

# CHAPTER - I

## Introduction

### 1.1. Native Literary Background

Native literature has its beginning from a tradition of storytelling. It is an orally transmitted voice having long, rich and unbroken oral tradition of telling a tale, narrating a myth or singing a song imbibing the history, experience, belief system and consciousness of people. Therefore, it is important to note, here, that when we talk about native literature prior to contact from written culture, it means the 'oral tradition' within which the stories of people are preserved in language by word of mouth, as opposed to writing. Its cultural knowledge are transmitted through vocal utterance paving the possibility for a society to transmit oral history, oral literature, oral law and other knowledge across generations without a script system.

In early native narrative, metaphors embody an emotional force creating ways for people to associate an idea with an object, with visual memory. They invariably make use of metaphors and analogies, because in spoken language they pay more attention to the implication or suggested meaning of their words that are the, "connotative as opposed to the specific or denotative meaning" (Benson and Toye 6). The power of language carries primary importance because "language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of control is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of truth, order, and reality becomes established" (Ashcroft et al. 7). This trend, allows a person with superior oratorical skill to hold higher respect, and leaders were obeyed in proportion to his use of eloquence because his followers had no other law than his voice.

Oral traditions being a chief medium essential to native culture, practitioners of the modern oral history movement enjoy contemplating its ancient origins, sometimes pointing out with delight that all history was oral before the advent of writing. From the Greek, comes the historian Herodotus, who employed first-person interviews in gathering information. Thucydides who interrogated his witnesses to extract information, and, in the Zhou dynasty of China, the emperor appointed scribes to record the saying of the people for the benefit of court historians. Africans point to the griot tradition in recording history, in which oral tradition have been handed down to say that oral stories are commonly shared, constantly changing and have the power to create reality. Until now, oral tradition continues to play its vital role in contemporary society at multifarious levels. For example, Indian cultures molded on epic tradition have strong performance orientation, recitation and storytelling. The spoken word always had an edge over the written word and Vedic epic and Puranic literatures were mainly for oral transmission. The values of the oral tradition are integral for epic modes that even the fixed text is liberated and becomes a part of the oral tradition. Native oral tradition vitally links the past memories with the present in terms of both its didactic function as tribal history and its focus on the community. For native society, oral tradition is the basic human mode of communication and that conversational meanings exist because people mean and others believe they understand what implied word meant. In short, oral tradition is a way of life. Indeed in many ways it is the base of people's literature, social norm, belief and history containing the sum total of human experiences. It expresses self-identity and upholds social associations, religious customs, ethical values and customary laws. While being a rich repository of mythical, legendary, and historical past, it provides life meanings and examples for the sustenance of contemporary social order. It articulates protest and dissent and simultaneously voice concerns of reformation.

Each culture has often responded with its own explanations, say, of oral stories that are unique to that culture. Therefore, interpretation concerning native literary background requires an apt discussion on storytelling because stories are a guiding principle or a living account that generates understanding of the native world. It is also essential because stories of native functions as collective memories of community, history and experiences. For natives, writing only represents speech and is simply a medium to convey ideas in the absence of speakers and listeners or as Ferdinand de Saussure, founder of Modern linguistic writes: “Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs. The second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first. The linguistic object is not both the written and spoken forms of words; the spoken forms alone constitute the object” (23-24). Creative expressions of natives live through verbal folklore as it deals with the known and shared myths, the epic, legends, life stories of deified cultural heroes, stories of romance and battles, of community gods and racial memories. A constantly shared living memory because it is inherited, learnt and renewed by each generation of performers and each individual performer with the help of collective retelling and recitations. Precisely, native people were accustomed to remember their histories and customs through intricate time-proven processes of storytelling. It has always been part of their tradition and only recently, these ways of storytelling have become designated by scholars as ‘oral tradition’. Storytelling is perhaps the oldest mode of transmitting knowledge and a common practice among many communities since time immemorial. It is also possible to regard it as an informal means of imparting education. The oral knowledge implanted with socio-cultural traits of a society is repeatedly carried forward from one to the next generation with no change or with very little change in its contents. Thomas King, who writes prominently on native subjects, recorded these supreme techniques in a native storytelling. He says:

There is a story I know. It is about the earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle. I have heard this story many times, and each time someone tells the story, it changes. Sometimes the change is simply in the voice of the storyteller. Sometimes the change is in the details. Sometimes in the order of events. Other times it is the dialogue or the responses of the audience. But in all the telling of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back and the turtle never swims away (*The Truth about Stories* 30).

