

*Deschooling the Mind, Body, Soul: Performing  
Indigenous Alterities in the Cities of Toronto and  
Ahmadabad*

by

**Dheeman Bhattacharyya**

**Thesis submitted to Jadavpur University for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)**

**Supervisor: Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay**

**Department of Comparative Literature**

**Faculty of Arts**

**Jadavpur University**

**2016**

Certified that the Thesis entitled “*Deschooling the Mind, Body, Soul: Performing Indigenous Alterities in the Cities of Toronto and Ahmadabad*” submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the supervision of Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

---

Supervisor :

Candidate :

Dated :

Dated :

## **Acknowledgement**

Acknowledgement is written usually after a work is done to appreciate the energies that were around in the most isolating experience of drafting a Ph. D dissertation. This effort was possible as I had people who really shared in the true spirit of sharing. It was a huge responsibility as I have dealt with experiences of people who are still negotiating with various forms of suppression and it is a never ending process and I must accept that this dissertation is just the first step towards 'giving back' to all my relations. Since an academic dissertation should follow its course and come to an end, I must confess (could not find a better word at this moment but the intention is extremely non-Christian) I have been just able to identify a viable area of work that could be done for the rest of my life as I am connected with most of the individuals and their works and *inshallah* they would continue inspiring me through their works and lives forever.

I take this opportunity to thank my Supervisor Professor Suchorita Chattopadhyay for being extremely kind and supportive across the period of field work and later drafting and re-drafting of the content. I had to change the title of my thesis and there was a major re-structuring of all the chapter divisions as I was unsure about the work I could do in India as I had started my research in 2009 and visiting areas I wanted to work and people I wanted to meet was not always possible due to serious crisis in those areas at that point. My bags and belongings which contained painting material for the Chharanagar library were screened at the railway station when I visited

Ahmedabad in 2012. Visiting areas like Ayodhya hills, Akarbaid in Purulia was also difficult in 2009-10.

I thank Dakxin Bajarange Chhara for inspiring me to explore the nomad in me. I would also like to thank Roxy Gagdekar, Kalpana, Atish and all the members of Budhan Theatre and members of the Chhara community in Kubernagar, Ahmedabad. I would like to thank Sm. Mahasweta Devi (Amma) for all her support and pushing me to explore more. I thank Professor Ganesh Devy for inspiring me to leave the cocooned academia and step out and I went all the way to be with various community members in Gujarat. I drafted my Ph.D. proposal at the Tejgadh Tribal Academy.

I would like to thank Prasanta Rakshit, Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samiti, Roma Mallick and Jharna Acharya of the Lodha Sabar Kalyan Samiti, Shibdas Lohar, Dhekaru Unnayan Samiti, Manik Bagdi, Madan Meena, Mohammad Kalam and several other friends and colleagues from the nomadic, semi-nomadic and Denotified Tribes in India. I thank them for sharing so much with me.

I would like to thank Kateri Akiwenzi Damm for inviting me to visit her community in the Saugeen Island Cape Croker Reserve. I thank Lee Maracle for her Master Classes at the University of Toronto and later collaborating with me on a project in Ahmedabad and coming all the way to Ahmedabad along with Columpa Bob and other friends from First Nations House to conduct a week long workshop with members of the Chhara Communities. I would like to thank Tomson Highway for calling me Demon and coming all the way to Satkahunia village in West Bengal to conduct a Workshop.

I would like to thank Professor Daniel Heath Justice for being my academic affiliate at University of Toronto during my stint there in 2010-11. He inducted me in the community and shared the most important insights of ‘going around with an open mind’ and lesser question and inculcate the power of listening. Professor Himani Bannerji, Professor Emeritus, York University was another source of inspiration who fed me with a healthy dose of Marxism, Feminism, contemporary theory and Bangali *sukto* which replenished my mind soul and body. Professor Tania Dasgupta, Department of Sociology and Equity Studies inspired me to write my dissertation as a narrative which I could not actually execute within the academic practices here in India but I have tried to retain a flavor of continuous human intervention across my writing. I would like to thank Professor Bula Bhadra, Department of Sociology, University of Calcutta and Dr. Julie Mehta, University of Toronto for their comments and suggestions as they were just a phone call away.

I specially thank First Nations House, University of Toronto for giving me a home and family far away from home. I can never forget the warmth of all the staff and members of FNH for being so kind and generous with me...even the photocopier ( my friends at FNH will understand that!). I need to mention Jackie Exquimaux Hamlin, FNH for her affection and support and love, Dr. Michelle Mohabeer, York University, Canada for giving critical insights into the actual process of research and Hana Dang, for introducing the actual Canada on my arrival in 2010.

The library resources at Tejgadh Tribal Academy, Vadodara, Gujarat, Robarts Library, FNH Library, University of Toronto, Canadian Museum of Civilization, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Canada,

Jadavpur University library, Intercultural Institute of Montreal, SNTD University library Mumbai , Native Earth Performing Arts, York University Library, University of Manitoba Library , Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute Library, Delhi, ICSSR Library, Delhi, Apne Aap Women World Library, IIC, Delhi and above all the library hosted at the Centre for Canadian Studies, Jadavpur University were immensely helpful.

I would like to thank Nitai Da and Kajal Da in the Department of Comparative Literature Departmental Library and the Chief Librarian and other staff members of Visva-Bharati University.

I extend my heartiest gratitude towards my funding sources as without their assistance I could not have travelled as much I did as my sources were out there on the main street or in wilderness but fortunately not in the cold chambers of Academic Library vaults, archives or for that matter classrooms. I thank the State Government of West Bengal, India for their Doctoral Research Fellowships awarded in the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

I thank the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and DFAIT, Canada for awarding me the Doctoral Research Fellowship for the academic year 2010-11 which enabled me to visit University of Toronto, Canada. I thank Apne Aap Women Worldwide for funding my documentary film “Vimukti” on the Denotified Tribes of India. I would specially thank Ruchira Gupta, Tinku Khanna, Swati Chakraborty and others at AAWW Delhi and Kolkata Office for their support while I was working on the project of Educational Attainment

of Denotified Tribes in West Bengal, India as a Research Consultant of ICSSR.

I would like to thank the Office of the Census of India, Delhi and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. I would like to thank CID, West Bengal online archive.

I would like to thank all my teachers in the Department of Comparative Literature especially Professor Sibaji Bandyopadhyay, Ipsita Chanda and Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta for inspiring me to follow my heart. Professor Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta encouraged me develop a video narrative along with the dissertation and Vimukti is an outcome of those insights. I have placed it as a reference along with the thesis. I would like to thank Dr. Nilanjana Deb, Department of English, Jadavpur University for sharing in the true spirit of sharing. Chi Meegwetch. I thank Sukhendu Pan and Professor Benoyendra Nath Roy for inspiring me to take up Comparative Literature in school.

I would like to thank Professor Tapati Mukherjee, Dr. Nilanjana Bhattacharya and Dr. Soma Mukhopadhyay, my senior colleagues at the Centre for Comparative Literature, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati and Professor Kailash Pattanaik, Principal, Bhasha Bhavan for their support and cooperation.

I take this opportunity to thank my partner Swagata Bhattacharya for being extremely critical about all my projects and constantly pushing me to work even harder.

I thank my parents Sm. Anita Bhattacharyya and Sri Benoy Bhusan Bhattacharyya for giving me whatever they have and allowing me to be who I am.

I would like to thank all my detractors and critics for all their energies.



## **Table of Contents**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: COLONISING THE BODY SOUL AND MIND</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: FROM REZ TO CITY: CITY TO REZ</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: MAPPING INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE IN THE CITIES OF TORONTO AND AHMEDABAD</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: PERFORMANCE AS INTERVENTION: THE NEO-LIBERAL URBAN SPACE REVISITED</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: MIMICRY AND THE NATION: DECODING THE TEXT AND THE TEXTUAL PRACTICE.</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6: ALMIGHTY(S) AND BUDHAN (S): A PLAUSIBLE DIALOGUE</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>APPENDIX-1: CRIMINAL TRIBES ACT, 1871</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: THE INDIAN ACT, 1876 : TERMS AND CONCEPTS</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>PICTORAL GLOSSARY</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>WORKS CITED</b>	<b>309</b>

## **List of Figures and Tables**

<b>Figure 1: Tracing Reconciliation</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Figure 2: The Linguistic Distribution of Aboriginal People in Canada</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Table 1: The Historical journey of Budhan in India</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Table 2: The Historical Journey of Native Earth Performing Arts.</b>	<b>205</b>

## Introduction

History may not be a story of development or of progress. It is well nigh impossible to construct a teleology of literary history. But it certainly is a story of change. Certain changes are innovations which do not cause any perceptible disorder within a literary system. Some changes are, of course, far-reaching in their effects, creating tensions within the existing structures eventually leading to a restructuration of the system.

-Sisir Kumar Das, "The Idea of Literary History"<sup>1</sup>

---

In the above passage if we carefully look at the operative word 'History', which in itself is a critically engaging category accentuated by the idea of 'a story of change', of shifts in the process of knowledge production and reception of the knowledge produced within a given structure ( which can be the literary system itself or the various factors that are continuously shaping the structure), we will be able to arrive at a certain synthesis of the provocations inbuilt in the quoted passage. The second important category is that of the agency, that perceives this change. The agency again is a product of this change and can be responsible for bringing about certain changes. If I am allowed to move further, then this passage invokes the idea around which documented history making can be contested. Working on alternative ways of remembering the past events constitutes the essence of this research as information gathered during several interaction with the communities I have

---

<sup>1</sup> Chanda, Ipsita ed. *Literary Historiography*. Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2004. Literary Studies in India Series.

worked with in both Canada and India have been primarily oral, participatory, like watching a play, being a part of a theatre workshop or listening to community elders, and at times validated by documented references in edited volumes of stories by Elder Louis Bird or critical essays or performance texts. The section on my experience around auditing a story telling course at University of Manitoba, where Louis Bird was the coordinator will exemplify my claim. As most of the subjects of my research are living with me, cohabiting different spaces and at times the same space and all the experiences are lived ones for the communities as well as for myself as a researcher, this process of narrating events is purely experiential and not driven by an academic engagement or assignment only. The history of subjugation that connects both the colonies are identical in the way the The Criminal Tribes Act 1871 ( Please refer to Appendix I) or The Indian Act 1876 ( See Appendix II) were implemented to ‘govern’ people, to be more specific subjugate histories of survival, conflict, negotiations which have been going on for years even long before the arrival of the settler race. These forms of subjugations were identical in both Canada and India as the common denominator was land as an important category. Associated with this was the concept of *terra nullius* in the Canadian context. In case of the Indian subcontinent, the people who were labeled later as the Criminal tribes, had their own system of governance and understanding of the land. In this context it would be worth mentioning that my knowledge is restricted only to the tribes I have worked with in West Bengal, parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. It was not possible for me to cover Southern India due to technical constraints but I have tried to deal with the various issues from my secondary readings of Meena Radhakrishna’s

*Dishonoured by History: Criminal Tribes and British Colonial Policy* (2001).

Similarly, In the Canadian context I had to restrict myself to my field research in Toronto and Manitoba. I had to depend on primary and secondary materials collected mainly from Toronto, Manitoba, Montreal and Ottawa.

As I have mentioned, land was the major marker of debate in both India and Canada. It would be interesting to note how the tribes in question gradually lost their stronghold on their lands and became easily disposable. In the Indian context it would be worth mentioning how the Rajputs interacted with the original inhabitants of the land from the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD:

...the adventurous bands of the Rajputs carried their arms successfully through the regions of Maru, Mad, Medpat, and Mer regions encountering and dislodging or driving away the early inhabitants to the hills. From this time desparate struggle between the aboriginals and new comers commenced, resulting in the victory of one and reversion of power of the other....Chanting the dirge of the dead warriors, singing and dancing in their memories and unifying their units for defence became a common feature of their life. There emerged guerilla war and age of arrows and bows. From this age, the history of tribals took a new turn...( Sharma, 6)

It would also be worth mentioning how the British Raj imposed certain laws to control the tribes in India:

During the British era, the appointment of *Talatees* (*Patwaris*), the decision of Bombay Board of Directors in 1819 A.D. regarding land policies, introduction of settlement operations, restriction on cutting of forests, hunting and *walar* cultivation, curtailment of rights of tribal panchayat, intereferece in witch-hunting, magic beliefs, rites and rituals, prohibiting manufacture of liquor, rise in the price of salt and mismanagement in its distribution were considered interference in socio-economic, religious and cultural spheres, which they [the tribals] never liked. ( Meharda, 51)

As loss of forest land meant destruction of traditional ways of life, Pranabananda Bhattacharya, a local historian of Kanksha Village, Burdwan, West Bengal has recorded how the forest land was cleared to develop the Durgapur Industrial belt in West Bengal and how that deeply affected the local inhabitants. He has cited *The Annals of Rural Bengal*<sup>2</sup> to substantiate his claim (Bhattacharyya, 2). According to him, the *Uberis* mentioned in Megathenes's account are the Bauris and the word *Bagadh* mentioned in *Aitareya Purana* meant Bagdi, another warrior tribe like the Bauris. Apart from them were the Doms, Mallas, Khayras along with the local Santhals who were appointed in Indigo cultivation. The local zamindars had once employed them as sentinels but they gradually became redundant in the new system of extracting tax introduced by the imperial forces. (12-15).

In the Canadian context, Miller poignantly points out:

The initial Aboriginal response to the arrival of the Europeans-Dutch, French, and English-who wanted to establish some sort of relationship with them was to integrate the newcomers into their existing systems. Prior to contact, eastern First Nations had well developed mechanisms for relating to one another as civil societies, for facilitating commercial exchange, and for making peace to end the strife that broke out from time to time. The confederacies that existed among the Five Nations and the Huron or Wendat were a form of internal treaty. (2009, 284)

As recorded in *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, the relationship between the Indigenous peoples and the British was developed on the motive of extracting

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Annals of The Annals of Rural Bengal, 1868* by William Wilson Hunter documents the following events which can be read along the policies implemented in Canada:

1765- The Emperor appoints the Company to the Fiscal Administration of Bengal

1765-72-The Company collects the revenues by native agents

1772-86-The Company's experimental efforts at rural administration by means of English Officers.

1786-90-Lord Cornwallis' Provisional System.

It also records the presence of Clan system and absence of caste consciousness amongst the Tribes.

maximum surplus from the land by utilizing the knowledge of the locals or forcing them to abide by laws unlike the well-calculated treaties in the Canadian context. 'To deal with strangers, First Nations extended, or replicated, kin ties' (Miller, 2009, 284) but they could probably never imagine what British Companies had in mind. By the 1670s the Hudson Bay Company was using "the labour, knowledge, skills of the First Nations" (12). They also realized that the Company's overseas representatives "...should secure ownership ('absolute propriety') to the terrain, or, more realistically, the exclusive right to trade with the Indian with whom they made the compact" (12). The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was the last step required by the Company to legally acquire Indigenous lands and "that shaped the third phase of treaty-making with consequences still felt in Canada in the twenty-first century" (66).

So the root of the "Indian Problem" was a land base problem with its diverse ramifications. Unlike the colonial powers who saw land as a trope of extracting surplus, for the Aboriginal people "land is much more than an economic resource and much more than a source for the creation of wealth and profit...the land is the basis of the spiritual relationship between all creatures and elements of the universe" ( Hedican, 123). This link between Man and Nature was ruptured with colonial policies of land acquisition. This view of looking at land as an extension of the Aboriginal identity was challenged by the burgeoning industrial nation like Canada. Similar patterns of interpreting tribal ways of life could be located in the context of rapid industrialization of the subcontinent. Indigenous people who still continue with traditional patterns of hunting, gathering are projected as anti-development and

“...traditional patterns of making a living are seen as somehow irrational in the context of a modern industrial society, it follows that indigenous populations tend to be regarded as incompetent.”( Hedican, 80).

The Indigenous people posed a major challenge in the emerging new nation now known as the Dominion of Canada. The new nation needed settlers to work for its prosperity but the already existing Indigenous population was a major threat. As Jo- Ann Episkenew points out:

By 1867, the colonial government had established the Dominion of Canada....Progress, for the settler government, meant expanding the Dominion from Atlantic to Pacific. Immigrants were needed to make the dream a reality...(2009, 21)

This attitude is reflected in the settler-Indigenous relationship in the Neo-liberal space and I shall discuss it in Chapter 2 on ‘Rez to City: City to Rez’. As the Indigenous population “ were the de facto owners of that [Northwest] land by way of their continuous occupancy [according to the treaty]... colonial officials devised strategies for addressing... the Indian Problem.... By employing much subtler methods”(Episkenew, 22). The Residential school system was a strategy to eradicate Indigenous unrest and convert the docile bodies of “the Indigenous population into the colonizer’s capitalist, free market society” ( 22). This is exactly what is happening in India in the tribal belts where residential schools are becoming popular amongst the tribal populations. The Tribal population will be converted into docile subjects to be ruled by multinational companies who are contesting with each other to establish their supremacy in those areas. What happened in Canada has started now in India. “For Aboriginal people in Canada the educational system has been a major source of the interrelated problems of cultural dissonance and



conflicting expectations....Cree children were removed from their home communities and immersed in a language other than their own, and since success in school was also dependent on the adoption of southern- Canadian styles of interaction and identity, further problems developed”( Hedican, 245). I shall establish this relationship of land and language in the subsequent chapters. As the title of my dissertation suggests a plausible reading of the various the process of schooling the “docile bodies” within a given space, the land becomes a text, like the bodies which inhabit it. “To posit the land as a text is to claim its readability, and thence to arrogate power over it” ( Ryan, 126). To come back to the idea of *terra nullius*, through this propaganda of “... erasure of the land not only is previous Aboriginal occupation and ownership ignored, but the land itself is inserted into a particular narrativisation of history” (127).

As students of Comparative Literature we ‘do several things’ but we do not ‘compare’ as comparative literature is not about comparing two or more texts written in different languages or about comparing two different cultural texts from two historical locations only. My idea was to engage with two forms of colonies, forms of Governance, forms of Capital that regulate the lives of the Indigenous population within these colonies and a performance culture “from below” that responded to a history of genocide. I was not merely comparing the similarities or differences in the behavioural pattern of the Indigenous people post contact in Canada and India and their cultural texts. Being aware of my location, which defined my tools and the formulation of the research question that dealt with the various anxieties of

identity formations of the communities within the Neo-liberal framework which is closely aligned with the alterities, I started my research by visiting the communities and creating a rapport with the members. This entire exercise understandably took some time.

I was aware of the ways in which literary scholars “have learned and unlearned how different histories , bodies, and experiences constitute the writing, reception, and critical response to literature and the academic production of literary knowledge” (Emberly, 245). This is where I realized the importance of cross-pollination of disciplines and moved ahead and crossed the permissible borders of my discipline, which also regulated my identity as a researcher of Comparative Literature in India, working with communities where I was an outsider. My idea was to contest this process of the ‘production of literary knowledge’ vis-à-vis the position of the researcher. I have interviewed community members and have extracted information from informal talks and meetings. I have analysed those narratives and interviews to read the various lapses in history making process which I had initially identified while analyzing the performance texts of the communities. The strategy of the cultural productions of the first peoples in Canada and India is to engage with an audience who will ignore, overlook the ‘profane’ and the ‘unintelligible’ during the first encounter, but might revisit the text to de-code the signs and subsequently participate in the meaning making process of a process driven performance culture.

I have tried to read the reception of certain performance texts of the Indigenous peoples in Canada and India by the Indigenous communities and

members of other communities. I have deliberately not dealt with the thematic analysis of the available texts which were written down maybe after its hundredth performance. I have tried to look at performance from a broader perspective and could not restrict myself to mere generic codification. For me 'performance' is a way of negotiating with the 'imposed' modernities for these communities. Performance is a tool to claim that "they are alive and well" (Taylor, 2005). Performance is a way of channelizing ideology for the communities I shall talk about. Performance is a way to contest Eurocentric models of museumisation of the culture of specific communities. "To analyse the historical processes through which the 'pure gaze' is constituted is thus, in part, to trace the formation of those spaces and institutions in which works of art are so assembled, arranged, named, and classified as to be rendered visible as, precisely, 'art', just as it is also to examine those forces which produce spectators capable of recognizing and appreciating those works as such" (Bennet, 297). I would precisely read the arrangements of the "bodies in dissent"<sup>3</sup> in the colonial spaces like the modern city. These arrangements and installations are the alterities I have mentioned in my title, which, according to my reading, continuously challenge the process of subject-object positionings within a given time and space.

As a student of Comparative Literature, I felt that a analysis of the cultural expressions of the First Peoples of Canada and India in the context of the emerging voices of marginal groups across the globe can be carried out quite effectively. It can actually show how various atrocities inflicted by the

---

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to entry on Daphe A. Brooks with the same title.

dominant groups across the globe, affect the cultural production of these diverse groups. These groups have been forcefully silenced or denied a voice due to colonisation or unrestrained urbanisation in the present context.

My primary objective was to identify the external changes forced upon indigenous societies by Industrial societies like that of Canada or India, who have endorsed urbanisation and industrialisation without undertaking the basic groundwork required to track the changes that are introduced in the system of production due to imposed urbanisation or industrialisation. The myopic vision of these forces has failed to keep a tab on the after effects of converting a primarily nomadic society into an agrarian and subsequently into an industrial settled race . My secondary objective was to situate the 'performance' of the First Peoples in Canada and India in the context of urbanisation, to be more specific within the urban space, and then go on to show how the first peoples in both the countries are performing their discontent. In doing so, my third objective would be to propose an alternative pedagogic model within the premises of Comparative Literature, which could address emerging issues not only within academia in the name of Subaltern Studies, Orality Studies, Performance studies, but also effectively by engaging with the communities to create a space, a gathering where one could share in the true spirit of sharing. The alternative model that I would suggest in the course of writing my thesis would actually deal with this pedagogic shift of how things were initially perceived and how things stand now within the Neo-liberal framework, the Urban Space, as far as the growing visibility of Aboriginal peoples are concerned in all spheres of life. I would propose here

that the cultural productions of various Indigenous groups across the globe can be seen as interventions within the Neo-liberal space. The ‘alternative’ model is an extension of the various approaches being proposed by the First Peoples both in Canada and in India, both within and without the Academia and beyond.

As my focus is on the various Indigenous ‘alterities’ vis-à-vis ‘performance’ in the Urban space in India and Canada, I had applied for the Canadian Studies Doctoral Research Fellowship Award, administered by the Shastri Indo Canadian Institute for the academic year 2010-2011. I was awarded the fellowship and I visited University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada in the month of July, 2010 for a period of six months. My primary endeavour was to try to situate Indigenous performance, which has its own growth and development in Canada, in the urban space of the city of Toronto. I visited Native Earth Performing Arts<sup>4</sup> and watched their performances both live and recorded. I also interacted with various Aboriginal performers in the cities of Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg. I also had extensive discussions with a number of Canadian experts on theatre during my stay in Canada like Monique Mojica, who is a Kuna Rappahnnock and a direct spun from the Spider Woman Theatre Group, founded in 1976, in New York. Spider

---

<sup>4</sup> Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA) is Canada’s oldest professional Native theatre company founded in 1982. It has produced *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* by Tomson Highway, *Almighty Voice and His Wife* by Daniel David Moses. In 1989, NEPA introduced *Weesageechak Begins to Dance*, festival to promote new workrds for Aboriginal Theatre. The company has received several awards like Dora Mavor Moore Award. I shall try to define the space i.e. 55, Mill Street, Toronto, Ontario where these theatres and other performing spaces like the Dancemakers are situated. They are extremely important in analysing the existence of such spaces within the Neo Liberal State.)

Woman's Gloria and Muriel Miguel occupied a centre stage during the formative years of Tomson Highway and Native Earth Performing Arts as they had collaborated on several projects like *The Rez Sisters*.

Professor Daniel Heath Justice, who hails from the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, was my Academic affiliate in Canada and was instrumental in introducing me to the resource centre of First Nations House (FNH) at University of Toronto. Professor Himani Bannerji, Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology, York University, Professor Tania Dasgupta, Department of Sociology and Equity Studies enriched my theoretical understanding of the area I chose for my research. Professor Dasgupta suggested that I write the entire dissertation in the form of a dialogue with minimum references and I have tried to respect that essence in Chapter 6 where I have written a One Act Play to explain my ideas on the interface of the two realities. Yvette Nolan was the Artistic Director of NEPA in 2010-11 and she had given me access to all the video archives and other archives at NEPA and arranged for interviews with several artists and allowed me to audit the workshop of *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian*. Watching *Almighty Voice and His Wife* on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 at the Dancemakers Centre, housed in 55 Mill Street changed my perception about the reception of Aboriginal Cultural Texts. Interacting with Daniel David Moses on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2010 at University of Montreal and thereafter during the production at Dancemakers, facilitated my understanding of a performance culture which was completely unknown and unexplored to me. Meeting Tomson Highway on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 at Ryerson University which was followed by a friendly chat and an everlasting

friendship enriched my research. Tomson later visited India in 2013 and we have worked together in a performance narrative with the *Ebong Amra* group in *Tepantor Natyagram*, Kanksha, Burdwan. This group was formed with the local nomadic and semi nomadic tribe members like Bagdi, Bauri and Dom communities which I have mentioned earlier while referring to *The Annals of Rural Bengal*. Professor Renate Eigenbrod and Professor Warren Carriou, University of Manitoba had invited me to attend a workshop conducted by Elder Louis Bird, Omushkego Cree during the week of 9-13<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 and I immensely benefitted from the interaction and the stories he narrated which he had been collecting over forty years along western Hudson and James Bay. Louis went to a residential school.

The decision to take the thirty six hours Grey Hound trip to Manitoba from Toronto also enriched my understanding of the landscape of Canada's West. To work in and about Canada requires an understanding of the Canadian landscape.

Visiting the Cape Croker Reserve during the week of 20-23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2010 during the Powwow renewed my bonding with Anishinawbe<sup>5</sup> poet Kateri Damm. She also introduced me to Basil Johnston. Meeting Jane Hubbard at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) in Ottawa on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010 prompted me to re-draft several write ups as I could access printed documents on the after effect of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> There are various pronunciations and spellings across Canada. The Ojibwa-speaking people of northern Ontario are referred as the Anishenabe people.

<sup>6</sup> The historical Report of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) recommended in 1996 for a 'public enquiry to examine the origins,

Auditing Several courses on Aboriginal Literature by Lee Maracle were experiences that I shall always nurture and has transformed me personally. Several evening courses at OISE also helped me grasp my content better. I would like to mention the master class conducted by Dr. Kathy Absolon, Anishnabekwe, Ojibway woman from the Flying Post First Nation on July 21, 2010. Her topic was Indigenous methodologies and I could connect with Lee Maracle's version of 'decolonising academia' with Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work in New Zealand. On July 28, 2010, Anna Hunter, L.L.B, L.L.M. from the Ktunaxa First Nation spoke at length about Indigenous governance. Another important event was attending the 'Art of Decolonisation Workshop' organised by The Indigenous Education Network (IEN) at the Peace Lounge of OISE.

Meeting Monique Mojica, Troy Emery Twigg, Waawaate Fobister on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 opened new avenues of exploring Indigenous performance in Canada. The event showcased *Earth in Motion*, a Dance production that involved serious issues on race, ethnicity and gender. This exposure culminated into the experience of watching *When Will you Rage?* conceived and choreographed by Penny Couchie on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2010. The discussion that ensued the performance over dinner came as a full circle with Monique

---

purposes, and effects of residential school policies, to identify abuses, to recommend remedial measures and to begin the process of healing' ( Castellano *et al* , 2). Following this historical event was *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement* implemented in 2007 which endorsed cash payments to 'Survivors living in 2005 or their estates if deceased, as well as providing an individual assessment process for adjudication of cases of more serious abuse, the creation of memorials, a five year extension of funding for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to support community healing initiatives, and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission...' (3). For further information please visit [www.ahf.ca](http://www.ahf.ca)



Mojica, Muriel Miguel, Rose from Centre for Indigenous Theatre and Jill Carter, who was my instructor at First Nations House.

Meeting Stephen Augustine on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec helped me to contextualise the 'performance' I wanted to document against the modernity of the exhibition of the Museum that displays Aboriginality or Indigeneity as static Images of the past. A particular order is maintained to display "...the past history of a particular people, nation, region or social group. This organisation of a new invisible was the combined result of the choice of a new set of semiophores (period costumes, for example)...through which a national past, say, could be rendered materially present through an assemblage of its artefactual remnants" ( Bennet, 301).

Sourcing books from the Intercultural Institute of Montreal during my brief stint from 21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 helped me to explore the Mohawk territory. My theorisation of the 'Neo-liberal space' has been structured around the lectures of Elizabeth Povinelli at York University on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

As far as the Indian context is concerned, I shall focus on the activities and productions of Budhan Theatre<sup>7</sup> in the city of Ahmedabad, India. My

---

<sup>7</sup> The Custodial death of Budhan Sabar in Purulia, West Bengal in the 1998 triggered a movement across India. Mahasweta Devi along with the Kheria Sabar Welfare Samiti moved the case of Budhan Sabar to Calcutta High Court. The same year Mahasweta Devi delivered the Verrier Elwin Lecture at Bhasha Research Centre in Baroda. Gradually the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Rights Action Group( DNTRAG) was formed in the same year by Lakshman Gaikwad, Ganesh Devy and Mahasweta Devy. Subsequently a

association with the Budhan Theatre Group, Gujarat, India (founded on 31st August 1998) goes back to 2008, when I first met Dakxin Bajrange Chhara and have been in touch with them since then. Budhan Theatre performs street plays to raise awareness about the condition of the Denotified Tribes<sup>8</sup> in India. Their objective is to demonstrate that the Chharas are not ‘born criminals’, they are human beings with real emotions, capacities, and aspirations. Each of their productions dramatizes the events surrounding custodial deaths, abductions, beatings and torture of such tribes throughout the country. Therefore, the formative years of the theatre activities of the First Peoples of Canada or the Chharas in Gujarat was definitely not a discrete charm. The growth and development of the theatre tradition amongst the communities I shall refer to, historicises the impact of colonial policies and a Neo-Liberal

---

magazine called *Budhan* was launched. In May, 1998, the DNTRAG group visited Chharamnagar, an urban Ghetto of the Denotified Groups in the city of Ahmedabad, India. The verdict of Budhan Sabar Case came out in the month of July and the report was published in the *Budhan Magazine*. During the visit of the DNTRAG, Mahasweta Devi and Ganesh Devy had established a library within the DNT community in Ahmedabad. The magazine arrived at the library and a young group of Chhara men read the story and decided to convert that into a play. They performed the play in New Delhi, Bhopal, Baroda, Pune, Bombay and had a great impact which mobilized the DNT cultural movement in India. Budhan, was written by Dakxin Bajarange but it was a direct spun of the oral story telling tradition of the nomadic tribes and hence contested the idea of a fixed text. Budhan gradually became the name of contemporary DNT movement within the Neo-Liberal economy of India. Source: *Adivasis: Legal Provisions, Languages, Locations*

<sup>8</sup> By 1871 the British had prepared an extensive list of tribes with they associated criminality. Subsequently they implemented the law Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 which ‘made provisions for establishing reformatory settlements [like the Residential schools and reserves in Canada] where the criminal adivasis could be kept in confinement and subjected to low paid work. They were required to report to the guard rooms several times every day, so that they did not escape the oppressive settlements’ .( Devy, 127) The notified tribes were denotified in 1952 but was substituted by ‘Habitual Offenders Act’ making them ‘born’ criminal.

economy that continuously re-defines their existence through their cultural productions. They interrogate the formation of the colonized subjects and the hegemony of colonial representation. The theatrical text is not fixed like the body of the Indigenous person clad in regalia in a museum or a Disney cartoon or the customary *Thug* in the pages of a novel or a film text. The theatre of these groups delves deep into the representational matrix of the power equation of the represented bodies within the theatrical space.

I have deliberately chosen theatre because I strongly feel that the theatre captures the performative quality of language. Citing examples from various performance texts, I shall try to expose the dynamics of the formation of a language of resistance. I shall also highlight how the heinous act of schooling the mind, body and soul in the language of the colonizer can be or already is inverted in these performances by extending the capacity of the ‘word’ which has always remained sacrosanct to the first peoples and their way of life which was primarily oral. Since the communities I am dealing with were primarily oral communities and knowledge was disseminated orally, I would like to analyse the impact of the introduction of a language like English or French in the knowledge system of the groups concerned and how that impacted their storytelling, to be more specific narrating history. My idea is also to investigate the changing trope of orality and historically trace the growth and development of an urban form of orality, which is dynamic in its own way, negotiating all the while with an imposed modernity.

As the title of my dissertation suggests, in the idea of “deschooling” the mind, body and soul, the operative “body” contains both the

mind and soul. The derogated bodies of the colonized are the sites of resistance as pointed out by Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tomkins:

The body which has been violated, degraded, maimed, imprisoned, viewed with disgust, or otherwise compromised has particular relevance to post-colonial literatures and invariably functions within some kind of allegorical framework. Most often, the personal site of the body becomes a sign of the political fortunes of the collective culture, a sign which must be actively reassigned to a more productive representation through embodiments on the post colonial stage. In the theatre, the derogated body is a potent site of representation since the constraints and oppressions it endures can be visually displayed rather than simply described. (221-22)

I shall analyse the presence of these de-graded bodies within the theatrical space which again is situated within the urban space, thus creating a dialogue with the space within and without along with the actual bodies and the performed bodies.

With the various advances of new urban sociologies, the inadequacies of already existing models to track the production of the urban space have been felt all across the globe. This approach of redefining or demystifying the urban 'space' as a social category comes from the inherent inadequacies of already existing economic, political, sociological and semiotic fields. The fascination with the 'Native' with its various markers of degradation like the cigar store 'Squaw' can be a suitable example. More empirical work is required to understand the production of the urban space and other forms of spatial negotiations associated with it. We have to remember that this urban space is also the 'settlement' space/zone. It is an important territory for

emerging social movements, community relations/liaisons and ‘alliances’ (Davis, 2010).

