

First Chapter

Writing / Righting History: An Obligation of Fourth World Literature by Re-tracing Space

“History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake”

(Joyce 34)

A plethora of definitions and conceptions are associated with the notion of history and the narrowed down framework of history as the study of past events is not encompassed to demonstrate it within the larger context of disciplinary variation of multiple spatialities. History covers the notions of the past with its culture, geography, literature, art, life and everything that affects human affairs. A historian may give an account or a narrative of ‘what happened’ according to the sequence of events, but it is not certain whether the narrative is constructed exclusively by the ‘collected’ facts’ or whether it is being shaped by his imagination. The chapter introduces the efforts of Fourth World writers to address the conundrum of history erasure and historical rewriting by re-acknowledging the spatial qualities and descriptions of Aboriginal literature and life.

Prior to French Revolution historiography or the act of constructing history was regarded as literary art. Until late-nineteenth-century historians regarded themselves as men of letters who told stories as clearly and poetically as any novelist. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, the discipline of history converted into more scientific, professionalised and academic. There are many historiographers with the same perspective such as E. H. Carr, the British Marxist historian who adds that

History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his/her facts. So the historian plays a great role in determining the history of a land, race and community (124).

The assertion of the role of historian in constructing historical narrative brings forth certain questions of credibility and quantity of fact, and Fourth World Literature tries to answer all these dubitation.

The crucial question arises on the need of having a history of a land, culture and community for its people and it explicates that it is quintessential to know the history because it provides man with the knowledge of the past and the 'past' or 'historical consciousness' moulds one's vision of the present. The historical consciousness makes people rooted to their land and community with strong emotional intensity. The essentiality of history marks two important purposes that define a person's existence; firstly, one needs history to know himself / herself that will eventually lead to self – pride. Secondly, the notion of history is quintessential to determine someone's identity as an individual belongs to a particular nation, land, community etc. In general, the specific spot of the Fourth World was undermined through a conscious effort to configure it as 'historyless'. Even though the Fourth World is termed as First Nations, the cradle of civilisation and culture, the people who belong to these lands are severed without any roots of culture and history. The terminology 'Fourth World' is clearly explained in the hierarchic and hegemonic structure of social strata and the catastrophic degradation ascribed to First Nation People in the order of social positioning as 'fourth'.

The term 'Fourth World' literature is not a monolithic one, the hydra-headed constituents that form its ideological structure is more heterogeneous, vivid and

specific. Though the climate of politics is varied, the structure of subjugation and marginalisation is homogeneous in all Fourth World communities. With the advent of colonialism, the local indigenous histories were replaced by Eurocentric account of past and the history of natives were re-categorised as myths and legends, the unofficial, unauthenticated and invalid account of irrational fantasy. The prevailing western ideology confined the native literature and narrative on the same ground, as the by-product of myth, magic realism and fantasy.

Fourth World writers, generally, repudiate the western presentation of Aboriginal kinds of literature as substandard and unacceptable and demonstrate that western epistemology is inadequate to comprehend the reality and aesthetics of Aboriginal life and works of literature. The degradation of Aboriginal literature by the conscious effort of the coloniser to make it devoid of any literary merit or quality was apparent in the scenario of colonial period. The colonial version of history was made triumphant by the acts unscrupulous suppression through 'epistemic violence', massacres and even genocide. Kateryna Arthur views the unequal struggle between literacy and orality (Arthur 55) which can only be rectified by the Aboriginal rewriting of their history in English from an aboriginal point of view. A reconfiguration of history becomes a political endeavour that proposes a modality of anti-colonial resistance.

Aboriginal people write their own experiences, thoughts and knowledge; their stories are passed orally in the normal life system, by the word of mouth supplemented by graphic representations with regionally and socially coded and variable meanings. The Coloniser or the 'mainstream' deliberately wipes out the Aboriginal epistemological system through erasing the oral tradition of the natives. The process of 'erasure' of indigenous cultures proposes many apposite questions and

the Fourth World people's claim of being the First Nation with all its privileges is negated by the coloniser and the mainstream who claim that history began with them.

The project of making the Aboriginal as 'historyless' initiates grave consequence on the Fourth World life and their literature in all the fields and spaces of societal functions and activities. So the process of rewriting history becomes an obligation to explore the physical, cultural and psychological ill effects of the deliberate attempt to erase the Fourth World people and their literature by making them 'historyless'. The adverse effects of colonial strategies on Aboriginal lives are listed as following. Firstly, the issue of nation and identity is catastrophically strained with the mentioned incidents; the ideas of nationhood, community, oneness and fraternity are central to tribal life and culture of Fourth world people. But with the process of erasing their history, the cultural values of the Fourth world people were degraded or assimilated to mainstream culture. The essentialist features of native cultures were evaporated by the so-called 'civilising mission'. The community was destined to get entrapped into jeopardy in which the questions of nation and identity obviously occurred as complex and problematic.

Secondly, the degradation of status and subjugation of individuals and community was widely accepted as a normal process or everyday reality. The epistemological system of history tended to be a criterion to determine the status of a community since 'historylessness' was successfully exercised as a kind of weapon by the coloniser, settler or the mainstream to re-establish the inferiority of Aboriginals. Later it turned to be a tool to subjugate the Natives in a larger hegemonic structure of colonialism. There were two phases in the process of colonisation; the first one being the phase of direct control of occupying land, grabbing industries and physical violence inflicted upon to human beings and to spread its way to conquer physical

land and human resources. The following one was of the hegemonic period where no direct, physical and concrete control over the colonised is practiced. During this period, the power vested with various agencies of education and other non – coercive systems and gradually the Eurocentric historians had seized native intellectual space and the mainstream that followed it was not an exemption.

Thirdly, to designate Aboriginal people ‘historyless’ can be interpreted as delineating them neutral objects to the whole system of ontology. The native mind converts to ‘tabula rasa’, the clean slate, thus it is more convenient for the master race to impose westernised ideologies as in a clean state, and it is comparatively effortless to inscribe anything clearly. Native minds are imposed with western epistemology of truth and the catastrophic situation evokes questions of responsibility of an Aboriginal writer. The native writer is entitled with the obligation that to make the native community aware of their historical position and the writer has to make the community conscious of a past which is quite different from savagery.

Fourth World writers realised the requirement to restore and redefine the culture and tradition of Aboriginality lost in non – entity due to imposed culture of the coloniser/mainstream and the history of Aboriginal modality is the need of the hour to write in native language and they have to regain their lost spaces – social, cultural, political and literary. They add an Aboriginal version of history that elicits certain questions to the coloniser / the mainstream on the irrevocable consequences of colonial violence. One of the very important ways to reconstruct cultural and national histories is to create literature and the literary output of Aboriginal people since it is considered as the oppressed people’s privilege to narrate. The exercise of this privilege to narrate demands the Fourth World writer’s effort to regain control over

material artefacts of their culture, that means their food system, rituals, ceremonies, cultural identifications, the reclamation of memory and their lived experience too.

The regeneration of lost spaces is one of the major tools for cultural decolonisation since it evokes the possibility of analysis and reinterpretation of history and culture from the Fourth World perspective. Some methodologies in literature are practicable for reclamation of spaces. The Fourth World writers have to dismantle the older tradition of narratives and the creation of new narratology is quintessential in native writing. The Fourth World Literature seeks to locate the community at the centre of the narrative and the protagonist represents the voice of the community. Though there is individual consciousness, the feeling of the community pervades all through the literary texts.

Another methodology is to revive myths and legends that constitutes as functionary elements in native literature. Preoccupation with nature and land is inevitable in the discourse of native writing since each community is intrinsically connected to it. Retrieval of orality is employed as a significant method in the construction of the genre - Fourth World literature. Majority of tribal language being scriptless, it is indeed indispensable to include the oral tradition of literature to the narrative structure of Fourth World literature. The retrieval of orality automatically leads to the reclamation of aboriginal epistemological systems too since aboriginal forms of knowledge have always been rejected by First World science by accusing it as the product of unauthentic fantasy and invalid experiments.

The prime concern of Fourth World writers is to make his/her community aware that they are not 'historyless' and actually they are in possession of a glorified past. Wole Soyinka innovates the term 'race retrieval' for the reconfiguration of space

and it denotes the reclamation of lost culture, tradition, identity and history hidden due to the imposition of the coloniser's intervention. Fourth World literature enunciates to redefine each system in the arena of aboriginal life and literature. In the mainstream history of Australia, the possibility to trace out Aboriginal life and tradition marks low ebb. But Paul Keating, the 24th Prime Minister of Australia (1991-1996), declared the necessity to redefine the history of Australia and to include the history of Aboriginals of Australia to the existing system. He argued,

National identity develops essentially over some time and social engineers should not try to manipulate it or create a sense of crisis about identity. Australian history risks being further distorted if highly selective views of Australian history are used as the basis for endless and agonised naval gazing about who we are or as part of the perpetual seminar for a literary opinion about our national identity (13).

But the successor of Keating, John Howard considered that he distorted the mainstream history of Australia. But a new tendency is introduced in Australia with the above mentioned incident to recreate and redefine the history of Australia with the assistance of dairies, journals, and official records of colonisers that manipulate the agenda of ideologies and activities of the settlers. Now the writers take the responsibility to create history from those who are denied of any social presence.

Since history constitutes as a major elements in the study of space, it is significant to configure historical space pragmatically with the initiation of different modalities. The reconfiguration of historical space of Aboriginals made a dismantling of all those existing notions on Aboriginal sensibility. Australia, like any other nation with a history of colonization and invasion, is morally bound to a kind of hesitation to come

in terms with the indigenous people. The history of colonisation verbalises itself as justifiable and similarly it defines hundreds of years of subjugation on the bases of the convenient legal fiction that Australia was 'terra nullius', an uninhabited land. The British deliberately utilises this sort of argument to justify massacres and consequently the glorification of heroic cult and the construction of war memorials to Aboriginal people who died defending their country are plunged into oblivion. Land and the usage of land are considered a major causative factor for annexation and colonisation and the land of Australia is marked with the innumerable attempts of invasion on the similar ground that Australians are failed to employ the land in the strict sense of cultivation. The White concluded that land is an otiose entity for Aboriginal people and the process to make them 'historyless' via landless tended to be an unproblematic effort. Geographical space or land is considered as a prominent element in historiography too.