Stories like this Canadian native narrative of 'earth floating on a Turtle's back' and another folktale from the native Indian stories of a 'Bird hovering around the mythical forefather of the Nagas guiding them to a place of settlement on earth' is purely an indication of long repository story collections of memories, values and wisdom (Carbo et al. xii). As this legacy passes on, varying changes in a story are inevitable while much remains the same preserving continuity. Each time we read a folktale we become the storyteller, in our own telling we create a conversation. It screens a two way dialogue between what is being told in the story and on the other, the personal human experience. The story itself holds authority that binds people together in shared experience. Narratives connect us to one another, to families, relatives, neighbors, members of the same community or to strangers and the exuberance obtained in a native story extend to all animate and inanimate objects. Storytelling provides a kind of platform to return to the symbols of the tradition that could explain an event to the communities and stories are a practical matter that balances respect with survival. Stories are a living entity to sort out the possibility of ordering unique relationships, memories and an attempt to come to terms with the past, an attempt to find a future as notably heralded by a famous Nigerian storyteller Ben Okri, "We live by stories, we also live in them" (46). There is a spiritual connotation of having thus encircled in the vast expanse of a native universe and that according to Thomas King is a mouthpiece for understanding the territory of contemporary native written literature. Stories enter a new phase of evolution through the very act of writing and, the art of the writer. The reinforced re-telling of native stories

provides a vital link of the people's present with their past and its written orality ensure for itself a kind of permanence in a different form and medium. Also in a certain way, it forms a process of 'self deconstruction' of a people in search of meanings for their existence by retrieving relevant metaphors from the "imaginative experience" of orality to deal with present realities of life (Ao 111).

## 1.2. Native Literary Narrative: A Progress from Oral to Written Tradition

Human society first formed itself with the aid of oral speech, and the problem with oral tradition is that it is by word of mouth. Without a help of written reference, the message may be forgotten, misinterpreted, misunderstood or embellished especially in a fast changing world. Hence, to maintain permanent historical information, social value, and correct oral records in space and time, the transition from oral to written mores becomes obligatory. Precisely, the progress from oral to written tradition is necessary because writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and invasive orientation to knowledge and interpretation. Writing is a "solipsistic operation" and it provides for consciousness as nothing else does and writing language shields the factors that cause continuous change in the ephemeral spoken language (Ong 100-102).

Natives, the study under discussion has only oral tradition. They did not write down their stories, myths and experiences, it is in later contact with the Europeans, who gave them a writing system, which has resulted in the appropriation of native voices by non-native writers. Among natives under consideration, the first sign of writing appeared because of organized missionary efforts to convert them. Later on, with writing system in hand, the creative native writers began to draw upon oral cultures to unravel the depth of authentic native culture in print. It provided them a forte to retell the story from the perspective of the

native narrators and record such voices in its literary forms of poetry, drama, novel, autobiography and short fiction. This progress from oral to written has facilitated the native to express traditional and contemporary concerns about the world. Written culture provides an avenue into the perceptions of reality for other people across cultures and generations. With a rich storehouse of oral knowledge at hand, native authors offer written or printed views of reality far more complex than the western mode of perception can accommodate. They have access to cultural traditions that have enabled them to survive under extreme conditions, enhancing their lives and instilling them with deep respect for all relationships. A native writer Thomas King calls such 'relations' as: "the web of kinship extending to the animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all the animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagine" (*All My Relations* ix). Easterine Kire associates the cooperative existence of man in connection with its natural world. She opines that, "Man is supposed to befriend nature, by taking care of nature" (*Thoughts after Easter* 6).

