

Native American Resistance to Euro-American Hegemony: A Cultural Materialist Critique of Momaday's *the Indolent Boys*

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Abstract:

This study analyzed N. Scott Momaday's play *The Indolent Boys* in order to bring the marginalized Native Americans and their literature into centre and to explore the Natives' resistance to Euro-American hegemony from the perspective of cultural materialism especially hegemony. Cultural materialism tends to challenge hegemony of the dominant culture and ideology because it deals with 'genuine dissidence'. Employing methodology of cultural materialism and method of Dollimore and Sinfield's model (1985), this study explored how the Euro-Americans exercise their hegemony over the Native Americans and how the Natives resist to the Euro-American hegemony through imaginative revival of Native culture in the mainstream American society. There are four traits of Dollimore and Sinfield's model i.e. historical context, close textual analysis, theoretical method, and political commitment. Findings of this study were: employing 'historical context' of this model, exploration of hegemony of the state (U.S. government) and academy (the Boarding schools); using 'close textual analysis', investigation of the hegemonic position of the Euro-Americans that marginalized the Natives; and utilizing 'political commitment', exploration of the resistance of the Natives to the Euro-American hegemony through Momaday's political purpose of the revival of the Natives' culture in the mainstream American society from his play *The Indolent Boys*.

Keywords: Cultural Materialism; Hegemony; Euro-Americans; Native Americans; Resistance

1. Introduction

The scholarly discipline of cultural materialism and its application to the British writers emerged in the late twentieth century but application of this Britain-oriented theory to the marginalized Native American literature in order to establish a new area of study has not yet been explored. Krishnappa (2018), employing material objects, explores the traits of cultural materialism with the description of day-to-day lives and the primitive culture and traditions of the Native Americans from Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* but the significant problem with the study is that it did not investigate hegemony, an importance concept of cultural materialism, from this novel and *The Indolent Boys*. The present study argues that cultural materialism has an unrecognized relevance to Native American literature especially Momaday through the exploration of the Euro-Americans' exercising hegemony over the Native Americans which can be identified as the significant influence on cultural materialism. This study demonstrates that Native American resistance to Euro-American hegemony in the light of Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism (1985) has not yet been explored from Momaday's *The Indolent Boys* or his any other work. Therefore, the researchers demonstrate that materialist readings of Momaday can be developed out of an analysis of Native American resistance to Euro-American hegemony by using Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism. Using the methodology of cultural materialism and research method of Dollimore and Sinfield's model, this study is the first attempt to investigate the Euro-Americans' exercising their hegemony over the Native Americans and the Natives' resistance to the Euro-American cultural hegemony from this play.

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This qualitative study employing Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism investigates Native American resistance to Euro-American hegemony from N. Scott Momaday's *The Indolent Boys*. The previous researchers analyzed Momaday's works from different perspectives: Berner (1988) explored the use of poetic devices i.e. symbolism and oral story-telling in language and structure from his memoir; Landrum (1996) investigated the shattered modernism from *House Made of Dawn*; Allen (1999) discerned the blood memories of the indigenous people from his works; Garrait-Bourrier (2010) sought out a relationship between tribal narratives and postmodernism from *The Way*; and Brigido-Corachan (2012) explored the performative power of language from his poetry. But a lot is still required in order to bring literary oeuvre of Momaday under the analysis of cultural materialism and to bring the marginalized Native Americans and their literature into the center. The study was accomplished by using non-empirical approach of data collection because it was collected from published books, journals, and theses and the procedure of analysis contains four steps. The study will contribute to cultural materialism through an analysis of a Native American writer, Momaday, under the umbrella of the theory initiated from the British school of thought. The research scholars and the students of Native American Studies and cultural materialism will get benefit from this study.

Application of the concepts of cultural materialism to the British writers i.e. Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, D.H. Lawrence, Tennyson, etc. have been investigated in several studies since the emergence of this theory in 1977 but this study brings the analysis of *The Indolent Boys* by a Native American novelist, poet, and playwright Momaday under the umbrella of cultural materialism. The study demonstrates that it will not only open up new realm of research in cultural materialism but also in Native American Studies. The objectives of this study are to bring literary oeuvre of Momaday under the analysis of cultural materialism and to discern the Native American identity and their literature and doing so changing the existing reality bringing the marginalized into the centre. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do the Euro-Americans exercise their hegemony over the Native Americans which has been reflected in Momaday's *The Indolent Boys*?
2. How do the Native Americans resist to the Euro-American cultural hegemony through revival of their own native culture in the mainstream American society being explored from Momaday's *The Indolent Boys*?

