

Jimmy Carter's "I Wanted to Share my Father's World": A Lyric that seems to involve the Indians.

ACHO Patrice ADOUPO

Péléforo Gon Coulibaly University

English Department

adoupo_acho@yahoo.fr

Abstract:

Every human society is made up of several individuals organized into ethnic groups. These groups consist of various families with the father and mother at the head. The children are seen as the descendants of these parents who are expected to prepare them for their social integration. Therefore, a rigorous education is essential. It is with this in mind that we are interested in the lyrical poem entitled "I Wanted to Share My Father's World" by US President Jimmy Carter. In this poem, at the same time he evokes the hard life he had had with his father – because of his Rigor – he regrets this life he once saw as an abusive, exaggerated rigor [on the part of his father]. We can extend this perception of the father's behaviour by the child to what characterized historical realities of the United-states.

So here we want to try to relate this poem to the American society in general and to White-Indian relations past and present in the United States, in particular – considering the father as the White man and the son as the Indian. To achieve this, we will unveil the poem; that is, to explain it in order to make it more accessible, to give a brief overview of the past of Indians in the United States before juxtaposing the poem with the relational realities between whites and Indians. To better illustrate this relevant coincidence, Duchet's sociocriticism seems to be the appropriate theoretical approach.

Keywords: *Regret – Projection – Whites – Indians – Relationships – Family life.*

Résumé :

Toute société humaine est composée de plusieurs individus organisés en groupes ethniques. Lesquels groupes sont eux-même, composés de diverse familles, avec à la tête, le père et la mère. Les enfants sont vus

comme les descendants de ceux-ci qui sont censés préparer leur insertion sociale. Une éducation rigoureuse s'impose donc. C'est dans cette optique que nous nous intéressons au poème lyrique intitulé "I Wanted to Share My Father's World" du Président américain Jimmy Carter. Dans ce poème, en même temps qu'il évoque la vie dure qu'il a menée auprès de son père – à cause de sa rigueur – il regrette cette vie qu'il a, autrefois, vu comme une maltraitance, une rigueur exagérée [de la part de son père]. Nous pouvons étendre cette perception du comportement du père par l'enfant aux événements liées aux réalités historiques des États-Unis.

Nous voulons donc ici, essayer de rapprocher ce poème à la société américaine en général et aux relations Blancs-Indiens d'hier à aujourd'hui aux États-Unis, en particulier – tout en considérant le père comme le Blanc et le fils comme l'Indien. Pour y parvenir, nous allons dévoiler le poème; c'est-à-dire l'expliquer à fond pour le rendre plus accessible, donner un bref aperçu du passé des Indiens aux États-Unis avant de juxtaposer le poème aux réalités relationnelles entre Blancs et Indiens aux États-Unis. Pour mieux illustrer cette coïncidence pertinente, la sociocritique de Duchet semble être l'approche théorique appropriée.

Mots-clés : Regret – Projection – Blancs – Indiens – Relations – Vie familiale.

Introduction

Like any literary work, poetry is also seen as a mirror of the society. For, most literary works depict our realities – historical, present and daily. Jimmy Carter (born in October 1, 1924 in Plains, Georgia, 39th President of the United States: 1977–1981) wrote a lyric poem entitled "I Wanted to Share my Father's World" in which, at the same time, he evokes his childhood and citizenship hard life he had had with his father and regrets that life he once saw as an abusive. He explores themes generally observed in human relationships ; especially in relations between parents and children : insults, punishments, anger, misunderstandings and finally, reconciliation. In "I Wanted to Share my Father's World", Jimmy Carter focuses on harsh punishments which conduct to misunderstanding between him and his father. Which misunderstanding is transformed into

understanding and even love during his adulthood ; unfortunately at the eve of his father's death, mentioned in the poem by "his final hours" (L21). We can extend this perspective to the realities connected with the American historical realities which truly experienced a spectacular spectrum with the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 — a law that made all the Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States, American citizens. We must recognize that this Act is and remains an essential compass in the accomplishment of this work. In other words, after 1924 – to talk about his own era – and before 1924 ; to allude to his "Father's World" which he compares to his world and he wishes to be his own and admires once grown up.