Native written literature emerged as a new field aiming for a more authentic portrayal of indigenous people. *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* edited by Eugene Benson and William Toye states that native writers regard the oral as 'Native', in conflict with the 'written'. As a result, they have begun to "object strongly the corrupt and intrusive writing process that non-natives have applied to their stories, and particularly to the appropriation of their stories by non-natives" (3). Basil H. Johnson criticizes the misconceptions and misrepresentations surrounding native trickster figure. He opines that, it is only within the context of "tribal customs as commemorated in oral traditions and in ritual" that trickster figure may be more fully understood (qtd. in Benson et al. 3). Lenore Keeshig Tobias affirms native stories as power and "their appropriation is culture theft, the theft of voice" (ibidem). Native writers of modern age transcend from oral to written mores to reclaim their stories, they now apply written language to voice their authentic beliefs,

traditions and values blurring the boundary between the oral and the written, the colonial and the postcolonial. Natives are also willingly trying to integrate oral voices within the written modes to bridge the gap of imperial discourse. Eugene Benson and William Toye pointed out that, the native author's book during 1960's and 1970's revealed five trends:

- (i) A pan-native approach that played down tribal affiliation and focused on a common native identity, while sometimes shifting emphasis from the shared experiences of the group to the single experiences of the individual
- (ii) a greater diversification of literary genres
- (iii) inspirational writing intended to provide a sense of historical continuity and making use of ancient beliefs and values and
- (iv) advocated separation from the dominant society and
- (v) sought an as-yet-undefined revisionist presence in society (9).

Natives have started writing about their society forcing, at the same time, the non-natives to pay attention to them and acknowledge their presence. Native writings reflect their consciousness, their growing political awareness, and their experience of oppression, exploitation at the hands of the imperialist, their struggle for recognition has finally found a voice in various forms of literature. With the development of recent modern critical theories like 'Marxism', 'Feminism', 'Humanism', the 'Ecological Movement' and the rise of Political and Cultural Movement, natives writers of the twenty first century are breaking the coded subdued silence by writing in English, a literate or a dominant European language accessible for all people. They feel it is crucial to develop their skills in the written English language because it is the universal language serving the purpose of uniting people as well raising the political consciousness preferably of the native community. The use of English to native advantage will, according to Kerrie Charnely, enable native writers to create their own image of who they are, "erase invisibility and proclaim native men and women as distinct and valuable people" (16). Native writers censure the misuse of native voices by non-native writers for they feel that they should be left free to use the cultural creation of the natives,

particularly the oral text, that teaches a way of life and exist within specific cultural parameters. Contemporary native writers of today's era, confidently commune in a characteristic ingenious voice of its own and therefore, writes with an idea to strengthen their own identity as well as exhort the young native groups to bond, unite and stand for themselves. James S. Frideres eminently points native struggle for survival as a struggle for identity and declares that, "If Natives are going to control their destiny they must implement some form of community control immediately", and that the group must voice its past positively and maintain strong links with time-honored customs and beliefs to achieve political equality and look forward to a promising future (3).

### 1.3. Who are the Natives? : Understanding Native Voices of India and Canada

'Native' refers to a person born in a specified place or associated with a place by birth having a common meaning of the original origin. In simple terms, natives are the original occupant of a land. Its older connected name was a person more or less land-locked bound to his roots and the soil, and who produces something of practical use to his community. These original people under discussion, are communities and nations who claim a historical continuity and cultural affinity with societies predating contact with western culture. While considering their local cultures to be distinctly separate from westernized cultures, they continue to assert their sovereignty towards preserving, reviving and enhancing the cohesion and uniqueness of their traditional social values and customs along with a conscientious effort to transmit this knowledge to future generations and right to cultural self-determination.

Citing general idea on 'Native' derivation is helpful because the present thesis aims to discover the native voices and it examine specific native people, of India and Canada. India

and Canada have always been culturally pluralist nations with natives belonging to several linguistic groups. The similar display of bilingualism, biculturalism and as multicultural countries, India and Canada make vibrant and accessible fields for any scholar intending to undertake a comparative native study of these nations. Even more interesting is a participatory link between these two countries in the longstanding bilateral connections and strong interpersonal relations. Presently there is an “Indian Diaspora of more than one million living in Canada” (“Canada-India.” [www. canadainternational.gc.ca](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca)). Both India and Canada are former colonies of the British Empire and has its due share of related experiences in terms of displacement, colonization, false-projection, misrepresentation or marginality. The natives were exposed and subjected to numerous changes in the last two hundred years and have witnessed drastically not only in natural environments involving ecological changes but also changes in cultural, social, economic and political climates.

