Journal Of the Iraqia University (76-9) October (2026)

ISSN(Print): 1813-4521 OnLine ISSN:2663-7502
Journal Of the Iraqia University
available online at: https://www.mabdaa.edu.iq

Absolute Responsibilities of Indigenous Women in Annie Mae's Play Movement

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المسؤوليات المطلقة للنساء من السكان الأصليين في مسرحية آني ماي "الحركة"

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Abstract

Canadian theatre represents a rich intercultural blend, standing as a powerful artistic movement that highlights the culture and history of Indigenous peoples. It focuses particularly on Indigenous women, with writers striving to reclaim women's stories and challenge the stereotypes imposed by colonialism. The women's role in Canadian theatre at the heart of the narrative; the stories and the struggles of Indigenous women are central themes in many contemporary theatrical works in Canada. Also, challenging colonial violence that most play shed light on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and address historical traumas. Never forget, the driving change as most of literary works reject the role of victim, focusing instead on the resilience, strength, and steadfastness of Indigenous women. This proves the fact that Indigenous theatre in Canada is not just one thing because its works are wide-ranging comedic, ceremonial, contemporary, land-based and experimental. In Canada, Indigenous women frequently experience challenges and discrimination that are neither necessarily shared by non- Indigenous women, nor by Indigenous men. Indigenous women have been described as facing a double-burden that for being discriminated against as a woman, and further an Indigenous. It is obvious that Indigenous women's contribution in society adopts better responsibility, transparency, and awareness to the needs of marginalized communities.**Key Words: Canadian theatre, colonialism, victim, resilience, marginalization**

المستخلص:

يمثل المسرح الكندي مزيجاً ثقافياً غنياً، ويُعد حركة فنية قوية تسلط الضوء على ثقافة الشعوب الأصلية وتاريخها؛ إذ يركز المسرح بشكل خاص على نساء هذه الشعوب، حيث يسعى الكُتّاب إلى استعادة قصص النساء وتحدي الصور النمطية التي فرضها الاستعمار. يحتل دور المرأة في المسرح الكندي صلب السردية؛ إذ تُعد قصص النساء من السكان الأصليين ومعاناتهن محاور رئيسية في العديد من الأعمال المسرحية الكندية المعاصرة. وعلاوة على ذلك، تتصدى هذه الأعمال للعنف الاستعماري، حيث تسلط معظم المسرحيات الضوء على قضية النساء من السكان الأصليين المفقودات والمقتولات، وتتناول الصدمات التاريخية. ولا ننسى أن المحرك الأساسي للتغيير يكمن في رفض معظم الأعمال الأدبية لدور "الضحية"، والتركيز بدلاً من ذلك على مرونة نساء الشعوب الأصلية وقوتهن وصمودهن. ويُثبت هذا أن مسرح الشعوب الأصلية في كندا ليس نمطاً واحداً، إذ تتسم أعماله بالتنوع الكبير ؛ فهي تشمل الأعمال الكوميدية، والطقوسية، والمعاصرة، وتلك المرتبطة بالأرض، فضلاً عن الأعمال التجريبية.تواجه النساء من السكان الأصليين في كندا، في كثير من الأحيان، تحدياتٍ وأشكالاً من التمييز لا تشاركهن فيها بالضرورة النساءُ من غير السكان الأصليين ولا الرجالُ من السكان الأصليين.توصف النساء من السكان الاصليين بانهن يواجهن عبئاً مزدوجاً يتمثل في التعرض للتمييز لكونهن نساءً، وكذلك لكونهن من السكان الأصليين. من الواضح أن مساهمة النساء من السكان الأصليين في المجتمع تتسم بقدر أكبر من المسؤولية والشفافية والوعي باحتياجات المجتمعات المهمشة.الكلمات المفتاحية: المسرح الكندي، الاستعمار، الضحية، الصمود، التهميش.

