



مجلة

الآداب المستنصرية

مجلة فصلية محكمة تصدر عن كلية الآداب في الجامعة المستنصرية العدد 94، المجلد
45، حزيران 2021

doi
Crossref

ISSN
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
ISSN : 02581086

PKP
PUBLIC
KNOWLEDGE
PROJECT
OPEN JOURNAL SYSTEMS



مجلة آداب المستنصرية

رقم الصفحة	عنوان البحث	اسم الباحث	العدد
٢٨-١	أساليب المعاملة الوالدية وعلاقتها برتب هوية الانا باستعمال الارتباط الكانوني لدى طلبة المرحلة الإعدادية	أ.م. د. سيف محمدرديف م. مائل كامل ثامر	١
٤٦-٢٩	التجنبية وعلاقتها بالقلق الاخلاقي لدى طلبة الجامعة	م. د. قيس رشيد خواف الزيدي	٢
٦٤-٤٧	موقف الصحافة العراقية من حلف سياتو ٨ ايلول ١٩٥٤	م. د. حيدر علي طوبان	٣
٨٢-٦٥	الوسائط المتعددة في خطاب الملكة دراسة في ضوء السيميائية الاجتماعية ، والأنظمة الوظيفية اللغوية	أ. د. ذكرى يحيى القبيلي	٤
١٠٠-٨٣	جمالية التعالق النصي في شعر أبي اسحاق الغزي	أ. م. د. شيماء نجم عبد الله	٥
١١٦-١٠١	غزلية القصيدة / المرأة - الأم ، المدينة عند الجواهري	م. د. سهام حسن خضر	٦
١٣٤-١١٧	التعامل الإنساني وأثره في بناء المؤسسة الرقابية (دراسة تحليلية)	أ. د. رباح أحمد مهدي	٧
١٤٤-١٣٥	المقاومة والأبوة والاستذكار في قصائد مختارة لاورتيز و بليتو ولانكورت	م. د. وداد علاوي صدام	٨
١٦٤-١٤٥	كيفية إيصال السخرية في حوارات المسلسلات الكارتونية الأمريكية والعراقية: دراسة مقارنة لمسلسلي فاملي كاي والعتاك	م. غسان جبار كاظم	٩

aim of this paper is to highlight the value of these topics in raising awareness among people about Native American poetry. The paper scrutinizes three selected poems written by Native American poets. More specifically such poems as Simon J. Ortiz's "My Father's Song," Ann Plato's "The Natives of America," and Suzanne Rancourt's "Whose Mouth Do I Speak With" are discussed in this paper. The poems are analysed and compared to each other in terms of inclusion of the ideas of resistance and remembrance. The theme of fatherhood is directly presented in all the three poems. One poem only contains the trace of the topics of remembrance and resistance, whereas another poem describes the theme of remembrance more directly, and, finally, the last poem concretely involves the issues related to the remembrance of Native American culture and the resistance of these people to oppression.

Keywords: Native American poetry, fatherhood, remembrance, resistance

Introduction

Generally speaking, there are different forms, styles, and techniques by which resistance takes place. For example, if there is a political issue that is not approved by people, then people can resist that political decision in a public manner. On the other hand, there could be a resistance for a specific ideology when the analyst makes critical analysis of that ideology. Thus, he/she is resisting in doing so. Moreover, there are people that resist when they refuse class distinctions and discriminations according to race, gender, ethnic groups, and the like.

It is understood from the examples above that poetry can be used to resist by using different tools to show the poetry through speaking and writing. In terms of the Native American Poets, they resist by using the themes that express refusal, criticism, and condemnations of the colonizers that conquer their country. Their poems stir the revolutionary perspectives in the minds of their audience. They make their audience enthusiastic and completely aware of what happens in their land in order not to be deceived by the strategic discourse of the colonizers. Fatherhood represents the corner stone of the cultural transmission of the American traditional values. The new generation will acquire the heritage of their country and appreciate it (Nayar, 2017).