When involved in native studies, it becomes obligatory to look into the subject that best represent them and addresses their issues. Colonization being one that effected changes, it is vital to explain native place in society from this stance. From the beginning, the original people did not fashion the name ‘Native’, it is during the later contact with Europeans who gave them the name, they are now identified with. In a manner, the term ‘Native’ has its source in primordial European languages after white defines natives as indigenous if they exhibited a certain way of life, or to those individuals who claim to have aboriginal ancestry/origin. Native is related to the appellation ‘nativist’ under colonial rule, a distinction which first expressed itself in what are called the settler contact zones, where colonist Europeans and indigenous populations came into direct interaction with one another. A critic Elleke Boehmer affirms that: “In using terms such as ‘native’ or ‘creole’, it is important to remember that empire constantly invoked racial and cultural categories such as these against the perceived creeping corruptions of mixing and miscegenation” (111). From those

peculiarity and classification attached to native identity, we can well assume that, the conquest of native by colonial power ushered in a new era that pick the consciousness of native groups, with a sensitive question of 'who they actually are' and 'what their rights' are. Definitions of 'who they are' seem to affect all natives, subjected to the control of outsiders in their own land through the assimilationist's tactic of colonizing governments. Their dignity so often stereotyped by others to such a degree that at times their awareness and knowledge of themselves obliterated. Natives of India and Canada are members of this misplaced group chiefly because throughout recorded time, empowered groups have been able to define history and provide an explanation of the present. Instances of which is the confrontations or interpretation of wars between natives and whites. Set by historical facts and existing structural relations, the subjected native people gets misrepresented in the popular history books, for instance, when natives attacked a white fortification and won, the result is a massacre. If white attacked a native village and won, the result is as a straight victory. The reason because the dominant group documented these interpretations and definitions, it is also able to keep others from initiating alternative explanations or definitions. Historians too have tendency to focus on specific complaints and overlook actual issues hence, labeling natives as malcontents, troublemakers and opportunists; labels that conceivably be defended only through reframing the abbreviated view of history. History gives credence and legitimacy to a society's normative structure, and to legitimize its power, the dominant group must therefore reconstruct social history whenever necessary for validation of humans past behavior. No historian is free from bias; no history is capable of presenting only the facts. The native people's duty must then use dominant language available to argue, to claim and to discover their lost sense of self-identity, which is ignored for many years leading to continued native exploitation, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and neglect, perpetuated by the

mainstream culture. In some cases, they must, then, use legal aid to gain compensation and due acknowledgement.

Colonization no doubt has effected an erasure on native culture, values and tradition. One can easily perceive the distinct ways in which colonization has affected India and Canada. As for India, British rulers no doubt has granted independence to India but with political freedom came the trauma of 'partition' from whose ill-effects India has not been able to recover so far. From the very beginning, the history of India is a story of adaptation, absorption and assimilation of continual coming to terms with foreign influences and resistances transformed into responses. All migrated people coming to India from varied countries like the Aryans, Persians, Arab traders, Afghans and Turkish merchants get incorporated and absorbed into larger expanse of India that they actually became its natives. India adapts a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious society to retain its unity in diversity. However, in such country of variety where diversity prevails, the question of identity remains crucial as remarked by Satya P. Mohanty: "In societies where cultural inequality is pervasive, the identity-based struggle of subordinate cultural groups is often a necessary component of multicultural politics" (239). Multiculturalism may refer to the recognition of the people's ethnicity but in many cases of India, the minority stands mostly dominated in the hands of the mainstream groups. Correspondingly, the position of Canada is one of misplacement. Canada, colonized by the British and the French, originally was the land of the Inuit, Métis, Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations) and other tribal communities inclusive of some others who are now, variously called the Natives and the Aborigines. The natives collectively are also, sometimes referred to as the Indians of Canada, of which names, 'Natives, Indian, First Nations,' are one, that I have used interchangeably in the Thesis. Besides, the natives have now gradually been displaced from the center and have been pushed to the margins, first by the French and then by the English. In Canada, the

process of inventing the Canadian nation has also been a problematic process till today with lots of immigrant Europeans as well as immigrants from other countries such as India, China, Japan, Africa, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and south Asian countries, occupying a major part of its land. The Canadian native minority has, in a way, become exiles in their own land. Additionally, Canada official proclamation of Multiculturalism in October 1971 to accommodate varied immigrant groups and Canada having its two official languages, English and French, create more challenges to Canada's national identity especially the socio-cultural identity of the native. In spite of the many challenges consuming Canadian ideology, there has been a constant effort from the constitution makers to promote national integration. The indulgent scenario of the Canadian situation largely comparable to one in India, yields rich understanding on wide-ranging issues confronting native society.