3. Literature review

Cultural materialist critique of N. Scott Momaday's works is often overlooked or may be deemed unimportant because only few researches have yet been conducted. Though several researches have been accomplished on the Red Indian writers with the perspective of subjection, stereotyping, and marginalization yet a lot is to be done on Momaday in the frame of reference to cultural materialism. The Natives Americans' life, culture, and history have been treated from a biased perspective on the part of the editor was always white. On the works of a Native American Kiowa writer and poet Momaday who won Pulitzer-Prize for his novel *House Made of Dawn*, several researches have been conducted. The previous researchers analyzed Momaday's works in different perspectives. Berner (1988) investigated the use of poetic devices i.e. symbolism and oral story-telling in language and structure from his *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Landrum (1996) explored the shattered modernism from his *House Made of Dawn*. Allen (1999) discerned the blood memories of the indigenous people from his work. Garrait-Bourrier (2010) explored a relationship between tribal narratives and postmodernism from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Brigido- Corachan (2012) sought out the performative power of language used in his works. But the present study, using methodology of cultural materialism, has analyzed Momaday's *The Indolent Boys* with the perspective of the Native American resistance to the Euro-American hegemony which the previous researches could not address.

4. Research framework



In this section, research framework of cultural materialism was used for guiding this study. Raymond Williams' coined term 'cultural materialism' is a new approach to analyze materialist properties of culture that uncovers hegemony and hidden political and ideological agendas from the texts written in the past in order to interpret these texts within the context of contemporary power relations. Cultural materialism is a theory in cultural studies in which power relations are exposed. It deals with literature of yesterday to change the contemporary world (Ryan, 1998). It recovers the subordinated voices or the marginalized sections of society (Parvini, 2012). In order to widen the scope of Native American Studies, it is needed to analyze N. Scott Momaday's *The Indolent Boys* in the light of cultural materialism. For this purpose, Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism was used for accomplishing cultural materialist study of Momaday's this play. Research framework of this study will provide a background into cultural materialism and hegemony which will help to investigate the Native American resistance to the Euro-American hegemony from *The Indolent Boys*.

3.1. Evolution of Cultural Materialism

British cultural materialists i.e. Williams, Dollimore, Sinfield, Hoggarts, Holderness, Belsey, and Parvini, etc., borrowed from Clifford Geertz, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault (Parvini, 2012) who are the forerunners of this theory. Geertz (1973; 1983) analyzed culture governs human behavior by making symbols in material objects that can be analyzed in their original context in order to produce 'local knowledge'. Gramsci (1973) endeavored for developing consciousness among the proletariats to stop their consent to be controlled and raised up the marginalized sections or 'subordinate groups' through the reigns of knowledge. Althusser (1971) exercised "the greatest influence on cultural materialism" (Cohn, 1987, p.27) through constituting concrete individuals as subjects and material existence of ideology in state apparatuses i.e. churches, parties, trade unions, schools, media, etc. Foucault's 'analytics of power' exercised an influence on cultural materialism (Pieters, 2000).