The poetry of Native American poets frequently contains the themes of remembrance of their ancestral traditions, and of resistance to the severe oppression which they were subjected to by the European colonizers. The resistance can be seen in many poems and songs, including one 'Ode of the lost Indian Nation' which addresses the colonialist saying, "you trampled over our wood as if we were not there," (Beckford, 2018, p. 161) lamenting the loss of land and resources and dignity. This tradition of remembering the past before they came and the ideal of resistance after the whites established themselves continues to this day.

I miss my father tonight,
 His voice, the slight catch,
 the depth from his thin chest,
 the tremble of emotion
 in something he has just said
 to his son, his song. (L.1-7)

These lines can be read out loud like an elegy for a father long gone but whose teachings are still in the mind and soul of the speaker. The speaker is feeling nostalgic when remembering father's "voice, that slight catch" that had been full of emotion. Whatever that he father said, the speaker remembers it as a song that he misses a lot but through this nostalgia and elegy, the speaker in his own term is keeping his father's teaching and thus by extension the Native traditions alive.

The poem is an emotional one in which we are introduced to a kind, strong role model. It is important to highlight the manner in which the father in the poem treats mice that were found in the overturned furrow. The father treats these animals with care; having found a nest of these animals, he takes them and, together with his son, carries them and their nest to safety, putting them in the shade carefully (Ortiz, 1976). For Native American cultures, the ideas of responsibility and the value of life play a significant role, since the father passes these values to his sons. This poem is based on wisdom which transfer from a father to his son, and from old generation to the new one.

As Roger Dunsmore notes this short poem expresses values deeply resected in the Native traditions (20). The father accompanies his actions with explanations, talking to his child in a soft voice and elaborating the value of life and the responsibility that the son needs to learn to take when he grows up to be an adult. Thus, the father in the poem teaches his son to remember the cultural traditions of his people, not only by words, but also by his actions.

Moreover, it is also possible to hypothesize that "My Father's Song" has a certain degree of opposition to the colonialism. Colonialism could frequently be characterized as imposing the mercantile values of the maximization of profits regardless of the cost. In contrast, in the poem, the father passes on to his son the knowledge about the value of life, and teaches him responsibility (Ortiz, 1976).

The speaker also notes this value.

I remember the very softness
 of cool and warm sand and tiny alive mice
 and my father saying things. (L. 25-27)

The emphasis on the importance of the lives of all creatures ties the speaker to the ancestral land that is a site of resistance. The act of remembering these values itself is resistance on its own terms.

aim of this paper is to highlight the value of these topics in raising awareness among people about Native American poetry. The paper scrutinizes three selected poems written by Native American poets. More specifically such poems as Simon J. Ortiz's "My Father's Song," Ann Plato's "The Natives of America," and Suzanne Rancourt's "Whose Mouth Do I Speak With" are discussed in this paper. The poems are analysed and compared to each other in terms of inclusion of the ideas of resistance and remembrance. The theme of fatherhood is directly presented in all the three poems. One poem only contains the trace of the topics of remembrance and resistance, whereas another poem describes the theme of remembrance more directly, and, finally, the last poem concretely involves the issues related to the remembrance of Native American culture and the resistance of these people to oppression.

Keywords: Native American poetry, fatherhood, remembrance, resistance

Introduction

Generally speaking, there are different forms, styles, and techniques by which resistance takes place. For example, if there is a political issue that is not approved by people, then people can resist that political decision in a public manner. On the other hand, there could be a resistance for a specific ideology when the analyst makes critical analysis of that ideology. Thus, he/she is resisting in doing so. Moreover, there are people that resist when they refuse class distinctions and discriminations according to race, gender, ethnic groups, and the like.

It is understood from the examples above that poetry can be used to resist by using different tools to show the poetry through speaking and writing. In terms of the Native American Poets, they resist by using the themes that express refusal, criticism, and condemnations of the colonizers that conquer their country. Their poems stir the revolutionary perspectives in the minds of their audience. They make their audience enthusiastic and completely aware of what happens in their land in order not to be deceived by the strategic discourse of the colonizers. Fatherhood represents the corner stone of the cultural transmission of the American traditional values. The new generation will acquire the heritage of their country and appreciate it (Nayar, 2017).

