Intergenerational trauma is the result of an accumulation of oppression from an oppressor. One of the biggest problems Native American communities face is intergenerational trauma. In Sherman Alexies novel The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven discusses the topic of Intergenerational trauma. Intergenerational trauma has an ensnaring cyclical nature that can be solved through acts of spiritual resistance.

The ensnaring nature of intergenerational trauma is symbolically exemplified in Alexie’s portrayal of his characters’ struggle with alcohol.

-”With each glass of beer, Samuel gained a few ounces of wisdom, courage.”134

-”All his life he had watched his brothers and sisters, most of his tribe, fall into alcoholism and surrendered dreams” 133

Imagination and storytelling are forms of spiritual resistance against oppression s suggested by Alexie’s stories. In Alexie’s chapter, “A Train is an Order of Occurrence”, a character named Samuel Builds-the-Fire describes why he has never had alcohol in his life. Alexie describes that ”Samuel had always thought alcohol would corrupt his stories, render them useless, flat..he could tell funny stories that would make each day less painful.” [Aleie 134] Samuel knows that alcohol will ruin his ability to tell stories and knows that stories can help people cope with their life. Alexie uses a hopeful tone to describe Samuel’s situation. Alexie understands that storytelling can be a substitute for alcohol because they both can make days less painful. Alexie hopefully implies that storytelling could be an ample substitute for alcohol. Therefore, storytelling is an act of spiritual resistance against oppression because it could substitute for alcohol, an embodiment of intergenerational trauma. In one very philosophical story, Alexie discusses different ways imagination is used on the Spokane Reservation as a coping mechanism. Alexie describes that people should “Imagine an escape..Imagine a song stronger than penicillin...Imagine a spring with water that mends broken bones.” [Alexie 153] Alexie is implying that by imagining positive ideas, a person can better cope with the oppression and hardships they face on the reservation. Alexie uses rhythm to make his point by using a short phrase starting with “Imagine”. By using rhythm Alexie describes that oppressed people can use their imagination as a powerful tool to overcome oppression. Centuries of oppression has caused Native American peoples to have to live harsh lives, but this strategy can help them overcome the hopelessness and despair. By discussing how imagination can be a strong coping mechanism, Alexie reveals that imagination is a form of spiritual resistance.

Imagination leads to resilience which is a form of spiritual resistance against oppression.

In oppressed communities, some children are able to escape the cycle of oppression by having resilience. That quality is extremely important to escaping oppression and intergenerational trauma, so researchers have done studies to figure out why some children can use resilience. In a New Yorker article, Maria Konnikova cites a study that found. She describes that the children, “Saw themselves as orchestrators of their own fate” and “they believed that they, and not their circumstances, affected their achievements.” [Konnikova] The kids use a form of imagination to get over the trauma they face.

-It’s been trying to kill Indians since the very beginning. Indians are pretty much born  
soldiers anyway. Don’t need a uniform to prove it.”