The ‘Urban’ cannot be studied as a single discreet metropolitan development in a particular national setting. We have to look at it from a larger global setting in order to identify the ideologies which evolved from Colonialism to late Liberalism behind the social production of this urban space. Thus the study of this ‘urban space’ has to be multidisciplinary. We need a comparative methodology to understand the complexity of the space. It is important to remember that the ‘urban’ is continuously being defined in relation to what is ‘not’ urban.

Urbanisation as an ongoing process is also related to the notions of encroachment and violation. This is directly related to the unequal distribution of opportunities and manhandling of human resources. Simultaneously, these territories are lands of promises. They are lands of disenchantment also. The manifestation of various forms of discontent like the sense of loss, unfulfilled dreams, desires, etcetera takes a backseat behind the glittering towers of human advancements/achievements. We need to understand and question the existence of various urban centres. These structures were not there from the beginning. The urban space is the trope of conflicting ideas on land claims, Indigeneity, displacement, labour mobilisation, ecological threats, and etcetera. The existence of urban space/s also produces borderlands and often promotes the cohabitation of several borderlands even within the defined ‘urban’ space. If we consider these urban spaces as negotiations of neocolonial

paradigms, then one cannot ignore the various forms of ‘performing discontent’ from several communities in these emerging territories.

The radical offshoot of performing the discontent that deals with broken images and promises within these ‘monitored systems’ in the urban space is the burgeoning area of multidisciplinary studies which I have endorsed earlier.

In trying to map these ‘performing discontents’ as pedagogic shifts, to be more specific, paradigmatic shifts in the global context, my idea was to relocate pedagogy outside the imperial framework of “understanding” the activities of the “others”. Donald Preziosi critically engages with this discomfort in a theoretically sound way in following words:

Modernity is thus the performance of the ethics and politics of identity, at every scale from the person to the race. It exists as a virtual site constituting the *edge* between the material residues, relics, and dreams of the past and the adjacent dream space of the future. It is what is perpetually in-between two fictions: origins in an immemorial past and the destiny of its to-be-filled future. The fundamental labor of the nation and its parts ( that cyborg entity conjoining the organic with the artifactual) was to use the image of its origins, identity, and history as the reflected source and truth of that projective fulfilled destiny-a room of whose walls, and whose floor and ceiling, are mirrored. (33)

In the Global context, the situation of the Aboriginal People in Canada and India , how it was and how it is perceived today within the academia and other social institutions, can serve as an example in both Canada and India to substantiate the claim of spatial negotiation in the context of the increasing visibility of various minority groups in the urban space. Immigration and international labour mobilization/politics can be cited as another example in this context.

Since I have already introduced two important conceptual categories for my research i.e. the ‘body’ and the ‘Neo-liberal urban space’, it is important at this point to explain the interplay of these two categories across my research. The body of the colonial subject is not her/ his own. Since Indigeneity is produced, “...the body is linked to the materiality of the self, family, community and the environment” (Altamirano-Jimenez, 65). The body of the colonizer is the site of all resistance, knowledge, power, identity in relation to space, here the Neo-liberal space.

The purpose of this research was to trace the unfolding pattern of Neo-liberalism in specific locations and to show how the bodies define themselves within the Neo-liberal paradigm and how they are being defined continuously by other players of the Neo-liberal dance. Some of the major areas that are connected with this interface of Indigeneity and Neo-liberalism are:

- Indigenous Identity vis-à-vis various constitutional Rights and Neo-liberal policies
- Citizenship and the urban Indigenous phenomena
- Alterities and censorship

The major trope of understanding these complex relationship would be land as an important category because “...in Canada the myth of emptiness and ‘un-improved’ land, for example not only validated Indigenous dispossession but also shaped the political and legal corollaries that constricted this country as a settler space(Altamirano-Jimenez, 71)

As I visualize alterities as ‘performance’ of the “bodies in dissent”<sup>9</sup>, the notion of performativity becomes a critical tool for engaging with the visual representation ,within the codified theatrical space and the ‘city as a palimpsest’ (Tiwari, 2010) in its diverse manifestations to de-code the process of identity formation with its multiple contingencies.

Conducting the research for this dissertation was a journey which was extremely complex as the questions I faced again and again were centered around why India and Canada? Comparing India and Canada was definitely not an arbitrary choice but to examine the distinct manifestations of Neo-liberalisms in different locations and show how that affected the cultural productions of the tribes in question. Since the locations were of primary importance, the model of comparing these two realities had to be restructured. Often the inadequacies of the available model of my discipline in accommodating a multidisciplinary approach only broadened the scope of literary studies in India. “A historically grounded comparative analysis reveals how reclaiming certain Indigenous rights and mobilizing certain concepts in the present stem not only from the opportunities opened by global articulations of Indigeneity but also from different geographies of colonialism”(Altamirano-Jimenez, 8).

Closely aligned with the anxiety quotient that settles around the disciplinary boundaries of Comparative Literature are the ideas of nation, nationality,

---

<sup>9</sup> Brooks. Daphne A. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom*. Duke University Press:2006 (Print)



national identity, representation, marginalization of groups etc. Just as there are many Indias inside the geopolitical entity called INDIA as defined by the constitution, there are many Canadas within what we know as Canada that officially endorses the coexistence of several cultures if not Nations. Both the countries have a colonial history and these particular moments of interventions and subsequent historical events of human dislocation and genocide have contributed immensely to the idea of studying the two realities along if not similar but parallel lines of critical enquiry. It is an imperative to concentrate on the forms of post-colonialities ( if at all!) of these two countries to understand the various ‘silences’ and ‘alliances’ within the national borders. Apart from the “two solitudes” the internal negotiations of the several ‘silences’ define the national character of the cultural productions of Indigenous groups in Canada. Similarly, in India what we understand by ‘Indian’, as far as the cultural productions are concerned, is haunted by the shadowy presence of untold and unheard stories that challenge the official His-tories from below.

In “The Ends of Irony: The Politics of Appropriatenes” Linda Hutcheon in defining the multicultural, multiracial nature of Toronto, writes (quoted extensively):

Since 1971, Canada has had an official government policy of what is called “multiculturalism”; in 1988 the “Act for the preservation and enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada” was passed. The term has always been accepted as a description of the demographic realities of Canada, but the policy and law have been seen in different ways. Some view it still as a federal government ploy to divert attention from Quebec separatist energies; others accuse it of assimilationist aims. The word and policy certainly gained currency when

Canada's unofficial self-image as a northern nation was being challenged from within by the immigration of people from southern European and non-white nations, largely those of the British Commonwealth. The law has often been called custodial, paternalistic, anachronistic, reductive, retentive; it has been said to create an enforced inclusiveness and a kind of ethnic industry. But its defenders argue that, as an ideal of civic tolerance, it has liberal and liberating possibilities. It makes room for diversity and specificity as the defining characteristics of a nation that seems to feel it is in need of self-definition. (395)

She also rightly points out how settler colonies like Canada who have marginalized or exterminated the Indigenous populations have a very different version of history from those who were forcibly colonized. Before plunging into studying analogies, here Canada and India, it is important to understand the different forms of governmentality. It is important to understand whether a nation has fought for political independence or has evolved as a form of government out of imperial institutions. I think this explains why Canada and the cultural productions in Canada perpetually strive to ascertain the politics of identity, which is borne out of the various identity crises of the subjects. Closely associated with this idea of 'governmentality' is the politics of Neoliberalism which tries to "white wash" the negotiations of the 'variants', the 'deviants' by designating / allocating several roles to the variants (Pollner, 27-33). It is slightly different from the 'deviant model'(Pollner) of labeling. Because of her/his active role, individuals are regulated from 'inside'/within in a Neo-liberal setting. In the case of Neo-liberal governmentality, which is a kind of governmentality based on the predominance of market mechanisms and of the restriction or the action of the state, the knowledge produced, allows the construction of auto-regulated or auto-correcting selves since they have a designated role to play. In recognizing

their difference, the state regulates their activities. If 'difference' is seen as a category, as I have mentioned in the beginning, "...difference here is as between considered (or considering yourself) by metropolitan standards because your 'official' culture is generally seen as continuous with and derivative of Empire's, and doing so because your indigenous culture is radically different from that of the imperial power" (Hutcheon, 396).

Various narratives by immigrants authors, performers, activists have challenged the happy coexistence from below. The 'Dark Sides of the Nation' (Bannerji, 2001) have been exposed in critical theories. Sociological studies of immigrant women in Canada have exposed the manhandling of human resource. When I say manhandling, I mean the plight of South Asian women who had migrated with their husbands for better opportunities in the promised land of Canada and who finally end up working in coffee shops as janitors despite having university education which is not recognized in their new adopted homeland. Bloor street might offer cuisines from across the globe, but it would be worth mapping the trials and tribulations of the dark girl in an Ethiopian Store or the narrative of a Vietnamese school teacher or the Caribbean women in a Bank or the Bangladeshi woman at Tim Hortons. They have their way of looking at Canada as probably different versions and experiences highlighting the polyphony of the post modern fractured self. In order to study the 'variables' within the Neo-liberal set up we need to understand not just chronologies but a synchronic study is equally important with special focus on an intersectional approach to literatures on the plight of human beings in these forms of colonies . It is important to understand the

coexistence of the various sociologies of differences in the manufactured spaces.

Hartmut Lutz rightly points out that “when it comes to the Indigenous people on Turtle Island, the relationship between the land, language, culture and national identity is most evident. As Jeannette Armstrong writes that, ‘I am claimed and owned by this land, this Okanagan...’”( Lutz, 2007, 13). Aboriginal peoples were driven off their former territories and have no access to their ancestral home or their sacred sites. How can one forget “the profound impact that land has on shaping human cultures as distinct ways of life, not only economically but equally in terms of ethnicity and nationhood” ( 11) and the related debate around the Oka Crisis<sup>10</sup>—an event that changed the context of Indigenous solidarity and redefined Indigeneity in the global context—as most Indigenous communities across the globe have and still are encountering the problems of dislocation

---

<sup>10</sup> To understand the event of Oka one needs to situate it within the series of event that have contributed to the idea of Indigenous Sovereignty in Canada which probably starts with the participation of Aboriginal people in the Second World War, where they saw another world.  
1939-45- Aboriginal Soldiers in Second World War  
1951- Revision of the Indian Act.  
1966- Hawthorn Report  
1969-Indian Agents withdrawn from Reserves  
1971- Formation of National Indian Brotherhood  
1973- Beginnings of Indian control on Education  
1975- Proposal for Constitutional change  
1981- Recognition of Metis and Inuit People  
1984- Rights of Indian Women recognized in Bill C-31  
1990- Oka Dispute flares into violence. The seventy nine day confrontation at Oka between Mohawk and Federal and Quebec government over a piece of traditional burial ground being converted into golf course was a major reason for the establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People in 1991-96. (Source: Various sections from Olive Dickason, Olive Patricia. *Canada's First Nations*. For further details please see Works Cited)

and language. In the case of the immigrant there is always this longing for this old place of belonging. Their critic of the official policy is often centered around this debate of what is to be 'at home' which is a transnational, transgenerational issue which makes most of us diasporic in our own ways. The relationship of the aboriginal people and settler societies reflects the tension associated with Land claims. In this context it is important to mention the contribution of the indigenous women in protecting their lands for their posterity. The Activism of a group of educated Aboriginal women touring in Canada, raising general awareness around the Alberta Tar Sand Project should be taken into consideration and I have discussed that in the section on Indigenous Sovereignty Week 2010. Occupy Wall street triggered a mass consciousness amongst several non-indigenous youths in the city of Toronto. It opened up a possible dialogue between Indigenous people and settler/immigrants who accept the fact that "We are on occupied land". The Indigenous Sovereignty Week 2010 organized a Great Indian Bus tour in the city of Toronto. The primary objective of this ride was to identify Aboriginal Trade Routes and tracing aboriginal History in the city of a Neo-liberal space called Toronto. The inadequacy of disciplinary boundaries in incorporating these aesthetics of resistance was long felt within academic practices. The importance of situating particular events, or moments in history outside the boundaries of Nation necessitated the birth of a particular discipline or approach/attitude towards reading 'cultural texts'. Comparative methodology extended the horizon of human 'understanding'. It emphasized the importance of a synchronic approach to particular events in history but not completely ignoring the diachronic approach. Canada's cultural productions thus became

a part of Comparative Literary studies in India in the form of Area Studies. This was to map several realities from our location. Managing diversities have always been a challenge for both the countries. Official policies have often failed to understand the relationship of land and people. Encroachment of land is often a part of Multinational projects even in India. It is part of my doctoral dissertation to map the various discontents of Indigenous communities in two Neo-liberal Urban spaces of the city of Toronto and Ahmedabad. By comparing the realities of marginalized communities, alternative Indigenous methodologies might replace established academic models of managing Human Resources. This requires in-depth analysis of the activities of marginalized communities who bear the brunt of economic growth and international politics.

Understanding the locatedness of specific literatures within specific cultures and histories can initiate dialogues between disparate literatures as well as between literature and its neighbouring cultural spheres. Comparative Literature enables research that is among the best and most exciting and it is precisely this excitement that prompted me to formulate my methodology of reading the two forms of colonies and the negotiations of the tribes in question within two Neo-liberal economies.

## Chapter 1: Colonising the Body Soul and Mind

When “TRUTH” has to be told “Reconciliation” is impossible...

---

For too long in Canada the image in the public’s mind has been one of the *vanishing Indian* (emphasis added by me), fading off into the sunset on horseback with feathers dangling behind. Either that or the image of the assimilated Native, with shirt and tie and office job, indistinguishable from his workmates except for his brown skin [at times even not that]. Neither scenario turned out the way people might have imagined it. Certainly Aboriginal people are still here, but their aspirations have seldom been those entertained by other Canadians. (Hedican, 182)

Since this chapter would deal with the complex notion of ‘Is Canada Postcolonial?’, rather de-mystify the term post-colonial ala Laura Moss, it is worth mentioning that “the question of Canada’s national identity in a comparative postcolonial framework still relies on the emphasis placed on the ‘basic similarities’ and/or the ‘wide contrasts and local differences’ of colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial histories, locations, and cultures” (1). Where would one situate the Aboriginal people even in this valid debate? The inclusion of cultural texts by Aboriginal people will not change the attitude of the people who would frame and be fed on the academic post-colonialities in class rooms. There are critics like Judith Leggatt who in their “defence of post-colonialism” (Leggatt, 116) cites how authors like Lee Maracle “considers the very conception of post-colonialism to be ‘luxury’” (117) and defends the “post” as a prefix that “conveys the idea that colonization has happened, and the field focuses on the strategies Indigenous cultures have developed to

combat and to deal with *continuing* colonization, and on possible approaches to decolonization” ( 117). Being homeless in Canadian winter might have triggered the various discomforts people like Lee Maracle voice with the all encompassing post-colonialities that try to situate the Indigenous as the Other in relation to “the dominant majority within the context of of liberal pluralist, multiculturalist white settler nations [who] have the burden placed upon them of being representative of their mythical and cultural originary” ( Chakraborty, 128) with a healthy dose of hybridity. The literature surveyed in support of the post-colonial conjecture is not validated by the interface of the literary and extra-literary factors that shape the various cultural productions from these forms of colonies and hence one theory cannot successfully read the multiple realities from multiple locations. A post-colonial course can dare to read a text by a black immigrant lesbian author writing in English, a performance text by a Gay Metis dancer located in Toronto along with an elite, English educated heterosexual Indian male author writing in English, settled in the West or inside some fancy pleasure dome sponsored by the next publishing house, or a text by an author from Africa who wrote in English and later refused to write in English after a point of time along the same or identical theoretical framework, doing complete injustice to the multiple intersections of power politics inbuilt in the bodies that exhibit these layers of human existence.

It is with all these anxieties and trepidations that I would dare to introduce the ‘First Peoples’ of Canada and their on-going struggle within a settler colony like Canada at this juncture. As researchers, we have this task of ‘defining’ our ‘contexts’ and ‘trajectories’ which then translate into the formation of research questions and methodologies. Who were the ‘First



Peoples' of Canada is the most important question and the most contested terrain in the history of Canada. If I can extend it a bit further- in any research pertaining to the 'first peoples' of Canada. I shall use the words Aboriginal people, First Peoples, Indigenous population, Native across my thesis as I do not want to be politically correct or camouflage the discomfiture of labeling in a language whose anxiety lies with 'representation'. The discomfiture of 'representation' was my first point of departure while formulating the research question which was to examine the ethos of Aboriginality/ Indigeneity in the context of the dislocation of the First Peoples to the cities and the formation of an identity which is much more complex than the popular representations in novels by white settlers or comic books. The Aboriginal person we encounter in our urban spaces or in the Reserves, settlements or ghettos is a product of centuries of institutional subjugation. Hence, I was more concerned with the Neo-liberal citizenships that have been shaping the 'Aboriginal' from Eurocentric, upper-class, upper caste readings of the "other" in both the forms of colonies I am dealing with .

Before the arrival of the "Shallow Peoples"<sup>1</sup> , the Aboriginal peoples of Turtle Island<sup>2</sup> played a major role in shaping what we now know as

---

<sup>1</sup>A section from 'This is a story' by Jeanette C. Armstrong will clarify the usage of the word. I quote: "While walking along, Kyoti noticed a lot of new things. A lot of things changed since that last trip through here. There sure were a lot of Swallow people, and they had houses everywhere, but Kyoti couldn't find any People, or even the villages of the People". Here the People are the Okanagan people and the Swallow people are the new settlers who have occupied the land and built dam.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Iroquois Creation Story humans came to earth after the pregnant wife of a chief fell from Skyland through the hole created by the uprooting of a Great Tree. When the creatures below saw her fall, they decided to rescue her. Swans caught her and began to lower her slowly towards the water, and the others decided to dive below the surface to bring up

Canada. They were gradually forced to become the “vanishing race” as Europeans from the late eighteenth century usurped Aboriginal land to establish their colonial monopoly over the usage of land and natural resources. Primarily they used Aboriginal peoples to understand the vast expanse and diversity of the land and then over time they confiscated Aboriginal land for agriculture, mining, forestry and other forms of extraction of natural resources. The economic loss added with the introduction of horrific disease like small pox reduced the Aboriginal population drastically. Small pox was introduced through the contact with settler colonies and Aboriginal People were genetically not immune to this. This wiped out generations. Writing about or around these issues might be a form of decolonization but labeling these literatures under one straightjacket would be similar to the idea of promoting ‘Reconciliation’. According to Taiaiake Alfred:

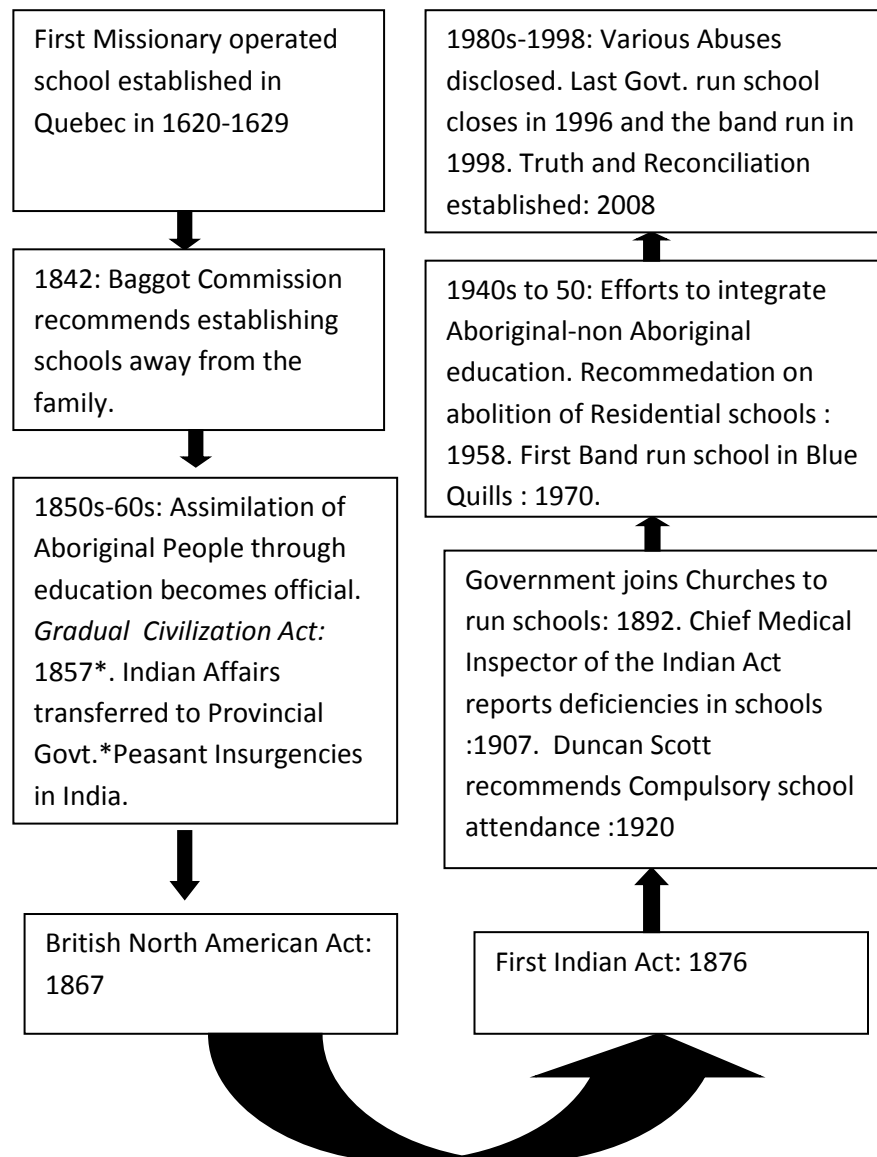
Reconciliation may be capable of moving us beyond the unpalatable stench of overt racism in social interactions; this would be an easy solution to the problem of colonialism for white people, and no doubt most would be satisfied with this obfuscation of colonial realities. But logically and morally, there is no escaping that the problems of colonialism experienced by Onkwehonwe [the Mohawk people] are a direct result of the theft of their lands and cannot be addressed in any way other than through its return to them. ( Alfred 2009, 154)

---

some earth they heard existed there. After several failed attempts, a little muskrat dove into the water and brought some mud up in its tiny paw. When the animals cast about for a place to put the mud, the Great Turtle volunteered to have it on his back. Once placed on Turtle, the earth expanded rapidly until it became the world. The swans brought the woman down to earth, which the Iroquois nations to this day call Turtle Island. ( Source: *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction*)

Though I am sure many of my Indigenous colleagues living in the urban space of Toronto will not endorse this activism of Taiaiake which is essentially location specific as I have pronounced earlier.

**Figure 1: Tracing Reconciliation**



Source: *The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2010.

If we consider the residential school system as the worst form of systematic atrocity meted out to the Aboriginal peoples in Canada, then one needs to look at other forms of exploitations also. The Aboriginal peoples were being controlled culturally, economically and politically. The Residential school system will become my point of departure to understand the ethos of contemporary cultural productions in Canada since the late 1970s. The period for which I shall choose to analyse the cultural productions would range from 1970 to 2013, with 1990 as the major event in the cultural history of Canada and its Aboriginal population. Hence, the journey would be revisiting the historicity of the “performance texts”. 1990 is a major event both in the literary history and official history of Canada for various reasons I have mentioned in my Introduction. 1990 changed the cultural ethos of Canada. Oka, as I have mentioned in my Introduction, was not the first Native insurgency in North America or the last one, but will remain as a common referral point apart from Wounded Knee, Ipperwash, Grassy Narrow, Caledonia to name a few and recently .

Disconnection with land, language, traditional way of life are the salient features of the disintegration of the Indigenous populations. Violence and self-destruction are the corollaries. It is in this context that I shall situate the alcohol consumption pattern of the First Peoples in Canada and India later in this chapter which can be reached at only through an insight into the complex web of socio-economic conditions that operate in producing the Indigenous, always in contrast with the Non-Indigenous. Alfred reads alcohol

dependency and other health problems among the Aboriginal youth in the following passage:

It is important to note as well that the anomie experienced by youth generally is combined, for Onkwehonwe young people, with colonial psychologies of self-hating, repressed rage, drug and alcohol dependency, and an overall social climate of racism which create a situation in which they are more likely than any other group of people to experience interracial violence. ( Alfred, 2009, 163)

Before entering the contested terrain of Aboriginality in this context of disintegration of mind, body and soul, I would like to clarify the basic premise on which I am developing my methodology to compare two forms of colonies and address the diverse manifestations of their negotiations in Canada and India. Canada is a settler colony and in India even after sixty seven years of Indian Independence, Indigenous groups are still having to reclaim their rights for access to land that was originally theirs. So 'Land' as a category would be a major point of reference throughout this work to understand the dynamics of Colonial intervention in Canada and the intervention of the State mechanism in the context of our Subcontinent. To understand this, one needs to go back to the seventeenth century when the focus shifted from production to land as far as taxation is concerned and how people became non-taxpayers and hence redundant and disposable.<sup>3</sup>

In both the countries, Anthropology as an emerging discipline in the 1800s, dominated the scholarly approaches to recording information about Aboriginal people. They classified peoples according to social, political, economic, religious practices and structures and above all their racial

---

<sup>3</sup>The analysis of the TAG report will explain the claim

codifications of bone structures and skin colour to mention a few. Even the historical writings of the late twentieth century failed to comprehend the ethos of the Aboriginal way of life. The latter half of the twentieth century experienced the influx of Aboriginal scholarship which I shall discuss in my chapter on the analysis of the performance texts in the context of de-colonising methodologies *a la* Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

Now coming back to the point with which I started, who then is an Aboriginal in Canada? Much of the clarification given so far by cultural anthropologists have only deluded and obscured the “whats” and “whoms” in question. J.R. Miller in his introduction to the *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction* writes:

For a long time, most of these peoples were known as Indians or Eskimos, even though the former was a misnomer and the latter an epithet used by opponents. “Indians” was adopted because Columbus thought that he had reached South Asia; “Eskimo” derived from an Algonquian description of a northern enemy who were dismissed as “eaters of raw meat”...further confusion is found in the terminology for people of mixed aboriginal and European ancestry. Originally, “Metis” and “halfbreed” were used to distinguish between those of French or British and Native background, but “halfbreed” is now considered offensive and unacceptable (9).

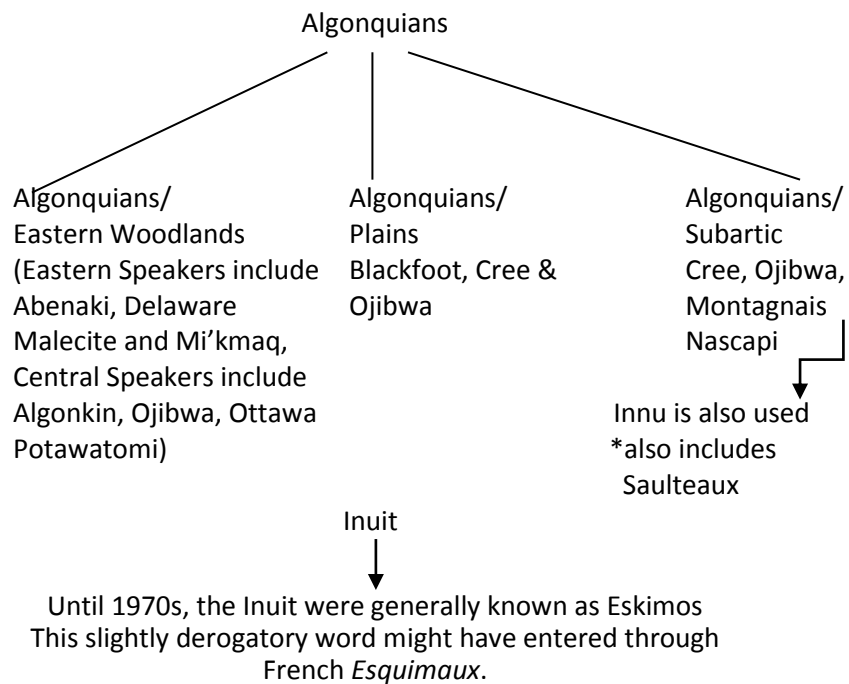
These misnomers would be addressed and contested across contemporary Aboriginal performances in both the countries. Daniel David Moses’ *Almighty Voice and His Wife* (2010, NEPA production), *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spot* (1990 CBC production) by Monique Mojica, Tomson Highway’s *Rez* plays are the major performance texts that have been trying to contest the popular ‘representation’ of the Aboriginal people within the Canadian State.

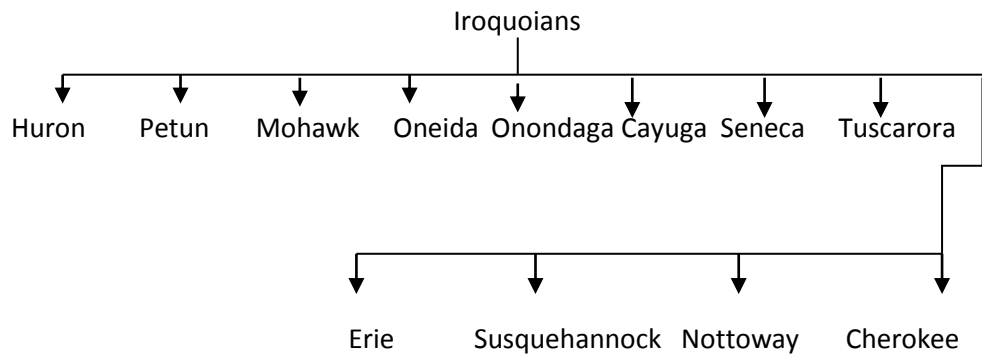
More specific terminology for Aboriginal people needs more research in the areas of the social mores of the diverse populations. But primarily Aboriginal peoples in Canada can be categorised into two groups:

1. Ethnic group or nation
2. Linguistic group

Keeping the above mentioned categories in mind the following chart will help us to identify the linguistic diversity of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Though I shall refrain from analyzing those as I am not a qualified linguist and I shall depend on secondary sources. But I feel a cursory glass is required to associate the plight of the communities I shall discuss in the Canadian context.

**Figure 2: The Linguistic Distribution of Aboriginal People in Canada**

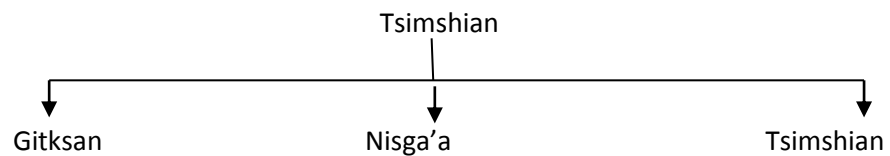
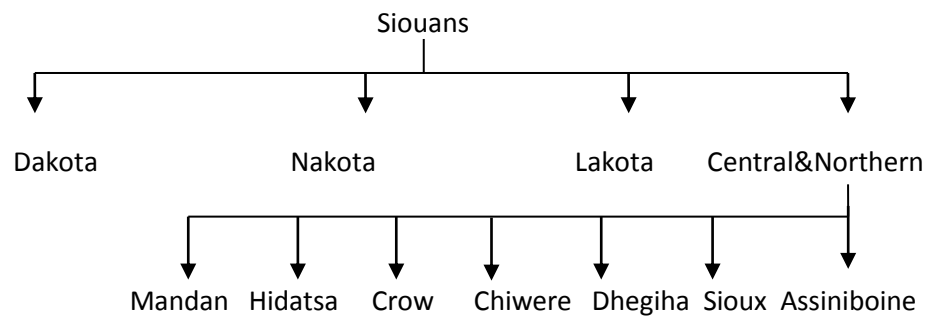
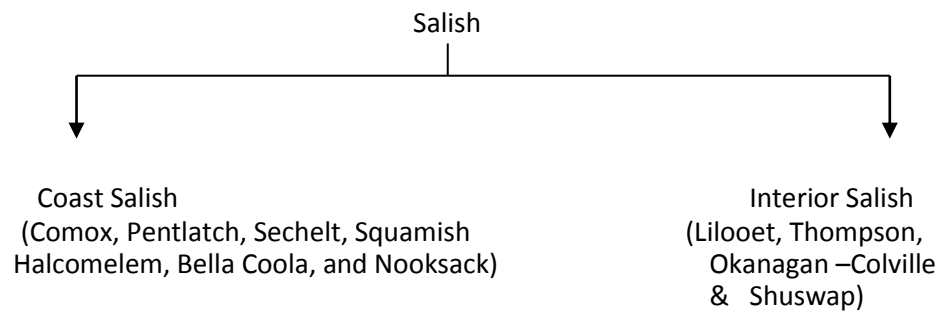




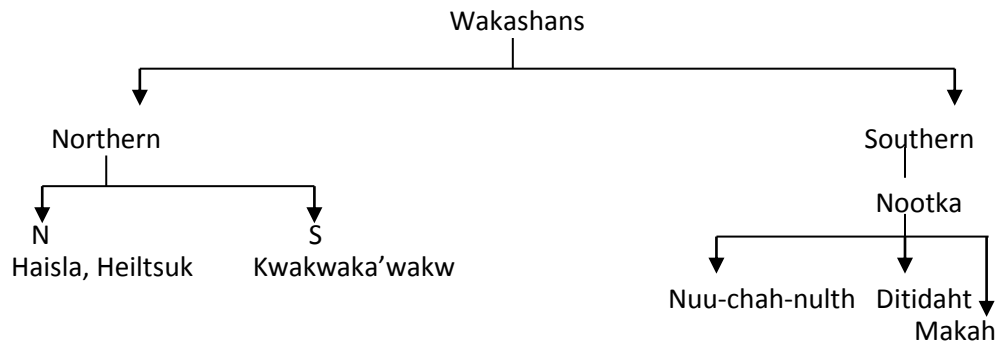
Ktunaxa

Refers to a single ethnic group with a single language

The word Kutenai is derived from the Blackfoot word *Kotona*







**Table 1: The Linguistic Distribution of Aboriginal People in Canada**  
 (Source : Magosci 2002, 2012)

For me these are again categories used by academic researchers which do not actually reflect the internal negotiations of the tribes who have been living there long before the arrival of disciplinary boundaries and they have a strong form of governance without which they could not have survived in a country like Canada.