Culture's manifesting itself by making its material objects in a particular society is the hallmark of cultural materialism. Geertz (1973) culture manifests itself in the material objects it produces: "Chartres is made of stone and glass. But it is not just stone and glass; it is a cathedral but a particular cathedral built at a particular time by certain members of a particular society" (pp.48-49). Like the cathedral, literary texts also are cultural products. If the cathedral tells something about the culture that produced it, in the same way, literary texts also tell something about the culture in which they are produced (Parvini, 2012). Cultural materialism has been "under the sway of Althusser" who was a French Marxist philosopher and professor at École Normale Supérieure in Paris (Liu, 1989, p.736). Althusser's (1971) ideologies that have a material existence in 'state apparatuses' i.e. schools, families, the media, and churches have contributed to cultural materialism. Belsey (1999) has echoed Althusser in "stressing the materiality of ideology, [wherein] beliefs are inscribed in practices, particularly ritualistic practices" (p.6). Unlike Gramsci's proletariats Althusser's workers did not rise up because they were completely in thrall to capitalist ideology but the focus of the latter on material existence of ideologies through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). These ISAs help to interpellate individuals fully and maintain the illusion that individuals are free but they are not. For Althusser (1971), the subjects perform the function of the ideology and they "work all by themselves" to maintain the condition of the state (p.123). In this way, Althusser's subjects are not free and autonomous like Gramsci's individuals. Antonio Gramsci, a member of the Italian Communist Party during Mussolini's Fascist regime in 1920s and 1930s, is another forerunner of cultural materialism. This study contributes to cultural materialism through seeking the roots of Dollimore and Sinfield's (1985) notion of 'genuine dissidence' and subversion in Gramsci's hegemony that contains challenging spirit of the masses as well. Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony can be understood with the help of his The-tier model: the first stratum of the 'intellectual' bourgeois of the ruling class i.e. the managing director or the army general; 'sub-intellectual' stratum of the petty bourgeois official i.e. the managers, the petty official; and the third stratum of 'the masses'. In his concept of hegemony, the masses or the proletariats have opportunity of getting the reigns of knowledge and

strive for an autonomous and ‘superior’ culture. For Gramsci, cultural and ideological hegemony manifested in the Western democracies is a negative force that needs to be overturned. Hegemony is a positive force for Gramsci that can be used by the subordinate groups in order to become a dominant class by the means of struggle (Parvini, 2012). Gramsci was succeeded in the formation of hegemony that is a notion of proletariat kind which would be capable of challenging the bourgeois hegemony (Bocock, 1986). Hence, his notion of hegemony paves the way for Dollimore and Sinfield’s concept of ‘genuine dissidence’ and subversion. Although Michel Foucault proved to be more acceptable for new historicists and post-structuralists, cultural materialism was also influenced by his philosophical notions of ‘analytics of power’ and refutation of traditional history. His being ‘critical’ towards traditional history, psychiatry, clinical history of the Classical Age, criminology, and mechanism of power makes his analysis based in cultural materialism and critical theory. Like cultural materialists, Foucault (1972) follows a radical and disruptive approach to history: switching the historian’s gaze from the ideology of continuity to discontinuity, rupture, limit, series, and transformation (Parvini, 2012). His approach to history paves the way for Dollimore and Sinfield’s (1985) notion of ‘genuine dissidence’ and subversion. For Foucault (1975), discourses are not univocal but contain the points of confrontation and risks of conflict: they “cannot be localized in a particular type of institution or state apparatus . . . these relations go right down into the depths of society... They are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of power relations” (pp.26-27). Hence, Foucault was the forerunner of cultural materialist notion of power and hegemony.

3.2. Understanding Cultural Materialism

This study intervenes cultural materialism through an analysis of a Native American writer, N. Scott Momaday, under the umbrella of the theory that was initiated from the British school of thought. Raymond Williams, Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart, Graham Holderness, Catherine Belsey, John Brannigan, Neema Parvini, etc. belonged to the British school of thought who played significant role in the development of cultural materialism. These theorists of the British school of thought contributed to cultural materialism in different ways: Williams (1977) coined the term ‘cultural materialism’; Dollimore and Sinfield (1985) presented cultural materialist model that kept four defining characteristics; Hall articulated the “concrete” in cultural and social fields (Ogasawara, 2017); Hoggart (1957) brought the marginalized section of mid twentieth century of the British popular culture i.e. “juke-box boys,” Peg’s Paper, “chara trips,” and “spicy magazines”; Holderness (1986) analyzed Shakespeare’s plays with the perspective of contemporary television and film version of these plays and the British education system; Belsey (2008) made Shakespeare’s plays meaningful in the context of contemporary politics and culture; Brannigan (1998) explored the limitations of the critical practices of new historicism and cultural materialism through readings of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Yeats’ *Ester* 1916; and Parvini (2012) sought out evolution of cultural materialism in Geertz, Gramsci, Althusser, and Foucault’s oeuvre. All these British practitioners have analyzed British culture and writers i.e. Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, etc. with the perspective of cultural materialism but this study will contribute to cultural materialism through an analysis of a Native writer, Momaday, under the domain of the theory initiated and developed by the British school of thought i.e. Williams, Dollimore and Sinfield, Hoggart, and Belsey, etc.