Prior to the European invasion of Australia, the volume of Aboriginal literature in written form was limited and the exploration to find any concrete evidences or written records was restricted to an enclosed space of orality. The native writers primarily engaged the performativity modes of expressions such as dance, ritual gestures, stone engraving, carvings on trees, body paintings, message sticks, drawing on the walls of the cave and the flat surface of the rock. They explored the possibilities of the physical space of writing mode to express their ideas and ideologies and the Aboriginal people were not annoyed with the thought of the permanence of literary space. The oral songs and stories were circulated from mouth to mouth from ancient time onwards. The Natives were not daunted with the thought of losing their culture especially the oral tradition of their literary epistemology by any external intervention.

The Native religion, tradition and culture were transferred to the succeeding generation in the form of orality. Aboriginals' lives were left unmarked in the arena of

historical documentation, without any trace or instance of written literary space and gradually with the process of colonisation, some researchers and White intellectuals attempted to record in tapes the lengthy narratives of Aboriginal people and transcribed them into English later. This endeavour was executed not out of the enthusiasm to preserve the old tradition of Aboriginal people, but due to mere curiosity to realise what the Aboriginal people have been retelling in their oral narratives. To maintain the integrity and coherence of oral space of literature, the process of transcription was accomplished as a tedious task that had a double folded advantage, as the White researches got an access to the knowledge systems of Aboriginal Australia and on the other hand, the Aboriginal people got a chance to learn the English language in a minimal way.

The prime concern of Aboriginal writing is to unveil their subjugation in their land and also to traverse the hidden untold underside of Australian history. A strong historical sense is exhibited in Aboriginal writing. Davis, a well-known critic, playwright and scholar on Aboriginal studies, in his book *Aboriginal Writing*, comments “History is more important, more inseparable from literature for Aboriginal writers than for White writers” (13). They thought that by reconfiguring history they could come to grips with the present reality and sociality. In the attempt of reconfiguring the historical space, Aboriginal Australian writing has evolved into different branches of narrative discourse. In the book *Indigenous Literature of Australia*, Mudrooroo makes this classification of Aboriginal literature as (1) Time of dreaming (1788 – colonial invasion) (2) The time of invasions (1901 – colonial development) (3) Punitive expeditions and protections (4) Colonial period (5) Period of self-determination and assimilation (1967 – 1988) and (6) Period of reconciliation.

The inception of Aboriginal writing in Australia appeared in the form of a letter which was drafted by Bennelong addressed to the steward of Lord Sydney in 1796, but strictly speaking it is almost impossible to relate it with any literacy genre or tradition. In the 1820s, Aboriginal people initiated certain attempts to translate works in collaboration with the missionaries. *The Gospel of St. Luke* was translated into Awabakal language by an Awabakal man, Biraban by working with a missionary, Lancelot Threlkeld. Another attempt in this respect was undertaken by James Unaipon who translated the Ngarrindjeri tribal oral narratives into English in collaboration with a missionary, George Taplin in 1870.

In 1836 *The Flinders Island*, a weekly chronicle started publication and it was an effort by three Aboriginal men namely Thomas Brune, Walter George Arthur and Walter Juba Martin. They produced manuscripts of this paper and they intended to create an awareness of the importance of learning and current issues of that period. David Unaipon is considered as the harbinger of Aboriginal writing in Australia. His first literary attempt was an article "Aboriginals: Their Traditions and Customs" published in daily Telegraph in 1924. Following this, he wrote "The Story of Mungingee" in *Home Magazine* in 1925. Later during 1929, Unaipon wrote *Native Legends*, a romantic story which dealt with native kings, queens, princes and little princesses and in 1951 his autobiography *My Life Story* was published. His writings interweave indigenous and white myths and classical and scientific elements.

The era after 1950 hailed for its blooming of Aboriginal literature and when Aboriginal community acquired proficiency in English language, they started addressing social, political and cultural issues in this alien language. A new dimension of Aboriginal literature began in 1964 with the writings of Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Kevin Gilbert, Mudrooroo Narrogin and Jack Davis. They attempted with different genres and prevalent

themes like land rights, call for justice and correcting the biased Australian history. They considered literary activity as an engagement of genuine endeavour to uplift their community from the long-lasting humiliation and insult from Whites and the mainstream.

The year 1964 marked as a watershed moment in the history of Aboriginal writing in Australia, the publication of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's first collection of poetry *We are Going* in the year was the first incident of poetical note in raising voice against the injustice inflicted upon the Aboriginal community. It inducted the commencement of a varied experience for the Whites as they hear the song of suffering, insult and subjugation from the very tongue of marginalised Aboriginals for the first time. This book is a meticulous detail upon the real plight of Aboriginal Australians. Her other poetry collections include *The Dawn is at Hand* (1966) and *My People* (1970). These collections deal with their struggle for citizenship rights and land rights. Poetry is an instrument for her to highlight communal and political purposes and her emphasis is to regain the lost space and tradition by rejuvenating of community culture.

In the arena of non – fiction and criticism, Mudrooroo Narrogin is the precursor, irrespective of his dubious identity status; his contribution to Australian Aboriginal literature is remarkable and pertinent. He was brought up in Clontarf Boy's Home where he gained European education and his first novel *Wild Cat Falling* (1965) gives a detailed account of the life, land, tradition, identity and community concerns of the Aboriginal people. His later works also have a great inclination towards Aboriginal life and tradition. In the early 1970s, two Aboriginal writers namely Kevin Gilbert and Jack Davis invaded the literary scene of Aboriginal Australia. Gilbert is a versatile playwright, poet and painter and his *The Cheesy Pickers* (1968) is the first Aboriginal play to be performed. In his political work, *Because a White Man' II Never Do it* (1973),

Gilbert addresses the White's treatment of the Aboriginal people as ignorant children, and also offers a solution to how the Aborigines could be treated as adults and also as equals by Whites.

Kevin Gilbert drafted a collection of history, *Living Black* (1977) which hit the conscience of white Australians and he published *Inside Black Australia* (1987), *The Blackside* (1990), *Child's Dreaming* (1992), and *Black from the Edge* (1994), a poetry collection which initiated to evince his notion on land and another perspective of Aboriginal life from an insider's point of view. Jack Davis enacted as a strong defender and promoter of Aboriginal life and culture whose versatility expressed in the engagements of acting, playwriting and composing poetry and he found theatre as a mode of protest and agitation against white domination.

Aboriginal writers from Australia are countless in number and they have made their impression on world literature too. Bobby Merrit (*The Cake Man*, 1978), Gerry Bortocle (*Here Comes the Nigger*), Archie Weller (*The Day of the Dog*, 1977) and Faith Bandler (*Wacvie*) are the major writers who wrote about Aboriginal sensibility. Thomas Bennell exclusively focuses on children's literature. His major work is *Aboriginal Legends from the Bibulman Tribe* (1981) and *Vs Fellas – An Anthology of Aboriginal Writing* (1987) is collected by Colleen Glass and Archie Weller. Later the period is remarkable for the incredible influx of edited works in the literacy arena of Aboriginal writing like *Aboriginal Writing Today* (1985), *Connections – Essays on Black Words*, *White Page: Aboriginal literature 1929 – 88* (1989), *Black Australia* (1985) Autobiographical and biographical sketches from Australian Aboriginal life constitute a major component of their literature and such literature also inaugurated a blooming era of Women's literary output from the perspective of Aboriginal life.

The explication of historical space in selected text from Australian Aboriginal arena comprises the core of this chapter. The construction and redefinition of history through literary texts is a prevalent motif in Aboriginal literature since the construction of history defines time as a space that can be measured and time flows in a certain linear-direction where people 'create' history. *Carpentaria* is distinguished as an aboriginal narrative set in the fictional coastal town of Desperance by the Gulf of Carpentaria in northwestern Queensland. The author Alexis Wright foregrounds the notions of time, timelessness, history, memory and experience as the central concern of the fiction and representations of deep and shallow time, notions of cosmos and chaos, history and memory also get juxtaposed in her narrative.

Time is a major concern in history and Wright uses this dimension effectively to recreate the perspective of Aboriginal life and culture. The novel *Carpentaria* begins with a chapter called "From Time Immemorial" exposing a multitude system of time that exists in single space,

A nation chants but we know your story already. The bells peal everywhere. Church bells calling the faithful to the tabernacle where the gates of heaven will open. But not for the wicked calling innocent little black girls from a distant community where the white dove bearing the olive branch never lands. Little girls who come back home after church on Sunday, who look around themselves at the human fallout and announce matter of fact, 'Armageddon begins here (Wright 1).

Fourth World narratives like *Carpentaria* represent and configure time in a unique manner and as a relevant constituent in recording history. The epic sea journeys by

Normal Phantom, that are neither marked by days, weeks, months, years, fathoms, leagues or any another conventional marker of space or time or the malfunctioning of every single watch, clock and timepiece owned by the settler, suspends western time for the duration of the narrative.

Carpentaria presents native life from the third-person autobiographical narrative mode and it collapses the entire standard and ordered view of space and time, thus honouring Aboriginal past, present, memory, future and the sense of collectively experienced time with the image of 'Serpent' in the narrative acts as an agent of time. Although fictional Desperance is representative of small towns in the Gulf Country in terms of geography, climate, demographics, history and memory, it is home to a fractious Aboriginal community living on both the east and west sides of the town. The Pricklebush mob and its patriarch Normal Phantom make a life adjacent to the rubbish tip and the contrasting breakaway group, Joseph Midnight's mob lives in car bodies and they invent a fictitious Aboriginal identity to profit from a mine. Another group of separatist traditionalists led by Big Mozzie Fishman follows the ancient Dreaming tracks from across the Northern Territory border in battered Holden and Fords that require constant maintenance and salvaging by bush mechanics using the tools and parts found only in nature. This group is inspired by another group of a guerrilla warrior, led by Will Phantom, who is intent on sabotaging the mine.