Apart from the emergence of the Metis<sup>4</sup> people, who are the direct descendants of Native and European blood, the origins of these diverse Native communities are quite bewildering. The First Nations People have a huge range of creation stories about themselves. One common factor that can thematically connect these stories is their close association with the land. Though the popular notion of the pan Asian migration of people from Asia being connected with the story of how Turtle island was populated can be contested, there are certainly several thematic connections between the Cree or the Iroquois creation stories as I had mentioned in the context of defining

---

<sup>4</sup> The term Metis means “to mix” in Latin. ‘Canada’s Metis were formally recognized as an aboriginal people in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982’ (Dickason, 2002, 189)

Turtle Island and the Santhali creation stories known as *Jom Sim Binti*. In this context, the predominance of the trickster figures in these cultures can also be taken into account. The Cree creation Story involves a story of a flood and how a muskrat dove into the waters in search of clay and brought earth which expanded and became this world and how Wee-say-gee-chak, the trickster baked a human figure out of that clay. Now, the most important festival for promoting emerging Indigenous Artist in Canada is called Wee-say-gee-chak begins to Dance and Muskrat is a reputed magazine of the First Nations in Toronto. It is important to read these retelling of Indigenous stories in the urban context.

As I had mentioned earlier, Aboriginal people were quite involved in trade even long before the advent of the Colonisers and this connection is unveiled in the story telling of traditional story teller like Elder Louis Bird, which should be dealt as valid account narrating events of the past. The Aboriginal people had a strong connection with the land; they had their own rituals expressing their gratitude towards mother earth in both the countries. Since they did not have written documents of their past, essentially the land and associated stories bound them together and that tradition has still remained. For many first peoples in India the mountain or a piece of stone can be their God ( refer to Pictorial Glossary for *Gram Devta*). Now we can also posit scientific arguments about why they felt so but one needs to consider Aboriginal spirituality in this context. I shall elaborate that in my discussion of the ‘dream quest’ in *Almighty Voice and his Wife*.

The Aboriginal peoples were unevenly distributed before the period of contact and they were non-sedentary groups who moved across the landscape. Since the Aboriginal people had a fair idea about the “wilderness” in both the countries, the colonial period established strong relationship with the Aboriginal population which was commercially motivated and aggressive. Gradually the ‘European Founding Nations’ marginalized the Aboriginal peoples commercially. Introduction of diseases made their population shrink considerably and an attempted assimilation process resulted in tremendous loss of Aboriginal lives, culture and social mores in both the countries. Though the Fur trade flourished with the French, the worst epidemic of small pox was introduced with this contact and thousands of Aboriginal people died. As Miller points out:

By far the worst was epidemic disease, which killed tens of thousands over the centuries. The first recorded sufferers were the Huron, who lost between one-third and one-half of their numbers to diseases and aggression by the Five Nations Iroquois in the late 1630s and 1640s. The western interior also saw major epidemics in the 1730s, 1780s, and 1830s.... Similar patterns of epidemic disease, which was invariably introduced at fur trade posts, were to be found in British Columbia, especially after the maritime phase gave way to the land-based trade early in the nineteenth century. ( 2009, 22)

As the focus shifted towards an agrarian society, the Government felt that the Aboriginal people were obstacles and hence they had to be forcefully displaced. The process continued even when Canada emerged as an industrial nation and cities were built to accommodate the people they brought from other colonies. It is interesting to note that Canada never tried to convert its Aboriginal peoples into workforce. Cherokee author and academician Daniel

Heath Justice once told in a discussion that by that time the Aboriginal population had declined by considerable numbers.

The first well documented revolt against encroachment was the rebellion organized by Louis Riel<sup>5</sup> around the Red River Settlement in Canada. Similarly the Denotified Tribes in India were probably the only people who never ever surrendered and continuously went on developing alliances and even supplied weapons to fight the British Imperial forces but they soon became redundant and so were their occupations. The Dhekaru Lohar community in West Bengal and Jharkhand extracted iron from the land of this region which is still famous for ferrous oxide and made weapons and supplied it to the armed rebellion of Bengal against the British Raj. According to local historians they might have travelled across eastern India and landed in Rajasthan as well.

The mid half of the nineteenth century experienced the influx of treaties with the settler “fathers” and the Aboriginal people of the British colonies. The Indian Act (1876)<sup>6</sup> and its subsequent amendments in Canada and the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA, 1871) were efforts to monitor the

---

<sup>5</sup> In the midst of hunger and discontent that plagued the Red River region during the period of 1862- 68, Louis Riel, who studied law in Montreal, resisted the interventions of the Canadian Government especially the Hudson Bay Company who had sent surveyors in the region without consulting the Metis People. He soon became a leader and was elected president Red River’s first provincial government in 1869. The consequent of this Metis stand was the formation of the province of Manitoba in 1870. But the Metis people continuously faced challenges as assimilation into the dominant society proceeded. The anxiety was also around interventions from other nations and subsequent loss of lands. By 1869-70 the Metis people were being outnumbered by the infiltration of more whites who settled in that region with the near-completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1885 Riel proclaimed a provisional government backed with a ten-point Bill of Rights asking for basic rights like health, education and access to land. An unsuccessful battle broke out and Riel was hanged along with other casualties. The Metis ended up as “road allowance people” living on the fringes of the white settler and Indigenous communities ( Source: Magocsi, 2002)

<sup>6</sup> Refer to Appendix 1 for The Indian Act of 1876.

activities of the Indigenous population in both the countries . Through the Indian Act, the government not only tried to deprive the First People of their hunting, fishing, gathering rights but tried to assimilate the Aboriginal peoples. Miller aptly summarises:

Perhaps the most important was a perverse educational policy, but also significant were efforts to crush Indigenous cultural practices, to reshape the economic foundations of western peoples especially, and to impose Euro-Canadian notions of governance on aboriginal communities across the country. West of Ontario, the locus for much of this campaign was the reserves that in due time were portioned out in compliance with the numbered treaties of the 1870s...the collapse of the buffalo economy was rapid and total, the shaggy beasts almost completely disappearing by 1879 and leaving Plains people destitute...The Department ( Department of Indian Affairs) insisted upon a centralized and paternalistic administration of the reserve affairs, leaving native peoples little scope for initiative or risk taking (2002, 29)

We would encounter the deplorable condition of the reserves in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* (1986). It is not only the condition of the reserves, but the anxiety of a Young Rez Guy has also been documented in the article 'Should Only Native Actors Have the Right to Play Native Roles?'. He writes:

...what about the next generation of Native Playwrights? Will they, too, one day find themselves standing on that subway platform-late at night, stoned, drunk out of their skulls, not a penny in their pockets, no future in sight-and those silvery tracks down below gleaming up at them in a manner most, enticing? (2001, 26)

The government did not restrict themselves by just controlling the economy of the reserve, they actually converted the reserves into open prisons. As agricultural practices declined in these reserves, reserve land became “surplus” and the band council<sup>7</sup> were then forced to surrender land for Government usage. Reserves became panopticons.

Activists like Alfred express their disillusionment with the activities of the band council that mediates between the federal fiscal policies and the Indigenous populations:

Just imagine how different things would be in Canada today if band councils had seized the opportunity to make meaningful change during the most recent era of confrontation that culminated with the Oka crisis in 1990. They could have focused on spreading the wave of assertion and linked the reserve-based communities’ capacity to resist land incursions with the disruptive potential of urban Onkwehonwe. Or they could have started promoting education as a way to reduce people’s dependency on the colonial infrastructure and white owned business...( 2009,69)

With the gradual increase in Aboriginal population in the 1950s, the reserves were inadequate to support the Aboriginal people and they migrated to the

---

<sup>7</sup> A group of Aboriginal representatives who are appointed to monitor the economy of the reserves creating a rupture in the traditional modes of economic transaction amongst the First Peoples. As Dosman writes, ‘the Indian Act did provide for a formal instrument of local self-government on reserves: the *band council*...for a century, the band councils were rubber stamps for the rules laid down by the Indian Affairs branch....The Indians had no say in the setting-up of this political system and and the Chief and Councillors of the band council were chosen “according to the customs of the band”, that is by the Indian Agent. (22-23). This was definitely another form of assimilation.

cities. This forms the basic area of my enquiry-the negotiations of Aboriginal peoples in the urban space.

Since the notion of the urban space is “perceived”, “conceived” and “lived”, the production of the urban space is the trope of conflicting ideas on land claims, Indigeneity, displacement, labour mobilisation, ecological threats, and etcetera. The existence of urban space/s also produces borderlands and cohabitation of several borderlands even within the defined ‘urban’ space. If we consider these urban spaces as negotiations of neocolonial paradigms, then one cannot ignore the various forms of ‘performing discontent’ from several Indigenous communities in these emerging territories. The various “bodies in dissent” inhabit, construct, and represent a city and its spaces. The space is not extraneous to the body, but rather is an integral part of the performing body.

In this chapter, I shall try to explore the new urban politics behind the various cultural productions (primarily theatrical productions) of the Chhara community in Gujarat, India and Indigenous performing groups in the City of Toronto, Canada with whom I have worked closely. I shall also try to show how these cultural productions represent issues of Indigeneity, Ethnicity, Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality to demystify the images and promises of these ‘monitored systems’ . I shall read the ‘fatal alcohol syndrome’ or alcoholism as a marker of othering. The process of othering that is structured on the ‘deviant model’ of alcohol consumption, can illustrate how the above mentioned representations corroborate to the ‘drunken impulse’, closely associated with the Aboriginal peoples. It is important to situate this

particulate 'syndrome' within the current debate on dislocation of Aboriginal peoples and a memory of a past that haunts them and a future that labels them.

GIRL: It's all gone. The beef's all gone

VOICE: I don't really like beef.

GIRL: What's wrong? I didn't burn it.

VOICE: No. Cattle aren't like real meat. They're stupid.

GIRL: They're not Buffalo.

VOICE: That's for sure. They don't taste right.

GIRL: I like it. It makes me feel full.

VOICE: I'll get something else soon. My wife's not going hungry.

GIRL: It's good to be hungry.

Voice: It's better to be full.

GIRL: It reminds you you're alive. That's what my mother used to say.

VOICE: What's wrong?

GIRL: Young Dust said the snow was too deep. The treaty agent wouldn't send the supplies out. Last winter. My mother wouldn't eat. While I was away at that school. She used to like the way I cook.

VOICE: I do too, white Girl.

GIRL: I would have cooked for her.

VOICE: Cook for me now, White Girl.

GIRL: I didn't really want to be there. We had to eat this mush made out of grass seeds.

VOICE: No meat?

GIRL: Mush

( *Almighty Voice and His Wife*, Act 1, Scene 5, 12)

This particular passage from Daniel David Moses' play, which I first read and later experienced the unfolding pattern in a black box theatre in Toronto, is a layered text which weaved several historical events I have been continuously referring to so far. White Girl is a product of the Residential school and she knows she has 'bad medicine in her' ( Moses, Scene 3, 7). The nuptial night is haunted with memories of past and the present. According to historical documents, Almighty had killed a cow to feed his family and friends. He was arrested and might be set free but there were rumours of hanging him in the jail so he managed to escape from the jail. This only created fresh grounds for



the RCMP to hang him. It was quite strange for the Aboriginal people to comprehend the reason behind arresting them for killing animals to feed their family.

VOICE: That cow belonged to the Great White Mother. This halfbreed told me the guard said no way would I rot in jail like my dirty chief of a father. The Guard said I'd hang for killing that cow!

GIRL: But that's crazy. They don't hang people over meat!

VOICE: I'm not going back to that guard house, White Girl.

GIRL: They can't take you there.

VOICE: They always come after you. My Dad's is in jail at Prince Albert over the pieces of a plough. He hates their stupid farming, this stupid reserve. They even turn the prairie into a jail.

( Moses, Scene 4, 10-11)

This passage will precisely demonstrate the claim I have been making so far that how the change in the system of production affected the Aboriginal people and the various forms of ghettos in which they had to operate. The reserves were open prison!

There is always an anxiety amongst the Aboriginal men. As Lee said in one of her conversations which I will refer to again, that she was never close to her father, rather disliked him. She realized quite late in her life that why the men in her community reacted that way. Why they consumed alcohol or were victims of substance abuse. It was this anxiety of not being able to relate to what was happening around and the anxiety of not being able to provide the family with food and shelter. The men gradually lost hope and they could see that they were left in the reserves to perish with practically no means of survival except the Treaty money.

VOICE: ...When one arrow got back from the jail at Stoney Mountain, he was old. He told my father that the visions of warriors have no more power against the soldiers.

GIRL: He was old, husband. He was tired.  
VOICE: Not even Riel's vision, and he was part white.  
GIRL: It's the jail, husband. They watch you all the time. You can't move.  
VOICE: I was there when he said it.  
GIRL: And it's all stone.  
VOICE: He gave away his rifle.  
GIRL: You can't see anything but stones. You can't see anything, husband. You forget everything.  
VOICE: How can you forget everything and be a man?  
GIRL: You are not a man then. You're like a ghost. You're lost.  
(Moses, Scene 7, 20-21)

Generations lost and became shadows of their past. And as the INTERLOCUTOR in Act 2, Scene 3 would say 'that the only good Indians are the dead ones' (Moses, 35). Act 2 is a vaudeville and it is the journey of reclaiming the past. White Girl becomes the Master of ceremonies and becomes the representative of generations who had internalized colonization and wanted to disassociate themselves from their past by playing the role of the master, entering into the master-slave narrative. White Girl is the INTERLOCUTOR, dressed as the RCMP, with a white paint on her face like the Ghost of Almighty Voice, a voice from the past entering into a dialogue with the various representations but much more confident while he reacts to the INTERLOCUTOR. He is 'from the One Arrow Reserve, Treaty Number Six.' (Moses, Act 2, Scene 4, 39).

GHOST: And ultimately Sir, I am like a newspaper in that I am read all over-the countryside.  
INTERLOCUTOR: *Red* [emphasis added] all over, sir? A most colourful conceit. Bloody good as our cousins would have it. Newspapers are our pass to an understanding of the reserve and the life of its denizens.  
GHOST: And we don't have to go to the Indian agent to get them. The passes.  
INTERLOCUTOR: Are you making one at me, sir? (hitting him) Did you read how we're teaching our primitive friends agriculture?  
GHOST: That'll bring them down to earth.

INTERLOCUTOR: And we are giving them the benefit of our modern tongue.

GHOST: They'll need no other one, our kingdom come.

INTERLOCUTOR: Did you read how tranquil and subordinate they've become under our wise and humane government?

This definitely adds to the politics of writing in the benefit of writing in the modern tongue of the colonizer and that too quite effectively in a vaudeville where the actors have painted their face all white, enacting in a room full of white audience with a healthy dose of 'dirty Indians' here and there.

The Ghost gradually occupies the centre stage and retaliates with his 'native humour'.

GHOST: Ahem. Ahem. Give me some rum or I'll shoot you in the bum. I need *fire water* [emphasis added] for a starter.(Moses, Scene 6, 45)

The Ghost of Almighty 'de-feathers' the Indian in the guise of the Interlocutor and brings out the White Girl in her by continuously threatening her with all the designated roles of an Indian in the popular media. He performs all the role the INTERLOCUTOR wants him to perform, and in turn compels the audience to read the layers of history of exploitation that the body of 'Corporal Red Coat of the Mounted Police' embodies', that is how the Interlocutor demystifies RCMP<sup>8</sup>.

Daniel David Moses leaves not a single stone unturned to provoke the audience through his puns in the ghost narrative that he has designed . By the end of Act 2, Scene Six, the following conversation between the Interlocutor and Ghost hits hard on Christian morality that was imposed through the imposition of Bible in the residential schools as the holy text that could

---

<sup>8</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

redeem the savages was even translated into Cree as Elder Louis Bird recollectes from his ‘Indian School days’.

INTERLOCUTOR: We hope our tale encouraged all and offended *none* [emphasis added]

GHOST: There ain’t no *nuns* [emphasis added] I can see out there sir.

INTERLOCUTOR: We give you laughter and tears. We give hope to all who toil and laden.

GHOST: For every girl , there is a guy.

INTERLOCUTOR: For every man, a maiden

GHOST: For every nun, a holy Ghost.

(Moses, 49)

An almost all assuring catechism class ends with this antinomian tone which frustrates the Interlocutor whose show had been completely turned upside down. The liberal licence to enact one’s role within a monitored space is challenged and the Interlocutor disintegrates by uttering the following lines:

INTERLOCUTOR:...Does it follow, sir, that our good and great Queen Victoria keeps her Prince Albert in a can? That’s where she keeps the Indians! Hear ye, hear ye! Don’t knock off her bonnet and stick her in her royal rump with a sword, sir. The word, sir, is treason. Or are you drunk? Besotted! Be seated, sir. No! Standup! You, sir, you, I recognize you now. You’re that redskin! You are that wagon burner! That ! That feather head, Chief Bullshit. No, Chief Shitting Bull[ Alludes to Sitting Bull<sup>9</sup>! Oh, no, no. Blood –thirsty savage. Yes, you’re primitive, uncivilized, a cantankerous cannibal! Unruly redman, you lack human intelligence! Stupidly stoic, sick, demented, alcoholic, diseased, dirty, filthy, stinking, ill-fated degenerate race, vanishing, dying, lazy, mortifying, fierce, fierce and crazy, crazy, shit, shit, shit, shit...

GHOST: What’s a light bulb?

INTERLOCUTOR: Who are you? Who the hell are you?

GHOST: I’m a dead Indian. I eat crow instead of buffalo.

---

<sup>9</sup> Sitting Bull, chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux, who came to Canada with 4,000 followers after they defeated the Americans in the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876. Their arrival at a time when the Buffalo herds were diminishing made for an uneasy stay, and the Sioux soon began drifting back to the United States. Sitting Bull finally surrendered to the Americans in 1881. The contradictions in his reputations were such that he has been called the greatest Indian enigma of his time ( Dickason, 2002, 261)

In an identical historical context the spirit of Budhan in Dakxin Kumar Bajarange's play *Budhan* asked a simple question:

*(After the final judgement, all actors stand still in the background while Budhan's spirit takes the front stage, Budhan addresses the audience.)*

BUDHAN: Finally...finally...tell me, what was my crime? Why was I killed? I was only eating a paan. Is even eating a paan, a crime for us? My wife is now a widow? My son is orphaned. What will happen to them now that I am gone? Did my crime lie in the fact that I was a Sabar? A DNT?;

(Bajarange, Scene XIV, 29)

Memorising events of the past, of experiences of a particular place, becomes crucial in understanding the performing bodies. In her seminal work *Space-Body- Ritual: Performativity in the City*, Rina Tiwari theorises the city as a site for both collective and individual memory where each space, each building has a forgotten story to convey. City spaces work as a palimpsest, where memories are inscribed and re-inscribed based on cultural contexts and the circumstances in which they are formed. An important aspect in contemporary urban discourse has been the unraveling of these collective and individual memories and the way in which such memories are spatialised (71).

In both the countries, the rising cityscape can be read along neo-liberal paradigms, where the city becomes the trope of urban negotiation. To accommodate more people, the cities grew at the cost of dislocation of hundreds and millions. The Toronto downtown area was actually an ancient Aboriginal trade route across the river. The Algonquian people were removed

far away from the cities in the reservations without adequate resources. There is still no proper elementary school. People from reserves have to come to the cities for education and jobs and herein lies the problem with which I started and formulated my research enquiry. This urban space is the trope of negotiation for the 'bodies in dissent'.

At this juncture it would be reiterate some factors to contextualize Indigenous performances. There are various levels of racism. It is interesting to note how institutional racism is often endorsed at the level of the Individual and even subjects who are somehow at the receiving end of this institutionalized racism internalize it as I have discussed in my analysis of Moses' play . I would like to stress that this affects and shapes the relationship of nonwhite settlers and Aboriginal people in Canada and various Indigenous and non indigenous interactions in India. Another important dimension is the structural dimension of racism:

... It refers to the way in which the rooted inequalities of society operate to justify the allocation of racial groups to particular categories and class sites. It explains how the ideas of inferiority and superiority based on socially selected physical characteristics, and which are found in society's norms and values, operate to exclude racial minority group members from accessing and participating in major social and cultural institutions. Hughes and Kallen suggest that it is structural racism that is particularly relevant when examining racism and discrimination in Canada. They contend that, because of structural racism, minority group members are denied access to the qualifications, education and skills necessary for full participation in society." ( James, 135)

Unhealthy living conditions, lack of medical facilities, repeated destructions of living cites and possibilities of losing permanent habitat, ceremonial grounds, disease, substance abuse, alcoholism, suicide and poverty plagued most of the

indigenous communities living on the borderlands of these urban spaces. Destruction of the self, community and family became a common narrative. 'Indigenising the academia' and 'Indigenous Methodologies' are some of the catch phrases used by the Indigenous people to decolonize academia in the present context and for that matter any discourse on Indigeneity. This is a pedagogic shift where the Indigenous peoples are trying to use their traditional forms of knowledge and methodology to contest the disciplinary boundaries inside the academia. Indigenous performances should be seen as important interventions in the Neo Liberal setting of Multicultural Canada or India. Though these activities are primarily aimed at promoting the cause of the Indigenous people, they percolate into common issues of racism and create mass awareness even amongst non-indigenous groups in the city of Toronto in Canada or the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat in India.

As I have already mentioned, the worst form of violence was the introduction of Residential Schools, whose impact was far more than a "schooling system that went wrong". The schools were 'a strange place' (Moses, 7) as Girl in Moses' play recollect:

GIRL: ...All made out of stone. The wind tries to get in, and can't and cries. It's so hot and dry, your throat gets sore. You cough a lot, too. I used to even cough blood. And they won't let you talk. They try to make you talk like they do. It's like stone in your mouth. ( Moses, Scene 3, 7)

The schools did enormous damage to people who experienced it themselves, as well as to the families who had survivors of the schooling system like that of Tomson Highway, Basil Johnston who were victims of the schooling system or the Sto:lo author Lee Maracle, who never attended one but had

survivors in the family. Work-load, poor diet, physical punishment and sexual abuse were frequent in the schools. Racist assumptions denigrated native culture and identity.

One needs to study the devastating impact of residential schools on First Nation individuals, families, communities to explore the lasting impact it has on the Aboriginal People in Canada and offer a close understanding of how racism permeates the project of Neo-liberal politics in developed and developing countries. My argument is that along with other factors we should attempt to treat the introduction of Residential Schools in Canada as a major event which has shaped the identity of many young Aboriginal people in Canada and their subsequent struggle in the cityscape.

One needs to understand that the Residential School System was a systematic attempt to get rid of the “Indian Problem”. With the help of the RCMP, the Federal government forcibly seized Aboriginal children away from their parents and put them into church-run residential schools where they were forbidden to speak their native languages and often faced physical and sexual abuse. Some of the children died in those schools, mostly from sickness and disease, but also from physical abuse. But it is interesting to note that when I worked at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, it was clear from the records that access to matter pertaining to Residential schools was restricted and it was labeled as “restricted documents”. From my personal experience of interacting with aboriginal youths, this “forced assimilation” continues outside the residential schools, within the urban space as well and could be read as



attitudes or behavioural patterns of the settler white cultures or the upper caste brahminical forces in our subcontinent:

... the uncritical acceptance of a negative social definition of a colonized or subordinate group typically identified by physical features (i.e, race—black, brown, yellow, red). These “racalised groups are believed to lack certain abilities or characteristics, which in turn characterises them as culturally or biologically inferior. Discriminatory or unequal treatment towards these groups is legitimized or justified in this way. (James, 133)

At the very onset I have mentioned that there will be an effort to read the various ‘representations’ of the Indigenous peoples in both the countries and analyse how they are dealing with it in their cultural productions. The drunken impulse of the first peoples is one of the favourite images we encounter in cultural productions of the West and even in this part of the globe. I would like to focus on the cultural constructs and the ideology that embraces the understanding of the drinking pattern of several Indigenous communities. It will be argued that this ‘understanding’ is intrinsically an extension of a particular prejudice which governs the non-native intellectual’s distorted beliefs in relation to the ‘natives’. This should be mentioned at the very beginning that in a way I have also entered the arena of actually reading my ‘self’ because I am intrigued by this thought whether by undertaking this self commissioned ‘task’ of discussing the plight of the first peoples vis-à-vis alcohol consumption, I will actually increase the ‘relics of bum’ without coming out with alternatives. This concern of mine might actually give rise to some other way of reading which again is being mediated by my ‘understanding’. So the area I have chosen is a dubious field no doubt and

should be dealt with very carefully. Again, a pertinent question that might arise questioning my endeavor, would be whether the area I have chosen to deal with should fall under the purview of development economics. As a student of Comparative Literature, my activities and the methodology we talk about might also come under the scanner. But I think through ‘cultural texts’ we can actually address certain pertinent social issues like alcoholism that plagues the lives of the First Peoples in Canada and India. Critical analysis can be intellectually satisfying, but the time has come when it is important to come up with serious alternatives and realize the full extent of the problem. Again when I say ‘alternative’, I am not making claims as a social reformer, I am just talking about a kind of censorship that mediates the reception of the cultural productions of the First Peoples.

The ‘popular’ has never been able to embrace the plight of ‘tribes in question’ except making tangential references to it in films/ advertisements, novels or cartoons as exhibits performing on the fringes of an elite discourse. So when I am talking about ‘alternatives’, I am actually hinting at the reception of the cultural production of the indigenous communities-works of Aboriginal peoples about themselves. Again, this category is definitely not a monolith. Each group has their own way of life and hence their expression ought to be different. I shall again not restrict my discussion to only written texts or documents, as most of the communities I have chosen to deal with, were primarily oral, as I have mentioned earlier.

Apparently the alcohol consumption pattern among the First Peoples is widely seen as a social problem. To start with, even I would read it

as a social problem. That suits the scope of a sociological enquiry. But in the course of my discussion, I shall also try to explore other avenues and deviate a bit only to scrutinize the scope of literature and cultural productions in understanding the social problem by putting the process driven expression itself under serious objective scrutiny.

The alcohol consumption pattern would be my point of departure, to read the prejudices associated with 'governance', how certain communities are monitored and projected as 'deviant'. Again, the alcohol consumption pattern would help us to explore the life of the first peoples in the reserves, their experience in the residential school system, the role of the Welfares, crime, drug abuse, infant death rate, the way censorship works at various levels, the policy of the government , the role of disseminating 'scientific knowledge' among the indigenous groups without hampering their traditional faiths and practices, the space called city, the comparatively affluent 'Aboriginal', criminalizing a particular group and so on. The aboriginal writers deal with alcoholism and drug abuse in their contemporary cultural expressions which in a way becomes a necessary tool which questions censorship from below and questions certain representations. They actually form a rupture within the grand narrative by presenting a counter discourse. The episode of Big Joe in the Rez series by Tomson Highway actually deals with this particular issue and the anxiety associated with it. The Women in the Rez are desperate to win the Bingo as they want to rescue their reserves. The women are the worst sufferers of physical, spiritual abuse on the Reserves or in the tribal settlements in India. A close analysis of a particular song by the Dhekharu Lohar community( Denotified Tribes in Birbhum,West Bengal) will

reflect the anxieties associated with urbanization and the construction of the Messanjore Dam in the name of development.

*147 Mouja tip sohite kohite thik*

*Mulya diye kore unasthan, kenel Krishna Narayan*

*Ubhoy Porbat jeno Jugolo Milon*

*Mililo Poisa Kori Sobai Kine Cycle Gadi Gwo*

*Nitya din kore Surapaan, Kenel Krishna Narayan*

*Ubhoy Porbot jeno Jugolo Milon*

*Phurailo Poisa Kori Bheve Bheve Holam Deri Gwo-*

*Je kore sei Bipad Bhanjan, Kenel Krishna Narayan*

*Ubhoy Porbat jeno Jugoloa Milon*

*Dekhiya Bhanga Ghor Prane Lage Dor Gwo...*

(Sung by Sibdas Lohar, a member of the Dhekaru community in Rajnagar, West Bengal)

Translation:

The land identified as *Mouja 147* was settled with our thumb impressions

Feasted on the exchange money, look at the Canal Krishna-Narayan

Stands in perfect union

On receiving some money people bough bi-cycle lo!

feasting on alcohol every day, Canal Krishna-Narayan

up there, the banks in perfect union

Spending all the money I stood there baffled, late

Who will be our savior, Canal Krishna-Narayan

the two banks in perfect union

Scared to see my ruined home front( Translated by Dheeman Bhattacharyya  
with the author Sibdas Lohar)

The lyrical anxiety can be situated within the context of development and here the historical event is the building of the Messanjore Dam. The lyric narrates the historical accounts of land acquisition around the area in which the Dam was erected. 147 hamlets were acquired and the State compensated with money. Villagers got easy cash in hand, bought bi-cycles which were markers of development and indulged widely in alcohol as they were never directly involved in this development programme. Soon all their money was gone and they found themselves homeless, without land and occupation.

Now, one can understand the social construction of crime, which again, is directly related to the aesthetics of development. The need to enter into a kind of dialogue has been strongly proposed in these works (the lyric I have just mentioned). These Jhumur Songs by the Dhekaru Kamar<sup>10</sup> interrogate certain available models. All our elite models of estrangement and detachment will definitely not work in this context if we want to appreciate or even try to understand the works of the First Peoples. Again, let me clarify at the beginning, that I shall not have enough scope to deal with 'Language' as an important category but it should be recorded that tampering with the

---

<sup>10</sup> One of the Denotified Tribes in West Bengal. I have precisely worked with the community near Rajnagar, Birbhum District.

mainstream vocabulary has always remained an essential tool in the hands of these artists to decolonize if not their mind but their works for sure. So in my thesis, fact and fiction will interact as it does in any discourse making the field of study more complex. So what I would actually deliberate on, is the testimonial reading of their cultures where even my intervention was clearly documented in the form of a play by the Budhan theatre group where a character Jayendra in *Kahani Meri Tumhari* ( Tale of you and me), enacting his role talked about my first visit to the community and how that changed his perception- formulating the idea of the actual reception of the received.

According to popular readings, the First Peoples have an extraordinary attraction to beverage alcohol which makes them problem drinkers. They suffer from the syndrome of ‘alcoholism’. Just like the idea of ‘born criminal’, alcoholism has been diagnosed as a disease which is usually inherited. The alcohol consumption pattern of the Aboriginal Peoples when examined in close comparison to the beverage consumption of non-aboriginals (predominantly whites), then the model that emerges in the context of Aboriginal people is the ‘disease model’ whereas Alcohol consumption in the elite white or Non –aboriginal (in our context) is the question of choice and leisure. But if we look at the context of alcohol consumption patterns in aboriginal societies, it is diagnosed as a deviation that should be cured. The alcohol consumption pattern also becomes the marker of the aboriginal identity. There is a difference between the diagnosis and the prognosis. Like many other binaries which construct the identity of an ‘authentic’ aboriginal, the alcohol consumption pattern becomes an extension of all other

assumptions emanating from the basic urge to construct an identity and then 'study' it.

At this point it is wise to note that there is a genuine concern about alcohol and substance abuse among Canada's First Peoples. When asked to rank health problems, First Nations people living on Reserves, consider alcohol abuse and drug abuse as a serious health problem affecting their people and their communities (Thatcher, 17). Now whether they consider it as a health problem or not is again mediated by the questionnaire which are cited as concrete evidences. Again it is to be remembered that before labeling alcohol consumption as a disease or problem (29) , one should remember that there has always been a tacit sanction vis-à-vis alcohol consumption in these communities at least in the communities I have worked with like the Sansis, Bauri and other communities in India. Ritual offerings of homemade liquor is quite common in several nomadic, semi-nomadic and denotified communities in India. It is interesting to note that "the indigenous peoples...were introduced to beverage alcohol by [European] traders. They were initially repulsed by the liquor, and their first reaction was to spit it out. It took the concerted efforts of the traders to teach the Indians to drink to the point of drunkenness" (128). Thatcher has shown how problem drinking becomes an "intergenerational" pattern in the reserves ( 130) which can be compared to the idea of "intergenerational criminal" or 'intergenerational prostitution' in the context of the Denotified tribes in India.

Now when this 'problem drinking is elevated to the level of crime, drinking becomes the culprit, separated from the person and personal

responsibility of the individual who committed the crime. The disease model looks at it (alcoholism) as chronic and genetic ( Thatcher, 30). The other view is to associate problem drinking/ substance consumption with ‘spirituality’. The act of getting possessed in several communities in the tribal villages of Tejgadh, near Chhote Udaipur, Vadodara, is the moment of transgression which even defies gender roles. A man getting possessed impersonates a woman and vice-versa. It is important to note that tribal communities in Gujarat have always defied gender roles. For examples a man performs the role of the *Dai Maa* or mid-wife in several parts of Chhote Udaipur, Vadodara. I shall address this misconception in the course of my discussion. The problem arises when this model which has been seen primarily seen as a health problem enters into the purview of the “mental illness” (Thatcher, 45)— a domain which has so religiously dedicated itself to the construction of the ‘normal’.