The phrase ‘cultural materialism’ was coined by Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* (1977) in order to challenge the liberal humanism of F.R. Leavis in English literary studies. In *Marxism and Literature* (1977), Williams used the term ‘cultural materialism’ in order to study literature within the analytical frameworks of Marxist theory: the new approach “can be briefly described as cultural materialism: a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism” (p.5). Cultural materialism analyzes power relations in the text written in the past in order to interpret these texts within the context of contemporary power relations. It uncovers hidden political and



ideological agendas from the texts written in past (Brannigan, 1998). Scott Wilson claims that “cultural materialism.... does not pretend to neutrality but declares its partiality or bias” (1995, p.16). It studies hegemony in order to identify the co-occurrence of the subordinate and oppositional cultural forces. It tends to challenge hegemony of the dominant culture and ideology because it deals with ‘genuine dissidence’. Williams plays a significant role the development of cultural materialism but he acknowledges the importance of Gramsci’s hegemony in this British-oriented theory.

3.3. Gramsci on Hegemony

Gramsci brings a radical change in Marxist ideology theory through his term ‘hegemony’ that is rooted in *Prison Notebooks* (1992). It is rooted in his distinction between coercion and consent as alternative mechanisms of social power. Coercion is the State’s capacity for violence which can be used against those who refuse to participate in capitalist relations of production. Whereas hegemonic power refers to convince individuals and social classes to support the social values and norms of an inherently exploitative system (Stoddart, 2007). Hegemony as a form of social power is based on voluntarism and participation rather than the threat of punishment for disobedience. It as a view of the world is “inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed” (Gramsci, 1971, p.333). It relies on producing a sort of social homeostasis or “moral and political passivity” (ibid.). According to Gramsci (1971), there are two major superstructural levels: civil society and the state. The dominant group exercises its hegemony over the civil society by ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population. If coercive power produces domination of the State, on the other hand, hegemony works through the institutions of ‘civil society’ i.e. the Church, schools, the mass media, and the family in order to disseminate the hegemonic power (Gramsci, 1966).

According to Williams, Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is important for cultural materialism because it is based on lived system of meanings and domination and subordination of certain sections of society. For Williams (1977), hegemony “is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values—constitutive and constituting— which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming” (p.110). Further, hegemony is culture “lived domination and subordination in particular classes” (ibid.).

Gramsci’s ‘hegemony’ is linked with cultural materialism because of its material dimension. It is not only a system of ideas but the social action of everyday life that produces hegemonic effects. According to Gramsci (1996), hegemony is constructed through our cultural and material surroundings i.e. the press, libraries, schools, associations and clubs, architecture and the layout of streets and their names. As per Williams (1977), Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is important for cultural materialism. Hegemony is the phenomenon that shapes and redirects our lives. “It is a whole body of practices and expectations over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values—constitutive and constituting—which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming” (Williams, 1977, p.110).

Gramsci’s hegemony is located in the cultural realm of a society through the exercise of a social power. For Gramsci, the subaltern classes, intellectuals, and revolutionary political parties are the agents for social change (Stoddart, 2007). Hegemonic power is exercised in a society where a prolonged cultural ‘war of position’ and a new hegemony of the subaltern classes including intellectuals and revolutionary political parts is crystallized rather than a coercion (Femia, 1975).

Hegemony is produced by contestation between ruling elites and subaltern groups. Gramsci (1971) ascribes hegemony to contestation that is basic to the process of constituting hegemony because there is never a unified and totalizing system of ideological domination. There is a dialectical relationship between hegemony and counter-hegemony because both shape each other and both exist in a state of tension. The dominated social groups face the issue of how to maintain “ideological unity” to secure the

consent of the governed (Gramsci, 1971, p.328). Hegemonic power is always contested because it is a historically contingent and unfinished struggle.