In between and surrounded by these Aboriginal groups, Europeans live in the Uptown, who continually resist the efforts of southern bureaucrats of renaming their town Masterton because they indented on honouring their pioneer history by adhering to colonial symbols. Underneath Desperance, there is a place of deep time that is out of visual range of the settlers, but its presence felt in ways that they cannot comprehend the sense of it. The narrator points out that,

The inside knowledge about the river and coastal region is Aboriginal Law handed down through (generations) since time began. Otherwise, how would one know where to look for the underwater courses in the vast flooding mud plains, full of serpents and fish in the monsoon season? Know the moment of climate change better than they know themselves? (6)

The above-mentioned statements reveal Aboriginal life's inherent connection to land and nature and their perception of their geography, space, and climate. Aboriginal detects even the minute element of change in the space accurately and the author recapitulates the instances of Aboriginal's knowledge on land in the space of the textual body. Beneath Desperance, bits and pieces discarded from Uptown float to the bottom of the sea and those reefs are home to many. The ancient sea reefs initiated the process to archive settler history in their depth and the geographic space of sea reefs enacted as an agent to reconfigure the past. The physical space of reef is converted into the metaphysical entity of history in the larger context of spatial configuration. In literature, the aesthetic possibility of narrating history directly is ineffectual, so the author has to employ different techniques to unravel the untold past.

A rubbish tip beyond the town, Pricklebush mob and the central character Normal Phantom live exposes unique spatial dimensions. Normal built a home from all sorts of scraps thrown away by the white folk, with his wife Angel Day and their own seven children.

An old tribal man who lived... in the dense Pricklebush scrub on the edge of the town. They had lived in a human dumping ground since the day Normal Phantom was born ... The descendants of the pioneer

families who claimed ownership of the town said that Aboriginal was not part of the town at all (4).

The Pricklebush mob fashions their dwellings from settlers unnecessary scraps configure a different upgraded value for settler's waste through the act of construction by Aboriginals. The process engenders a different stratum of memory and history through the landscape. The Pricklebush mob owns and experiences only what is occupied and emaciated by the White settlers. So their history and memory trace a concrete vestige of coloniser's culture and they are in possession of an ideological stand manufactured out of the perspectives of settler. The Pricklebush dwellings record a deeper layer of history of settler diaspora and life. The lives of Aboriginals are denied of their past, tradition and memory and the settler negates the aboriginal right of land or geographical space. Here, the land applied as a major metaphor to prove Native roots or history. The process of deracination of Aboriginal from their land acted as a tool of epistemic violence to attribute them with the title rootless or 'historyless'.

The floating island constructed of wastes supports human life and vegetation and the image of human-made floating islands on natural sea highlights the image of space of Aboriginal memory and realism in correlation with western history and rationalism. *Carpentaria's* continuing narrative of the Aboriginal experience of place, people and time reinvestigate the possibility of rejuvenating past and historical documentation. Wright rejects the term history because it confines Aboriginal narrative into a congested space of time and land since the so-called history is the standardised version from non-Aboriginal perspective and is structured by western ideology. She emphasises the fact that she does not want to write a historical novel, even though Australia appears to be a land with a disappearing memory. She describes Australian history as the colonising spider and certainly in a very short and

shallow space of time it has woven a very tangled web and netted (authors own term from the novel) Aboriginal people within its colonising discourse. As Wright reminds history drags every Aboriginal person into the conquering grips of colonisation with all its possible means and intensity. Westernised historical sensibility imposes their episteme of truth and that truth has been constantly foregrounded as the only coherent and acceptable. Wright goes on to say,

The story does not only come from colonisation or assimilation or having learnt to write English or arguing whether people with an oral history should write books, but it is sung just as strongly from those of our ancestors who wrote our stories on the walls of caves and the surface of weathered rock (Wright *On Writing Carpentaria*13).

Historians write retrospectively and selectively on past events with the aid of interpretative narrative structure. Wright reconfigures conventional meanings of time and timelessness in a story of Aboriginal realism.

The Fourth world people termed as ‘historyless’ since their deeper connections to the land are severed without any trace and their root to the land is dismantled by the white settlers. Their timelessness exemplifies vacuum of the short history that settlers have made and the settler’s belief of invisible net protecting the town’s colonial history from Aboriginal superstition and natural disaster proves to be a slim veneer. The western concept and definition of history are negated by Wright on the ground being shallow and narrow. At the same time, she also makes dubitation in using western terms like science to describe the Aboriginal epistemological system.

In *Carpentaria*, Aboriginal knowledge is grounded in its credibility and sincerity to a particular place, its ancestry, its people, its seas and skies rooted in the deep

coalition with these elements intertwined in sacredness. The novel rejects Europeans attempts to consign this kind of knowledge to the discourse of irrationality, superstitious and pre-scientific, Wright adds in the text itself that Aboriginal people know the moment of climatic change better than they know themselves. Wright rejects the notion of prevailing history to describe a credible narrative since it confines Aboriginal people to victim space and presents time as a shallow layer of deeper history. Time is represented in *Carpentaria* by the resilience of ancient beliefs overlaying the inherited colonial experience that the author describes as

Nothing more than hot air passing through the mind: And, of this shallow settler history.

With no disrespect, it is expedient to say at this point, that such little towns are apt to do one thing right, and this is how a town like Desperance shared a slither of similarity with others... it too sought glory in its legends. A single, important legendary lore of place developed over a century or two (55).

The settler tries to narrate history – the safe things to tell – but they never realise that they unconsciously incorporate the history of Aboriginal land, memory and past to the shallow layer of settler history. The most striking feature of temporal space that is represented in *Carpentaria* is the contrast between the deep and shallow time that never even included in the settler's premises of thinking.

Southern people who like noise would say that something north of the Tropic of Capricorn like Desperance, was just a quiet little town, but if you listened hard enough, you would have heard the silence screaming to be heard (55).

The silenced voice of history of Aboriginal past, present, belief and memory are articulated over the construction of physical space of land, town and Desperance. This layer of history stands below the colonial construction of Aboriginal life as a set of myths, beliefs and superstitions. In reflecting the lengthy process of narrating an Aboriginal story of collective memories, Wright wrote:

The story could not be contained in a capsule that was either time or incident-specific. It would not fit into the English and therefore Australian tradition of creating boundaries and fences which encode the development of thinking in this country, and which follows through ... the containment of thought and idea in the novel. (Wright, *On Writing Carpentaria* 81)

Alexis Wright makes a very deliberate attempt to retrieve the past with the symbols of Aboriginal cultural life with the aid of the tropes of space and time. She says,

I want our people to have books, in their own communities, and written by our people. I want the truth to be told, our truths, so first and foremost, I hold my pen for the suffering in our communities. Let it not be mistaken; suffering is widespread in our communities (*Serve the People*)

She knows the importance of regaining history, land and culture. She was a land right activist in Wanniyi, the highlands of the southern Gulf of Carpentaria since childhood and she had fought for the neglected and rejected rights of Aboriginal people. So she deliberately selected her spatial locale with all its nuances to create a grand narrative to retrace history of Aboriginals. She adds,

I set my writing in my own traditional country which is the Gulf of Carpentaria. This is where I believe I belong and place I know best; it is the place I carry in my heart and learnt from a very early age from my grandmother's memories (*Serve the People* I).

Wright retells her grandmother's voice of history that is blocked and wrongly interpreted by the coloniser. The epistemological system of oral history interlinks the Aboriginal past and present in a very delicate manner. She stubbornly proclaims that she never intends to write a tale of suffering, instead, she demands the involvement of writers in the process of reshaping history through textual space and literary narratives. The novel *Carpentaria* pored as a locus of Aboriginal struggle for land rights, to protect natural resources, sacred sites and history of blocked reality. The central issue of the novel revolves around the conflict over physical space since space is conceived of many supernatural elements that possess incredible capacity to intervene in the life of the people. The presence of spirits and other supernatural elements in affiliation to land regard it as more sacred in the belief system of Aboriginality. When the Whitefellas treat the land violently and illogically, the spirits retort in the same coin of violent nature by afflicting natural disasters.

The idea of 'Dreamtime' recreates the past and asserts that the essence of the past is possibly converts to cognisable mode only through the conceptual framework of dreaming. The notion of Dreaming connects to cornucopia of ideologies that blend past, present, time, space, and mental dispositions in a single stand of logical thinking. All characters in the novel maintain the sense of nostalgia strongly and it refers to the mental disposition which always longs for the golden past that is restricted by present-day jeopardy. Nostalgia creates an urge to recapture the lost entities with all past credentials and nuances in every possible way. Now Aboriginals challenge White version of history

and regenerate a system of historical accounting as an authorized edition of the original sensibility of Aboriginality.

The terminology 'dreamscape' pioneers a surplus of possibilities to the conceptual stratagem of time and space in Aboriginal epistemology. Many critics employ the term dreamscape to describe Aboriginal narrative in which time and space evolve into variant or hydra-headed dimensions in the discourse of narrating history. Aboriginal Dreaming develops an idea that never confines to a system of static place or time as western discourse often implies. *Carpentaria* challenges the idea of boundaries and confinement by exploring the ancient Aboriginal system of beliefs that posits humanity in unbound mode in the contemporary world as a continuation of our Dreaming stories. 'Dreamtime' refers to established mode of experience and belief that are largely peculiar to the Australian native people. Dreamtime enlightens philosophical attributions which confront with some fundamental ideals of human life and nature – The beginning of all things, the life and influence of the ancestors, the way of life and death and source of power in life. With the ideological assistants of Dreamtime, Natives connect their life with past, present, future and to the ancestral spirits. Broadly, spirituality is the essence of their life which is closely linked to spatiality.

