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Threads of Tradition: Native American Women's Resistance and Resilience in Piatote's "Beading Lesson"

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Abstract

Resistance literature's significance to empower the weak cannot be overemphasized. This article examines "Beading Lesson" by Native American (NA) women author, Beth Piatote. The short fiction highlights the importance of NA women's roles within their communities. Utilizing the Indigenous feminist framework, this study applies seven analytical categories of resistance by Baaz et al. and integrates Southwick et al.'s concepts of resilience to examine how the narrator navigates through historical trauma and hardships. In the narrative, issues such as tumultuous relations with the U.S. government, exploitation, incarceration, cultural erasure, and change of gender roles, are brought up in the story through the light-toned monologue of an aunt, the narrator, who is teaching her niece how to bead. Contrasted to this backdrop of historical trauma and adversities is the narrator's resistance and resilience embedded in her everyday actions. The findings revealed that the narrator employs discreet and non-confrontational forms of resistance demonstrated through routine activities such as beading, teaching, storytelling, and engaging in powwow rituals. These seemingly ordinary activities are actually powerful acts of resistance as they assert the narrator's original gender role as keeper of tradition within the context of NA culture. The narrator's resilience is firmly grounded in her strong sense of identity as an NA woman. By engaging in various forms of resistance, she not only challenges the oppressive system but also helps foster collective resilience in her community. As resistance literature, this short fiction reveals the multifaceted forms of resistance and resilience within NA communities.

Keywords: Native American women; resistance literature; resilience; cultural preservation

Article information

Received:
30 August
2023

Revised:
4 October
2023

Accepted:
6 October
2023

Introduction

This article examines the short fiction “Beading Lesson” by a Native American (NA) woman author and scholar Beth Piatote. The objective of the analysis is to explore the piece as a form of resistance literature with a particular focus on unravelling the theme of resilience.

Literary works hold significance that extends beyond mere aesthetic appeal for marginalized communities, who often face systemic oppression, exclusion, and discrimination. They can serve as formidable tools through which people can express their perspectives, experiences, and identities to resist, challenge, and critique dominant societal narratives that undermine their existence. In her prominent work, *Resistance Literature*, Harlow argues that narratives of resistance like novels or short stories help readers understand the past, and these works can delve into the intricacies of the power structure, shedding light on how perpetual domination and exploitation operate. Narrative resistance’s power to expose the oppressive system and to assist people in understanding historical accounts, collective memories, and the shared experience of a community can help people make informed decisions for future endeavors to achieve justice, liberation, and equality (1987).

Among marginalized communities are indigenous people whose identity and culture are endangered due to the history of colonization and the profound ramifications it has on their continuing survival. In particular, NA communities in the North American continent have to face land dispossession, forced migration, forced assimilation, cultural erosion, and socioeconomic challenges. The statistical analysis conducted to discover the effects of land dispossession and forced migration on indigenous populations in North America yielded several noteworthy findings. Firstly, it was revealed that a staggering 98.9% of tribal land was taken away by the government. Additionally, in contemporary times, 42,1% of NA tribes have no land base recognized by the government. For those tribes that still possess land, their current territories,

on average, constitute a mere 2.6% of their historical territories. Furthermore, the average distance traveled by tribes forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands was found to be 239 km, with a median distance of 131 km and a maximum distance of 2774 km (Farrell et al., 2021).

The historical repercussions along with insufficient assistance from governmental policies continue to bring negative impacts on present-day NA communities. Although in recent years the tribal nations have experienced a revival in self-governance and self-determination, they still face long-term socioeconomic challenges. According to U.S. Census Bureau, 28.3% of Natives live in poverty. This number is the highest of any racial or ethnic group and is nearly twice the national poverty rate. 23,1% of Natives are deprived of health insurance coverage, which is notably higher than the national average of 11.7%. Additionally, their dropout rate is 11% which is higher than the 5% corresponding rate of non-Hispanic Whites. All of these factors contribute to health disparities among Native Americans (Blue Bird Jernigan et al., 2020).