5. Research methodology

This study was qualitative in nature because the researchers analyzed ‘words and phrases’ of Momaday’s *The Indolent Boys* in the paradigm of cultural materialism by using Dollimore and Sinfield’s model of cultural materialism (1985). Dollimore and Sinfield (1985) have identified four defining traits of this tool of cultural materialism i.e. historical context, close textual analysis, political commitment, and theoretical method. Non-empirical approach was used in data collection because data were collected from published books, journals, and theses. The procedure of the analysis contained four steps. In the first step of the procedure of analysis, different books of cultural materialism were studied. In the second step, the lines and paragraphs from Momaday’s play *The Indolent Boys* were marked out in which the Euro-Americans’ exercising their hegemony over the Native Americans was reflected. In the third step, the lines and paragraphs from Momaday’s this play were marked out in which the Native Americans’ resistance to the Euro-American cultural hegemony through revival of their own native culture was reflected. In the final step of the procedure of the analysis, the marked out lines and paragraphs were analyzed with the help of Dollimore and Sinfield’s model of cultural materialism with the perspective of cultural materialist notion of hegemony for seeking the findings of this study.

6. Findings and discussion

In order to bring an analysis of a Native American writer, Momaday, under the umbrella cultural materialism and to bring the marginalized Native American literature into centre, Momaday’s play *The Indolent Boys* (2007) was studied with the perspective of cultural materialist notion of hegemony by using Dollimore and Sinfield’s model (1985). Employing ‘historical context’ of this model, hegemony of the state (U.S. government) and academy (the boarding schools) was explored from Momaday’s *The Indolent Boys*. Using ‘close textual analysis’, the hegemonic position of U.S. government that marginalized Native Americans was investigated. Utilizing ‘theoretical method’ and ‘political commitment’ of this model, popular culture of the marginalized Native Americans and Momaday’s political purpose of the revival of the Natives’ culture in the mainstream American society were sought out from this play.

In the play *The Indolent Boys*, Momaday writes the story of three heroes of Kiowa culture named Mosatse, Koi-kahn-hodle, and Seta known at school as Jack, Arch, and Sailor who ran away from the government boarding school after a severe beating from Barton Wherritt, the white teacher and disciplinarian of the school, and died in the frigid Midwestern winter as they traveled towards their parents’ camps. He honors Native American cultural memory, events, people and stories through their revival in his plays that “have now become visible in the long lens of history” (Momaday, 2007, p.6). He presents the runaways as heroes and ceremonial agents because they left school for the continuance of their Kiowa culture (Katanski, 2005). He sets this play of the runaways from the Kiowa Indian boarding school in 1891. They are the heroes because their story is included in Kiowa calendar. Momaday writes in the introductory notes to *The Indolent Boys* that the story of the frozen boys “is marked in the pictographic calendars of the Kiowas, and it remains fixed in the tribal memory” (Momaday, 2007, p.5). The play begins with Mother Goodeye, a Kiowa elder, speaking about her favored grandchild who was the leader of the three runaways. The story that is based on the actual event weaves John Pai’s (a young Kiowa boy) struggles who is looking for meaning and balance in the life caught between the white man’s world and the world of his forefathers. But the play ends with the characters’ mixed reactions to this tragedy with Carrie’s, a white teacher of Pai, making plan of picnic with him.

Employing ‘historical context’ of Dollimore and Sinfield’s model of cultural materialism, hegemony of U.S. government through the social structure of the boarding school is sought out from Momaday’s *The Indolent Boys*. Hegemony of the U.S. government is reflected through discrimination of the white man against the Native Americans that produces unequal power relationship between them. Kadasih et al. (2019) state that the White Americans forced the Natives to obey their rules, culture, and religion. In this



play, discrimination of the white Americans against the Natives lies in this fact that story of the frozen boys is not found into U.S. history books but remains a defining moment in Kiowa history. This story is included in Anko Monthly Calendar (Kiowa). Katanski (2005) mentions Momaday who says about this story, "very much alive in the tribal memory. I grew up hearing about the frozen boys. The people tell the story" (p.180). The white man believes in the relationship of discrimination that is reflected in Wherritt's words when he justifies his action of whipping Seta in the Kiowa Indian Boarding School at Anadarko, Oklahoma and considers him guilty because, as Wherritt tells Carrie, "let's be honest, he is an Indian, a savage" (Momaday, 2007, p.47). Aim of the white Americans' boarding schools was to demolish the Natives' identities and cultures (Magagnini, 1997). These boarding or Indian Residential schools were established on the policy of Colonel Richard Henry Pratt based on magnificent obsession to convert the Indians into white men and Pratt's motto was "to kill the Indian and save the man" (Momaday, 2007, p.5).

