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***The first impression of a work of art
is its otherness from reality.***

– Suzanne Langer

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1. Introduction

You think the only people who are people
are the people who look and think like you.
But if you walk the footsteps of a stranger
you'll learn things you never knew you never knew.
(Judy Kuhn, *Colors of the Wind*)

Growing up as a child of the Disney generation, my initial understanding of Native Americans was – throughout my childhood – primarily shaped by one of my favorite Disney movies, *Pocahontas* (1995). Despite the thought-provoking quote from one of the movie's songs introduced above, non-Native people often tend to neglect that the movie reinforces a highly stereotyped and distorted image of Native Americans which distorts the historical truth (Strong 148-152). In addition, in the media, Native Americans are frequently depicted as stereotypical, historicized versions wearing face paint and feather headdresses, who desperately fight for their land rights. Similarly, from a historical viewpoint, also the representations of Native Americans in literature were long characterized by being productions of non-Native authors writing about Native Americans as their subjects (Washburn 427). Hence, Native Americans are frequently represented as being culturally different, the Other¹, in these texts. However, the increasing number of literary texts written by Native American authors – North American Na(rra)tives – has ever since served to challenge such negative assumptions, as Native American authors try to counteract negative and inaccurate portrayals of Native Americans by providing readers with insights into the lives of (contemporary) Native Americans.

From the moments of (pre-)birth, children are confronted with gender roles, in particular stereotypes of what gender should look like and in which ways one needs to behave. Despite the fact that in the last centuries both males and female have been fighting for equality, a lack of equality is still noticeable: the norm is frequently still considered as white, heterosexual, middle and upper class (Messner 8). In particular with regard to masculinities, different ethnicities and their versions of masculinity are still frequently silenced and neglected. Thus,

¹ The psychoanalyst Lacan was the first one to distinguish two forms: the Other and the other. The lowercased other is a representation of the unconscious (Evans 135), whereas the capitalized Other designates radical Otherness, "an [O]therness which transcends the illusory [O]therness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification" (Evans 136). This distinction is also the reason for the use of the capitalized Other in this thesis.

it is the aim of this thesis to raise awareness of Native American masculinities, the Native American young men Other in particular.

One specific category of Native American literature, which has rather been neglected in scholarly discussions so far, is Native American literature intended for young adult readers (Cox and Justice 9). The diploma thesis at hand aims at providing an in-depth analysis of two examples of Native American young adult literature: Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) and Eric Gansworth's *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (2013). The major theme both novels share is crucial for the focus of this thesis. Both novels are clearly characterized by the male Native American protagonists' struggle for establishing their identity, since the protagonist has to cope with two different surroundings he lives in: the reservation and a (primarily) white high school. In both novels, these two different surroundings serve to represent the protagonist as different from the majority of students, thus representing the Other. Hence, the major focus of this diploma thesis will be to analyze in which ways Native Americans are represented as the Other in both texts, focusing on the following research questions:

- In what ways are Native Americans represented as the cultural Other in the two texts under analysis?
- In what ways are Native Americans represented as the young men Other in the two texts under analysis?
- Which techniques do Native American authors use in order to represent Otherness?

The theoretical background of this thesis will be examined in closer detail in sections 2 and 3. Section 2 will focus on the fundamental key concepts: Native American literature, young adult literature, and Native American young adult literature. In the section on Native American literature, discussions will focus on the authorship issue, the historical development of the genre, as well as the status of either being considered part of colonial or post-colonial theory. In the subsection on young adult literature, the struggles of defining the audience will first be identified, whereas also its status separate from children's literature, and the category's characteristics will be highlighted. In the third subsection, these discussions will be intertwined in order to define the characteristics and literary potential of Native American young adult literature.

The second part of the theoretical foundations, section 3, will focus on the concept of Otherness; in this thesis, cultural Otherness and being different from hegemonic masculinity

norms. After providing an introduction to the concept of Otherness in general, the focus will shift towards different approaches to defining the Native American Other – in particular Deloria’s “playing Indian” and Vizenor’s “(post-)indian” – in order to observe whether and in which instances Native Americans are represented as the cultural Other. Since the Native American Other will also be examined from a masculinity studies’ perspective, the third subsection will focus on the interrelation of the concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, the various notions of Native American masculinity, as well as the representations of male adolescents in young adult literature in general.

Having established the theoretical background essential for the analysis, section 4 will present a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the two selected young adult novels by Native American writers. In the separate subsections, the representations of Native Americans as the cultural and young men Other will be structured according to recurring themes and topics in the novels. Additionally, both texts include illustrations, which will be examined and incorporated in the analysis as well. These illustrations also turn the novels into the textual Other from other novels. Similarities and differences of the representations in both texts will be conclusively summarized in a subsection.

2. Key Concepts

Native American Literature
Young Adult Literature
Native American Young Adult Literature

In the following section, the literary key concepts that are vital for the analysis of the texts will be briefly introduced. These concepts are Native American literatures (NAL), young adult literature (YAL) as well as Native American young adult literature (NAYAL).

2.1. Native American Literatures

When addressing the question of what constitutes NAL², people might, most probably due to the category's designation, consider it in a relatively broad sense as the literatures of the indigenous peoples of the United States. However, defining NAL is not as straightforward as this broad definition might suggest, and in the process of defining NAL scholars have encountered considerable difficulties. In this section, which will serve as a brief introduction to NAL, the following issues will be closely examined: the importance of the Native American Renaissance for the revival of NAL and the emergence of Native American studies will be discussed. Due to the scope of this thesis, this section will mainly focus on questions of authenticity, including what counts as NAL and who is qualified to be considered a Native American writer, its status as literature separate from other minority literatures and the widely debated issue of the (post-)colonial status of NAL.

Already before European contact, Native Americans had a powerful literary tradition of oral texts. The primary oral forms were songs, ritual dramas, oratory and narratives, and those oral texts "continue to provide a foundational heritage" (Porter 42) for NAL. Although it is not possible to outline the complexity of oral literatures in this thesis, their importance for contemporary NAL as well as NAL in general needs to be highlighted (42). Before the so-called Native American Renaissance, Native authors already published written texts and some of them, including Mourning Dove and Pauline Johnson, already heavily criticized non-Native representations of Native people in literature (Womack, *Book-Length* 10). While some of these early texts have survived, despite the fact that understanding them is frequently

² In this thesis, the abbreviation NAL will be applied in order to refer to Native American literature(s), including the diverse body of Native American oral and written texts. In scientific research, discussions frequently center on the questions whether NAL should not rather be referred to in the plural form and whether the label 'Native American' literature is the most appropriate. For an in-depth discussion of these issues see Roemer (4-11) and Madsen (2-11).

challenging for scholars, others have been adapted, censored and transcribed into colonial languages by non-Natives, resulting in a distortion of representations (Cox and Justice 2). As this issue reveals, NAL experienced a struggle for literary recognition and Native Americans were largely misrepresented and frequently ignored in American literature.

The opposite was gradually achieved in the 1970s and 1980s: the combination of social and academic movements, such as the occurrence of the Civil Rights Movement and the growing importance of women's studies, and literary events, including the Pulitzer Prize for N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968), are – among other factors – considered as explanations for a gradual change towards the increased awareness of Native writers. As a result of the so-called Native American Renaissance, the number of Native authors publishing literary texts increased dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s. These events resulted in a significant “shift of consciousness” (Womack, *Book-Length* 12) away from Eurocentric modes, and the growth of the literary field.

Native American and indigenous literary studies have gradually transformed since the beginning of the Native American Renaissance. This transformation was encouraged through the introduction of essentialist theories, such as tribal nation specificity and Native American literary nationalism (Cox and Justice 1). In addition, an inter- and trans-indigenous approach has developed, which aims at the integration of inter- and transnational perspectives into Native American studies. This approach is heavily criticized by Cox and Justice as well as Warrior for being considered as either reinforcing the marginalized status of Native Americans or excluding Native Americans from the discussion (Cox and Justice 2; Warrior 119-121). Also the importance of post-modern approaches, such as the post-modern and transnational Indigenism introduced by Vizenor, needs to be stressed. Cox and Justice (2) as well as Warrior (119), however, argue that all these methods should be considered as integral components of Native American literary studies and should be simultaneously embraced.

These new methods of interpretation were first developed towards the end of the 1990s and simultaneously resulted in an institutional shift: indigenous literature and literary studies received greater visibility and importance in academic programs. This shift also resulted in a further rise of the number of Native American scholars and writers who were both nationally and internationally renowned, shaped a new Native American critical literary conversation and a novel body of scholarship with their publications, research and attempts to work for greater recognition (Cox and Justice 1-2). Womack (*Red on Red* 2) argues that due to the

variety of realities constituting Native American identity, not one particular, but rather a variety of approaches to analyzing NAL needs to be considered legitimate.

The growing number of Native American scholars and writers has also resulted in discussions of the authors of NAL. Native writers have become crucially involved in shaping the discipline as critics and artists, which resulted in a paradigm shift from being the objects of study towards creating and producing literature themselves (Cox and Justice 4). One of the primary goals of Native American studies is the “recognition of literature written in English by American Indians” (Roemer 1). Treuer, however, harshly criticizes NAL being defined as literature by Native authors only: “A Native American novel is not a Native American novel simply or only because an Indian wrote it, or because of his/her imagination (always a messy thing) is fundamentally and essentially Indian” (3). He further asserts that defining NAL by the ethnicity of the author reveals insights into politics and identity, but does not provide any information on the literary quality of the text (3). Therefore, he argues in favor of the study of the literary style of Native American texts, thus enjoying the pleasures of the literary product instead of focusing on the production, since Native American writers and critics “are no less permeable, no less susceptible to received images and ideas that come together to create the convincing narratives found in novels” (4). In contrast, Womack (*Red on Red* 4-5) prioritizes Native voices over non-Native ones in order to allow Native Americans to represent their experiences and speak for themselves. After all, it is Native people’s right to represent themselves – the plural use of voices/images thereby referring to the myriad voices, as one single, unified Native American voice does not exist. Womack (4) further states that Native voices might vary in quality, and considers Native voices as viewpoints which have been silenced in history too long but need to be heard. Womack even denotes it as “fool-hardy [...] to abandon a search for the affirmation of a national literary identity simply to fall in line with the latest literary trend” (6).

While I agree with Treuer that the focus should not only be on the literary production but also the literary quality, I reject his argument that the focus should merely be on the literary level, as both sides contribute to the quality of NAL. Treuer’s claim also results in a view neglecting political and cultural awareness. This view is also supported in Womack (*Book-Length* 7), who argues that NAL should not be merely analyzed on the textual level, for example by analyzing tropes and symbols, but the analysis and criticism should always be based on the historical background as well. Neglecting the historical background results in what he considers “atemporal, nonhistorical, clichéd analyses” (7). Krupat (*Turn* 10) supports this

argument by stressing that Native people should be largely dominating the writing of NAL, referring to the fact that while both Natives and non-Natives may acquire the theoretical and historical knowledge vital to criticism, only Native people can express their own experiences. He argues that a combination of both the knowledge and experiences is of pivotal importance and desirable, and therefore he maintains that Native people are the ones who “can approach the ideal of intellectual and experiential adequacy in a way that non-Native critics [...] cannot” (10). This viewpoint is particularly interesting as Krupat himself argues from a non-Native perspective, which can be understood as showing appreciation of the necessity to focus on Native voices.

One aspect addressed by Treuer, which I regard as highly interesting, is his argument to distinguish between “reading books *as* culture and seeing books capable of *suggesting* culture” (5; original emphasis). I support this view since particularly fiction can never represent the ‘whole truth’ of a culture – culture referring to “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group, or humanity in general” (Williams, “Culture” 90). It is highly debatable if NAL even claims to provide readers with this one true representation of Native American culture. NAL rather helps to shape a general understanding of Native American culture, thus to a certain extent “*suggest[s]*” (5; original emphasis) culture. It is also questionable whether culture and literature can be treated separately, since literature is an essential facet of culture. As regards issues of authenticity as well as insider or outsider status, it needs to be added that these issues are also controversially discussed in Native communities, particularly due to the fact that outsiders to Native American culture have often been the ones to write about presumed Native American viewpoints (Womack, *Red on Red* 5-6). However, outsiders of a culture are not even capable of “*suggesting*” (Treuer 5; original emphasis) culture, as they do not have the same insights into a culture as Natives. One point in favor of this claim is that Womack refers to the necessity to “disrupt the powers of the literary status quo” (5), not “being subverted *by* it” (12; original emphasis), which is not achieved by stating that Native American viewpoints are always filtered through a European viewpoint and that an undistorted Native American viewpoint does not exist. Womack (5-12) stresses that it is particularly vital to understand that Native perspectives deconstruct non-Native ones and vice versa, thus stating that this process of deconstruction is not only directed in one way. Conclusively, Treuer (195) even denies the existence of NAL, which is debatable and illogic, since he proposes an opinion about a literary sphere that does not even exist in his view.

All these discussions regarding authorship do not necessarily imply that non-Native critics should be silenced, but a variety of critical voices is frequently even encouraged (Krupat, *Culturalism* 12; Weaver 11). Weaver makes clear that while “[w]e *want* non-Natives to read, engage, and study Native literature [...] [w]e do not need modern literary colonizers” (11; original emphasis). Therefore, it is vital that non-Native critics, readers, teachers, etc. approach NAL carefully and with respect to Native American communities.

The authorship issue has simultaneously provoked discussions as to who actually can be considered a Native American and defining this insider status yields various difficulties. According to Krupat (*Turn* xi), clearly distinguishing ‘us’ and ‘them’ is highly complex and poses the risk of neglecting sociopolitical and sociocultural issues. Krupat further argues against an essentialization which neglects historical and geographical factors, meaning that being Native American results in a certain behavior, and he states that “there is no *essence* of America that Native people automatically incarnate” (5; original emphasis). In addition, due to the diversity of tribal cultures, distinct languages, and the fact that a large part of the Native American population lives outside reservations in suburban or urban contexts, different Native and non-Native groups stress the importance of different factors, including blood quantum, tribal affiliation, or self-perception (Madsen 2-3; Roemer 19). This means that being Native American is not a fixed, unitary concept that can be defined without facing any problems. While texts by different Native American authors of diverse tribal origin and cultural backgrounds might vary to a huge extent, those authors reflect “to a remarkable degree a shared consciousness, an inherently identifiable worldview, a collective understanding of custom, language and tradition” (Dorris 147) in their texts.

Another frequently discussed issue as regards NAL is its status as a separate literature from migrant literatures and American literature. Weaver (40) observes that NAL should be considered a separate literature from migrant literatures due to the fact that the ongoing colonized situation of Native Americans should be acknowledged. According to Womack, “Native literatures deserve to be judged by their own criteria, in their own terms, not merely in agreement with, or reaction against, European literature and theory” (*Red on Red* 243). As regards the relation to American literature, Womack uses the metaphor of a tree in order to challenge the assumption of NAL as a branch of American literature: “I say that tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted onto the main trunk. Tribal literatures are the *tree*, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures. We *are* the canon” (6-7; original emphasis). He further argues that NAL and American literature

represent two separate canons and should not be subsumed in one category (7). In contrast, Krupat (*Turn* 19) points out that NAL should be – with all the other minority literatures in the United States – included in American literature, while American literature is then again included in the category of a global literature. He stresses that ‘including’ cannot be compared with ‘belonging’, as NAL “is a practice, not a thing, and as a practice, it cannot ‘belong’ [...] to American literature” (22). In addition, he also asserts that regardless of the fact which literature predated the other, “there is no ‘body of literature’ that exists literally unto itself” (Krupat, *Culturalism* 10).

This issue can be closely related to the discussions whether NAL can be considered colonial or post-colonial and whether post-colonial theories can be applied to NAL, which presents another fiercely debated topic in regard to NAL. Before introducing the different views on understanding NAL as (post-)colonial, it needs to be stressed that post-colonialism has been defined differently in research, thus also influencing the opinions as to understanding NAL as (post-)colonial. One highly interesting approach to the definition(s) of post-colonialism is introduced in Madsen (1-2). She introduces different meanings of post-colonialism, which will be elaborated in relation to different scholars’ perspectives in the following.

It has been suggested in Krupat that, despite the fact that NAL faces similar issues as other works which count as post-colonial, NAL should not be denoted as such “for the simple reason that there is not *yet* a ‘post-’ to the colonial status of Native Americans” (*Turn* 30; emphasis added). He bases this assumption on the fact that a considerable number of Native Americans, especially those living on reservations, experience a state which is considered “domestic imperialism or internal colonialism” (30). This claim is also confirmed in Womack, who states that the “appropriation of Native issues by non-Natives is still acceptable in Native studies in ways that have long been unacceptable in regards to other minorities” (*Red on Red* 8-9). For example, he refers to the fact that in Native study programs the number of Native American scholars is still relatively low (8). These Native American situations being understood as colonial can be most likely ascribed to the first definition of post-colonialism: as Madsen (1-2) summarizes, post-colonial writings are texts which are considered to be produced in a former colonized nation after gaining its independence from the colonial power. In general, the term colonial has thus been used to describe the literature before this independence, whereas post-colonial has been used to consider the time after independence (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2). Similarly, King (184-185) criticizes post-colonialism in regard to NAL since the post-colonial neglects the time before the colonial contact and a post-

colonial perspective rather represents NAL as a construct of this oppression. Another aspect which can be criticized is that post-colonial approaches mainly focus on the way the settler culture experiences the Other, while the way Native Americans see themselves is neglected (Womack, *Red on Red* 13). However, Krupat (*Turn* 32) argues that despite the fact that NAL is produced under conditions of ongoing colonialism, some Native American literary texts do not only appear to be post-colonial, but can – from an ideological perspective – be considered as parallel to post-colonial fiction. Nonetheless, it needs to be added that the Native American Renaissance could be considered as the starting point of a post-colonial stage (40).

The approaches introduced above already reveal that the (post-)colonial status of NAL and the application of post-colonial theories to NAL are highly controversial and complex. Nonetheless, various scholars argue for applying post-colonial theories to NAL and stress the importance of the use of these theories. Among others, Madsen (1) states that various recurring post-colonial themes, including displacement or diaspora, are also prominent in NAL and these topics should therefore be analyzed from a post-colonial perspective. Also Allen supports using post-colonial approaches in NAL in order to exemplify the “ongoing U.S. colonialism vis-à-vis indigenous individuals and communities“ (17). Nonetheless, it needs to be added that both scholars do not view post-colonialism from a perspective as introduced above, but see it as encompassing the complexity of the cultural and historical processes, including the pre-colonial, colonial, independence as well as decolonized phases of a nation’s development (2). In addition, also Schweninger (69-70) argues that borrowing concepts from post-colonial studies might assist readers in understanding NAL.

Similar to Krupat, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2) highlight the unique status of the United States in relation to (post-)colonialism. They stress that due to the United States’ “current position of power, and the neo-colonizing role it has played, its post-colonial nature has not been generally recognized” (2), while also stating that “its relationship with the metropolitan centre [sic] [...] has been paradigmatic for post-colonial literatures everywhere” (2). According to them, the term post-colonial refers to all cultures which are affected by imperial processes, ranging from colonization to the present day, thus also arguing for the inclusion of NAL in this category (2).

Nonetheless, it needs to be added that by discussing the status of NAL as (post-)colonial and whether post-colonial theories should be applied, I do not aim at rejecting the research on NAL as an expression of colonialism. The approaches introduced above reveal that a clear classification is highly complex, perhaps not even possible. Furthermore, it needs to be added

that subsuming NAL and other post-colonial literatures might result in a denial of Native literary recognition, which should not be the case (Weaver 15). However, I argue that the application of post-colonial theories in NAL should not automatically be refused due to the colonial status, but can indeed provide significant insights.

To summarize the discussions of NAL, in this thesis, I will adhere to Weaver's definition of NAL as "literature of, from, by Native Americans, not *about* them – or, worse yet, *set* among them" (16; original emphasis).

2.2. (R)evolution of Young Adult Literature

Due to the variety of circulating definitions of YAL³ and the different attempts to define the relatively broad span of adulthood, deciding on one definition of YAL is indeed a challenging task. While experts define YAL in various different ways, it is, in its most basic form, literature that is written for young adults as the main audience. Having a closer look at different scholars' definitions of YAL provides an insight into the fact that it is difficult to define this body of literature and likewise it reveals the complexities of determining what constitutes a book for young adults.

According to the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association, a young adult is "an individual between the ages of twelve and eighteen" (qtd. in Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xviii), and thus YALSA considers YAL as literature especially written for teenagers of this age. Cart (*Insider* 95), however, even extends the upper parameter of adolescence and includes readers up to the age of 25 in his definition. In contrast, scholars such as Bushman and Haas take a different approach and avoid limiting YAL to a certain age group, rather broadly categorizing it as "literature written for and about young adults" (2), thus providing a certain potential frame to conceptualize young adults and the stage of adolescence differently. Similarly, Garcia defines YAL as "genre books that – *at first* – tended to be written about and for adolescents" (5; emphasis added), adding that "there is not a defined age group that is specified within YA[L]" (6). As these diverging approaches to defining YAL reveal, one conclusive definition of YAL does not exist per se. Therefore, different definitions of YAL and the assumptions as to what actually constitutes YAL need to

³ Over time, YAL has been labeled differently, e.g. adolescent literature, teen(age) fiction, youth fiction, junior teen novels and juvenile literature/fiction (see Bushman and Haas 2). In this thesis, the term YAL will be preferred.

be critically examined in closer detail. In addition, the differences between children's literature and YAL will be examined and the characteristics of YAL will be summarized.

Children's literature is often used as an umbrella term to cover both children's literature and YAL (Bland and Lütge 1). One could argue that clearly distinguishing YAL from children's literature serves little purpose, as the differences of YAL and children's literature are only loosely defined, and as both share certain similarities regarding topics that are addressed. However, I strongly argue that the value of both being individual categories should be acknowledged. One reason why I argue for the necessity of distinguishing between YAL and children's literature when selecting books for readers is that both obviously appeal to different audiences. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that especially in secondary literature on children's literature and YAL, both are quite often subsumed. This is also the reason why, in this thesis, secondary literature which might at first merely seem to focus on children's literature based on its titles will be used, as the topics and issues addressed are also prominent in YAL and – as stated in some of the books – as the authors include both children and young adults in their definition of children's literature.

In order to support the claim of differentiating between YAL and children's literature, first and foremost, the historical development of both need to be considered. While children's literature can be traced back to the late Victorian period in England, Hall was the first one to address the problems of youth in 1904 and to use the term adolescence in order to describe “a separate age group between the onset of puberty and adulthood” (qtd. in Hilton and Nikolajeva 1-2). Prior to this time, society was only divided into children and adults. The introduction of adolescence as a process of the child becoming an adult, however, did not directly result in YAL. Children's literature continued to include the teenage years, and the expression *teenager* gradually emerged in Great Britain and the United States from 1945 onwards (2-7). The contraction of the job market in the 1930s led to a considerable increase in high-school enrollments, which consequently resulted in a new teen culture that was the starting point for the gradual evolution of YAL (Cart, “YA Literature” 738). Cart denotes the beginning of the 21st century as a “new golden age of [YAL]” (*Insider* 96). To summarize, I argue for a clear distinction of children's literature and YAL due to the fact that “its readership is drawn from a separate segment of society” (Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xvii) and should also be valued as such.

One approach towards the definition of YAL, which I consider highly appealing, is addressed in Kullmann. Aside from merely defining YAL as distinctive based on its young adult

readership, Kullmann (13) suggests an alternative approach towards defining YAL according to the intention of actually being marketed as such. He criticizes definitions based on the intended readership due to the fact that merely defining YAL by its adolescent readership neglects a potential adult readership. This is also stressed in Garcia (16), who – based on a report on the consumption of children’s and young adult’s books published by the Bowker Market Research – argues that the majority of today’s YAL purchasers are 18 years old or older. This report also confirms that 78 percent of this demographic group actually read the books themselves. Therefore, criticism often circles the question whether young adults are still the main intended audience of YAL (17). I, however, strongly argue that young adults are still the intended audience of YAL, although YAL “speaks to the greater human condition, and not just to the specific teen experience“ (Garcia, “Preface” xi).

This issue of intended and actual audiences of YAL is bridged by its crossover appeal. As is the case with crossover literature, YAL is multilayered in that it often has multiple audiences: young adults and adults (Bland and Lütge 2). The current demand for high-quality books for different age groups is met by publishers with crossovers in both directions: books that are rather interesting for younger young adults, on the one hand, and those which appeal to the interests of more mature young adults and adults, on the other hand (Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xviii). Furthermore, despite the relatively broad span between the interests of a twelve-year-old and an eighteen-year-old, certain genres in YAL, especially science fiction and fantasy, successfully manage to bridge these differences in interest (xviii).