The poetry of Native American poets frequently contains the themes of remembrance of their ancestral traditions, and of resistance to the severe oppression which they were subjected to by the European colonizers. The resistance can be seen in many poems and songs, including one 'Ode of the lost Indian Nation' which addresses the colonialist saying, "you trampled over our wood as if we were not there," (Beckford, 2018, p. 161) lamenting the loss of land and resources and dignity. This tradition of remembering the past before they came and the ideal of resistance after the whites established themselves continues to this day.

المقاومة والأبوة والاستذكار في قصائد مختارة لاورتيز و بليتو ولانكورت
Resistance, Fatherhood, and Remembrance as Reflected in Ortiz,
Plato and Rancourt's Selected Poems

م. د. وداد علاوي صدام

وزارة التربية - الرصافة الثانية

Dr.Widad Allawi Saddam

Ministry of Education / Al-Rusafa 2

wedad.saddam@yahoo.com

ملخص البحث :

إن لاستذكار التقاليد الثقافية القديمة ، وكذلك مقاومة القمع الاستعماري ارتباطا قويا ، ومهما للفترة التي تبعت الاستعمار، إذ تميز الشعر الأمريكي بغناه بها، ويعمل الآباء غالبا وسيلة لنقل المثل العليا لإحياء ذكرى التراث الأصلي والمقاومة ضد الاستعمار الثقافي الأبيض لأطفالهم، وإن الهدف الرئيسي لهذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على أهمية تلك المواضيع في رفع الوعي بين الناس حول الشعر الأمريكي الأصيل. إن شعر المؤلفين الأمريكيين يقوم بطرح ، واستذكار التقاليد الثقافية القديمة ، وما رافقها في تلك الفترة من مقاومة الشعب للقمع الاستعماري، ويقدم هذا البحث تحليلا ودراسة لمواضيع الاستذكار والأبوة والمقاومة في قصائد مختارة لثلاثة من الشعراء الأمريكيين الأصليين ، وبشكل أكثر تحديدا ناقش البحث قصائد مثل أغنية سيمون ج. أورتيز بعنوان «أغنية أبي» ، و «سكان أمريكا الأصليين» للشاعرة ان بليتو واخيرا قصيدة «لاي لسان اتكلم» لسوزان رانكورت، إذ يقدم البحث تحليلا ومقارنة بين القصائد الثلاثة مع بعضها من حيث تضمينها للاستذكار والمقاومة. أما بالنسبة لموضوع الأبوة فهو موجود في القصائد الثلاثة، ويتبين لنا إن احد القصائد كانت تحتوي على أثر واضح للاستذكار والمقاومة ، في حين أن قصيدة أخرى تصف موضوع التذكر بشكل أكثر مباشرة ، وأخيرا ، فإن القصيدة الأخيرة تنطوي بشكل ملموس على القضايا المتعلقة باستذكار الثقافة الأمريكية الأصلية ، ومقاومة هؤلاء الناس للقمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشعر الأمريكي الأصلي ، الأبوة ، الاستذكار ، المقاومة

Abstract

Remembrance of old cultural traditions, as well as of resistance to the colonialist oppression, have powerful affiliation with post-colonialism. For their importance, they are enriched in Native American poetry. Fathers frequently serve as the facilitators of transmission of the ideals of remembrance of the Native heritage and resistance against the white cultural assimilation to their children. The