In English speaking societies, alcohol problem had long been considered as a sign of immorality, slothfulness, and character weakness as well as a moral issue. Historically speaking, disorderly behavior associated with drinking, always fit into specific social control doctrines. Those various doctrines have been translated into policies and programs designed to regulate the behavior of the available labour supply, the economically disadvantaged, and the potentially rebellious. It is to be noted that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have not been the sole targets of such policies; peasants made landless in India, the vagrants, the unemployed, the economically displaced and the variously marginalized were and are being subjected to the often draconian sweep of such regulatory policies. By referring to all these I am actually



preparing the ground for the presentation of my actual thesis. These are my tools to contest the ‘disease model’ which is seen as genetic like many other behavioral patterns which are classified to pin down certain section of the society. To understand the maxim of labeling process, Melvin Pollner deduces from H.S. Becker’s *Outsiders*(1963) to write about ‘deviance’ which according to him:

...is derived from the demonstrable inadequacies and variability of the detection and categorization of rule violations. The maxim takes its mandate from the observation that not all those who violate rules are categorized as deviant and not all those who violate rules are categorized as deviant have violated a rule. Presumably , if the classes of deviance and non-deviance were properly assembled (i.e. in perfect conformity with the criterion of rule violation), if all the faults of police and judicial processing were removed so as to provide for homogeneous categories, then labeling would be superfluous. Rule violation and application of the label ‘deviant’ would coincide and the deviant would in effect be he who has violated a rule and only incidentally he who has been labeled deviant. ( 30)

Closely associated with the ‘deviance model’ are strategies implemented by state machinery and institutions to punish, deny opportunity, promote moral rejuvenation by following a particular order or sect, and even ideas of rehabilitation—to me all these are part of the grand scheme called ‘assimilation’. This is possibly the best way to show how scientific ‘knowledge’ and religion co-exists in the colonial space to pacify and normalize the so called ‘heathen’, ‘pagan’, ‘prodigious’.....the list is a series of negations through which we can reach the ‘Ideal’, the ‘normal’. In this framework, the social problems concentrated among the poor and the dispossessed are viewed as “pathological and unhealthy” (Thatcher, 62). Such destructive behavioral pattern is then seen as “antagonistic to the normal

functioning of families, communities and societies”( 62) . The tendency then is to create a pattern to read the behaviours of minority groups. The probable categories are the Aboriginal people in industrial society, low-income groups, unemployed youth, rebellious teens and other marginalized groups including the sexual minorities. The idea is to put them in a pathology lab and invent a common law to cure the ‘deviance’ . “Therapeutic approaches to social problems, if dominant, are essentially a contradiction in terms: they offer individualized solutions to socially generated problems that require social intervention. Yet this is the major thrust in the alcohol abuse and mental health programming serving First Nations people on reserves. Paradoxically, the dominance of the therapeutic approach to this social problem completes a victimization-dependency-victimization cycle” (Thatcher, 198).

They are categorized as ‘subpopulations’ whose members vary from the standards of the majority in the wider society . Similarly, members belonging to the ‘deviant’ communities also define themselves in relation to the population living outside the ghetto. “The social and economic segregation of most reserve communities from the mainstream economy and the deprivation characteristic of the reserves themselves has created for First Nations people a sense of profound distance from Canadian society. Reserve residents tend to view themselves as living in communities that are unique and socially distant from the settlements of non-aboriginal neighbours”( 201). A suitable example would be how the mainstream population perceives the youths born and brought up in a Chhara basti of Ahmedabad or a Mallah or Dom *basti* in West Bengal or an Aboriginal Reserve in Canada. These are all tropes of “insurgencies” and the populations being potential threats as they are

not 'us', they are the 'others' who live on the fringes of our society. When we try to 'understand' the social mores of under-development in these sub-sectors where sub-humans live, our interventions are often triggered by passive empathy and not 'identification'. On one hand, drinking is elevated to the level of Stoicism by a group of analysts, on the other hand it becomes a ritual, an enactment of 'rebellion' or discord which do not actually explore the root cause of such behavioural pattern.

The term 'Firewater' "first appeared in the North American literature in the nineteenth century" ( Thatcher, 114) and its significance has been widely modified and expanded over time. Relevant literature has proved that no indigenous cultural group in the land area within what is now Canada had developed the process of preparing alcohol (114) . At this juncture, I can actually look at our own reality in India. Again this 'reality' is my own reality and it might not corroborate to the functioning of other realities even within the space called 'academia'. I know some of my Santhal friends who reside in the mufasils of Hooghly district. They are educated 'middle class' interacting with the '*bhadraloks*' on a daily basis. They visit their villages only during vacations or to attend certain religious or cultural festivals. For them alcohol is a part of their rituals and is associated with their identity. If we look at the creation myth, we come across the mention of the consumption of alcohol in *Jom Sim Binti*, the creation story of the Santhals. Pilchu haram and Pilchu buri die in an inebriated state.

Many of the literate Santhals somehow feel detached from their own communities because they reside in the urban space they participate in

their *Porobs* (festivals) occasionally. For years they have remained outside the mainstream. Even when they are visible at times now, they are invariably plagued by certain curiosities which range from the practice of witchcraft to alcoholism. Being a student of biology, a Santhal friend of mine had to quit his studies in a medical college and was forced to take up teaching as a profession for his sustenance as it is widely believed that the Santhals can never occupy responsible positions. Whatever measures have been taken so far to incorporate them in the Indian mainstream, have been in the direction of redeemability of these marginal groups, and 'school' them to become 'reliable citizens'. With rapid urbanization, overcrowding of residential areas, economic depression, unemployment, loss of landed properties, these groups are incessantly suffering from poverty, alcoholism, ill-health, unstable family lives and intermittent criminal activities.

On the other hand, the practice of regarding alcoholism as the invariable result of lack of proper means of livelihood and generally non-availability of jobs. This non-availability of work, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle then becomes the trajectory of their marginalization. It is also important at this juncture to remember the ambivalences and contradictions in the attitude of sedentary communities to itinerant ones. It was felt that these non-sedentary communities must be made to settle somewhere else but definitely not near the cities. Like the Kalandars in Delhi, Bedias in Guptipara, Hooghly or the Lodhas in 24Pgs, West Bengal, live on the fringes of the urban centre. The irony is when the elected members from these communities also fail to escalate their problems. The same thing happens in the Canadian Reserves also. The chiefs are often accused of being the real culprits. In the

Indian context, alcoholism amongst these communities has always been linked with criminality. It is important to explore the relation of criminality before I enter into the realm of 'texts'. I would like to mention the purpose of the 1871 Criminal Tribes Act in India. It is important to note how we are carrying the same legacy of looking at several communities with suspicion. The oral tradition, the only history left to the tribal communities, is usually looked down upon in general only to be addressed by academics and that too primarily to serve their own end. The option that was adopted in India was to transform the itinerant communities to industrial wage earners as opposed to the situation in Canada, with minor exceptions in the Hudson or James Bay which I have mentioned while talking about Louis Bird. It is a narrative of constant negotiations with the workforce outside the communities and the management. If we can digress a bit and look at the Criminal tribes and the British policies implemented to control them, their massive conversion to Christianity was seen to be the only option to mobilize the sedentary communities. The songs they sing in their leisure time glorify the Salvation Army and in details talk about their criminal past. It is almost as if they completely disown their past, the past without the reality called 'Colonization'. I shall elaborate on this performative element later referring to Meena Radhakrishna's work in South India. In the Canadian context, "Life in the Salvation Army symbolizes failure in the larger society; it is a depressed, although not necessarily brutal, home for male outsiders....Among the native people in general, with the exception of the *Affluent*, there appears to be none of the social stigma attached to the Salvation Army that there is in white society" ( Dosman, 111) Or is it merely a kind of survival strategy that is

being adopted for the sake of secure sustenance? Whether the imposed history of the outsider becomes a part the collective memory of such groups is to be discussed at length but I shall refrain from doing so at this juncture. The full potential of the oral form has never been used to resist the dominant voice though they have voiced their difference on material grounds. If we look at the Santhal community closely, they have voiced their differences at times but have never really used it in their cultural productions. I am convinced they don't even bother to think that they have been wronged seriously because they received certain allowances and reservations unlike the DNTs, who have received nothing except being clubbed with other schedule tribes and castes in the Indian context.

A careful exploration will show that there has been a remarkable change in the cultural expression of these communities. Daxin Bajrange along with other performers and his compatriots from Budhan Theatre are precisely trying to claim their own voice through the Budhan theatre. Their documentary *It is the Music* (2010) conjured out of the liquor making utensils is a marker of this change. The street plays actually always address the plight of the Chhara community in Gujarat with a strong indication of an impending change. Interestingly they are writing and performing plays to address other concerns that are bugging them as human beings if not as citizens.

I think by now I have actually succeeded in touching upon certain pertinent issues vis-à-vis the deliberate marginalization and calculated representation of several Indigenous communities. I shall now look at a few texts to substantiate what I have claimed to have deduce from the organized

history of subjugation in the two forms of colonies. In very simple words, I shall address a simple trend (as far as cultural texts are concerned) that emanates from the situation I have so far discussed. The didactic tone in several texts addresses issues pertaining to alcoholism, witchcraft, ill-health, hygiene, poverty, education etc. The city becomes synonymous to opportunity. Assimilation becomes a major concern where aping the lifestyle of non-natives is seen as the only way to come out of the gutters. When one encounters all these in a play or short story written by a contemporary Indigenous artist, one invariably doubts the role of these cultural productions. Without fail they become the spokesperson of their respective communities. It will be a great mistake if we consider them only as propaganda although none can actually ignore the didactic tone of certain works. The performative elements in these texts provoke the community to enter into a kind of dialogue with their past. In addressing the problems that are plaguing the community, playwrights like Thomson Highway perform the role of the community elder who pass their 'knowledge' onwards as heirloom. It is generally not imposed from outside. It works from within the community. *The Rez Sisters* by Highway begins with a call from the urbane space—the big bingo in Toronto. The sisters on the Rez are desperate to improve their lives on the reserve. Toronto becomes the place where 'educated Indian boys can get jobs' (Act 1, 7). Pelajia bemoans the deplorable condition of the roads in the reserve—"and dirt roads! Years now that old chief's been making speeches about getting paved roads 'for my people' and still we got dirt roads all over" (7). So the federal government is not only the target but actually the representatives of the community are under the scanner. The other option is marrying outside the

community. This was a dangerous proposition as far the Indigenous women were concerned. According to the Indian Act prior to 1985, Aboriginal women who married a non-Aboriginal could lose her status as an Indian along with her children. The Bill C-31 amendment to the Indian Act of 1985 was designed to remove this discriminatory piece of legislation ( Hedican, 227)

I have already mentioned earlier that the alcohol consumption patterns of the Indigenous groups are studied in close proximity to the available behavioural patterns of the non-aboriginals. Such notions filter through the general consciousness and become an accepted marker of the aboriginal identity. I quote Annie, a character from *The Rez Sisters*—“ And then I will go to all the taverns and all the night clubs in Toronto and listen to the live bands while I drink beer quietly- not noisy and crazy like here” (13). So it is perceived that one has to imbibe the drinking patterns of the ‘Whites’ to be there among ‘them’. The welfare state takes care of everything including the “mentally ill”. So the adoption of an ‘pathologically’ ill daughter Zaboonigan, becomes an excuse to draw the ‘Welfare’ cheque in her name apparently for many people on and off-reserve but Zaboonigan represents the life of many teenager on the reserve, the lost Aboriginal women and above all the symptoms of a lost generation . The Sisters on the Rez are products of the welfare programme and hence they are made to be completely dependent on the federal policies as they do not have their hunting, fishing and gathering rights. They don’t know how to generate profit on their own. They have their own way of looking at life but are not equipped with the ability to fulfill it. Thus the City and the Big Bingo cloud their memory which in a way detach them from their traditional beliefs and thoughts. The sisters have to deal with



their drunken husbands and they dream of a day when there shall be enough work for their male counterpart and they know very well that it is the only way to rescue the men from alcohol dependence.

ANNIE: Awe these white guys. They're nicer to their women. Not like Indian guys. Screw you, drink all your money, and leave you flat on your ass.

Emily: Yeah, right. Apple Indian Annie. Red on the outside. White on the inside. (Act Two, 86)

The characters are caught between two stools. For them adopting the white way of life is the only option which they have not yet experienced. The life on reserve which they are currently experiencing is deplorable and undesirable and they desperately want a way out. The impact of the Christian redeemability is so strong that it haunts the sisters on *Rez*:

EMILY: When I die, I may not go to Heaven, I don't know if they let Indians in...(Act Two, 87)

This is a genuine concern because the aboriginal existence has been a subject of study by 'outsiders' who propagate the concept of immoral, licentious aboriginal self which requires external intervention to be redeemed. The only escape for the Rez sisters was to participate in the Bingo. They Won. But the play ends with a note that this escape was not permanent, could not possibly ever be. The Reserve is a reality and they still have dirty roads. The play is a ritualistic expression of the constructs that are popular. The medium of theatre thus becomes a potential tool to enact the various types so that a counter discourse might also arise which can address not only the Aboriginals but also of the non-aboriginals. The presence of the traditional figure called 'Nanabush' is roped in to remind the audience of their past and interrogate why Nanabush left them thereby hinting at the degradation within the

community. The message is that the change has to come from within and not without. Nanabush, the Ojibway trickster embodies the assaults and trauma of the body of the Aboriginal. The body is the site of various forms of violations.

*Hindich* by Gorachand Murmu, translated as *Asamka*<sup>11</sup>, is the symptomatic text which deals with alcoholism in general and the various manifestations of the wide ranging effects of alcohol consumption which plagues the Santhals, witchcraft<sup>12</sup> being a prominent example. Gaju *matal* (inebriated) dies from the consumption of local liquor. According to the villagers, a *daini* or witch is responsible for the mishap and Kachha buri, the alcohol supplier becomes the soft target. The villagers move away from the actual problem of alcohol consumption and concentrate on the ritual of evoking the spirit. Tanbor Master the village school teacher is the only exception. He is literate and thinks the only way to save his community is through the proper dissemination of education. He cannot identify with his own community but anyway has to participate in the ritual, or listen to the *Jaan Guru* or the Shaman. The story ends with a death. Khandi, a young woman commits suicide. She was pregnant. The story ends with another problem which questions several government programmes on teen pregnancy. The story follows the realistic mode of representation. The narrator presents a realistic description of a Santhali village and hints at the task which has to be undertaken by educated youths like Tanbor Master.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Asamka* (Santhali), Trans. Dheeman Bhattacharyya. Dasgupta, Sayantan et al eds. *Sabda Khonje Edesh O Desh*. Kolkata: Ababhas, 2006. Print.

<sup>12</sup> An informative account on this is available in the Census of India 1931 (3Vols) by J.H. Hutton. Please refer to Works Cited for more details.

From the discussion above one can conclude that the influence of the popular theory which deals with the First Peoples' predisposition with alcoholism is powerful within the communities also. The social and economic segregation of most communities from the mainstream economy has created a sense of profound distance from the wider discourse. In Canada, the reserve residents tend to view themselves as living in communities that are unique and socially different from their non-aboriginal neighbours. In India they are dynamic but are subject to mistreatment from their neighbouring non-aboriginal communities. The roles of religion and Government have always been to elevate their position but at the cost of disassociating themselves from their traditional way of life. In Canada, the Reserves act like 'incubators'(Thatcher, 202). The panoptican situation was implemented to monitor them and "normalize" them. So instead of incentives and other assistance the "another solitude" (201) should be given the opportunity to find their way out within the Neo-liberal framework which allows the alterities as a ritual to be continued, repeated to keep the mask of 'inclusion' intact. "The Margin, the periphery, the edge, now is the exciting and dangerous boundary where silence and sound meet. It is where the action is..."(Kroetsch, 356-7)

Since my primary objective was to identify the external changes forced upon Indigenous societies by industrial nations through their various policies of assimilations and how that has impacted the lives of Indigenous peoples in the colonies, the analysis of the political lyric (by the Dhekarus) will help me to substantiate the point that I have already raised:

*Lohak Karbar Hori Laila Go-British*

*Lohak Karbar Karhi Laila*

*Petek Lagi Nukai Nukai Bone Jhare,*

*Loha Gelaila Bare Bare*

*Pulicer Hathe, Porholo Dhera Gwo*

*Lohak Karbar Kadi Laila...*

(Translation: The British came and snatched our iron works. For our livelihood we had to go from one jungle to another. The police caught us whenever we went for our work in the forest.)

*Ki Koribo Kahan Jabo Kahan Jaiya Praan Jurabo*

*Hay re Hay...Lohak ko Karbari Kadik Laila*

( Translation: So where do we go and find solace...hay re hay...the British snatched our livelihood)

*Eho Dukh British Dai gela Gwo*

*Lohak Karbari kari laila....*

(The British has given us all this pain...they took away our *karobar*)

This text was collected by Dhekaru Lohar activist Sibdas Lohar and translated by Dheeman Bhattacharyya.

The forced dislocation of tribal population from their ‘homelands’ to urban centers can be traced as the common thread that would connect the various forms of colonies I shall subsequently talk about. Deprived of their traditional practices like hunting, fishing, gathering, the urban tribal population in countries like Canada, India, New Zealand and Australia failed

to adopt the imposed model of generating resources by industrial societies and consequently became easily disposable within Neo-liberal economic practices. For example, if we consider the case of the Dom, Bauri and Bagdi communities in the old Zamindari system in the rural parts of Bengal, these people were appointed as the *lethels*( sentinels) to guard the property of the local Zamindars. With the alliance with the British, the prospective duty of guarding property was handed over to the government. Hence these people became jobless and later revolted by forming groups who looted the rich and were popularly known as the *Thugs*. I have discussed this in *Ghumantoos: The Roadies of Canada and India*<sup>13</sup> at length citing examples from the band formed by Govinda Dom.

Since my primary focus is on ‘space’ as a category, one needs to be careful about the binaries like urban/rural which were not there as such in the societies I shall talk about. As Professor Himani Banerjee enlightened us in one of her informal talks that the urban /rural are apparently phenomenally different but in reality they are linked and connected. The divisions are all products of the process of industrialisation. The discourse of dislocation associated with the movements of people from the ruralis to the metropolis is contained in the proliferation of power relations like the ruler and the ruled. This is a part of capitalist colonization, which is not marked by genocide as such but is a long term ‘occupation’, the blue print of the formation of a colonial society with its diverse ramifications. This is a process which culminates into the formation of a colonial architecture that erects a façade of

---

<sup>13</sup> Please refer to Works Cited for more information.

‘progress’ and ‘development’ on the ruins of stories associated with a particular land and its peoples.

Capitalist societies create their neo-bourgeois subjects who are unaware of the political economy of that particular geo-political space which they eventually occupy as ‘citizens’. Such spaces of capital create hegemonic consciousness. These urban spaces are sites of naturalization of concepts like race, class and gender. These are also sites of resistance and suppression of protests. All the colonies have similar/identical ways of subjugating the otherness of the ‘others’. In that way, all colonial countries are hinterlands where power relations are continuously being realigned with the propaganda of the state mechanism.

Rising forms of capital are responsible for the systematic destruction of the countryside. The urban space arises out of this deprivation. Urban centers become products of encroachment. It is important to understand the political economy of underdevelopment emanating from urbanization. Concepts like semi-employed, un-employed, underemployed are associated with these ‘spaces of deprivation’ in both ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries like Canada and India.

Loss of land is directly related to the loss of histories especially for those who did not have any written accounts of their past. The Aboriginal people in both the countries always worshipped their land and trees. They knew the traditional knowledge of extracting the exact resources required for human sustenance without affecting the ecological balance of Nature. The Birhor tribes near the foothills of Ayodhya in Purulia, West Bengal, India are

very few in numbers. Around sixty families can be traced near the hills. They knew the hills well and the hill was their primary source of income. They have their own language and a detailed knowledge of their land. They extract honey from the local hills and are usually bird catchers. They have maintained an ecological balance by clearing the forest when required and made ropes from *Chirhorlata*, a local climber and sold it in the market. This economy was disrupted with the ban on direct access to forest land by the government and their rehabilitation in the foothills. Introduction of residential schools in these areas has also created a confused lot of students and parents who are completely clueless about the books they are buying and the language they are being taught. Similarly, the Dhekaru Lohars knew how to melt iron present in the red soil -*Lad*<sup>14</sup> region of West Bengal. They had a knowledge of iron ores and iron stones which they used as raw material to make weapons for their sustenance. This bond was disrupted once their occupation was declared as ‘criminal’ and they had to migrate to other parts of India for work as they had almost no knowledge about agriculture.

Talking about the ill effects of urbanization and the ensuing encroachment in the post contact period in the west, the Sto:lo author and activist Lee Maracle talks about the introduction of Wheat into the Prairies and how that has contributed to the increase in temperature in and around Winnipeg. “...both the Metis and the Indians, following the disappearance of the buffalo, were ground down into a miserable dependent existence. By the 1870s in the West [of Canada], there was no alternative for the Indians: they had to salvage whatever they could in an enforced settlement with the

---

<sup>14</sup> Land of red earth like Burdwan, Birbhum, Purulia districts in West Bengal, India.

Canadian Government. The Indians, therefore, 'took treaty'"( Dosman, 14). It would be worth noting the point that the Criminal Tribes Act was enforced in the year 1871 in India. I have explained these facts in detail in the course of my discussion on the play *Almighty Voice and his Wife* by Daniel David Moses earlier.

Aboriginal people in both the countries are today raising their voice against land encroachments. They are promoting their Indigenous knowledge to protect their land and environment. Their knowledge of the land and environment promotes cultural sensitivity and tolerance within the communities and seeks to invert colonial power relations. This is a much contested terrain. It is only recently that a lot of work is being done to explore this alternative way of disseminating knowledge, especially in the works of like Cathryn McConaghy in her *Rethinking Indigenous Education: Culturalism, Colonialism & the Politics of Knowing*. If the politics of knowing is explored, and the focus is put on how dissemination of 'Knowledge' differs in communities which were primarily oral and how the lettered world see 'Knowledge', it is relevant to rethink and reevaluate Indigenous negotiations vis-à-vis land and environment in other postcolonial sites in not only India, but Canada, Australia, New Zealand to name a few others.

Urban centres are sites of invasion of bodies. Ghettos in urban spaces constitute the economy of the construction of crime in and around it. The dark sides of the cities are the natural abode of the Criminal Tribes. The genesis of the crime has never been questioned though. Death and disappearances of Aboriginal women in Canada and have been reported



repeatedly in Canadian News reports. The inclination to violence springs from the circumstances of life among the Ghetto poor. Lack of jobs that pay basic wage, the stigma of race, the absence of hope for the future and simply being forced to live in such environments of deprivation places young people at the special risk of indulging in aggressive behavior.

All these social consequences of persistent urban poverty and joblessness coalesce into an acute alienation from mainstream society and its representative institutions, especially amongst the youth. What has taken shape is an institutionalized oppositional culture as a natural reaction to a history of prejudice and discrimination that permeates into schools and other institutions. The public manifestation of this alienation is the code of the street that reflects the lost sense of security and a profound lack of faith in the police and the judicial system.

Informal sectors like prostitution, looting, snatching, proliferate in the fringes of the society turning the people associated with these occupations as mere consumers as they do not contribute to the production system as such. As a result, they become 'disposable'. The point that I am trying to highlight here is the 'invasion of occupation' as another form of capitalism and colonization as we have seen in Israel, Palestine and Libya. Examples of internal colonization can be best exemplified by the case studies in Canada and India, which I shall present in the course of my deliberations.

Capital itself has always created borderlands and liberal democracy has only heightened the possibilities of genocide in these borderlands by advocating hierarchies. Minoritization, regulated delegitimation, widespread

disregard for the language of the 'alien' are categories which are forcefully injected into the public consciousness, which finally result in, mass pogrom which is a planned campaign of persecution or extermination sanctioned by a government and directed against an ethnic group.

The focus should be on the socio-economic structure that is ultimately responsible for the structural change of the society. This structural change caused jobs to decline. Most of the communities I am talking about became service providers as far as the Indian context is considered. However, one cannot ignore the lack of good education, job training, and job networks that could help them to secure jobs.

Generations of Aboriginal people were wiped off from the landscapes. Residential schools, foster homes, violation of Human Rights, disease that were introduced post contact period, killed generations. The trauma of contact killed many. Loss of generations of aboriginal people also meant loss of history that had never been documented. Each tribe had their own idea of the natural flora and fauna of the space that they occupied. There was a definite politics of governance within the structure of the long house of the Iroquois Nation. They knew how to convert the natural resources to livelihood without seriously affecting nature. With forced dislocation, along with people, seeds and tress disappeared forever!

Canada consciously brought in people from other colonies to work for them. In India, the Dalits have always been at the receiving end and were earmarked for performing 'manual labour'. The colonial regime only heightened their predicament. The Dalits actually experienced some freedom

in the cities and they somehow formed a voice to resist the caste-system in the urban centres. The cities actually redefined the discourse of the modern form of untouchability and it is in these sites that the Dalits shared their experience as labourers and often evolved as organic intellectuals where as it is still difficult for a denotified tribe to go to school.

The introduction of private property in land compelled several marginal groups, such as the Tribals, untouchables, who had certain rights to land in an earlier period, to gradually become dependant labourers. Moreover, various itinerant groups such as the Yerukullas, Bhandus, Banjaras, Bedias, Sansis who were engaged in legitimate professions earlier, lost their occupation when the colonial rule enforced law to monitor them. They were gradually declared criminal tribes and still face the stigma of the horrendous Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. These groups were forced to engage in low paid or even servile work.

Before we progress further, it is important to understand the conceptual ground on which we are reading the nature of Tribal identity or Indigeneity or Aboriginality for that matter. This is not an easy task as researchers working in these areas need to set aside their own values and assumptions about what is good and what is morally acceptable. The latest emphasis on engaging with Indigenous authors in the realm of theory by academician is an example of how biased our readings are. As researchers who are outsiders, peeping into the world of our objects of enquiry, there is a huge responsibility of being unbiased, objective and non-judgemental. The deepening awareness in recent years of the fragility of the earth's ecology and

its grave implications for human survival has made it possible from within modern discourse to qualitatively pay attention to the nature and significance of “pre-modern” ways of life. I have deliberately used “pre-modern” because most people still associate “pre-modern” with the tribal existence. This understanding is tainted and needs a substantial unlearning on our part to negate the evolutionist premise and move towards a different cognitive zone.

Immediate implication of this shift would be :

- Acknowledging the existence of an alternative pedagogy vis-à-vis tribal participation in the process of Modern transformations.
- Recognising the lack of human concern vis-à-vis the potential capacity of the tribal populations in decision making
- Recognizing the tribal ethos, which could add much positive value to the process of social transformation( if we call it sustainable growth then I have no problem if it can assure growth for everyone)

Recognizing folk memory requires a serious understanding of the tribal ethos and also of how that understanding is also fragmented. She cites how an elder refers to a dreaming site as a point of reference to construct the history of a particular place which is performed, enacted and in a way documented. This is a contested terrain because folk memory is primarily posited against the archival knowledge and constantly being validated by historical fact findings. The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871, passed by the governor of India in Council, (received the assent of the Governor General on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1871), was an Act for the Registration of Criminal Tribes and

Eunuchs as modified up to 1<sup>st</sup>, February 1897. (Source: TAG Report, 2006. and Appendix I, Criminal Tribes Act 1871)

There were political and social reasons for declaring such large number of communities as criminals. This law would then be responsible for long-term consequences put into action. According to the TAG Report, in 1891, Plowden, had already taken up the monumental task of indexing and classifying castes, races and ethnic groups, etc., under sixty major groups, like military and agricultural castes, land-holders, cattle breeders and grazers, agricultural labourers, genealogists, singers and dancers, traders, silver and goldsmiths, barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters and masons, tailors, weavers and dyers, washermen, fishermen and palki-bearers, forest tribes, etc. along with the population and territorial distribution of each. They were all categorized as service providers and were non-sedentary groups who had to move from one part of the land to another for their occupations. Not occupying a particular space for a prolonged period made the governance suspicious of their activities as they could not be monitored. Gradually their occupation came under scanner and their occupation gradually lost importance due to the advent of technology and other 'modern' advancements like roads and railways.

In England, the concept of a 'hereditary criminal class' was an important and attractive explanation for the continuing problem of social crime. Interestingly, as early as 1860s in England, the term "criminal tribes" was already in usage to define gypsies, who, it was alleged, preferred to rob rather than submit to the discipline of steady work.

Aboriginal identity is highly political. The identity of an individual is always being negotiated in relation to the collective identity and in the face of an external colonizing society. Bodies of law and order control and define the body of the “Indian” which has for years distorted Indigenous knowledge, the ways of identifying the self in relation to the collective identity of the settlers. If we really believe that there is some relationship, then what exactly happens with the divine intervention of colonization? The contribution of this intervention, to be more specific the labeling theorist is the ‘deviance’ model which is a process of stigmatizing where certain behaviours, such as theft, can be deviant, but other crimes attract little or no social reaction, and cannot be considered deviant. Deviance is relative to time and place because what is considered deviant in one social context may be non-deviant in another (Pollner, 28). The issue of social power cannot be divorced from a definition of deviance because some groups in society can criminalize the actions of another group by using their influence on legislators.

There has been a shift from the traditional understanding of Aboriginal Identity as a passive state of existence in contradiction to the social construction of Indigeneity mediated by Modernity, with its diverse ramifications, which includes interaction with other nation States and ethnic groups. This is definitely a reflection of the increasing participation or visibility of the urban Aboriginal population. The presence of these bodies is a matter of violence, curiosity, pity and desire that accompanies the intellectual coloniser’s gaze. And it is at this juncture that I try to reposition myself as a researcher of Comparative Literature.

My primary objective is to identify the external changes forced upon various tribal groups by post-industrial societies/ nations and situate the 'performance' of these dislocated marginal groups in the wider context of urbanisation. The idea is to map how people are 'performing' their discontent in and around urban centres across the world. In doing so, my second objective emerges, that would be to propose an alternative pedagogic model within the premises of Comparative Literature, which could address emerging issues not only within the academia but extend its horizon beyond the scope of disciplinary boundaries. The alternative model that I would suggest in the course of my deliberation would actually deal with this pedagogic shift of how things were perceived earlier and how things are perceived now within the Neo-liberal framework, the Urban space, as far as the growing visibility of the dislocated tribal population is concerned in all spheres of life. I would propose here that cultural production of various Indigenous groups across the globe should be seen as potential interventions as far as the neo-liberal space is concerned. The 'alternative' model is an extension of the various approaches being proposed by the Indigenous people across the world be it Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the tribal population in India, both within and without Academia.

It was at this point that I felt that Neo-liberalism and the Urban indigenous negotiations across the globe can be read along identical, if not similar lines to analyse various forms of colonies. My interactions with the Chhara Tribe and the various activities of their theatre group called Budhan, situated in the city of Ahmedabaad became a major point of departure to

establish the faint line of comparativism which I felt could be examined from the broader framework of comparative literary studies.



## Chapter 2: From Rez to City: City to Rez

I shall not be there. I shall rise and pass. Bury my heart at Wounded Knee.

-STEPHEN VINCENT BENET<sup>1</sup>

---

There is cause to lament, but it is the Native peoples who have the most cause to lament the passing of their languages. They lose not only the ability to express the simplest of daily sentiments and needs, but they can no longer understand the ideas, concepts, attitudes and rituals brought into being by their ancestors; and having lost the power to understand, cannot sustain, enrich, or pass on their heritage. No longer will they think Indian or feel Indian. And though they may wear “Indian” jewellery or take part in powwows, they can never capture that kinship with or the reverence for the sun and the moon, the sky and the water, or feel the life beat of Mother Earth or sense the change in her moods...They will have lost their identity, which no amount of reading can ever restore. Only language and literature can restore the “Indianness”(2011, 87)

As someone who was invited to meet the legendary author, an elder of the Saugeen Island called Basil Johnston, I could identify with the lament of the “keepers of secret”. Basil knew each stone of his reserve, so did Kateri, who hailed from the Manitoulin and simultaneously resided in the city of Ottawa. She chose to publish her books from her publishing house Kegedonce Press which published books by Indigenous authors and is located in Cape Croker reserve. Kateri had invited me for a Powwow in her community. I took a bus

---

<sup>1</sup> Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*.

till Owen Sound and then Kateri drove me to her reserve. On our way we collected some food and she gave me a small tent which I could put up near the waters. As we went ahead and drove for fifteen minutes, I could feel and see that I was entering a world which did not exist for many living in the cities, except those who had planned a visit to the Aboriginal Reserve for a weekend Powwow trip to be amongst “them”. The dusty road, actually a trail, snaked its way into the woods with hardly anyone around. Kateri said “here are my ancestors in the woods”. As we drove to the store ( the only store that was the source of all supplies in the community) which was located near the Powwow ground, had a board that read “High Bear Alert”. Kateri suggested that I buy enough wood for the night and keep all food packed in a container she had given to keep away the bear as the young mother bear was perpetually in search of food. The store sold everything at a rate higher than in downtown. We passed the hut of the treaty agent who had taken away fishing rights from Kateri’s mother and her family. Later as we reached the spot, I could actually occupy a small ground to set up my one-man-tent near the waters. There were long cues outside the common toilets for visitors. Kateri took me to her hut which was near the waters, a wooden hut with bright faces popping up to greet their friend from India. Kateri’s son Kegsy and her nephew and niece, with whom I connected immediately. Kateri also joined us. We shared our marshmallows. Kateri suddenly dropped the idea of springing tadpoles in water, an old game with which we, who grew up in small towns were familiar. After successfully launching my tadpoles, we located various Inukshuks across the silver lining of the shore. Kateri said to me “ you seem to know our games”. That evening we explored through the woods and got acquainted

with the place. Kateri joined me in the evening for the fireworks and I returned to my small tent where Kateri helped me with the night fire to keep off the bear. A bright sunny day was gradually sweeping into a wet evening and it started to rain. I ate my energy bites and cakes and retired for the night. I could feel people flocking the entire night, cracking jokes, greeting each other. I woke up the next morning with multiple tents around me and inquisitive eyes gazing at this brown self. It was the Powwow day but the weather was a dampener. As I got ready and approached the ground, I could see the central teepee where all the musicians had gathered and a stage was erected out there in the corner where the MC announced, cracked jokes to cheer up the people. Gradually all the dancers in colourful dresses gathered. The drums started roaring and the shrill voices of the traditional throat singers pierced through the gloom.

The reserve suddenly became populated with people who drove all the way from the small towns and downtown to participate in the community affair. One band that caught the attention of many was the Poplar Brothers. As more people flocked, the MC started to announce the names of the dancers- Jingle bell, grass dancers, buffalo dancer, hoop dancer and then inter-tribal event when even we, who were non-indigenous, could participate.