In the concept of Dreamtime, the present is watched over by the actions, incidents and events of the past and the present is demonstrated as the direct outcome of the past. Fourth World people retains great reverence to past heroes and historical incidents and the visibility of their veneration is apparent in all the activities they engaged, and even the personal skills and character of natives determined by the influence of the previous generation. In the novel *Carpentaria*, The Pricklebush mob believed that Normal Phantom possesses a command over the river in his mind and live

with it as his father's father did before him. His ancestors were the river people, who were living with the river from ancient time. The knowledge regarding of space coincides with 'dreaming' is a requisite in the retrieval of history.

I wanted to examine how memory is being recreated to challenge the warped creativity, of negativity, and somehow becomes a continuation of the Dreaming story (82).

The concept of 'Dreaming' has great vitality and vividness in connection with the narrow and shallow concept of time and space. In the process to configure history, Wright is convinced of the arduous reality to produce an Aboriginal story of all times, of all space with international acceptance. She is inspired and influenced by novelist like Carlos Fuentes who described Mexico as a country of 'suspended times', where no time has been resolved. The concept of Dreaming applies pragmatically and strategically to the narrative scheme to prioritise Aboriginal notions of time and space.

Retracing of history does not encompass merely the documentation of the past events in black and white, but Aboriginal introduces their system of recalling the past with the aids of non-normative use of time, Dreamtime, orality, rituals, and ceremonies. In the novel itself, the normalised version of time and history is disrupted. "...Who in charge of changing time then? (362). In another instance, the character Mickey keeps a museum of the unofficial history of the region displaying,

... all those forty fours, thirty threes, their o threes, twelve gauges- all kinds of cartridges used in the massacre of the local tribes... his voice lives on in the great archive of cassettes which he left for the war trials he predicted would happen one day (Wright 10).

Restoration of oral history assumes different forms and modalities and the old Pricklebush people keeps the chronicles of the land hereabouts since ancient time. *Carpentaria* seeks to re-establish the authority and authenticity of oral history and it relays the ancient story of the ancestral creation serpent from long ago to foreground the concept of Aboriginal sensibility and Aboriginal notions of time and space. The oral historic tradition traces its roots beyond limits and the time of pre-human existence, thus dwarfing 'scientific' and 'systematic' record-keeping of the Europeans. The White settlers' concept of 'historyless' Aboriginals is subverted even with the thought of oral history.

Uptown Whitefella mob was full of people claiming they had no origins. They said that they were not strangers because they had originated from now where (55).

There, history was just a half-flick of the switch of truth simply a memory no greater than two life-spans (56).

These people are no good. They don't believe in God. They don't even remember their religion (47).

The above-mentioned passages from the novel indicate a subverted notion of the so-called history keeping tradition of the White race. Fourth World writers acclaim the impression that White keeps memory of at least two spans of life and hail the concept of White amnesia. The first sentence of the text itself focuses on the unhidden history of Aboriginals "A nation wants but we know our story already" (1). Fourth World literature provides voice to those who had been silenced by the discursive practice of colonialism.

The novel articulates the notion that all records of the past are precarious. Viewing the devastation after the cyclone, Will Phantom is struck and says,

History could be obliterated when the Gods move the country. He saw history rolled, reshaped, undone and mauled as the great creators of the natural world engineered the bounty of everything man had ever done in this part of the world into something more of their own making (492).

In a strict sense, it is not a historical novel, but the notion of past and history pervades all through the narrative. Historical consciousness enounces hydra-headed forms in the literary narrative of *Carpentaria* and memory is one of the major instrument to exemplify the notion of past to negate all kinds of western linear narration of history. Instead, it contains short, defective, rich, lost, painful, trivial fragments of memory into a coherent and unified system of life and culture. The Aboriginal history is assembled out of the pieces of memory, experience and subjectivity hidden by the dianoetic practices of colonialism.

The rejection of Eurocentric aspect of history is indispensable to create an alternative mode of Aboriginal literature and history. The history of the Pricklebush people decipher from ancient time, while the history of the Uptown peoples prolongs only as old as the cemetery. The narrative explores a space of historical awareness, but it is not produced in the way such as mainstream westernised historiography portrayed Aboriginal as the stakeholders of marginal, peripheral and secluded spaces. *Carpentaria* discloses Fourth World people as rejuvenated subjectivities of traditional culture and life.

Wright burlesques the attitude of Whites towards the historical archives of Aboriginal as "Written on the rock" (28) and validates Fourth World history as authentic when White settlers deliberately attempt to archive their history to sabotage Aboriginal literary space. Fourth World people practices daily 'memorial tribunals' since every

fleck of Fourth World life is closely linked to the process of retracing historical consciousness. She undervalues the official versions of recording history documents and books, and glorifies the informal system of generation to generation oral transmission of history. In general, Wright rejects western literary framing of historical consciousness.

In *Carpentaria*, the White settlers deny the Aboriginal notions of possession of their land, as a prime tool to alienate Aboriginal from their history and past. For coloniser, the concept of historical objectivity is a fantasy and the focus is given to heteroglossia of representation. Aboriginals discover their own ways to retort to this epistemic violence, the reclamation of orality is a major statement in the perspective of Aboriginal writing and retrieval of hidden historical space to regain past events and knowledge system since Aboriginal history is orally centred. Alexis Wright refuses assimilation of Aboriginal experience and beliefs to western paradigms and exposes the dreams and desires of the settler residents of Desperance as impossible and mere fantasy. The old people of Pricklebush advises children, whom they send to Uptown School, to search through every single line of those Whitefellas history book. The children flicked through the damp pages of western history books to find that Whitefellas keep no secrets. At the end of the exercise the little scholars report on Whitefella dreams to their elders as

These children stood full of themselves in front of the old people and proclaimed loudly, that the folk of uptown could be masters of their dreams. Yes, like stonemasons, who in a night could relay every single stone in an invisible boundary surrounding the town into a wall so solid it had the appearance of an important medieval palace. But where were stones to be found in the claypans? In these times it was assumed that any outsider to these dreams would never see the stones of

Desperance if he carried a different understanding of worldly matters originating from ancient times elsewhere. The outsider to these dreams only saw open spaces and flat land (58-59).

The knowledge of land and space attributes Aboriginal identity as elevated in the order of the hierarchical structure of epistemology of nature. For instances, as the cyclone approaches, the omniscient voice of the Aboriginal storyteller speaks as the land itself and asks; "The old, unanswerable question; How the heck were they going to keep themselves out of the water" (55) For the Pricklebush, crickets and frogs are the guardians of the night for generations of Pricklebush folk. The Pricklebush mob sees not a boundary or a net or a fence but,

Huge, powerful, ancestral creation spirits occupying the land and sea moving through the town, even inside other folk's houses. Nothing good was coming out of these puerile dreams of stone walls big locked gates, barred windows, barbed wire rolled around the top to lock out the black demon Pricklebush decided the uptown must be a gammon one. Then the uptown folk showed their boundaries which they said had been created at the beginning of their time (59).

Every act of protest and reconciliation are described in terms of land and physical space. The Aboriginal's control over nature exemplifies their knowledge on even the minute dynamics of nature. In the closing passages of the novel, Desperance is levelled by a cyclone and Aboriginal activists employ the settler chaos around the cyclone as catalyst of action to attack the mine. Settler rubbish formed out of floating island of debris acts as a hideout for a guerrilla warrior who survives for months floating around the Gulf of Carpentaria. For the settlers, Desperance is thoroughly destroyed, but for the

Aboriginals, it is transferred into a new one with the final cyclone. Aboriginals also believe in the intervention of serpent in shifting cosmos of Desperance. Wright constantly challenges European arrogance and inexperience with the living land by pointing instances in the literary space. The major transformation of land over the time by a cyclone at the end of the novel, in favour of Aboriginals, indicates Aboriginal victory over land, history, memory and space.

Kim Scott's *Benang: From the Heart* is opted as the second narrative to explicate the process of historical rewriting through the mode of textual space. *Benang* foregrounds the concept of historical awareness that is indispensable in the lives of Fourth World people to survive. It narrates the story of Harley who is in search of his past with the assistance of official documents, newspaper articles, letters and reports, thus making a valid source of counter-history of his native self that is hidden hitherto. Harley traces out his Noongar history with all its authenticity and intensity. Noongar (Nyoongar or Nyungar) were the residents of Western Australia, composed of thousands of communities and comprised of thirteen dialectical groups. With colonisation, the Native system of life was collapsed and they were contracted into thirty thousand only in number.

In the initial phase of colonialism, Aboriginals branded White settlers as 'Django' or the white devil and later their system of belief was modified with the thought that those Whites as their ancestral spirits of Dreamtime, thus started venerating and serving them. From 1910 to 1970, the Australian government forcibly removed and transported Aboriginal and half-caste children –those born of Aboriginal and white parents –from their parents to training camps. Thus history reveals that a huge flux of forced displacement had enacted with Western Australia's Aboriginals Act of 1905. A.O. Neville, 'the Chief Protector of Aborigines' practised the policy of forced displacement

for a long time and himself wrote many historical documents about his administration, policies and activities, which unravels an ambiguous position of narrative structure oscillating between history and fiction. It gave only one-sided dimension of truth and history that conveniently hides what is to be kept secret and concealed.

Neville's account of history fluctuates between fact and fiction, personal and public act, political and non-political narration that expose a great impact upon nation and individuals to formulate subjective consciousness. The same incidents occur in the personal life of Kim Scott and he belongs to the mixed heritage that problematises his existence than a pureblood one. *Benang* traces the family history of Harley and reveals his true identity of Aboriginality. He finds it is adoptable to configure history by the means of textual space, with the aid of authentic documents and narratives shreds of evidence. Scott urges the character Harley to expose the 'lie' spread by Whites to create a Eurocentric version of history and to regain the Aboriginal way of recording things and events. Harley believes that it is crucial to instigate the past to consciousness to detect a truthful present.

I looked to my children, and –oh, this was sudden, not at all a gradual or patient uplift- I was the one poised, balanced, hovering on shifting currents and – looking down my family approaching from across the vast distances my vision could cover – I was the one to show them where and who we are (Scott 456).