Despite unfortunate circumstances, indigenous communities persist in asserting their distinctive identities, asserting their innate sovereignty to their territories through treaty rights and original title claims, preserving their languages and spiritual customs, and notably, continuing to tell their own stories. The implications of residing in a colonial society have, to a certain extent, motivated Native authors to employ more evocative and creative narrative techniques. Consequently, NA literature has emerged as a particularly captivating, imaginative, and creative works in contemporary literary discourse (Lopenzina, 2020). Nevertheless, prior to the publication of N. Scott Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn*, which marks the beginning of the NA Renaissance in the 1970s-80s, NA and their experiences were documented by white authors. As outsiders, they oftentimes fail to proportionately portray these experiences. Consequently, the portrayals often result in misinterpretation and reductionism that perpetuates stereotypical depictions. These problematic representations were criticized by Haudenosaunee scholar

David Cusick and Pequot activist William Apess in the early 19th century, who would later author books that portrayed Native peoples from their own perspectives (Pleasant et al., 2018).

During the era of NA Renaissance, Native writers such as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo, Louis Erdrich, and Linda Hogan emerged as prominent figures. They challenged misconceptions, reclaimed cultural identity, and highlighted the complexities of the NA experience through their works. In the context of American literary tradition, they offer a body of works that are distinct from the literary canon. Blaeser, a contemporary Native women author asserted,

The works of Native American writers both inadvertently and self-consciously embody literary processes and genres unlike those of the old canon. Many Indian authors have purposefully chosen to ignore standard rules and forms that are ill-suited to Native storytelling. They strive to introduce different codes. Their works teach readers and critics new ways of reading and interacting with voices on the page. (1997, p. 556)

Her statement goes along with Harlow's idea on resistance literature, that writers of resistance narratives deliberately experiment with narrative structure. This experimentation is not just a display of artistic prowess as by deviating from the standard of narrative structure, they disrupt the traditional historical perspective that overlooks their existence and demand recognition for their own histories and perspectives (Harlow, 1987). Still discussing the uniqueness of NA literature, Blaeser described the quality of literary works authored by NA women writers as carrying a new vision.

"It refuses to separate the literary and academic from the sacred and the daily, as it brings to the text the unpaginated experiences of contemporary tribal reality. Writings by Native women remain infused with supraliterary intentions." (1997, p. 556)

This statement signifies that Native American women's works are culturally rooted, authentic, and holistic as they do not compartmentalize different aspects of life.

Erdrich's dystopian novel *Future Home of the Living God* exemplifies these characteristics. Narrating the story in the perfect future tense, she addresses the attacks on reproductive rights and the devastating impacts of climate change that affect women and NA women. This unique stylistic choice emphasized the interconnectedness of events and the importance of taking action before a potential disaster (Martínez-Falquina, 2019). This work also challenges whitestream (mainstream) stereotypes and ideas of progress. Not only does she set the story in a dystopian future, but she also uses an NA protagonist, Cedar, who stands as a symbol for future generations. This character was frequently visited by a guardian spirit, which symbolizes beliefs in interconnectedness in all things that existed in many Native cultures (Martínez-Falquina, 2019). By doing this, Erdrich highlights the importance of representation that resonates with the indigenous experience.

Solar Storm by Linda Hogan is one of the NA literary canons that explores the issue of environmental degradation, trauma, and the intricate connection between the two. It is crucial to acknowledge that these subjects are inseparable from the pervasive influence of settler colonialism. Regarding this matter, two recent scholarly studies of this novel were carried out by Ned Schaumberg and Summer Harrison. Schaumberg's research on the narrative explores how water, which is mainly represented through the water of a hydroelectric dam that flooded Native settlement, is not merely a physical entity, but a living being that embodies cultural, spiritual, and geological histories (2019). The construction of the dam itself can be seen as a representation of a settler-colonial attempt to exploit natural resources that bring destruction to native settlements. However, water is dynamic; it cannot always be controlled. Its unpredictable nature and its defiance of human control symbolize Native resistance against cultural erasure. In addition to that, the story also explores the theme of interconnectedness between NA with the natural world they lived

in. It can be seen through the protagonist's understanding of water. Angel's attempt to reconnect to her root is reflected in her evolving understanding of water, as it influences her perceptions of self, her culture, and her resistance against colonialism (Schaumberg, 2019).