1.Introduction

Canadian theater represents a significant movement that seeks to highlight and reveal various meanings, most notably the vital roles Indigenous women play in society with the ultimate goal of achieving equality across all spheres of life, thereby positively influencing human relationships among community members.Scholars Shari M. Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack point out that: "although Indigenous women do not share a single culture, they do have a common colonial history; the imposition of patriarchy has transformed Indigenous societies by diminishing Indigenous women's power, status and material circumstances" (Huhndorf and Suzack 16).Historically, Indigenous women have faced various forms of discrimination and marginalization that have hindered their role in any process or activity to develop themselves and their communities. Even with the development, Indigenous women confront substantial social, cultural, and economic barriers that limit their participation in society. But, the emphasis on women's rights leads to many attempts at increasing their role actively and positively. Indigenous women's theatre is a decolonizing space in which playwrights confront racist and sexist Indigenous womanhood constructions. Unfortunately, myth of the Indigenous woman as a sexual aberrant continues in modern Canadian society with some actual consequences as Silman and etal. aver:No, this view hasn't changed, and yes it is something I have encountered. The myth of the deviant Aboriginal woman continues to plague us, reinforced by dominant cases ……. Contemporary Canadian society dismisses violence against Aboriginal women and girls today on the basis of these perceived deviances (Silman and etal. 25).Indigenous theatre opposes imposed stereotypes and supports processes of self-definition, thereby challenging Indigenous identity beyond the colonial and stereotypical. Through this, the performance becomes a cultural practice that allows Indigenous women to assert themselves in positive ways and to question the racism and colonial misrepresentations of Native womanhood (Campbell 2).Indigenous women's theatre functions as a means of challenging colonial images of Indigenous womanhood, inspired by Indigenous feminist theory. As Indigenous women playwrights focus on historically constructed stereotypes, they are developing theatre spaces that are grounded in Indigenous women's voices, experiences and cultural agency. In this process, theatre is not just a medium for artistic expression, but also a space for decolonization, for Indigenous women to determine their own definition. Indigenous women's theatre fights back against the external representations and reclaims Indigenous women's presence in cultural narratives, thus, this theatre contributes to broader efforts of self-representation, empowerment, and cultural renewal (Campbell 2).In the current Indigenous theatre, the importance of representation and authenticity is central to Indigenous cultural production. Artists of Indigenous descent are often judged and criticized by outsiders according to notions of the expected form of Indigenous theatre, rather than the ways in which these ideas are expressed within the art itself (Nolan, "What We Talk About" 226). Discussions with people about the way they answer Shakespeare's works and the way that audience / critics often expect an internal answer from them (Nolan, "What We Talk About" 223). These assumptions are challenged, Indigenous artists emphasis on need to control their representation of Indigenous identities and experiences on stage, thus asserting their own authority over the way in which they are depicted (Nolan, "What We Talk About" 229).

2.Indigenous Methodology

Concerning Indigenous methodology, memory as a connective force transmits cultural knowledge from generation to generation. Moreover, it enhances connections between people, communities and their histories, and builds intergenerational relationships. Indigenous stories help to remember their collective knowledge to bring them back into cultural production. In this context, storytelling is not just about using storytelling as a dramatic device, but a way to help sustain Indigenous memory and cultural continuity in the face of disruption by colonialism. This means that modern Indigenous theatre is an environment of Indigenous voices' survival through the transmission of memory, history and identity (Noell vii–viii)In this rejection of traditional ideas about authenticity, Nolan also claims that Indigenous theatre is made in Indigenous ways of seeing and understanding the world, not through superficial cultural markers. When asked about her theatrical practice, she says that Indigenous artists are changing the way of performance by translating every moment to an Indigenous worldview and redirecting attention step by step. By doing this, it is possible to reimagine dramatic texts from indigenous viewpoints, thereby giving indigenous artists control over representation and cultural significance. As such, Indigenous theatre can be seen as a place where Indigenous worldviews are actively recognized and expressed in the context of the present day performance (Nolan, "What We Talk About" 232)Colonialism has always been manifested in structures that oppress Indigenous people and Indigenous women have faced especially intense oppression and violence. Colonizing is not only a historical event; it is a continuous system of political, social,