As Hilton and Nikolajeva (8) as well as Kullmann (15-18) argue, YAL and children’s literature share some major concerns. The fact that literature for young adults is – with few exceptions – written and published by adults results in what Kullmann (15) considers an asymmetry of literary communication. This actually means that stories often rather address what adults – perhaps subconsciously – consider or remember adolescence to be like, maybe even to instruct and guide young adults, and not reflect what it really means and feels like to be a teenager (Hilton and Nikolajeva 8). Thus, the representations of young adults quite often reflect what adults want teenagers to believe about their lives, making it “a very powerful ideological tool” (8). Furthermore, the issues as regards the question of the target audience of YAL are also prominent in discussions on children’s literature (Grenby and Immel xiv). For instance, Kullmann (14) argues that, if defining YAL as literature merely read by young adults as suggested in Hayn and Kaplan (“Introduction” 1), certain children’s and adult novels that are read by young adults would have to fall into the category of YAL as well. Similarly,

Stephens (*Young Adult* 40) supports this proposition by stating that classics featuring teen protagonists do not always automatically fall into the category of YAL. Additionally, Cart (*Insider* 97) points out that the Association of Library Service for Children (ALSC) defines children as persons aged up to fourteen, resulting in a two-year overlap of the definitions of children and young adults. All these definitional issues reflect that – similar to children’s literature – YAL is a highly universal form “since (unlike most kinds of books for adults) everyone has been part of its target audience” (Grenby and Immel xiv).

Due to the fact that YAL is, in its initial definition and also expressed in its labeling, mainly addressed at young adults, this category has often been criticized for its literary status, which yields in various negative assumptions. For example, critics accuse YAL of only being addressed at young people, thus being simplistic and pulp entertainment, and of not serving any didactic functions (Stephens, *Young Adult* 34). Furthermore, criticism has particularly focused on the questions of what actually marks YAL as different from children’s and adult literature and therefore distinguishes it from other literary categories.

Despite its flourishing history and the unique relation to the studies of adolescence, little attention has been devoted to the specific traits of YAL. Also, YAL has, in general, resulted in less critical scholarship than children’s literature (Hilton and Nikolajeva 8). The different trends that have enriched and informed YAL in the 21st century and the characteristics of contemporary YAL are manifold. Stephens addresses some of these characteristics in his definition of YAL as “a story that tackles the difficult, and oftentimes adult, issues that arise during an adolescent’s journey toward identity, a journey told through a distinctly teen voice that holds the same potential for literary value as its ‘Grownup’ peers” (*Young Adult* 40-41). To summarize Stephens’ categorization, YAL readings are texts which mainly focus on adolescent protagonists, who are approximately at the same age as the intended readers, and their experiences. Quite often, these experiences focus on the main character’s struggles “to become an adult, to establish an identity, to belong, to fit into peer groups, and to assume a measure of personal independence” (Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xviii), thus overcoming problems that young adult readers themselves may face and want to read about. Issues of the exploration of one’s self-identity and self-discovery underline young adult narratives (Kaplan 20; Stephens, *Young Adult* 36), and Garcia (130) adds that, apart from their own identity, readers also develop an appreciation of the identities of other people. Although adult characters may play primary roles in these texts, readers usually identify themselves with the adolescent main character (Bushman and Haas 33).

In YAL, first-person narratives occur significantly more often compared to children's and adult fiction in order to establish proximity to and arouse the reader's interest, resulting in texts following a distinctly teen voice (Stephens, *Young Adult* 41). While it needs to be mentioned that a first-person point of view is more limiting than an omniscient point of view due to the fact that readers experience the narrative world through the mind of one character only, a first-person narration results in a closer, more personal connection of the reader and the fictional character (Bushman and Haas 37; Hilton and Nikolajeva 4).

As regards the literary value addressed in Stephens' definition, it needs to be emphasized that YAL presents a considerable literary potential that should not be merely judged by its intended audience. Visual elements seem to be of utmost importance to young adults, which results in a growing demand for different, and at times complex, YAL forms, including graphic novels or comics (Cart, *Insider* 97; Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xviii). Furthermore, nowadays YAL comprises a wide span of different, highly prominent literary genres, featuring dystopian fiction, fantasy, (paranormal) romance, historical fiction and also non-fiction (Cart, "Foreword" vii-ix).

What the controversies regarding the definitions and characteristics introduced above begin to demonstrate is that the study of YAL is highly complex. Clearly distinguishing YAL from children's or adult literature is – to a certain extent – impossible, as the boundaries remain vague. However, all factors introduced above help to gradually expand the field of YAL, which is constantly in flux, resulting in books for young adults which are "[i]n their literary quality, their variety, and their innovative nature, [...] not only the best of a splendid new millennium, they are – compared with other decades – the best of the best" (vii). Nonetheless, Garcia stresses that despite addressing young adults as the target audience, too much of YAL "is focused on the interest of white, affluent teenagers" (5). This issue will be closely examined in the next section.

2.3. Native American Young Adult Literature

While – as described in section 2.2. – the concept of YAL in its contemporary form gradually emerged towards the end of the 20th century after a long process of development, also multicultural literature has gained importance within the last fifty years. The emergence of multicultural literature, also for children and young adults, was a direct result of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, and served as an expression of

the politics of recognition, especially referring to issues of discrimination, inequality and oppression (John Stephens 212). Multicultural literature is defined as “texts that feature underrepresented groups’ lived experiences, [and thus] offer counternarratives to the pervasive [w]hite, middle-class, monolingual storylines” (Botelho 268). Therefore, in the definition’s widest sense, “[a]ny group that has been marginalized can be considered diverse or hold multicultural status, like race, gender, ethnicity, language of origin, ability, age, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities” (Hayn and Burns 135). According to this broad definition, multicultural literature does not merely focus on issues of race and ethnicity, but may, for example, also address religious diversity or protagonists with special needs. While there are tendencies to maintain this relatively broad definition, in a more narrow sense, multicultural literature is typically related to the diversity existing in ethnically different communities (John Stephens 212). It needs to be added that multicultural literature has frequently been criticized as serving as a ground for Othering, which will be more closely examined in section 3.1., and thus also as reinforcing racism (Weaver 41). I will, however, adapt Krupat’s position of multiculturalism as a positive tool in that “its pedagogical and critical strategies might contribute to a breakdown of ‘hierarchical relationships’ and to a cosmopolitan vision that would stand against age-old narrow sectarianism and endless battles between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (*Turn* 25). In this thesis, multicultural literature is addressed from a viewpoint of ethnicity, as the focus lies on the analysis of NAYAL, but also on gender (roles) since the books will be analyzed from a masculinity studies perspective. Thus, henceforth, the use of multi-ethnic literature will be preferred over multicultural literature due to the fact that literatures of different ethnicities, such as Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans or other immigrants from all around the world, are vital to American literature and to this thesis (Fischer-Hornung and Raphael-Hernandez xi). Multicultural literature refers to literature featuring underrepresented groups in general, whereas multi-ethnic literature comprises literature written by authors of ethnic minority groups. In that respect it is, first of all, vital to define the characteristics of multi-ethnic literature and NAYAL specifically, while also difficulties encountered when reading and teaching NAYAL will be addressed.

NAYAL may serve two essential functions for its (young adult) readers from different cultural backgrounds. On the one hand, for Native American adolescents, NAYAL may serve as a mirror, as the texts may reflect familiar experiences, a shared cultural background and similar identity issues (Botelho 268; Moura-Koçoğlu 314). On the other hand, for non-Native readers, for instance young adults in Austria, the protagonists of multi-ethnic stories originate from a different cultural background. Since a straightforward identification is thus frequently

not possible, the readers' empathy and individual reflection are essential, as they have to experience the story from an unfamiliar perspective (Kullmann 45). Therefore, multi-ethnic texts are often metaphorically considered as windows revealing insights into other people's cultural and social circumstances by juxtaposing the less familiar and familiar through a character's eyes (Botelho 268; Moura-Koçoğlu 314). In addition, multi-ethnic literature serves as a teaching tool to provide students with an appreciation of cultural diversity and an understanding of the significance of racial tolerance (Bradford 12; Kaplan 23) because young adults experience a story that "addresses the alienation experienced in-between cultures, and promotes a distinct indigenous perspective" (Moura-Koçoğlu 323). Thus, it is important for teachers and students to understand the value of multi-ethnic YAL for both readers from the same, but also from different cultural backgrounds.

In YAL, it can be observed that multi-ethnic literature is on the rise (Cullinan, Kunzel, and Wooten xviii; Hesse 33). This development is closely related to the emergence of multicultural literatures in English, which, as already introduced before, commenced in North America in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, it is not unusual that in YAL readers experience characters who are distinctly different from them in their cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. However, based on a report by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in which researchers have been investigating the publications of multi-ethnic literature in the United States since 1985, Cart ("Foreword" xi) summarizes that – similar to the decades preceding them – the years between 2000 and 2013 were still dominated by a deficit with regard to the number of titles featuring minorities published (see table 1). He further elaborates that the number of multi-ethnic YAL publications (in this report including African American, Asian-American, Native American and Latino/a YAL) has constantly fluctuated, but represents approximately ten percent of the total children's literature and YAL titles published per year. Nonetheless, when limiting those publications to books written by indigenous authors, thus insiders from within the culture, the number even declines to five percent. This area of YAL requires further, urgently needed attention, as – although the number of multi-ethnic books published each year has been increasing – a severe lack of diversity in YAL is still noticeable and especially Native American protagonists in YAL are still poorly represented in the literary canon (Garcia 3; Hazlett and Hayn 192).

Year	Number of Books Received at CCBC	African / African Americans		American Indians / First Nations		Asian Pacifics/ Asian Pacific Americans		Latinos	
		By	About	By	About	By	About	By	About
2016	3,400	94	287	23	55	217	240	104	169
2015	3,400	108	270	19	42	176	113	60	85
2014	3,500	85	181	20	38	129	112	59	66
2013	3,200	69	94	18	34	90	69	49	58
2012	3,600	69	119	6	22	83	76	58	54
2011	3,400	79	123	12	28	76	91	52	58
2010	3,400	102	156	9	22	60	64	55	66
2009	3,000	83	157	12	33	67	80	60	61
2008	3,000	83	172	9	40	77	98	48	79
2007	3,000	77	150	6	44	56	68	42	59
2006	3,000	87	153	14	41	72	74	42	63
2005	2,800	75	149	4	34	60	64	50	76
2004	2,800	99	143	7	33	61	65	37	61
2003	3,200	79	171	11	95	43	78	41	63
2002	3,150	69	166	6	64	46	91	48	94

Table 1: Number of YAL titles published in the United States according to minority groups (2002-2016) (*Publishing Statistics*)

Similar to the discussions of the authorship of NAL in general, these discussions are also prominent in literature on Native themes published for children and young adults (Bradford 10-11; Roy 333-336; White-Kaulaity 11). For a long time, literature on Native themes was mainly the product of non-Native authors, featuring Native young adults as the main characters (Roy 333). Bradford (10) criticizes the fact that non-indigenous people represented indigenous culture and indigenous people in a way that they were the objects, and not the subjects of the discourse. Over time, these representations of Native Americans were heavily criticized and understood to be “erroneous continuations of damaging stereotypes” (Roy 333) – stereotypes referring to “a vivid but simple representation that reduces persons to a set of exaggerated, usually negative, character traits” (“Stereotype” 188). Authors were “regarded less as well-meaning gifted writers and artists who were honoring Native cultures and more as opportunists benefiting financially from misappropriation of traditional cultural knowledge” (Roy 333). Again, it needs to be stressed that these representations of indigenous people are “filtered through the perspectives of white culture” (Bradford 10) and thus these texts are – even if attempted to be such – never guaranteed to be free of stereotypes, as the dominant culture’s non-Native ideologies are frequently internalized to such an extent that they are accepted as being standard (10). Bradford (12), however, argues that – due to their cultural knowledge and individual experiences – Native authors are less likely to draw on stereotypes based on Western modes of thought. In general, NAYAL has yet not been incorporated extensively into scholarly conversations of NAL, so it is even more essential to provide

discussions in this field. In YAL, more recently, misrepresentations by non-Native authors have been replaced with stories written by Native Americans, which constitutes NAYAL according to the definition which will be applied in this thesis, i.e. YAL written by Native American authors featuring Native American young adult protagonists.

In the report by the CCBC introduced above, the numbers of YAL titles published in the United States each year are also divided according to minority groups (see table 1). Trends as regards the publication of NAYAL between 2002 and 2016 can be described in the following: in 2002, 6 out of 3,150 texts were published by Native Americans, while 64 books were considered to be about Native Americans, i.e. either the main character is a Native American or a Native American character features significantly in the narrative. Although the numbers of publications constantly fluctuated between 2002 and 2016, in 2016, 23 out of 3,400 texts were published by authors of Native American heritage, as opposed to 55 books being written about Native Americans. These numbers reveal that, on the one hand, the number of texts written by Native Americans have significantly increased in total. On the other hand, the number of books written about Native Americans has moderately decreased. It also needs to be taken into consideration that narratives incorporating Native Americans do not necessarily explore cultural difference, and it is rather important to analyze the ways in which those characters are represented instead of merely counting numbers.

To mention only a few authors, Sherman Alexie, Simon Ortiz, and Luci Tapahonso are publishing books for adult readers, but are also writing literature specifically addressed at children and young adults. In addition, Joseph Bruchac, Tim Tingle, and Cynthia Leitich Smith are also names associated with the genre of NAYAL. Leitich Smith and Debbie Reese have also created blogs for people interested in NAYAL and Native American children's literature, thus acknowledging today's importance of the Internet as a source of information. It needs to be stressed that the number of authors publishing NAYAL is still relatively small. Factors affecting this number are, amongst others, that the number of Native American authors opposed to non-Native authors is limited and that mainstream publishers have frequently not focused on publishing NAYAL (Bradford 49). The emergence of publishing houses which focus on NAYAL and thus encourage indigenous literary production, such as Oyate in the United States, have resulted in a higher appreciation of NAYAL (47). Additionally, literary awards are considered important tools in order to "recognize Native writers for their contributions and to contest the old model of cultural appropriation of [i]ndigenous cultural stories by outsiders who believe that [i]ndigenous stories are free for the

taking” (Roy 338). Especially over the last years, Native American authors have received numerous literary awards, which also include awards particularly created to devote attention to NAYAL, such as the American Indian Youth Literature Award (339).

The increasing number of Native American authors writing YAL has simultaneously resulted in a diversity of topics addressed in NAYAL and comprises a relatively broad scope of genres. As Roy (334) summarizes, the thematic focus of NAYAL has extended from retellings of cultural stories, including stories about tricksters, cultural figures or the Navajo Long Walk, to the representation of Native American adolescents’ contemporary lives, and to addressing sensitive topics, for example HIV. Contemporary NAYAL comprises a broad variety of themes because – as already outlined in section 2.2. – both YAL and also NAYAL are, in general, known for a major focus on the exploration of themes which young adults are interested in, can relate to, and enjoy. Roy (334-35) outlines that especially in recent publications, authors of NAYAL have explored genres with a crossover appeal including fantastic elements (fantasy-werewolves, etc.), while also focusing on topics which might be of particular interest to Native American teenagers but also non-Native adolescent readers. These topics include a focus on identity struggles, boarding school experiences and the historical background on Navajo code talkers. Addressing topics such as identity formation and the representation of Native American young adults in contemporary settings result in what Bradford considers as “a crucial corrective to the many texts by non-[i]ndigenous authors and illustrators that persist in treating [i]ndigenous cultures locked into ancient and unchanging modes of thought” (49). Another dominant narrative pattern applied in NAYAL is the friendship of Native American and non-Native young adults (Bradford 72).

In addition, also (auto-)biographies of Native people serve an important function as literary examples of the survival of Native Americans in everyday life. Especially in the United States, non-fiction texts elaborating on indigenous cultures and historical accounts of communities and individuals represent a prominent category (Bradford 48). Also memoir is a central theme that is often addressed in NAYAL in that it is “effective in combatting the stereotype that Native people exist[ed] only in the past” (Roy 335). A significant number of stories is told in the form of picture books, some of them addressing not only a children but also young adult audience, while particularly graphic novels enjoy popularity and are considered to be the most distinctive trend in NAYAL (Bradford 48; Roy 337).

To summarize the two major functions of multi-ethnic literature introduced in this section, NAYAL implies two different intended audiences: Native American young adults as members

of the culture of production, and non-indigenous young adults, including young people from a different cultural background who are confronted with the cultural understanding of another group and the emblematic of difference (Bradford 69). Especially due to the fact that today's classrooms are increasingly diverse, it is of utmost importance to provide students with literature that is diverse to its readers because young adults and their parents desire that their cultural backgrounds are represented in the classroom (Hazlett and Hayn 186; Kaplan 23; White-Kaulaity 10). While it is crucial to offer young adults readings of characters who are similar to them and who experience familiar situations, Hazlett and Hayn (193-194) stress that it is even more important to offer texts portraying differences. In exposure to and comparison with others, readers do not only experience someone else's life, but also learn more about themselves (194). However, in both the literary canon and curricula, the voices of minorities are still often excluded, since they are either stereotyped or underrepresented. White-Kaulaity metaphorically describes this issue in a way that the "voices of power" (8), i.e. the voices of the dominant culture, are at focus, while the readers do not experience the "power of voices" (8). Thus, if only reading texts from the canon which neglects indigenous literary productions, students frequently do not experience one of the main purposes of literature: reading and learning about themselves and others, which stresses why it is crucial to confront readers with literature about different ethnic groups.

When teaching NAYAL, teachers might also face various challenges. One of these major challenges is that it is particularly important to consider that one single book is not able to perfectly portray a cultural experience due to the diversity within and among different cultural groups (Botelho 268; White-Kaulaity 10). For instance, more than 560 different Native American tribes are federally recognized as such in the United States and Alaska; and while some similarities exist among these Native American tribes, also differences arise between the groups, including different languages, different cultural practices as well as different geographical locations (Washburn 428-429). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the variety of voices speaking in multi-ethnic literature, as in NAYAL the representations of one Native character can never be understood to be universal for all Native American adolescents. Both teachers and students need to understand that Native Americans cannot be considered a homogenous, undifferentiated group, and thus one true representation of indigeneity does not exist (Bradford 12; White-Kaulaity 10). Therefore, students and teachers should aim at overcoming potential internalized assumptions (Zitzer-Comfort 162). This can, for example, be achieved by providing students with the necessary cultural, historical and social background knowledge, as a lack of this knowledge is considered to be one of the most

frequent barriers when teaching NAYAL (White-Kaulaity 11; Zitzer-Comfort 162). Based on a survey conducted with her students, Zitzer-Comfort (161), for instance, argues that students are – in most cases – best familiarized with literature representing their own ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

In addition, when teaching NAYAL, both teachers and students also need to be aware of their own internalized assumptions on various levels. To begin with, these internalized assumptions might include stereotypes about Native Americans, and combatting those is seen as one of the main goals when teaching NAYAL (Zitzer-Comfort 162). Especially if students are not provided with the necessary background knowledge, as introduced above, this could result in stereotypes, prejudices, and negative or racist feelings (White-Kaulaity 11). In this regard, it needs to be stressed once again that despite providing students with insights into different cultural groups, preferably even creating an understanding of these groups, NAYAL is not necessarily immune to stereotypes and racialized hierarchies. Zitzer-Comfort (162) explains that not only negative stereotypes, but also those which might be interpreted as positive, for instance that Native Americans are said to feel closely connected to nature, are harming and have strong negative effects. According to Garcia (41), today, racialized depictions of characters even deviate from explicitly being considered racist, and are rather that subtle, which results in the fact that they are often not even realized by readers. All these factors undermine why it is significant to be aware of internalized assumptions.

Secondly, these internalizations might also result from assumptions as regards the literary production of texts and the reception of different types of literature. Both Zitzer-Comfort (162) and White-Kaulaity (11) agree that when teaching NAYAL, readers need to become aware of the internalizations of their own socialization as regards the fundamental understanding of human nature and the ways in which the world functions. Bradford (12) insists that engaging with NAYAL might result in the realization that various ideologies that are understood to be natural are actually culturally constructed. Therefore, when teaching NAYAL, teachers should aim at imparting both an understanding and appreciation of the literary texts' production, which might differ from the students' internalized assumptions.

To summarize, it can be observed that both multi-ethnic literature and NAYAL have definitely grown in popularity. Nonetheless, as the relatively low numbers of NAYAL published each year reveal, NAYAL still faces a long process of development before actually being able to reflect the variety of perspectives across and within different cultures. Therefore, the use of NAYAL in both American and international classrooms should be further

encouraged, which might simultaneously lead to minority populations gaining further visibility.

3. That's Them, That's Us: Forging Identities

The meaning of the word 'other' – regardless of whether considered as a noun or an adjective – seems to be common sense. Despite the fact that the process of categorizing and understanding someone as Other is as old as humankind, even “as original as consciousness itself” (de Beauvoir 6), the theory behind the term is more complex than probably imagined. Ideas of similarity and difference are crucial on various levels, such as people's cultural or ethnic identities, class identities or gender identities (Hall 231). The following section will introduce the concept of Otherness and will define it – with a special focus on ethnic and gender identities – for the purposes of this thesis.

In general, it can be argued that representations of the Other occur in various scholarly disciplines and in a wide variety of literary and cultural texts (234-38). While issues of Otherness are considered relevant to all narratives and are also dealt with outside of colonial or post-colonial contexts, representations of the Other seem to be most prominent in post-colonial texts (Fludernik 263). Hence, also the research on Otherness frequently focuses on the understanding of the Other in a post-colonial scenario, such as in Bhabha, Hall or Said. Due to the unique status of NAL as colonial, this post-colonial theoretical undermining is indeed vital for the understanding of Otherness, but not all of the ideas are equally useful for an analysis of NAYAL. Thus, after providing a brief introduction of the concept of Otherness in general, the focus will specifically shift towards the representation of Native Americans as the (cultural) Other and the Other from a masculinity studies' perspective.

3.1. Defining Otherness

Defining the Other is closely interrelated with questions of identity. In this thesis, identity is defined as “the imagined sameness of a person or of a social being at all times and in all circumstances” (Robins, “Identity” 172). Identities are constructed in social interaction with and in relation to people who are considered different (Deloria, *Play* 21; Fludernik 261; Robins, “Other” 249). Hence, all forms of identity, regardless of whether an individual's identity or collective identities, are constructed in interaction with the Other (Fludernik 261). Therefore, differences and similarities can be considered crucial factors contributing to a person's sense of (social) identity, which is considered negotiable (Jenkins 4-5).

Robins (“Other” 249) describes two sides of Otherness, which are frequently discussed: on

the one hand, the existence of the Other might result in anxiety and fears of the unknown. On the other hand, he refers to the fact that Otherness and difference are necessary for the existence of change in our world. However, especially in discussions of Otherness, the focus has mainly been on the fearful side of Otherness, which is frequently related to racist or xenophobic feelings (Robins, “Other” 249). This rather negative connotation attached to Otherness also provides the underlying understanding of Otherness in this thesis: the Other is used to refer to everything “outside the margins of the dominant cultural representations” (Plate 4). Central to the concept of Otherness is the idea that the Other is contrasted with the ‘self’, which is also referred to as the subject (Brooker 183). Brooker outlines that “the Other is construed as the non-self who departs from and simultaneously defines the norms of a dominant social order, whether by sexuality, race or ethnicity” (184). Deloria (*Play* 21) adds further identity categories which are defined in the relation between the self and the Other: class, gender, religion, region and nationality. To be precise, the dominant order has been constructed by “caucasian [sic], heterosexual, wealthy men” (Plate 4).

Othering is described as the process in which “feelings of rage, hostility, and hatred are projected onto what are regarded as dangerously alien persons or cultures” (Robins, “Other” 249). As this dichotomy of the self and the Other reveals, representations of Otherness are frequently expressed through binary oppositions representing direct opposites. According to Bauman, these dichotomies are crucial to the construction of identities:

In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of the social order, the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the first, the opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus abnormality is the other of the norm, [...] woman the other of man, stranger the other of the [N]ative, enemy the other of friend, ‘them’ the other of ‘us’, insanity the other of reason, foreigner the other of the state subject, but the dependence is not symmetrical. The second side depends on the first for its contrived and enforced isolation. The first depends on the second for its self-assertion. (14)

This quote again stresses the complexity of identity formation and the mutually constructed self in relation to the Other, since not only the Other is defined by the self but also vice versa. Both the Other and the self are represented as crucial to the social order, and the hierarchical power of the self is illustrated as well. In addition to Bauman, Crick (165) stresses that self and Other are mutually constitutive categories. He also outlines that the self and Other are not fixed, unalterable categories, but might change over time since understandings of what separates different cultures or social groups might further develop (165). Nonetheless, it also needs to be added that binary oppositions can be criticized in that the boundaries are

frequently blurred, as a two-part structure does not allow anything in-between.