Harrison's study on Hogan's *Solar Storm*, probes the story as a narrative of trauma that encourages alternative representation that promotes healing. The researcher also draws a parallel between the narrative's plot and the maps accompanying the construction of James Bay and the Standing Rock/Dakota Access Pipelines (2019). Harrison argues that Hogan's story is inseparable from real historical events that traumatize NA communities. The protagonist's quest to understand her (traumatized) self is inseparable from the long history of NA colonization and the exploitation of nature. Hogan's formal technique to bring up this subject is the use of what Harrison calls an "insert narrative" where the protagonist's narration is frequently interrupted by her relatives, specifically by three grandmotherly figures. These insert narratives say that Angel's story started not with the time she was born, but with the onset of colonial exploitation, encompassing extraction of resources of land such as iron mines and deforestation, as well as the mistreatment of indigenous people through starvation and forced attendance at boarding schools. Over time, Angel gradually comprehends the interconnectedness between her own wound, memory loss, and the broader communal and environmental trauma (Harrison, 2019).

The theme of resilience can be found in the NA memoir *Crazy Brave* by Joy Harjo. A study conducted by Navarro in 2019 examines the life of Harjo and some of her poems in conjunction with the narrative. The objective is to uncover the mechanism through which Harjo managed to defy the hardship she faced during her upbringing and eventually claim her voice and construct her identity. Resilience in the context of this study refers to an individual's capacity to cope with and navigate through distressing occurrences while also extracting significance from the painful situation, ultimately resulting in personal growth. Navarro argues that Harjo's work is a means

through which she recalls her wound thus making the start of the healing process possible; it is a strategy for cultivating resilience promoting the pursuit of liberation, emancipation, and communal building. It is because the memoir gives her a perspective to explore her multiple identities, encompassing her gender, creative pursuits, and NA heritage (Navarro, 2019).

While there have been numerous studies conducted on the works of prominent NA women writers such as Louis Erdrich, Linda Hogan, and Joy Harjo, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Martínez-Falquina, Schaumberg, Harrison, and Navarro, there has been a gap in the exploration of emerging NA voices, especially in the realm of short fiction. "Beading Lesson" by Beth Piatote is one such piece that has not been frequently studied in academia, particularly in the context of NA women's resistance and resilience. While the existing studies focus on themes such as environmental degradation, trauma, colonization, and resilience, this study highlights the subtleties of resistance manifested in everyday activities, the interplay between resistance and resilience, and their connection with women's role in NA communities. By focusing on a piece by a younger generation of authors, the research examines the ongoing issues and triumphs of contemporary NA communities.

Methodology

This study is conducted within the framework of the Indigenous feminist approach also known as the Aboriginal feminist approach, as it examines the portrayal of the unique experiences of NA women whose predicaments are not comparable to their Euro-American counterparts. In the pre-contact era, NA women enjoyed more respect in their communities and were more empowered than they are today (Anderson, 2010). Their social standing was compromised after the arrival of European settlers, as colonialism throughout the Americas entailed the enforcement of Western gender roles and patriarchal social systems (Huhndorf & Suzack, 2010).

Green's argument sheds light on how intellectuals ought to conceptualize Aboriginal feminism.

"Aboriginal feminism seeks an Aboriginal liberation that includes women, and not just the conforming woman, but also the marginal and excluded, and especially the woman who has been excluded from her community by virtue of colonial legislation and socio-historical forces. This Aboriginal feminism is a theoretical engagement with contemporary social, economic, cultural, and political issues. ... Aboriginal feminism interrogates power structures and practices between and among Aboriginal and dominant institutions. ... While Aboriginal feminists have focused largely on the impositions of Imperialism, colonialism, racism, and sexism from dominant societies, the same body of thought has also illuminated impositions of power and practices within Indigenous communities, organizations, and families." (2007, p. 24-25)

The statement highlights the intersection between gender, colonialism, and NA identity. NA women's experiences, especially the current social, economic, cultural, and political challenges, should be understood within the context of settler colonialism which causes both external and internal societal pressures. This framework, therefore, provides a more holistic lens to comprehend the layered experience of NA women depicted in the narrative.

In dismantling the idea of resistance in "Beading Lesson", the researchers turn to the following seven analytical categories proposed by Baaz et al.