Using 'historical context' of this model, the context of the discriminated words of the white Americans used in this play is presented to achieve clarity. Discriminated words spoken in this play on the part of the white teachers i.e. Wherritt and Gregory have a long history. U.S. military power was in favor of butchery and extermination of the Natives: "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" (General Philip Sheridan); "I want no peace until the Indians suffer more" (Colonel John M. Chivington); "they (The Third Colorado regiment) have been raised to kill Indian and they must kill Indian" (Chivington); and "kill scalp all, little and big....nits make lice" (Chivington) (Mann, 2005, p.98).

Employing 'close textual analysis' of Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism, the Euro-Americans' exercising hegemony over the Natives is reflected in the discourses of the white teachers Wherritt and Gregory. The Euro-Americans' hegemony is seen during the preparation of the report on Seta or Sailor's punishment by Wherritt. Cultural conflict between the Natives and the white men is vividly seen. From the first scene, Wherritt and G. P. Gregory, the school's superintendent, are seen working to formulate an explanation of the boys' behavior and blame them for their punishment. He asserts that Sailor received a whipping because he "deliberately violated the rules of the school" by kicking a younger, sickly boy (Momaday, 2007, p.18). Seta or Sailor is troublesome for the white educators but for the Kiowa, he possessed strong spiritual power, marked by his pure white hair. Mother Goodeye describes him as "an original boy, a boy priest, perhaps too a warrior. . . And Seta talks like an old man, foolish and wise like Saynday [the Kiowa trickster], like a medicine man" (p.12). According to Katanski (2005), "the Kiowas view Seta as powerful, important, and brave according to tribal cultural standards, so he is a target for the educators, who seek to destroy his legitimacy and integrity among the students and the larger community" (pp.185-186).

Through 'close textual analysis' of this model, the Euro-American hegemonic position and resistance to it is reflected during conversation between Wherritt and John Pai on the death of Seta or Sailor. For the former, Sailor has disability but for the latter he has some special sacred powers. When Wherritt claims that Sailor had a "disability" but Pai rejects his claim saying: "he was old, one of the old people" (Momaday, 2007, p.55), but Wherritt misunderstands it saying, "exactly. It is a disease.... There are cases in which children have become senile, and they have died of old age" (ibid.). But the boy points out: "it seemed Seta died of the cold, and perhaps of shame," (ibid.). For the white teacher, Sailor was cowardly person but for John Pai, he was a brave person or martyr who died in the children's crusade. Headstrong Wherritt insists, "it is clear that Sailor acted imprudently, irrationally. He, well, he acted cowardly, it is sad to say. We must all agree that he led his little expedition into. . . into. . . (while searches for fit words) "peril and destruction" (p.56). John Pai interjects, "into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. An *expedition*, as you say, I like that. Yes, they were a war party of the Rabbit Society, a children's crusade. It is so" (p.56). The white teacher's accusing attitude reflects the hegemonic position of the boarding schools that played a significant role in demolishing the Natives' identity. Further, Wherritt puts charge



on Sailor of stealing the cloths of other runaways and his being cause of the death of other two boys i.e. Arch and Jack saying, Sailor “took—stole —the cloths from the little ones...and sought shelter to save himself” (p.48).

Through ‘political commitment’ of this model, cultural hegemonic discrimination of the Euro-Americans that is based on the relationship of hatred and prejudice with the Natives’ cultures has been explored from *The Indolent Boys*. If there is a great respect for the Medicine Wheel in the Natives’ culture, on the contrary, the white man has disdain for it. The school’s white disciplinarian, Wherritt, describes the Wheel with contemptuousness, calling it “an image drawn upon the skin of an animal, a Kiowa drawing, a pagan thing” (p.14) and “to me, frankly, it’s superstition, paganism. Such things are sacrilegious, I believe” (Momaday, 2007, p.15). It shows unequal power relationship between the Euro-Americans and the Natives’ cultures.