In addition, Bauman's quote again emphasizes that Otherness is important on various levels and in various spheres. Therefore, it is not surprising that issues of Otherness have been addressed and defined differently in different scholarly disciplines. Hall (234), for example, summarizes different approaches to defining Otherness, ranging from linguistic, anthropological, to psychoanalytic approaches. In terms of this thesis, I do not consider a clear classification according to one particular of these approaches useful, but rather aim at summarizing the ideas which I consider the most appropriate. In my view, the anthropological explanation is highly interesting as its main argument is that "culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system" (236). According to this approach, difference is seen as shaping the basis of what society considers as culture, and binary oppositions are crucial in creating meaning (236). From a psychoanalytic perspective, the Other is considered as "fundamental to the constitution of the self, to us as subjects, and to sexual identity" (237). In other words, sexual identities are highly dependent on the ways in which the self is constructed as a subject. In addition to Freud, who argues that sexuality is not fixed in the child, Lacan focuses on the psychoanalytic Other (237). Rudd (222) summarizes Lacan's view stating that people are not fully present to themselves but are always constituted by the Other. Undoubtedly, however, the most prominent approach influencing today's understanding of how the self is constructed in relation to the Other is Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Said (1-30) focuses on the ways in which a dominant West has been constructed in opposition to the Orient by a means of denigration and Othering of the latter. Hence, Said refers to the West, "which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (300), in order to consider the West as the norm.

Plate (4-5) strongly criticizes the fact that the Other is usually defined in relation to the self and argues for changing this direction, moving from the perspective of the Other to that of the self. He strongly asserts that – despite this restructuring – difference is not merely negative and that it should not be the goal to turn all Others into a self. Rather, the major aim should be to consider differences as non-hierarchical (5). Without difference, also meaning itself could not exist, since meaning is relational (Hall 234). Nonetheless, Fabian (117) argues that anthropology will always have an impact on the struggles for mutual recognition.

3.2. **Nativeness = (Cultural) Otherness?**

The representations of Native Americans as stereotypical Others which are built on tropes central to Western views have been prominent in both literature and the different domains of popular culture since the beginning of colonialism. While the growing visibility of Native American authors, scholars, activists etc. has aimed at criticizing, subverting, challenging, and replacing those stereotypical representations by non-Natives, some of these negative representations have been persistent (Strong 1). This section will aim at introducing various approaches to defining the Native American Other, while also providing a historical analysis of the representations of Native Americans as the Other with a particular focus on the concept of “playing Indian”⁴ (Deloria), which has been primarily shaped by the Native American scholar Deloria.

As already discussed in section 3.1., the concept of the Native American Other mainly serves as a means of constructing an American identity. Deloria (*Play* 5) outlines that in the history of the United States, ranging from the colonial period to the present day, non-Native Americans have constructed a multitude of representations of the Native American Other. Americans have used those images in order to express their own difficulties as regards defining themselves both as individuals and as a collective nation, the “American imaginary” (Strong 2). Deloria observes that 18th century non-Natives constructed their identities in relation to Native Americans by creating and referring to oppositional dichotomies of “civilized-savage, gentry-commoner, male-female, [and] immigrant-native” (Deloria, *Play* 32). These dichotomies resulted in a view that non-Natives presented their worldview as the norm, as opposed to that of Native Americans representing the Other. Similar to Deloria, also Pearce addresses the relation of identity and Otherness and refers to the Native American as a person who “became important for the English mind, not for what he [sic] was in and of himself [sic], but rather for what he [sic] showed civilized men [sic] they were not and must not be” (5). Native Americans were devalued and represented as an undesirable Other. The issue of the interdependence of creating an identity in relation to the Other already highlights dominance, and also the dichotomy of male-female is addressed in Pearce’s quote since merely men are at focus of his observation.

In historical observations of the Native American Other, Deloria particularly highlights the American tradition of “playing Indian”, which is part of the American identity. Regardless of

⁴ Despite the fact that in this thesis the term ‘Native American’ is preferred, the terms ‘Indian’ and ‘indian’ will be used as in the original theories by Deloria and Vizenor, and if these terms are used in verbatim quotes or book titles. In addition, they will also be applied if using specific terms/phrases, such as Indian reservation.

whether for children who are dressing as Native Americans for Thanksgiving school performances or adults who are cheering for their favorite sports teams of 'Indians', the formation of a collective identity seems to be highly influenced by non-Native appropriations of elements of the indigenous American culture, such as symbols or costumes, and combined with expectations about Native American realities (Strong 125). Americans have used costumes and have adapted practices they consider fundamental to Native Americans "to identify with such generalized indigenous qualities as independence, vigor, bravery, loyalty, spiritual power, and closeness to nature" (131). Deloria's examination of "playing Indian" from a detailed historical perspective provides a fundamental basis for understanding the ways in which Americans have been constructing their identities, the self, by using imitative strategies.

The Native American Other has been constantly reinvented and appropriated throughout history (Deloria, *Play* 93-94). This is also outlined in Williams, who highlights the interrelation of history and identity by referring to tradition as "an intentionally selective version of shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and culture definition and identification" (115). In particular the image of the noble savage has been of major importance for the formation of an American identity. Native Americans were considered to simultaneously represent nobility and savagery, which juxtaposes the idealization of Native Americans and the urge for dispossession (Deloria, *Play* 4). The images of the Other depended on whether nobility or savagery was favored: emphasizing the noble sphere, for example, could serve as a critique of non-Native societies, whereas advocating the savage sphere could result in colonial legitimation (4). These two sides reflect that Native American Others were considered as "objects of both desire and repulsion, and in that raging contradiction lay their power" (175). These images were then reflected upon the emerging self, while they also influenced the ways in which Native American Others have been constructed as real or imagined (20). The perception of Native Americans through "a variety of European cultural lenses" (20), based on the understanding of aspects such as gender or religion, resulted in distorted views of the Native American Other. Hence, the image of the noble savage is "founded upon a metanarrative that insists upon the mythic and tragic '[O]therness' of Native Americans" (Yu 96).

Throughout history, non-Native Americans have dressed as Native Americans in various events or social and political movements, and referred to Native Americans in a way of "reinterpreting the intuitive dilemmas surrounding Indianness to meet the circumstance of

their times” (Deloria, *Play* 8). Thus, “playing Indian” has been shaped differently in different times. In the events of the Boston Tea Party, for example, disguise served as a means of symbolizing rebellion and as representing the separateness and opposition to England rather than to Native Americans (21-26). By turning noble savage Others into symbolic figures, colonists shifted both the oppositions and understanding of the self: “As England became a *them* for colonists, Indians became an *us*” (22; emphasis added). As this quote implies, Native Americans seemed to be rather considered a part of the self instead of being the Other. After the American Revolution, however, the Native American Other was frequently perceived in negative and racial terms (44-45). Despite the fact that organizations such as the Tammany society invoked Native American roots, these organizations considered Native Americans as distinct Others (55). While “playing Indian” in the Boston Tea Party still served as a means of denying the colonial status, these organizations focused on a historicized past and stressed the savage sphere in highly negative ways (69-70). As these examples reveal, Americans have imitated Native Americans in either positive or negative ways, while they were also considered as either interior or exterior to American Society (21). Todorov (185) introduces a typology in order to describe the relationships between the self and the Other along three different axes: the axiological level (focusing on the values of equality or inferiority), the praxeological level (focusing on identification or distance) and the epistemic level (focusing on knowledge or ignorance). The praxeological axis, the interplay of identification and distance, is also the axis at focus of Deloria’s approach of “playing Indian”.

Towards the beginning of the 20th century, the axes of the positive and negative Native American Other became gradually inverted: while the positive Indian Other was linked with representations of an ‘authentic’ – according to traditional and culture-focused advocates – Native American reality, those Native Americans who assimilated into modern American culture were negatively perceived as Others (Deloria, *Play* 73-74). Thus, discussions circulated around issues of authenticity and only those Native Americans presumably outside of modernity and mainstream American society served as the objects of desire (135). However, according to Powers (qtd. in Deloria, *Play* 140), Native Americans were, on the one hand, assimilating into American culture, and, on the other hand, also reviving their cultural difference on the basis of their past. Therefore, Deloria insists that “living Indians could be considered as authentic as dead ones” (*Play* 140). Similarly, Fabian (30-34) addresses notions of time and the construction of the Other, and argues that the Native American Other is frequently represented as being locked in the past. This process, which Fabian calls “allochronism” (32), a strategy of the “denial of coevalness” (31), refers to the fact that

contemporary Native Americans are often only understood to be survivors of an authentic past. This strategy of locking Native Americans in the past is again a means of distancing the self from the Other because the Native American Other is represented as existing in a different time, which seems to be a justification for (colonial) dominance. Until today, these representations of Native Americans being ‘frozen in time’ are still prominent in popular culture. To mention two examples: in 2012, Gwen Stefani was represented as a sexualized Native American princess being chased by cowboys in a No Doubt music video (Priya). In addition, also various fashion brands have “played Indian”; for example, in 2012, Victoria’s Secret models wore feather headdresses for a runway show (Gibson).

Since Native Americans assimilated into American culture, drawing clear boundaries between constructions of the self and the Other has become ever more complicated (Deloria, *Play* 142-43). In order to be able to distinguish the Other from the self, however, Native American Otherness was claimed to be – in a highly racist sense – determined by nature, since race, “a signifier indicating categories of people based on alleged biological characteristics, including skin pigmentation” (“Race” 170), represented one of the most visible differences (132-43). This representational strategy of naturalizing difference is also addressed in Hall (245), who states that strategies of the naturalization of difference result in a view that boundaries are seen as unchangeable and fixed. Not only Native Americans but also other minority groups such as African Americans or Latino/as are facing similar issues of oppression due to their visible ethnicities.

In addition to Deloria’s “playing Indian”, also Vizenor’s theory of the “indian” can be considered crucial to this thesis. According to Vizenor, the “indian” is “an occidental invention [...] [and] has no referent in tribal languages or cultures” (*Manners* 11). In other words, the term does not refer to actual Native Americans but can rather be understood as an invention and a sign of dominance of the Western society (Yu 90); thus being considered as “a weak metaphor of colonialism” (Vizenor, *Conversations* 85). As Vizenor argues:

The *indian* is the invention, and *indian* cultures are simulations, that is the ethnographic construction of a model that replaces the real in most academic references. Natives are the real, the ironies of the real, and an unnameable [sic] sense of presence, but simulations are the absence, and so the *indian* is an absence, not a presence. [...] That is to say, the simulations of the [O]ther have no real origin, no original reference, and there is no real place on this continent that bears the meaning of that name. (*Conversations* 85; original emphasis)

As this quote describes, there are striking differences between the “indian”, which is “a case of cultural nostalgia, the presence of tradition in a chemical civilization” (Vizenor, *Fugitives*

38), and the actual Native American. Thus, the representations of the “indian” are not representatives of real Native Americans but simulations without references, and signify the Native American Other. Native Americans are often only accepted by non-Natives if they conform to this idealized, invented “indian”, and are frequently merely linked with the traditional and cultural spheres of the past instead of the present (Deloria, *Play* 91; Yu 97). Thus, Vizenor (*Conversations* 84) introduces the “postindian” as a reaction to these dominant simulations attributed to the “indian” in order to provoke the understanding of the absence of the Other. The “postindian” represents both “an active, ironic resistance to dominance, and the good energy of native survivance” (84) and “the return of the repressed, [...] of the vanishing Indian as an uncanny specter of empire” (Ganser 23).

Similarly, Deloria also addresses the idea of the “postindian” and challenges the trope of the vanishing Native American. He argues that some Native Americans are gradually leaping into modernity, “not necessarily because they adopted political and legal tools from whites or because they were acculturated into the educational, political, and economic order of twentieth-century America [...] [but] because it became painfully clear that they were not distinct from the history that even then was being made“ (Deloria, *Unexpected* 231). In addition, the idea of the “postindian” can also be related to the fact that Native Americans do not merely observe “playing Indian” as bystanders but also actively reshape the emerging images of Native American Others (Deloria, *Play* 8). In particular in the 20th century, Native American authors and activists actively participated in non-Native Americans’ play by supporting and also challenging non-Native Americans’ perceptions of Native Americans by “imitating non-Indian imitations of Indians” (123) for non-Native audiences. Thus, Native Americans also subtly defend Native American cultural traditions against negative stereotypes by participating in and challenging the idea of “playing Indian” (122-25).

Nonetheless, “playing Indian” and thus representing Native Americans as a distinct Other can be considered “a tradition with limitations” (7), since this tradition is interrelated with uneven power relations:

In every instance, playing Indian represented, evaded, and perpetuated those relations. Indianness was the bedrock for creative American identities, but it was also one of the foundations (slavery and gender relations being two others) for imagining and performing domination and power in America. At the very same moment that it was suggesting Indians' essential place in the national psyche, playing Indian evoked actual Indian people and suggested a history of conquest, resistance, and eventual dependency. (186)

As this quote reveals, “playing Indian” represents a way of dominating Native Americans by a means of exercising power. However, analyzing and raising awareness of representations of Native Americans as the Other can be considered as crucial, since these representations provide significant insights into power-laden socio-cultural processes (Strong 1). Deloria (*Play* 189) further adds that – since, in the United States, the ‘culture’ part in the term ‘multiculturalism’ seems to be of greater importance than ‘multi-‘ – having knowledge about minority groups seems to serve a satisfactory means of political and social involvement. Thus, the identity formation of what constitutes an American still continues to neglect issues of inequality as well as asymmetrical power relations (189-90).

As this historical examination of the Native American Other portrays, the tradition of “playing Indian” can be either seen as the appreciation of Native American Otherness in a positive way or as the confirmation of the power of constructing and shaping identities in a negative sense. What can be considered highly interesting in relation to the shaping of Native Americans as the Other is the fact that Otherness is a philosophical concept of Western thought. In the texts under analysis, it is the Other who speaks. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how dominant stereotypical representations are addressed, resisted or countered in the texts written by the Other, as Vizenor states that “Natives, of course, use simulations too, but for reasons of liberation rather than dominance” (*Conversations* 84).

3.3. Masculinity Studies

In recent decades, the study of gender has attracted significant interest in various disciplines. While the focus of gender research has primarily been on representations of women, also the importance of masculinity studies has gradually increased since the emergence of the men’s movement in the 1990s. Similar to women’s studies, also masculinity studies is based on the assumption that people are viewed through a gendered lens, which typically captures male privilege (Kidder 304). The aim of masculinity studies is to challenge these inequalities by examining men’s relationship with patriarchal power relations (Kidder 304; Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell 1-2). Masculinity studies can be considered crucial as people who are committed to raising awareness of female stereotypes frequently tend to neglect the fact that stereotypical understandings of masculinity are equally overgeneralized and result in harm for boys and men just as they do for girls and women (Nodelman, *Boys* 2). Also, in YAL, likely due to the impact of feminism, applications of gender studies have predominantly focused on the issues of female representations (Flanagan 36; Stephens, “Preface” x). Bereska even asserts that “for

many years, gender has been perceived as a female quality” (159) and little attention has been devoted to the representations of male adolescents in YAL. Although the study of female representations and women as the Other in YAL is vital, it needs to be considered that a continuous focus on women as the main subjects of gender studies might simultaneously result in the naturalization of masculinity (Wannamaker 25). Thus, it is crucial that not only the importance of women’s studies, but also of masculinity studies for YAL is acknowledged. In this section, the focus will be on the definitions of masculinity in general, with a particular focus on hegemonic masculinity and subordinated masculinities. Also, due to the fact that NAYAL will be analyzed, Native American masculinities and young adult masculinities will be closely examined.

Before elaborating on masculinity specifically, it is vital to briefly address the concepts of sex and gender. In contrast to sex, which describes the biological differences between male and female, gender can be considered a social practice which is not merely restricted to the body but “exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* determine the social” (Connell 71; original emphasis). Hence, echoing de Beauvoir’s claim that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (295), masculinity studies challenges the view that masculinity is naturally given, as the construction of masculinity and of male identity can be considered a socially constructed process as well (Wannamaker 24). Mallan summarizes this view by describing masculinity “not as a ‘singular’, ‘given’ or ‘natural’ attribute of men, but as a social and political construction that is temporally and historically shaped” (57). This social construction of masculinity is highly relational because understandings of what it means to be a man are created in opposition to the Other and masculinity is, as such, based on dichotomies (Kimmel, *Homophobia* 120). In addition, Nodelman adds that since masculinity is a social construct, it “connects with but does not necessarily coincide with maleness” (*Boys* 2); in other words, masculinity is not naturally predefined by biological qualities. Thus, in this thesis, masculinity is understood as suggested in Reynolds as “a set of assumptions about what men are like which are projected on to those with male bodies” (*Lads* 12), which are frequently considered as universal but are in fact subject to variation.

Although the idea of masculinity began circulating in discussions of men’s studies in the late 1990s, Connell (71-75) establishes the idea of the existence of a variety of masculinities at a particular time and place. Accordingly, the plural form of masculinity will be preferred henceforth in this thesis when addressing masculinities in general. Despite the fact that masculinities are subject to temporal and regional differences, certain paradigms of

masculinities will always be dominant over others (Stephens, “Preface” ix). In Connell’s definition of the term hegemonic masculinity, the alterable nature of the concept is highlighted:

The concept of ‘hegemony’, deriving from Antonio Gramsci’s analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (77)

As this quote illustrates, hegemonic masculinity seems to be the single form of masculinities that is normative, the most privileged, and dominant one. Similarly, Messner (7-8) also highlights that hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and is seen as a form of empowerment. He also refers to the fact that hegemonic masculinity, usually understood to be “white, middle- and upper-class, and heterosexual” (8), is also characterized by its relation to certain subordinate masculinities, such as those dominated by ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and social class. These subordinating factors have challenged the traditional assumptions as to what constitutes hegemonic concepts (Messner 7; Reynolds, *Lads* 99). This issue further reflects the difficulties of studying gender, as it is highly complex to separately observe the various and shifting axes of difference that intersect with gender. For example, Messner mentions African American, Latino or Native American as well as disabled and homosexual men who “more than overshadow whatever privileges these people might have as men in society” (7). Thus, it is nearly impossible to consider “men as a coherent group” (8) and everything apart from the hegemonic position of authority is considered to be the Other. Connell, however, also adds that hegemonic masculinity represents a “‘currently accepted’ strategy” (77), implying that assumptions as to what defines this hegemony might be challenged and result in a new form of hegemony. Therefore, as hegemonic understandings of society are also alterable, this could result in a less oppressive form of masculinity becoming hegemonic.

As already mentioned, hegemonic masculinity can be considered a form of empowerment and is always interrelated with power relations. Connell (79) highlights that hegemonic masculinity and normative definitions are, in general, highly questionable, since only a minority of men even fit into these standards. Nonetheless, she argues that the majority of men benefit from the “patriarchal dividend” (79), which are the institutional and economic advantages men face from the overall subordination of women. Hence, she highlights the

complexity of the relationships between men and power as well as the ways in which men interrelate with different forms of hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, Reynolds (*Lads* 100-01) also states that it is nearly impossible to separate masculinities and power, both having been shaped together over the last centuries and now being firmly instilled in Western understandings.

Connell (80-81) suggests the use of the term marginalization in order to address the relations between hegemonic masculinity and subordinated ethnic groups, which are also linked to the authorization of hegemonic masculinity. With the growing awareness of the interrelation between gender and other variables, such as ethnicity and class, also different forms of marginalized masculinities have shifted to the focus of interest (76). As Connell (76-77) asserts, recognizing these multiple masculinities is the first step, while examining their relations is another one. In a reformulation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (847-50) focus on gender hierarchies and the geography of marginalized masculinities. While Connell and Messerschmidt (845-48) stress that different masculinities are structured hierarchically, they also add that certain regional and local forms of masculinity enjoy a status similar to hegemonic masculinity since they are widely accepted. However, they are not considered hegemonic in a global context. Hence, Connell and Messerschmidt argue that hegemonic masculinities on a regional and global level are interrelated, and that “we must understand that regional and local constructions of hegemonic masculinity are shaped by the articulation of these gender systems with global processes” (849). Therefore, males of minority cultures are challenged as they are influenced by both the culture-specific dominant masculinity and the global hegemonic masculinity (Wannamaker 32).

In this thesis, the marginalized masculinities at focus are those of Native Americans. It needs to be added that up to the present day, the majority of texts discussing Native American gender have primarily focused on representations of Native American femininity (Bell 2002; Sneider 2015; Van Dyke 2015), whereas Native American men and masculinities tend to be neglected or only addressed secondarily. In addition, Native American and Latino masculinities have also been discussed with less frequency than other marginalized masculinities in the United States, such as Asian American and African American masculinities (Reeser 26). Thus, this thesis presents an extremely valuable contribution to a field in which scholarly research has been rather neglected so far.

Due to the fact that NAYAL will be examined, also theoretical approaches to Native American masculinities are introduced. Despite not conforming to global hegemonic

masculinity, the Native American warrior is considered of privileged status on the local level of hegemonic masculinity and is still relevant to contemporary Native American culture (Roberts 141-42). Roberts (141-47) adds that the warrior ideal is not merely linked to historical and ancient views of war, but also to the contemporary roles of military service and communal contexts, such as war dancing in powwows. Despite being integral to Native American masculinity, the warrior symbol cannot merely be applied to masculinities but also femininities, as Native American women are equally present in the United States Armed Forces (142). This figure of the warrior is also mentioned in Vizenor's (*Conversations* 84) theory of the "postindian" introduced in section 3.2. In addition, Rushforth (337) examines in which ways Native Americans have adapted certain definitions of masculinity of the historical warrior ideal, such as bravery, to meet today's circumstances. Nonetheless, Roberts (142) strongly asserts that, due to the variety of Native American tribes, Native Americans cannot be generalized regarding their construction of masculinities.

Similar to Roberts, who states that "the warrior identity has continued as a stereotype imposed on Native Americans by non-Natives" (147), Rushforth (334) and Evans (188) argue that Native American masculinities have been defined in sharp contrast to the radically different understandings of European (hegemonic) masculinity. Native American masculinities can be considered especially unique with regard to what Roscoe describes as the "multiple gender paradigm" (126), meaning that Native American cultures have had a variety of ways to express gender. As Brown observes, Native Americans had at least six different gender styles instead of merely defining gender dichotomously: "women and men, not-men (biological women who assume some aspects of male roles) and not-women (biological men who assume some aspects of female roles), lesbians and gays" (6). For instance, biological men adapting women's behavior, commonly referred to as "berdache" (Rushforth 335) or – in a more contemporary expression – "two-spirited people" (Bell 317), were considered as deviant from non-Native gender norms, and thus repressed under colonization, but were attributed spiritual powers by Native Americans (Bell 317-318; Rushforth 335-336). These early manifestations of socially constructed genders already reflect the criticism of hegemonic Native American masculinity and the fluidity of gender roles, which are crucial in terms of this thesis, since the different forms of Native American masculinities are not considered as natural but constructed.

Due to the fact that the texts under analysis are examples of NAYAL, the relation between masculinities and young adults needs to be examined as well. Reynolds (*Lads* 99) argues that

if it is the aim to overcome the understanding of gender as a polarized, binary model, it is necessary to confront children and young adults with questioning hegemonic masculinity at an early age. Since, as already outlined, the construction of masculinities and femininities are considered to be learned as part of the socializing process, childhood should be the starting point of initiating changes of this hegemonic understanding. Thus, various scholars (Flanagan 26; Nodelman and Reimer 242; Reynolds, *Lads* 99) assert that it is vital to focus on the interrelation of gender and childhood, the ways in which dominant perceptions are produced and reified by society, and in which ways certain gender stereotypes can be deconstructed. Both children's literature and YAL may serve the crucial function of providing insights into the construction of identities and that of gender. In this respect, it must be noted that masculinities do not only focus on the representations of men, but also boys and young adults. It should be added that – similar to Tribunella (24) – I do not merely consider boys and male adolescents as younger versions of men, but argue that boyhood may challenge and alter the current understanding of masculinities.

Despite the fact that hegemonic masculinity norms exist, this does not automatically mean that young adult readers want to engage with readings that constantly reinforce these norms (Wannamaker 18). Nodelman even observes that various examples of YAL aim at transcending hegemonic masculinity norms and “are about boys seeing through the conventional construction of masculinities, learning to be more sensitive or more loving or more openly imaginative or literate, or less caught up in the pleasures of aggressive bullying” (*Boys* 11). These books focusing on challenging dominant versions of masculinity, however, are not primarily aimed at young adults who are comfortable with hegemonic masculinity norms, but rather at those readers who are interested in critiquing those assumptions: usually those who are considered to be the Other on various levels (13). Therefore, Wannamaker (19) argues that there is an urgent need to represent young adult characters from minority groups in literature that challenges hegemonic masculinity, since young adults from minority groups are often only exposed to texts of mainstream popular culture that do not mirror their lives. This aspect is of great importance as by convincing (young adult) readers that hegemonic masculinity equally harms men and boys as it harms women and girls, it might be possible to influence a large number of males “to embrace versions of masculinit[ies] that are not based on the oppression of women, gay men, minorities, and other ‘[O]thers’” (20). What needs to be considered is that dominant masculinity is not perceived in negative ways by all people, especially males, which again results in the maintenance of those systems of power (20).