Andrea Musher, in "Showdown at Sorrow Cave," confirms that the survival of Indian culture in the twentieth century despite all the efforts to destroy it in order to blend with the American way of life has depended on their endeavour to save the ancestral tradition through remembrance (1994). Musher emphasizes the fact that Native Americans have to understand their ties to the past to be able to protect their communities' salvation. This can be achieved by remembering the past and connecting it to the present and future along with all the individuals of the same Native community. This remembrance is a site of resistance to the elimination of the Native way of life and one way to present it to the readers is by presenting the image of the father as the bearer of the torch of culture. Many Native poets have demonstrated the connection of the past and resent through the image of father. In order to show this connection, fathers tell stories of the past even if they are cruel facts of history. As Nelson (1997) mentions a father's words act like prayers for the child. The children are eager to learn about their ancestors and the father abides by this wish. As long as such traditions are preserved, the Native identity can shoulder the onslaught of the assimilation of the white culture. It is also noteworthy to mention that such traditions are usually passed down orally. By keeping this oral way of storytelling, fathers make sure that their children stay connected to their roots (Maczak, 2009). The oral tradition ensured that the Native American heritage can be passed down from one generation to the next to resist the invading cultures of others. It is a way to stay rooted both physically and metaphorically to the ancestral lands that is a site of resistance. This orality mixes a sense of nostalgia and elegy to both show the painful memories of the past and also its beauty because of the existence of their Native folklore.

The current paper provides an analysis of three selected poems of Native American authors, discussing the position of fatherhood and the role that fathers played with regard to remembering the Native American traditions and opposing colonial oppressive teachings.

Analysis of the Poems

Simon J. Ortiz's poem "My Father's Song" which was first published in 1976, provides the reader with a glimpse of the relationships between the poet and his father (Purdy, Hausman, & Ortiz, 2000). On the whole, it is possible to state that the title of the poem is highly indicative of what the poem could mean. Although it is entitled "My Father's Song," the father of the author does not sing in it. In contrast, the father simply talks to his son, showing him something, teaching him many things, such as how to plant corn. The knowledge of how to plant crops is paramount for survival, for planting and harvesting crops permits people to grow food and eat. Clearly, for the Native American cultures, this is also true; furthermore, farming and agriculture play a pivotal role for Native Americans.

Wanting to say things,

much remembrance of Native American traditions, but the resistance is present there even if it is indirect. The theme of fatherhood is directly present in all the three poems.

Simon J. Ortiz's "My Father's Song" much more directly pertains to the remembrance of the Native American traditions. In this poem, the father serves as the figure who teaches his son to plant crops, which is a crucial aspect for the culture of Native Americans and for their survival, and who demonstrates the value of life, which is also pivotal for their culture. The topic of resistance is present in the form of remembering one's people's traditions, instead of directly opposing the colonial culture. Finally, in Ann Plato's "The Natives of America," the topics of remembrance and resistance are directly present. The father serves as the guardian of these traditions and of the spirit of resistance. It is the father who tells his daughters a story about how in the past the Native Americans used to be happy people, living in harmony with one another and with the nature around them, but then European colonizers came and cruelly oppressed them. Thus, although the father is powerless to do anything with this oppression now, he instils the traditions and the spirit of resistance to such oppression in his children.

Conclusion

All in all, as discussed above, in the three selected poems, "My Father's Song," "The Native America," and "Whose Mouth Do I speak With," the topics of remembrance of Native American cultural traditions and the resistance to colonialist oppression, and the role of the father in such remembrance and resistance, are present in different degrees. While one of the poems does not mention these themes directly, and they can only be traced there via the knowledge of the context, another poem describes the transmission of traditions from the father to the child, and the last poem directly shows how a father teaches his children some lessons about the past of the Native American people.

References

1. "An interview with Suzanne S. Rancourt". (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.thepoetmagazine.org/an-interview-with-suzanne-s-rancourt>. Accessed on May 2019.
2. Beckford, B. F. (2018). *Poverty and Climate Change: Restoring a Global Biogeochemical Equilibrium*. London: Routledge.
3. Brennan, J. (Ed.). (2003). *When brer rabbit meets coyote: African-Native American literature*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
4. Dunsmore, Roger. (2005). "Simon Ortiz and Lyricism of Continuance. For the sake of the people, for the sake of te land." *Studies in American Indian Literature* 16.4:20-28.
5. Lavallee, Tracy. (n.d). "Suzanne Rancourt". Retrieved from <https://dawnlandvoices.org/collections/items/show/300>. Accessed on 25th May 2019.