In the influx of a colonial rule, the native lost their power, land and wealth. The invader had scant regard and no tolerance for the existing owners, particularly when these owners were seen as an inferior people who, because they appeared to make ineffective use of the land, had little claim to it. Natives were led to surrender their land with very little compensations or without any of it. Hence, the notion of human rights includes all claims, inclusive of the snatched away native land. Native people maintain that their right to land starts from original occupancy, and point out that land entitlement has been recognized by the dominant society through various judicial decrees and amendment of the government. Native identity have always been intimately connected with land, a part of their being: "It is in and through the land that they are bound together with their 'relatives' such as trees, animals, rocks etc. and where all their ancestors continue to live in spirit" (Imsong 101-102). Land is an extremely important element of native claims in general. Historically, people had communal ownership of land. It is considered a sacred possession that could not be bought or sold. Native peoples are articulate about their unique relationship to the land both past and

present, and about the meaning it has for them. In their concept the land is seen as a territory, place, homeland, religion, culture, spiritual settings and living beings including animals. They are aware that material standard of living derives ultimately from the land and its resources. Consequently, they seek not only a role in determining the way in which the land and other resources are used but also a just share of benefits derived from their exploitation. A visible form of native 'Land claims' can be exemplified from among the Nagas in Northeastern part of India and among Native North Americans settlers, now called 'Canada'. With the advent of British colonial rule, alienation of the Naga People from the land posed new challenges to Naga identity and as a result, they attempted to reclaim their rightful ownership. The British ruler, and later the Indian Government, sought to create individual proprietorship of land by tagging a monetary value on land. Land in general is a property then, it became saleable, inheritable and transferable. The reservation of forest lands by various Governmental Acts like the Government Forests Act (1865), Indian Forest Act (1878) and by further classifying it as Reserved Forest, Protected Forests and Village Forests, have resulted in the breakdown or alteration of community life and a steady cultural death. "Tribal's are not only becoming rootless but also forced to lead a dehumanized existence without a livelihood, identity, community and culture" (Rongsen 37). Such Acts affected not only the economic project but also the religious rituals that is firmly connected to the forestland. Historically and mythically, lands being indivisible to the native mind, Nagas have resented these Acts because they threatened their ethnic socio-cultural identity, which is intimately attached to their concept of land. As for Canada, native people have come under European control but in law, the native interest in land and other natural resources could not be acquired directly by the newcomers. Nevertheless, when the Federal Government assumed political control over native people, it undertook responsibilities for reserve land and band finances and imposed special limitations on Indians (of Canada) as a feature of Indian status. It adopted a protective

role over Indians and their affairs corresponding to that a guardian or trustee towards a ward or beneficiary. From this relationship flow grievances and claims that pertain to the government's management of Indian resources. Canada's original settlers had to seek legal intervention for establishing their claims over native lands that were transformed into crown or governmental lands. It pushed them to negotiate for rights of recognition of land ownership in their traditional territories. There are two major categories of claims now pursued by the natives in Canada. Comprehensive and Specific claims, the first 'comprehensive or aboriginal rights claim,' deals with the unfinished business of treaty making in Canada. These claims generally arise in areas of Canada where aboriginal rights have not been dealt with by treaty or through other legal means. In these areas, 'modern treaties' are negotiated between the Aboriginal group, Canada and the province or territory. These treaties are implemented through legislation and remain the most comprehensive way of addressing native rights. It takes two different forms, which are to some extent regionally based. In the North, the claims focus on a demand for formal legal recognition of aboriginal land title and all the rights that are derived from it. In the South, this type of claim places more emphasis on the cooperation between natives and the government for "the extinguishment of aboriginal title and the restitution of specific rights" ("Aboriginal Affairs." [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)). Canada remains committed to working with its partners to achieve results at negotiating tables for the benefit of all Canadians and since 2006, they have signed six comprehensive land claims agreements and one self-government agreement.