Aboriginal cuisine and artifacts were on display. We had an appointment with Basil Johnston in his well maintained artist's den. Kateri was uncomfortable that she did not have anything for the elder. I carried a new scarf for Basil and Kateri appreciated the gesture of honouring the elder. He spoke at length about the stories he had heard from the community elders and

identified the territory of the Saugeen Island and how it was connected with the Manitoulin-the abode of the De-ba-jeh-mu-jik theatre company which I wanted to visit. But the ferry from Owen Sound closed for the year as the water started freezing. This theatre group deliberately chose to operate outside the city and I must say they contributed significantly to the formative years of Tomson Highway and NEPA precisely. Later in the afternoon Kateri took me along the Bruce trail identifying each berry and animal we met until we climbed the reef from where we could see the blue peninsula. As I discussed about my knowledge of walking in the woods like how we weave stories aloud so that the compatriots could keep a track of the voices, Kateri said they were trained to listen to woods and speak less on such occasions. On our way back, Kateri identified the elementary school and explained why the youth had to relocate to the city for further education. Kateri's mother was ecstatic as she had done pretty well in the previous night's Bingo and later I also met Kateri's father who had a Polish ancestry. The day ended with a heavy shower and I went back to my tent to retire for the night as I had an early morning bus to board from Owen Sound to Toronto. Lying in my bed, I could feel people around were wrapping their tents and leaving earlier as the water level was rising. Kateri came to my rescue and I had to wrap the tent, pack my belongings and stay in her house that night. I could see there was no running water and they used their caravan for their wash rooms. It was different from the wooden houses I had seen in the Suburbs or Downtown. They never complained but I could feel the difference. The difference of people living on the reserves and off-reserve. I realized how politicized the idea of Aboriginality was in the context of Canada. I had met some of these people

who were from the reserves, living in the cities for education at the First Nation's House at University of Toronto who were struggling with their identities every moment. Early morning Kateri's friend drove me all the way to the bus stand. We are not in touch anymore. I owe a lot to that lanky woman who drove me all the way. She was like any of the characters from Highway's plays.

This personal journey helped me to formulate my understanding of the dislocation of Indigenous people into urban centres. First, the cities were created to uproot the Aboriginal people and they were forced to move to the open prisons called reserves. They were once again displaced when the manufactured poverty in the reserves forced them to relocate to the urban centres for better opportunities and discover that they were minorities in their own land. This anxiety of not-belongingness, a sense of being easily disposable, the lack of opportunity, the pressures of assimilation, everything combined and formulated the Indigenous identity which was again fractured. This hybrid self and its quest for "who is an Indian" is precisely what I wanted to locate in the cultural productions of the first peoples in Canada. Why did the Native Centre on Spadina or the First Nations house brim with young Aboriginal people seeking answer within a Neo-liberal framework about their past, present and future, accentuated by the silence of missing Aboriginal women, homeless and jobless Aboriginal youth in the cities, became the *rohstoff* of my search. Rena Recollect (a student at FNH who was doing a course in 2010) transformed her behavioural pattern of plucking her hair into a performance narrative that theorized her syndrome. Waawaate's *Agowke*

talked about the narrowing queer positive space in his reserve in Kenora and explained why he had to relocate to the city of Toronto. Daniel David Moses describes the plight of the Six-Nations Reserves in his cultural texts. Tomson humoured about the deplorable conditions of the reserves in Canada. Basil never hesitated to speak about the sexual exploitation in the residential schools.

Before I move on to textual praxis, it becomes an imperative to illustrate the historicity of this ‘urban dilemma’ and then identify the problems of oversimplification of literary research that reads everything as ‘postcolonial’. This also led to the cross-disciplinary approach that I had to adopt to develop a methodology of ‘understanding’.

I shall talk about my experience of working with the Chhara youth in the city of Ahmedabad-their family life, social life, housing, employment, reasons for migration to cities, relation with Urban problem and the bleak connect with a past as well as their nomadism and associated suspicion around their profession, their reaction to racism, police atrocities etc in the next chapter. My stint at University of Toronto and interactions with the Urban Indigenous peoples within the academic space initiated a process of engaging with multiple subjects who gradually transformed into embodied texts and I could gradually frame an aesthetics of reading these realities. As I was dealing with cognitive imperialism, the aesthetics of understanding Indigeneity within the urban space was formulated on ground level psychology that predominantly talks about a kind of ‘relational’ aesthetics that is evoked in a researcher closely working with communities. In such a situation the

researcher locates herself/ himself within the research and simultaneously cohabits the subject-object position. Instead of only deducing from data and variables, each human interaction is narrated to formulate multiple entries into a given problem. That is precisely why I precisely chose the “tolerant, prosperous, smug” city of Toronto, Canada and the model of economic prosperity in India- the city of Ahmedabad.

Mi'kmaq educator and scholar Marie Battiste have been working on Cognitive Imperialism for quite some time. “Cognitive imperialism occurs when people from traditional societies begin to believe the versions of their culture and history set down by the colonizers and live out the roles set forth for them by the dominant society. Overwhelming evidence suggests that Aboriginal adults suffered from the social modeling they received as children in residential schools and the colonial education forced upon them. Poor social modeling is often passed on to their children, perpetuating the social ills that result from cognitive imperialism. Often, the price is a fear and an internalized hate for anything that reminds them of their Aboriginal identity” ( Rice and Snyder, 55). We shall encounter this again and again within the young people in the urban centres and I shall elaborate it with examples from cultural texts.

Directly linked with this is the ‘relational aesthetics’ of working with such communities:

A relationship-based model of research is critical for carrying out research with Indigenous communities on several levels. Philosophically, it honours the cultural value of relationship, it emphasizes people’s ability to shape and change their own destiny, and it is respectful....Relationship- based research can irritate the individualistic , clinical, outcome-oriented research process. However, in Indigenous communities (both urban and

rural), a relationship-based approach is a practical necessity because access to the community is unlikely unless time is invested in relationship building. ( Brown, 2005: 30)

Like the TAG report, about which I have discussed in details in my next chapter, the Hawthorn report (1964)<sup>2</sup> which was requested to present a report by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada had signaled the influx of Indigenous population in the cities. This was further accentuated by the introduction of the *New Policy*<sup>3</sup> in 1969.

As Edgar J. Dosman points out in his seminal work *Indians: The Urban Dilemma*:

The appearance of Indian poverty in Canadian cities has produced unprecedented problems. Native people form the hard core of the urban dispossessed: almost the entire minority lies outside the socio-economic structure of the city. The Indian subculture is not merely low in status and income; it is not merely at the bottom of the pile; its situation is becoming increasingly worse (8)

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Dosman, 1960-1964 experienced the decline of the older order of the Indian Affairs. The Indian problem came to forefront which was adversely affecting several national causes. The result was the New Policy introduced in July 1969. (Dosman, 26)

<sup>3</sup> 1964 endorsed increasing self-governance in the reserves. There were recommendations on education, employment, social welfare and community development. Another significant intervention was ‘ a dramatic change in the relation between white and non-white peoples of the world’ (Dosman, 28-29) and how that reflected in the policy making process across the world where Canada was not an exception. ‘According to the recommendations, the New Policy would involve the repeal of the Indian Act together with legislative steps which would allow Indians to control their lands and to acquire title to them’ ( Dosman, 31). As we all know the ‘immensely subtle document’ (Dosman, 31) only promoted the dominance of the provincial Governments control over welfare and education. Neither was the document a final one that would ‘ propose outright elimination of reserves, nor does it say that the provincial Governments should necessarily take responsibility for Indian Lands. Furthermore, it does not propose to disregard the Treaties or to end them unilaterally...’(ibid). The Indian Problem has remained a big national question.



Since the basic framework of this dissertation was to capture the contemporaneity of the Indigenous problem in cityscapes, the idea was to move beyond anthropological mapping of the tribes in question and dig into the cause of Urban Indigenous poverty.

The following reasons might be cited to theorise the migration of Indigenous peoples from the cities to the reserves:

1. Explore possibilities outside the reserves
2. Access of transportation facilities
3. Increase in population
4. Dying traditional practices
5. Educational opportunities
6. Recreation

The reserves were created to push the Aboriginal people into the open prisons that could monitor them, number them. They could do nothing without the permission of the Indian Agent. Hence though, as a literature graduate I started my enquiry into the Indian problem with a close analysis of their culture and cultural programmes, I soon understood the futility of the research conducted without situating their condition within institutionalized practices that subjugated them. Hence the idea of schooling became my first point of departure. Like several tribes in the Indian subcontinent, the economy of the tribes in Western Canada was directly intrinsic to their nomadism and they had entered into trade within the Hudson Bay area, until the settlers and immigrants appeared on the field. From Confederation till the early twentieth century, Aboriginal people were forced to surrender their interest in land and accept facilities offered by the crown( Dosman, 14)

The Indian Act employed agencies to manage the reserves, the education of the aboriginal peoples, administration of band funds, relief, welfare projects etc only multiplying the importance of the Indian Affairs Branch. A close analysis of the many stories collected by the missionaries in the Hudson Bay area will substantiate my claim how anthropology along with the colonial enterprise of documentation and further museuamisation of the Aboriginal cultural expressions resulted in a mass pogrom or cultural genocide-where the fad was to “become” or “ understand” the Aboriginal way of life.

As rightly pointed out by Dosman, the repeated revisions of the Indian Affairs was cleverly crafted to strategically deprive sections of the society who would fail to influence the government if they were isolated in separate pockets of lands with separate laws. This segregation from the larger society was also a form of genocide.

The policy aimed to settle the natives on reserved areas where their abode would be fixed and permanent; to abate and transform the annual distribution of ‘presents’ (gifts of making treaty, or annuities),...Christianize the natives into conformity with the rest of the population. This would be a new kind of peace in which the settler would have the land and be able to work it without fear of ioninterference. Once these became the ends of government, the concept of administration was born; the Government had ceased to deal with the Indians as allies and had imposed the status of wardship. ( Dosman. 17)

As this was a reality, there are records of the ‘removal of Indians’ also in Sec 46, 1911 of the Indian Act<sup>4</sup>:

In case of an Indian reserve which adjoins or is situated wholly or partly within an incorporated town or city having a

---

<sup>4</sup> Inquiry and Report by Exchequer Court as to Removal of Indians, Chapter 14 (Paul, 385, Notes Section)

population of no less than eight thousand...the Governor in Council may, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent General, refer to the judge of the Exchequer Court of Canada for inquiry and report the question as to whether it is expedient, having regard to the interest of the public and of the Indians of the band for whose use the reserve is held, that the Indians should be removed from the reserve or any part of it...(Paul, 312).

As far as living condition is concerned, it is important to understand that it would be naïve to deduce that, since housing is a serious problem in the reserves, as I have seen myself, the city becomes a trope of fulfilling that desire as we encounter in Highway's Rez plays. Contrary to this, cities do not welcome Indians and the reserves have their own hierarchies. As Daniel N. Paul cites the report of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs on June 9, 1936 which documents the housing conditions:

While there are a great many what we might call good houses among the Indians, while conditions vary in different districts, while better conditions exist among the Indians living on the Reserves, more particularly those close to an *Agent* [emphasis added], yet in every district there are unsanitary houses, houses badly in need of repair and, in the great majority of districts, houses that are absolutely unfit for occupation.( Paul, 296)

Actually the colonial enterprise was doing the same thing in the subcontinent when they implemented the Criminal Tribes Act ( 1871). They erected urban ghettos called "Settlements" and successfully restricted the activities of the non-sedantary groups. The major attempt to resist the Reserve policy in Canada was the Riel rebellion of 1885, which also dealt with the recognition of the Metis population who embodied the anxieties of their colonial legacies but it failed like various other meaningful attempts had earlier failed to resist the formation of a "third world" within the first world.

With the main objective of assimilation, the Indian Affairs department would control the economy like the church had full control on education through the Residential School System. There have been attempts to white wash the dark side of Canadian history by the Legislative authorities and describing the genocide as a “ schooling system that went wrong”. It is only the newly appointed Trudeau’s commission on Aboriginal people who has agreed to meet the representative of Aboriginal Communities on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. By the time the reports are out, it might be time for me to submit my thesis, only proving the futile practice of deducing any conclusion which deals with lives which are affected and stand out there, exposed and not caring much about our academic interventions. It would be worth mentioning here that the *New Policy* of 1969 ensured that ‘...Indians would look to the provinces instead of the federal Government for education, health, welfare and housing services. On the issue of increasing provincial services to the Indians at the expense of the federal role, the Trudeau Government merely issued a coup de grace to a tradition extending back into the 1950s’. ( Dosman, 31)

The Indian Act reacted to the Aboriginal people’s demand for Self-Governance by appointing the *Band Council* that regulated the economy of the reserves. These Band Councils were chosen by the Indian Agent. The New Policy of 1969 ( Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *The New Indian Policy*, Ottawa, July, 1969) recognized that “Canadians, Indians and Non-Indians alike, stand at the Cross Roads” ( Dosman).

A close reading of the *New Policy* apparently promised that the Indian Affairs Branch would cease to operate. The previous Trudeau

Government merely issued a *coup de grace* to a tradition extending back into the 1950s( Dosman 31) as I have mentioned and the “Indian Problem” was only redrafted as an administrative problem. The redrafting of the laws was effective in a reverse way. Instead of driving them to the reserves, the *New Policy* forced them to relocate to the cities for opportunities and accept white middle class norms (Dosman) . Only the tactics of playing the game changed. The most important part of this policy was the way the relationship of the Indian and Non-Indians were defined. These were the operative categories:

- Race and Colour (they were treated better than the black slaves from Africa)
- The idea of recognizing them as Nations (not individuals-failing to recognize the diversity of the population)
- Assimilation and formation of a ridiculous category called the Canadian Indian

These policies only left the Aboriginal people with a mental vaccum as pointed out by Dosman.

The colonial World is a world cut into two...the zone where the natives lives is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed but not in service of higher unity (41)

White societies continue to control the resources of the country, bringing into question of the futility of the Post-Colonialism we preach in university curriculum even in India-exposing the moral and theoretical vaccum of academia and academic practices. The communities in the reserve wanted to sustain themselves but the fiscal policies introduced in the reserves made them

more dependent on the federal government. As I have been trying to establish the connections between the two forms of colonies and the various forms of 'governance', it must be remembered that the journey from the reserve or settlement to cities was not easy at all. Like the DNTs in India, the Aboriginal people in Canada had to deal with the pass system:

...policy makers created the pass system in order to inhibit the Indian's ability to travel freely off their reserves. Reserves were posted with signs prohibiting trespassing, which prevented not only Whites from entering but also Indigenous relatives to whom the colonial regime had not granted Indian "status" (Episkenew, 2007: 45)

Till date there are several villages in the interiors of Rajasthan where male members of the DNT communities have to report to the local Police *Choukis* for *hazira* (reporting). It is precisely this point that I wanted to establish that which post colonial situation are we talking about? The subcontinent has its legislature deeply rooted in colonial practices of subjugation with its diverse ramifications.

### **The Urban Indian Elite: Formulating new hegemonies**

---

'A short history of Indians in Canada'

Bob Haynie catches a cab to Bay Street at three in the morning. He loves the smell of concrete. He loves the look of city lights. He loves the sound of skyscrapers.

Bay Street.

Smack.

Bob Looks up just in time to see a flock of Indians fly into the side of the building.

Smack! Smack!

Bob looks up just in time to get out of the way.

Whup!

An Indian hits the pavement in front of him.

Whup! Whup!

Two Indians hit the pavement behind him

Holy Cow! shouts Bob, and he leaps out of the way of the falling Indians.

Whup! Whup ! Whup!

Bob throws his hands over his head and dashes into the street. And is almost hit by a city truck.

Honk!

Two men jump out of the truck. Hi, I am Bill. Hi, I'm Rudy.

Hi, I'm Bob.

Businessman? Says Bill.

Yes.

First time in Toronto? Says Rudy.

Yes.

Whup! Whup! Whup!

Look out! Bob shouts. There are Indians flying into the skyscrapers and falling on the sidewalk.

Whup!

Mohawk, says Bill.

Whup! Whup!

Couple of Cree over here, says Rudy.

Amazing, says Bob. How can you tell?

By the feathers, says Bill. We got a book.

It's our job, says Rudy.

Whup!

Bob looks around. What's this one? he says.

Holy! Says Bill. Holy! Says Rudy.

Check the book, says Bill. Just to be sure.

Flip, flip, flip.

Navajo!

Bill and Rudy put their arms around Bob. A Navajo! Don't normally see Navajos this far north. Don't normally see Navajos this far east.

Is she dead? Says Bob

Nope, says Bill. Just stunned.

Most of them are just stunned, says Rudy.

Some people never see this, says Bill. One of nature's mysteries. A natural phenomenon.

They're nomadic you know, says Rudy. And migratory.

Toronto's in the middle of the flyway, says Bill. The lights attract them.

Bob counts the bodies. Seventy-three. No. Seventy four. What can I do to help?

Not much that anyone can do, says Bill. We tried turning off the lights in the buildings.

We tried broadcasting loud music from the roofs, says Bill.

Whup! Whup! Whup!

Bill and Rudy pull green plastic bags out of their pockets and try to find the open ends.

The dead ones we bag, says Rudy.

The live ones we tag, says Bill. Take them to the shelter. Nurse them back to health. Release them in the wild.

Amazing, says Bob.

A few wander off dazed and injured. If we don't find them right away, they don't stand a chance.

Amazing, says Bob.

You're one lucky guy, says Bill. In another couple of weeks, they'll be gone.

A family from Alberta came through last week and didn't even see an Ojibway, says Rudy.

Your first time in Toronto? Says Bill.

It's a great town, says Bob. You're doing a great job.

Whup!

Don't worry, says Rudy. By the time the commuters showup, you'll never even know the Indians were here.

Bob catches a cab back to the King Eddie and shakes the doorman's hand. I saw the Indians, he says.

Thought you'd enjoy that, sir, says the doorman.



Thank you, says Bob. It was spectacular.

Not like the old days. The doorman sighs and looks up into the night. In the old days, when they came through, they would black out the entire sky.

(King, 2005, 1-4)

As my primary objective was to read the performances of the bodies in dissent, this story, 'A short History of Indians in Canada' contests the historical grand narratives that labels the Indian. It also reads the 'urban' phenomenon of the Indians migrating into the cities and the way the settler culture reads the presence of the 'other' and treats them 'pathologically'.

Since my research was directed toward understanding the pedagogic shift of how things were perceived before and how things are perceived now, Dosman's account can be an interesting point of reference to contest earlier notions. Since 1969, a new Canada was emerging as I have mentioned earlier. People from various ethnicities had migrated from various parts of the world to "work", "die" for the emerging neo-capitalist economy. Forms of capitals were being re-aligned to understand the "would be" multicultural nation which was re-shuffling its internal politics to claim its own identity as a nation continuously with an antithesis called the Big American dream. What happened to the Aboriginal people who had migrated to cities and were negotiating with other immigrants?

They were once driven out of the city to make room for the settlers, now there was a reverse sweep to come to the cities for opportunities as the situation in reserves became worse and the memories of residential school system were still gaping wounds that had left an everlasting mark on the survivors.

Dosman uses the term *Affluent* to identify Aboriginal families who were doing well in the late 1960s. One needs to understand that his location i.e. Saskatoon, where he conducted his research and he was dealing predominantly with the Metis population. He broadly uses the following socio-economic variables to unfold the point he was trying to arrive:

- Job Stability
- Housing
- Intra-City Mobility
- Family Stability
- Visibility
- Personal Disintegration
- Identity in the city

Though they are interconnected, one can easily recognize a pattern of reading the problem. It starts with the job market and then permeates into the private zone. One could also read the pattern of employability. Driven by a market force economy, most people from the reserves lacked specific skills required to be properly absorbed in the industry. Their traditional system of knowledge was never recognized and every attempt to assimilate them in the job market only established them as complete “misfits” in the system. The above analysis could also be an oversimplification of the ethos of “Indianess” as we understand in the present situation in Canada or India. What I essentially mean, is that, an interesting study could be made between the immigration patterns of the Immigrants and the Indigenous population in both Canada and India. Men in Chhote Udaipur in Vadodara, Gujarat relocated to the cities to

earn wages from the *Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojna*<sup>5</sup> leaving the women behind to brew country liquors and sell themselves. The point is, will the percentage of men who migrated to the cities for opportunities( never to return) be considered as agents of upward mobility of a tribe in question or should we consider the phenomena of *Affluent* urban Indigenous population in Canadian cities as a global phenomenon? The tension between cities and the rez or the original habitat in the case of India will remain a contested terrain. For example, the Lodhas in Medinipur and those who relocated to Nadia, 24 Pgs in India in search of opportunities should be treated with care and with a proper understanding of their demography and the greater politics that produces their desire to re-locate .

As identity became a major trope in the 1960s, the journey from the Rez to city should be seen as the first move toward drafting an Indigenous Cultural revolution which later culminated in the 1990s, with theatre groups like NEPA emerging in the city of Toronto or the formation of Budhan theatre in the city of Ahmedabad along with organizations that were fighting for the Indigenous cause often securing a position in mainstream politics where the trope of “ representation” itself acquired a new meaning.

Another aspect of the Urban “Indian Problem” associated with job was the idea of Welfare which I have mentioned earlier also. This further disassociated the Aboriginal people from the other immigrants. Tax payers felt

---

<sup>5</sup> The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) was launched on 25 December 2000 as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The primary objective of the PMGSY is to provide connectivity to all the eligible unconnected habitations of more than 500 persons in the rural areas (250 persons in the hilly and desert areas) by good quality all-weather roads. ( Source: <http://www.archive.india.gov.in/sectors/rural/index.php?id=8>)

and still feel that the state was feeding the “natives” on their taxes, without acknowledging the original ownership of the land on which they were living. For example Toronto, especially 55 Mill Street, where NEPA had its office even a year back, was the trading route of the Aboriginal people which later became the Distillery District and now a hub of condominiums. These are also the centres of Urban poverty. The Salvation Army distributed food tickets and assisted Aboriginal women with illegitimate children without delving deep into the issues of missing Aboriginal women or teenage pregnancy and suicide. So where were these “urban Indians” accommodated in the cities? Definitely near railway yards, like Kubernagar Railway crossing, Maninagar Railway bridge in India, adding to the construction of criminal activities in these zones of dilapidated buildings waiting to be converted into plazas resulting into further homelessness of the ‘criminals’. In case of Canada, the cities have pockets for the Greek, Irish, Chinese, Blacks, etc but the landlords always preferred to rent out rooms to whites, pensioners but there was and still there is a hostility towards aboriginal people ( Dosman, 71).

From my personal account, I can recall that it took me long to realize that I shared a basement apartment with an Aboriginal woman when I first moved to Lamberton street in Toronto and my landlady was a Vietnamese woman who had shared a difficult past of entering the promised land. I had heard how this woman was abused at times by a man and had met her once at the Native Centre in Spadina. Dosman analyses the formation of an under-class in the Urban ghettos:

Essentially, the Indian *lumpenproletariat* has been too miserable to be able to develop a solid slum. Indian and

Metis families simply pick up the worst and cheapest dwelling that the European immigrant families left behind when they move to suburbs...The characteristic feature of bad housing on the West Side is a series of shacks in a row on the street , but usually not far from better homes with lawns and gardens (72)

It is precisely this crossroad that I had mentioned, the multiple grey zones of the city where silences met. Indian cities are the best examples of these incoherence, resulting into intolerant attitude from both the quarters. I shall illustrate this with my discussion on *Bulldozer* and *The Lower Depth* by the Budhan theatre group in the city of Ahmedabad in the subsequent chapters.

No one can ignore the destructive effect of poverty on the Indigenous population, but the idea of *Welfare* was more detrimental to the growth of the Indigenous population in both the countries. The grouping of individual into legislative categories was an evil and mean attempt which reflected the interest of political groups and parties who used these people for their own benefit in the Indian multi-party system. The problem was much complicated and at times beyond comprehension as the society was caste based and all well meaning attempts to escalate their cause never considered anything beyond class struggle or remained restricted to caste. Specific movements which tried to incorporate the Aboriginal issue failed to explore the boundaries and even women's movement in Canada failed to address the issues of Aboriginal women at least theoretically. India is today experiencing what Canada had experienced in the late sixties. Successful individuals from the DNTs are never allowed to relocate in upper class societies, their children are prohibited or rebuked at Institutions of higher learning and they still bear the brunt of their family stigma.

Before moving into the activities of the Salvation Army and its impact on itinerant communities in both the countries, it would be wise to juxtapose the ideas of poverty on the Reserve, the trends of relocation to the cities for better economic prospects and the success of Casinos on the reserve. It is important particularly for this thesis as we encounter the big Bingo in Tomson's Rez plays and a scene in Dakxin Bajarange Chhara's *Bulldozer*<sup>6</sup>

As I have also been trying to relate the various problems from a global perspective, it would be interesting to note what happened in the other colonies as well. Though drafted against the backdrop of the living condition of the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, Mexico, Ian Frazier documents the most spoken languages of the Americas, i.e. Navajo. He records that unemployment amongst the Navajo is around 30 percent. Navajos work in coal and Uranium mines on the reservations, or in harvesting the reservation's timber. They are famous for their turquoise jewelry. They encourage their youth to go to colleges. A huge number of Navajo's are homeless in their own territory. It would be important to reinstate that the performance narrative of Thomas King's 'A Short History of Indians in Canada' was cited precisely to establish this connection between fiction and history across this dissertation.

When I began my chapter by quoting Basil's premonition that the end of any language meant the end of a knowledge system, I wanted to enter into the contested terrain of Aboriginality. To be more specific, any reclamation of Aboriginal identity was rooted in their relationship with the land and that connection was established through Aboriginal spirituality. It is

---

<sup>6</sup> *Bulldozer* is a play written by Dakxin Bajagange and translated by Dheeman Bhattacharyya for the volume *Ghumantoo: Roadies of India and Canada*.

widely accepted that any attempt toward ‘healing’ should come from within and Indigenous spirituality will play a major role in promoting their sovereignty. So dislocation from one place to another meant disjuncture in the stories that connected them and stories were intrinsic to these itinerant communities. I would argue that the essence of ‘performativity’, associated with spiritual practices amongst Aboriginal people should be carefully analysed to extract the historicism of the behavioural pattern that changed with socio-economic conditionings. For example, the Bedia tribe who are also known as the Saperas were traditionally involved with showing tricks with snakes. With the ban on their occupation, they suddenly became jobless. The Bedias of West Bengal, India were also involved with catching birds and selling them in the market. With the new law that prohibits atrocities against animals, these tribes have become jobless and had to relocate to semi-urban zones for livelihood. Traditionally, their deity was *Mangalchandi*<sup>7</sup> but now they worship Viswakarma<sup>8</sup> as they make bamboo products to earn their living and at times their women are even forced into intergenerational prostitution.

Ian Frazier interestingly points out the spiritual disintegration of the Navajo beliefs and the ‘re-enactment’ of spiritual practices to reclaim the space that was disappearing:

At least 20,000 Navajo on the reservation are homeless. Some Navajo spend their time drinking in “border towns”-places like Gallup, New Mexico, or Winslow, Arizona-just across the reservation’s border. The border

---

<sup>7</sup> The Mangal Kavya tradition in Bengal that documents the journey of several tribes and the emergence of several deities who resided outside the domain of the upper castes.

<sup>8</sup> According to the myths, Viswakarma is the deity responsible for the flourish of industry, construction and allied worship of armaments.

towns make much of their income selling liquor to the Navajo; travelers who stop in peaceful-looking Gallup on the night of a big rodeo may be surprised at how wild a night in Gallup can be...Navajo by the score have been killed walking back to the reservation along the “hell highway”—a seven-and-a-half-mile stretch of U.S. 666 north of Gallup...Some Navajo live in hogans, traditional round dwellings of rock, timber, and adobe, and continue to worship hundred or so deities who help in different aspects of Navajo life. Not long ago a family in a remote part of the reservation said they received a visit from two of these deities, who warned them that the Navajo were risking great danger by giving up their traditions. When the news of the visit got out, thousands of Navajo made pilgrimages to the family’s Hogan to pray and scatter sacred corn pollen.(80)

Now, one needs to situate these events within the wider politics of the Aboriginal existence. Any spiritual connect with a particular piece of land or stories associated with a particular land can be used as a marker of belongingness to that land which contests the colonial idea of *terra nullus*. If the residential schools effaced languages and knowledge systems then one can say that the visit of the deity can metaphorically be seen as a haunting memory of past practices that bore the essence of their being. The Windigo in *A Windigo Tale*<sup>9</sup> by Ruffo precisely does that in the case of the Six Nations Reserve in Toronto. It narrates the history of the residential school system by the haunting spirit who eats the community every day and forces the spiritual reclamation of the peoples who had lost connect with the land.

Like the Reserves, which were primarily designed to monitor the Indigenous populations, the settlement designed for the itinerant CTs in India

---

<sup>9</sup> Film directed by Ruffo and screened at Imaginative Festival in Toronto in 2010. It dealt with the haunting spirit of a Windigo and a reunion of Residential school survivors.



were nothing but jails. Like the Residential schools and Salvation Army shaped up as major institutions that worked on profiling the Aboriginal, the Salvation Army (SA) in India worked as a major agency that were closely working with the criminal tribes to convert them into agricultural labourers. Meena Radhakrishna documents the role of Salvation Army in the maintenance of the settlements for the CTs in India:

The settlement policy, however, had a troubled career. There were accusations from the public, and from within the administration that settlements were novel kinds of jail where the CT members could be detained for infinite periods...The city settlements were, in fact, managed like jails and 'discipline' within the settlement were rigorously imposed...Watching and monitoring movements of settlers thus became very important parts of the day to day running of a settlement ( Radhakrishna, 82)

I had identified that if the residential school system was in place to educate the Aboriginal mind in North America, then the first half of the twentieth century was dedicated toward agricultural growth in India and land was required to fulfill the needs of the development of a Nation with a strong emphasis on agriculture. As Meena Radhakrishna records, how the Salvation army would then be given the task of converting the itinerant community to work as agricultural labourers (100). The government achieved dual objectives of rehabilitation and generating more revenue for the government. Though many attempts to settle several CT members failed. "Many of the schemes to settle CT members on land, however, failed. When they were given land 'some fair, and some very poor', the land was not cultivated" (101). It is to be noted that in India, 'the entire set of decisions about the so called agricultural settlements was based on the government's plans to increase revenue by turning large

tracts of wasteland into cultivable land' ( 99). For example, when the Kheria Sabars in West Bengal were given *chatan* which were arid, un-cultivable lands but no one ever asked what the Sabars had wanted. Soon they were identified as communities who were lazy and did not want to work. No one tried to comprehend the economy of the tribe in question. The Sabars had always relied on hunting the rodents and ate the corn collected by the rodents. They are also known as the *Mushahars* in Bihar. Every attempt to convert them into industrial wage earners was also directed toward achieving the goal of monitoring their activities. The new law of the industries prevented the workers to leave space without permission. Radhakrishna argues that the concentration of the members of CTs in the industrial areas helped the police by identifying a member of the tribe as "found guilty" whenever there were crimes. So the entire project of settling the tribes was a part of the colonial enterprise of continuously having a workforce ready for the growth of industries. The next attempt was to convert the communities into fabricated family units where the Christian way of life was introduced and women were taught to behave and dress properly, thus a very hindu way of life was endorsed with a healthy dose of Christian piety. Later these women had to move out to work as labourers in tobacco industry to run the family(130-31).

The purpose of this chapter is to map the external forces that operated in shaping the identity of the individual who was cohabiting multiple spaces at the same time and to show how history and memory re-drafted the modern folklore. The dislocation from the Rez to city or city to Rez could have formulated multiple tropes of the Canadian Aboriginal identity. On the

contrary, an alternative mythmaking was also in place, either resisting the various popular representations or by replicating the order of the hegemonic spaces. Members in the North American Ghettos could actually come closer to the white settlers and replicate their life style to get assimilated, or to resist the popular representation in several mores of cultural expressions. Similar trends are also visible in India amongst the communities I have personally worked with. The *Chang dance*<sup>10</sup> of the Lodhas in Medinipur has been replaced by the popular Bangla and Hindi film songs. It could have been interesting to note how a traditional form was absorbing the new contents but the adoption of another genre is resulting the complete disappearance of the previous form. On the other hand, the cityscape allows to weave the folklore that is artificially contrived or schooled. Radhakrishna cites sections from songs of the Yerukulas:

The Salvation Army now comes to our aid;  
With work for the Crim-yes , work for the Crim!  
And for us a pathway to Heaven has made,  
For tribes of the criminal kind...  
They give us an offer of work we accept'Tis work for  
the Crim-yes,work for the Crim;  
And soon at our task we become quite adept,  
We tribes of the Criminal kind...  
At last we wake up to the fact, and the thought,  
I'm no longer a Crim! I am no longer a Crim!  
I'm living by industry, honestly wrought,  
And have changed from the criminal mind!  
( 151)

The confessional tone of the poem reflects the after effect of the white hegemonic teachings in the residential school systems and simultaneously records the glory of the Salvation Army which had redeemed the CTs. It

---

<sup>10</sup> Musical Instrument of the Lodhas.

seems the collective we envisions a history constructed for them. They look into their criminality as a disease that was being purged. Interestingly, Meena Radhakrishna was documenting these in the 1980s when she identified how the settlement was re-inscribing the stories of human agents where the idea of agency was being erased. Interestingly the formation of the Museum of Hope within the Chharanagar basti in Kubernagar, Ahmedabad actually started a conversation within the community by opening this small centre along with the library within the community which I shall discuss in the next chapter. This museum of hope is a moving gallery of the Criminal past of the Sansis. Without any attempt at camouflaging the history of their past, tools and clothes that were being used by their ancestors to rob in the cities are on display. They have also included the utensils used by the elders in the community. The idea is to remember a way of life that existed and how are they negotiating with that past within the Neo-liberal urban space.