In contemporary YAL, various versions of masculinities mirroring the ways in which male young adults construct their identities are explored. While traditional, hegemonic masculinity is still at focus in literary texts – which may, however, be deliberately used to question those representations – new masculinities interrogating this dominant version are frequently favored (Stephens, *Schemata* 44). The protagonists of these texts often fail to conform to prescriptive requirements of hegemonic masculinity: Flanagan (36) summarizes that male adolescent characters often deviate from certain expectations in regards to male physical appearance, such as being described as small and weak instead of muscular, and are – in sharp contrast to traditional representations – also frequently portrayed as sensitive characters as they openly display emotions. Stephens defines this “sensitive new man schema” (“Preface” xi) in the following:

The New Age Boy, a male child in his primary school years who is beginning to display the traits of the New Age Man, [...] is depicted as different, often an outsider. He is characteristically the boy who reads for pleasure and may aspire to become a writer himself, and this endows him with a mastery over discourse which is germane to subjective agency; his relationships with peers are other-regarding [...]; he tends to lack physical prowess and physical courage, though his moral courage and other-regardingness will prompt him to act courageously. (44)

This “New Age Boy” offers an alternative to two opposed categories: the “Old Age Boy” and the “Mommy’s Boy”. While Stephens describes the Old Age Boy as “either aggressive or something of a rascal, self-regarding and physically assertive” (*Schemata* 44), the character of the Mommy’s Boy is a “pampered and privileged child who is to an excessive degree fashioned by his parents” (44). The schema of the New Age Boy destabilizes the dichotomy of manly (Old Age Boy) and unmanly (Mommy’s Boy) and is thus in contrast to both categories (44). However, Stephens (*Schemata*, 44-45) adds that all three categories are still prominent in YAL. In addition, Tribunella (24) remarks that certain elements traditionally linked with boys, such as sports, combat or discovery, are still recurring in contemporary YAL.

As this section illustrates, various spheres of masculinities need to be taken into consideration when analyzing NAYAL. Not only might Native American characters be regarded as the young men Other due to their deviances from hegemonic masculinity in general, but also due to their minority status.

4. Analysis: De/Constructing the Cultural and Young Men Other

Based on the theoretical foundation provided in the preceding sections, the following part will focus on the analysis of the representation of the Native American Other in Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (henceforth *TATD*) and Eric Gansworth's *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (henceforth *IIEGOH*). As already examined in sections 2.2. and 2.3., these texts have been selected due to the fact that representations of Native American young adults in NAYAL have largely been neglected so far (Kertzer 53). Contemporary fiction is even considered "probably the most underrepresented type of Indian-themed book" (Seale and Slapin 19). Additionally, the two texts share certain features with regard to the topics addressed. In both texts, the male protagonists struggle with forging their identities, since they are confronted with two different worlds they live in: the reservation and a (primarily) white high school. Both authors and their texts are also considered two of the most prolific examples of NAYAL according to Bruchac (39).

Another specific feature which both texts share is that they can be considered multimodal texts as they combine text and visual elements. Rader (*Reading* 299) highlights the growing importance of the interplay between different literary genres or text and image in NAL, observing that images are either used for aesthetic reasons or are thematically- or culturally-driven decisions the artists and writers take. Rader calls this interplay of different literary genres or between text and image "indigenous interdisciplinarity" (*Resistance* 2), which is a specific form of resistance. In both texts under analysis, the illustrations are not merely included for aesthetic reasons, but serve to convey the author's message. While Alexie's *TATD* includes cartoons by the non-Native artist Ellen Forney, Gansworth is both author and artist of his "innovative mash-ups" (Rader, *Reading* 308). In *TATD*, the artistic elements do not merely serve to reinforce the message conveyed, but simultaneously provide additional information which is crucial in order to understand the protagonist and the other characters (Moura-Koçoğlu 174). *IIEGOH*, in contrast, only contains four illustrations in total, which serve to visualize and metaphorically describe the underlying themes of the novel. The visual representations in this text are not merely illustrative, but they are "separate, parallel, visual narratives, for a visually adept reader" (Rader, *Reading* 309). In an interview, Gansworth even states that he "never want[s] images merely to illustrate words, or words to explicate images. They are, to [him], parallel narratives" (Weagel 78). Thus, the two levels of text and image

will also be blended in the following analysis, since both – verbal and visual – levels equally contribute to the information conveyed.

As can be derived from the title of this diploma thesis, the analysis focuses on the de/construction of the Other in the two novels. Hence, both texts will be analyzed with regard to the ways in which Native Americans are constructed as the Other. Since constructions of the Other are always inevitably related to the binary opposition of the self, deconstruction serves as a useful approach to the analysis of these representations. Deconstruction, a strategy primarily associated with the French philosopher Derrida, refers to “a critical *method* or procedure, involving the reversal and then annulment of hierarchically opposed terms” (Frow 70; original emphasis). Hence, the following analysis will aim at calling into question the hierarchical constructions of the Other in relation to the self. In addition, close contextual reading is considered an appropriate method to analyze the representations of the Other, since the general understanding of the characters’ Otherness is enhanced by a detailed examination of the author’s representations.

Additionally, it will be the focus to examine the ways in which cultural Otherness and Otherness from hegemonic masculinity norms intersect to construct the protagonists as the Other. Intersectionality is a useful approach with regard to analyzing how different social categories– including ethnicity, social class, and gender – as well as how categories of people who are privileged (e.g. white men) as opposed to those who are oppressed (e.g. Native American men) intersect (Guittar and Guittar 657). Examining those representations, however, does not aim at reinforcing the binary formations but rather at questioning the ways in which Native Americans are still frequently perceived as the Other. In the following analysis, the words ‘Indian’ and ‘white’ will be applied as they are used in the novels in order to portray that this clear differentiation already highlights the dichotomy of the self and the Other.

4.1. Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

The Native American writer Sherman Alexie, frequently considered as one of the most successful and iconic contemporary Native American writers, has risen to celebrity status (Hoffman, “Introduction” xv). *TATD*, Alexie’s first young adult novel published in 2007, is a semi-biographical account in which Alexie draws upon his experiences growing up on the Spokane Indian reservation (Alexie and Forney 245-46). His novel can be referred to as the

most prominent example of NAYAL, is also internationally renowned, and has won several awards, including the National Book Award for Young People's Literature. However, the book has also been highly criticized and since its publication, it has been repeatedly listed on the American Library Association's list of banned and challenged books (*Frequently Challenged Books*).

Summarizing the main characteristics of YAL introduced in section 2.2., including texts following a distinctly teen voice, focusing on adolescents and their struggles in discovering their identities, and having the same literary value as texts for adults, *TATD* can definitely be classified YAL. Nonetheless, as also examined, the fact that the novel is primarily targeted at young adult readers does not restrict the audience to being a young adult one. In an interview, Alexie indeed confirms that *TATD* is mainly addressed at young adults, “[N]ative kids certainly, but also poor kids of any variety who feel trapped by circumstance, by culture, by low expectations” (Alexie and Peterson 183). He further adds that his primary audience is “college-educated white women [...] [who] seem to be the people most willing to ignore barriers and boundaries and to reach across” (183) which definitely confirms the text's crossover appeal.

TATD, Sherman Alexie's semi-autobiographical account of his childhood and youth experience, targets the aftermath of exploitation and oppression of Native Americans. Alexie does so in form of the everyday struggle of the young Native American boy, Arnold/Junior Spirit, from a dead poor reservation, who writes into his diary, telling the reader all his secrets and feelings. Only through this narrative form, fairly common in YAL, does the reader gain honest insights into various key issues of his struggles as the cultural and young men Other, since Junior is the one to shape the story. For example, at times, he decides to keep secrets from the readers (149), but also addresses the audience directly by the use of personal pronouns. Thematically, *TATD* focuses on Junior's decision to attend an all-white high school off the reservation and the consequences of this decision. In his first-person account and cartoons, being a homodiegetic narrator, Junior informs the reader about his struggles living in-between the two different worlds he lives in, the distance he experiences from his best friend Rowdy due to his decision to leave the reservation, the struggles to blend in his new surroundings at Reardan High School as he is the Other, and even facing his former classmates from the reservation in a basketball game. His life is also shaped by several losses Junior experiences: the deaths of his grandmother, sister, and his father's best friend.

In the following sections, the verbal and visual representations of the protagonist as the cultural and young men Other in *TATD* will be examined. In order to address the various representations of Junior as the Other, the analysis is divided into several sections based on unifying themes which are, in general, prominent in *YAL* and *NAYAL* respectively. As already stressed regarding intersectionality, the levels of cultural and young men's Otherness cannot be clearly separated in all instances and thus will be blended in the analysis.

4.1.1. (In)Visible Otherness

Junior is represented as being different on various levels. Apart from the distinction of being the Other for white society – teachers, students, and parents – at Reardan High School, Junior can also be referred to as the Other within his own tribe, as he is physically different for a variety of reasons.

From birth onwards, Junior's life is significantly affected by a physical condition known as hydrocephalus, which is an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain (Alexie and Forney 1). Junior refers to this condition as being “born with water on the brain” (1), as he considers this description more appropriate than describing his brain as “a giant French fry” (2). This brain damage simultaneously results in other physical ailments: Junior has forty-two teeth instead of thirty-two as most young adults do, he can barely close his mouth due to his excess teeth, and his brain damage results in one near-sighted and one far-sighted eye. Thus, he is required to wear glasses. In addition, Junior describes himself as skinny with huge hands and feet, humorously comparing himself to a “capital L walking down the road” (3), and he has a huge skull. Junior states that while he “looked goofy on the outside, [...] it was the inside stuff that was the worst” (3). Due to his brain condition, he is susceptible to seizures and speaks both with a stutter and a lisp. All these conditions (see figure 1) mark him different from birth, and because of these deviances people on the reservation call him a “retard” (4). Junior perceives himself as the Other due to his unusual look, referring to himself as “weirdo me” (1), “a zero on the rez”⁵ (16), and directly contrasting himself with “the typical human” (2). In that respect, Junior's description of his forty-two teeth is particularly interesting: “Ten more than usual. Ten more than normal. Ten teeth past human” (2). This way of comparing himself to what is considered usual and normal raises the question of what actually constitutes the norm. Most probably, he is referring to the characteristics according to

⁵ In *TATD*, Junior and other Native Americans refer to the reservation using the term ‘rez’. Hence, this term will also be used in verbatim quotes.

hegemonic masculinity, the ideals which “serve to repress individual differences by identifying the supposed ideal as the norm“ (Nodelman, *Boys* 2). In one of the cartoons, Junior’s self-portrait (see figure 1), he ironically draws himself with all his conditions. The irony of the sketch title conveys that – in an image-driven society – Junior is far from being glorious. In addition, it contains a reference to the musical *My Fair Lady*, in which Eliza Doolittle is drilled with speech exercises. The original quote from the musical is “The Rain in Spain”, which Junior cannot pronounce correctly. Thus, Junior, due to his disabilities deviating from the hegemonic norm, can be considered as being an outsider, the Other, in both white society and his tribe.



Figure 1: Junior's Self-portrait (Alexie and Forney 5)

Gordy, one of Junior’s non-Native friends, also refers to the fact that historically disabled individuals have received positions of Otherness due to their minority status: “So, back in the day, weird people threatened the strength of the tribe. If you weren’t good for making food, shelter, or babies, then you were tossed out on your own. [...] Weird people still get banished” (132). This quote exemplifies that if people are perceived as unable, they are frequently excluded from the community due to their Otherness – similar to Junior.

As the examples above illustrate, Junior is a character with a strong sense of humor and is aware of both his differences and the prejudices he is confronted with. Nonetheless, Junior refuses to be defined by his Otherness, which can even be seen as crucial for his decision to transfer to another school. Examining Junior’s Otherness in terms of both his disability and attending a reservation school, Junior’s status can be considered of double minority: not only is he the Other within the Spokane tribe, but also are Native American students isolated and othered from white society in reservation schools (Crandall 72-73). This double minority

status remains persistent when Junior decides to attend a different school, since he is again considered an outsider and the Other.

4.1.2. “Part-Time Indian“: Reservation Life vs. the ‘White World’

Junior’s identity formation is determined by the spaces he lives in, since he travels between two worlds: the Spokane Indian reservation located in Wellpinit and the all-white Reardan High School. Bradford (148-166) observes that such journeys undertaken by indigenous children or young adults represent a common theme in multi-ethnic literature and NAYAL respectively. While Bradford (148) refers to various literary examples in which children or young adults are forcefully removed from their families and assimilated into the dominant culture in residential or boarding schools, Junior himself initiates crossing the border in *TATD*. These borders are interrelated with the fact that the hierarchies of ethnicity in *TATD* are spatialized (125-36).

Junior describes himself by highlighting clear dichotomies, especially the dichotomy of Indian versus white. When Junior arrives in Reardan for the first time, he immediately starts comparing himself to the white kids on a visible level: “Those kids weren’t just white. They were translucent” (56). This contrast highlights Junior’s Otherness on a visible level of having a different skin color, but also conforming to the prejudiced stereotype against white people. What is crucial about Junior’s representation is that he suddenly starts to view himself through the eyes of the white students, who stare at him “like [he] was Bigfoot or a UFO” (56), as if he is a surreal, alienated Other. Nonetheless, neither Junior nor the readers know whether the way in which the other students look at him is necessarily based on racist assumptions, or on the fact that he is new to school. However, Junior’s arrival illustrates that he does not feel comfortable in his new surrounding and even starts wondering why he came to Reardan, which he describes as the direct opposite of the reservation, his family, and himself: “I didn’t deserve to be there. I knew it; all of those kids knew it. Indians deserve shit” (56). By arguing to know what white kids think about him, Junior perceives himself in the way the other students might potentially view him. This perspective can be related to Du Bois’ (8) concept of “double-consciousness”, which he introduces in order to refer to a split self involving two different cultural identities. He expresses “a peculiar sensation, [...] this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (3), in this particular case, others referring to white society. This concept is highly interrelated with the process of Othering, since it serves to question the understanding of the self. Despite the fact that

initially being used in relation to African American literature, double-consciousness can indeed also serve as a useful approach to analyzing NAL and NAYAL.

Junior is forced to establish this second identity of being Arnold in order to become an individual existing in the white world. This identity struggle is also expressed in Junior's confusion to choose a name when he enters the classroom for the first time. In a conversation with Penelope, a non-Native girl from Reardan, he tells her that his name is Junior and the girl immediately starts to laugh about the – in her view – unusual name. The teacher, however, addresses Junior by his “*name name*” (60; original emphasis), Arnold, while Junior explains that Junior is his “*real name*” (60; original emphasis). Stating that his name is both Junior and Arnold, feeling “like two different people inside of one body” (61), Junior again reflects a split personality, a sense of “double-consciousness” (Du Bois 8). At home on the reservation, he is Junior, whereas his name Arnold is established in Reardan High School. Thus, Junior's two names serve as symbols for the two colliding worlds he lives in. The names also resemble that he feels uncomfortable and reflects the Other within both worlds. According to Bradford and Baccolini, this feeling of Otherness most probably results from the fact that the two different worlds “are inflected by differences of class, race, worldview, and values, so that [...] the opposition between the rez and Reardon [sic] is built on a mixture of social and spatial factors” (46).

In my view, one of the most powerful cartoons (see figure 2) that Junior depicts is the direct comparison of the differences between being white, the self, and Indian, the Other: while the affluent white side is – according to Junior – characterized by a bright future, positive role models, and hope, the impoverished Indian life is characterized by a vanishing past, a family history of diabetes and cancer, and bone-crushing reality. Thus, Alexie also refers to the myth of the vanishing Indian. In addition, the disparities between the two split personalities reflect the economic differences between Native Americans and white people. As can be observed, the white person is wearing an ergonomic backpack and a Timex wristwatch, whereas the Native American is using a garbage bag for his books and does not have a watch at all. Also, the cartoon resembles Junior's sense of “double-consciousness” (Du Bois 8): feeling like two people within the same body which is represented by merging two people in one picture, and his struggles with reconciling those two identities. This view is also reflected in Junior's statement that he feels like “somebody had shoved [him] into a rocket ship and blasted [him] to a new planet. [He] was a freaky alien and there was absolutely no way to get home” (66).

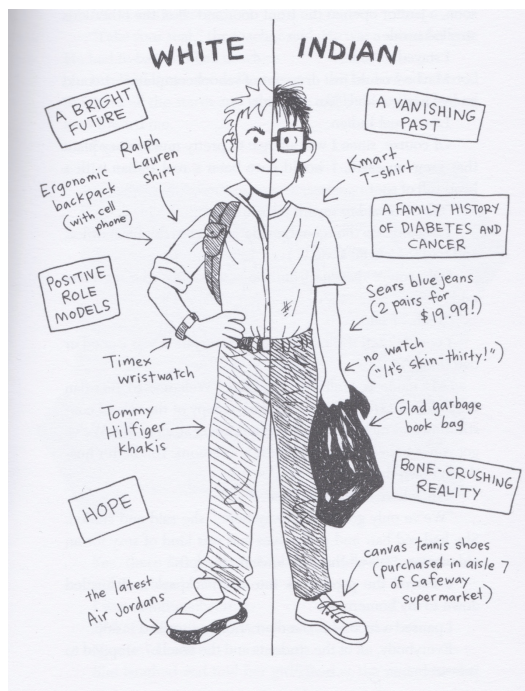


Figure 2: White/Indian Differences (Alexie and Forney 57)

Similarly, the distance Junior physically travels between the reservation and school is fundamental to Junior's development and identity. Traveling between Reardan and Wellpinit resembles Junior's struggle with which of the two worlds to identify with, which is described in the following:

A strange thing was happening to me. Zitty and lonely, I woke up on the reservation as an Indian, and somewhere on the road to Reardan, I became something less than Indian. And once I arrived at Reardan, I became something less than less than less than Indian. (83)

Traveling between Reardan and Wellpinit, between the little white town and the reservation, I always felt like a stranger. I was half Indian in one place and half white in the other. It was like being Indian was my job, but it was only a part-time job. And it didn't pay well at all. (118)

These textual moments disclose that Junior experiences a constant struggle with his life, since he neither feels to be part of the one nor the other world, which he addresses by comparing being an Indian to a part-time job. By stating to be "half Indian" and "half white", as well as the "part-time Indian" focus in the title, Junior's personality seems to be determined by an inner duality. Bhabha refers to these "'in-between' spaces [as] provid[ing] the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" (2). Nonetheless, it is questionable whether Junior ever felt like a 'real' Indian on the reservation because he has always been considered to be different and already expresses his urge to escape the reservation in the first chapter. This is also reflected when Junior considers dropping out of Reardan High School to live in the woods

like a hermit, “a *real* Indian” (58; emphasis added). However, the question arises whether, especially in contemporary times, this romanticized representation actually resembles what a ‘real’ – a highly negotiable concept – Indian is like. The majority of his tribal members, including Junior’s best friend Rowdy, consider Junior a traitor and his act of transferring schools a betrayal. Hence, the people on the reservation even metaphorically consider Junior an apple, being “red on the outside and white on the inside” (132). This representation of Junior illustrates that the majority of his Native American community considers any deviations from their norms a betrayal.

It also needs to be added that Junior does not merely move across the physical boundaries between Reardan and Wellpinit, but also gradually develops within those cultural boundaries. While in the beginning of the novel Junior still considers the most crucial difference between Native Americans and white people (42-43), it is revealed over the course of the novel that also white people face challenges in their lives. For example, Penelope is an anorexic girl who – at first – rejects Junior due to his Otherness. Finally, his Otherness, accompanied by his experiences with addictions on the reservation paralleling Penelope’s anorexia, is the reason why the two of them establish a friendship. In addition, despite first representing Junior as the Other due to the constraints of reservation life, it becomes obvious that the characters in Reardan also feel trapped in their town in a similar way to the reservation. While Arnold leaves the reservation in order to leave the circle of poverty and find hope, also the characters in Reardan face limitations in their lives. Penelope, for example, describes Reardan as “too small. Everything about it is small. The people here have small ideas. Small dreams” (111). In addition, this view is also reflected in a conversation between Gordy and Junior, in which Junior explains that “[s]ome Indians think you *become* white if you try to make your life better, if you become successful” (131; original emphasis). Gordy, however, ironically replies that “[i]f that were true, then wouldn’t all white people be successful?” (131). While in his friendship with Gordy Junior manages to transcend the cultural boundary of white-Indian, their friendship is actually based on both characters’ outsider status, since Gordy is described as a nerd who does not have any friends. Due to his few friendships in Reardan, the white town appears to become a place in which also Junior may be a legitimate participant of social life. These friendships also highlight that a person’s understanding of space closely correlates with interpersonal relations. Nonetheless, Junior constantly reasserts that he is “not all goofy-eyed in love with white people” (154) and that participating in Reardan’s culture raises his awareness of the positive aspects of reservation life, such as the way his parents care about him. Thus, in my view, Junior’s departure actually

represents an attempt to be different – despite he has already been different on various levels all his life – instead of an attempt to assimilate into a different culture.

While in the beginning of *TATD* Junior is defined by neither belonging to one nor the other world, he finally realizes that he does not merely belong to the tribe of Spokane Indians, but also to various other tribes, such as the tribes of cartoonists, poverty, and basketball players (217). Hence, he is successful in developing a multi-faceted identity, stating that “[he] used to think the world was broken down by tribes [...]. By black and white. By Indian and white. But [he finally] know[s] that isn’t true. The world is only broken into two tribes: The people who are assholes and the people who are not“ (176). In this quote, Junior emphasizes the way in which he further develops his sense of being the cultural Other, since he concludes that empathy is of wider significance than ethnicity. He also finally manages to overcome the internalized norms of both Native American and white communities by deconstructing the binaries based on ethnicity. Thus, Junior is finally able to relocate his identity and creates a hybrid identity on the “third space” (Bhabha 101) or “liminal space” (4), living in between those two spaces and combining them. This liminal space cannot be considered neutral, but “is determined by social practices, cultural differences and relations of power” (159). In addition, in the end of the novel, Rowdy starts to encourage Junior in his dreams and refers to him using the analogy of “an old-time nomad” (230). Since, in the past, Native Americans used to be nomadic and left their homes, Junior’s decision to transfer schools embodies a powerful means of expressing his Native American heritage, although his tribal members actually perceive it in the opposite. Due to their development, both Junior and Rowdy can be considered dynamic characters.

All of the examples introduced above reveal that space and identity in *TATD* are strongly intertwined and fundamentally affect the construction of the Other. Space and the journeys between different locations simultaneously serve to traverse cultural differences as well as the different values related to a specific cultural belief system. These distances between the two worlds of the reservation and Reardan are not merely geographical, but also emotional and psychological (Bradford and Baccolini 46). Hence, I contend that Junior represents an example of the possibility to live in two different cultural spheres at the same time and he illustrates that the boundaries between different cultures are assailable. In addition, the observations in this section also illustrate that identity is “a work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others“ (Taylor and Spencer 4).

4.1.3. (Native American) Stereotypes

The way non-Natives perceive Native Americans as a reinforcement of certain stereotypes is distinctive for the representation of Native Americans as the cultural Other, which are frequently based on sources such as Hollywood movies or controversial schoolbooks (Hoffman, “Introduction” xiii). Donaldson observes that these stereotypes are numerous, including “the no good, lazy, dirty, drunken Indian; the sullen, stolid, stone-faced, humorless Indian; the treacherous, dishonest and sometimes violent Indian” (4), and three major archetypal categories: “the bloodthirsty savage, the noble savage, and the vanishing Indian – with the last two of these categories often combined” (5). In *TATD*, Alexie illustrates that stereotypes are firmly rooted in both white and Native American societies. In an interview, Alexie highlights that he is frequently criticized for his depiction of Native Americans, which is understood by many to be stereotypical and negative (Alexie and Peterson 159). Native writers are frequently caught between affirming and celebrating Native American culture or highlighting the negative representations of colonialism (Bradford 162). Alexie asserts that he does not perpetuate stereotypes, but represents the “dump reality” (Alexie and Peterson 159) that Native Americans are confronted with in their everyday lives. Hence, in Native Americans’ representation of being the cultural Other it is crucial to distinguish stereotypes from social realities, for instance by having a look at statistics which reveal an insight into Native American realities.

Before elaborating on the stereotypes imposed on Native Americans by white people, it is again vital to stress that the narrator in *TATD* is homodiegetic, meaning that stereotypes are merely examined from Junior’s perspective. Hence, several of the stereotypes are based on Junior’s assumptions. When depicting the medical treatment of Native Americans, for example, Junior states that the white dentist believes that Native Americans only feel half the pain (2-3). Hence, he also only uses half the amount of the local anesthetic he would use on white patients to treat Native American patients, which is, although being hyperbolic, based on the racist, stereotypical notion that Native Americans experience pain differently. Similarly, in Reardan, Junior is harassed by students who call him different names, such as chief, Sitting Bull, Tonto, redskin, or squaw boy (63), drawing upon internalized stereotypes of Native Americans. Junior adds that none of the students ever got violent towards him because “[a]fter all, [he] was a reservation Indian, and no matter how geeky and weak [he] appeared to be, [he] was still a potential killer” (63). In this example, Alexie plays with the Native American stereotype of the savage Other. All of these examples imply the internalized stereotype of Native Americans as the noble savage with a focus on the savage aspect, in

which – as I have described in section 3.2. – Native Americans are/were considered uncivilized and wild. Another prominent prejudice in the novel is the one Junior's science teacher holds against him. In one of the lessons, he rejects Junior's answer, despite the fact that he is right, condemning the teaching on the reservation (84-85). It needs to be added that Junior infers his assumption that the others consider him a potential killer from the way the other students verbally treat him.