institutional practices that have a profound impact upon Indigenous people today. In this context, violence against Indigenous women is not just individual incidents, but a structural issue that is a product of colonial power. Policies like residential schools and child removal programs disrupted Indigenous cultural continuity and added to the erosion of Indigenous identity through forced assimilation. As such, Indigenous women's resistance can manifest a reclaiming of voice, identity and self-representation against the colonial systems that have historically silenced and marginalized them (MacKenzie 2)Yvette Nolan (1961-) is a Canadian Indigenous playwright, director and theatre practitioner whose work holds an important place in Canadian Indigenous theatre today. Nolan was born in Fort Saskatchewan, to an Algonquin mother and an Irish father. Her background at the intersection of Indigenous and settler histories is the heart of many concerns that reflect her ideas; emphasizing on identity, representation and voice. She has been active in the theatre profession since 1990, and has experience performing in various roles such as directing, acting, dramaturgy, and arts administration. Nolan's first play is *Blade* (1990) which catches wide attention. This play was performed at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival and earned her the reputation of being an emerging Indigenous playwright in the Canadian theatre community (Shantz 4).

Besides being a playwright, Nolan has also played a major role in building Indigenous theatre in Canada, working as a director and artistic leader at Native Earth Performing Arts (Nolan, Medicine Shows 77). In her critical writing, she describes the Indigenous theatre artist as "a conduit between the past and the future" (Nolan, Medicine Shows 3), someone who reconnects communities through story and memory. She organizes her critical study around themes such as ceremony, remembrance, and surviving, tracing how contemporary Indigenous plays reconnect artists and audiences to ancestral knowledge (Nolan, Medicine Shows 4). Drawing on gatherings of senior and emerging Indigenous artists, she reflects on how these communities trace their shared artistic ancestry, allowing younger practitioners to see their place within a larger continuum of work rather than starting in isolation (Nolan, Medicine Shows 5). Through this framework, she positions Indigenous theatre as a practice that keeps the community's stories, memories, and connections alive against the disconnection caused by colonialism (Nolan, Medicine Shows 6)The main hero of this play, Anna Mae Pictou Aquash (1945) was of Mi'kmaq descent, born in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. In 1960, she took up residence in Boston, Massachusetts where she married and began her family. In 1970, after her divorce, Aquash began to take a greater role in Indigenous community groups, especially the Boston Indian Council. In the early 1970s, her involvement in Indigenous activism grew as she became involved with the American Indian Movement (AIM), one of the most powerful Indigenous political organizations at that time. Aquash was an active member of Indigenous political movements in North America, through her work with AIM raising issues such as Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and social justice. She remained active as and eventually becomes one of the most well-known Indigenous women, and later inspiring the dramatic portrayal of her life in *Annie Mae's Movement* (1998) by Yvette Nolan (Brand 7)Annie Mae's *Movement* has a connection to the history of Wounded Knee, which was one of the most important events in Indigenous history. This movement is called Ghost Dance, was widely misunderstood and was increasingly interpreted as a threat by government officials and military authorities, yet Indigenous people have been saying that the Ghost Dance is a religious movement with a focus on renewal and hope (Pratt 152). This misunderstanding helped to turn indigenous peoples into resistant groups and eventually led to the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890. The event was an indicator of Indigenous world views' lack of comprehension on the part of the larger colonial community. Indigenous beliefs were often seen in the context of disorder and danger. Thus, Wounded Knee became a constant reminder of colonial brutality, dispossession, Indigenous resistance, and an important point of reference within Indigenous political and cultural memory (Pratt 154)Indigenous women's marginalization has often been reinforced within Indigenous political movements' narratives, as well as within colonial institutions. In a way, Anna Mae is more known for the circumstances of her death than for her work in Indigenous activism. *Annie Mae's Movement* by Nolan redresses this historical imbalance by placing Anna Mae at the center of the history of the American Indian Movement (AIM) that core on her as an organizer, educator and political activist. The play foregrounds her experiences, which disrupts the dominant masculine's narratives that ignore Indigenous women's contributions to Indigenous resistance movements. As a result of this historical recovery, Nolan brings a voice back to the forefront in Indigenous actions for which their political voice has been historically understated in the dominant narratives (El-Sawy 219–220)The play honors the memory of Anna Mae, but also speaks for her as a voice of resistance that will never be silenced. However, Anna Mae has tried to assert herself in every moment, even those just before her death, taking steps to influence and restore her sense. Her repeated affirmation of her own name transforms personal testimony into an act of resistance, emphasizing the endurance of Indigenous identity and highlighting the strength of indigenous identity in the midst of violence