One also needs to understand that both these apparently bordered zones of the Rez and City are contained within the idea of a geopolitical identity called India or Canada. The co-existence of these spaces of marginalization actually thwarts the myth of the modern nation and its allied propaganda of nationalism, national interest and others. The idea of the nation is the most contested zone where all these “warring” ideas were suppressed and law enforced human subjects to convert themselves into docile subjects. If they were allowed to “perform” their discontent, then that too was regulated. Our ideas of liberation and projects of De-colonisation are fraught with threats and tensions of national interests.

Citing examples from two forms of colonies, the primary thrust of this chapter was to understand the converging historiographies that translate into the formation of subjects who were earlier being defined in the colonial projects and to show how they are responding to the shifting boundaries of urban-rural binaries.

The theoretical premise which I have tried to supplement with historical documentation is a move towards historicizing the performances and cultural texts I have been dealing with since my interaction with NEPA started in 2008-09. As I was looking at contemporary Indigenous performances within two Neo-Liberal Urban Spaces, the politics of the identity formation of the Urban Indigenous subject emerged out of the various discussions I had with youths from various Indigenous communities in Toronto and Ahmedabad. These individuals co-habit and in-habit a hybrid space. This is either the space which is “out on the main street” as an Indigenous person, who at times may also be a visible minority, or on the other hand, the space within i.e. the lived in experience of being the other.

Darrell Dennis’ play *Tales of an Urban Indian* (2003) is a story of an urban Indian youth. Simon, at the very beginning pronounces the anxieties of many Indigenous youth I met in Toronto:

SIMON: ... I apologize for the mystical Native soundtrack but I am about to tell a story, and that requires a fitting Indian ceremony. Since I am an Urban Indian I have to settle for whatever Pan-Indian imagery I can find. Not even celestial, but it keeps me regular... You see, I’m what’s referred to as one of the “lucky ones”. I wasn’t forced to go to residential school. I wasn’t adopted out. I never got sick from a Hudson Bay Blanket. The worst thing my ndian Agent ever did

was take fifteen percent commission on a theatre gig...I like concrete! I get lost when am in the woods. I can't shape shift. I have never had a vision. Never heard the owl call my name. And I've never cried when saw someone litter. I can't even make it rain for god sakes! So go ahead! Call me what you want: Apple. Paper Skin. Uncle Tomahawk. I've heard it all before...Don't get me wrong! I have evolved from very deep roots, but the past is known to me as I remember it, and not the way it probably actually happened. Y story is based on memory so it's not entirely accurate, or fair. History never is. It's a story need to tell, not because its extraordinary but because it's common, too common , and its not told enough. In many ways, it's a tale about my people, which automatically makes it a tale of survival. Of memory...I remember a place one called "home", but even now that word tastes kind of funny. My people call it SEKLEP TE PESELLKWE but missionaries renamed it "Coyote Lake Reservation Number Four". In my language SEKLEP TE PESELLKWE does not mean "Reservation Number Four"( Dennis, 1)

This opening section actually summarises my research question of "de-feathering" the Urban Indigenous person. Knowing full well the burden of authenticity that plagues Indigenous cultural expressions in former colonies, a close analysis of this section unsettles certain claims and re-frames our understanding of the Aboriginal existence in the colonies. This section demystifies the Indian existence by pronouncing the multiple mores of representing the Indigenous person who himself had internalized certain markers of Indigeneity and is expected to "perform" accordingly. Unfortunately nothing had happened to this youth who did not have to go through the trauma of the Residential school system, nor did he have to go out to live in a foster home, but there are other traumatic memories of growing up as an Indigenous youth that haunts his memory. Thus memory becomes a major act of healing. This narrative is similar to the technique we encounter in

playback theatre, where people weave memories with the truth claim of the characters on stage. Darrell Dennis performs multiple roles on the stage like Josie who narrates how he was born, then numbered like other Indian kids and how he was baptized as Simon though his mother named him Robert. We have encountered this issue even in *All Mighty Voice and his Wife* Since birth the identity of the Aboriginal child is fragmented. Simon becomes the Treaty Agent Williams and the new-media that he deploys in the unfolding pattern of his technique reads “ Department of Indian Assimilation” on the screen. Now, anyone who have been working in the area of Indigenous cultural expression is familiar with the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) that regulates the journey of the Indigenous population on Turtle Island. The promise that the Hawthorn Report had was gradually the DIA would be dissolved and more power would be vested on Indigenous people who have been claiming sovereignty and self governance for decades. When Simon’s mother approaches the DIA to challenge the protocol of re-naming the Aboriginal child. The Agent replies:

AGENT:...a’am. I’ve been with the Department of Indian Affairs a long time. Since before there were Indian( Chuckle)...it says right here in the official DIA registry book, sealed with the official stamp , of the official office of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, right next to the official registry number, that your papoose’s official name is officially Simon Douglas. Now whom am supposed to believe? Some Indian Off the street, or the Prime Minister of the great Dominion of Canada...? Don’t care what his birth certificate says! Nobody calls Trudeau a liar! Get out of my cubicle or I’ll have you strung up for treason!( Dennis, 3)

This section exemplifies the humiliation associated with the moment a child is born in an Indigenous community. This passage is strategically placed with the introduction of Simon's father Tom who is a reporter working for a small Native Newspaper and he had been covering the Wounded Knee Massacre<sup>11</sup>.

Simon was taken to the reservation church “ Our Lady of the Converted Heathen”. One cannot fail to recognize Native humour in the unfolding patterns of the stories. Aboriginal peoples never fail to laugh at their situation. *The Rez Sisters* by Highway which paved the way for the flourishing Aboriginal theatre in Canada, connected the trilogy with the same essence of humour which at times was even difficult for the community to gulp. The song by father Murray comes at a point when Simon's mother finds a Marxist – Leninist, pseudo-Anarchist, Lacto-Ovo-Vegeterian suitor in Alistair who proposes a better future for both the ‘mother and child’ by relocating to the city in a “multicultural” environment. Simon wanted to meet his father before leaving for the city. His father had abandoned, was restless like many other young men. Josie explained that it was the Residential School that had made him into what he was. Josie's concluding words echoed what Lee Maracle had once narrated to me at the FNH. She said that she had immense hate for the men in the community, and it took her long to realize what her men had gone

---

<sup>11</sup> On December 29, 1890 soldiers open fired at the Minnecojou Indians who camped on the Wounded Knee Creek. At least 146 Indians died including women and children. Around 30 soldiers died. The Indians had gathered to participate in a Ghost Dance ceremony which was banned and Sitting Bull was killed. Wounded Knee's another prominent date was 1973, the year the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied the village as a protest movement. This had a great impact on the Americas. 1990 should be read along with these events.



through. She said how difficult it was for the men who could not provide for their family.

JOSIE: ....They said they'd teach him how to be welcome in their world. But they didn't teach him nothing. Just hate. Don't think your father doesn't care Simon. He just forgot how to love... (7)

The most intriguing part of the play begins when Simon challenges the politically correct Alistair who represents the "reformed" colonizer or the urban educated mass who looks at the Indigenous people with apathy. The following section is a direct attack on academic discourses on racism, gender issues and sexuality practiced within the liberal setup.

SIMON-Age 10: Alistair! Alistair! Look what I did at school! It's a picture of a black horse and its under a big yellow sun with a smiling face-

ALISTAIR: Simon don't say black, that's racist, say shaded. And don't say yellow, say Asian.

SIMON: But its not an Asian, it's the sun.

ALISTAIR: where are the daughters? That's patriarchal. From now on you are only to draw women of colour who dominate subservient men. If you could also draw them in a healthy lesbian relationship, that would be very empowering.

SIMON: For my birthday I asked for "Monopoly" and instead I got "Cooperative games" (8)

Indigenous people actually demanded, reclaimed their land rights and they had received the Welfare. As I had discussed about the identity formation of the Indian "off- reserve" which was continuously being aligned with the idea of the Aboriginal person, the bodies became a spectacle and were expected to fulfil the desire of the benevolent, urban, apathetic reformed white who would exhibit the authentic rituals of Aboriginal people and the various truth claims

banking on the proximity with the Aboriginals. Many research on Aboriginal people have always been affected by the patronizing tones where the voice had been to “ understand” and bracket Indigenous existence in a frame and time warp. The researchers drafted the methodical reassignment of roles to be performed by the Aboriginal Individual.

Tina revolts and bursts into the following words( strategically there is a sound of thunder):

TINA: You're disappointed!? How am supposed to look? You want me in a little buckskin mini skirt!? Wearing furs? My hair in braids? You met me a little too late Alistair. You would have loved me back in the sixteen-hundreds! You don't want a real Indian woman; you want some primitive sexual fantasy. Well ain't acting like Pochahontas for you, 'cause the only thing she got from her white man was dead. All you do is drink and smoke up, but when want to join the party you turn into Bill W. You condescending, racist hypocrite! Simon and aren't little Indian dolls you show off to your friends. I don't act Indian, because I Am Indian! This is what we are Alistair. This is what we've become. Deal with it! We live in a city, for Christ sake! How do you expect me to get close to Mother Earth! SHE'S COVERED IN FUCKING CONCRETE, YOU ASSHOLE! (9-10)

The most touching episode is when Daniel, Simon's friend commits suicide by hanging himself. Simon's proximity with the “soft” and gentlemanly Daniel earned him a reputation of a “fag” in the reserve, but Daniel's suicide opened up several questions which remained unanswered when Darrel produced the play, only to be re-positioned in a different format by Waawaate in his *Agokwe* which dealt with “being gay” in the Reserve of Kenora.

Josie prophetically declares:

JOSIE: There was a time when two-spirited people of this village were honoured. They were respected for possessing both sexes.

OLD MAN: Aah, no! they disrespected the creator. If they had prayed more, or went to the sweat lodge, they could have cured themselves of being gay.

SIMON: At that moment I started to realize the difference between being an elder, and just being old.

(14)

The play not only takes into consideration the complex web that manufactures the Urban Indian existence but also shows how that is performed. The above section explains how people had internalized colonization and the only way out for a person like Daniel would be to run out of the reserve and relocate to the city which atleast promises anonymity unlike the reserve. This is precisely what Waawaate did when he relocated from his reserve. The Aboriginals live in Urban ghettos and they speak, interact with the city from the other side of the border. Simon talks about the living condition of the Urban Indigenous youth:

SIMON:...our girls are all pregnant, we talk funny, our clothes are from seventies, and were all broke. We're supposed to be close to nature and all you see around here is garbage on the roads and broken down fridges in our yards. People here always say they're proud to be Indian, but what the fuck is there to be proud of...(17)

Marie Clements' *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian* was re-drafted and was being produced by NEPA in 2010 and I audited the workshop as a student auditor which included getting involved with the process of developing a script, the costume, and the stage. The scope of this chapter will not allow me to discuss the play which was being developed in details but the broader thematic of the

play needs to be discussed in brief to establish how these performance narratives are inter connected and how they fit in the broader framework of the discourse on the urban Indigenous existence. The context of the play is the Relocation programme of the 1952. This programme offered one way bus fare and promise of assistance in finding jobs and housing in urban areas for reservation Indians, usually younger tribal members with more employable skills. According to records, by the 1980s more than half the Indigenous population were living in the cities. Next came the sterilization of poor women especially Native Women. No one knows the exact number of Native women who were sterilized during the 1970s. Later even Native men were sterilized exposing the dark side of an burgeoning industrial Nation which brought people from its colonies to work for them but sterilized the already existing population to control their growth. The play juxtaposes the 1955 and 1973 Los Angeles and throws open certain questions on the condition of women in the city. This what a character says:

DANIEL: I think had at least forty cases today and then one old Indian woman thought was being abused because she had these huge blue bruises on her legs. I kept asking questions like “ have you had a fall lately, or did someone hurt you?” And every time she just nods her head, and finally I get her to walk around the office to see if she can show me where anything hurts, and see this big blue stain on the pocket of her cardigan, and ask her if I can take a look, and see what’s in there. What do you think it is?

No Response.

Daniel: it’s a bingo marker with a broken tip busted off, and it has been leaking blue highlighter over everything. I pull it out of her pocket and she just smiles and says “ Bingo” ( Clements, Working script)

This woman might seem to have entered the space of *Tombs* from the Rez of Tomson Highway and might have the blue spots that marked the journey of the Aboriginal woman in Monique's readings of the Pochahontas in popular media.

By entering into the profane space of the settler society, i.e. the city, the Aboriginal entered into renewed struggle with the settlers and its reality that the capitalist societies further accentuated the rift.

However, over the past 100 years, capitalism has extended and intensified its reach. Non-native people have become increasingly concentrated in large cities (Canada has the most urbanized population per capita in the world) and have been integrated into the capitalist system as workers. Because of the inherently exploitative dynamics of capitalism, workers in North America have faced a decline in living standards since the neo-liberal offensive of the late 1970s...the contemporary resurgence of [I]ndigenous struggle in the Americas is happening as the few remaining autonomous indigenous communities are being forced into compliance with the demands of capitalist world market...(Keefer, 121-22)

Now the question is, as far as the idea of survival is concerned, will it be possible to draft policies to address an emerging Native-Non-Native 'Alliance' that might affect the future course of interaction amongst Native groups and settler groups, at least in smaller groups like that of the universities? It is a huge task and requires relentless dialogue, where the idea of reconciliation can be a one way traffic, diluting the politics of identity formation of an Aboriginal culture which is alive and doing well and not dead. If this identity formation is drafted as "Indigenously" (Justice, 61), then the process "requires far more than simply existing as individual human beings... those of us who are Native (as well as our non-Native allies) must also be mindful of

those ceremonial, political, and intellectual traditions that embody our adaptive continuity as peoples, as nations with distinctive voices...” (61).

The complex journey of the Aboriginal people from the reserves to the city will enable us to contextualize Indigenous cultural productions within the Neo-liberal urban space.

### **Chapter 3: Mapping Indigenous Performance in the Cities of Toronto and Ahmedabad**

So who is the Real Indian?

“The Real Indian is the Dead Indian”

---

What is Culture? It is a rhetorical question, in fact a notorious question as well. The question deals with the ambiguity of the concept of ‘Culture’. For some, ‘Culture’ means stone henge, pottery, dance and music, fashion and style; while for others no material object can ever be ‘Culture’. For some, ‘Culture’ exists in the mind. If we look at any early definition, ‘Culture’ was seen as a complex whole which encompassed knowledge, belief, arts, law, customs and often capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of a particular society. ‘Culture’ is also seen as the ensemble of stories passed down as histories. With these working definitions of ‘Culture’ we generally try to define ‘ourselves’ and ‘others’. ‘Culture’ forms the basis of all ‘imagined communities’. Often we fail to recognize the existence of the plurality of the concept called ‘Culture’. This parochial view leads not only to a kind of human catastrophe but this non-acceptance is also a disease – the prognosis of the disappearance of various cultures. A modern state with its ‘diversity- as-ideal’ or ‘Multicultural’ policy is charged with cultural conflicts or conflicting cultures. If, at this point, we introduce another ambiguous term ‘Performance’ to understand the mythos of how culture is performed or contextualized in the arena of ‘Performing Arts’, the probable questions that would haunt our understandings are:

- Whether ‘Performing Art’ is an extension of a particular ‘Culture’
- Whether ‘Performing Art’ is a tool for various cultural expressions
- How to trace historically when a ‘performance’ attains the stature of ‘Art’ as such
- Is ‘Performing Art’ a discrete field? Is it ‘pure’ performance that we are talking about?
- Does ‘Performing Art’ incorporate texts and contexts that evolve out of performance as well?
- Whether a particular form of performance is roped in strategically as a means of subversion
- How does ‘Space’ as a category define ‘Culture’, ‘Performance’ and ‘Performing Arts’ and subsequently the ‘actors’ in the process of meaning making?

One can actually go on and on as I do not claim this list of queries to be exhaustive. On the other hand, the list is self-explanatory of the fact that the field I have decided to embark on is a dubious one. In my humble attempt to answer them, I shall play a bit with the etymology of ‘performance’ in the context of the Indigenous peoples with whom I have worked with in Canada and India. Closely associated with ‘performance’ will be words like *Kala* ( Art), *Kalakar* ( The Performer) and the ethics of the ‘performance’ and its reception as well. I shall use several performance texts from Canada and India to further complicate the issue of Indigenous alterities vis-à-vis a performance culture in two Neo-liberal Urban Spaces of Toronto and Ahmedabad.

This chapter in actuality tries to unveil certain pertinent issues vis-à-vis space as an important category in my dissertation. It is a contaminated space in the sense where structures of ‘authenticity’ are contested and Indigenous and Non-Indigenous forces coalesce to fight multiple forms of capitals. What the politics of this ‘alliance’ is, is something that I wanted to



explore as a student of Comparative Literature and also to critically engage with the idea of Reception. Meeting Dakxin Bajarange in an Internal Conference in 2009 at Khajuraho transformed my idea of “Indigeneity” in the context of our Subcontinent. This brief meeting translated into a long standing camaraderie and I was inducted in the DNT struggle for social justice in India. It is a short and unknown history for many of us who claim to be Indian. My initial dialogue with Dakxin dealt with the plight of the Chhara community in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, their struggle for self determination and the formation of their own theatre group Budhan. It requires immense courage and self determination to sustain such a group. For them, theatre is a powerful and positive instrument of empowerment. Through theatre they have wanted to bring about socio-economic changes in the lives of many who have remained “dishonoured by history” over a long period of time, as I have mentioned earlier. Theatre for ‘them’ is a collective effort to elevate the status of the tribe and make the people within the community economically stronger and confident. So there is an ideology behind each performance. For them theatre is their very existence. Whether it corroborates to the idea of ‘Art’ is definitely not their prime concern. Future theatrical production may use their form and style as sub-text or to affix the notion of intertextuality and elevate it to level of high art but for Dakxin and his group theatre is not just a means of generating money. It is beyond such mundane realities which even as an ‘outsider’ I/we could relate to. It is interesting to note that street theatre as a form, talks about subversion. It breaks all theatrical conventions and is accentuated with the presence of multiple voices which often become a cacophony trying to break the silence. The music that emanates from the

liquor making utensils break the silence and the rhythm pattern questions the long association of this community with crime. Criminalizing the activities of others contributes to the organized crime of imposing any form of ghetto. I shall subsequently address the notion of Art and Ideology in the context of the cultural productions of two Indigenous communities located in two hemispheres.

It is interesting that the entry in Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1976), 'Culture' precedes the entry 'Democracy' which talks about a form of governance. I am precisely interested in this indeterminacy of the process of the production of 'Culture' and its interface with governance. To be more specific, I am more concerned with thinking culture in its plural form as cultures and "the specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation" (Williams, 89). To situate this discourse on the production of Culture, Raymond William writes:

An essential hypothesis in the development of the idea of culture is that the art of a period is closely and necessarily related to the generally prevalent 'way of life', and further that, in consequence, aesthetic, moral, and social judgements are closely related. (1958, 137)

What happens when 'Culture' is performed and 'performance' is seen as a discursive category? In my discussion, I shall talk about a performance culture which is an artistic representation linked "with the constituents of training and rehearsal, skill and virtuosity, trained reception and spectatorship" (Bharucha, 20) and simultaneously a 'performance' which is 'less conditioned by the 'artistic' orchestration of a corporeal, 'live', rehearsed, time-and-space-bound event framed within the cultural norms of civic institutions like state

theatre, than by a much wider understanding of ‘performance’ inextricably linked to social interactions, behaviours, strategies, deceptions, manipulations and negotiations of terror in the public sphere’ ( Bharucha, 21). If space and performance become critical categories of engaging with Indigeneity and is interlinked with the idea of decolonization, then ‘performance’ becomes a theoretical tool to map the Native-non-Native ‘alliance’ which is an important trope in this particular research. This is precisely the domain which defines my intervention as an non-Indigenous person engaging in this rhetoric of dissent, which has its own aesthetics of reception in the cities of Toronto and Ahmedabad.

Since time and space are not too well defined separate categories in both the primarily oral communities I am dealing with, it is important to take into cognizance how the idea of space was introduced as an extraneous category. For instance, the idea of land is part of a collective consciousness amongst several Indigenous groups where land is connected with the body. Land is an extension of the self and not something that can be controlled by agencies. For the Native people, land by no means was a spatial category that followed rearrangements and display of “the relationship between people and the landscape, of culture as an object of study” ( Smith, 51). The colonization of a particular space is directly linked with colonizing the body and the mind. My idea is to map how specific communities reacted and are still doing so to record their dissent against this ongoing process of encroachment; to be more specific, to trace appropriation in their ‘performance’ from their specific locations.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her seminal work *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2006) engages with this particular spatio-temporal concern about how Indigenous land was stolen, renamed and re-introduced in the form of reserves or settlements in the following words:

This newly named land became increasingly disconnected from the songs and chants used by Indigenous peoples to trace their history, to bring forth spiritual elements or to carry out the simplest of ceremonies. More significantly, however, space was appropriated from Indigenous cultures and then 'gifted back' as reservations, reserved pockets of land for indigenous people who once possessed all of it. ( 51)

Since the urban space is cohabited by both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and my thrust area is to map Indigenous 'alterities' within the cityscape, I felt like many other social mores, the Indigenous- non-Indigenous interface is a significant player in drafting the alterities vis-à-vis ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality and many more. Situating myself as a researcher within this research is an extension of that particular anxiety of a researcher of Comparative Literature who is often accused of not being able to identify her/his discipline. I would say, since lived experiences are not discipline oriented, this grey zone of my location, that of a non-Native person writing/working on Indigenous alterities, prompted me to think about a plausible Native/ Indigenous-non-Native/ Indigenous alliance. This would require a cross pollination of disciplines which, in a way ,would strive to de-colonise academic practices by dismantling categories like the subject-object position by promoting possibilities of interchangeable position.

A historical event which I have identify as the major encounter between this Indigenous- non-Indigenous interface is the Oka crisis of 1990

which I shall refer to again and again even though I am well aware that Oka was not the first and last event when First Peoples in Canada reacted to years of subjugation. My interest is the reaction of the federal government and 'governance' in general as this particular event will promote many Indigenous authors like Lee Maracle to re-write, re-draft their works.

Lynne David introduces *Alliances : Re/Envisioning Indigenous-Non-Indigenous Relationships* by referring to post-effect of Oka in the following words:

At the time, the 1990 confrontation at Kanasatake (Oka) appeared to be a watershed in Aboriginal/ non-Aboriginal relations in Canada. Television images of Mohawk people at Kanasatake protecting sacred burial grounds from being turned into a golf course , and the reactive use of force by Quebec police and Canadian military to repress their resistance, galvanized the Canadian public. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was established soon afterwards by federal politicians from all political parties to thoroughly review the relationship between Canadians and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. ( 3)

Despite the report of RCAP which recommended and promoted a recognition of the First Peoples in Canada, where the operative words were respect, sharing and responsibility, many settler immigrants in Canada are not at all aware of who the Aboriginal people are. If they are, they do not have any clear idea about the struggles of the Indigenous population except a few in academia or in the domain of performing arts. Identifying with the cause of the First Peoples or participating in their struggle for self governance and sovereignty might be intellectually invigorating but 'what is to be done' is the catch phrase in this process of identification. I have formulated the idea of 'Research as

Activism' in my monograph *Ghumantoos*<sup>1</sup> where I have discussed at length about the scope of alliance within the Neo-liberal space where the various forms of alterities meet and coalesce.

The question then is, can theatre become a tool to escalate these anxieties? Dakxin, the founder member of Budhan theatre identifies with Augusto Boal and Badal Sircar's idea of the theatre. Boal writes:

But the theatre can be a weapon for liberation. For that it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative. (1979, viii)

Badal Sircar extends this idea in his article "The Changing Language of Theatre"<sup>2</sup> in the following words:

Theatre can also be result oriented, as theatre committed to a particular cause is. Such theatre desires to change the thoughts and beliefs of the spectators, lead them to some action. In this respect, theatre is moving closer to ritual, interweaving efficacy and entertainment. But to attain efficacy, asks our prototype, do we not need the greater participation of the spectators? Can we monopolise all the action and give them a passive role as is done in the conventional city theatre? Is there no way of including them a little more in the action? Making them participate a little more in the event of theatre, as communities do in ritual? (2009, 81)

In another essay "The Third Theatre"<sup>3</sup>, Sircar contextualized the idea of an alternative mode of expression in the city-scape in the following words:

---

<sup>1</sup> WIP volume published in 2013 by CAS, Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University,

<sup>2</sup> Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Lecture, 1981. See also *On Theatre: Selected Essays* by Badal Sircar.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a project entitled *Workshop For a Theatre of Synthesis as a Rural-Urban Link* carried out with the assistance of a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (June 1971-May 1973) and first published in Kolkata in 1978.

One of the important characteristics of the socio-economic conditions of India is an unfortunate dichotomy between urban and rural life, expressed in disparities in economic standards, services, educational levels and cultural development. Having been a colonial country for so long, the cities of India have acquired a colonial character in their development-sometimes even in their birth, like in the case of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, New Delhi. Such cities did not emerge as the natural products of the indigenous economic development of the country, but were created primarily to serve the colonial interests of a foreign power. ( Sircar, 2009,1)

I have tried to contextualize Indigenous performance within this city space which was not natural for the Indigenous populations. The colonial architecture was imposed on the Indigenous populations who were again forced to relocate to the cities for better opportunities. I have discuss that at length in Chapter 2.

Before I move ahead with my argument of situating the Performance Culture of Indigenous groups within a Neo-liberal space, I would like to briefly engage with the idea of Indigenous Performance Culture and show how is it different from the other performance traditions. This area is extremely important to address, as a student of Comparative Literature, as we are trained to delve deep into the process of cultural production and explore avenues of extracting the sources, influences and anxieties of a particular body of work within a given time and space. Since I shall deal with the formative years of two performance cultures from two locations in my thesis, which is precisely from the 1990s to the present, it is important to look at the available literature about this performance tradition and the methodologies that were evolving to accommodate this pedagogic shift.

In an article “The Artificial Tree”, Floyd Favel Starr records the absence of any practical model that could guide the Native artists and their histories were quite different from the available models. As the one who was an “Indian” was closely associated with the works they produced, many of them had to turn to the Aboriginal dance steps and drumming to connect with the stories that they could tell, the performing bodies could narrate the embodied stories of hope and despair. Floyd substantiates this premise in the following words:

The concept, Native Performance Culture, could be described as developing practices of our ancestors. It came about not as a clearly formulated plan based on a clear vision, but as a feeling and intuition born out of personal, cultural and universal needs. ( 1997, 83)

If we trace the history of a Native Performance Culture in the city of Toronto and Tomson Highway’s *The Rez Sisters* is seen as a major event in this history of Aboriginal Theatre in Canada, then it is important to read Native mythology as the core element of cultural revolution. According to Highway there is a specific need for introducing this mythology on stage, which is the most effective medium that translates Aboriginal oral traditions:

The only thing is, this mythology has to be re-worked somewhat if it is to be relevant to us Indians living in today’s world. The way these stories go to date, they were meant for a people who lived in a forest environment; we-our family-were all born in tents, grew up travelling by dog-sled and canoe, etc. But, today, as an adult, I am urban by choice. In order for these myths to be relevant to my life, to my own system of spiritual beliefs, I have to apply these myths, this mythology to the realities of city living. ( Highway 2005, 1-2)

This definitely echoes what Dakxin Bajarange Chhara feels about the vision of Budhan Theatre. He feels it is the task of his theatre group to introduce theatre



amongst all the DNT communities living on the fringes of the cities, on the road side slum as theatre is the most effective medium to reclaim their voice, their land and their rights. Above all to narrate their stories of subjugation, deprivation in a city like Ahmedabad which is the model city of the big Indian dream.

In a passage before he introduces the cast of his *The Rez Sisters*, where he weaves a story of hopes and impediments with the trickster as the central motif of continuity and change, he enlightens the recipient with this note:

The dream world of North American Indian mythology is inhabited by the most fantastic creatures, beings and events. Foremost among these beings is the “Trickster”, as pivotal and important a figure in the Native world as Christ is in the realm of Christian mythology.” Weesageechak” in Cree, “Nanabush” in Ojibway, “Raven” in others, “Coyote” in still others, this Trickster goes by many names and many guises. In fact, he can assume any guise he chooses. Essentially a comic, clownish sort of character, he teaches us about the nature and the meaning of existence on the planet Earth; he straddles the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great Spirit.

Some say that “Nanabush” left this continent when the Whiteman came. We believe he is still here among us-al-beit a little the worse for wear and tear-having assumed other guises. Without him- and without the spiritual health of this figure-the core of Indian culture would be gone forever.( Highway, 1988, xii)

This is not invented mythology that Highway is addressing with a certain poise and determination. His plays aim at imitating and including real world mythology, specifically created to bring mythology to modern readers, and/or to add credibility and literary depth to his theatrical worlds. Myth-making in

the context of Aboriginal Canadian theatre is a strategic move towards the fulfillment of its own projected reality in an ideally associative, personal world which is cohabited by other settlers with their associated myths. Please note that when I say this, I mean that the works do not exist in some aesthetic limbo but serve a purpose in people's lives and in the life of the entire community. Highway, like many of his contemporaries, drafts a mode of resistance through the performance which is linked with the healing process. This adds a new dimension to the aesthetics of Aboriginal cultural expressions. Highway felt the need for something new that would situate Native existence in a changing world outside. So a play becomes a dream- a series of brutal, horrific, tragic events and the awakening is soothing, anticipating a possibility of a brighter future as we encounter in *Almighty Voice and His Wife* by Daniel David Moses. This is the new myth. Whether this hints at emancipation or Aboriginal empowerment, is yet to unfold. As I have already pointed out that Highway's mythmaking is an extension of the story-telling tradition of the aboriginal people, trying to communicate the idea of history with Native as well as non-Native peoples across time and space.

I should clarify at this point that as a student of Comparative Literature, I am not trying to juxtapose the theatre of the Chhara community with that of the plays by Highway and read them objectively. I say this with reference to the fact that the position of the object is more preferred than the position of the subject in postmodern literary criticism. But I must say, as far as performance is concerned, looking at the theatrical productions from the eyes of an insider, as a performer in my case, I assume that both the realities can be read across similar if not identical patterns. Now it is important to

clarify my position at this juncture. It is this stance of identifying with the marginal and the oppressed, which fosters a different reading of the texts. It creates almost a pseudo receptive intellectual climate which corroborates to the Foucauldian models of studying the Mad, the sick and hence the bad, not normal etc. This emphasis on power politics, the character of power in this globalised world has triggered the imagination of many thinkers to look beyond available models and has acted as the impetus behind the search for a new language to dismantle the edifice of power and oppression. This appreciative approach stressing the importance of identifying with cultural minorities also generates a new way of studying sub-cultural forms and identities. The idea that the culture of the literally vulgar, the marginalized and the excluded could be re-evaluated by being seen as forms of resistance and subversion rather than failure, has been centrally important in rewriting the history of modernization. Now the central question is, whose history and whose modernity are we talking about? As a researcher, am I falling into the trap of this imposed modernity? Is my reading also conditioned by certain specific notions of modernity? I think at this point, we need to look at the connotations of 'Culture' 'Art' and 'Ideology' afresh. Do we need to have other working definitions of the terms within the quotations““?

Our social condition makes us expect certain things from a particular class or group. We try to associate a particular group with prototypes and available models which are basically stereotypes. Thus contemporary Aboriginal theatre comes as a shock to the urbane psyche because they are asking certain simple questions pertaining to their existence and they really have no compulsion to represent their culture. Their culture is

again a construct. Something which has been deliberately imposed. Their cultural expressions become commodities and this process of commodification is closely monitored by interest groups who claim to understand them and their culture. Hence, there is a lot of suspicion around “us” who research “on” the others.

Highway uses his altruistic humour to address this in his latest creation *The Post Mistress* (2013) where his protagonist MARIE-LOUISE discloses a ‘scrumptious secret’ about Sylvie Labranche’s, a Metis and her secret lover Barbaro Botafogo who is a linguist and writes to her from Brazil in Cree and came to Canada to study the Indians:

MARIE-LOUISE-I have no idea why the Indians have to be studied, but anyway. This Barbaro Botafogo speaks twenty languages, says my friend Sylvie Labranche, can you believe it? Me, I speak two-French and English-but him? Besides his native Portugese and his English, he speaks Chippewa, Chipewyan, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cheepoogoot, Chaggy-wat, Choggy-lat, Chipoocheech, Chickadee, Chickabee, Chickamee, Chickalee, Chickory, Chickaboom, Winnebago, Micmac-paddywhack-give –a-dog, and Cree, something like that. But Cree, for some reason, he tells Sylvie, is his favourite, can you believe it? “Cree if you sing it to samba,” this Barbaro Botafogo has said to my friend Sylvie Labranche, “sounds like Brazilian Portugese, same hot, sexy syllables,” which is why he is obsessed by it (though if you ask me, if he is obsessed by anything, it is Sylvie Labranche, Metis princess who wears too much mascara).( 2013, 6)

What Tomson achieves in this passage is what many Native writers and activists call ‘art of decolonisation’. Banking on his Cree humour, Tomson engages with the idea of ‘studying’ the Indian in the modern context. He also breaks the myth of the ‘Indian’ by talking about the linguistic diversity of the First Peoples in Canada and plays with reception of these words by adding

sounds which are as unfamiliar as the languages spoken. Besides that, he does not fail to stress the ongoing colonization of the aboriginal body and soul when MARIE says that Botafogo is only interested in the Metis princess, alluding to the ‘princess’ who became infamous for her ‘blue spots’ and simultaneously she also talks about her friend who might want to elope with the man to get out of this system. A system which took MARIE thirty one long years to be promoted as the first (Post ) Mistress when the previous one dropped dead one day, explaining the struggle of Native Women, who despite all their struggles never refrain from their ‘native humour’ which according to Highway, is the only strategy left for survival, to laugh at the situation and be strong.