With these entire unsettled colonial problem looming large in native minds, and the experience of a subdued status imposed by the Europeans or outsiders, forced native society to evaluate their identity. Evaluation being a basic form of social communications that is "subject-relative" and "potentially informative" about whatever it seeks to judge or define, intelligent native society, with creative potential turns to written culture to redefine their

voice, experience and their lost sense of self-identity ( Ansari 11). It has led to the growth of a new writing called 'Post-Colonial Literature'. A type of writing that classifies a process of a progressive dismantling of canonical imperial discourses along with their value system. This new expression paves the way for native literature to develop exclusive voice to the targeted audience, and it helps native writer to disentangle themselves from the forces of the imperial centre. Here, the native finds an authentic voice by resorting to an alternative discourse to identify themselves. Native writers center their energies on revising the language, narrative styles and historical representations of the invader. Powerful native subject writers, to name a few, Archie Weller, Kath Walker, Witi Ihimaera, Salman Rushdie, Raja Rao, Patricia Grace, Beatrice Culleton, Easterine Kire and Thomas King, have accentuated on writing as playing an integral part of self-definition, putting emphasis on historical reconstruction. Hence, crafting a way to liberate, unshackle, identify and resurrect native voices from the offensive past, and a future defined from their authentic point of view. A native Canadian critic, Kateri Damm, has rightly announced: "We have not faded into the earth like snow before the summer sun of progress nor have we stagnated in some sort of retrograde time capsule. We have survived and will continue to survive because of, and in spite of the changes" (16).

The textual strategies of native countries like India and Canada involve abrogation and appropriation. Language being a medium of power it demands that post-colonial writing should define itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse adapted to the colonized place. According to Bill Ashcroft et al, "there are two distinct processes by which it does this, first the abrogation or denial of the privilege of 'English' involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. Second, the appropriation and reconstitution of the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege" (37). The concept of 'criticism' as the modern term will designate, or as it is understood in the Western literary tradition, although does not find a mention in

native culture, the need to acquire such theory of criticism presses an issue if natives are to analyze and critically interpret their own literature. It becomes important for native writers to break silences, dispel lies and stereotypes cluttered on them. Native writers, from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, are now excitedly creating a body of new writing with rich indigenous touch, which has amazing versatility, vitality and commitment. Native writings talk about the Natives dispossession and alienation. The natives write to strengthen their own voice. They write about the suffering and upheavals in their lives. The need to represent them arose out of this need to be heard and to be recognized. They are questioning why they should be expected to conform to the constraints of Eurocentric critical theories, they are using the language of “the enemy”, English, to break from a colonized past, bending and stretching mainstream rules of genre, reinventing new ones, and redefining traditional notions of orality and literacy to enrich and expand native literature (Vevaina 40). Since the 1970s the voices of natives have begun to break silence, by narrating from the original perspectives, by dispelling lies and stereotypes and more currently by analyzing and critically interpreting their own literatures. ‘Native’ a label once derogatory for colonized people have recently been reclaimed to designate those who belong to a particular place by birth. Like any other models, colonization too has its limitation. Consequently, twenty first century has witnessed many changes in the cultural scenario of different countries all over the world. Colonization that has caused stagnation has also initiated a new dimension to postcolonial writing with its decline. People now must construct a portrait that corresponds closely to the real world and must select and incorporate certain variables, discard others as unimportant, and make assumptions about how people behave.