This last remark can be seen, when considering the Indians' presence in America, as two antagonistic but memorable periods for them : in the one hand before their citizenship, which was marked by wars, genocide, ethnocide, discriminatory policies and skewed treaties and on the other hand after that Act which recognizes their citizenship with policies and Acts in their favour. So, 1924 marked a decisive turning point in the American history in general and that of the Indians in particular ; because from this year on, the United States has new citizens ; a reality that gives a new direction to its domestic politics : the time has then come to have a new look at the relationship between the Whites and these new Americans. A relation which seems to reflect that Carter had had with his father. A relation which opposes two worlds that the author of "I wanted to share my Father's World" seems to paint as antagonistic.

Here, we want to try to relate this poem – which puts into evidence the rude relationship between a supposed stern father [by his son] and his son who, finally realized the benefits of this attitude of his father's – to the White-Indian relations (past and present) in the United States. This clearly justifies the title "Jimmy Carter's "I Wanted to Share my Father's World": a lyric

that seems to involve the Indians". For, through Carter and his father's life, we see the relationship between the Indians and the Whites – before and after the Indian Citizenship Act. Although Michel Foucault thinks in *Discipline and punish* (M. Foucault, 1995, p. 27) that modern societies exercise power not through brute force but through surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms that normlize certain behaviors while excluding others, force and bruality are sometimes needed to "shape" some people ; because education and good behavior are the pillars of a perfect integration in the society. If not the following question is fundamental : what is the future of a individual without education ?

The achievement of this target requires Duchet's sociocriticism which proposes a socio-historical reading of the text. For Duchet, sociocriticism constructs « a poetics of sociality, inseparable from a reading of the ideological in its textual specificity »¹ (Claude Duchet, *Introduction : socio-criticism*, p. 4). The poem paints a father who wants "to shape" his boy what he "should be". In "to shape", we can imagine "to provide the son with the cultural, educational and societal means to be respected and fully integrated in the society".

When extending the poem to the Indians-White relationship, the latter wanted, through civilization and christianization, "shape" the former what they "should be" in the american society. To achieve this full exploitation, we will unveil the poem (Understanding the poem), that is to explain it to make it more accessible, give a brief glimpse of the past of the Indians in the United-States (General view of the Indians' past in America) before juxtaposing the poem with the relational realities between the whites and the Indians (The Indians seen through the poem).

¹ « une poétique de la socialité, inséparable d'une lecture de l'idéologique dans sa spécificité textuelle ». The translation in the text is of us

I – Understanding the Poem

The poem “I Wanted to Share My Father’s World”, made of twenty three free verses, divided into three stanzas (a sestet, an octet and a nonet) shows a particularity, as far as the tenses are concerned: the verbs in the first stanza are in present simple (is, hide, ties, feel), those of the second stanza are in the past (despised, used to share, might feel, punished, didn’t show, would [not] have meant, would [not] have been) and in the third and last stanza, they are in past (put, shared, came, had become, was, did cross), present (survives) and future (will [never] cease) at the same time. These are trully meaningful for the comprehension of the author’s message because this is the logical course of events : past, present and future.

In fact, in the first stanza, with the present, Jimmy Carter expresses his present and actual resentments for his father’s past attitude towards him ; just to mean that he did not forget what he had endured with this father : "and even now I feel inside" (L3). To show that he had been marked by his father’s treatments, he focuses on the impossibility to forget that in the last stanza with this simple euphemism : "I never put side". He still views and lives each moment of that life. This review is what is characterized in the second stanza with the use of the past tense. Here, he expresses his past feeling that he could not clearly and outwardly manifest. This connects the two stanzas. The last stanza can be seen as a coherent synthesis of the previous stanzas (past and present which are followed and closed by the future). This future represents the fruit of the past ; he realizes the benefit of that harsh behaviour of his father’s.