Harley details the difficulties and impossibilities to retrieve family history and to convince the self on the misrepresentation obtrude hitherto since attempts are carried out to erase the historical evidence and to burn the past documents. He conducts the laborious task and infers that “the birth of even an unsuccessfully first white man born in

the family line has required a lot of death, a lot of space, a lot of emptiness” (457). He portrays the difficulties to rewrite history, “Of course it is impossible to completely retrace the process. A hundred years is a hundred tears is a hundred years” (30). The novel unravels the history of a community with all its justice and injustice inflicted upon them and imparts a pragmatic comment on the Aboriginals Act of 1905 and its effect on the community. “It made such a difference, that legislation”(217).

The historical figure A.O. Neville represents the central character in the novel and the novel rewrites and reconstructs the archival material surrounding of Neville and his policies. *Benang* disrupts Neville’s single-stranded dimension of the project of cultural assimilation or Eugenics. Scott exemplifies the blended form of fiction and non – fiction to make a more credible narrative of injustice practised by the process of colonialism. Neville utilises a representation of a glorified administrator by his own narratives to knap all his magnificence as an effective administrator. Scott subtly affirms and negates Neville's accounts of history simultaneously in the narrative modalities. Neville established settlement camp as a justification of the civilising mission, but Scott reveals a contrasting portrayal of it with the assistance of evidence given by Neville himself. Scott, cunningly, evinces the coloniser's account against himself and re-designs a history that is factual and truthful. The rendering of Neville as a squirmed character delineates a parody of colonial strategies and White subjectivities.

The title of Neville’s book, *Australia’s Coloured Minority; Their Place in Our Community* itself discloses the irony and sarcasm in addressing the divide and racial conflict between the White settlers and the Aboriginal. Neville’s work is considered as a eugenicist manifesto, propagated the ideology of White supremacy and provided a justification of the activities of White brutality. Scott reconstructs an alternative history of colonial Australia contrast to Neville’s portrayal. Like Neville, Harley’s grandfather

embodies as an epitome of White propaganda and his mirror represents as a metaphor to the reflection of past or history. Harley uses Scat's mirror to search for his ancestors and his past, he generates connections with the past which Scat tries to erase. The final walk with his children to the previously visited places with fathers and uncles attempts to continue the chronology of life from his former generation. He says, "I was still lightweight, but as I walked hand – in – hand with my young children, I noticed that my footprints in the sand were almost as deep as their" (454). The novel incorporates the discourse from the past dealing with assimilation and racism. Scot urges the Aboriginal to re-alter their historical consciousness through rewriting history. He recalls the history of Aboriginal as

When I took at our shared history particularly in the areas that I am from, this Noongar Country, there is a lot of generosity and inclusiveness by Noongar people in the early days (Buck 6)

Revealing the reality of Fourth World and unsettling the historical design of colonial power relations conditioned as the prime motives of Scott's literature. Harley says,

The whole process – my family history, as it turns out – appealed to Granddad's sense of himself as a scientist who with his trained mind and keen desire to exert his efforts in the field investigating native culture and studying the life history of the species, supplies an acid to administration (30).

Scott describes Ern's project of Eugenics to manufacture one "without a history, plucked from the possibility of a sinister race" (31). *Benang* negotiates and renegotiates the hegemonic construction of history, identity and narrative. It addresses the issue of resistance, survival and hope – for 'Benang' means tomorrow – for the today

in which the tomorrow is hidden. *Benang* negates the monograph written by Neville and introduces a multi-layered and polygraphical text that captured Aboriginal diversity and variety. The concept of 'historiographic metafiction' is relevant in Scott's *Benang* because not only there is an interaction between history and historical expectation of readers, but also a continual play between fact and fiction. Scott repeatedly quotes from Neville's *Australia's Coloured Minority*, thereby enabling the unravelling of the past to be critiqued and he addresses the conundrum of duality of the settler society, in its being as both the coloniser and the colonised. As Hutcheon goes on to explain,

As Foucault and Jameson have repeatedly stressed history, while it had a real referent once upon a time, is only accessible to us textualised form. Therefore the historiographic metafictionist who also deals with "events already constituted" but who self – consciously signals their textual nature within the novel is perhaps in an even more difficult position than a historian; he is constrained by the demands of narrative fiction as much as by those of history's events. (232)

Benang strategically converses and connects with the fictional to the archives. The characterisation of the historical figure A.O. Neville is pertinent in connection with the issues of race and miscegenation. It continually interacts with historical truth by archiving documents from the past and initiates the possibility to critique past by analysing historical events and figures like Neville in a blended narrative of fiction and non – fiction. Scott has done a cunning alteration of the historical document to unravel the truths of indigenous life.

Scott recalls some historical events in the novel like the construction of the railway network in Western Australia, "Ah, the railway. Once it was shining and new,

and so was the Chief Protector, Mr Neville when he first travelled it” (322). Even though it temporarily promotes Neville as the harbinger of modernity, later Scott connects Neville with the out-dated railway network “The railway is now rusty and dull” (322). The section “What reason” in *Benang* is one of the several that actively engage with archival material – it consists of a series of letters between A.O.Neville and Jack Chatalong, the Under Secretary of the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries. This section can be considered a fine example of oscillation between fiction and history. The reinvention of history attributes to the historical foundation for the literary text and reveals the impossibility of a truthful, complete historical reality to be found in the archives, and gives fiction and history equal value in a representation of the past.

Scott's historical metafiction becomes more authentic since it is based on the written document of the past and not on the imaginary past. The major objective of Scott's *Benang* is to disrupt the narrative in two way; firstly disrupting the story told by the archival correspondence, secondly disrupting the hitherto existing narrative mode. Scott finds archival letters are utilised to fill the gaps and holes of colonial hegemony, foregrounds the employment of historical text to deploy the existing notions according to his intentions. A.O Neville uses the physical spaces of photographs to prove his project of Eugenics and the evidence become the mark of historical justification, and when Harley finds these photographs, he is shocked

These were portraits arranged in pairs; one a snapshot labelled 'As I found them', the other a studio photograph captioned 'Identical with above child'. These were families grouped according to skin colour. And, sudden enough to startle me, my image (25 – 26).

The photographs are categorised based on their skin colours. Neville makes a scientific explanation of his project of Eugenics with the ideology of historical necessity, but Scott repudiates it with Harley's image in the eugenicist catalogue that carries attention to the effect of the breeding project on individuals. Through the process of appropriation and deployment, Scott removes the detached, objective veneer of science to highlight the impact of Neville's and Scot's classification of individuals for their eugenicist project.

Scott engages the historical text of Neville strategically and intellectually. He is successful in constructing a contrasting picture of Neville and his policy by using Neville's own historical narrative. Scott exerts the language of Neville's *Australia's Coloured Minority* in Scat's classification of Tommy's wife, although she was not one of a coloured minority– he'd say – White trash. Scott states in an interview with Romona Koral,

I wanted to take on Neville and defuse the potency of all the written stuff and that uplift and elevate, I thought, I'll just do that. I'll take literally. That helped me get out of the straight jacket of staying within his terms... it allows me just in writing to get out of some of the limitations of Neville's sort of language. (Interview, 49)

Benang reanimates ideas, ideologies and policies of Neville to deconstruct the established portrayal of colonial administration. Harley confides in the reader

“When I write like this – of railways, and fences, and of extensive pages of notes – I give a nod to my grandfather, to his lines and his discipline, to his schemes and his rigour, and I further knowledge, and a nod to the demands of Historical Fiction (323).

In an interview Scott adds,

Although it is a historical novel I don't want it to remain in the past. I want it to finish in the now. Because it is empowering, affirming. I am part of Neville's failure (*Shouting Buck* 21)

Benang bestows a new definition of history and adds a plethora of ideological interpretations to it. Harley suggests that he is writing most local histories. Yet, he engages in the confusing state to delimitate the term history, “What was it? A family history? A local history? An experiment? A fantasy? (33) To resist, challenge and reconfigure the colonial project in Australia which is entirely dominated by coloniser’s culture and knowledge in the social field and notions of truth even, Fourth World people name themselves with terminologies that are generated from histories, memories and imaginaries alien to non – Indigenous Australians. He adopts the arduous task to produce a counter-narrative to the long-existing and long-living historical documents of Neville which deploys multiple layers of colonial policies and employs hydra-headed strategies to construct an Aboriginal version of life and cultural knowledge.

Scott believes that the fictionalised version of history is up to expose Aboriginal life to the non – aboriginal outer world to formulate a distorted version of it. He guarantees scholarly investigations into the hidden history, ranges from personal to political and endeavours the purpose of education to unravel the real history of Nyoongar, that is too ignominious. The research and investigation of family history shifts Harley from ignorance to knowledge. The retrieving of history attributes with the epistemology of past, hidden history, oppression and the generations of people who had experience the system of oppression. Harley decides to expose these victimisation received by the three generations of the family line and retrieves the inglorious past hidden under the mask of glorious justifications.

Scott retrieves Neville's subjectivity as an interaction between the discourse of history and truth and negates the process of history to be conclusive and teleological. This fictionalised version of history acts as a very strong critique of the past and it proves that it does not account to historical fact and cannot escape from scrutiny. His civilising mission is fixed under the process of interrogation and Scot mimics the colonial discursive strategy of catching and containing Aboriginals to redesign the subjective consciousness inherent in them. Harley urges to restore the traditional ways of living since the major motivation arises when he is to witness the funeral rites of his father being carried out in a unique manner. No Aboriginal rites are performed, but only a small crowd standing with their heads down. On his way back from the funeral, he happens to get a look at Creek River. It is considered as a major source of livelihood, but now it was filled with pesticide. Harley thinks of the changing patterns of physical space in Aboriginal life and colonial period in affiliation to the changed mode of funeral for his father.