Therefore, the theme of the resistance to the oppression can be traced in this poem.

I can remember my father bringing home spruce gum.

He worked in the woods and filled his pockets
with golden chunks of pitch.

For his children

he provided this special sacrament

and we'd gather at this feet, around his legs,

bumping his lunchbox, and his empty thermos rattled inside. (L.1-7)

However poverty is not the only thing mentioned in these lines. The lives of Native despite hardship was flavoured by occasional touches of connection to their traditions. The father in the poem facilitates the remembrance of the old traditions of the Native American people by his children. He does so by engaging in a simple act of bringing home some spruce gum for his children, so that they could chew it. It is noteworthy, though, that this spruce gum was perceived by the children as a "special sacrament" and as "the blood of tree" (Rancourt, 2001, para. 1). This act can be viewed as the involvement with the cultural traditions of the Native American people, for whom the connection to the nature was of paramount importance. It is also pivotal that the father serves as the figure who engages the children into these traditions, thus helping them to remember and preserve their traditions, even via this simple act.

Suzanne Rancourt in an interview mentions her father as a source of inspiration as she says.

All of my ancestors are of people who worked and lived close to the land. Hunters. Warriors. Protectors. My dad and his dad worked in the woods and instilled in me at an early age that there is a way of balance that we humans must live by to ensure food and natural resources for future living. There was a code of integrity that we had to live by (poetmagazine.org).

The same feelings stated in the lines above, can be felt in the poem penned down by her. By which he means that the sense of responsibility toward her land and her heritage was instilled in her from a very young age and the reason has been to bring a balance to the distortion caused by the colonizer's rampaging their lands and destroying their cultures.

"Whose Mouth Do I Speak With" depicts the role of the father as that of an individual who is deeply involved in the remembrance of the Native American traditions and the resistance of these people to oppression; even though he does such a simple act, it is the father, not any other person, who does it. On the whole, it might be possible to state that among the three poems which were discussed above, Suzanne Rancourt "Whose Mouth Do I Speak With" involves the nostalgia of remembrance of Native American culture and resistance of these people to oppression, simultaneously, Ann Plato's "The Natives of America" directly speaks of these things; Simon J. Ortiz's "My Father's Song" involves

6. Maczak, Zsafia. (2009). "Native American Belief Systems through Navajo and Cherokee Creation Accounts." In Proceeding of the First American Studies, MA Student Conference. University of Debrecen.
7. Musher, Andrea. (1994). "Showdown at Sorrow Cave: Bat Medicine and the Spirit of Resistance in Mean Spirit." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 23-36. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20736794.
8. Nayar, N. A. (2017). "Resistance in literature". Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tnt/amp/564447-resistance-literature>. Accessed on May 2019.
9. Nelson, Robert M. (1997). "Place, vision, and Identity in Native American literatures." *American Indian studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Issues*. Ed. Dane Morrison. New York: Peter Lang, 265-83.
10. Ortiz, S. J. (1976). My father's song. Retrieved from <https://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php%3Fdate=2003%252F06%252F15.html>.
11. Plato, A. (n.d.). The Natives of America. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52473/the-natives-of-america>
12. Purdy, J., Hausman, B., & Ortiz, S. (2000). A Conversation with Simon Ortiz. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 12(4), 1-14.
13. Rancourt, S. (2001). Whose Mouth Do I Speak With. Retrieved from <https://poets.org/poem/whose-mouth-do-i-speak>
14. Stabell, L. I. (2017). «Innocence in Ann Plato's and Susan Paul's Black Children's Biographies». In Katharine Capshaw and Anna Mae Duane (eds), *Who Writes for Black Children?: African American Children's Literature before 1900*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 75-93.
15. Welburn, R. (2015). *Hartford's Ann Plato and the Native Borders of Identity*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Thus, the father in this poem can be viewed as one who preserved the cultural values of Native Americans and, through this, helped the future generation to resist the intrusion of colonialism with its mercantile values.