and oppression. Furthermore, the play is not just one person's journey, but a journey that is shared by Indigenous women. By referencing daughters, sisters and future generations, Nolan places Anna Mae in a broader history of Indigenous women's survival and resilience. As such, Annie Mae's Movement is not a tale of victimization, but rather an ongoing assertion for the resistance of Indigenous women against the structures of colonialism and patriarchy (El-Sawy 225–226).

3. Resistance in *Annie Mea's Movement*

Annie Mae's Movement honors Anna Mae Aquash for the reason that Annie Mae is not portrayed as a victim of political violence. Instead, this play depicts the resistant of Indigenous woman, whose voice persists to face the forces that seek to marginalize her. As Amani El-Sawy points out, Nolan re-centers Anna Mae in the political history of indigenous peoples by focusing on identity, agency, and relationship to other indigenous women. This representation is important because Anna Mae's story extends beyond her own suffering, and becomes a part of the broader history of Indigenous women's survival and resistance. In this way, the play sets up the reader to think of Anna Mae's voice as not only personal but political, as an act of self-representation and historical recovery (El-Sawy 226).You gotta stand up, Anna Mae, You gotta fight for what's important, No matter who wants to shut you up. We have to fight, even if it seems like we're fighting ourselves. Or else we will disappear, Just disappear (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 5)These lines highlight the issue of resistance, as a key theme of the play from the first moments. Anna Mae highlights the need to stand up and speak out about issues when Indigenous voices are being silenced. She keeps repeating the verbs 'stand up' and 'fight', which suggest that resistance is an ongoing struggle and not just one act of defiant opposition. Meanwhile, the change from the singular name "Anna Mae" to the collective term "we" expands her struggle to be more than just personal, on the contrary to be shared by Indigenous people as a whole. The warning that Indigenous people may "disappear" further demonstrates the threat of erasure lurking behind the play, implying a need to resist not only for political survival but also for the preservation of Indigenous identity and presence.Anderson argues that Indigenous women exercise the protection of their identity by resisting imposed definition, degrading assumptions and establishing a positive sense of self in the continuity of culture and the strength of community that is expressed in Anna Mae's statement. She has declared that Indigenous people must fight or they will "disappear", indicating an awareness of the forces that want to push Indigenous people aside, wanting to make Indigenous people weak. Anna Mae refuses to be silent and passive, as for her resistance is essential to maintaining Indigenous presence and continuity. Her words also ring true of Anderson's talk on colonial narratives that try to present the picture of Indigenous peoples as vanishing, irrelevant, or somehow no longer legitimate (Anderson 25). In doing so, Anna Mae rejects these stories, and states that Indigenous communities continue to exist, calling for collective actions to face of this threat.

The play opens with the idea that resistance is a collective effort required for Indigenous survival, but Nolan quickly undermines this theme by asserting that everyone does not have an equal opportunity to engage in this struggle. Resistance, as it unfolds in the play, is seen to be determined not just by colonial oppression, but also by gendered assumptions within the American Indian Movement itself.

Our leaders—the leaders of the American Indian Movement—said that we should learn to fight... We had to train our bodies, turn our hands into weapons. Well, they didn't mean me, did they? They meant the men, the warriors, that the dog soldiers. Not you, girl, fighting's not for you" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 3).

