulation, and social hierarchy still exist as phenomena that keep limiting the apparent potential of nations, however, it would be gullible to not consider inquisitive literary analysis as a tangible form to resolve such challenges, because, at the end of the day, a problem well stated is a problem half solved.

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