Coming to the content of the poem, one can immediately underline that Jimmy Carter, by talking about his

personal life and especially his childhood with a violent and abusive father, shows us the difficult and harsh life he had had with the latter. He started his poem with a description of his father as an authoritarian and omnipresent image in his life. His father was so strict that his discipline makes the son think of himself as a failure, someone with who and through whom nothing can be fulfilled. Here, Carter, as a child, did not really put in mind that : «from at least the writings of Freud (1933), the father-son relationship has often been characterised as one replete with much tension and discomfort ». Apparently, this can also support Singleton and Maher's idea which says that an American father is « actually encouraged to be connected to the lives of his children » (Singleton and Maher, 2004).

Firstly, the title of the poem captivates the reader's attention by presenting a synecdoche "my father's world", which is not actually "a physical world", but rather some specific things that Carter probably appreciates in his father's life. But, while the last stanza of the poem portrays the positivity of the father's actions and reactions to the son's behaviour, the very first [stanza] seems to show the opposite. This paradox is underlined in the following verses :

until with my own sons, I shared (L19)
his final hours, and came to see (L20)
what he'd become, or always was (L21)
the father who will never cease to (L22)
alive in me. (L23)

...

This is a pain I mostly hide (L1)
The hunger for his outstretched hand (4)
A man's embrace to take me in (L5)

The father's attitude is understandable : he wanted to be at the same time "a father and a dad" ; because he was very soon

aware that «any man can be a father, it takes someone special to be a dad. Anyone can become a father. Anyone can make a baby. Anyone can create life. But it takes someone special to *shape* that life »². He knows that, it is his duty to "shape what" his son "should be" (L8). To shape what the son should be, "contemporary academic literature on the nature of the father-son relationship largely portrays the father as critical to how the son sees himself as an emerging adult" (Mormon and Floyd, 2006). Although Carter's father is portrayed, by his son as someone unlivable and insensible, he finally marked the son and succeeded in shaping him "what he should be" and the latter still feel positively the effects of that tense education : what he'd become, or always was (L21) / the father who will never cease to be (L22) / alive in me (L23) ; although Pease (2000) thinks that "forgiveness and reconciliation may not always be the best way forward for men who feel the loss of their fathers" (p.15).

Let us say that, his father has an almost desperate wish of him for apparently, failing to follow his tracks. The son wishes that they could have been more like friends instead of parent and child. However, he realizes that it is too late because time does not wait ; it passes. He should have early understood that : «Many men are burdened with feelings that they never knew their fathers, nor how their fathers felt as men, nor if their fathers even liked them, nor if their fathers ever really approved of them » (Levant, 263). Levant is just focusing on the importance of a father in someone's life. He is showing Carter how lucky he was to have a father who, despite his rigor, wants to guide him according to the realities he, himself, experienced. Jimmy Carter did not understand that his father's wish to "shape" him the right way characterizes a good father. He had never realized that a child without a father is the an easy prey of

² By Holly Riordan, January 8th 2018
<https://thoughtcatalog.com/?p=830541>
 Accessed on 24/11/2024

all societal scourges. He does not know that many people who have problems with the justice for serious crimes like murder, or drug, realize that their behavior results from their fatherlessness. Most of them generally confess that, if they had had a father, they would not have become the men they are. Such a reaction is testified by David Blankenhorn who thinks that : "Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation. It is the leading cause of declining child well-being in our society" (p. 21). He did not understand life like that ; he wanted to be a beloved cherished child, a son who is carefully cared for. He did not expect such a treatment from a person he calls "dad". He, like Cory, expected to ask his father : "how come you ain't never liked me ?" (August Wilson, p. 37). His father also did not directly answer his unasked question. He did not, like Troy, Cory's father in *Fences* throw at his face : "It's my job. It's my responsibility !... A man got to take care of his family ... I owe a responsibility to you!" (*Fences*, 38). He just continues "to shape" him according to his own mould.