Another crucial passage for the internalization of white people's stereotypes about Native Americans is the arrival of billionaire Ted at grandmother Spirit's funeral, "yet another white guy who showed up on the rez because he loved Indian people SOOOOOOOO much" (162). Junior describes Ted's performance as both "sickening [a]nd boring" (162). In his speech, Ted represents his love for Native Americans by appropriating Native American culture and arts, arguing that he understands both Native American culture and misery. Ted reduces Native Americans to the arrowheads and sculptures he collects, thus perceiving them as cultural objects, making them feel "like insects pinned to a display board" (163). He is convinced that he bought a powwow costume which once belonged to Junior's grandmother and even hired an expert to trace the costume back to the Spokane reservation. When handing back the costume, Junior's mother, however, reveals Ted's ignorance, stating that neither was her mother a powwow dancer, nor is the costume of Spokane design, which results in "two thousand Indians [...] laughing[,] [...] the most glorious noise [Junior] ever heard" (166). Sharing laughter at this white man, Junior feels part of his community again.

Ted's performance can be also interpreted an example of "playing Indian". Although he is convinced to understand what actually defines Native Americans, he rather represents white people's oppressive and ignorant appropriation of Native American culture. As reflected in Junior's cartoon (see figure 3), Ted satirically conforms to various stereotypes imposed on Native Americans. All the purportedly Native American clothes he wears are expensive forgeries, which non-Natives do not recognize as such. Additionally, the cartoon also contains references to the Native American historical figure Geronimo and Kevin Costner's movie *Dances with Wolves* (1990), which has frequently been criticized for the stereotypical portrayal of Native Americans and is thus similar to Ted's performance of "playing Indian" (Shanley 82). It needs to be added that it is not explicitly stated in the text whether Ted is actually dressed in such a way or whether it merely presents a means to impose stereotypes.

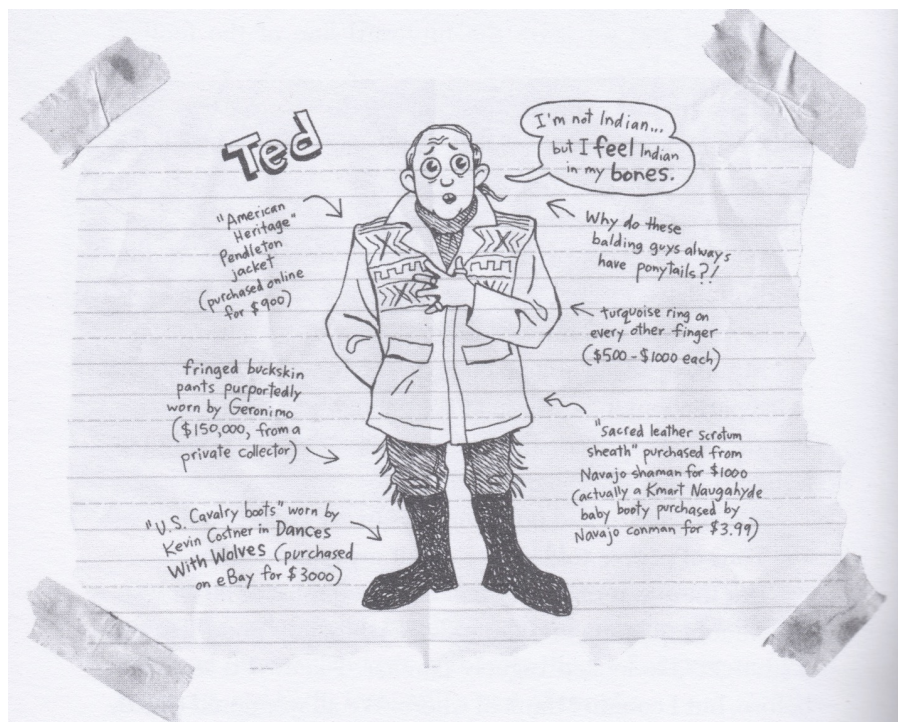


Figure 3: Ted at the Funeral (Alexie and Forney 162)

Alexie also provides insights into different shapes and realities of Native American life, including poverty, unemployment, alcohol abuse, racism, and death, which all result in a highly authentic text. However, in general, these social realities cannot merely be generalized to represent Native Americans as the Other, since also non-Natives and other ethnic minority groups might be affected by these issues. Nonetheless, in *TATD*, these issues are merely associated with Native Americans, while white people are not affected by any of them. Hence, by portraying the issues merely as part of Native American culture, Native Americans are indeed depicted as the Other. Regarding poverty, Junior describes that Native Americans believe to be determined by their poverty:

But we reservation Indians don't get to realize our dreams. [...] It sucks to be poor, and it sucks to feel that you somehow deserve to be poor. You start believing that you're poor because you're stupid and ugly. And then you start believing that you're stupid and ugly because you're Indian. And because you're Indian you start believing you're destined to be poor. It's an ugly circle and *there's nothing you can do about it*. (13; original emphasis)

This view can again be considered an instance of "double-consciousness": while Junior and the other Native Americans realize that they are victims of power discourses, they are double victims since they have internalized these views, which results in the affirmation of dominant discourses. The educational situation on the reservation – which is flawed due to outdated course books – the feeling to be of less virtue, and the economic situation negatively affect

Native Americans' self-perception, since not even students get the chance to break this vicious cycle of despair. This internalization is also expressed in the conversation between Mr. P and Junior in which the former explains that "[t]he only thing [Native American] kids are being taught is how to give up" (42), which results in a lack of hope. In order to cope with this despair, various characters in the novel, including Junior's father or Eugene, seem to consider the excessive consumption of alcohol as the only solution. Nonetheless, Alexie does not merely portray those characters in a negative light of the stereotype of the drunken Indian, but also highlights their positive character traits. Junior's father, for example, is described as caring and supportive, and Eugene is one of the few people who support Junior's decision to leave the reservation.

In the novel, Native Americans also perpetuate certain stereotypes about white people. By adding this perspective, Alexie decenters the dominant position of white society. Due to historical internalizations, Junior is biased against the white teachers working at the reservation school and pejoratively represents them as "white, vegetarian do-gooders and conservative, white missionary saviors" (30), keeping a highly sarcastic tone. In addition, Junior and his parents have also internalized the stereotypical assumption that white people have more hope, which results in the perception and prejudice that all white people are privileged. Before transferring schools, Junior also stereotypically asserts that "those Reardan kids were the best of times. [...] They were beautiful and smart and epic" (50). While these prejudices foster the solidarity of Native Americans, Junior later on realizes that some of them are actually wrong as white people also face challenges in their lives.

In addition, similar to the prejudices and stereotypes Native Americans perpetuate about white people and vice versa, Native Americans in the novel have also internalized certain prejudices about themselves based on their social realities. These internalizations confirm Bradford's (11) assumption that also Native American writers have frequently internalized colonial ideologies of white superiority. As already examined earlier, the majority of Native Americans have internalized the assumption that they do not have any chances in life and that their lives are determined by poverty. For example, Junior describes that one barely hears the words Indian and college in the same sentence (56), which implies an internalized lack of educational opportunities. He also describes that in order to be rich and famous, Native Americans need to be artists (13-14), and that he wishes he "were magical, but [he is] really just a poor-ass reservation kid living with his poor-ass family on the poor-ass Spokane Indian

Reservation” (7). With his decision to attend a different school, Junior, however, dismantles these internalized stereotypes.

In one of his cartoons (see figure 4), Junior draws “who [his] parents would have been if somebody had paid attention to their dreams” (12). He draws his father as a saxophone player, who only becomes the “fifth-best jazz sax player west of the Mississippi” (12), which again perpetuates the stereotype that Native Americans cannot be famous. His could-have-been mother is a community college teacher, who even repeatedly received a teacher of the year award. In addition, Junior also depicts the stereotypes he holds against white people, such as the fact that they have a different style and can afford clothes that Native Americans cannot.



Figure 4: Who My Parents Would Have Been (Alexie and Forney 12)

Nonetheless, it is crucial that negative representations of Native Americans in *TATD* are critically analyzed. It is neither appropriate to consider Native Americans romanticized figures of the past, nor is it beneficial to merely link them with being brutal and gambling alcoholics. Alexie highlights this issue by introducing characters deviating from prejudiced expectations, such as Junior – as will be further elaborated on in this analysis – and Junior’s grandmother, who never drank alcohol in her life, making her “the rarest kind of Indian in the

world” (158). Especially the emphasis on the “absolutely true” aspect in the title, on the one hand, implies Alexie’s semi-autobiographical experiences as a Native American; on the other hand, it also represents a means of convincing the reader to prefer Alexie’s representation to assumptions which readers might have about Native Americans and serves as a means of mockery.

To summarize, in *TATD*, stereotypes indeed serve to highlight the differences between Native American and white societies. At times, Junior even describes the life on the reservation as “green and golden and perfect” (226). It will be interesting to see whether these stereotypes will finally fade if authors such as Alexie continue to challenge assumptions as to what defines the Native American Other.

4.1.4. Violence and the Native American Warrior

On the Wellpinit reservation, physical violence plays a central role in the expression of masculinities. Native Americans are both perpetrators and victims of violence: violence here can be read as a cry for help, since Native Americans are caught in the vicious cycle of poverty. In particular for Rowdy, who partially conforms to the traditional norms of Native American masculinity, violence seems to be an appropriate tool for the resolution of his problems because he is imparted with this perspective at home. As his father uses domestic physical violence against both Rowdy and his mother, Rowdy is incapable of defining the limits of brutality and perpetuates this cycle of violence. Junior depicts Rowdy’s family in the following: “His father is drinking hard and throwing hard punches, so Rowdy and his mother are always walking around with bruised and bloody faces. ‘It’s war paint,’ Rowdy always says. ‘It just makes me look tougher’” (16). The way in which Rowdy responds asserts society’s acceptance of this form of masculinity, while physical brutality is simultaneously depicted in a glorified form of masculinity. By referring to war paint, which certain Native American tribes used in battles when facing their opponents, Rowdy claims to look tougher due to his bruises (McNab 72). A more detailed analysis of the figure of the Native American warrior will be carried out later in this section and in section 4.1.7. Additionally, the choice of naming the character Rowdy is a confirmation and personification of his violent behavior.

The characters face physical violence on the reservation on a daily basis. For example, Junior refers to Native Americans getting drunk at powwows and beating other people without any reason. Not only other children but also adults, such as the Andruss brothers, keep harassing and punching Junior. Junior even denotes himself a member of “the Black-Eye-of-the-Month

Club” (4). In order to remind Junior of being a “traitor” (132) because he left the reservation school, disguised people attack him on Halloween (79-80). As another example, a selection of “the unofficial and unwritten Spokane Indian rules of fisticuffs” (61) illustrates that violence seems to be seen as the solution to almost every problem on the reservation. No matter if people are insulted by others or only think that another person is going to insult them – a fight is considered an effective solution. Hence, physical violence can be understood as serving as a form of communication. This justified use of violence can probably also be attributed to the way Native Americans were treated by non-Natives. As Mr. P, Junior’s teacher, confesses, teachers in boarding schools used to beat Native American students with a stick: “That’s how we were taught to teach you. We were supposed to kill the Indian to save the child” (35). As this quote illustrates, brutality seemed to be the only way for white settlers in order to eliminate Native American culture and assimilate Native Americans into the non-Native lifestyle, “to save the child” (35), a dark but vital aspect of Native American history. In addition, also the excessive alcohol abuse of Native Americans in the novel can be considered an act of violence against themselves, as characters including Mary or Eugene even die under the influence of alcohol.

In sharp contrast, at Reardan High School, physical violence is avoided and is portrayed as being of minor importance. Penelope, who is in shock when seeing Junior’s bruises on Halloween, considers violence unnecessary. In addition, when Roger insults Junior with a racist joke, Junior believes it is appropriate to punch him as a means of defending both himself and Native American pride in general. Roger, however, reacts by declaring Junior an animal and by ridiculing him. While Junior adds that he himself “had followed the rules of fighting” (65), he observes that white students “followed a whole other set of mysterious rules where people apparently DID NOT GET INTO FISTFIGHTS” (65-66). By denoting these rules as “mysterious”, Junior reveals that violence as a tool to solve problems is considered natural on the Spokane reservation, and is passed on by various tribal members without critically reflecting on their actions. In attempting to solve the conflict resorting to violence, Junior, who barely uses physical violence, makes an attempt to conform to the norms of Native American masculinity on the reservation. Nonetheless, Junior gradually assimilates into his new part-time surrounding at Reardan and fights his battles preferring verbal over physical violence. Thus, Junior constructs his individual form of masculinity and rejects the traditional norms of hegemonic masculinity.

As already outlined in section 3.3. and earlier in this section, the warrior is a prominent figure in various Native American communities and texts, and is interrelated with understandings of masculinities. Kimmel even summarizes that “the ideal for manhood [has often been identified as] the fierce and handsome warrior“ (*Society* 245). Also in *TATD*, the warrior Other is repeatedly addressed in order to construct the Native American masculinity ideal. When dropping Junior off at Reardan High School for his first day of school, Junior’s father refers to Junior as both “brave” (55) and a “warrior” (55), which Junior considers “the best thing he could have said” (55). While various people on the reservation consider Junior a traitor, his family denotes his decision to attend a different school a heroic act of escaping the realities on the reservation. Thus, in this scene, being a warrior reflects Junior’s mental strength and the effort to be different.

Being a warrior also involves demonstrating physical strength, which Junior illustrates by playing basketball as his personal substitute for physical violence. In his excellent performance in the one-on-one basketball game against Roger, Junior is driven by the urge to succeed and finally considers himself a “warrior” (141), as he is satisfied with his athletic performance. In general, the basketball court metaphorically equals a battlefield: a space where enemies encounter each other, express their aggression, and are engaged in athletic fights. Junior, for example, describes this battle in his second game against Wellpinit in Reardan: “In fact, my white fans were going to cheer for me like I was some kind of crusading warrior. Jeez, I felt like one of those Indian scouts who led the Cavalry against other Indians” (182). Despite being the second player on the bench, Junior describes himself as being part of the team and facing “all sort of warrior stuff” (186). Thus, also the physical action required in sports and the shared goal of winning the game, which can be considered the equivalent to a battle, seem to affect the versions of masculinity. This view is also confirmed in an interview with Alexie, in which he states that basketball “has that warrior appeal that modern society doesn’t provide to [N]ative men anymore. Basketball ended up being a sort of substitute warrior culture“ (Blasingame 71).

In addition, according to Junior, the warrior figure is also characterized by a person’s courage to defend others. The day Junior returns to school after his grandmother’s death, one of the teachers insults Junior in front of his classmates. When Gordy, a rather shy boy, decides to defend Junior against their teacher by dropping his textbook on the table although he might face consequences, Junior calls his friend a “warrior” (132), and this action finally gives him hope. With this action, Gordy also inspires the other classmates, who decide to leave the room

together as an act of defense. Similarly, Rowdy, who protects Junior from other bullies on the reservation, can be considered a warrior figure.

Inspired by Junior, also his sister Mary decides to leave the reservation and to marry a man living on another reservation in Montana. Although she stays within the circle of another reservation, Junior's parents "had lost two kids to the outside world" (89). While his parents are devastated, Junior considers Mary's decision an act of bravery: "Of course, my parents and grandmother were in shock. They thought my sister and I were going absolutely crazy. But I thought we were being warriors, you know? And a warrior isn't afraid of confrontation" (91). In addition, the warrior performs a crucial role in relation to Junior's sister's romance novel: Mr. P informs Junior that Mary always wanted to write a novel featuring a love affair between a white schoolteacher or preacher's wife and an "Indian warrior" (38). The warrior on the cover is stereotypically depicted by adding a reference to the "huge half breed muscles" (38), mocking at both cultural and gender stereotypes.

In *TATD*, the figure of the warrior is also related to historical traditions, as can be observed in the following:

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. Gay people could do anything. They were like Swiss Army knives! (155)

Junior elaborates on the consequences arising from the arrival of the colonizers, the oppressive impact of European culture and the advent of Christianity on the reservation, blaming non-Natives for Native Americans' loss of acceptance. As the quote reveals, Native American tribes used to be more tolerant of people who were considered the Other. Even denoting homosexual Others as both warriors and caregivers provides them with a unique role. Thus, Junior refers to the multiple gender paradigm which I introduced in section 3.3. and the fluidity of gender roles is simultaneously highlighted. Junior's grandmother, in particular, serves as an outstanding symbol of tolerance, which is illustrated by the fact that she "had no use for gay bashing and homophobia in the world" (155) and by her last call for forgiving the drunk driver who killed her.

To summarize, resorting to violence in *TATD* is interrelated with space: whereas it seems to be acceptable on the reservation, it is unacceptable in Reardan. Also, the figure of the warrior,

which means illustrating physical strength and courage to Junior, as well as the importance of the fluidity of gender roles and acceptance are highlighted.

4.1.5. Basketball

In both Native American culture as well as in NAL, sports serve various “complex, contradictory, and often conflicted social, cultural, and political functions” (Bak 101). As Alexie observes in an interview, basketball is one of the strongest aspects of Native American culture, intertribal culture in particular (Blasingame 71). Also in *TATD*, sports, basketball in particular, is primarily crucial for the construction of the cultural Other, but also the definition of the characters’ masculinities.

When Junior arrives in Reardan, he is first confronted with basketball in terms of the school’s mascot, “an Indian, [...] making [him] the only *other* Indian in town” (56; original emphasis). Junior also depicts the mascot in one of his cartoons (see figure 5) as a highly stereotypical representation of a bright red-skinned Native American wearing a feather headdress and war paint, which represents the mascot as a primitive savage Other. Junior even ironically titles the cartoon “Reardan’s inspiring mascot” (56). This issue of Native American mascots again highlights the tradition of “playing Indian” as sports teams even profit from these (mis)representations (Strong 157). While people actually frequently claim that these mascots honor Native American culture, they can rather be considered disrespectful misrepresentations constituting racial discrimination (156-58). This aspect is highlighted in the use of the mascot in *TATD*, but also in the fact that sports teams frequently use names related to Native Americans: while Junior, ironically, plays for the team of Indians in Reardan, his former team in Wellpinit is called Redskins. However, these names result in the exclusion of Native Americans from full citizenship, since Native Americans are rather treated as signs instead of individuals (160). While Junior never specifically expresses how he feels about this representation, Alexie definitely uses the mascot and names of sports teams to create awareness of an issue, which is still prominent in American society nowadays, as he observes in the following interview: “‘The mascot thing gets me really mad’[,] Alexie says. ‘Don’t think about it in terms of race. Think about it in terms of religion. Those are our religious imagery up there. Feather, the paint, the sun[,] that’s our religious imagery’” (*The Toughest Indian In the World*).

A similar cartoon to the one describing the mascot is a drawing of Junior playing basketball at the try-outs (see figure 6), in which he is similarly stereotypically depicted wearing a headdress, war paint, and merely a breechcloth, while shouting like a savage warrior.

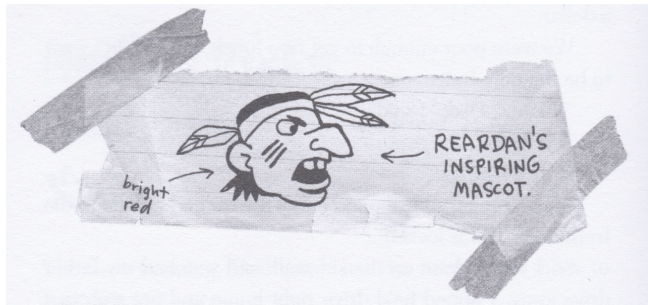


Figure 5: Reardan's Mascot (Alexie and Forney 56)

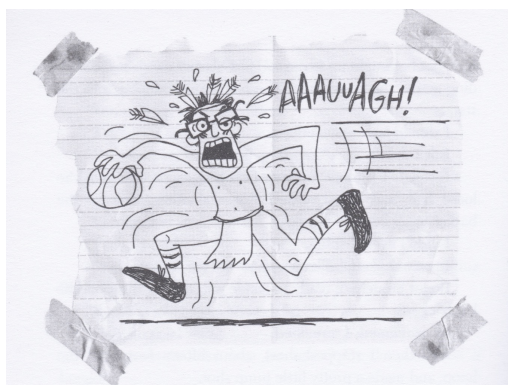


Figure 6: Junior Playing Basketball, the Savage Other (Alexie and Forney 142)

For Junior, basketball serves as both a means of being accepted in his new environment at Reardan High School and a link with his Native American culture. First, Junior is skeptical whether he will have any chances to make the team, since he does not know if the coach will accept a Native American. Due to both his basketball skills and his passion, Junior manages to become a part of the varsity team. In contrast to other spheres at Reardan High School, for example when one of Junior's teachers does not appreciate Junior's contribution, but ridicules him by sarcastically stating that "[they] all know there's so much amazing science on the reservation" (85), it is surprising that the basketball court can be read as representing a place in which nobody distinguishes between the Other and the self within one team. As the selection process of players resembles, all players are equally required to perform and work hard in order to become part of the team. It is in particular the coach's dedication to treat all players with dignity and respect that reassures Junior in his decision to join the team. Thus, even though Junior is smaller and not as fast as most of his teammates, he becomes one of the most valuable players – a "Weapon of Mass Destruction" (142). Therefore, the basketball

court represents one of the first spheres in which Junior is not othered and feels a sense of truly belonging.

In his first game, Junior has to face the Wellpinit basketball team – his former team, tribal members, and best friend Rowdy – turning the basketball court into a stage for intercultural conflicts. Thus, the two worlds he is living in collide in the game. While basketball represents Junior's way of being able to immerse himself in his new school culture, the other tribal members living on the reservation consider him a betrayer. When Junior enters the gym hall, they physically demonstrate their discontent in a visual metaphor of turning their backs on Junior. Rowdy is the only person in the gym who faces Junior, thus symbolizing that he is ready for the game. Fans shouting “Ar-nold sucks!” (143) and cheering against him represent verbal alternatives to continue the bullying. By referring to Junior by his Reardan name, Arnold, instead of his reservation name, the other reservation members represent Junior as a member of white society, an outsider, whereas Junior, asking “who am I?” (182), illustrates that he neither feels like being part of one nor the other society (see figure 7). As soon as Junior enters the game, Rowdy knocks him unconscious and Wellpinit defeats Reardan. Junior is sent to hospital and the coach comes to visit him. They spend the whole night talking, which illustrates that basketball can be considered a way of transcending the boundaries of ethnicity.



Figure 7: Basketball in the Wellpinit Gym vs. Reardan Gym (Alexie and Forney 182)

By juxtaposing his performances playing for the reservation team and Reardan, Junior reflects upon the way his self-confidence influences his sports performance:

Back on the rez, I was a decent player, I guess. [...] But something magical happened to me when I went to Reardan. [...] I'd always been the lowest Indian on the reservation totem pole – I wasn't expected to be good so I wasn't. But in Reardan, my coach and the

other players wanted me to be good. They needed me to be good. They expected me to be good. And so I became good. (180)

This quote also confirms that the solidarity among the players of the Reardan team as well as the encouragement Junior receives from his coach motivate Junior to fulfill his teammates', coach's, and fans' expectations. Junior is also empowered by the coach telling him "[y]ou can do it" (188), which Junior considers "the four hugest words in the world when they're put together" (189). In addition, also the fact that Junior even wonders whether a Native American basketball player might have legacy in a white town and whether basketball players in the future will be compared to him reflect that Junior does not perceive himself as a total outsider anymore (179-80).

After Junior manages to score the first points of the rematch, all fans are determined by happiness and filled with excitement. When Junior's father hugs and kisses the white man standing next to him "like they were brothers" (193), the boundaries between different ethnicities are again visibly transcended. The Reardan team finally manages to beat Wellpinit by forty points. Junior and the whole team celebrate their victory until he realizes his former team's disappointment. Whereas basketball represents the one sphere in which Junior is equalized with the other white students, he realizes that it simultaneously distances himself from his tribal members. Junior juxtaposes white students' and Native Americans' lives:

Okay, so maybe my white teammates had problems, serious problems, but none of their problems was life threatening. But I looked over at the Wellpinit Redskins, at Rowdy. I knew that two or three of those Indians might not have eaten breakfast that morning. No food in the house. I knew that seven or eight of those Indians lived with drunken mothers and fathers. I knew that one of those Indians had a father who dealt crack and meth. I knew two of those Indians had fathers in prison. I knew that none of them were going to college. Not one of them. (195)

Thus, although Junior is now accepted in Reardan, Junior's victory equals his friends' defeat. Junior finally feels ashamed for desperately wanting to win, which again highlights that he will always be torn between the two different worlds he is living in. The novel, however, ends with Rowdy and Junior's reconciliation in a one-on-one basketball game in which they neither keep scores, nor focus on time (226-30), which resembles the transcendence of the binaries Junior first faced.