In the same vein, it is clear that the poem by Ann Plato (1841) "The Natives of America" pertains to the problem of remembrance of Native American traditions, and the resistance of these people to the colonization efforts to the individuals who arrived from Europe (Welburn, 2015). Ann Plato was a mixed race, African Native American educator and poet who was considered the heir to Phillis Wheatley and emphasized the importance of equality and education (Stabell 2017). In this poem, the father serves as the source of information about the history of the Native American people. When his daughter asks him to tell her a story, the father starts telling her the oral history about the lives of the Native American people that they used to have in the past, prior to the arrival of Europeans (Plato, 1841). The father explains to his daughter that the Native Americans used to live in harmony with each other and the surrounding world, speak a single language, and have peace with other tribes.

Tell me a story, father please,
And then I sat upon his knees.
Then answer'd he,—“what speech make known,
Or tell the words of native tone,
Of how my Indian fathers dwelt,
And, of sore oppression felt;
And how they mourned a land serene,
It was an ever mournful theme.” (L.1-10)

It is stated that in spite of the fact that their way of life was quite simple (for instance, they lived in huts which were built out of sticks), their lives were balanced. It is then stressed that when the Europeans came, they started to conquer the lands that previously belonged to the Native Americans, and to cruelly oppress these people and put them to flight. The Native Americans had to escape into the forests, while many of their brothers and sisters were slain, and their fields and villages destroyed, in the name of the European people's conquest for power (Plato, 1841).

Ann Plato's poem demonstrates how the father plays the role of the person who facilitates the remembrance of Native American traditions for his children, and who preserves the spirit of resistance against colonization (Brennan, 2003). Even though the father is powerless to do much against the oppression practiced by the European people who came to America, he at least teaches his daughter the oral history of their people, showing that there was another way of life, another culture, where

her people lived in harmony with each other, rather than being constantly oppressed by the White man (Plato, 1841). In telling the story of the ancestors, they "bring my father's spirit near;/ Of every pain they did forego" (L 10-11). So it is important to know not only about the good times but also about the painful memories of the past as in the following lines.

Wars ensued. They knew the handling of firearms.

Mothers spoke,—no fear this breast alarms,

They will not cruelly us oppress,

Or thus our lands possess.

Alas! it was a cruel day; we were crush'd: (L 36-41).

The father wants the daughter to know that the Indians lost many things when the colonizers arrived. This knowledge for them in the form of remembering "cruel oppression" is itself a weapon for them. The father does not hide his pain or sadness but clearly states it. But he also states his loyalty to his tribe and to his identity.

I love my country, and shall, until death

Shall cease my breath (L 55-56).

He not only makes sure that the history of Native Americans will be remembered by the representatives of the young generation, but also points out to his daughter that they are currently oppressed by the White people, yet this has not always been so, and probably does not have to be so forever. As Welburn states this poem is "the best indicator of a conscious Native expression" (2015, p. 28). This knowledge, therefore, may instil the spirit of resistance in the daughter of this man.

When it comes to Suzanne Rancourt's poem "Whose Mouth Do I Speak With," it should be pointed out that this poem has a strong cultural reference to the ties with the land and the nature that people used to have in the past (Rancourt, 2001). Suzanne Rancourt's poetry usually covers three different themes: her childhood, her ancestral stories, and her life. "Ancestral poems cover stories Rancourt has heard conveying deep connections between her people and their land" (Lavallee, nd).

When poem "Whose Mouth Do I Speak With," is interpreted in the context of fatherhood, and the remembrance of the traditions of the Native Americans and their resistance to White oppression, it is possible to state that, the father also serves as the facilitator of the remembrance of the distant traditions and customs of the Native American people. It is clear that the family mentioned in the poem is quite poor – the poetess states that "we had no money for store bought gum" (Rancourt, 2001, para. 1) – and this may be interpreted as an indicator of the oppression which the Native American people were subjected to by the Whites, since in the times prior to the arrival of the Europeans, it is highly unlikely that most Native Americans were poor, or even knew what poverty was.