We can notice that Carter finally appreciates his father, in spite of the old situation between them. He finally realizes the positivity of his father's behaviour. In the poem, he felt really sorry for not still having him because he was dead ; he died at the moment he was growing up to realize to what extent he has impacted him. The poem clearly underlines that fact : "I shared/ his final hours, and came to see what he'd become, or always was / the father who will never cease to be alive in me" (17-23).

In this first stanza, we can perceive the struggles between the poet and his own father. The latter notes that as a child, he "despised the discipline" (L7) that his father used to shape his son into the man he wanted him to become. In any case, the times were rare when father and son crossed the emotional "bridge" to meet each other. There was not a particularly warm relationship. It is important to pinpoint the

true relationship between the son and the father, in order to highlight these lines :

For those rare times when we did cross
the bridge between us, the pure joy
survives.

"Survive" can show both the extreme tension between them and the almost impossible occasion to meet. When there is understanding, peace, love (did cross the bridge between us), it is a real happiness (pure joy survives) because these moments / occasions are extremely difficult to occur (these rare times). Besides, as Carter tells, "I despised the discipline / he used to shape what I should be, / not owning up that he might feel / his own pain when he punished me" (L7-10), he seems not to be interested in him, as a father. He even underlines that in lines 11, 12, 13 and 14 :

I didn't show my need to him
since his response to an appeal
would not have meant as much to me,
or been as real.

While Carter feels the physical pain of the discipline, he thinks that his father should feel the emotional pain of the punishment. The father is, here, characterized as an insensitive character. For, his discipline is so harsh that he hates it. In fact, he did not understand his father. He could not know the feeling of a father who is looking at his child using the wrong way. That is what he will realize, once grown up and a father himself. We think that, this is the real motivation of the title of the poem : I wanted to share my father's world. The last stanza seems to be like a confession of the wrong feeling he had had for his father and a recognition of the latter's right reactions. Unfortunately,

this finally kind, nice and lovely recognized father was living his very last moment on earth.

The line 7 "I never put aside" sounds like the expression of an imminently persistent resentment. A resentment that was about to prevent Cory from attending his father Troy's funerals. But, Cory, unlike Carter, had his mother around to advise : "whatever was between you and your daddy ... the time has come to put it aside. Just take it and set it over on the shelf and forget about it". Carter did not have this opportunity and suddenly faced his father's death without having had the time to apologize and thank him for his "discipline".

The last part of the last stanza clearly underlines that the executioner of yesterday has suddenly become an angel for the victim of yesterday ; because he, finally, noticed, with his new social rank, that the punishments have really shaped his character and helped him have a good understanding of morality and ethics. He now realizes how essential fathers are. As a matter of fact, this discipline has a specific purpose which expects to give the son a behaviour for his own success. The son seems not to notice it because of the pain he felt.

To summarize, we can retain that, in the poem "I Wanted to Share My Father's World,"

Jimmy Carter shares his life with us and the relationship he had with his father. The speaker in the poem reveals that he had a tense relationship with his father, who was very strict. He was so strict that it seemed as though "he couldn't wait to turn my back." The son thought of himself as a failure, yet this is not really true. In fact, his father "had an almost desperate wish" for him to be like him. The son wishes that they could have been more like friends instead of

parent and child; however, he realizes that it is too late because of time's passing³.

The last sentence of this citation clearly enlightens Carter's understanding his father and his final will to accept him like a true companion. He is now aware that children should imitate their fathers in order to become men like them. Unfortunately, it is too late because the father died. But he, internally, promised to apply that education with his "own sons" (L 19). This father-child relationship is what is supposed to be shown here with the Indians and the American government. In this sense, the history of the United-States is to question.