As already examined in section 4.1.4., basketball is in various instances interrelated with the masculine representations of the Native American warrior. Similarly, Stephens observes that "[s]porting accomplishment stands in metonymic relationship to masculinity" (*Schemata* 46). Junior describes the rematch against Wellpinit in the following: "We were all boys desperate

to be men, and this game would be a huge moment in our transition” (187). In this passage, Junior reflects that winning against Wellpinit actually resembles the players’ transition from boys to men. Junior’s reaction after the match also illustrates this maturity, since he shows his compassion towards the others as well as his emotional strength.

4.1.6. The “Part-Time” Sensitive Protagonist

In *TATD*, the different expressions of masculinity are rendered visible on various levels. While, to a certain extent, characters reinforce the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, as I have argued in the previous sections, Junior partially subverts them by challenging the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

There are various reasons why Junior serves as an example of the “sensitive new man schema” introduced in section 3.3. Since Junior is scared of bullies and of the physical violence on the reservation, he prefers to stay at home, and enjoys reading books and drawing cartoons of himself, his family, Rowdy, and other people on the reservation. Junior uses these drawings in order to understand the complexities of adolescence and of his double-faceted life, as well as to forge his identity. He describes his relation to cartoons in the following:

I draw because words are too unpredictable. I draw because words are too limited. [...] So I draw because I want to talk to the world. And I want the world to pay attention to me. I feel important with a pen in my hand. I feel like I might grow up to be somebody important. An artist. Maybe a famous artist. Maybe a rich artist. (6)

This quote can be understood in a way that both writing and drawing seem to form Junior’s secret haven, a creative form of therapy, and serve as a means of communication, since his voice is frequently silenced by the violence he experiences on the reservation. He even metaphorically considers his cartoons as “tiny little lifeboats” (6) in a world which he perceives as “a series of broken dams and floods” (6). Similarly, for Junior, artwork represents a lifeboat which he steers through adolescence and the search for his identity. In addition, the quote reflects that for Junior drawing might be the only chance to become successful in life, in order “to be somebody important” (6). It is interesting that finally a book is his inspiration to leave the reservation because throwing his book at Mr. P reflects Junior’s desire for a better life and is the final reason for Junior to attend a different school. In the novel, drawing again represents Junior’s lifeboat in order to cope with the deaths of his grandmother, his sister, and Eugene, since writing and drawing constitute supportive activities in Junior’s grieving process.

In *TATD*, Junior openly reveals the feelings he experiences. He can be described as a highly empathetic, caring, and sensitive character, and appears to be emotionally mature. For example, when Junior's dad has to shoot his sick dog, which Junior describes as one of his best friends, he gets very emotional and describes his feelings of being depressed in rich detail. Junior also refers to his parents as "the twin suns around which [he] orbit[s] and [his] world would EXPLODE without them" (11), while he constantly asserts that he misses Rowdy, his grandmother and his sister. After Mary's death, the guidance counselor tells Junior to wait for his father inside school as he is vulnerable; Junior expresses his intense grief in the following: "VULNERABLE! She told me I was vulnerable. My big sister was dead. Of course I was vulnerable. [...] I was the most vulnerable kid in the United States." (203). Thus, Junior represents the clear opposite to what is frequently considered man-like behavior (Kimmel, *Society* 206-07).

As previously examined in section 4.1.4., in contrast to Junior, Rowdy mainly represents a character who portrays an aggressive and tough form of masculinity. Hence, Rowdy can outwardly be considered an example of the "old age boy schema" introduced in section 3.3. In sharp contrast, Junior describes Rowdy's love for comic books, especially kids' comics such as *Casper the Friendly Ghost*. Rowdy hides these comics and only reveals to Junior that he reads them, which implies that he is ashamed of reading such texts. In addition, Junior describes Rowdy as "a big, goofy dreamer, too" (23), which indicates that Rowdy is mentally not as strong as he physically and verbally appears to be. In addition, Junior also considers one of the cartoons he draws for Rowdy a possibility "to give him other worlds to live inside" (23). Hence, to some extent, Rowdy can be considered possessing certain character traits representing the "sensitive new man schema".

However, in *TATD*, negative connotations are attached to male characters that cry. Both Rowdy and Junior are determined by the thought that in order to represent hegemonic masculinity, they are not allowed to cry. When Mr. P tells Junior that he deserves a better life, he immediately starts to cry, while stating that he dislikes crying: "Other kids, they beat me up when I cry. Sometimes they make me cry so they can beat me up for crying" (41). Furthermore, when Junior tells Rowdy about his decision to attend Reardan High School, Rowdy is unable to cope with his emotions since he does not consider openly showing his emotions as socially acceptable on the reservation. Similarly, Gordy warns Junior not to get too sentimental when Junior merely tries to hug Gordy. Junior describes the emotions leading him to cry in the following: "Man, I've always cried too easily. I cry when I'm happy or sad. I

cry when I'm angry. I cry because I'm crying. It's weak. It's the opposite of warrior" (75). In this quote, the warrior as a form of masculinity worth aspiring to is again highlighted, whereas crying appears to be the opposite of hegemonic masculinity. Junior expresses his need to embody this stereotype of the masculine warrior and considers his crying a sign of weakness. Similarly, after Mary's funeral, Rowdy denies that he has been crying. It is interesting that as soon as sports are involved, tears seem to be socially acceptable. After losing a basketball game, the coach and the players are deeply disappointed and all start to cry in the locker rooms. Junior, however, observes that "that's the only time that men and boys get to cry and not get punched in the face" (196). In addition, Junior's coach encourages him to use his tears and anger, and turn them into dedication to achieve his goals, which represents a mature way of handling his emotions.

As already briefly examined with regard to the warrior ideal in section 4.1.4., hegemonic masculinity is also interrelated with the manifestation of heterosexuality. While in Native American history homosexuality was traditionally often considered in positive terms, there are various instances in the novel that highlight the bias against homosexual people in the (Native) American society, which is also observed in Kimmel (*Society* 212-13). On Thanksgiving, which Rowdy and Junior usually spend together, Junior releases his feelings in a cartoon in which he depicts them as superheroes. Junior decides to give the picture to Rowdy although they have lost touch of each other. When he walks to Rowdy's house in order to give the cartoon to his friend, Rowdy's drunk father opens the door, stares at the picture, and finally smirks as he asks Junior: "You're kind of gay, aren't you?" (103). Rowdy's dad clearly links being sensitive and caring with being homosexual. Furthermore, when Junior asks Gordy whether he would like to become friends, he steps back stating "I assure you, [...] I am not homosexual" (94). As these examples reveal, both societies have internalized certain prejudices about male friendship and seem to equalize sensitivity with homosexuality. Similarly, when Junior touches Rowdy's shoulder once, he replies: "Don't touch me, you retarded fag!" (52). In addition, one of Junior's cartoons stating "Boys can hold hands until they turn nine" (218) and his decision not to tell Rowdy that he loves him as a friend because "boys didn't say such things to other boys" (49) serve to illustrate that male friendship is restricted by society's expectations of hegemonic masculinity and gender roles. This view is also reflected in Nodelman (*Boys* 8), who observes that masculinities are firmly considered as not being feminine, while homosexuality is frequently regarded as a form of femininity. Thus, he refers to the "significance of not being gay in the culture of boyhood [which] is a little less obvious but it is there nevertheless" (8). In the novel, Junior portrays

that the socially constructed understanding of gender roles can be questioned with regard to both men crying and revealing one's affection to male friends. Therefore, readers are invited to challenge the oppositional thinking which is vital to hegemonic masculinity.

Due to Junior's character traits, also the readers are encouraged to challenge the oppositional thinking as regards the construction of masculinities and are provided with an insight into the different forms of masculinity that coexist simultaneously. Nonetheless, *TATD* also illustrates that while examples of the "new age boy schema" are prominent in *NAYAL*, this does not automatically mean that examples of oppressive, hegemonic masculinity are fully obliterated.

4.1.7. The "Part-Time" Humorous (Post-)indian

In addition to the stereotypes examined in section 4.1.3., another widely spread and inaccurate stereotype about Native Americans is that of being stolid and humorless (Donaldson 12). In *NAL*, critique of the dominant, non-Native society is frequently conveyed through using irony (12). Hence, humor is – in fact – considered "one of the chief survival mechanisms that have helped American Indians to endure centuries of attacks, conquest, subjugation[,] and discrimination" (12). Therefore, Alexie's humor can be considered an important tool to Native American "survivance", a term – blending the words survival and resistance – coined by Vizenor. Survivance narratives refer to the "renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, in that sense, the estate of native survivancy" (Vizenor, *Manners* vii). Alexie dismisses the idea of survivance in an interview, stating that "[s]urvival is a low hope. I don't want just survival, or 'survivance.' I want triumph!" (Nygren 156). However, *TATD* is threaded through with various references to cultural survivance.

Humor, in particular, "has helped [Native Americans] survive" (Bruchac 39). In *TATD*, Alexie – or Alexie's characters – use humor to reveal the injustice they face in their everyday lives, to hide their weaknesses and stress their strengths, to engage both Native and non-Native readers, and to reconsider stereotypes. Thus, readers are not passive recipients, but are highly engaged in the reading process. Similar to the trickster figure, also humor "unsettles ways of thinking and compels re-evaluation and growth, ultimately allowing Indian characters to reconnect to their heritage [...] and forcing non-Native readers to reconsider simplistic generalizations" (Coulombe 117). Junior's self-description introduced in section 4.1.1. as well as his self-portrait (see figure 1) can be considered examples of his humorous manner of describing things. In addition, in one of the cartoons, Junior humorously depicts his potential

responses in order to pretend not being poor (see figure 8). In this cartoon, he humorously describes his misery and uses false stereotypes to pretend not being poor. For example, he argues that he cannot buy any cookies, since Native Americans are allergic to sugar, and that he has to miss the school dance due to a traditional Native American ceremony. Additionally, he pretends to be old school and hence listens to records instead of having the latest iPod.



Figure 8: How to Pretend You're Not Poor (Alexie and Forney 120)

Nonetheless, humor often also contains messages which are not easily understandable and thus missed by the non-Native society. Alexie even describes his humor as “a passport into other people’s cultures. A temporary visa. [...] Humor is my green card” (Nelson 43). Thus, humor offers a possibility to link “individuals otherwise alienated within a hostile culture” (Coulombe 130). Humor also allows people to identify with one another, despite existing boundaries, ethnic or cultural ones, creating a “zone of contact” (130). For example, it is Junior’s humor that links Gordy and him despite their cultural differences. In *TATD*, Alexie’s use of humor is also a vital strategy with regard to demonstrating Native American friendship (130). In particular the language between Junior and Rowdy is humorous, and also ironic and offensive. For instance, Rowdy non-seriously refers to Junior as a “wuss” (18) and a “dickwad” (48), whereas Junior replies that Rowdy should “[k]iss his ass” (48).

In an interview, Alexie, however, states that if an author writes in a humorous manner, the message is frequently not taken seriously (Nelson 43), whereas he also argues that “[s]ometimes life can be so bad that humor is the only way you can talk about it. The only

option to humor is silence” (Blasingame 70). Hence, it is vital to distinguish between the two possibilities of laughing at and laughing with somebody, which is the danger of irony and satire, as well as stereotypes (Kertzer 66). Also Junior addresses this struggle, stating that “he [Gordy] realized that [he] wasn’t laughing WITH him. [He] was laughing AT him” (93), which are clearly opposite things.

In addition to “survivance”, also Vizenor’s image of the “(post)indian warrior” introduced in section 3.2., can be considered a crucial image in *TATD* (Liu 92). There are various reasons why Junior can be considered an example of the “(post)indian”. Since Junior decides to leave the reservation, he simultaneously decides to fight back against colonialism. Additionally, his insight in the end of the novel that the world is not broken down in tribes according to ethnicity is another way of expressing being a “(post)indian warrior” (176). Hence, Junior does not merely cross the boundaries of Reardan and Wellpinit to assimilate, but to create himself again as a “postindian”. However, Sneider observes that – in trickster style – *TATD* also “reveals the dangers of a heightened sense of pride, self-centeredness, and hypermasculinity” (195).

In conclusion, humor, irony, and the instances of the “post-indian” warrior in the novel can be considered mechanisms of Native American survivance. Additionally, humor cannot always be understood to be interculturally understandable, while also posing the danger of not being taken seriously.

4.2. Eric Gansworth's *If I Ever Get Out of Here*

Eric Gansworth is both a Native American writer and visual artist, and an enrolled member of the Onondaga Nation who grew up on the Tuscarora reservation in western New York ("Gansworth, Eric"). Gansworth's only young adult novel *IIEGOH*, which was published in 2013, has won the YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults award in 2014.

Summarizing the main characteristics of YAL which I have examined in section 2.2., as *TATD* also *IIEGOH* can definitely be classified as YAL, NAYAL specifically. In the following sections, the verbal and visual representations of the protagonist Lewis Blake as the cultural and young men Other in *IIEGOH* will be examined. In order to address the various representations of Lewis as the Other, the analysis is divided into several sections based on unifying themes which are, in general, prominent in YAL and NAYAL. Also in *IIEGOH*, the levels of cultural and young men's Otherness cannot be clearly separated in all instances and thus will be blended in the analysis, which focuses on both the text and the pictures.

Lewis Blake, the homodiegetic narrator, is a Native American middle school student living on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in the 1970s. Lewis is the only Native American who is placed in the smart section at high school in a class full of white students. The plot is driven by his Otherness, as he is treated like an outsider who is made aware of the stereotypes and prejudices his classmates and the school staff hold against him and Native Americans in general. Fortunately, a new student, George Haddonfield, who lives on the local Air Force base with his father and German mother, arrives at school. George and Lewis become friends due to their shared love for the Beatles, and they even attend a concert performed by Paul McCartney and Wings in Canada. The plot unfolds due to George's father's boarding school (hi)story, and Lewis being bullied by a white student at school, Evan Reininger.

4.2.1. (In)Visible Otherness

In the novel *IIEGOH*, the protagonist Lewis is represented as both the cultural and young men Other on a visible level. Not only does his skin color clearly mark him as the Other, but also his deviances from hegemonic masculinity as regards male physical appearance cast him as different. Lewis is described as a skinny kid, "ribs showing and all – like a birdcage" (Gansworth 198), and he wears welfare glasses, which undermine his self-confidence. He is constantly comparing himself to other students at school and wishes he was as muscular as them, since a different physical shape might also end the bullying he faces. Thus, Lewis

admires certain ideals of hegemonic masculinity, whereas he represents the clear opposite to those ideals, which substantially contributes to his sense of being the Other.

Lewis' braid, in particular, serves as one of the prominent visible signifiers of his Native American identity, while also visibly categorizing him as the Other at school. With the help of his Native American friends Carson and Tami, Lewis cuts off the braid he has been growing for years in the first chapter of the novel. Both Carson and Tami remain critical whether cutting a braid will automatically result in Lewis being accepted in class in which he is the only Native American student: "You think cutting off your braid is going to make those white kids suddenly talk to you? [...] If you believe that, you need brain surgery, not a haircut" (3). As this quote portrays, Lewis is motivated by his desire to be accepted in his school environment instead of merely being the Other. Similar to Carson and Tami, his mother and brother, Zach, are also shocked about Lewis' new hair style, and believe the act of cutting the braid is a demonstration of Lewis' emotional weakness, both of them considering it a way of accepting white people's superiority. Lewis, however, perceives this act of cutting his braid as a means of negotiating his cultural identity. He regards changing his outer appearance as an attempt to end his isolation in class, as it decreases his sense of Otherness: "I'm tired of not fitting in with my class. That two-foot braid just shouted, 'Reservation Kid', so I got rid of it" (19). This quote illustrates that Lewis considers his braid as one of the most visible signifiers of his Otherness and hopes to influence his schoolmates' bias by his change of hairstyle. The same night, when Lewis is lying in bed reading a comic, he reaches behind him in order to pull the braid forward as he used to do it for years. In this moment, Lewis – for the first time – encounters a feeling of unfamiliarity and the loss of an important part of his Native American identity. The importance of Lewis' braid also communicates Native American history; McGillis observes that "texts reproduce the dominant values of a culture at a particular time" (113). In order to assimilate Native Americans, their hair was cut when they were placed in boarding schools, thus symbolizing a means of giving up someone's identity (Bothelo and Rudman 244-45). Hair serves various social and political purposes, being used as both a symbol of difference and unity (246-47). Additionally, the braid can be regarded as a symbol of interweaving different strands, as, for example, also the two spheres of text and picture are interwoven in the story.

It even seems that, at least at school and in George's company, Lewis wants to fully assimilate and hence lose his tribal identity. The next day at school, Lewis – at first – observes that his hairstyle did not change anything, as his classmates are still ignoring him. One of

them even warns George not to be fooled by the haircut, since he is a Native American, which, according to the student's generalization, equals trouble – to “[a]void the scary Indian” (16). Nonetheless, George decides to spend time with Lewis, which leads Lewis to the conclusion that his new haircut has indeed worked; he ignores the fact that George, however, knows about his ethnicity and wants to become friends despite their different cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, Lewis and the other Native Americans also face prejudices based on their skin color, which represents another signifier of visible Otherness. Lewis observes that his Native American friend Carson is fair-skinned and thus not always already predetermined by his ethnicity, but he describes his own skin as “still the color of a brick” (29). Hence, referring to the pejorative use of the color red in order to describe Native Americans, Lewis is fully aware of the fact that his identity is frequently automatically interrelated with his ethnicity. This assertion is also confirmed in a conversation between Lewis and George, in which Lewis stresses that he is the only person in their class “fall[ing] into the off-white end of the [color] spectrum” (131), thus representing the cultural Other. He also describes that non-Natives are usually predetermined by their prejudices and assumptions about Native Americans, which cannot be easily altered. This perspective is also stressed in a conversation with his uncle Albert, in which Lewis admits that he misses his braid at times, while he also believes that his life outside the reservation became easier without the braid:

While I'd told him [Albert] the truth as it applied to that moment, it was hard to admit that my life was easier without the braid, even more now that my summer tan had faded. As much as I hated being invisible in class, I liked being invisible around town. I could be Italian, or even German, and so I didn't get followed around anymore by store employees who just happened suddenly to be doing inventory in whatever aisle I was in. (49)

Although Lewis expresses that he enjoys this feeling of invisibility in town, he is simultaneously overwhelmed with guilt due to the fact that he considers his assimilation a means of hiding his Native American identity. This quote also provides readers with an insight into the racial prejudices Native Americans frequently face due to their visible Otherness. Constantly comparing himself to the other students and the urge to look like them resemble that Lewis desperately struggles with the way he is treated as well as the limitations he encounters in life due to his cultural Otherness.

In general, it can be observed that Lewis' outward appearance is closely interrelated with his representation as the Other. Although Lewis' mother displays a bias against white people in

the same way as they are frequently biased against Native Americans, she worries that Lewis may be labeled a “Welfare Indian” (10) or a “dirty Indian” (200) at school. While Lewis replies that he indeed is a Welfare Indian, she argues that there is albeit no need to look like one in the ‘white world’ (10-11). Additionally, the representation of the Other based on his visible appearance is also portrayed regarding his clothing style. Another student at school, Summer, the principal’s daughter, aims at arrogantly educating Lewis about the rules of fashion. When observing the other students, Lewis realizes that he is actually the only student dressed in a different way and adjusts as he unbuttons the top button of his shirt to look similar to all of the others. Clearly limiting his value to his appearance, Summer argues that she immediately knew that Lewis would be trouble “by how shabby and backward [he] always dressed” (294). All these examples serve to illustrate the prejudices white society in the novel imposes on Native Americans due to their visible Otherness. In addition, the examples also highlight the views Native Americans might have internalized about themselves because Lewis feels the urge to adhere to the ideals of white society. Furthermore, Summer is an example serving to deconstruct the hegemonic masculinity ideals, since a female character displays her power in various situations.

One of the smurfs in George’s selection of smurf pieces is a stereotypical representation of a Native American wearing a headdress and holding a tomahawk. Lewis describes this figure as looking like a “TV Indian” (66), referring to the stereotypical notions of Native Americans frequently communicated in Hollywood movies. This representation is in sharp contrast with the representations of Native Americans in *IIEGOHO*, who are not ‘frozen in the past’ and do not conform to those representatives of “playing Indian”.

Despite the fact that language use cannot be considered an expression of the visible differences between Native Americans and white society, this feature is also crucial with regard to Lewis’ perception of his Otherness. Hence, it is also briefly addressed in this section. Similar to the way in which Lewis aims at visibly assimilating into white society, he also becomes aware of the different language use outside the reservation. As Lewis describes, “the way [they] talk to one another on the reservation was definitely not the way kids talked in this largely white junior high” (6-7) and “these worlds feeling like LEGOs in my mouth” (59). While the language on the reservation is characterized by teasing one another, this form of language use marks Lewis as the outsider at high school. When Lewis finds insulting nicknames for two of his classmates on their first day of school, which is common on the reservation but unusual for white students, they respond by merely ignoring him. In addition,

also Albert uses reservation slang in front of George and his mother, such as “gwuh-gwuh” (47) to refer to Germans, which makes Lewis feel uncomfortable.

To conclude, Lewis is represented as the Other due to his physical appearance. However, it is not only his different skin color and the braid which serve to represent Lewis as being culturally different, but also his style of clothing and the language he uses mark him as the Other. Thus, Lewis performs the opposite of “playing Indian”, by trying to visibly conform to the self. This view is exacerbated by Lewis’ lack of conformity to the visible ideals of hegemonic masculinity, as he is described as a skinny boy. Additionally, also the long braid might be stereotypically considered a female attribute in societies apart from the Native American one. Nonetheless, it needs to be added that regarding adherence to ideals of hegemonic masculinity, it is questionable whether Lewis should even represent these ideals, as both Lewis’ mental strength and intelligence can be considered of greater importance than his look.

4.2.2. Forging Identities, Crossing Boundaries

One of the major themes which serve to categorize Native Americans as the Other in *IIEGOH* is that of clear boundaries between whites and Native Americans, and the relation of space and ethnicity (Holmes 88). The story is determined by characters who are crossing existing boundaries in different directions. These instances do not merely involve the crossing of spatial, but also of social boundaries.

Lewis manages to partially bridge the boundaries existing between white society and Native Americans due to his intelligence, since he becomes part of the “smarties section, the brainiacs” (6) in high school. Although he is the only Native American student in class, which can be understood as an attempt to cross the boundaries, he is still represented as an outsider. Lewis describes himself using the self-invented nickname “the Invisible Boy” (7), who faces “twenty-two white strangers” (6) in his new environment at school. This nickname can be understood as a reference to the vanishing Indian. The choice of the term “stranger” implies that he perceives white students as different as they consider him to be. The distance Lewis experiences due to his Otherness is what he metaphorically refers to as a “force field [which] kept him inside and everyone else out” (8). Additionally, the way in which the other students treat Lewis resembles that he is not entirely successful in crossing the boundaries due to his Otherness. He even humorously describes the other students in class “as friendly as strangers thrown together in a hospital emergency room late on a Sunday night” (12). This quote

humorously describes Lewis' experiences at school, explaining how he is perceived as an outsider, the Other, which he is fully aware of. In general, Lewis can be described as a character who understands the limitations he faces due to his Otherness, as can be observed in the following: "'So you're the one, a real live Indian.' [...] 'As opposed to a dead one?' I said. I understood enough about our history to get that a lot of people had preferred us dead, but I was kind of hoping that era was over" (13). In this quote, Gansworth ironically uses the trope of the vanishing Indian, which is still rooted in various non-Natives' understandings of Native Americans.

Nonetheless, for Lewis, his friendship with George serves as an attempt to transcend the social boundaries between the reservation and school. Despite their different cultural backgrounds, George wishes to get to know Lewis, as he represents similarly an outsider in class. George later on explains to "know what it means to be on the outside – a little" (42) and both of them similarly struggle with the "'Local Customs'" (24) at school. Therefore, their friendship is actually based on both characters' Otherness, even though in different spheres. Nonetheless, the outsider feeling both experience cannot be paralleled, since Lewis is marginalized due to his ethnicity, whereas George manages to gradually immerse himself in his new environment. George also attempts at including Lewis in his group of friends, and some of the other non-Native students, including Artie and Stacey, also seem to slowly accept Lewis.