(i) repertoires of resistance in relation to particular configurations of power, (ii) the spectrum between organized and individual resistance, (iii) the temporal aspect of resistance, (iv) the spatial dimensions of resistance, (v) the relationship between bodies and representations, (vi) resistance reinforcing and/or creating new performances of resistance, and (vii)

processes of self-reflection and affects. By this let us now turn to an elaboration on the categories one by one. (2016, p. 145)

These categories were formulated by considering various conceptualizations of resistance by different theorists such as Michael Foucault and James Scott among others. Foucault, as quoted by Baaz et al. (2016), argued that power and resistance are co-constitutive; without resistance, no power relation is established. Meanwhile, Scott's seminal work "Everyday Forms of Resistance" provides insight that resistance is not always in an overt confrontational political form; it can appear as "informal, hidden, and nonconfrontational" (Baaz et al., 2016, p. 139).

In NA communities, resistance is deeply intertwined with resilience. Southwick et al. defined resilience as an active determination to grow out of adversaries; a capacity of a system, be it an individual or a community, to adapt so that it can survive, function, and develop. In addition, resilience also means a process to effectively and efficiently manage resources to maintain well-being (2014). According to The American Psychological Association, three predominant factors that contribute to one's resilience are *"the ways people view and engage with the world, the availability and quality of social resources, and specific coping strategies."* ("Resilience," 2023) The second factor signifies the interdependence between individuals and communities. As Southwick et al. put it, in order to cultivate resilience in a comprehensive manner, it is crucial to recognize the interdependence of people within familial units, families within organizational and communal structures, and communities within broader societal and cultural contexts (Southwick et al., 2014). This serves as a vantage point to observe the resilience depicted in the story.

The primary data of this study is acquired through close reading and textual analysis of Piatote's "Beading Lesson". Intrinsic literary elements that demonstrate NA women's resilience were identified, and related scholarly articles were used to provide context. In analyzing the data, the researchers conducted a thematic analysis based on the

principles of Aboriginal feminism and Baaz et al.'s seven analytical categories of resistance as shown in recurring themes, symbols, and motifs in the narrative.

Results and Discussion

As resistance and resilience are parts of a power struggle, the analysis starts with a discussion on the representation of historical trauma and adversities in the short fiction.

Representation of Historical Trauma and Adversities

Expectation and Irony: Relationship with the U.S. Government

Relation between NA communities and the U.S. Government appears near the end of the narrative when the narrator complains about how White people like to get their worn-out beadwork fixed for free, as they expect NA handcraft to last forever. She juxtaposes it with a hypothetical situation as follows.

"But some people, when they buy your beadwork, they think it should last forever. Somebody's car breaks down, he knows he got to take it to the shop, pay someone to get it goin' again. But not with beadwork— not with something an Indian made. No, they bring it back ten years later and they want you to fix it for free! They think because an Indian makes it, it's got to last forever. Just think if the Indians did that with all the things the government made for us. Hey, you got to fix it for free!" (Piatote, 2008, p. 269)

This sarcastic statement carries a powerful subtext that comprises a long history of contact between Native nations and the federal government, dating back to the early republic until today. Early federal government efforts in nation-building involved taking land from Native nations through treaties – most of which were broken by the government itself, relocating them to reservations, imposing a European way of life and ideology – including Christianity, and taking away Native children from their parents to be Americanized in boarding schools. These undertakings were

manifested through legislation or law enactment and the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) whose task is to carry out federal policy toward Indians (Lambert, 2016). The phrase "all the things the government made for us" serves as a sarcastic reference to these broken treaties, policies, laws, BIA, and actions that detriment NA communities.

The narrator's assertion suggests the ironic nature of the concept of value and compensation. NA culture and labor which is represented through beadwork is expected to last forever. In contrast, people do not hold the same expectations regarding governmental measures. This statement functions as a critique of the prevailing double standard and the absence of historical responsibility.

Exploitation

Refusal to pay for fixing NA beadwork as portrayed in the previous excerpt can be read as an act of exploitation. It reveals how NA craftsmanship is being devalued, and the devaluation does not only apply to the beadwork itself as a product, but it extends to Native peoples,' specifically NA women's labor, their skills, and their craftsmanship. In the story, beadwork is not respected for its cultural and historical value that it holds. This is a form of economic marginalization that can be linked to historically unbalanced power dynamics between NA and White people.