II – General View of the Indians' Past in America

History may be distant or recent. But distant or recent, it generally has a certain repercussion on the contemporary realities. Indians are today seen as American citizens. But what realities had they gone through to reach this level in America? This simple question becomes fundamental because it is the cornerstone of this part of this work: the Indians' past in America. However, one should admit that it is very difficult to talk seriously about something without referring to its origins. That is why, it seems necessary to turn a glance on the history of America in general and the Indians' in particular. But before we talk about any notion of the Indians, it is important to emphasize that knowing, describing and defining Indians seems as perilous as jumping on a train without knowing where it is going. That is to say, the multidimensionality of these people, because of their cultural diversity and the instability of the tribes due to the

³ "How does Jimmy Carter's poem "I Wanted to Share My Father's World" reflect on lifespans, regeneration and legacy?" *eNotes Editorial*, 26 Feb. 2020, <https://www.enotes.com/topics/essay/questions/after-reading-jimmy-carter-s-poem-i-wanted-to-2175360>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2024.

numerous displacements caused by the removal policy of the 1830s make their study difficult.

So, talking about the past of these people in America can be seen as a flashback on events people want to forget. Unfortunately, one cannot talk about an American history without referring to the Indians. In this case, although the Indians were seen as people without history, we can notice that this American history is inextricably tied to the Indian history. The Indians have a history which, because it is difficult to localize in time, shows a complex aspect. To start, we should underline that they have been forced to change many patterns of what should have coloured their true history. Let us say that, at the beginning of this discovery, Christopher Columbus had never understood what he had really discovered. He thought it was India because – like many early navigators – he wanted to find a route, not a region; a route to India with which the Europeans had commercial relationship. And, because of that mistake, many people did not consider him as the real discoverer of America. That is why the credit for that discovery was awarded to the Florentine navigator Amerigo Vespucci, who mentioned the region not as India but as a “New World” in 1503. Because of that, his name was used in 1507 to baptize the region by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller.

In fact, Christopher Columbus and his expedition encountered the Indian people in October 12, 1492; opening the door of that part of the world to the profanes (those who never thought that such a rich and peaceful place could exist elsewhere, a place where the troubles of their original Europe could rapidly and easily be forgotten). Thus the Portuguese, after the Spanish, found a new soil for exploitation: many other Europeans started moving to the so-called “New World”. At that time, Native Americans were identified as the “Noble Savage” and the many Europeans who first went there, were really expecting savage and wild people ; because before their arrival,

they had never thought of people who, like themselves, live with desires, needs, fear, appetite and passions. Indians were seen as so barbarous that no communication with them was practically possible. So, the whites viewed in them people with whom and through whom nothing could generate, if they are let alone. That is why they thought that these infidel and savage people should be converted to christianity and placed under the English King. With such an idea, the whites wanted the Indians to be – literarily, politically, socially and economically – submitted in order to fulfil their hidden dark plan : destroy the Indians, move them off the land which is really their covetousness. In their combat to move the Indians off the land, the whites established, since 1638, what they call a reservation. Thus, through treaties, many Indians would be forced to accept to sell most of their lands and keep small parcels known as “reservation”. For that, one can quote the Treaty of Stanwix in October 22, 1784 which obliged the Iroqueuse Indians (except the Oneida and the Tuscarora) to leave a part of their land for goods from the government: the Indians were thus reduced to trade land for goods, because they were forbidden to hunt, farm and fish on the land that had been theirs. We also have the Treaty of Fort Laramie in September 17, 1851, organized by Thomas Fitzpatrick (Commissioner of the Bureau of the Indian Affairs) to negociate with the Indians about the free going pass on the Indian territories ; the second Treaty of Laramie was about the Black Hills (the American government had propped 100 million dollars to have the Black Hills ; but the Indians refused). They refused because they knew that "land is the only thing that lasts life to life" (Louise Erdrich, p. 33), that money would go. And once money gone, they would have nowhere to call "home".