Due to the fact that Lewis is the only Native American in class and that only a few Native Americans attend the same school, Lewis is also perceived as the Other within Native American society. Thus, Lewis can be considered a character living in the margins of two different societies, a "liminal space" (Pagni Stewart 149), which is a common theme in Native American literature (149). This view is what bell hooks identifies as the power of the margin, "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (qtd. in Wallace 93). Despite the fact that bell hooks is an African American scholar, her theory indeed also proves to be useful in analyzing NAL. On the one hand, Lewis is driven by his urge to become part of the society at school, which is, for example, illustrated by his attempts to visually assimilate, as addressed in section 4.2.1. On the other hand, Lewis is also firmly linked to his life on the reservation, his family and friends, and aims at maintaining his Native American identity. This view is also stressed in a conversation with George, in which he states he is "happy being from the rez, [...] [but] [i]t'd be nice if others didn't have an issue" (293). This feeling of being torn between two different lives is addressed in a passage in

which Lewis states that he once thought whether surgery could mitigate this problem. As he describes:

I thought once that if I could find a good plastic surgeon, [...] maybe I could ask for a few modifications, a pull here and there, some skin bleach, and suddenly, I wouldn't be that kid from the reservation anymore. I would be like everyone else, a Dear Boy. [...] Could I be a Dear Boy and still be an Indian? Was there any way to make an informed decision – any way to find out what would happen without stripping my Indian life away completely first? (31)

In this quote it is described that a person's identity is not merely intertwined with a person's appearance, but equally with a person's sense of belonging. While Lewis' visual Otherness serves to categorize him as the Other as he is different from the "Dear Boys" at school, a term which Lewis uses to refer to his non-Native classmates, he seems to be curious whether his life would be different if he really belonged to them. Hence, in this passage, Lewis' relentless quest for his identity is particularly highlighted.

To Lewis, fears of the unknown also underlie the crossing of boundaries. The first time Lewis agrees to visit George at home, he expresses that it feels "like [...] going across the border into another country" (51). He is then indeed confronted with a whole new world and his status as the Other is expressed in the differences between Lewis' and George's housing situations. While George's house is portrayed as "a place pulled from a Monopoly board, or someone's imagination of what a house should look like" (52), Lewis lives in a "scandalously broken place [they]'d always kept a secret from any white person [they]'d ever met" (312).

Nevertheless, in *HIEGOH*, the crossing of boundaries is not merely related to Lewis becoming part of the white world, but also George and his father are provided with insights into Native American culture and life when Lewis invites them to join him for the National Picnic and a traditional fireball game on the reservation. On the reservation, Lewis describes George and his father as "look[ing] marooned, like people from out of state whose cars overheated on their way to Niagara Falls" (175). From this description one can assume that George and his father are equally perceived as different and outsiders in Native American society as Lewis is represented as the Other at school. Furthermore, this passage also portrays the importance of traditions in Native American societies. However, the emotional moment Lewis perceives as the real crossing of social boundaries is when George and his father are forced to stay at Lewis' house due to a heavy snowstorm. Prior to this event, Lewis constantly builds barriers to keep George from entering the realities of his life, since he is ashamed of his family's poverty which again confirms his status as an Other. Nonetheless, when George and his father

face the realities of Lewis' life, George's father reveals that he is used to the realities on the reservation. Similar to Lewis' experiences at the white school, George's father's childhood was determined by his crossings between the white world and the reservation. Since his parents both worked as teachers in a reservation school that was built as the opposite to boarding schools, George's father lived on a reservation as a child. Like Lewis, George's father also never managed to overcome the boundaries between the two different societies. Being the only non-Native child living on the reservation, he became friends with Native American children and gained insights into Native American culture, but was never considered a real member of the society – being neither/nor. Hence, George's father's life unveils striking similarities to Lewis' experiences as the cultural Other at school, while it also explains why George and his father hold no bias against Lewis. Due to this background knowledge, it can be argued that both George and his father deconstruct the binary opposition between self and Other. Therefore, in the novel, it is stressed that not all boundaries – regardless of whether spatial or social – are fixed and stable, but can indeed be modified.

4.2.3. Moon and Stars

One of the recurring metaphors in *IIEGOH* in order to represent Otherness is that of the relation of the moon and stars, which is also the title of the second part of the novel. The distance between different planets represents the distance between the two different worlds Lewis and George live in. Thus, since the metaphor serves to represent Lewis as the cultural Other, the occurrences of this metaphor in the novel will be closely examined. This metaphor is particularly crucial due to the fact that Native Americans live in near symbiosis with nature; hence, also stars and the moon are of crucial importance to Native Americans, since, for example, Native Americans used the position of stars and the moon to tell the time (Kerr).

The metaphor first appears when Lewis receives the music album *Venus and Mars* by Wings as a Christmas present from Albert. As will be more closely examined in section 4.2.6., music is one of the shared passions of Lewis and George, but the album also serves as a representation of the relationship between the two friends. By representing this metaphor in close detail in a conversation between Lewis and Albert, Gansworth (95-98) ensures that the (young adult) readers understand the importance of the metaphor. In this conversation, Lewis describes the cover (see figure 9) as two differently colored billiard balls, one yellow and the other red, against a field of black. These two colors are also prominent in the red and yellow colored ornaments which are arranged in pairs on the family's Christmas tree (93). In the inner record sleeve of the album, Junior observes that the billiard balls are connected with

dotted lines in order to appear like fixed constellations. Albert, however, intentionally bought the album to point out the (cultural) differences between the two planets Lewis and George live in: while Venus, the red planet, refers to the reservation, Mars represents the planet George is from. On the one hand, the planets on the cover are linked, as Lewis and George are friends bridging the differences despite living on different planets. On the other hand, representing the lines as dotted illustrates that the planets remain in their orbits and that the differences can never be completely overcome. In Gansworth's illustration (see figure 9), the original cover is minimally changed as he represents the background as a universe full of stars, and even adds a moon sign on one of the billiard balls and a star sign on the other.

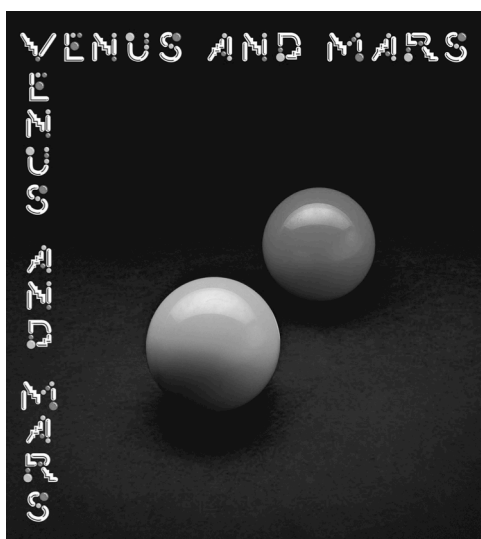


Figure 9: Original *Venus and Mars* Cover, Wings (McCartney)

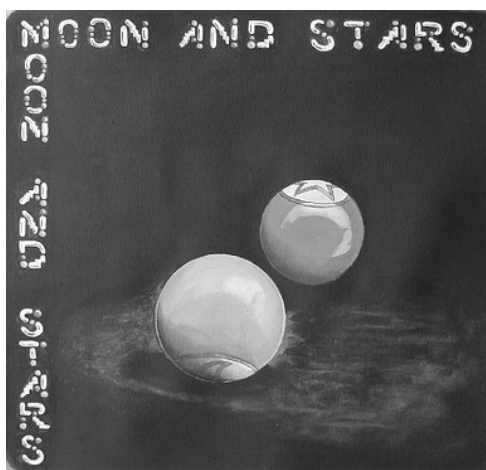


Figure 10: Moon and Stars (Gansworth 91)

The metaphor of planets is crucial in various other passages of the novel as well. For example, when Lewis and George are playing pool, in Lewis' rack formation the red and yellow billiard balls are both located closely together near the front. This formation resembles Lewis' desire

for not being representative of the Other. Following the official billiard rules, the red and yellow billiard balls are almost as far apart as possible in George's rack formation (101-05). Similarly, at the Wings concert, the distance between George's and Lewis' seats also serves as a "perfect reminder of the different planets where [they] lived" (156). *Venus and Mars* is also the first song which Wings perform at the concert, which again stresses the importance of this particular metaphor in the novel. In general, as described in the novel by Lewis, the friendship between George and him is determined by these differences, sometimes as being closer, then again being distant. When he tells George about the tradition of "New Yah" (111) on the reservation, Lewis describes the origin of this tradition as being interrelated with the fact that the Native American calendar is geared around the moon. As he states: "[T]hese, days, *our* world has to deal with *your* world. [...] We need to know when the rest of the world says it's the new year" (111; emphasis added). As the selection of the words "our world" versus "your world" illustrates, Lewis internalizes the view that both of them live in different worlds, on different planets. Hence, the metaphor is applied in several moments in which Lewis wants to express the distance he feels between George and him, for example, when he states that "the worlds had gone back into their old familiar alignment: Venus and Mars, impossibly far apart" (138). In contrast, when Lewis and George come back from Toronto, they experience the moment in which Venus and Mars are both visible in the sky at the same time, signifying that their distance has been reduced.

In addition, the metaphor of different planets is also applied in order to describe Lewis' split sense of personality, since he is torn between the two different societies: "Suddenly, it felt like I didn't exist in either world, with no rocket to get to George's and no rez rocket to make it home. I had become the Invisible Boy again" (112). Similarly, Lewis also stresses that he "wanted to try to navigate both planets, make choices within both worlds, not have to choose one to love and one to hate" (311). Both quotes exemplify Lewis' struggles with his sense of being the Other in both societies and reconciling those two identities, "inhabit[ing] the 'border spaces' of [i]ndigenous and non-[i]ndigenous life, belonging to both yet neither" (Pagni Stewart 149).

Even in the novel's first illustration (see figure 11), the text's dedication, this metaphor is already portrayed. Without the knowledge the reader acquires when reading the novel, understanding the intentions behind this metaphor is – at first – rather difficult. Nonetheless, when the reader is familiarized with the underlying ideas of the text, the interrelation of the illustration and Lewis' life become more visible. The "bumblebee flying smoothly between

Venus and Mars” (Gansworth, *Dedication*) also metaphorically describes Lewis’ struggles between the two different worlds, as examined in section 4.2.2. The selection of the bumblebee is particularly interesting with regard to his representation of the Other due to the following reasons. To begin with, similar to Lewis, bumblebees are a specific bee species which could hence be described as the Other if honey bees are considered to represent the norm, the self. Secondly, bumblebees jump between various flower species, which can be equated with the two different planets Lewis tries to unite. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether Lewis’ journey towards his identity can be described as “smoothly” (Gansworth, *Dedication*) as represented in the illustration, since – as described above – Lewis indeed encounters various difficulties on his journey. In addition, the planets are arranged close to each other, whereas in the novel this distance varies between close and distant.

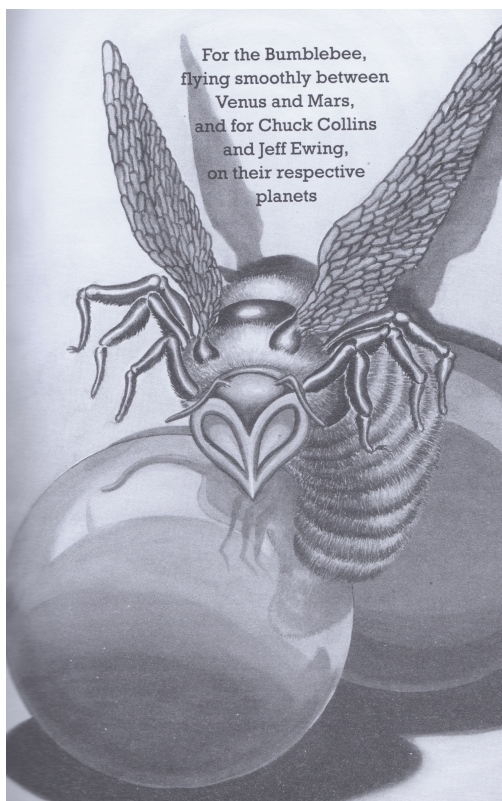


Figure 11: The Bumblebee (Gansworth, *Dedication*)

In conclusion, the metaphor of different planets in *IIEGOH* provides a powerful image representing the distance Lewis feels from George due to his Otherness. Hence, as illustrated, the metaphor substantially contributes to the representation of Lewis as the cultural Other.

4.2.4. Violence and Unequal Power Distributions

In *HIEGOH*, physical violence is crucial for both the plot and the manifestation of the characters' masculinities. Kimmel describes violence as "perhaps the most gendered behavior in our culture" (*Society* 250). Based on various statistics, he argues that "[f]rom early childhood to old age, violence is the most obdurate, intractable behavioral gender difference" (243). The plot is particularly driven by the bullying Lewis experiences. Especially the reasons why Lewis is harassed serve to highlight the unequal power distributions between white and Native American societies, and they can be identified as a stereotypically masculine trait. However, Kimmel (249) also adds that not only men but also women are performing violent acts, but these acts differ considerably from those by men.

In general, when comparing the protagonist, Lewis, and the antagonist, Evan, the two characters represent two different versions of masculinity. Evan is represented as a flat character who harasses other students and teachers at school both physically and mentally. He enjoys the privileges awarded to him at school due to his family's influence – as his father funds the sports program – which seems to serve as a justification for his actions. Evan can be deconstructed as basing his understandings of violence as an expression of masculinity on the way his father imparts this view on him. In contrast to other parents, his father even welcomes his suspension from school, since this is a sign of "how tough [he is]" (210). Due to the violence and masculinity Evan embodies, enhanced by the physical description of "showing wiry muscles, as if he'd inherited the physique of an adult bodybuilder" (188), he can be clearly categorized as an example of the "Old Age Boy" schema introduced in section 3.3. Additionally, since Lewis and the other students also refer to Evan as the "Wedgie King" (25), the representation of being considered the king of violence again confirms Evan's status of (violent) superiority.

In contrast to Evan, Lewis does not seem to consider violence an appropriate tool to resolving conflicts. This perspective can be stressed in Lewis referring to Evan's behavior as a means "to prove his new fake manhood" (84). As I have argued in section 4.2.1., Lewis is – in sharp contrast to Evan and George – described as the clear opposite to athletic masculinity and is thus represented as weak. However, Lewis does not accept the way he is treated silently, but defends him by using words instead of physical violence. Hence, for Lewis, this more mature way of addressing the issues of bullying serves as an expression of his understanding of masculinities. George also defends Lewis verbally, but refuses to violate his father's rule of no physical fighting – both serving as examples of the "New Age Boy". When Lewis finally

defends himself against Evan, this is not portrayed as being a stereotypical savage Native American but merely an act of self-defense.

Nonetheless, in conversations with other people, it is displayed that in Lewis' social surroundings violence is considered a sign indicating tough masculinity. This is, for example, expressed when one of the teachers merely ignores Lewis being bullied and argues that "boys have to become men sometime" (256). Hence, the teacher seems to interpret the expression of violence as a sign of the boys' transition from childhood to manhood. In a highly prejudiced way, he also states that Lewis will probably receive a low grade in class, since "[a]ny boy who can't fight his own battles, [is] bound to be incompetent in shop" (257). This example reinforces the stereotypical notion that boys not only need to prove their manhood, but also adhere to the definitions according to hegemonic masculinity to be considered 'real' men, which is also confirmed by certain activities stereotypically denoted to men, such as crafts. Similarly, when Lewis informs his mother about the harassment at school, she merely questions why he does not defend himself, which portrays that she considers the use of violence an appropriate solution to his conflicts (211). However, Lewis replies by reversing this perspective, asking her why she does not fight the injustice she experiences in her everyday working life, since she is also suppressed by her white employer, which can be similarly considered an example of mental violence directed at Native Americans. Thus, the bullying Lewis experiences exemplifies the struggles Native Americans face in their everyday lives, highlighting the internalized power disproportion between white society and Native Americans.

These unequal power relations are repeatedly addressed in the novel. Initially, Evan decides to continue harassing Lewis, as Lewis does not accept the way he is treated silently but intentionally provokes Evan. Lewis compares the fights with Evan to the ones he has already been involved in on the reservation: "I'd been in fights at home before, but this felt different, like the Wedgie King was looking for blood" (128). In this comparison, Lewis stresses the seriousness of the situation, which is in sharp contrast to the reason for fights on the reservation. Nonetheless, the main reason for Evan to proceed with the bullying is that Lewis is a Native American. Referring to Lewis as "reservation trash" (210) and "a whiny Indian bitch" (195) reflects Evan's negative attitude towards Native Americans in general. Lewis connects this bullying with the way Native Americans have been treated, which he describes in the following: "[...] that almost five hundred years of [his] people being wiped out by their people had found its way into [his] doorstep at last" (196). Apart from George, all the other

students as well as teachers simply ignore the events; Lewis even describes to see “the satisfaction on all their faces” (128). All of these instances highlight that Lewis is determined by his marginalized Native American masculinity, since he is both denigrated and excluded due to his ethnicity.

In contrast to other students, who silently endure the bullying, Lewis decides to take action, since he thinks that “Power and size can’t always win, can they?” (24). While at first he aims at dealing with the issue himself, he decides to inform the school authorities about the incidents. The school staff decides to turn a blind eye to Evan’s behavior, which clearly reminds Lewis that his heritage determines the way he is treated by others. The fact that the principal does not believe Lewis but even supports Evan results in Lewis’ decision to stay away from school until the problem is resolved. At school, this decision is perceived as a sign of the character’s weakness, illustrating the opposite of ‘being masculine’. The extent of the inequalities Native Americans face at school is exemplified when Evan is finally asked to leave the school only after attacking a white student, who turns out to be George, who provoked Evan.

In general, in several passages in the novel, prejudices serving to perpetuate the power relations between white people and Native Americans are prominent. For example, one of Lewis’ classmates stereotypically describes Native Americans as savage Others who use every single chance to fight, arguing that “it’s only when they’re singled out that they’re running scared” (207). Lewis reverses this perspective by stating that “[w]ild Indians on a reservation had nothing on a mostly white junior high in the way of scariness” (207). These quotes imply the difficulties in reversing internalized views, while simultaneously raising awareness and questioning certain perspectives which are imposed on Native Americans by whites. Similarly, the school’s principal expresses deeply rooted prejudices against Native Americans. In a conversation with Lewis, he represents Native Americans as different from the other students at school: “Well, this is America, and I know you reservation kids think you’re from someplace other than America, but for seven hours a day you live in America, *my* America [...]” (226; original emphasis). In this conversation, based on his prejudices against Native Americans, the principal collectively represents all Native Americans as not willing to follow the rules he sets at school and does not even provide Lewis with the chance to convince him of the opposite. Additionally, instead of intervening when Evan attacks Lewis again, one of the teachers reacts by turning his gaze away from Lewis, staring at the desk “as if [Lewis] looked exactly as [he] should” (202). As this quote illustrates, Lewis is aware of the

limitations and inequalities he experiences due to his Otherness. These insights are also reflected in the following passage:

I could believe all I wanted that offering a reasonable explanation to someone in power would set the world right, that rules were in place so everyone was treated equally. But the truth was, no one was ever treated all that equally. The influence Mrs. Tunny was talking about was as real as the influence the sun had over all the planets, keeping them in their orbits. (224)

This quote reveals that despite Lewis' hopes for being treated equally, he indeed becomes aware of the fact that he is incapable of stopping the injustice he faces due to his Otherness. Gansworth again uses the metaphor of planets in order to describe the power relations in the novel, but also to refer to the way in which societies are constructed: the self as the dominant force can be equated with the sun, whereas the Other refers to the planets orbiting around the self. It is interesting that George is a character who is not intimidated by the existing power relations, but rather dismantles them in the way he supports Lewis, since he finally understands "that everyone was dismissing what [Lewis] said about Evan because of who [he was]" (295). This instance illustrates that society is still frequently determined by stereotypes and prejudices, which results in unequal power relations. In addition, violence is often perceived as a tool of masculinity, whereas being more sensitive is stereotypically ascribed to rather feminine behavior.

4.2.5. Father-Son Relationship(s) and Sensitive Personalities

In contrast to Evan, who defines his masculinity in relation to his father, this biological father figure role model is lacking in Lewis' life, as his father left the family when Lewis was only two years old. Nodelman (*Boys* 12), however, asserts that the relationship between father and son is crucial for the construction of a boy's masculinity and he also observes that in YAL, concerns about the relationship between fathers and sons are frequently addressed. It is particularly this lack of a biological father which determines Lewis' masculine identity, his personality, and his sensitivity. Thus, in the novel, he constantly searches for people to fill this role as his father. Deviances from the archetypal, traditional family – mother, father, and child(ren) – have become a crucial theme in YAL since the beginning of the 20th century (Pearson 102; Reynolds, *Family* 205). Stories for young adults have portrayed a variety of families, including single-parent families, no parents at all, or families with lesbian and gay parents, in order to "reshap[e] the idea of the family to suit the social, economic[,] and emotional needs of the times" (Reynolds, *Family* 207).

In *HIEGOH*, Lewis' uncle, Albert, performs a crucial role in the development of Lewis' identity and his understanding of masculinities. Especially due to the fact that Albert and Lewis share a room, their relationship can be described as very close, and Albert inhabits fatherly characteristics. In contrast to Lewis' father, who is absent, Albert is the one performing the role of both an advisor and mentor for Lewis. For example, when George invites Lewis to join them for the Wings concert, Albert immediately encourages him and even lends him the money he needs to make his wish come true. Additionally, the act of giving his pair of gloves to Lewis when the two of them are forced to walk home in the cold after the Christmas concert displays Albert's protective qualities towards Lewis. This protective personality is also again portrayed towards the end of the story. When Lewis decides to go back to school, Albert offers him his leather jacket which he keeps as a memory of his time playing lacrosse. Lewis considers this jacket his "shiny security blanket" (248), which symbolically serves as a means of protecting Lewis. After stating that – similar to his lacrosse team – also Lewis and him are "kind of a small team, [...] a team of two" (247), Lewis considers his uncle "more of a parent to [him] than even [his] ma" (248).

In addition to Albert, Lewis also establishes a relatively close relationship with George's father. This relationship is predominantly determined by their shared passion for music, but also strengthened by George's father's experience with Native Americans, since he does not hold any prejudices against Lewis. Particularly in a passage in which George's father addresses Lewis by using the word "son" (60), Lewis realizes that even George's father is more of a father figure to him than his biological father. Additionally, during the concert, George's father is protective in that he constantly checks on Lewis. Furthermore, he defends Lewis against Evan's father and, hence, he is the ultimate reason for ending the bullying which Lewis experiences. These representations are particularly interesting due to the fact that, as Justice observes, kinship in Native American cultures cannot be described as static, but rather dynamic, as "something that's *done* more than something that simply *is*" (150; original emphasis). In Native American cultures, kinship is less based on jurisdiction, but more on the "understanding of a common social interdependence within the community [...] that link[s] the People [sic], the land, and the cosmos together in an ongoing and dynamic system of mutually affecting relationships" (Justice 151).

Despite the fact that both Lewis and George frequently depict themselves as strong characters in their conversations, both of them also possess traits of the "sensitive new man" schema which I have introduced in section 3.3. Both characters can be described as reluctant with

regard to openly showing their emotions. For example, Lewis is skeptical whether to honestly tell George that he is his best friend, stating that “it was way too lame to say something like that out loud” (99). Similarly, when George tells Lewis that he is his best friend, he adds that “saying it [...] sounds so dorky” (135). In addition, when Lewis thanks George for secretly getting his lunch ticket for him, despite their close friendship, he thanks him in a relatively distant way of shaking hands, “the way [they]’d each seen men do in friendship on TV shows” (135). As these instances reveal, both characters perceive open displays of their emotions as socially unacceptable, as they are determined by the ways in which masculinities are imposed on them by society. This view is also confirmed by Lewis being proud of learning to play on a “*real* man’s guitar” (163; emphasis added). Hence, both characters encounter conflicts with their sensitive personalities against the urge to adhere to hegemonic norms of masculinity.

In addition, with regard to family relationship, it needs to be added that also the relation between the text and images can be understood as some sort of kinship. In *IIEGOH*, various characters substitute for the role of Lewis’ father, including Albert and George’s father, who are both more of a father figure to Lewis than his biological father. In addition, addressing emotions and showing them openly seems to be socially unacceptable in the societies surrounding Lewis and George.

4.2.6. “Big Boys Don’t Cry”: Music

As already examined in several of the preceding sections, especially in section 4.2.3., references to music represent a recurring theme in *IIEGOH*. Whereas in different YAL texts authors either omit using music or merely use it as an atmospheric marker, for other authors, such as Gansworth, music serves a crucial role in the developmental processes of their teen characters (Coats 112). Despite the fact that this theme does not primarily highlight the differences between the Other and the self, music is vital as it serves as one of the passions and bridges connecting the two different worlds Lewis and George live in, it is crucial to Lewis’ identity formation, and to the novel’s representations of masculinities.

In the playlist and discography section following the novel, Gansworth states that “each of the chapters is named, in alternating order, for a Beatles song and a Paul McCartney post-Beatles song” (53). This alternation of song titles by either a band or an individual singer can be considered as the expression of the struggles Lewis faces in his everyday life, and his “internal journey toward a cohesive sense of self” (Jansen 99). He experiences split feelings

whether to strive towards his individual identity, similar to Paul McCartney, or to become part of a larger group, the Beatles. This idea is also reflected in the selection of the titles for the three chapters: “If I Ever Get Out of Here” (1), “Moon and Stars” (91) and “Tragical History Tour” (235). These headings and their three-part structure parallel Lewis’ development from being a miserable, insecure outsider to a self-confident individual who is satisfied with his life, and finally experiences a connection to his culture, family, and community (Jansen 99). It also needs to be noted that the number three is significant in the Native American Haudenosaunee tribe, as it is “a reflection of the clan system [...] in which there are nine clans: three water, three land, and three air” (Weagel 79-80).