The Allusion to Over-Incarceration of Native Americans

In the story, the narrator tells her niece about her experience of regularly going to the prison to give beading lessons, where she meets some NA prisoners.

I'll show you these real easy earrings, the same thing I always start those men at the jail with. You know I go over there and give them beading lessons. ... I know this one man, William, he would be an artist if he wasn't in jail. I'll show you, he gave me a drawing he did of an eagle. ... There's a couple of other Indian prisoners—I guess we're supposed to call

them inmates, but I always call them prisoners—and sometimes I make designs for them for their beadwork from what they draw. (Piatote, 2008, p. 268)

The mention of NA prisoners in the narration alludes to the high incarceration rate of Native people which is reflected in the most recent statistics. The incarceration rate of Native individuals in correctional facilities, specifically jails, and prisons, was found to be more than twice as high as that of their white counterparts. Moreover, this gap was shown to be even more pronounced within prison settings (Wang, 2021).

High incarceration rate of NA individuals can be attributed to interconnected historical, legal, and institutional factors (Fox et al., 2023). As mentioned earlier, the U.S. federal government attempted to exploit Native land and other resources and to assimilate NA into white society. To achieve these purposes, the government established political restraints, including laws weakening tribal judicial systems and sovereignty such as The General Crimes Act, Assimilative Crimes Act, Major Crimes Act, General Allotment Act, and Public Law 280. These measures have hindered the ability of Native nations to self-govern and handle crime. Furthermore, the historical trauma caused by these practices continues to hurt Native people's physical and mental health, increasing their criminal justice involvement. Also, tribal courts' lack of representation worsens the issue. Consequently, political oppression, cultural erasure, and legal intricacy have long led to disproportionate NA imprisonment (Fox et al., 2023).

A subtle mention of a regular visit to a prison in this story serves as an underlying message that points out the far-reaching ramifications of past trauma. It summarizes systemic challenges resulting from decades of government tyranny, cultural loss, and legal issues. This seemingly understated reference highlights how historical trauma can emerge in contemporary issues such as over-incarceration.

Cultural Erasure

There are two parts in the story that signify cultural erasure or ethnocide; the first one is the narrator's recollection of attending boarding school and her concern about her sister's lack of cultural skills, particularly beading skills.

The narrator interestingly states that going to boarding school was not bad for her.

She didn't have to do things she didn't want to, she didn't even have to go to boarding school. I think she would have liked it. It wasn't bad for me at that school. Those nuns were good to me; they doted on me. I was their pet. I think your mama missed out on something, not going to St. Andrew's, because that's when you get real close with other Indians. (Piatote, 2008, p. 268)

The passage highlights the uneven power relation between the nuns administering the boarding school and the narrator. Although the narrator's reminiscence is benign as she says, "*they (the nuns) doted on me,*" her following statement, "*I was their pet,*" suggests a potential for abuse. The metaphor "*pet*" implies a lack of agency on the children's part, and it places the nuns in a position of power.

Boarding schools for Native children are a strategic measure by the government to assimilate NA. According to Adams as quoted by Krupat (2018), Native people were given two options: civilization (assimilation) or extinction. Children were taken away by force in the early 1890s by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to be "civilized". This practice is obviously an ethnocide as reflected in Henry Pratt's infamous slogan "Kill the Indian and save the man". In the early 1990s, the Meriam Report revealed that these schools' provisions were inadequate. Nutrition, hygiene, and healthcare were neglected which led to the spread of diseases such as trachoma, tuberculosis, measles, pneumonia, and influenza. The report, however, fails to record the use of corporal punishment and cases of sexual abuse that appeared in various personal accounts (Krupat, 2018).

The stark contrast between the aforementioned historical context and the narrator's seemingly positive experience was ironic. This irony suggests that the narrative serves as a commentary on how stories of abuse and trauma are often "sanitized" just like what happened to historical accounts like the Meriam Report.

The second part of the story that signifies cultural erasure is the narrator's sister who does not have beading skill.