The linguistic retrieval is a prime concern of Fourth World Literature since language constructs history and history is disrupted by language vice versa. Nyoongar language and names were replaced by Christian and English terminologies in the early phase of colonialism itself. Ern remembers Sandy and Daniel speak some Nyoongar words, but Harley does not even utter a word of Nyoongar language. Harley himself agrees to the moral and political demerit to write about his tradition and ancestral history in the alien English language.

I had inherited his language, the voice of others, his stories. That history whose descendants write: there was never any trouble. Never blood spilt or a gun rose in anger (185).

He proclaims the urge to re-read and rewrite the history from a third person perspective as if this history is just variations on the one or the other motif to regain lost spatiality. These kinds of literature construct the concept of historiographic metafiction. It foregrounds that Aboriginal history is nothing but pervaded by silence and now Aboriginal writers initiated to reinstate linguistic spatiality to break the silence to produce the history possible through a deliberate activity of social and political rejuvenation of the past. The dialogism of retrieving the past destructs the concept of the coloniser as the sole authority to create history/meaning. Michael R. Griffiths argues,

Scott's 'deconstructive repetition' of colonial biopolitical discourse has the effect of reanimating the spectres of Aboriginal kinship buried between the lines of such archival masks (159 – 160)

Benang foregrounds the seminal role of the process of historiography in constructing an alternative mode of history. Certain characters are symbolised as the space of historical retracing, as Jack brought with him the real history of their black ancestors, an alternative history that is denied hitherto. Harley probes the family lineage of Sandy One and his transformation from Whiteman to Aborigines has completed the legacy of the family of Nyoongar.

In this research, the second arena of space correlates with the land of America and American native literature comprises the area of textual space to explicate the conundrum of Fourth world spatiality. The Native Americans believed to have migrated from Asia more than thirty thousand years back and survived by adapting to American land and culture. Later Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. The term 'Indian' is also employed to denote Native American during the advent of colonisation; the American Natives have incurred to the process of victimisation

through many sufferings, physical harassment, mental torture cultural transformation, and identity crisis as the result of colonial intervention of that time, but with the event of American Revolution the new government introduced pro-native policies and politics towards tribes.

Like any other Fourth World culture, Native American's languages are 'scriptless'. The inception of Aboriginal literature traces back to the components of tradition of orality transmitted through myths, legends, tales and lyrics. Though Native American literature commenced publishing since the eighteenth century it acquired a new renaissance spirit and sense in the 1960s. Nineteenth-century America marked as troublesome and turbulent politically and the Indian Removal Act of 1830 defined the life, subjectivities and identities of Native Americans, by this act Indians living east of the Mississippi River displaced to land west of the river. Native Americans were relocated to infertile, less populated and less advantageous land and the White Americans replaced to the fertile lands. The tribal people resisted strongly against all kinds of oppression and discrimination and they created their systems of the life, culture and survived with all its odds. They even initiated to propose a system of written alphabet and a constitution similar to the US Constitution.

In the first turn of the twentieth century, Native America started to take a strong and potent stand on the policies of identity and assimilation. The World Wars, the Vietnam War and the Gulf war undertook a drastic change in the attitude of Native America and the notion of subjective representation of Native American also. A loosened sense of Nativity and distancing of the people from their traditional systems introduced with these incidents and the causative factors were physical relocation and exposure to white education and culture. The numbers of Native

Americans were reduced considerably with the entry of Europeans due to struggles, bloodshed, murders and also due to the alien diseases like smallpox.

In the intellectual scenario, the Europeans develop a non – realistic alternative history to gain control over the Native system by reducing Native as mere savages without any trace of history. They assert the inferiority of the Natives by historical representation and identified with the concept 'epistemic violence' by Spivak. European made history exercised as the textual windows to the subjectivities and lives of Natives, the process of propagation enacted in a speedier manner and with low economic expenses for Whites with printing. The pages of history strikeout Natives without a face, name and identity; instead it marked Natives as a bunch of fellows without any emotional status who lead their lives as primitives even in the twentieth century.

The Dawes Act of 1887 impinge a blow on Native American life, the act hastened the process of land confiscation. Education was provided with effective and intensive systems and it worked complimentary to all the process of land confiscation physical, enslavement, moral harassing to eradicate even the last traits of the nativity. Proselytization to Christianity was ordained as a tool of transition that changes the uncultured plural religions to monotheistic systems of western Christian belief. When the Native Indians received education, they stimulated to the process of recording history from the available existing sources of oral tradition and fought heavy and intensive struggle to reoccupy their land to claim the sole ownership of their traditional space.

Native writers initiated the responsibility of predicting the impact of the dislocation and cultural alienation that take place in the lives of Native Americans.

Europeans forced Natives to join the army during World Wars. This kind of catastrophic condition led to complete jeopardy, thus they started finding solace in consuming excessive alcohol, and spiritual and cultural stroke is apparent in the later phases of Native lives. The Native writers ascertain pragmatic solutions to this cataclysmic conditions through the representations of native healing strategies like introducing orality, myth, ritual, history and recreating past. For them, past is not the immediate past but the roots of their land and tradition that exist from the ancient time.

John Rollin Ridge and Emily Pauline Johnson are major writers of Native American tradition in the eighteenth century. Even in the catastrophic conditions, the Native Americans maintain their identity, intellectual and spiritual tradition etc. The first work of Native American fiction was a sketch published in pamphlet form in 1823 titled *Poor Sarah, or Religion Exemplified in the Life and Death of a Native American Woman* by Elias Boudinot who later identified as the founding editor of the first Native Newspaper. The first novel by a Native American was John Rollin Ridge's *Life and Adventure of Joaquin Murieta* (1854). By the end of the century, the plight of Native American transforms to an altered dimension and perspective with colonial intervention and policies.

In literature, certain writers like Washington Irving, James Fennimore Cooper, Herman Melville and Mark Twain always express Native American Caricatures in the light of American spirits, but they are only caricatures not fully drawn characters. But in the real life scenario, the Native Americans stand insensible even in all kinds of oppression and injustice and in midst of the policies of dislocation and assimilation as strategic moves to disempower the strength and number of Natives by weakening

their stronghold on tradition and culture and by civilising them through education and religion.

The selected novel *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday treats history in a dissimilar manner from the essential notions of past since it assumes past is beyond the capacity of regeneration, so the reclaiming and recreating past is not possible in an authentic manner. The past takes the form of loss and pain, memory and experience, loneliness and alienation. The first chapter “The Longhair” invokes the historical spirit of Native land Walatowa and begins with the epic description of the landscape which heralds the historical perspective of Native reservation. Francisco, the grandfather of the hero Abel, is a well-acclimate native since he is much adaptive to Bahkyush as well as Jemez blood, both as a believer of the Catholic Church and the Squash Kina, as a hunter, drummer and runner too. The deed of running also occurs with younger Francisco as a move or transformation in the life of a Native.

Francisco symbolises as an emblematic position of past, history and tradition and as an agent to transfer the values of past to the prevailing set of people including Abel. The historical perspective is enforced as an instruction to configure the present subjectivities and historic interpretation. As in any Fourth World community, the process of regaining past is a laborious one in the discourse of Native American too and Abel is failed firstly in his attempt to regain self through memories. Abel believes that land has the pertinence to wait, to receive and to heal, even long after his rejections to the Native land, Abel still feels that he belongs here. Ceremonies are another set of constituents of spatiality that remarkably arranges its prominence in retelling the past and asseverates the consistent nature of methodology to recreate the belief systems, values and traditional culture. In *House Made of Dawn*, the ceremony

of Gallo or “rooster pull” resembles the systematic way of recreating the past in a very natural background and the modes of specific geographic locality or space.

In *House Made of Dawn*, Momaday recalls historical consciousness through the strategic employment of rituals and myths in the narrative structure. The enactment of rituals and the retelling of myths designate as a space of archaeological sites of memory. Momaday quotes enough instances of this kind as a major technique to renew the spatiality of historical consciousness. Momaday is a staunch believer that memory has a powerful role over reality and tries to retrieve the lost memory and forgotten past to recount the historical view. In the novel, memory and counter-memory intermingled uniquely to establish the process of reclamation of history more accountable and authentic.

Even though the mythical elements discount a certain amount of accountability of history, it provides a more or less enlighten vision of history. The blending of non – linear myths and memories with linear history makes the process more problematic, but Momaday interweaved it in an extraordinary manner to balance those dissimilar discourses. For Native Americans, myths are reproduced as a symbolic representation of pain suffered by society, but the reproduction of history has a healing function to erase the pain with the accountable notes of life. Memory / racial history has a pertinent role in fashioning this novel as it acts so powerfully upon the psyche of the protagonist that it triggers a vision that helps spiritual healing.

Since the novel highlights the process of renewal of Abel from his horrific immediate past by imbibing values of tradition / remote past as a pure Native, it is imminent to explore the elements of his decay too. To find historical reasons, in this case, are quite problematic as their history is retold by a third person point of view. The problem of Abel is the displacement from his sense/consciousness of space and it

is the healing process that helps to relocate himself within the structures of traditional space. His spatial departure from Pueblo community can be seen as the cause of estrangement and alienation. At war, he "seemed apart from the land" (Momaday27). With this, he was physically and spiritually deteriorated as babbling, inarticulate and drunk. He cannot even recognise his grandfather who stands as the embodiment of the traditional past. Abel is too damn dumb to be civilised and he is wreck beyond redemption after his war experience.

The historical parallels are pivotal in connection with the narrative structure of the novel since the fragmented personality of Abel configures the text as fragmented, but the historical recollection provides coherence to the narration. Abel desperately craves for the recollection of past and memories and his intensive attempt to recreate historical nuances is identified in the following passage.

It would have been a creation song, he would have sung slowly of the first world, of fire and flood and the emergence of dawn from the hills (57).

This kind of memory retrieval, Momaday identifies as "a blood recollection" as a major technique of racial memory. This process is accelerated by the intensive retrieval of myths such as Festival of Santiago, Feast of Porcingula, the prayers/sermons of Father Olguin, descriptions of Peyote beliefs, Tosomah homily, Navajo chant etc. Myths and ritual are considered as an alternative way to regain history. Here, through this technique, Momaday gives breath to the psychologically dumb Abel affected by the spatial alienation from his traditional land. Abel is counted as the first victim in the Bible, in White America being Nyoongar one.