Similarly, the novel’s title *If I Ever Get Out of Here* refers to a song by Paul McCartney and Wings. This song title is also the heading of the novel’s first section; the illustration Gansworth provides for this first part is based on the original album cover *Band on the Run*. While the original cover (see figure 12) represents people caught by a large spotlight standing in front of a brick wall, Gansworth (see figure 13) reverses this perspective and represents people facing the brick wall instead. Gansworth’s illustration can be considered a portrayal of Lewis’ life, who expresses his desire to escape, but is indeed restricted by his life on the reservation. Nonetheless, the title does not merely imply a focus on space, but it can also be understood as representing Lewis’ urge to finally leave the time of adolescence and all the struggles he encounters behind. In the novel, Gansworth even quotes the song: “Stuck inside these four walls, sent inside forever, never seeing no one nice again like you. [...] All I need is a pint a day, if I ever get out of here, (if we ever get out of here). [...] We never will be found” (72-73). Lewis even refers to *If I Ever Get Out of Here* as “[his] song” (72).



Figure 12: Original *Band on the Run* Cover, Paul McCartney & Wings (*TheBeatles Wiki Band on the Run*)

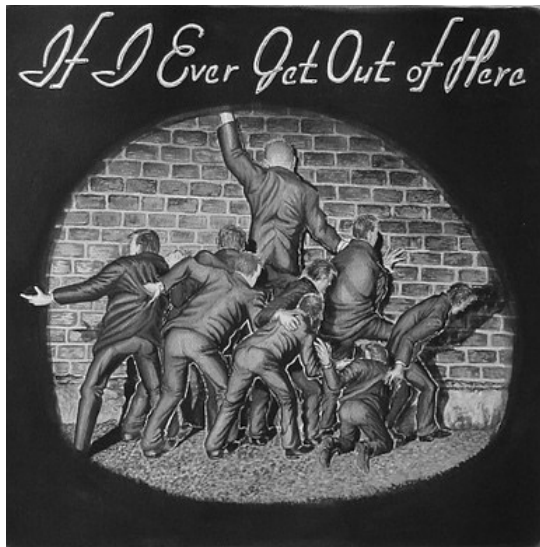


Figure 13: If I Ever Get Out of Here (Gansworth 1)

Whereas I have already described the cover of the second part in section 4.2.3., the cover of the third part is based on the album *Magical Mystery Tour* by The Beatles (see figure 14) and is called *Tragical History Tour* (see figure 15) instead. While in the original cover the four band members are wearing a walrus, chicken, hippo, and bunny costume, Gansworth uses dogs and a fox or coyote, which is frequently used to represent the trickster in Native American cultures. Dogs are also a leitmotif in the novel, since Lewis' mother gives George and his father beaded belt buckles with a picture of dogs on them as a present, which also contain Lewis' address Dog Street 77 (343). These belts, also called wampum, are what Gansworth considers "[his] culture's primary tool of survival [...] serv[ing] as a mnemonic, a trigger for cultural memory" (de la Paz and Purdy, *Crossing* 174). The symbols woven into these belts "engage the act of remembering, forcing each member of the culture to commit certain things to memory, in essence, to be individually responsible for cultural memory" (174). Thus, for George and his father, these belts also serve as a means of remembering Lewis and his family. Again, stars are prominently featured in the two covers in both the font of "Beatles" and "Indians" as well as in the background. In the third part, the truths of George's dad's past living on the reservation and Lewis' impoverished life are revealed, which is probably one of the reasons for calling this part *Tragical History Tour*.

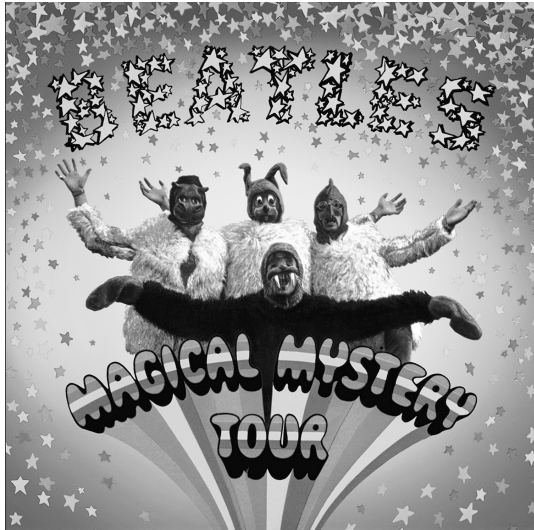


Figure 14: Original *Magical Mystery Tour* Cover, The Beatles (*TheBeatles Wiki Magical Mystery Tour*)

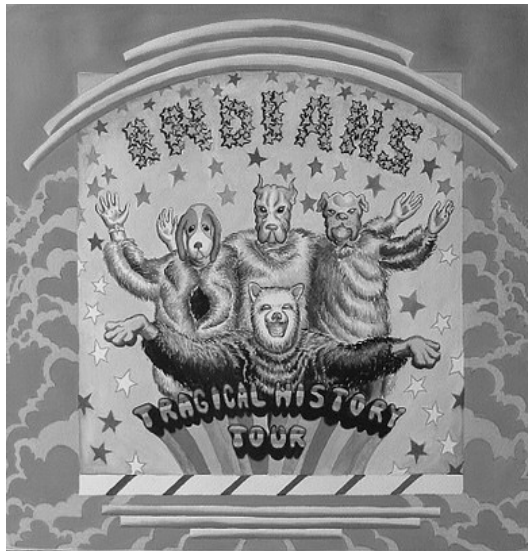


Figure 15: Tragical History Tour (Gansworth 235)

In addition, music is also the centerpiece in the book's cover (see figure 15), as the title is surrounded with headphones. These headphones could be understood as being rather old-fashioned, thus potentially implying the setting of the novel: the 1970s.



Figure 16: Cover of *IEGOH*

Also, the frontispiece in the front matter (see figure 17) includes a painting in which Gansworth combines the theme of music – since a jacket is holding a guitar (both Lewis and Carson are playing the guitar) – with the most crucial symbols used in the novel. These symbols include Albert’s leather jacket, an iconic, stereotypical imprint of a Native American with face paint, a feather headdress, and a long braid, as well as a billiard ball which is hidden in the jacket. The fact that the leather jacket and not an actual person is holding the guitar can be considered a personification, since the jacket is brought to life resembling a person.

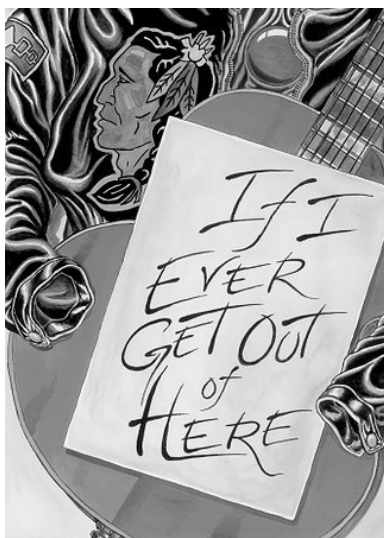


Figure 17: Frontispiece of *If I Ever Get Out of Here*

The role which music serves in *IIEGOH* is particularly fascinating due to the fact that while certain experiences, such as a person's ethnicity, cannot be considered universal, music represents a means to traverse the boundaries imposed on different ethnicities. Hence, music serves as an intercultural experience with the potential to bridge cultural differences, as illustrated in Lewis and George's friendship, thus being cross-cultural. There are various other instances in the novel, which support this claim. For example, Lewis describes his experience at the Wings concert in the following: "The strangers around me made me one of them. It was almost like being home on the reservation, and I let myself enjoy the surging excitement" (156). Comparing the concert to the reservation resembles a feeling of solidarity and belonging that is created by the music. Simultaneously, this quote also reflects the strong ties Lewis experiences within the tribal community. Comparing these "strangers" (256) at the concert with the "strangers" (6) Lewis faces at school, two completely different understandings of the word stranger seem to apply. While Lewis struggles with turning the strangers at school into friends, it is astonishing that Lewis experiences the strangers at the concert as being relatively close merely due to their shared interest in music.

In music class, Lewis' teacher Miss Ward also introduces the importance of music in Native American cultures and asks Lewis to inform the class about the tradition of music on the reservation (194). However, in an interview, Gansworth stresses his intention in focusing on non-traditional music in the novel:

[T]here [are] traditional drummers and singers and dancers on the reservation [...], but they're not the only Indians, not even the only Indians living on the reservation. [...] I wanted the Beatles to be so present here in part so that some kids on some reservation right now who like Jay-Z or Death Cab for Cutie can see that it's all right, that they are not less Indian because outsiders suggest they're not traditional enough, because they don't chat regularly with their animal friends and dance to manipulate weather patterns. (*Talking With*)

These references to well-known musicians, popular culture, and the occurrence of non-Native cultural icons also represents contemporary Native Americans – in the setting of the novel particularly those in the 1970s – as not being locked in the past, a representation which has already been examined in section 3.2. Gansworth further adds that music is a "strong [...] mnemonic to [him] [...] and [he is] transported by those songs to different times in [his] life and in the lives of [his] family and community" (de la Paz and Purdy, *Crossing* 176).

In the novel, Miss Ward stereotypically refers to traditional, historicized Native Americans (the "indian"), whereas the quote of the interview highlights that one specific Native American identity does not exist per se, but rather a variety of identities need to be

considered. Additionally, the fact that Lewis listens to music by non-Native Americans can be regarded as cross-cultural, since he immerses himself into a different world. De la Paz and Purdy also observe that in Gansworth's texts different objects, artifacts or elements of popular culture are crucial in that they "speak personally rather than generically to characters" (Rez 163). In *IIEGOH*, Lewis' guitar can be considered such an object which provides a symbolic subtext. These challenging representations of reading contemporary Native Americans are also highlighted in the way Gansworth challenges the traditional notions of reading books due to interspersing pictures and text (Rader, *Reading* 309).

In *IIEGOH*, music also functions as a cross-generational link. Regarding the relationship between Lewis and Albert with music, Albert is the one who supports Lewis' passion since he organizes his guitar lessons and also saves the money to buy the guitar for Lewis. It is not only Lewis and Albert who use music to enhance their relationship, but also Lewis, George and George's father's relationship is developed from music. After George's father becomes acquainted with Lewis, he lends Lewis one of his favorite albums. When Lewis tells George that he will bring the album back as soon as possible, George is even surprised since his father never lends out records to anybody.

In the final chapter, after George and his father have moved away, one of them – the sender is not revealed – sends Lewis a package including an album by the Beatles. Lewis, listening to the same song again and again, appreciates the message that the songs shall serve as a means of "keeping them connected, even when they don't live near each other anymore" (349). Remembering the times when George and him used to sing the song *Two of Us* together, the story ends with Lewis playing the guitar and singing the song again, this time "using the tougher, truer chords [he]'d learned from the Haddonfields" (350). The chorus of this song repeats "On our way back home/we're on our way back home/we're on our way back home/we're going home" (Pagni Stewart 157), which is in sharp contrast to the title of the first part *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. Symbolically, music serves to an even greater extent as bridging the distance between the two friends after George moved away. Ultimately, despite the fact that in the end of the novel Lewis is as lonely as he was before George's arrival at school, he manages to develop his identity from being an invisible outsider due to his Otherness to becoming a self-confident young adult, who feels a strong connection to his friends, family, and Native American identity.

With regard to gender roles and music, Nodelman (*Music* 225) argues that music is a sphere usually identified with femininity and opposed to values of hegemonic masculinity. In

IIEGOH, these representations of music are redefined since music occupies a crucial role in the male characters' lives, including Lewis, George, Carson, George's father, and Albert. Coats observes that the powerful qualities of gender in relation to music (consumption) "allow writers to use it as a signifier of character development in various ways to reinforce, challenge, or even blur gender norms and category distinctions" (115). Hence, in *IIEGOH*, music serves as a means of transcending culture, ethnicity, and generations, as well as a means of challenging stereotypical gender roles.

4.3. Comparison of the Texts

After providing an in-depth analysis of both novels, the fundamental similarities and differences between the representations of the Other in *TATD* and *IIEGOH* will be outlined. As illustrated in the analyses, the protagonists are represented as the cultural and young men Other on various different levels.

Both characters are represented as different based on their physical appearance. Lewis, on the one hand, is perceived as the cultural Other by his classmates due to his outward appearance, whereas he expresses the wish not to be predetermined by this visual level. By cutting off his braid, which serves as one of the most prominent visual signifiers of his Otherness, Lewis introduces his struggle for the search of his cultural identity. Junior, on the other hand, is not only characterized by the Otherness of his ethnicity in Reardan – at first being treated like a cultural outsider – but he is also different from the other students and tribal members in Wellpinit as a result of his disability. His ethnicity is the main reason for representing an Other at school where he is the only Native American, and his disability results in his outsider status on the reservation. Similarly, also Lewis represents an outsider in his tribe due to his intelligence, as he is the only Native American student in a class for highly gifted students in a high school with primarily white students. Hence, both protagonists struggle with their recognition in two different surroundings and, at first, they seem to neither belong to one nor the other world. Both texts use the school story alongside Native American issues to create novels celebrating their liminality. In *IIEGOH*, the metaphor of the moon and stars serves to highlight this liminal space.

Junior, however, manages to partly bridge the outsider status by his sports performance for Reardan's basketball team, since he manages to become part of the varsity team due to his sports skills and his commitment. On the one hand, basketball is the reason why Junior

gradually becomes accepted in the society at Reardan, whereas, on the other hand, it is actually the sphere alienating Junior from his tribal community. In general, in *TATD*, basketball can be considered as a domain in which Junior's understandings of masculinities and cultural Otherness intersect: he even considers the inter-cultural encounter in the game against Wellpinit a transition from being boys to becoming men. In *TATD*, Alexie also examines the Native American warrior ideal, which is closely related to Junior's expression of his masculinity and the sports sphere. According to Junior, being a warrior involves physical strength, as he exemplifies by playing basketball. Furthermore, the warrior figure is also characterized by a person's courage to defend others. Similarly, Junior highlights the fluidity of gender roles in that he refers to homosexual Others as warriors.

With regard to the representations of the deviances from hegemonic masculinity in the novels, the "sensitive new man schema" introduced in section 3.2. can be highlighted as distinctive in both novels. Junior, in particular, conforms to this schema on different levels. Both reading and drawing comics are among his favorite leisure time activities. He is, on the one hand, portrayed as an extremely sensitive young adult, whereas, on the other hand, he considers openly expressing his emotions as culturally and socially unacceptable. In *TATD*, negative connotations are attached to male characters that cry, which reflects that masculinities are always shaped by expectations on the side of society as a whole. Similar to Junior, also Lewis displays his sensitivity. Lewis can be considered representing a tougher personality and form of masculinity than Junior, since he does not silently accept the way he is treated at school.

Both texts blur the boundaries between binaries such as Native/non-Native, oral/written, and image/text. As regards the binary Native/non-Native, it can be observed that in *IIEGOH* not only the Other and self exist, but there are also characters who can be considered in-between figures, including George and his father. Both of them used to be Others in their lives before, George when he used to live in Germany and George's father when he used to live on the reservation as the only white child. Both novels include non-Native characters challenging the fixed notions of the self and the Other by establishing close friendships with the othered protagonists. In *TATD*, Gordy and Penelope serve to exemplify this claim as both gradually accept Junior despite their cultural differences, whereas in *IIEGOH* both George and George's father can be identified as such mediators. Simultaneously, these relationships imply that Otherness does not necessarily always present a stigmatization in life. This view can also be confirmed in the section in which Lewis invites George and George's father to join him for the National Picnic on the reservation, a situation in which he among his tribal members

perceives the two of them as significantly different. In addition, the fact that both texts include visual and textual elements serves to highlight the Otherness from other novels, blurring the boundaries between oral/written and image/text.

There are various cultural themes that can be explored through reading and teaching multi-ethnic literature in the books under analysis, including the cross-cultural importance of hair, traditional events, and ceremonies. In addition, kinship is a topic which is vital in both texts. In *TATD* it is in particular Junior's relation to his parents, grandmother, and sister which is crucial to him and his identity construction. In *IIEGOH*, in contrast, not only the relation to Lewis' mother, uncle, and siblings is highlighted, but he also develops a family-like relation to George's father, who can be considered as a substitute for the lacking father figure in Lewis' life. Thus, readers may gain understandings of their family relations and (dys)functional relationships in general.

In both texts, the authors address the ways in which Native American texts interact with popular culture. In the analysis of *IIEGOH*, the importance of music for the novel has been discussed. Music is an extremely powerful medium as the shared passion for music serves as an additional tool to reduce the distance between Lewis and George, to provide a generational link between Lewis, George, Albert, and George's father, as well as serves as a vital source of identity formation. Despite not being as prominently featured as in *IIEGOH*, music is also a cross-cultural tool in *TATD*. Junior enjoys both the traditional music and dancing at tribal powwows as well as the dancing at his high school's dance. After the series of deaths, he even makes a list of his favorite musicians in order to cope with his grief. Alexie has, however, been frequently criticized for his representation of popular culture as being extremely negative and an example of continuing colonialism (Narcisi 51). Representing Native Americans in popular culture serves to combat the tendency to represent Native Americans as frozen in a nostalgic past.

Alexie describes the harsh realities of reservation life in order for non-Natives to alter the ways in which they see Native Americans as well as to change Native Americans' own perceptions about themselves. By elaborating on stereotypes which non-Natives hold against Native Americans and vice versa, as well as those which Native Americans hold about themselves, Alexie presents those realities in a highly sarcastic manner. It is, however, not only Junior's subordination as regards his ethnicity, but also other forms of subordination which are noticeable: he is not only labeled a Native American, but his ethnicity intersects

with his disabilities and thus his representations as the young men Other. *IIEGOH* educates readers about the ongoing consequences of the United States' attempts to assimilate Native Americans, being informed about the extreme poverty many Native Americans are still facing. Hence, (young adult) readers, non-Natives in particular, are encouraged to critically examine popularly held, clichéd beliefs or stereotypes, to question the current situation of ethnicity and masculinity in the United States, and to challenge the accuracy of (hi)stories. I think that both Alexie's and Gansworth's writings and pictures are effective in articulating societal injustice – regardless of the reader's ethnicity.

In both texts, the authors draw on humor in order to construct their narratives. Alexie's use of humor in order to depict the harsh realities of many Native American's lives serves to make these more comfortable to read about. Alexie's humor does not reduce the seriousness of the topics addressed, but is indeed a crucial coping mechanism to Junior. Gansworth's wry humor serves a similar purpose to that of Alexie. In my opinion, the humor in both novels makes the texts more relatable to (young adult) readers, since readers might easily identify with the protagonists' wit. In addition, humor can be considered a vital tool of resistance and survivance, as well as an expression of both authors' post-indianism.

Whereas in *IIEGOH* Evan is the antagonist, white society in *TATD* in general can be considered the antagonist (Garcia 54). The Native American experience on the reservation is at closer focus at *TATD*, while particularly the universal themes, such as adolescence, friendship or a sense of belonging, in *IIEGOH* might appeal to readers from different backgrounds and result in a text which is accessible to a diversity of readers. It is also interesting that both authors aim at producing texts in which they highlight Native American characters intersecting with the representations of different masculinities. Hence, both texts under analysis can be considered accessible for educators working with adolescent readers, as the stories show the potential to encourage discussions of a variety of students: ranging from those from majority cultures to those from minority backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those who are considered smart and gifted.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to offer a sophisticated investigation of a scholarly field which has rather been neglected in scientific research so far: Native American young adult literature. By thoroughly analyzing two texts, Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and Eric Gansworth's *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, with regard to the representations of the cultural and young men Other, it is revealed that both texts offer highly complex, humorous readings of the protagonists' Otherness, which intersects on various levels. Both texts are similar with regard to the topics addressed: a Native American student is confronted with studying at a (primarily) white high school, living in the liminal space of neither one nor the other culture.

In the first part of this thesis, I have introduced the underlying key concepts, which are – in my view – most important to the topic, with the purpose of later applying them in order to analyze the two novels. These concepts include Native American literature, young adult literature, Native American young adult literature, cultural Otherness – the Native American Other in particular – and the young men Other. The question of Otherness has occupied a significant role in different disciplines and thus finding a universal definition of the concept is nearly impossible. Not only are the Native American protagonists represented as the Other on a cultural level, but they also develop their own understandings of masculinities, which are not based on hegemonic masculinity. Both texts do not only blur the boundaries between binaries such as Native/non-Native, but also those of oral/written and image/text.

In order to analyze these instances, the analysis has been divided in sub-sections according to shared themes and topics, which have been again contrasted in a final discussion. The historical tradition of “playing Indian” (Deloria) has been shaping the American identity by a means of direct comparison with a distinctively Other and is thus prominent in both texts. In addition, also Vizenor's theory of the “(post)-indian” can be highlighted as vital in both novels, since both authors apply strategies of survivance, such as the use of humour and the dismantling of stereotypes. Both Junior and Lewis are represented as different based on their physical appearance. For Junior, in particular, his Native American identity and his disabilities result in a double-minority status. In *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, the importance of sports in order to reduce the feeling of Otherness as well as the Native American warrior figure as an expression of masculinity are prominent. Both protagonists can be described as examples of the “sensitive new man schema” (Stephens), being described as more caring and sensitive, which is a recurring schema in contemporary

young adult literature. In addition, inter-cultural friendships are crucial in both texts. The authors, Gansworth in particular, also address the ways in which Native American texts interact with popular culture. In *If I Ever Get Out of Here* music serves as a means to traverse the cultural boundaries of the self and the Other.

In conclusion, it needs to be added that in both books under analysis only Native American and white societies are represented, which actually does not resemble the variety of ethnical groups in the United States. Again drawing upon the mirror metaphor introduced in section 2.3., the two essential functions of NAYAL for its (young adult) readers from diverse cultural backgrounds need to be highlighted: on the one hand, Native American young adult literature may serve as a mirror for Native American adolescents, since texts may reflect familiar experiences, a shared cultural background, and similar identity issues (Botelho 268; Moura-Koçoğlu 314). On the other hand, for non-Native readers, for instance young adults in Austria, the protagonists of multi-ethnic stories originate from a completely different cultural background. Hence, the study and analysis of these contemporary Native American young adult novels offer potent sites for the exploration of Otherness and masculinities for teachers and students, but also people who are interested in Native American (young adult) literature in general.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the representations of the cultural and young men Other in the two Native American young adult novels *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Sherman Alexie) and *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (Eric Gansworth). Both texts are similar with regard to the topics addressed: a Native American student is confronted with studying at a (primarily) white high school. Drawing on the underlying key concepts, including Native American literature, young adult literature, Native American young adult literature, cultural Otherness – the Native American Other in particular – and the young men Other, both texts are analyzed with regard to their representations. The analysis suggests that both novels offer highly complex, humorous readings of the protagonists' Otherness. Not only are they represented as the Other on a cultural level, but they also develop their own understandings of masculinities, which are not based on hegemonic masculinity. The study and analysis of these contemporary Native American young adult novels offers potent sites for the exploration of Otherness and masculinities for teachers and students, but also people who are interested in Native American (young adult) literature in general – a field which has been neglected in scientific research so far.

Keywords: Native American literature; Native American young adult literature; Otherness; cultural Other; young men Other; masculinity; masculinities; hegemonic masculinity; Sherman Alexie; *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*; Eric Gansworth; *If I Ever Get Out of Here*; stereotypes

Zusammenfassung der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Darstellung von Native Americans als das Andere (*Othering*) in den zwei U.S.-amerikanischen jugendliterarischen Werken *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Sherman Alexie) und *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (Eric Gansworth). Beide Texte ähneln sich in ihrer Thematik, die adressiert wird: ein Native American jugendlicher Protagonist ist damit konfrontiert, sich an einer (größtenteils) weißen Schule zurechtzufinden und einzuleben. Basierend auf den grundlegenden Theorien, "Native American literature", "young adult literature" (Jugendliteratur), "Native American young adult literature", "cultural Otherness – the Native American Other" und "the young men Other", werden beide Texte schließlich in einer Analyse einander gegenübergestellt. Diese Analyse bestätigt, dass in beiden Texten sehr komplexe und humorvolle Repräsentationen dieser Alterität vorliegen. Die Protagonisten stellen nicht nur das Andere auf einer kulturellen Ebene dar, sondern ebenso in Bezug auf deren Repräsentationen als das maskuline Andere – im klaren Gegenteil zur hegemonialen Männlichkeit. Diese Studie und Analyse beider Text bietet Potential für die Auseinandersetzung mit Alterität für Lehrende und Lernende, aber auch jene, die generell an "Native American (young) adult literature" interessiert sind, da diese Sphäre bisher in der Forschung oftmals vernachlässigt wurde.