I think your mama is really goin' to like these earrings, and maybe she'll come and ask you to teach her how you do it. You think she'll ever want to learn beadwork? Maybe she'll come and ask me, aay? What do you think of that? You think your mama would ever want to learn something from her big sister? ... I just keep thinkin' if I stay around long enough, everyone's goin' to come back and ask me, even your mama. (Piatote, 2008, p. 269)

The passage shows how eager the narrator is to teach her sister and how hopeful she is that one day the sister wants to master the skill. The narrator's concern implies the importance of beadwork, and beadwork in the story is more than just craftsmanship. It symbolizes NA culture. The sister's inability to perform this tradition symbolizes a break in cultural continuation. Her disinterestedness also signifies the gap between the older and younger generations. The narrator, who represents the older generation in the story, sees the urgency to preserve her culture. The same sentiment, however, is not shared by the younger sister. The younger sister's own agency in refusing the tradition can also be seen as a threat of cultural extinction that comes from within the NA community itself.

Change of Gender Roles

A commentary on gender relations is found in the narrator's remark on her other niece's romantic relationship and how it is a hindrance to her achieving her degree.

How do you like it over there at the university? You know your cousin Rae is

just about gettin' her degree. She just has her practicum, then she'll be done. I think her boyfriend don't like her being in school though, and that's slowing her down. It's probably a good thing you don't have a boyfriend right now. They can really make a lot of trouble for you, and slow you down on things you got to do. (Piatote, 2008, p. 267)

The narrator sees what her niece's boyfriend did as an act of control and limitation. The narrator also believes that it is better for the niece – the one she is talking to, to not have a male partner, as having one will prevent her from achieving personal development. This statement can be further connected to gender roles and expectations. Career and education advancement can be seen as a threat to the male partner, signifying unequal gender-power dynamics. It also suggests that men must be the more powerful and dominant figure in a relationship.

Unequal gender-power dynamics portrayed in the story, however, have not always been the value of NA culture. Although gender roles are diverse from one culture to another, Native nations tend to hold egalitarian principles; gender-based violence was unheard of in many communities (Liddell et al., 2021; Green, 2007). Particularly in Nez Perce, the origin of the story's author, women enjoy respectable positions in the community. Although Nez Perce men and women performed different roles in families and communities, they had equal status (Bonvillain, 2011). It can be seen in how both genders perform economic tasks. Men and women sometimes work separately but sometimes together. Women supplied families with food by gathering wild plants, fruits, and roots, and by doing this, they contributed to 50 to 70 percent of the annual diet. Women too, participated in communal hunting and fishing with men. The kinship system also reflects equality between men and women. The Nez Perce hold "bilateral" kinship where people trace their ancestry through their mothers and fathers. Nez Perce women's agency is also reflected in the fact that they could participate and voice opinions in village councils and that they could initiate divorce whenever stuck in an unhappy marriage (Bonvillain, 2011).

The Nez Perce ethics of gender is in contrast with the gender dynamics presented in the story, revealing a shift in gender-power dynamics. Colonization was instrumental in restructuring gender relations, resulting in the subordination of women. During the early stages of colonization, there were political and economic dynamics that demonstrated a bias towards Native males, illustrating colonizers' reluctance or inability to recognize the authority of women. This led to disruptions to established hierarchies within NA communities. These disruptions were later exacerbated by the establishment of residential schools and boarding schools where patriarchal gender norms were imposed as parts of assimilation efforts (Huhndorf & Suzack, 2010).

Fighting Back: The Resistance of Native American Women

The researchers discovered that in the narrative, the narrator's resistance lies in mundane activities such as beading, teaching beadworks to other people, getting involved in Native ceremonies, and giving relationship guidance to her niece. These are the narrator's repertoire of resistance to challenge the dominant power structure that oppresses her and her community.