Before these treaties, the Whites tried to organize the Indians through the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) — an organ created in 1824 to serve as a go-between between the Indians and the American government. The former saw that Bureau as

something to hypnotize them ; something that would canalize them according to the Whites' will. To reach this purpose, the Whites passed the Removal Act in 1830 (which stated that the Indians could be moved from their inhabited land in the East to the West at any moment), the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to help people in poverty by providing them with job training, education, and other resources to improve their lives and become self-sufficient, the Indian Homestead Act of 1884 provides that all Indians then located on public land might avail themselves of the homestead, the General Allotment or Dawes Act of 1887 providing private parcels from communal reservation lands for tribal members, and the Indian Reorganization Act in June 18, 1934 — a wide-ranging legislation which authorized tribal self-rule under federal supervision, put an end to land allotment, and promoted measures to enhance tribes and encourage education. Thus, progressively, the white integrated the Indians into their society, in spite of the latter's strong interest for their own ways. The Indians finally became so absorbed by the flood of white civilization that people (non Indians) considered them as a "vanishing people". They were dispatched in the country in very small tribes ; families and friends were separated, new ways of life were imposed upon them and they finally seemed to be about to disappear. But, in front of all these realities, the Indians did not stay there, hand crossed, looking at strangers [to] deal with their own problems, their destiny ; they reacted with the creation of Pan-Indiannist movements — like the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the American Indian Movement (AIM) — to facilitate the understanding between them and the whites. And in 1962, the former got their voting right.

With the nasty and ungrateful view that the newcomers had had for them, the Indians appeared to be very discouraged by their own behaviour (*vis-à-vis* these strangers). They seemed to be very sorry for their kindness, and to blame themselves for

that. And this attitude of sorrow appeared to have touched the whites' heart. Then, they appeared to understand their mistake. For, by demanding the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934, John Collier wanted to show the whites that the Indians had a passion for human beings and lands. So, they should be allowed their freedom which is linked to their lands. Thus, on August 1st, 1953, the federal government would cease its pressure on the Indians with the House Concurrent Resolution 108⁴ under President Eisenhower. That is why, after all the misunderstandings between Indians and whites, the fourth Thursday of November is recognized by the whole American society as the "Thanksgiving Day" ; a day for the whites to thank the Indians for having received them with an open heart, for having permitted them to create on their lands the greatest and most powerful country of the world. In fact, through this day, the whites tried to reintroduce the Indians to the world with more human characteristics. For, they had always misunderstood their ways of doing things, their kindness and their merits ; and they fought them, massacred them. Concerning the massacres, we can quote the massacre of Sand Creek in November 28, 1864 and that of Wounded Knee in 1890 which "marked the end of the armed resistance of the Indians" (Russell Thornton, 347). Apart from the massacres, many epidemics contributed to the failure of the Indians to resist the conquest of their land.

The Indians had such a behaviour toward the whites because they had never foreseen the intention of these strange visitors. They had never thought that, that opportunity given to the very first Europeans would bring many others who, without any form of process, claim their lands and even force them to abandon their culture, religion and languages. They had never

⁴ In 1953, the House Concurrent Resolution 108 states that, "at the earliest possible time, all of the Indian tribes and the individual members thereof located within the States of California, Florida, New York and Texas, should be freed from Federal supervision and control and all disabilities and limitations specifically applicable to Indians".

Source : <https://geriatrics.stanford.edu>.

though that outsiders could steal the ownership of that miraculous land of their ancestors'. They still had faith in that old theory : « it is not our way to banish any guest » (Louise Erdrich, 189). But, with time, the American governments, through Laws, will think of the Indians by creating between them (whites and Indians) a father-children relationship like painted in "I wanted to share my father's world" by Jimmy Carter.