Through the symbolic significance of the material object ‘the Medicine Wheel’, its importance has been investigated in historical context from *The Indolent Boys*. In order to achieve clarity of a large wheel drawing hung on the wall of the stage and congruous power relationship between the Kiowas and their tribal ideology, ‘historical context’ of Dollimore and Sinfield’s model (1985) has been used. In the description of the setting, Momaday describes: “a large wheel, crudely drawn on the blackboard [or a drawing hung on the wall] is a central icon, always visible on stage. Even in blackouts it is dimly illuminated. All the characters react to it, each in his own way. It is a likeness of the Bighorn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming” (p. iv). It is necessary to go into the context of the Medicine Wheel to achieve clarity and its symbolic significance in this play. Going into the context of the cultural practices is another characteristic of cultural materialism. Context of the Medicine Wheel shows that it is symbol of both religious rites and interconnected relationship of Kiowa community. ‘A large wheel’ on the stage is the Medicine Wheel located in northern Wyoming’s Big Horn Mountains. It is a huge two-dimensional stone blueprint for the medicine lodge used in Kiowa Sun Dance. It is believed to have been constructed by the Kiowa between 1700 and 1760. The Medicine Wheel is the symbol of the Sacred Sun Dance lodge. A central stone cairn represents the location of the lodge pole, while twenty-eight spokes radiate from the centre represent twenty-eight Kiowa family groups (Katanski, 2005). In this way, the Medicine Wheel represents both religious ceremony as well as the integrated and congruous relationship between the sacred location and the Kiowas. The interrelated relationship of the Kiowas with their tribal power is like a sacred ceremony for them.

In order to achieve further clarity of the Wheel, through ‘political commitment’, the Natives’ political purpose of resistance to the Euro-American hegemony through the revival of their Kiowa culture has been sought out. The additional cairn in the centre of the Wheel represents the locations of the drum and the head priest during the ceremony (Katanski, 2005). The head priest is in the centre of the Kiowa ceremony and like the twenty-eight spokes, the Kiowas are connected with the priest (authority) and authority with the masses. It shows, unlike the white man, there is an equal, congruous and dialectical relationship between the tribal power and the Natives. Illumination of the Wheel even in blackouts and all characters’ reacting to it are highly symbolic. Illumination of the Wheel in blackouts represents the illumination of the Natives’ culture even after its death. It shows the revival of the dead culture of the Natives that is a political agenda of Momaday.

The context of the father Emdotah’s wearing Ghost Dance regalia and his discourse of dream sequence that reflect the Natives’ dream of the revival of their culture has been sought out from *The Indolent Boys*. In the middle of the second act, the father says: “Haw! We are a tribe of dreamers. . . Let us dream one story, and let us be whole and honorable and true to our dream, and ourselves in it” (Momaday, 2007, p.59). The father’s this dream sequence reflects the ritual Ghost Dance that is based on the dream of freedom of the Natives. The Ghost Dance, according to Randlett, in Caddo language is known as ‘Nanissáanah’ (p.19). It was a new religious movement based on American Indians’ belief systems and their dream of the end of colonialism of the white men. According to the teachings and vision of the

messiah Wovoka, Paiute man (renamed Jack Wilson), spirits of the dead would reunite with the living through proper practices of the dance, bring the spirits of the dead to fight on their behalf, make the white colonists leave, and bring peace, prosperity, and unity to Indian peoples throughout the region (Mooney, 1896). The Ghost Dance was highly visionary: dream of the Natives of the demolishment of the white men under the soil five times the height of man. It was the Natives' dream of returning of the buffalos and antelopes, rising up of the deceased ancestors to the earth and practicing honesty and peace not only to other tribes but to the whites as well. Katanski (2005) mentions the purpose of the ritual of the Ghost Dance in this play is the dream of the survival Kiowa's culture and to "free their (Kiowa) world from white presence, this ritual connotes the Kiowa's power to dream their own reality ceremonially, refusing to allow white explanations and representations to define them" (p.185).