Nativism means a return to the roots, an awareness of self, “an emotional need of the human race” (Seth 103). In all appropriate reading, we now see that native voices carry the evidence of the social and cultural practices of a community in its evaluational history and

play an obvious social role by serving as a selective memory of traditions and ideals. Historical civilization or a recorded oral narrative of ancient settlers teaches us that the human race has a tendency to go far away from its societal and cultural axes and return to its centers. Thereby, in this twenty-first century, we have many native writers, speakers, singers, and folk tellers making their way to express, expand and communicate their ideas, and have been contributing creatively to tribal cultures. Native voices often play a most important role in society as the transmitter of beliefs, ideas, values and community concerns. It offers a new insight into the understanding of the world and remains a defining feature in terms of both its didactic nature and its focus on the community. Voices being part of communal absorption to expressing worldviews, native writers artistically formulate and adapt literary textuality as a tool to express their selves and question the assumptions propagated by the white writers. They articulate the cultural, social and political issues affecting the natives. They also debunk the role played by the dominant white text in diminishing the value of the native culture as well as the native literature. Their “oppositonality is directed against dominant ways of perceiving literature” (Mukherjee vii).

Moreover, the recent shift from the conception of the Third World to that of the Fourth World popularized by George Manuel, a Canadian aboriginal man suggests the refusal of the decolonizing peoples to be shadows of other nations or creatures of other powers. The idea of a Fourth World emerged from the struggle of native peoples to avoid the subordination of their own diverse identities beneath the ongoing conquest and imperialism. “The Fourth World peoples are not immigrants but the original inhabitants of lands that they today form the territories of nation states” (Dyck 1). In the Fourth World, natives refuse to become alienated from their own past. Instead are encouraged to draw on the nutritive energy of humanity’s diverse inheritances of language and culture. The philosophy of balance and ecological equilibrium are central to the Fourth World and this quest for balance is expressed

in the need to combine the natural conservation of tradition, inheritance and organic community with the revolutionary energy inherent in all struggles for decolonization. In the Fourth World, the natural and cultural diversity of life is cultivated, celebrated and, if necessary, protected. It invokes a sense of confidence in the capacity of living native cultures to contribute actively to the betterment of all humanity, to generate adaptive strategies for indigenous, national, transnational and global progress. George Manuel has called the Fourth World “a vision of the future history of North America and of the Indian peoples” a vision in which traditional spiritual and cultural values merge with economic self-sufficiency and political self determination to liberate native peoples from colonialist shackles placed upon mind and body (12). It affirms that native people are working and uniting for the purpose of coalition, to form a new group in order to achieve claims on a global scale and to assert greater political influence through greater number. Accordingly, any discussion pertaining to Native voices involves a very broad outlook and a sensitive review or evaluation. It needs a meticulous examination on various issues confronting them, be it the native traditional values, social, economic, political and cultural sphere. As such, the expository understanding of ‘Native Voices of India and Canada’ is contributory because the present study focuses on the Native Voices in the works of Easterine Kire and Thomas King. Their fictional works have been taken up for study because they offer suitable scope for an examination into the area of my interest, that is, Native Voices, which, it is my belief, gave the writers their distinct mark.

Easterine Kire (born 1959-), and Thomas King (born 1943-) are reciprocally contemporary ‘Native subject’ writers belonging one each from India and Canada. Both writers use history simply as a story to explicitly voice out opinion in favor of native place and play out the importance of self-representation and self-identification. Easterine Kire and Thomas King imaginative writings spot stories as a creative balance through which the

transformative capacities of language and people are closely knitted and they engagingly try to portray native stories as critical lenses through which other stories may be interpreted. Their collections of short stories and novels are filled with insightful commentary on life, addressing themes ranging from historical events, social, and cultural concerns. They exhibit primal link to storytelling, with styles often penetrating giving the audience a refreshing blend of oration and inscription. It will guide readers to new ways of thinking about the universal world and their roles in it, significantly providing requisite information and context to comprehend native ideology on clearer perspectives. Acclaimed as an important voice coming out of their respective ethnic community and by writing themes drawn from realistic society and from the standpoint of the people who had experience it, Easterine Kire and Thomas King narratives will provide a motivating study on native subjects and an authentic understanding of native voices. Comparative study of the works of Easterine Kire and Thomas King is fruitfully engaging because both their fictional narratives act as political exercises in that they reclaim, readdress, and redefine their native culture and history from misrepresentation. Pointedly, Kire and King are both objective writers and thinkers who articulate the social, political, economic and cultural issues affecting the natives whilst aiming at the self-empowerment of the native society. Overall, the thesis offers an attempt to appreciate native paradigms and understand Native Voices prevalent in the works of Easterine Kire and Thomas King.

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