III – The Indians seen through the Poem

To approach this last chapter, we are going to start by this irony of Chief Seattle Bull – talking about the manifest desire of the whites to buy their lands without their making the slightest advertisement of sale – as postulate : « So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children ». « He will be our father and we will be his children » clearly illustrates the general idea of our referential poem "I Wanted to share my Father's World" which paints the father-child relationship : here, the American government – which is represented by the white men and identified as the Great Chief – represent the father (Carter's father) and the Indians, the son (Carter). Historically, that can be verified : Jimmy Carter, who is the son (in the poem) was born in 1924 – the year in which all the Indians were granted the indian citizenship; through the Indian Citizenship Act. Thus, they are here newly born Americans; while the Whites are old American citizens (they represent Carter's father in the poem). As the Indians' father, they have to "shape what" the Indians "should be". But should somebody compulsorily do what his master or father does or live exactly like him ? Can somebody be somebody else ? Is it not clearly precised that : « Levinson

and colleagues' (1978) influential analysis of the male adult lifespan course does suggest that a man generally is 'encouraged to seek his own way rather than to literally follow in his father's footsteps'» (p. 76). But, in spite of the fact that the Citizenship Act gave the Indians a new identity in America, the realities that have marked the presence of the white men on their land still characterize that new birth. To summarize, the Indians have been seen [by the white] as wild, savage and barbarous people ; people with whom and through whom nothing can be got if [they are] let alone. They should be educated and shown how to live as human beings. Thus, they should be converted to the white man's religion and submitted to the american government. It is the duty of the father to "shape " the child " what [he] should be". In the process of shaping them, violence, humiliation, and illtreatments had been necessary like in Carter's education by his father : they endured wars (military or epidemiologic), massacres taking the forms of genocide and ethnocide and trick treaties which forced them to transfer great parts of their lands. This assignment of land was officialized in the 1830s with the Indian Removal Act⁵. This Act gave a dramatic turn to the Indians' realities as Indians. Like Jimmy Carter considers his sufferings through these lines "this is a pain I mostly hide / but ties of blood, or seed, endure / end evn now I feel inside", the Indians continue to remember these movements they all keep in mind as the "Trail of Tears". All that seems to corroborate with Bly's book *Iron John* (1990) which « is often viewed as a critical guide to the men's movement: in his book, Bly discusses how American culture has traditionally encouraged a sense of detachment between fathers and sons – to the detriment of both ».

⁵ The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized the forced relocation of Native American tribes from their ancestral lands in the southeastern United States to designated territories west of the Mississippi River, leading to significant suffering and loss of life, particularly during the Trail of Tears.

Talking about the massacres, that of Wounded Knee properly illustrates the Indians' discouragement – as far as the Whites' sincerity is concerned. For, while they wish a "need for just a word of praise" (L6), Colonel John Chevington treachously attacked their peaceful camp ; in spite of the pact of non-aggression. What kind of father-son relationship is that ? A family relationship in which the father is unable to respect his own speech. Did Floyd (2006) not contend « that the father-son relationship may be the single most significant male-male relationship in a man's life cycle »?

History regards this massacre as the end of the Indians' armed resistance to the white man's will to make them real and good Americans ; to use Carter's father's idea, to "shape" them what they "should be". This attitude of real and good Americans can be testified only if the Great Chief succeeds in shaping the Indians the American ways ; which requires a perfect partnership between them (the Indians and the whites). Instead of a direct contact, an office was created to serve as a go-between between the Indians and the American government : the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs). Although the government sometimes decide to meet the Indians, one can say that this indirect way of educating the child (through the BIA) cannot be efficient. And, "the rare times when [they] did cross / the bridge between [them] the pure joy / survives ; the Indians think they are opportunities (rare times) to present the white man their view of life. For the Americans, they are opportunities to show the Indians the advantages of behaving like them. Still, the Indians were not happy with their treatment by the American government which is for the latter a way to "shape what [they] should be". To show that they "despise the discipline", Wahunsonacock or Powhatan, an Indian Chief, did not tolerate the Whites for their ungratefulness. He, like many other Indians, seemed not to understand both the Indians' kindness and the whites' dark intention. This sentence of him sounds like sorrow and anger

together : "what do you expect to gain by destroying us who provide you with food?" (Bob Blaisdell, p. 4).