In this passage, Anna Mae remembers the lessons imparted by the AIM to Indigenous peoples to fight against colonial oppression through discipline, physical endurance and collective struggle. The movement considers resistance to be inevitability in response to the injustice, and it asks people to be ready, both mentally and physically in order to take political action. But this vision of resistance also shows something significant about the concept of resistance. While there is encouragement for Indigenous people to fight, Anna Mae acknowledges that this is largely geared towards males. It makes clear the gendered assumptions that are prevalent in the movement and women are not meant for positions traditionally deemed as leadership in fighting and political involvement. Therefore, the article demonstrates the conflict between resistance to colonial oppression and the marginalization of women in the resistance.

Anderson relates this imbalance in gender relations with the exclusion of Anna Mae from the role of the warrior to the colonial disruption of Indigenous communities. She suggests that colonial disrespect for women helped to marginalize Indigenous women and erode the balance of the community (Anderson 13). The significance of the statement "Not you, girl, fighting's not for you" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 3) is in the context of women's limited participation in the movement which is centered on Indigenous liberation. While AIM is trying to fight against colonial oppression, women are not given the same power or taken as seriously as men are in the fight.

The play highlighted this exclusion and indirectly questioned the notion that political resistance is a domain of men. It is therefore not surprising that Anna Mae has remained engaged in activism, as a reminder of the significance of Indigenous women in both community life and political resistance.

Annie Mae isn't just aware of the gender inequalities that are at work in the AIM. Throughout the play, she explicitly challenges such erasures and calls attention to the movement's inaction on the issue of Indigenous women's full inclusion into the struggle. Thus, her anti-discrimination becomes a consciousness of gender discrimination and turns into a demand for political inclusion of women. "It is impossible to run a political movement while totally ignoring 75% of its members – the women" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 3), this statement marks one of the clearest challenges to patriarchal authority in the play. Anna Mae highlights the contradiction of AIM's political principles by stressing the fact that women make up the majority of the membership of the movement. While the movement aims to free itself from colonial oppression, Indigenous women remain devalued and excluded from leadership and decision-making. Instead, open questioning of this inequality and demand for the recognition of women's contributions to the movement, Anna Mae responds. Resistance thus becomes not just against the colonial domination but also to the gender discrimination in the Indigenous political activism.Anderson's Indigenous feminist framework can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the challenge of Anna Mae to the movement. In order to reconstruct Native womanhood, one needs to look at the colonial situation that has restricted the place of Native women and bring them back to having significance in community life (Anderson 13). Therefore, Anna Mae's criticism is not just about the current practices of AIM, but also represents a rejection of the very structures that prevent Indigenous women from being in positions of authority. Her push to make women's presence in a movement that is committed to Indigenous liberation is proof of their political agency and their importance in achieving collective renewal. In this reading Anderson argues that the restoration of Indigenous communities needs to be built on the value, strength and leadership of Native women (Anderson 14)."I guess I got it from my mother, she used to fight with the Indian Agent" (Nolan 3), this short statement prevents resistance from being an individual trait and makes it inherited. Drawing inspiration from her mother, Anna Mae identifies resistance as knowledge passed down through generations of Indigenous women. The mention of her mother's interactions with the Indian Agent also places this resistance in a colonial framework, indicating that Indigenous women have long resisted colonial control in various ways. Anna Mae doesn't see herself as a lone activist but as part of a longer history of Indigenous women who were resilient and defiant. In this way, the text focuses on continuity of past/ present resistance and the importance of Indigenous women in keeping this tradition alive. Anderson's argument about Indigenous women are central in passing on cultural values, strengths and communal identity from one generation to the next is echoed in Anna Mae's recognition of her mother's influence. According to Anderson, the reconstruction of Native womanhood requires reclaiming what was known and led by Indigenous women who are often overlooked by colonial narratives (Anderson 14). Here, Anna Mae's struggle is not just for herself, but because of the Indigenous women's strength that came before her. The play also illustrates Anderson's belief that Indigenous women create continuity in their communities through the passing on of knowledge, values, and resistance to generations (Anderson 115).Near the end of the play, Anna Mae's resistance becomes most potent. No longer only claiming political participation and inherited struggle, she faces the supreme threat of colonial violence by requesting her identity, her family and the continuity of her people. In doing so, resistance becomes a statement of collective survival, rather than political action. She states: "My name is Anna Mae Pictou Aquash, Micmac Nation, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. My mother is Mary Ellen Pictou, my father is Francis Thomas Levi, my sisters are Rebecca Julien and Mary Lafford and my brother is Francis. You can kill me, but my sisters live, my daughters live. You cannot kill us all (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 53).This scene is one of the most potent displays of resistance, as in the midst of violence and impending death, Anna Mae refuses to be treated as a victim, or a lost historical figure. Rather, she starts identifying herself, her family and her community. Her mother, father, sisters and daughters are identified in detail and this action of identification becomes an act of resistance to erasure. Instead of claiming to be a solitary individual, Anna Mae places herself in the midst of a vast family and community relationship that is not subject to violence. The continuity of Indigenous identity across generations challenges colonial logic of disappearance.The words "You cannot kill us" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 53) all further amplify the meaning of Anna Mae's resistance to more than just an individual level. Though her body may be gone, values, memory and relationships she embodies are alive through other Indigenous women and future generations. It is obvious that these swords are not only a declaration of personal courage, on the contrary, it counters the notion that death of one can wipe out a community and tone can silence a struggle. Anna Mae's