Beading as Cultural Preservation

In the narrative, the beading lesson serves as the central axis around which the story unfolds; it is not a background activity. As the narrator gives a beading lesson, she simultaneously tells stories that give the niece cultural and historical context of their existence. The niece is not the only one she taught; there are also Native prisoners whom she regularly visits. Beading for NA is not just an art form as it has great cultural significance. It is deeply connected with spiritual and religious practices. The bead artists typically drew inspiration from dreams and visions, and their sacred motifs were traditionally passed down to the next generations of bead artists. Beadwork also has political significance. The beads woven in wampum treaty belts were worn by Native people to signal their political status within the Native community. The

prohibition of wearing beadwork is linked to the assimilation process, particularly through residential schools and religious institutions (Gray, 2017). With this context, the narrator's act of giving her niece and the prisoners beading lessons means that she fights against cultural erasure by bringing back the tradition imbued with spiritual and religious significance and political and social importance for Native communities.

Giving beading lessons as a form of resistance possesses a temporal aspect. As the narrator teaches her niece and other people, she is passing down a multifaceted and ancient cultural practice that she fights to preserve for future generations. By doing this, she is linking the past, present, and future. She refuses cultural erasure to break the continuum. The temporal aspect of this practice is therefore related to the idea that resistance reinforces new performances of resistance. When beading is perceived as a practice of resisting cultural marginalization and oppression, the narrator makes her pupils, the niece and the prisoners, the new generation of resisters.

Another aspect of resistance found in beading activity is the affective aspect. It is reflected in the emotional investment the narrator makes when she preserves this cultural practice. Her emotion is reflected in her commitment, her patience when giving the beading lesson, her concerns over her sister who does not have the beading skill, and her willingness to teach everyone who wants to master the skill. This emotional investment is an indication of a deep emotional connection to her culture.

Beading as a cultural resistance also gives economic empowerment for the narrator. She makes a living selling her beadwork, and it is essential to her survival.

And they are always askin' for my work at the gift shop. My beadwork has got me through some hard times, some years of livin' skinny. (Piatote, 2008, p. 269)

The beadwork for the narrator becomes a tool to resist economic marginalization. By selling her own beadwork, the narrator prevents cultural appropriation committed by people

outside her culture. She also has her own agency in the economic activity by giving economic value to the art. Not only that but by selling her art, she increases the visibility of beadwork that will eventually counter the attempts of cultural erasure.

Resistance across Realms: From Private to Public Spaces

There are two important spaces mentioned in the story where the beading lessons take place; the first one is at home and the second one is at the correctional facility. This spatial dimension of resistance is linked to the spectrum between organized resistance and individual resistance.

At home, the narrator engages in a more private, personal, and intimate form of resistance. In addition to the beading lesson, the narrator also gives her niece education about the history and struggle of their people. Also, she encourages her to master other cultural skills.

I think you'll look real good when you're ready to dance. Once you get going on your beadwork I'll get you started on your moccasins, and you know your cousin Woody is making you a belt and I know this lady who can make you a cornhusk bag. (Piatote, 2008, p. 268)

This form of resistance is connected to the gender roles the narrator plays as a Native woman who traditionally was responsible for the education of the children, and whose task is to ensure the transmission of culture from the older to the younger generation. This task is very important for NA communities as their survival cannot be separated from women's roles as progenitors of nations.

The public space the narrator visits is a prison where she meets incarcerated NA people. It is a symbolic space that signifies the oppression and marginalization of Indigenous communities. As previously mentioned, the legal system imposed by the government undermines the tribal councils and tribal legal structure which consequently weakens NA communities. By visiting the prison and give

beading lessons to the inmates, the narrator transforms a space that is used to constrain Native people and makes it a place where cultural transmission happens, a place for empowerment. Through the interaction, she builds a sense of community and solidarity, which is also demonstrated by her involvement in the powwow ceremony in the prison.

The powwow ceremony is still closely related to beadwork. When wearing beadwork was prohibited, it made its way through powwow, a ceremony that has become a social event, where NA people perform rituals and ceremonies with non-Native audiences in attendance. There, beadworks give a beautiful spectacle for spectators coming from outside the Indigenous community, a spectacle that can only be comprehended by the insiders (Gray, 2017). By joining the incarcerated NA in powwow, the narrator resists the oppression by joining communal cultural preservation, as in the ceremony, Indigenous identity and communal ties are asserted through various cultural practices. Through her attendance, she too affirms her identity and reclaims her gender roles as a cultural bearer. This way her resistance is both personal and organized; it happens in her private sphere at her home, and in a public space like a correctional facility.