The repetitive use of Tricksters like Albino intends to create the spirit of history effectively; it evokes the oral tradition of American Native culture. Tricksters

introduce culture's deepest perceptions of history, indeed, it explains what otherwise seems unexplainable, a people's origin, purpose and destiny. Abel is enforced to perform certain ceremonial games, but for instance when he tries to pull a rooster out of the ground, he failed in it. This shows his inability to dominate his consciousness of the past and it intensifies the crisis of dislocation. Chanting in the sun was another practice of ceremony existed among American Indians and Momaday describes it as

There was something so grave and mysterious in it, those old men chanting in the sun... so serious in what they were doing. Their eyes held upon some vision out of range, something away at the end of the distance, some reality that she did not know or even support. To see beyond landscape, beyond every shape and shadow and colour, that was to see nothing (36 – 37).

The elements of the past are retraced by certain symbolic events. Abel recollects his childhood memories with his brother when he involves in certain ceremonial and ritualistic past.

The second novel from American literary space is *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, recreates past in a unique manner as it is an act of ceremony or a process of a traditional source of healing. The traditional model of story-telling is restored to emphasise representations of ancient times and the structure of the novel is a blending of ancient songs and legends which invoke past and history that are quintessential to revive the traditional modalities of living.

Like other Fourth World fictions *Ceremony* also negates the linear and coherent concepts of time since Silko imbibes all her inherent ideologies and innate values from native life that is all anti-white in essence. Language being a fluctuating constituent possesses certain amount of incapability of expressing time as it is rooted

in the circular narrative in the Native American world view. So reclamation of the past does not mean rewriting the chronology of events but to evoke a sense of past in the consciousness of the human mind. The novel retraces past and present by the same artistic technique and marks no boundary between the incisions of time. The infusion of time makes the non- Native reader in a complex state of enterprise that time is shifting interchangeably and things are comprehended only through the totality of text. Even though *Ceremony* starts with the normal sense of past it later moves to myth, ritual, orality, fact, and fiction and takes flashing shifts of time and forms within the liminality of textual space.

Silko celebrates the deviation as it is leading to unparalleled modes of narration. She put forwards the theory of social toleration in the public sphere of life; she urges the non – Native readers to tolerate the difference of approach by Native writers. *Ceremony* fixes as a great instance of counter-resistance that intends to create the hidden past into a more visible light. The protagonist, Tayo inherent his Laguna or Pueblo identity effortlessly though he belongs to mixed blood. In an interview with Arnold, Silko states

You can be full blood and grow up in Cincinnati and lose touch... The community is tremendously important. That is where a person's identity has to come from, not from racial blood quantum levels (23-26)

Tayo's recovery associated with his reconfiguration of past, cultural legacies and the perspectives of Pueblo life. He never completely adheres to the older version of Pueblo life, but he adjusts himself to the adequate transformation necessary to make his survival possible. The novel marks this struggle of transformation and internalises the positive modes of both Laguna and Eurocentric. Ancient stories are

the pertinent elements to incorporate the past consciousness to individual subjectivities by regaining their knowledge on landscape and other spatial entities, on the other way these stories constitute an artefact of historiography. They submit themselves to the transformation since the Native Americans possess the capability to reconnect themselves with their land and culture. The Eurocentric ideologies are incompetent to understand and limit the possibilities of ancient stories and oral tradition. Their language also does not possess the potentiality to verbalise these stories since it is rooted deeply in the cultural realm of Native Americans.

The novel begins and ends with the mythic notes on past as it indicates the importance of continuing tradition and Silko possesses a strategic scheme of presenting her stories that erase all the political nuances of British colonisation, instead, it brings out an acute sense of traditional past of Native Americans which is pivotal to determine their futurity. She states, "I'm political in my stories" (Arnold 26), she owns the ability to resist Eurocentric effort to mislead Natives by misinterpreting their past and history. By rendering the old stories in a meaningful manner rejects the claims of Eurocentric ideology that these stories are out-dated and worthless on the other hand, Silko brings out the capacity of the stories to convince the value of traditional past and culture.

The process of remembrance has a great strength to make your resistance mightier since it recalls your past consciousness through stories, legends, and monuments. Restoration of memory leads to the reclamation of confiscated physical space that is effaced by the process of colonisation. The memory becomes an alternative space for the landscape that makes a platform for regaining the hidden past and the annexed land. The novel clearly states the priority of storytelling in the recollection of past events and memorial reconnection.

I will tell you something about stories; he said they are not just entertainment. Do not be fooled. They are all we have, you see, all are have to fight off illness and death, you do not have anything if you don't have stories. This evil is mighty but it can't stand up to one story. So they try to destroy the stories, let the stories be confused or forgotten. They would like that they would be happy because we would be defenceless then. (2)

The narrative techniques used in the novel are apt to recreate past in unique ways such as narrative moves back and forth in time as Tayo reminiscences, the use of flashback, and the adoption of extracts from the past directly and indirectly. It revolves around the spaces that are closely linked to Laguna past and history. Tayo reconfigures the blurred images of past and reaches to clarity by evoking the sense of spatiality and knowledge on space. There is a space called Gallup where all the garbage is heaped; it indicates the plight of Native Americans who had suffered under colonial rule and became worthless like garbage. The physical space of Gallup evokes the historical injustice done by the coloniser to the colonised.

Personally, Silko strongly agitated against illegitimate confiscation of land, but she failed to be victorious and finds her way through stories that are capable to change the social structure of unjust society. An acute consciousness to preserve traditional land and culture can be seen throughout the novel. Silko constantly urges the need to retrieve past and argues the survival is possible only through the strategic amalgamation of the present in the lights of the past. She adds that Tayo's sickness is only part of something larger context of the conundrum of colonial consequences and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything.

The novel reclaims the authority of community to regenerate their history authentic and its capacity to heal and to control its members even at derelict times. The eco-centric value system of Natives is remade by the traditional storytelling, reforming, remoulding and reworking to the existing demands of social, cultural, political and aesthetic values. The concept of historical consciousness is intertwined to mythic associations of thought by invoking past by contrasting the worth of Laguna epistemology against White science.

The recalling of the past through myth and rituals is directly attributed to the construction of memory, identity and ideology as it negates the disruption between antiquity and contemporaneity. The disconnection to the past creates jeopardy, thus lead to Tayo's utter collapse. His miscomprehension of spatial events such as his incapacity to feel the rain indicates his inability to connect with his past, memory and land, since Native American life is closely associated and harmonious with the ways of spatiality. The fading traits of Tayo's memory are illustrated as it languished into the White world 'of their bed sheets and walls, it is sucked away by the words of doctors who try to talk to the invisible scattered smoke'. Critics attribute Tayo's condition to the state of temporary amnesia, but it is the case of misremembering caused out of suffering from dislocation and spatial alienation. Finally, he realises his protection is there in the sky, in the position of the sun, in the pattern of the stars. Silko's political responsibility is to retrieve Aboriginal culture and life.

As a third terrain of discussion, it is Canadian First nation Literature that exemplifies itself as a true instance of historical reconfiguration. In the Canadian Native literary discourse, autobiographical narratives provide a more truthful account of the history of the human soul. In this sense Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* documents the racial conundrums of aboriginal life and it engenders an authentic social

autobiography provides textual implications of the life of the tribe Metis. Maria Campbell documents 'herstory' as history and she stubbornly negates the intervention of Whites/mainstream in telling the stories for Native people. The author positions herself as a recorder of history of his / her community and it is crafted during the height of Native resistance. She dedicated this work to Cheechum's children and the work is an honest attempt to account human misery, jeopardy, hope, anger, and resistance. She says that our immediate past is not marked by glorified versions of history, but it is the tale of suffering in the form of poverty, illiteracy, slavery, suppression and ruthless genocide. She says,

When I started to write *Half breed* I don't know I was going to write a book. I was very angry, very frustrated ... I had no money, and I was on the verge of being kicked out of my house, had no food and I decided to go back out in the street and work. I went out one night and sat in a bar. And I just couldn't because I knew that if I went back to that, I'd be back on drugs again. I always carry a paper in my bag, and I started writing a letter because I had to have somebody to talk to, and there was nobody to talk to. And that was how I wrote *Halfbreed* (Campbell 2).

This book published in 1973 and considered as the most acclaimed Native autobiography from the space of Canadian Nativity. The initial chapters locate Maria within her local space of Metis where she leads harmonious life altogether irrespective of all hardships and sufferings. This native local space constructs the subjectivity of a girl as someone jovial and all human and non – human elements attribute for the construction of Native identity. The initial two chapters of the book deal with the historical documentation of Canada from 1860s, Saskatchewan is a part

of Northwest Territories – "a land free of towns, barbed wire fences and farmhouses"

(3) Third and fourth chapters trace Maria's ancestry and her childhood days. The history of a tribe depicted with accurate and meticulous documentation.

The fear of the Halfbreeds that these rights would not be respected by the Canadian government when it acquired the land from the Hudson's Bay Company, along with the prejudice of the white protestant settlers, led to the Red River Rebellion of 1869. Louis Riel established a provisional government at Fort Garry, Manitoba, but escaped to the United States in 1870 when troops arrived from eastern Canada. So with their leaders and their lands gone, the Halfbreeds fled to the areas south of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and established the settlements of Duck Lake, Batoche, St. Louis and St. Laurent (9).

The visualisation of the individual narrative becomes the document of the collective history of a community. She articulates the incidents of past, traumatic experiences of fragmentation, frustration and catastrophe. Her historical documentation authenticates the transformation from the position of an innocent child to a more vulnerable prostitute is addressed in this narrative of *Half breed*.

The reclamation of the past does not only means to rewrite history but also to regain contact with an earlier, mythical, nationalistic and indigenous spatiality of Canada. The catastrophic history of First Nation is remedied only with healing that is possible through the rewriting of ill-treatment and injustice done to First Nation people. In the book, *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon argues that finding identity by reclaiming past and rewriting history as a quintessential step in the process of decolonisation.