All that appears to be old resentments, old realities, and 1924 would create a new american society with a new relationship between the father (the American government) and the children (the indian tribes) ; although this opportunity was not offered to Carter and his father who died before he realizes his importance. Morman and Floyd (2002) argue that the culture of the detached authoritarian father is giving way to a role of an involved, nurturing father.

As a matter of course, from 1924 on, Acts and Policies have been applied to booster the Indians' integration into the American society. In the intention "to shape" the Indians "what [they] should be", they were introduced into the american government. This new glance at the Indians encourages "a man's embrace to take [they] in" (L5), to meet them and try to get to know them better and understand them. And this man is seen in Lewis Meriam who, in 1928, was authorized to quest for the Indians' true realities and their needs in the american society. But, the lack of confidence in the White man forced the Indians to conduct their own study. Which study also met Meriam's results. The Indians' problems mastered, the government initiated their reorganization (Indian Reorganization Act in 1934) in order to know how to resolve these problems and from where to start. But, in spite of these attempts to reconcile the indian tribes and the american government, the former still "despise the discipline" (L7), because they still did not see in these achievements the true facet of societalization. They still plan "to shape what [they] should be" (L9). So, many actions were conducted by the Indians to show both their discontent and their ability to concretize their own dreams, to ensure self-determination and sovereignty. Thus, in July 1968, Dennis Banks and his friends created the American Indian Movement (AIM) in respond to police brutality and racism.

Conclusion

Reading and dissecting the poem "I Wanted to Share my Father's World" makes us immediately understand the importance of a father in a child's life. We are talking here about this father who is, by his attitude and character, a guide, an inspiration for his son.

Indeed, Jimmy Carter, the author of this poem, paints, with disgust and bitterness his existence with his father. A life tinged, according to him, with mistreatment and unbearable and even inhumane punishments. He speaks, in no uncertain terms, about how he feels about his father and the way he raises him. It is a real disappointment for him to have him as a father. But since childhood is not an eternal stage of the human being, he grows up and becomes a father himself. From then on, he finds himself caught up in his immaturity of the past and begins to regret this same father:

the father who will never cease to be
alive in me.

The life of this small family (father and son) has been extended to the whole society of the United States which, since 1924, has counted the Indians as citizens. The relationship between the author of the poem and his father is thus exported to America where the white-owned U.S government claims to be the father of the Indian community. We take the situation as such basing on this ironical illustration from *Seattle Bull*: « So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children ». Throughout the life of this father-children relationship, we notice that, being

the father seems to mean owning the son's properties. In this vein, Pease (2000) questions « whether there is some sort of universal need for men to have a particular kind of relationship with their fathers » (Pease, 15).

In the end, we can notice that, the title and the three last lines of the poem seem to corroborate. Both show Carter's sorrow for not having understood his father. They especially underline that this regret came at the very last time. But, let us remind that the aim of this study was to involve the Indians in Carter's preoccupation. In other words, we wanted to see the relationship between the American government and the Indians through that between Carter and his father. The fact is that Carter disagreed with his father and finally realized what a good and perfect father he had had. This testifies that the author's father was able to do his part for having very early realized that preparing one's child to easily integrate into society is more than a duty. But, should that be the case for the Indians ? Can a final understanding of the white man's behavior mean blaming their ancestors for their struggles to maintain what made them Indians ? Moreover, should we blame the Whites for their contribution to the integration of the Indians into the American society?

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