focus on the living presence of other Indigenous women makes resistance a process that is both communal and intergenerational as well. Her words reflect the type of collective action that Mohanty posits as integral to resistance Indigenous women's power lies not just in their individual resilience, but in a network of solidarity, shared memory and mutual survival (Mohanty 7).This is very similar to Anderson's idea that Indigenous women respond to colonial oppression by refusing it, retrieving positive self-definitions and reconnection with family, histories and communities. For Anderson, Indigenous identity is not about individuality, but about relationships with community (Anderson 25). This attitude is reflected in the conscious way in which Anna Mae named her family, creating a web of relationships that spans generations. Hence, native womanhood serves as a force of strength, continuity, and renewal in Indigenous communities (Anderson 14). Anna Mae calls on her daughters and sisters in the moment of death to make them witness the statement of the communal survival; even her words reflect the identity that Anderson sees as the heart of Indigenous resistance and cultural continuity. It is evident that the switch from "I" to "sisters" and "daughters" takes a turn from endurance to focus on collective survival in order to assert the continuity of Indigenous presence, memory and identity, as colonial violence is never able to stop Indigenous presence.*Mae's Movement* will not allow the essence of being Anna Mae Aquash to be defined by the conditions of her death. However, Nolan refocuses her as a speaking subject that takes an active stance to assert her identity in the face of violence and erasure. This is clearly seen in Anna Mae's last statement regarding her name and family. She is not allowed to be determined by colonial or patriarchal narratives, but has the power to determine herself on her own terms. By naming the relatives repeatedly, Anna Mae takes possession of her history, identity and memory (El-Sawy 225).The play goes beyond the story of one person by linking the experience of Anna Mae to the experiences of Indigenous women over the generations. The relationship is seen in the shift from personal identification to an affirmation that her sisters and daughters will continue to live. This enables the text to become a statement of survival, a collective voices in which Anna Mae's voice represents a broader Indigenous women's history that refuses to be erased but keeps persisting the colonial violence. In this remembrance and self-definition, the play makes itself a site of resistance to the erasure of history (El-Sawy 226).Chandra Talpade Mohanty also discussed collective resistance and the construction of political solidarity among marginalized women. Mohanty states that resistance is best when it leaves behind the confines of individual experience and becomes a collective struggle with common histories and conditions of oppression (Mohanty 7). This seems to be the viewpoint with which Anna Mae will not settle for simply securing her own survival. Rather than concluding her declaration with "I," she calls upon her family's members and places herself as a part of a larger community of Indigenous women who have lives and experiences beyond her own.Through Mae's declarations, the play is considered a reminder of the political and symbolic importance of Indigenous resistance. Nolan continually shows Anna Mae as a real part of the struggle, and that resistance is not only through words and political opinion but also through acts of commitment, endurance and service to the community. "ANNA crawls on, with a heavily loaded pack on her back. It's the night and she's running supplies into the besieged Wounded Knee" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 13), this stage direction portrays Anna Mae as an active player in Indigenous resistance, not a passive witness to political events. Although it is dangerous to be in Wounded Knee, she is willing to go there and bring supplies to the community; showing her dedication to the fight of the people. The image of Anna Mae walking through the night, bearing a heavy pack on her shoulders, shows both her strength and sacrifices. Instead of playing a symbolic or supportive part, she is actually directly involved in the survival of the people's resistance that being a form of practical action based on responsibility, courage and commitment to the community.Anna Mae's actions can be viewed in the context of Mohanty's talk on resistance and political solidarity. Meaningful resistance is developed through sharing forms of struggle that can engage individuals with other communities to confront systems of oppression (Mohanty 7). This is apparent when Anna Mae risks herself regardless all the dangers she might face just to help others at Wounded Knee. All her actions are done neither for personal recognition nor for personal gaining but for the survival and well-being of the community. Therefore, the scene depicts resistance as a collaborative process, which is maintained by cooperating, assuming responsibility, and showing solidarity. Anna Mae provides food and supplies into the occupied area, which would represent the communal form of political involvement that Mohanty sees as basic for effective resistance (Mohanty 7)Nolan continues his theme of active resistance by highlighting the unique role played by Anna Mae in respect to the occupation. She is not involved in armed conflict; she helps the community survive by giving resources that it needs. "Don't shoot, don't shoot, it's Anna Mae Pictou, I've brought food and medicine" (Nolan, *Annie Mae's Movement* 13), this statement illustrates Anna Mae's active involvement in Indigenous resistance during the occupation of Wounded Knee. She is not on the sidelines of political events, but