The ancestry of postcolonial criticism can be traced to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in French in 1961, and voicing what might be called cultural resistance to France's African empire. Fanon argued that the first step for colonised people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim past. For centuries the European colonising powers have devalued the nation's past, seeing its pre-colonial era as a pre – civilisation limbo, or even as a historical void. Children, both black and white, will have been taught to see history, culture and progress as beginning with the arrival of Europeans. If the first step towards a post-colonial perspective is to reclaim one's past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued (Barry 186).

The historical events provided them with the ambiguous identity as a by-product of subjugation, destruction, colonisation based on civilisation, ethnicity, gender, racism, displacement, foster homes, drink drunk abuse, residential schools, unemployment, and cultural loss. First Nation literature as a counter discursive relation to the settler literature counts as an extension of traditional orality to speak against all the injustice. She discovers the history of Gabriel Dumont, a great leader and the elected president of the era of 1860s from Halfbreed communities, Maria's grandmother Cheechum is the niece of Dumont. She traces the history of Metis, their disposition and origin. Armstrong says that

Campbell's retelling of Native history in a revolutionary vein is a rereading of the hegemonic writing of the Metis history. In the first chapter of her autobiography, Campbell records very brief Metis

historical events and struggles and family history in an encapsulated form. (45)

Campbell's voice renders as the authentic note on the extinction of the First Nation culture and tradition and she articulates an alternative mode of history. The initial chapters recount the history of personal experiences and events, later she thrusts on the social systems of Canadian First Nation life; the struggling story of Metis people to survive the problems of poverty, prejudice, harshness and finally reached to the possibility of political activism.

Another Canadian narrative for explication is Richard Wagamese *Indian Horse*; unlike other selected fictions, it concentrated on the major issues of rewriting the real history of Residential schools in Canada. The protagonist unearths his level of cognition on these schools to draw the picture of it and his repressed memory acts as the common element in the construction of Aboriginal historical consciousness. Wagamese offers a major contribution to the rewriting of the history of residential schools in Canada by reclaiming Aboriginal narrative forms as a means to recover stolen memories, and thus to reconstruct both the fragmented (his)story and the shattered self.

Richard Wagamese himself asserts the notion that his novel is brutal and harrowing since it recreates the most unusual and cruel episodes in the history of Canada. The novel enunciates emotional, cultural and social linkage of a community towards their land and culture and how they are intentionally deracinated from there. The only way for Saul Indian Horse, the young protagonist, to cope with the utter loss of landmarks and references is to build himself a sheltering space to avoid disintegration,

and then to unite a narrative from the fragmented memories of the years spent at St. Jerome's Indian residential school.

The novelist, knowing fully what it means to be uprooted and relocated, adopts a clear stance on the destructive effects of colonisation by setting his narrative in an environment already corrupted by the invasion of foreign elements. Although the novel does mention a prelapsarian world, such a space is not to be found in the world in which Saul grew up before being forced to move to St. Jerome's. It has to be traced back to the founding myth encapsulating the history of Saul's clan—in a Dreamtime of sorts when the community still acted as a whole and when the traditional social structures had not yet been fragmented by the intrusion of white norms and standards. It is interesting, however, to stress that even then, traces of invasion could already be found in the very story accounting for the origins of Saul's name.

Images of a tribal order irretrievably altered and alienated Indian characters struggling to reconnect with the tribe after being immersed in the white man's world are a recurrent feature of Native literature. *Indian Horse* is no exception as two generations of displaced and estranged characters fail to reconnect with their heritage and traditions. Benjamin is probably the most striking example of the destructive effects of the Indian education system in terms of mental and physical integrity. When he runs away from the residential school and manages to find his way back to his family's camp, the others view him with a degraded version of the young boy they used to know.

The severance of the ties that bound Saul to his tribal history is made all the more disastrous when Naomi dies from exposure while trying to save him from the harshness of an upcoming winter snowstorm. The parallel between Saul's story and Wagamese's own experience is so obvious again that the narrative can be read as the re-

enactment of the process through which the novelist himself became alienated from his own culture after he was sent to live in white foster families in the 1960s. At St. Jerome's, Saul's life becomes a wasteland of sorts, as sterile as the barren landscape surrounding the buildings.

Saul's recollections of the years spent in the Residential school show how true the nun's warning proved over time. In the long chilly corridors of the school, the pungent smell of disinfectant foreshadows the ordeal which the children have to go through upon their arrival when a pair of nuns force them into a bathtub and scrub their bodies frantically as if to erase all traces of Indianness as the same process happens with erasing their history. "They rubbed us nearly raw. It felt they were trying to remove more than grime or odour. It felt as though they were trying to remove our skin" (44).

The inverted metaphor of colonisation appears in the few paragraphs recounting the games opposing the Moose to other Aboriginal teams. What the reader is provided within these passages is a reconfiguration of the horse and warrior culture which mark the heyday of most Native tribes in the Great Plains and prairies of North America before forced settlement. Predictably enough, Naomi's death has a profound impact on Saul and the narrative. Saul's ability to tell his story gradually dwindles as Naomi's voice fades away in the winter storm and as her stories are scattered by *Keewatin*, the cruel winter wind. Her demise is reported in a rather dry and unemotional tone, a news-writing style of sorts, that not only reproduces Saul's inability to cope with her sudden loss and the alienation it entails but also marks the beginning of a long stasis which freezes the narration of Saul's story until one spring, years later, when he decides to return to Manitouwadge and face the truth of his experience.

Remembering is a slow process and involves a retrospective approach, a *regressus ad initium* of sorts, which leads the victim of a traumatic experience back to the time and place where the original event occurred. Thus, as soon as Saul manages to reconnect with his past through a vision in which his ancestors visit him, he realizes that the place he had been heading to all this time is nowhere else than St. Jerome's. Releasing pressure that is built up year after year since the death of Naomi opens up space within himself allowing the repressed memory to resurface as suddenly as it vanishes. In the end, the uncanny precision with which Wagamese reported the various hockey games reminds the reader of a process identified by many experts on traumatic memory as hypermnesia, or the exaggerated precision or proliferation of recollections. This dysfunctional process signals the victim's need to forget and to replace the impossible memory with gap-filling memories that give consistency to an otherwise disjointed narrative.

The opening chapter of the novel presents the chronology that is, as mentioned earlier, resolutely circular. After reconnecting with the sacred centre where history dwells, Saul returns to another centre, The New Dawn Centre in Winnipeg, where his rehabilitation treatment involves sharing his story with the other patients. At first, he is unable to share his narrative orally during the talk therapy sessions. So, he undertakes to write it down rather than speak it.

As Wagamese once argued, *Indian Horse* is a novel about reclaiming history. The first step consists in reclaiming collective history by writing a counter-narrative of colonisation or by inserting history in the interstices of fiction and vice versa. Wagamese is more concerned with the impact of the images he employs than giving a detailed account of the reality of life in a Residential school. The existence of a torture device used against uncooperative children and called the iron sister, for instance, has never

been confirmed. Historicity, however, does not matter in this particular instance. What does matter is the violence of the treatment inflicted on the young Indians, of which the iron sister is only an illustration.

The process in the opposite can also be found in some passages where History and fiction intertwine. Such micro counter-narratives are a form of resistance too since they challenge the widely accepted and sanitised version of the history of Indian education in Canada that still prevails despite the damning evidence of mistreatment and abuse. Telling history from the margin, as Wagamese does, telling it as an author from a minority culture in the majority language, amounts to reclaiming memory-the beliefs of whole people-that history trampled underfoot as Saul aptly remarks (Wagamese 5). As Wagamese argues, the history of Canada cannot be understood separately from the history of relationships with the First Nations. Consequently, the dissolution, the loss and the reintegration of tribal stories and customs in the narration are necessarily part of more general historiography.

Paradoxically, by reminding the necessity to come to terms with the trauma left by the attempts to acculturate Indian communities in Canada, Wagamese refuses to consider Residential schools as something relegated to the past. This is a point he had already made very clear in interviews given long before the novel was released when he warned against the dangers of narratives celebrating a glorious but long-gone past as an ideal to be recovered. This proves true insofar as *Indian Horse* acts both as a cathartic and as a catalyst, helping to expel the rage and the pain within while bringing elements of truth to the surface to make the future possible. Moving beyond the mere factual reality of residential schools is therefore an essential element in the reconstruction process. The purpose is not to offer a universal historical truth about the system but to

understand and face one's truth about the experience without ignoring the emotions and the recollections as painful as they might be.

In Saul's case, hockey is the veil that masked the truth of his experience and at the end of the novel, however, he manages to reclaim hockey as a positive element both at individual and community levels. As he tries to recover what is pure in the game, he understands that he wants to coach rather than play. *Indian Horse* is thus both the story of reconstruction at a personal level and of a cultural quest whose purpose is to revive social, linguistic and spiritual systems obliterated after over four centuries of colonisation and one hundred years of forced schooling for Aboriginal children. Rather than simply denouncing the abuses committed by those in charge of Indian education, Wagamese proposes a story about conciliation and the recovery of stolen memories as well as forms of expression which had been silenced for a very long time; a story in which, as Deleuze argues in his essay on minor literature, individual and collective matters intertwine, in which the microscopic and the macroscopic cannot be understood separately (Deleuze 30-31).

More than the compulsion to commemorate the past or the necessity to forget it, Wagamese praises the need to remember. At the end of the novel, the writing of tribal history is indeed a collective process since it amounts to the sum of the individual narratives. Access to the stories recounted by the other members of the group means that the chapter of Residential schools in the history of Canada has not been closed and that a page that had never been filled before remains to be the written-the story of the relationship between Canadian mainstream culture and its Aboriginal cultures. As he once makes it plain, his purpose in writing *Indian Horse* was to recount a human experience-the story of a human being in search of his humanity, not of a victimised Indian looking for compassion (Wagamese 2013).