Using 'close textual analysis' of Dollimore and Sinfield's model of cultural materialism (1985), the Natives' resistance to the Euro-Americans' hegemony has been explored from the conversation between John Pai, a Kiowa boy, and Carrie, his white school teacher. When his teacher praises him on his command of speaking English language but he replies that in spite of having fluency in English, it not his native language: "imagine. I am eloquent, and it isn't my native language" (Momaday, 2007, p.28). His love for Kiowa identity is reflected in this discourse. When Carrie advises him to make English as 'your own' and he will become a fine preacher and further says, "you will glorify the word of God". He responds to her, "I was born to words, truly, ma'am—very old words, from the time when dogs could talk" (ibid.). Lincoln (1983) presents importance of power of words in Native American culture: "a well-chosen word, like a well-made arrow, pierces the heart" (n.p.). Berner (1988) mentions sacred power of words for the Kiowas with reference to Momaday's memoir *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. In this memoir Momaday (1969) states that the Kiowas name themselves from their experience of emerging into the world; the tribe splits, and the exiles are given a name; they acquire dogs when a hunter is saved from his enemies by a talking dog, and the brave Ka-itsenko ('Real Dog') warrior society originates in words spoken by a dog in the dream of the society's founded; Grandmother Spider comforts Sun Boy with a song; and her magic word saves the brothers from the giant's cave. Finally, Tai-me first appears to the Kiowas in a magical moment as a voice. All these examples show a word possesses sacred power and gives origin to all things in Kiowa culture that Momaday wants to revive in the mainstream American society.

Using 'political commitment' of this model, the Native resistance to the Euro-American cultural and political hegemony has been explored from *The Indolent Boys*. On the occasion of the arrival of the bodies of three young boys, the father Emdotah prays in distress and longs for Kiowa identity. In his discourse, his resistance to the mixed identity is reflected: "I shall be who I am then. I shall not be then an agency Indian; I shall not wear these ugly, branded clothes. And I shall not hunt down my children! I shall have lived as I could, and I shall be with you in the right way, in the right spirit" (Momaday, 2007, p.39). Momaday does not only resist to Euro-American hegemony through his Native characters i.e. Pai, Emdotah, and Mother Goodeye but also through his new techniques of dramaturgy.

Greatness of Momaday's dramaturgy lies in this fact that he revives the Native American culture of dramaturgy through combining tribal story-telling forms with the structure of contemporary American drama in order to challenge the Euro-Americans hegemony. Jeffrey Huntsman claims: "contemporary American Indian theater is closely tied to traditional tribal drama, a link readily apparent in Momaday's work" (1983, p.370). In *The Indolent Boys*, Momaday is seen following elements of tribal Indian drama i.e. timeless and non-linear action, and blurring the boundary between spectators and performer. As Huntsman (1983) explains: "the lack of a clear boundary between audience and performer and a focus on the timeless moment of the center (that is, a ceremonial presence and space) are two of the most important characteristics of traditional Indian drama, and Momaday's play incorporates both of these elements" (p.371). Like story, this play also set in timeless space. Chris Teuton in his book review of this play states that it is: "set in a timeless space 'as in a creation story,' this twelve-scene play flows together as a story



of the creation of the Talyi-dai, or 'boy medicine,' which remains with the Kiowa today as medicine bundles" (2008). In this way, Momaday keeps alive dying culture of the marginalized Native Americans through their resistance to the hegemony of the Euro-Americans for political purpose that is the main agenda of cultural materialism.

7. Conclusion

This study was an attempt to bring into centre the Native American literature of the marginalized section of the mainstream American society and to explore cultural materialist notion of hegemony from Momaday's *The Indolent Boys*. Using methodology of cultural materialism, method of Dollimore and Sinfield's model (1985), the hegemonic position of the U.S. government and the boarding schools and the resistance of the Native Americans to the hegemony of the Euro-Americans have been explored from *The Indolent Boys*. Native American literature that is written by the marginalized Native writers has been brought under the umbrella of cultural materialism that is a Britain-oriented theory based on giving voice to the subordinate and marginalized sections of the society. This study gives voice to the marginalized Native Americans and exposes the hegemonic position of U.S. government exercised through the boarding schools reflecting in *The Indolent Boys*. Research scholars of future might investigate cultural materialist notion of hegemony from other works of Momaday and other Native American writers i.e. Sherman Alexie, Silko, James Welch, and Joy Harjo, etc.

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