takes part in supporting the struggle. The mention of "food and medicine" is of particular importance as it draws attention to a kind of resistance that is devoted to care, responsibility, and life. The contribution of Anna Mae is not in the form of words, it is in the form of action through helping this community to sustain it in a crisis. Thus, the passage expands the notion of resistance to enhance the need of caring for Indigenous communities during times of risk. Anderson's argument for Indigenous women occupying central roles concerning caring, protecting and sustaining well-being is embodied in Anna Mae's actions. Anderson emphasizes that Native womanhood is not defined as passivity or dependency, but rather strength, responsible and maintaining communal balance (Anderson 14). Anna Mae sustains those inside Wounded Knee by bringing them food and medicine. Her work helps to save other's lives and shows that Indigenous women's roles in political movements are not always apparent. Thus, the above passage accentuates Native womanhood as a means of strength and continuity, further solidifying Anderson's belief that Native women are a crucial element in sustaining the strength and survival of Native communities (Anderson 14).

Conclusion

Annie Mae's Movement exemplifies that Indigenous theatre is not just about telling stories, but redefining the ways these stories are told and understood. The play recovers Indigenous women's voices and re-centers Indigenous perspectives in order to challenge the ideological assumptions in dominant representations of history. Nolan refuses to take colonial discourses at face value but instead aims to represent Indigenous experience from within Indigenous cultural knowledge. Thus, the play can be interpreted as an act of cultural reclaiming, making it possible for the audience to see Indigenous history in a way that has been ignored by colonial discourse.The social status of indigenous women has been an ongoing issue of concern for researchers and scholars for many years as they are often marginalized and face numerous challenges, including discrimination, poverty and violence. It is very clear that woman in general and not only have the Indigenous women played a great role in building and developing their society through various means. The justice is not to stifle women's potential or deprive them of a role in society. They have to harness their capabilities in the right direction, enabling them to become active participants who play a positive and constructive role.

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