In India when a particular tribe is invited to perform in space like Government meetings or Hotels , the audience expects certain exotic things with which they are not otherwise acquainted. They try to extract specific meanings from them which at times are part of certain secret rituals. These are to be preserved and members of a particular community are not allowed to share the secrets with anyone outside the community. Any alternative voice comes as a shock to us. Aboriginals are expected to ‘perform’ their Culture. A certain degree of authenticity is expected. Now what is an ‘authentic’ Aboriginal Performance? This mode of attestation is also a kind of silencing. It is almost like believing that they inhabit outside the domain of common knowledge and therefore they do not or are not expected to participate in any public discourse. I am a bit skeptic about this overemphasis on the understanding of the Culture of the Aboriginals. I might sound a bit cynical but what I proposed in this chapter was precisely to focus on this concern that

how can we still expect a particular group to retain their 'authenticity' and make them creatures of the past. If Art is all about dynamism then Culture is also ever changing and there are several factors which are responsible. For this, dislocation being one of them. I shall deal with in my next chapter and trace certain cultural texts that responds to the dislocation of Aboriginal peoples.

Cultural productions by diverse groups become a category, the dominant topic and the most productive source to rewrite our understanding of life in the Neo-liberal context. The concept of culture is fascinating but often puzzling because it has been used in several locations in distinctive ways, in different languages and intellectual traditions. Culture as a critical category of engaging in intellectual discourses carries its own weight of associations, and it changes through history. Members of a group have specific characteristics and persistent forms or patterns of thought and value through which they understand and present their worldview. Culture is therefore a tricky category as it uses itself and its own presuppositions in order to become meaningful. It is a process. Although the term 'culture', used in its sense of a way of life as well as the content of libraries, museums, galleries and so on, has become one of the common terms of descriptions of social life in the urban context that takes pride in defining quality of privilege. It is the proper rohstoff for academic discourse which speaks from a specific class and even cast position. To extend the scope a bit, it is a normative discourse which accepts non-normativity as a performance also. Hence allowing alterities does not necessarily mean developing allies, but a pseudo acceptance of marginalities to retain the power of the centre.

If we believe that one of the many functions of ‘Art’ is to perceive the specific ideology behind a cultural production, then there is a history of reception here Aboriginal Theatre.

How do we participate in this meaning-making process as outsiders? I would like to emphasise on the pseudo acceptance of the cultures of others as a kind of ‘passive empathy’. This is another form of appropriation which fails to recognize the basis of such contemporary cultural codes. Now coming back to the rhetoric of Performing Arts, the central strategy of Aristotelian pity is being contested as there is limited way of imagining similar ‘fear’ in the spectators if she is not from the community that is being re-presented. The agent of empathy then is the fear for oneself being subjected to the ‘offence’, ‘crime’ committed by the characters like substance abuse, robbery, *loot* etc. It is this very point that I am trying to establish that we need a specifically different orientation to appreciate Indigenous performing culture if anything like that exists at all. Here I would like to propose the Testimonial reading of certain performance texts a la Megan Boler:

What, then, distinguishes emphatic from testimonial reading? What might it mean for the reader to ‘take action’? I suggest that unlike passive empathy, testimonial reading requires a self-reflective participation: an awareness first of myself as reader, positioned in a relative position of power by virtue of the safe distance of reading. Second, I recognize that reading potentially involves a task. This task is at minimum an active reading practice that involves challenging my own assumptions and world views ( 1997, 263)

As I have already mentioned, this chapter would thrive to discuss the relation between the ethics and politics of performance of the Budhan theatre group

within the cityscape of Ahmedabad, India and simultaneously try to contextualise the basic premises on which we could situate Indigenous performances in the city of Toronto in my next chapter. This does not necessarily mean that these chapters are exclusively detached from each other as two circumpolar identities, rather the inner connection will be traced to discuss the broad framework of comparativism that I have only hinted at in my Introduction.

The conceptual framework of reading ‘violence’ in the works of Budhan actually triggers from the idea of practicing experimental theatre, which systematically de-stabilises the conventional structures of theatre practices on a global stage. So violence is contained in the form it adopts to escalate violation of human rights for generations and to focus on the injustices meted out to groups/ tribes in question which is part of the formative anxieties of the research question I am addressing.

When we think about ethics, it is not a term that has been used here to problematise social conditionings or social mores of expression, rather, I have used ‘ethics’ as a critical category that would contest any “given situation” or any form of moral surety, in this case the subject position and the object of study. As the title of my dissertation suggests, and many senior colleagues feel, I shall not overtly offer an alternative political mode of reading the political landscape of Neo-liberalism and then situate their negotiations within and without the structure of Budhan’s performances.

To do that, it would be wise to re-capture the essence of violence associated with colonisation which I have clearly mentioned in my



Introduction. I am basically trying to read two forms of colonies, their laws, how marginalities were and are still being produced in urban ghettos and how the so called marginal voices are negotiating within the late liberal grey-zone.

### **History Revisited: The ‘ Criminal’ in the City**

The history of the Denotified communities is a complex one. The Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871, passed by the governor of India in Council, (received the assent of the Governor General on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1871), was an Act for the Registration of Criminal Tribes and Eunuchs as modified up to 1<sup>st</sup>, February 1897. (TAG Report, 2006.)

There were political and social reasons for declaring such a large number of communities as criminals. This law would then be responsible for long-term consequences put into action. The following section from the TAG report will help me to substantiate my claim on the social production of crime:

A study of the records of the late nineteenth century shows that due to a set of colonial policies, certain communities lost their livelihood, and this lack of work got linked to the concept of such communities living by crime. Even in England, lack of “ostensible means of livelihood” made a person qualify as a potential criminal at that time. In fact, it was officially recognised that the British administration’s economic policies, aimed at raising revenue, had made the itinerant communities economically redundant and anachronistic. (2006, 43)

Similarly, laws implemented in recent years in India are directly responsible for the living conditions of the Bedia (Saperas). The Government implemented the law without ever taking into consideration the wider

implication of the Act on atrocities towards animal. So what is important is to understand the social construction of crime. This issue was precisely covered in the DNT meet organised by Budhan theatre in 2012 and 2013.

The TAG report also documents the process in which the communities in question lost their livelihood and gradually became redundant. According to the report, during 1850s, road and railway networks were established throughout the Presidency, and non-sedentary communities who carried out their trade largely on pack bullocks or donkeys, became almost redundant. Further, they lost a large number of their cattle in the famines of the nineteenth century. The Yerukulas were worst sufferers as they were denied access to forest lands and resources like bamboo and leaves which they used to make mats. Communities like Banjaras, Lambadas, Koravars, Yerukulas, Korachas etc, who were trading in salt also suffered a crisis with the influx of private traders in this field due to the new salt policy of the government which was introduced in the 1880s (Radhakrishnan)

The next act of violence was the mapping the body of the criminal which involved sketching the skull, nose pattern of the hereditary criminal. The popular imagination was overpopulated by the image of a strange body and psyche of the criminal. At this juncture it would be wise to introduce the “body” as an important category and its interface with the discipline of anthropology which has its own ideology of reading human behaviour.

While identifying the role of Eugenics Education Society in endorsing the idea of a 'hereditary criminal class', the TAG report substantiates that this was an 'attractive explanation for the continuing

problem of social crime' ( 45). The term "criminal tribes" was already in usage to define gypsies, who, are closely associated with the non-sedentary groups in India and interestingly they use a lingua franca called *Narsi Parsi* which is similar to a code language of the non-sedentary groups across the world. It is interesting to note that the period in which the British Indian administration instituted the Criminal Tribes Act, Eugenics was making tremendous advances as a science and had wide appeal amongst the public in Britain. This has been well documented in TAG report. This trope of labelling people could then be used to replicate models of subjugating peoples in all the colonies. Open prison could be built in the name of Reserves in Canada, Bantusthans in Africa and the Settlement Zones in India.

Anthropology did the same thing in the Canadian context. Edward J. Hedin identifies the detrimental effect of findings of Anthropology vis-à-vis Native people in Canada:

Whether intentional or not, the image conveyed was that of a dying Indian culture, or at least one vastly transformed. The myriad studies of social disorganisation lent support to the view that Natives were either resistant to or incapable of adapting to new lifestyle. What anthropologists did not study were the deleterious effects that treaties and government policies had in undermining the infrastructure of Aboriginal societies. ( 2008, 44)

It is interesting to note the amendment of 1897. Section 1A, which was added after section 1 of the Criminal Tribes' Act, 1871 deems the words "tribe", "gang" and "class" to include any portion or members of a tribe, gang or class.

The most important aspect of the next section, which has direct relation to the two realities I am talking about vis-à-vis India and Canada is section 17 A,

which was added after section 17 of the Law of 1871. I quote from the records of 1897 reflected in the TAG report which is probably the only well researched document on the DNTS in India apart from Meena Radhakrishna's

*Dishonoured by History* ( 2001):

(1)The Local Government may establish and maintain reformatory settlements for children and may separate and remove from their parents and place in such a reformatory settlement the children of the registered members of any tribe, gang or class which has been declared to be criminal.

(2)For every reformatory settlement for children established under sub-section a Superintendent shall be appointed by the Local Government.

(3)The Superintendent of a reformatory settlement for children shall be deemed to be the guardian, within the meaning of Act No XIX of 1850 (concerning the binding of apprentices), of every child detained in such settlement; and such Superintendent may, if he shall think fit, and subject to any rules which the Local Government may make in this behalf, apprentice such child under the provisions of the aforesaid Act.  
Explanation : The term “ children” in this section includes all persons under the age of eighteen and above the age of four years.

(Criminal Tribes Act; 1897, Sections 1A and 17 A, TAG report, 2006, 194)

This actually has direct reference to the Residential School systems in Canada which I have mentioned in my introduction and I would like to cite selected sections from the report prepared by Deborah Chansonneuve for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF)<sup>4</sup>. Deborah reads the Indian Act of 1876 as the Canadian Government's system of controlling and assimilating Aboriginal peoples. Deborah identifies the following features of the Act, which were primarily designed to subjugate the Aboriginal Population:

---

<sup>4</sup> A report on *Addictive Behaviours Among Aboriginal People in Canada* prepared by Deborah Chansonneuve for Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

- Native people were prevented from leaving or travelling off the reservation without written permission signed by a government
- The status rights of Native women who married non-Native men were removed
- Traditional spiritual ceremonies were criminalized
- Traditional leadership and forms of governance was changed
- Ban on hunting, fishing, gathering

Before I move on to other pertinent issues, I would like to address the ostrich like effort of Government policies. According to Government records and the TAG Report, The Criminal Tribes Act, 1924, was in active operation in the States of the Punjab, the Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Delhi and Ajmer (paragraph 188). The records of CID, Bhavanibhavan, West Bengal actually maps the case study of the notorious Govinda Dome case of 1924. I have dealt with it in *Ghumantoos* but the scope of this chapter will not allow me to discuss that in detail. Again, it is noted that the Criminal Tribes Act has worked very harshly in the Saran district (Bihar State) as it is inhuman that registered persons should be required to give *hajri* 5 to 6 times during night (paragraph 221). Again, it is well documented that the tented accommodation provided in the Reformatory Settlement at Amritsar, Punjab State, requires to be replaced by suitable buildings, and there is scope for improving the wages of the settlers in that settlement (paragraph 241). The next section which has direct relevance to my research topic is the section which documents that:

Except the Punjab, Bengal (before Partition), Bombay and Delhi (to a limited extent), no states have made any use of

section 17 of the Criminal Tribes Act. Although we are not in favour of wholesale removal of the Criminal Tribes children from their parents, removal of children from their parents in special circumstances is desirable (paragraph 259).

The report also states that the average area of land allotted to Criminal Tribes members was also found to be much less than their requirements. It is interesting that though the Supreme court has ordered the Gujarat Government to allocate lands to the Sansi, Dubgars, Rajbhois and Wagri residing below Nathalal Jhaggadia Bridge, Maninagar Railway Station, Ahmedabad, the land finally allocated to them is the dumping yard of the model state of India! This is exactly where the theatre group performed *The Lower Depth* that only reinstated the fact that interwove their living patterns in the plays they performed. The *Patta* system in West Bengal, India proved to be fatal exercise which deprived the Kheria Sabars from land and they were given only arid land which they could never cultivate and thus invariably ended up being arrested for the crimes they were forced to commit for basic sustenance.

Reasons behind the Social Stigma and why they are potential threat to any established order as identified in the TAG Report, 2006:

- The Nomads' lack of property and consequently lack of due regard for others' property was seen as a major threat.
- Nomadism seen as a possible escape route for the so-called outcasts and refuse of sedentary societies

- The Nomads escape from the arm of law, or simply fleeing from hard work of any kind. This is also similar to the situation of the Aboriginal people in Canada.
- Nomadism is not seen as a chosen way of life, but as “deviance” of some sort.
- The Nomad’s extremely marginal status in the established system is suspected to be the reason for a deliberate rejection of that system.

It was mandatory for most of the male members of the DNT community to report at the local police station on a daily basis. According to the latest statistics of the survey conducted by the National Survey team appointed by ICSSR, the Kanjars in Rajasthan still have to report at the local police station on a daily basis. It is somehow similar to the pass system within the reserves in Canada.

- Their lack of predictability of movements implied a potential lack of control
- Their shifting abodes meant shifting loyalties to different patrons, and so they were seen to be perennially disloyal. Hence even after sixty seven years of our Independence many Nomadic communities still do not have voting rights. It is only recently that the Technical Advisory Group on the DNTs have directly written to the Central Government to provide the Nomadic communities with mobile voting cards so that they can vote wherever they are at that point of time

- Since they could not be taxed, or raising any kind of revenue out of them was impossible, there have been unequal distribution of resources in the areas where the non-sedentary groups have settled. I have mentioned this in my article in *Ghumantoos*. A similar section in the Indian Act, 1876 will only prompt us to engage with the various forms of colonies and the imperial policies implemented across the colonies to govern people.
- Their lack of written codes of conduct (most of the communities use their code language *Narsi-Parsi* to communicate), and absence of loudly articulated norms of morality implied absolute licentiousness. Their Women were always believed to be available for the society on whose fringes they had settled.
- These communities had amongst their members *Kalakars*-acrobats, singers, dancers, tight ropewalkers (Like the Nats, Banjaras and the Chharas who are born performers) and fortune-tellers like the Gosains in Vadodara district of Gujarat. More and more, like their counterparts all over the world, street entertainment was provided by them, and still is, seen to be a threat to public order. They were the ‘Road Allowance People’ either to perish with Welfare money on the reserves or rob the travellers on the Road.
- It is worth mentioning here that in England, all laws relating to the gypsies are to protect the settled communities from these itinerant communities.



- It is also important at this juncture to keep in mind the contradictions in the attitude of sedentary communities to itinerant ones. This is reminiscent of a similar ambivalence: ‘they should visit our village, entertain, but should not stay too long’. Further, they are expected to become a part of the mainstream, but were expected also to be segregated from the main society, which constituted the Neo-liberal politics of “social inclusion”.

However, as I had mentioned earlier, the idea that they had become criminals because they lost their means of livelihood, is more important. The loss of means of livelihood was correctly attributed to a host of colonial policies, which had made their trading activities redundant. So whenever, these communities came to settle near areas occupied by sedentary groups, the crime rates of that area increased because other groups took advantage of their presence and the local police station would always arrest members of the non-sedentary groups. They were also accused of prostitution. Though it is true that the Nat community in Bihar have history of intergenerational prostitution but one needs to understand the social context of prostitution. Even if we look at the Province of Ontario in Canada, most of the women who provide service to men belong to the Aboriginal communities. In an article published in *Transcultural Psychiatry* (June 2005 Issue)<sup>5</sup> the authors write about the 100 women involved in prostitution in Vancouver:

We found an extremely high prevalence of lifetime violence and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Fifty-two percent of our

---

<sup>5</sup> Vol 42(2): 242–271 DOI: 10.1177/1363461505052667 www.sagepublications.com  
Copyright © 2005 McGill University.

were women from Canada's First Nations, a significant overrepresentation in prostitution compared with their representation in Vancouver generally (1.7–7%). Eighty-two percent reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, by an average of four perpetrators. Seventy-two percent reported childhood physical abuse, 90% had been physically assaulted in prostitution, 78% had been raped in prostitution. Seventy-two percent met DSM-IV criteria for PTSD. Ninety-five percent said that they wanted to leave prostitution. Eighty-six percent reported current or past homelessness with housing as one of their most urgent needs. Eighty-two percent expressed a need for treatment for drug or alcohol addictions. Findings are discussed in terms of the legacy of colonialism, the intrinsically traumatizing nature of prostitution and prostitution's violations of basic human rights.

In any case, the general point to emphasise here is that the category of a criminal tribe was not a sudden development. A large number of communities were declared to be 'criminal tribes' throughout British India. Under one of its provisions, once a community was thus branded, each and every individual member was to be considered a criminal. A good example would be the Chhara community in the city of Ahmedabad. Under such circumstances, irrespective of the fact whether an individual had committed any offence or not, he or she could be confined to a criminal tribe settlement without much judicial procedure. These practices drew unflinching criticism by the leaders of the freedom movement, and by 1952, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru declared these communities free from the notification under the Criminal Tribes Act. Henceforth they came to be known as Denotified Tribes (DNTs).

While the criminal tribes settlements protected by barbed wires have supposedly vanished, yet in many areas DNT continued to live in isolation and often in urban ghettos with the tag of 'criminality' etched in the minds of the police and more unfortunately of the people. There are

allegations that the police have vested interests in the continuation of these ghettos where illegal activities like liquor brewing and prostitution can lead to some income for the police too. It is further alleged that the police also finds it convenient to pick up accused persons from these ghettos whenever there is a complaint of theft/illicit distillation and when they need to push up their prosecution statistics. The DNT thus are avoided by the civil society, harassed by the police and neglected by the political leaders since most of them are not voters because of their unsettled and nomadic existence.

Over a few decades, Canada and India, as geo-political entities experienced the growth and development of urban spaces and the discontent associated with it. With the various advances of new urban sociologies, the inadequacies of already existing models to track the production of the urban space have been felt all across the globe. This urban space is also the 'settlement' space/zone. Various groups, Indigenous, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, religious minorities, in both the countries have performed their discontent to reclaim their identities which have been thwarted in these promised lands. If we consider these urban spaces as negotiations of neocolonial paradigms, then one cannot ignore the various forms of 'performing discontent' from several communities in these emerging territories. The radical offshoot of performing the discontent, which deals with broken images and promises within these 'monitored systems' in the urban space is the burgeoning area of multidisciplinary studies. The primary objective of this chapter is to map these 'performing discontent' as pedagogic shifts, to be more specific, paradigmatic shifts in the global context.

Performance has always been a fundamental essence of Aboriginal societies. The performing 'bodies in dissent' in contemporary Aboriginal performances in India and Canada, address essential ways of communicating memory, history, belief and tradition which are directly related to issues of Indigeneity, Ethnicity, Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality within the neocolonial space.

Aboriginal Identity has always been highly political. The identity of an individual is always being negotiated in relation to the collective identity and the associated memory of the intervention of the external colonizing society. Bodies of law and order control and define the body of the "Indian". Mis-representation of Indigenous knowledge was a strategy of identifying the European and colonizing Self in relation to the Indigenous people of the occupied land. The contribution of this intervention, to be more specific the labeling theorist is the 'deviance' model which I have dealt with in Chapter 1. The Deviance model can be used to stigmatize behavior such as theft which is associated with the Chharas in the city of Ahmedabad or the Kheria Sabar in Purulia. Hence, social power of the dominant group of a particular space defines deviance and some groups in society can criminalize the actions of another group by using their influence attested by legislative bodies who are allied with Men and Women in power.

One needs to note here that there has been a shift from the previous understandings of Aboriginal Identity as a passive state of existence in contradiction to status of minor players within the Neo-liberal space, which has built a façade of 'inclusion' in drafting its economic policies. It allows alterities within a monitored system. This is definitely a reflection of the

increasing participation or visibility of urban Aboriginal population. But this understanding is mediated by ‘understandings’ of settler societies and academic institutions built on ‘occupied’ lands. This ‘understanding’ as I had stated elsewhere is a matter of violence that comes as a baggage with the intellectual Coloniser’s gaze.

Here I would like to mention two interventions which I feel are models of alterities within the Neo-liberal urban space in India which is associated with the community I have been closely working on i.e. the Chhara people in the city of Ahmedabad.

The City of Toronto has NEPA, The Dance Makers, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and other alternative spaces but developing the Chharanagar space as a performance zone was a difficult task. What really stuck me was the ‘Museum of Hope’ -a small space in an abandoned house within the Chhara settlement founded by members of Budhan theatre on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2015. They have displayed all the instruments and clothes their ancestors used for *loot* and robbery. They have displayed the formation of the colony over the years and shown how art was a major intervention that changed the lives of the peoples. This according to me is also a performance where they have deliberately displayed all the markers of their criminality and created a space for open interaction. This intervention also contests notions of museumisation of Indigenous cultures where they are displayed as mere objects. Another structure is the Conflictorium; the Museum of Conflict located in Mirzapur in the older part of Ahmedabad city. The webpage of the

Conflictorium in Ahmedabad pronounces its objective and vision in the following words:

Along with it being a physical space housing exhibitions, installations, artwork it also engages in a vibrant programming lineup which include film screenings, performances, poetry reading sessions, workshops on capacity building etc. Although the intended space does fulfill the criteria of being a museum (in terms of exhibiting artefacts along themes), the intention is to avoid the inertness and monumental aspect that the idea of a museum seems to carry. The mode by which this would be achieved is art, in its various forms. (2013)

*Triveni* is their latest initiative which invites performers, poets from three language groups and in one session they had invited Atish, Jayendra and Aneesh, performers of Budhan who have their own language i.e. *Bhantu*. My point is whether this is inclusion or showcasing alterities within a space that allows 'conflict' which does not disturb the social equilibrium. Budhan has been performing from years and they are suffering from serious budget crunch and might not be able to maintain their modest space in Chharanagar as it is always difficult to get fundings for ghettos like Chharanagar.

According to Metis Cultural activist and Academician Bonita Lawrence :

It is not only a matter of the "violence, curiosity, pity and desire" that frequently accompanies the Western intellectual's gaze at those , such as Native people, who have been silenced in the bourgeois West (Clifford 1988, 5). It is the knowledge base at the core of the Indigenous Societies continues to be devalued within precisely those academic contexts that are busily theorizing Nativeness as merely contingent and negotiated. (2004, 2)

What I find significant in her discussion on 'authenticity' against the 'negotiated' identity of the Native person, contingent on several factors that

produces the Native , something that is continuously evolving within the urban space is the dangerous proposition as far as Native land claim is concerned and cites the case study where James Clifford has explored the example of the Wampanoag Indians of Mashpee who were required to prove their identities as Native people in order to pursue land claim in 1977. Now it is worth mentioning that I feel since most of the communities I have worked with in India were nomadic and the idea of being attached to land is directly linked with the idea of Eurocentric 'production' system, or the traditional production system in India, the communities who have always remained outside the production system as service providers complicates the issue which needs further probe. What I have encountered during my research with the nomadic, seminomadic and DNT communities in India is that since they do not occupy land they do not have voter identity card or for that matter ration card. One recommendation that emerged from the research analysis was to introduce mobile identity cards to members of nomadic communities so that they could practice their rights wherever they were at any point of time.

The shift I have mentioned comes along with a baggage of suspicion and disbelief which engages in discourses of how authentically Aboriginal Identity can be/should be represented. Aboriginal Identities are constructed, contested, negotiated, imposed, imputed, resisted and redefined in this act of 'understanding'. Please note, this act of 'understanding' is intricately related to performance.

The Western Society continues to imagine and paint the "endangered authenticities" juxtaposed to modernity. The body of the

Aboriginal person becomes the museum which preserves “The Vanishing race”. As Bonita rightly points out, how colonial pedagogy and legislation defines the Indian. Who has the authority to determine a group’s identity or authenticity has remained unanswered.

Bonita identifies the problematic context of defining who is the “Real” Indian in the urban context and how increasingly there is a tension between the dark skinned Indian and the apologetic comparatively white looking Indian. Looking like an Indian is another “task” assigned to the Aboriginal population and theories like Blood quantum only complicates the issue. Looking like an Indian is in itself a performance. One needs to understand that this idea of Indianness within the urban space is different from the construction in the reserves as the reserves are the only “recognized” lands where Aboriginal peoples live. And I have mentioned exactly this in my previous chapter. To substantiate my claim, I would like to refer to how Bonita reacts to this phenomena:

...urban communities have had to wrestle with the almost inevitably higher rates of intermarriage with Non-whites than reserve communities typically face. Meanwhile the pressure on reserve communities to maintain their land base and a measure of cultural and racial distinctiveness, in a context where the reserves are the only sites in Canada where Indian land is legally recognized, has created a need to maintain fairly rigid boundaries about Indianness. (2004, 229)

Western Societies decode images of bodies which are not “right,” not “normal,” grossly noticeable as minorities. The gaze produces stereotypes. The “bodies in dissent” are talking about how they are reduced to mere signs that could be governed.



The question of who is an Indian is directly linked with the colonization process and to the genocidal policies of the governments. The Indian status is definitely one of them.

Indian Status, above all, is a system that enabled Canada to deny and bypass Indigenous sovereignty, by replacing “the Nation” with the “the Indian”. As the experiences of the participants’ families have demonstrated, Canada has been able to use Indian status to define who can be considered Indian in ways that have alienated whole communities from any access to a land base and permanently fragmented Native identity through an extremely patriarchal and racist system that has torn large holes in the fabric of Native societies. (Lawrence, 2004, 229)

Women in these communities have been the worst sufferers. A close look at Bill C-31 amendment to the Indian Act of 1985<sup>6</sup> will help us to understand the situation of Native Women. It might be mentioned here that the Salvation Army regulated the matchmaking in the industrial Settlement in Stuartpuram, India and the tribal women ‘ lost their autonomy in marital affairs at a time when they were the principal contributors to the family income’ ( Radhakrishna, 132)

As I have already tried to clarify, defining the Indian in Canada is an old colonial project of land theft and privatization of Reserve lands. This resonates the recent developments in India too where people’s movements pertaining to violation of human rights and land rights have been categorically

---

<sup>6</sup> Bill C-31- A section of the Indian Act that could reinstate Indian status to women who had lost their status by marrying male who did not have a status under the terms of Indian Act. This is a much complex debate and requires an in depth analysis which might not be possible here.

labeled 'undemocratic' and 'stumbling blocks' in the history of rewriting the myth of nation/state building especially in Odisha, West Bengal.

The history of colonization in Canada is the removal of Aboriginal children from their communities to the residential school system. This had a direct impact on generations who attended the school like Tomson Highway and the next generations who had survivors in their family. The Indian who migrated to the city always came back with all these baggage.

The Canadian Government's regulation of Aboriginal Identity has been internalized by members of the dominant culture and even other "visible minority groups". It is interesting that Professor Bonita Lawrence identifies Toronto as a unique case study in that it represents the final stage of a process of urbanization. It is also the abode of Urban Aboriginal residents who are products of generations of intermarriages, dislocations and removals. She also suggests the invisibility of the Aboriginal peoples in Toronto because of the presence of the other racialized others in Toronto as the Aboriginal person has to continuously engage with these communities even while renting a room in the city. In this context I have already mentioned the survival of the Urban Aboriginal, retaining their Indigenous identities despite continuous assaults from other settler societies. The urban Native community in general is continually engaging in ways of subverting or actively resisting these ways of thinking about Indianness. And this I would say is happening widely in field of Arts, particularly Performing Arts in major cities like Toronto, Manitoba.

The "bodies in dissent" are contesting various histories and are continuously reinscribing the gaze. The gaze is allowed to develop as a

construct within the ambit of a performance text and is gradually being dismantled piece by piece. My Almighty Voice says:

I am the teacher, my body is offered up to them to learn from, the room is an arena, a stage, an amphitheatre, I am an actor in a theatre of cruelty...I signify, symbolize, embody a construct and teach on it... But I would rather not be Names, names, They are all the same. Crees all wear feathers. Dead Man, red man, Indian, Kisse- Manitou-Wayou, Almighty Voice, Jean Baptiste! Geronimo, Tonto, Calijah. Or Simply Mr. Ghost (as the Interlocutor says in the Daniel David's *Almighty Voice and his Wife*) But this body, along with centuries of "knowing," of existential and historical racism, is my "teaching" presence and tool and I would like to substantiate this in my Chapter on a plausible dialogue of the several marginalities within the trope of the Neo-liberal city.

According to Schechner, "Theatres are gay, lesbian, black, Chicano, deaf, poor, Marxist, Jewish, AIDS, Asian, Native American, Antinuclear...and so on..."<sup>7</sup>. This list is not an exhaustive one and we can add more to it, depending on our position, time and space.

What I am more concerned with now is the 'performance' of the speech act. Various performances by Indigenous societies would initiate the process of thinking beyond this trope, this bourgeois understanding of speech-act, which is closely related to the process of mythmaking. The plays of Budhan theatre, which are primarily designed to be performed on the streets or intimate spaces, demystify the presence of an 'Urtext' (German, meaning

---

<sup>7</sup> Schechner, Richard. "Race Free, Gender Free, Body –Type Free, Age Free Casting. *The Drama Review* T 121 (Spring 1989): 4-12.

original). The organic performance texts are housed in the bodies of the performers ‘like tattoos on our skins (Mojica, 2009, 97). Each body has a story to tell. Monique explains the formative stage of her performance ensemble, which is essentially cosmopolitan and deeply rooted in the experiences of cities in New York and Toronto in the following lines:

Mining my body for these organic texts has become the primary source material for my work and I continue to be fascinated and surprised by it. When we work we use a process of deep improvisation. We stand in an empty room, witnessed by a director or by fellow ensemble members. We establish a world or a situation and we enter it with a specific question or task in mind to source information about it: how it looks like, smells like, who was there and what was said. The role of the witness is not only to watch and listen, but to tether the improvisers to the physical world. These improvisations result in raw texts that, because they are organic, often have no linear logic.( 2009, 98)

These performances have wider significance in reception studies. When I say reception studies, I mean how previous representations of Indigenous people shape the ‘structure of feeling’ (as used by Raymond Williams) of contemporary cultural expressions of these dislocated tribal population in India and Canada. They address the “Urban Dilemma” of who is the “Real Indian”. The body becomes an important category which is a subject of gaze and a site of resistance.

If a particular cultural production has a history of its own, it also has its own complex matrix of internal and external negotiations and gradually it becomes difficult to label it or define it adequately. One cannot designate generic boundaries like we are used to doing in our academic discourses. The modernity of these productions lies not in the fact that they are not easily defined but the complex web of textual negotiations they are going through

within and without. There is a definite politics behind it. For example, a cultural production by the Chharas(DNT) contains a complex political process and it makes our politics more complicated. Our historical grand narrative receives a jolt from these fragmented narratives.

There are playwrights who are raising their voice and coming up with questions which are continuously bothering them. It is particularly in this area that I am trying to engage in. Political theatre in India is still relatively underdeveloped. Though I am definitely not referring to the right-wing forces that have deployed theatre to promote their cause, yet abstaining from the essential essence of theatre practice or promoting the cause of theatre proper per se. By political theatre, I mean theatre which can usher in change, can provide a solution or alternative. But there can be forms of expression which are beyond polarities like “subculture” which are not ‘culture’ in this sense, which cannot be adequately or usefully described as art of high degree. They can be labelled as ‘sub-cultural deviance’. Much of the interest of these works lies in the ways in which they explore and modify the codes which define them. The patterns drawn on the walls of cities by some ethnic groups have been escalated to the status of ‘graffiti’ but the essence of sub-cultural deviance is co-opted by high culture by negotiating its code of conduct of the street. The ritual of subversion is inverted by accommodating it in the Neo-liberal discourse. The historical truth which constitutes the history of the productions is often overlooked and the purpose of contemporary Indigenous performance culture in the Urban space is to re-visit these points of references that are connected with the plight of the tribes in question.

It was at this point that I felt that Neo-liberalism and the Urban indigenous negotiations across the globe can be read along identical, if not similar lines to analyse various forms of colonies. My interactions with the Chhara Tribe and the various activities of their theatre group called Budhan, situated in the city of Ahmedabad became a major point of departure to establish the faint line of comparativism which I felt could be examined from the broader framework of comparative literary studies. I was merely trying to go beyond my discipline and trying to offer socio political readings of the performance texts of Budhan theatre and the Aboriginal cultural productions in the city of Toronto. Hence, Budhan became the sole representative of my theoretical concern and textual analysis, whereas various cultural productions of various Aboriginal groups in Canada have contributed to my understanding of the 'alterities' that I have tried to deal with in my dissertation. The reason behind this is my inability to trace other potential group in India. This in itself is a marker of the politics of representation in two different colonies, in two different nations.

Before I move on to discuss the plays, it is important to understand the geopolitical entity called Chharanagar. Located near Sardargram Railway Station, Ahmedabad, the bastis of the Chharas can be divided into nine parts, which would also reflect how people gradually settled.

- Free Colony One (First Chowk)
- Chalis Makan
- Free Colony Two
- Khadia

- Navkholi
- Rajdani Chowli
- New Chharanagar
- Arjun Nagar Society
- Single Chowli

The objective of Budhan Theatre, which was formed by Mahasweta Devi and now a cultural wing of Bhasha, is to escalate the problems plaguing the community. They are:

- Alcoholism
- Early Death
- Widows
- Child Marriage
- Lack of opportunity
- Police Atrocity
- Land Issue
- Rehabilitation

So what are the consequences of a theatrical production in a society and culture like that of the Chharas? How can theatre facilitate socio-political justice? Brecht recognised the power and ability of his epic theatre to change society by replacing one set of idea with another set: Justice with Injustice.

Ethico-Political theatre would go beyond that and present a situation where unlike the Brechtian model an ideology is not imposed, rather the plays enter into a kind of dialogue with the audience. I would discuss Budhan's environmental theatre *The Lower Depth*, particularly in this light of provocative discourse. This section will critically look at the concept of Derridian Hospitality which is a critical theoretical category in Comparative Literary Study.