Gender Dynamics: Emphasis on Individual Agency

In addition to beadwork and the act of teaching, resistance also manifests in the form of romantic advice the narrator gives to her niece. The narrator says that it is better to be alone than to have a partner who makes a lot of trouble and who will slow things down (Piatote, 2008). This resistance counters the patriarchal norms, that did not exist prior to European contact. It is an individual form of resistance that seeks to empower an individual, the niece, and it happens in a private space, at home. In terms of self-reflection and affects, this resistance is emotionally charged, as the narrator tries to instill in her niece a sense of self-worth.

One important aspect of resistance in this action is the relationship between bodies and

representation. Bodies which mean the lived experience of women are not the same as representations that consist of societal norms, and expectations of what it means to become a woman. The narrator's advice to her niece is a call to claim control over her own body and to prioritize her own autonomy. This call is at the same time an appeal to reclaim the respected position of women in Native cultures that were eroded by the imposition of patriarchal values.

Overcoming Adversity: The Resilience of Native American Women

The narrator's acts of resistance are indications of her resilience. As a member of a marginalized community, it is definitely not easy for the narrator to effectively function with chronic daily stressors such as marginalization and cultural erasure. Based on Southwick et al.'s definition of resilience, the narrator is a resilient individual. She has the capacity to adapt to challenging situations. Keeping tradition by giving beading lessons, building close connections with her niece and incarcerated NA individuals, and taking part in powwow ceremonies are her survival strategies. The fact that she transmits a cultural practice imbued with spiritual, religious, political, and social importance to fellow members of NA communities, means that she does not develop only herself but also others. This way she helps to foster her community's resilience. If resilient individuals can maintain well-being through effective management of resources, so can the narrator. Her resourcefulness is demonstrated through her use of beadwork as a means of economic survival. She knows how to make use of her skills and cultural knowledge to help her through hard times.

The narrator's ability to persevere is related to the relational worldview. In NA culture, an individual sense of self and identity is inseparable from the bonds one has with the family and the community. The self is created through interpersonal relations, and one's growth is measured through the deepening of these connections. In this sense, resilience means the establishment of harmonious relationships with others and sustaining a state of balance in one's life (Greene et al.,

2019). The narrator's Indigenous gender identity, therefore, plays a crucial role in fostering her resilience. As an NA woman, she keeps tradition by giving beading lessons, imparting wisdom, building connections with her niece and fellow Native people, and participating in Native ceremonies. These actions are not purely individual initiatives as she draws them from Indigenous traditional gender roles; she draws them from the Native women who came before her. Keeping tradition alive and creating harmonious relationships with her family, and fellow Native people is her attempt to restore the balance that was lost, and to sustain her community culturally, emotionally, and spiritually. Her resilience eventually becomes communal resilience. The principles of Indigenous feminism are manifested through the narrator as by keeping the tradition, she seeks to oppose patriarchal values that marginalize women's roles in NA communities; she seeks to restore the original respectable roles of women as keepers of tradition. As an NA woman she uses her agency not to advance her cause as an individual, but to heal her community as a whole.

Conclusion

Piatote's "Beading Lesson" is a resistance literature that challenges the erasure of Indigenous culture and the marginalization of Indigenous women caused by settler colonialism. The narrative presented the idea that resistance is not always overt and confrontational. It can manifest through the act of maintaining tradition, through seemingly mundane but meaningful and powerful activities such as beading, teaching, storytelling, and taking part in Indigenous ceremonies. Furthermore, through the narrator, the story suggests that NA women's resistance and resilience are rooted in their original gender role as cultural bearers - a role that was eroded because of the imposition of patriarchal values into Indigenous communities. The story also illustrates how NA women's resilience contributes to the Native community's collective resilience. Finally, it illuminates the complexities of resistance and resilience within NA communities. It shows that even amid

systemic oppression, NA women find their way to survive, resist, and regain their rightful position in their community.

The scope of this study is narrowed to provide an in-depth analysis of Piatote's "Beading Lesson" to allow for a detailed exploration of the theme of resistance and resilience. However, this specificity might not encompass the diverse narrative and thematic variations present in other works. A suggestion for future research is to expand the scope, examining different works by Piatote and other NA women writers to bring more insights into NA women's resistance and resilience in NA communities.

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