As I have mentioned earlier that the notion of the urban space is “perceived”, “conceived” and “lived”, the production of the urban space is the trope of conflicting ideas on land claims, Indigeneity, displacement, labour mobilisation, ecological threats, etcetera. The existence of urban space/s also produces borderlands and cohabitation of several borderlands even within the defined ‘urban’ space. If we consider these urban spaces as negotiations of neocolonial paradigms, then one cannot ignore the various forms of ‘performing discontent’ from several Indigenous communities in these emerging territories. The various “bodies in dissent” inhabit, construct, and represent a city and its spaces. The space is not extraneous to the body, but it is an integral part of the performing body. In this chapter, I have tried to explore the complex web of urban politics behind the various cultural productions, primarily theatrical productions, of the Chhara community in Gujarat and Indigenous performing groups in the City of Toronto, Canada with whom I have worked closely. I shall also try to show how these cultural productions represent issues of Indigeneity, Ethnicity, Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality to demystify the images and promises of these ‘monitored systems’-our cities .



Memory and imagination have always been seen as critical in the perception of a space. As Reena Tiwari points out:

City spaces work as a palimpsest, where memories are inscribed and re-inscribed based on cultural contexts and the circumstances in which they are formed. An important aspect in contemporary urban discourse has been the unraveling of these collective and individual memories and the way in which such memories are spatialised (2001, 71)

Several youths from various racialised groups are performing their discontent in diverse ways, in diverse spaces. Fighting for the cause of missing Aboriginal Women or the Occupy Indigenous Lands project have actually brought youths from various racial minority groups under one roof and they have collectively expressed their solidarities in the city of Toronto, Canada. As Professor Himani Bannerji rightly pointed out in an informal talk with her students like us that she had actually identified with the politics of Black people in Canada when she had first arrived there. Many Aboriginal youths identify with the problems of the black population and can readily associate with the cultural expressions on Black Peoples in Canada.

Talking about structural racism, I would like to talk about my experience of working with the Chhara Youths in the city of Ahmedabad. I have conducted extensive research and worked closely with the Chhara Youths in March, 2011. The Britishers tagged millions of such People and named them 'Born Criminals' to create the 'Criminal Tribes Act – 1871'. An inhuman act, which branded 192 tribal communities as 'Born Criminals' and made life hell for them. They were a lost community and totally ignored when India got her independence and later laid down its constitution. Though the

Act was repealed in 1952 the Stigma is still there. Chharas are one among those communities who were branded Criminals by colonial rule. On my way from Gandhinagar to Chharanagar in March 2011, I was repeatedly told by the autorichshaw driver not to visit that place. He kept on repeating the huge risk that I was going to undertake by even going near the colony. He went on till that moment I reached the Chharanagar Library and Aatish Bhai came out to greet me. His concluding remark was, “ be careful about your pocket!”...I was carefree as I was meeting my brothers with whom I spent memorable days inside the colony, sharing my stories and listening to them. This colony never had a map. It was a group of students who came from abroad and prepared their first working Map. Walking along this trajectory, tracing and locating stories along the Map was a form of performance too! Dakxin Bajarange is a Chhara who has written consistently about institutional violence and structural racism in his autobiography *Budhan Bolta Hain*. Enduring years of a tortuous time there, ostracized by other children, humiliated by teachers, he refused to budge, even as his parents resorted to theft to support him. But the stigma of belonging to such a lineage stuck on and, in spite of being educated, his became a struggle. He is a graduate from the Gujarat University in Psychology, award-winning Filmmaker, and founder of the Budhan Theatre, having written, directed and acted in many productions including the play *Budhan*, which has been translated into many languages and performed worldwide. It is not only the story of Dakxin alone, I have stories of Roxy Gagdekar, Jayendra Chhara, Janak Chhara, Atish Indrekar who still face the stigma of belonging to a community which was associated with and at times still associated with theft, liquor making. As I was collecting the life narrative

of youths in this community, I felt the significance of the small library that was established by Mahasweta Devi and Ganesh Devi. The Chharanagar library is a common place for many youngsters who are willing to change the notorious image of chharanagar.

Budhan Theatre is the name of this cultural group run by many Chhara youths. It is an important activity not only for the development of Chhara tribe but also for 191 Denotified Tribes of India. The main activity of this group is to culturally develop Chharanagar, so that some alternative source of income could be automatically generated in the community. In fact they had started generating employment in such areas.

Most of the plays are anti-establishment, anti-police and generally arising out of their personal experiences. They connect with the custodial death of Budhan in the state of West Bengal. Even today their performing space is outside a police station, because there is no other place in Chharanagar. There is another interesting performance space inside the colony. It is an abandoned platform of a Water tank, where they perform their “show of discontent” on 31<sup>st</sup> August ever year. The performers are often harassed, arrested or even asked to stay outside the police jurisdiction. Knowing fully well that they cannot challenge the police at any level, their only strength lies in speaking and expressing themselves through their theatre. Apart from the various insecurities in life like arrests, public harassments, atrocities, what plagues the community is inadequate supply of resources, unhygienic living conditions, and health care. This generates a sense of alienation and aggressive attitude within some of the youths. Writing about,

around, through race is part of rigorous academic practices along with all the “antis” (racism, imperialism) we use to fight for social justice with “a healthy dose of liberalism with perhaps a tidy side order of Marxism”( Mathur, 2) is positioned to contest various systems. I have tried to situate performance study within the rubrics of Comparative Literary practices and have borrowed from other disciplines to show the inadequacies of academic models here and the discontent of a researcher. I have tried to highlight the importance of performative act. Long after the performance is over, one is able to relive it through the traces left by the performance. The performance is long gone. It has apparently disappeared. But it remains as an event, an intervention, an occurrence to be deciphered. The text is not fixed, it is to be revisited and relived. Performance is a ritual in that sense which represents Budhan, Almighty Voice, the Pochahontas, La Malinche, all the “la Chingadas” to add some salt to the gaping wound as Badal Sircar would like to put it. Theatre is all about that wound, a “hatiyar” of the oppressed.

## Chapter 4: Performance as Intervention: The Neo-liberal Urban Space Revisited

---

At no time in history have Europeans ever suggested playing golf on their own graves. Yet gravesite after gravesite of our dead are considered accessible for the most ridiculous of pastimes ( Maracle, 1990, 8 )

It would be wise at this juncture to explain why the Oka crisis becomes a major point of departure in our discussions on Indigeneity in Canada in our class room lectures as well as academic research papers especially from our own location. Oka was definitely a major event in Canadian history which brought Indigenous issues on the dinner table as it had received huge press coverage drawing attention from various international quarters. Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson analyses the various news reports and letters to the editors of the newspapers on the post- Oka events in *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (2011) quite effectively:

A colonial narrative emerges again and again in letters to the editor examined in this chapter [Letters from the Edges]. The porousness of the stereotyping and the malleability of the archetypes in play made it possible to fit the clichés to match events as they unfolded. This included assertions of inherent Native violence and criminality but also allegations of special rights, lack of self control, and childishness. Yet other common allegations-drunkenness, whorishness, thievery-received little notice. Nonetheless, the Native savage reared his head ( 239)

The above discussion can be taken as a point of departure to build the theoretical premise on which I laid the basic foundation of this research which is to posit the alterities against the mis-representation of Indigenous peoples in Canada and India. This research, carried over a period of 6 years has prompted me to look afresh at the questions I had framed initially. I should again say, I did not have 'specific' questions but entered the zone with a series of questions including the feasibility of such a research from my location as a student of Comparative Literature. Since the idea of "literature" as understood by any literature department did not stand in my way as my discipline had already broadened and liberated the scope of "literariness" to be dissected for a research analysis, I always searched for alternative mores of human expressions. The idea was to challenge an Eurocentric literary history, which had failed to accommodate human expressions beyond 'traditional' generic classifications. Is *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* a Novel, a Memoir, an Epitaph, a Manifesto? Is it a collective "I" or "We" that is behind the unfolding pattern of the text?

We, I, We, will take on the struggle for self-determination...(Maracle, 241)

I started to critically look at not only generic embargos but also at Literature as a category. All the texts that were part of my Syllabi came under the scanner. We had specific divisions for poems, novels, short stories, plays. As far as these 'texts' by Indigenous/Aboriginal authors were part of a course they existed as specific categories but by the second year of my research I could

feel the overlaps and decided that I shall not be able to do research on Indigenous Novels/ Poems/ Short Stories as these peoples and their expressions were beyond the class room colonization, where we read ‘marginalities’ within “Po-Co” modules. On a second thought, if we believe that there is a considerable market for these cultural productions, then was I in-scribing a cultural revolution through my thesis? I felt I was equally a part of this research that I was conducting where my location prompted my readings of the ‘texts’ I interacted with, the body of literature I read, experienced and the “bodies in dissent” I encountered on Bay Street or Bloor in Toronto. The following piece named ‘Oka Sights: Tanks for Everything’ by Mike Couchie can be read as an individual voice or a collective cry “from the shadows and reflections of the past, present and future” (Maki, 1996, 2):

You hide nothing in your hate.

you spend your money

to protect your name

ignoring a history

that is filled with hate

You stand behind

your battle lines

holding press conferences

to explain away your hate

you live in a country

where you pretend

we all hold hands  
and there is no hate

But U.S. tanks will make things right  
And Canada's militia will guard your gate  
So, you hide nothing in your hate.(119)

Before I move further with this crucial chapter, let me share a report of the Indigenous Sovereignty Week, November 21-28, 2010, organised in the city of Toronto that I took active part in it like the Imaginative Festival: Film+Media Arts festival organized in Toronto in 2010. Since I am talking about performance as intervention within the Neo-Liberal space, this event facilitated several interactions I had with First Nations Elders and community members. Most of my knowledge about the communities I am dealing with have come from direct conversations and are NOT second hand 'reference material'. Hence writing about these experiences is extremely painful at times, as I have a huge responsibility towards the people who have trusted me and shared so much with me. I have not just collected material for my thesis but also got involved in several activities like walking with my friends at University of Toronto to commemorate the tragic events like the disappearance of Aboriginal Women who never return home. The programme schedule will exemplify the anxieties of the communities in the city and somehow justify my research question.



The “Toronto Indigenous Sovereignty Week 2010: Resistance and Renewal” started in the evening of November 21, 2010 with the Ceremonial Song at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto located on 16 Spadina Road, north of Bloor Street, Toronto. The opening night ended with the screening of a documentary film on the conditions at Grassy Narrows named ‘The Scars of Mercury’ that explored the destruction of a traditional Indigenous hunting, fishing and gathering way of life and other interrelated issues like the residential school system, relocation, treaty violations and above all mercury poisoning. The second evening was organised at University of Toronto Schools, 371 Bloor Street West and the topic was Fighting for Indigenous Education. Amongst speakers like Joanna Anaquod (Anishinaabe), who was the organiser of the 1989 hunger strike to protect secondary education funding for status Indians, Lee Maracle was the moderator and she spoke in detail about the history of education in Canada and about creating an alternative model of indigenising the academia. The evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> November was organised at the Fitzgerald Building, Room 103, University of Toronto, 150 College Street. The topic of discussion was Every inch of our land is who we are: Protecting Mother Earth, Protecting Traditional Knowledge. Amongst speakers like Jeanette Bugler (Cree-Red Pheasant First Nation), who was actively involved in building organised resistance to fight uranium mines at Meadow Lake. There was also Sylvia Plain, herself from the Aamjiwnang, First Nation, who was the moderator of the event. Topics on how the Chemical valley near Sarnia had been devastated by toxins produced in the petrochemical plants near her community, how the Wet ‘suwet’ en First Nation in Northern BC was fighting against installing a pipeline to carry tar

sands oil through their territory, were all part of the schedule. There were conversations on ideas of sovereignty, Indigenous bodies in the creative spaces and a special focus on Two-Spirited people within the Aboriginal communities. In the following evening there were discussions on the privatisation of reserve lands, Indigenous governance and issues related to the assimilation of Indigenous peoples. A provocative discussion was triggered on the Aboriginal City, which was a panel discussion on the interactions of Aboriginal people in the city with special reference to Tkaronto, a film about two Aboriginal people struggling in the urban centre of Toronto, the name of the city is derived from the Mohawk word Tkaronto. The Indigenous week also dealt with issues on the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples and concluded with a Bus ride that traced and explored the Indigenous history of Toronto.

Another important intervention was the 11<sup>th</sup> annual 'imagineNative Film +Media Arts Festival' held in October 20-24, 2010. I was able to attend some important workshops, installations, performances and film screenings which dealt with Indigenous issues on a global front. The most intriguing was *La Nostalgia Remix*, a multimedia presentation by Guillermo Gomez-Pena and James Luna where nostalgia becomes a form of resistance and where I was called upon stage to be part of the installation representing a former colony within the structure of the performance narrative. *Foundlings* was another multi-medium performance piece by Tara Began, who was the playwright in residence at Native Earth Performing Arts in 2010 when I visited NEPA on a regular basis. This piece dealt with issues of adoption and Michael Greyeyes

played the role of a successful Cree man who is entering phase four of adoption process and Tara is his adoption agent who in search of a First Nations paternal candidate. This complex performance piece provided a peep into the anxieties of the Aboriginal peoples in securing families and issues of adoption. But the video piece that added to my understanding of ‘gender’ in the Aboriginal context was *Dance to Miss Chief* by Kent Monkman where Monkman engages with issues like colonialism, representation of Indigenous bodies through his alterego Miss Eagle Testicle. I shall talk about it later. Watching the feature film *A Windigo Tale* (2010) by Armand Garnet Ruffo at the closing night of the Imaginative festival brought back all the stories that I have so far been experiencing. These experiences have been nurtured by an understanding of Indigenous cultural expression within the Neo-liberal context. Interestingly, Budhan theatre organised the Ahmedabad Theatre Festival ( ATF) in February, 2012 and became a major cultural intervention across Gujarat with representatives from several states of India attending it.

Ganesh Devy in his foreword to *Kahani Meri Tumhari*<sup>1</sup> raised the query whether these life writings should actually at all come under the category of *Sahitya* as we understand. As a student of Comparative Literature, this is where our primary anxiety starts. Our detractors would say that we read everything under the sun but does the methodology, which we claim we have well in place allow this inclusion? We have been claiming for years that Comparative Literature allows us to read these two realities from two locations i.e. the Canadian Aboriginal on the one hand and the Denotified

---

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of Chhara peoples, published by Bhasha Research Centre, Baroda in Hindi. I have paraphrased the foreword by Ganesh Devi in English.

Tribes in India on the other, where we might be talking about the historicity of the generic configuration in several location which might be thematically connected. It might not be this unilinear as well. It might be a study of the genres in specific histories of contact and how a particular genre entered the system and gradually adapted itself. In my research the dramatic mode can be a point of departure. It is important to contextualize the Indigenous performance cultures in both Canada and India to deal with 'drama' in the Aboriginal context. It would be oversimplification to read everything under post colonial drama.

Why is this research being conducted in a literature department and what is the methodology that would be used to read the texts, were questions which plagued my initial years. I knew I was not comparing one 'Canadian Indigenous' text with another 'Indian Indigenous' text or just one author with another author, nor one specific tradition with another. As a researcher of Comparative Literature, I could not merely embark on such naive thematic analysis by ignoring the complex interaction within textual productions from specific locations where multiple histories coalesced and meanings were produced.

My review of "texts" for the purpose of this research was to trigger a debate on the various lapses in literary historiography. I also needed to secure my area of research from the all engulfing " Post- Colonial" domain that reads everything from Achebe, Maracle and Rabindranath along identical "contact" zones without considering the specificities of History. In a way the research is a direct negation of the laws of disciplinary boundaries that sees

history, literature, fact, fancy, fiction as discreet and disparate zones. For my research all these were contact zones, zones of contamination and never elusive categories like hybrid (which is better if applied to studies of vegetations or fishes), but they interacted and graduated to formulate what I understand by Aboriginal Literature, which is a much contested terrain as the Aboriginal Identity is fragmented and fractured. Hence, any pre-conceived notions about reading the cultural productions of the peoples in question is not only futile but also quite misleading for future critical enquiry. Any periodisation of Aboriginal Literature can also be dangerous because the generic patterns that are reflected in a particular graph of periodisation can be contested through the discovery of an identical pattern in a different form. Since I was dealing with primary oral communities, who have retained their essence of oral narrations even in their written texts, I was actually entering into the historical relationship of the oral and the mediated written world. The history of the Residential School system as I have mentioned earlier can be recalled here to understand the tussle with the introduction of a new knowledge system.

John S. Milloy aptly points out in *“A National Crime”: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (1999) that the education system was the prime player in the Federal government’s policy of assimilation of Aboriginal people:

In education of the young lay the most potent power to effect cultural change- a power to be channelled through schools and, in particular, through residential schools (3)

Prior to contact, the Indigenous peoples had their own languages, their spiritual beliefs and their position in the cosmos. The knowledge about the world was widely disseminated through stories. In primary oral societies, storytellers had a prestigious position and memorisation was at the core of this culture. Verbal memory skill was a valued asset in oral cultures. But the way verbal memory worked in oral art forms is quite different from what the lettered worldview understood by memorizing ( Ong, 1982, 57). This listening and memorisation is related. Hence sound was an important category. Spoken words were sacred. With contact and gradual urbanisation the sound scape changes and the ways of understanding are also regulated by the introduction of new sounds vis-à-vis languages imposed in the residential schools. Children who attended residential schools were forced to forget their language and ended up not learning the imposed language in schools. This was the worst form of violence against Indigenous people who had a strong connection, a harmony with the land s/he inhabited:

In a primary oral culture, where the world has its existence only in sound, with no reference whatsoever to any visually perceptible text, and no awareness of even the possibility of such a text, the phenomenology of sound enters deeply into human beings' feel for existence, as spoken by the spoken word. For the way in which the word is experienced is always momentous in psychic life. The centering action of sound ( the field of sound is not spread out before me but is all around me) affects man's sense of the cosmos. ( Ong, 73)

Katerie Ackiwenzi Damm has been exhibiting this connection in her 'spoken words project' where the primary thrust is on utterances. The spoken word is

then a performance, an event, a movement in time as it imposes meaning at a point in time through an intervention to be erased by another sound or merged with another sound], completely lacking in the think-like repose of the written or printed word ( Ong, 75). Hence English words were like “stones in the mouth” for White Girl in Daniel David Moses’ *Almighty Voice and his Wife* (2010, NEPA production).

One cannot ignore the pattern of educating the future generations through storytelling. I can recollect how stories had a huge range that could be used to enter into critical debates to explaining natural phenomenon:

There lived a poor couple. They were very poor. But they had a rich friend who visited their place often. Now, one day this rich friend came to greet them in the evening and decided that he would have his dinner with this couple. So the wife went inside the house to prepare the dinner. She was embarrassed to see that there was no rice at home so she killed herself. The Man was impatient, as she had not returned for quite some time. Therefore, he went inside to discover that his wife had committed suicide. He understood the reason and killed himself in sheer distress. The rich friend was upset as the couple had not returned to attend him and he went inside, discovered the bodies, and he also killed himself as felt he was responsible for the plight. A thief came to steal at night. On discovering the corpses, he felt that if he was noticed leaving the house with the dead bodies behind people might think he

had murdered them and would beat him to death, so he killed himself. Next morning when the neighbours came to know about what had happened, they decided that the best way to treat ones guest would be to offer beetle nut as a gesture of cordiality ( Khashi anecdote as told by Esther Syem at conference organized by IGNOU, International Book Fair Delhi, 2014)

Apart from imposing languages and an alien worldview, the residential schools were responsible for spreading epidemics like tuberculosis and children were affected from the milk infected with bovine tuberculosis(Milloy, 84). Since the children were consistently undernourished stealing was chronic and this resulted into further mistreatment and abuse(112).

This will enable us to understand how ‘crime’ was institutionalised. People who came out of the Residential schools turned to substance and alcohol abuse as a result of isolation from community and they were not fluent in either language.

If we consider the years of 1867 (Indian Act, Canada) and 1871 (Criminal Tribes Act) as major events in the history of dislocation of Aboriginal people across the globe, then the ‘dislocation’ I have mentioned earlier is primarily from collective sound and memory. Stories of trauma and abuse in residential schools has shaped and politicized ‘memory’ as an operative category in Canada (Waldram, 228)



Contemporary cultural productions by these groups have tried to address the sounds and memories of inhabiting, constructing and representing the space they occupy. In doing so, they have created their own sounds to decolonize the space. With close reference to texts and contexts, I shall try to demonstrate the co-existence of several sound-memories and hence various versions of a particular story. Spoken words can re-define humour ( loss of language in Residential schools). Reclaiming the lost voice with a healthy dose of humour has been a strategy of Tomson Highway in his Rez Plays. The utterance itself becomes funny. Laughter is the trope of negotiating with carnality and corporeality. Kristina Fagan reflects on this aspect of Native humour aptly in the collection *Funny* (2005) :

Humour, like cockfighting, is episodic, emotional and understood as somehow “lesser than” or detached from everyday life. As such, it becomes a way to displace, condense and examine various social tensions, anxieties and contradictions. Humour is an indirect means of thinking through contentious community issues. This view can help us to understand why Native writers, in depicting the use of humour within Native communities, would also depict a thread of violence. I would argue that humour allows the writers to reflect on and examine the process of community building. (Kristina, 43)

As Ganesh Devy said in the inaugural session of Chotro 2012, organised in Vadodara and Tejgadh from January 6 to 8 that Language (*Bhasha*) is the liberation of the life of the Mind( *Chitta* plus *Chetana*), uttered and un-uttered language is the reaction to the phenomenal world for several tribes in question. Then the idea is to analyse how this system of communication was interrupted with the advent of the colonisers. The Adivasis especially the non-sedantary groups were multilingual. They were

actually the keepers of diversity in India. How monolingualism was enforced through schooling systems can be read in the textual politics of the cultural productions of Indigenous peoples across the globe.

The existence of urban space/s also produces borderlands and cohabitation of several borderlands even within the defined 'urban' space. If we consider these urban spaces as negotiations of neocolonial paradigms, then one cannot ignore the various forms of 'performing discontent' from several Indigenous communities in these emerging territories. The various "bodies in dissent" inhabit, construct, and represent a city and its spaces. The space is not extraneous to the body, but it is an integral part of the performing body. Cultural productions by these diverse groups represent issues of Indigeneity, Ethnicity, Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality to demystify the images and promises of these 'monitored systems' be it the city or the reserve or the settlement or the prison or correctional homes which are interwoven with the reality of Indigenous existence in Canada or India. 'This is a Reserve' by SkyBlue Mary Morin is a direct peep into the complex world of the Indians in Canada.

THIS IS A CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF  
CANADA RESERVE,

the sign glared, daring us to enter the driveway.  
Saskatchewan Penitentiary, the devil's castle  
red brick/grey concrete/ steel caverns/ beehive domes.

We approach the steel gate entrance in awe.  
Guards, guns, a jeep flocked to our vehicle.  
" You can't go this far in a car!" one said.  
Their thoughts imprisoned by their jobs.

No cheery greeting, here...

In a Plexiglass-enclosed sentinel guard post,  
top of the red brick wall  
an alert guard perched, rifle in hand.  
So vivid a vision implanted my mind:  
that rifle to maim, if needed to kill.

Impact like a thunderbolt hit-  
things could shake rough, here.  
Too bad the bros live this reality  
some imprisoned for life.

Crashing barred steel gates locking  
Intensified my realization,  
seizing my heart, I stiffened to the sound.  
The bros hear this day in, day out,  
yet they return...conditioned...  
In the underground, three stair flights  
no sunlight, no day, no night, just lights.  
Time runs into time, until time stands still.

Spirits long dead walk in shadowy forms  
Of those hallowed hollowed halls  
lurking to complete sentenced time.

Yes, this is a reserve...  
mostly Indians behind those walls.  
Connotations of Indian Act history  
herding Indians into stockades onto reserves

Remind of the struggle for freedom  
of other imprisoned nations, I heard  
a wise one say, "Let my people go"

( Morin, 1996, 115-16)

Collective memory is a part of the community active life. It is a collection of multiple and dispersed memories that are relative to a specific community at a certain space and time. The grounds for this collective memory are social experiences, in a spatial and temporal frame work. Memory and imagination have always been seen as critical in the perception of built form. The city has been viewed as a site for both collective and individual memory (Tiwari, 71)

Qwo-Li Driskill summarises Native theatre as a means of entering into a dialogue with the white settler society as:

Theatre work is intensely kinaesthetic: the body is the central instrument with which to create art. The body is also a central site of healing and resistance. Theatre aids in decolonisation because through it we can learn what decolonisation and healing feel like. Native theatre helps us understand our histories, tell our stories and imagine our futures. (155)

National Imagination does not allow us to think about these “folks” outside museums and “folk cultures”.

The role that museum play in attaching historical meaning to displayed artifacts is problematic. Selection policies often foster the presentation of an incomplete historical picture, and the inherent subjectivities of the individuals who decide what goes into the display case also affect this outcome.

(Bolton, 147)

I would argue that the entire concept of the museum is entrenched in the overemphasis of documentation and preservation of the

“authentic” which is, according to me is the basic premise on which the western mode of knowledge production is based. The idea of civilization from its primitive state to a state of development is a product of western Enlightenment philosophy and a dangerous proposition for the Indigenous population who are always in the process of making. Hence, the myth of what constitutes Canada, is completely different for the Native individual who envisions the state agencies as threat to Indigenous ways of life. This idea of state agencies might be equally threatening for a non-Indigenous settler, but the way of defining threat is different as they are speaking from two points in histories. “For Indigenous peoples, the story of Canada is one of myth, magic, deceit, occupation and genocide. For Canadians, the story is one of discovery, law-ful acquisition, and the establishment of peace, order and good governance”( Ladner, 279). “Canadian” citizens i.e the non-Indigenous settler cultures approach Aboriginal struggles as primarily cultural and ethnic, and not as political struggles. Ian Frazier aptly summarises this syndrome as:

Another remark which non-Indians often make on the subject of Indians is “Why can’t they get with the program[Welfare I suppose]?” ....Why don’t Indians forget all this tribal nonsense and become ordinary Americans like the rest of us? Why do they insist on living in the past?....Why don’t they accept the fact that [“]we[“] won and [“]they[“] lost? Why won’t they stop, finally. Being Indians and join the modern world? I have a variety of answers handy. Sometimes I say that in former days “the program” called for the eradication of Indian Languages, and children in Indian boarding schools were beaten for speaking them and forced to speak English, so they would fit in; time passed, cultural fashions changed and Hollywood made a feature films about Indians [Pochahontas] ( 5)

This reading of the situation allows such nationals to dissociate the cultural (and spiritual) practices of Aboriginal peoples from their political demands for sovereignty. The irony is that the former can be accommodated, even celebrated as “folk”, without significant political and economic transformation, while the latter, which demands a fundamental transformation of nationality can be ignored. I think various cultural production of the first peoples in both the countries are trying to address these inequalities, in terms of opportunities within the broader framework of the Welfare state in Canada and the State which celebrates its diversity without actually acknowledging the interaction of these communities.

Lee Maracle, one of the leading Aboriginal cultural practitioner and activist is vocal about how her people were systematically wiped out. I began this chapter by quoting a section from *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel*(1990). This struggle is an ongoing struggle for generations. *I am Woman*( 1996) historically traces the various movements of the Indigenous people in Canada. The text divided into several sections, is in itself a journey of an Indigenous artist who is critical about what went wrong within her community. Joy Harjo had rightly pointed out in the back cover of the 1996 edition that it was not a book per se, but a story telling session that strongly asserted the politics of Indigeneity:

Over and over again I have heard it said, “ We were not a political people, we were spiritual people”....It arises from a debate between European intellectuals over how to interpret our society as opposed to their society. In the debates between

proponents of civil law and natural law, the adherents to natural law read very much like our modern-day traditionalists.

To accept a European interpretation of our old ways is fool-hardy.. ..To say our politics are in opposition to European politics would be correct. European law legalizes our oppression. Our law forbids it. But to say we were lawless is to say that, indeed, we were savages.(1996, 39)

It is important to note that there are multiple ways of looking at the geo-political entity called Canada. The understanding of the Canadian history is directly related to ideas that revolve around not only the binaries of colonizer/colonized but more complex interfaces of class, race and above all the idea of Nation which has been shaped over years of negotiations at several moments of contact between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous. This definitely shapes the interactions of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the cities as I have mentioned earlier. It must also be remembered that by theorizing this Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in the urban centres, one cannot afford to look at the various over lapses. Dealing with human subjects requires a better understanding about how these interactions operate at the individual level. Since the Aboriginal identity is marked by a 'culture of poverty' ( Satzewich, 334) they are almost left out of the domain of political economy which activists like Maracle vehemently resist in their cultural production. Poverty is a truth in Aboriginal communities but it is important to understand the politics of underdevelopment in these communities. Their apparent disappearance from the arena of political economy made them a vanishing race. Often the voices that resisted against encroachment of land or occupation were strategically coopted by the media run by multinationals that subsequently produced corrupt 'insiders' who

became a part of the liberal economy that endorses difference. One cannot ignore these performances also. Lee Marcale points out:

In 1973, at the juncture of the lowest ebb in the movement, the Wounded Knee siege broke out. The American Indian Movement was propelled to the fore of the siege by a biased and sensationalist press. The most vocal and articulate males, those who conducted themselves the most like arrogant white men, were interviewed and reported on over and over again. Touted as leaders, these men overshadowed the issue. The real goals of the occupation were lost in the shuffle. The clique entrenched itself. These leaders began to hire themselves out for speaking tours, initially to raise money for the Wounded Knee trials. Later they began to live off the movement rather than for it. (1996, 98)

This is a reality even in India. Mainstream politics in India is co-opting the movement of the Denotified communities. Getting a ticket to participate in the multi-party circus is a serious problem in rural India. Members of tribal communities are becoming victims of their 'culture of poverty'. Communities who never surrendered before are now becoming soft targets of 'development' which are nothing but organized erasure of traditional occupations which have been labeled as anti-development.

### **Indigenous Alterities and a Performance Culture**

---

Budhan Theatre was founded in 1998, by Padmashri Dr. Ganesh Devy and writer, activist Smt. Mahasweta Devi in response to the social stigma and discrimination experienced by the DNTs in India. I have argued about it in chapter 2 on Rez to City: City to Rez. Budhan is synonymous with resistance



and a sustainable model for the communities I am dealing with in India. Budhan Theatre is a continuous process of cultural revitalization. Originally scripted on the experiences of the Chhara community and other denotified tribes, Budhan Theatre's performances have included experimental forms of participatory theatre, street-theatre, and proscenium theatre based on the works of national and international playwrights, in addition to their own original scripts.

The other theatre group NEPA has been performing for more than three decades, located in Toronto, with a different economic background. For Budhan theatre is has always been a struggle to make ends meet till date. Though they have performed since 1998, there has always been a lack of proper documentation. Probably it is the temperament of the performers who hail from non-sedentary families who have never dreamt of permanence in life. The nomad never endorses in saving things for future. As a researcher I felt it would be impossible to analyse all the plays I have seen, documented in both the contexts. But I felt it is important to present the diversity of the works being done in both the spaces. A cursory glance at these documentation done with assistance from Budhan and NEPA and my supervisor Professor Chattopadhyay, during her visit to Toronto will reflect the premise on which I am positing my argument.

**Table 1: The Historical journey of Budhan in India**

#Information courtesy : Budhan Theatre and Josephine

Name of Play	Year	Synopsis of the play
Patta	2014	This play is about three real incidents that took place in rural Gujarat. It depicts real life oppressions committed against nomadic communities by members of the dominant society and shows how nomadic communities retain their hopes for a better future for the next generations, in spite of ongoing discrimination.
Agyaankosh	2013	This play is based on noted Banjara writer Late Atmaram Rathod's book <i>Agyankosh</i> (Knowledge of Illiterate People), which documents many oral stories from the Banjara community council, in order to enable justice for social issues.
'Me Vaddar'	2013	This is a solo performance based on an incident that took place in the denotified tribal community's Basti in Mumbai, in which a small child died due to the demolition of his house. Afterwards, his parents struggled to get a small piece of land in which to bury him, in the city.
Salvalto Kido	2013	This play concerns the sexual abuse of differently abled people and is based on real life incidents in various parts of India.
The Lower Depth	2012	This play is an adaptation of the play <i>The Lower Depths</i> by Maxim Gorky. It focuses on the issue of illegal slum evictions in Ahmedabad and the desire of slum residents to have a settled life and their request for the government to provide them with 10-15 feet of land. This play was performed in slums where residents were facing evictions.
Thokarpur	2012	This play concerns the daily discrimination faced by people with disabilities. It was produced in

		collaboration with the Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad and filmmaker Ashish Kakkad.
Accidental Death of An Anarchist	2009	This play is an interpretation of Dario Fo's infamous play of the same name. It is focused on illegal arrests and detentions of innocent people in the name of 'security.' It tells the story of how an innocent person can be portrayed as a terrorist to serve certain political agendas and to silence dissent.
Budhan Bolta Hai	2009	This play is based on the illegal evictions of Bastis in Ahmedabad.
Charandas Chor	2009	<i>Charandas Chor</i> was written by Habib Tanveer and was known for being performed with peasant communities of Chhatisgarh. The play is about an honest thief who faces many problems with society due to his firm honesty.
Ek Aur Balcony	2008	This play is an adaptation of French play <i>Le Balcon</i> written by Jean Genet. It is adapted to the context of India, in which people are faced to live by the rules of the system and society, blurring the lines between fantasy and reality.
Muze Mat Maro...Saab	2008	<i>Muze Mat Maro...Saab</i> is a collage of three previous plays, <i>Budhan</i> , <i>Pinya Kari Kale Ki Maut</i> , and <i>Encounter</i> . Through the enactment of real life cases of police atrocities, these stories discuss human rights violations against denotified tribal people.
TarasLaagi-Chhe, Taras	2008	This play was part of a protest against the commercialization of a public lake. It was performed as part of a rally to fight for free tickets for poor people to visit the lake.
Bhukh	2007	<i>Bhukh</i> is a solo performance based on the Bengal famine and farmers issues in the country.
Bhagawa Barrack	2007	This play is based on how SC, ST and OBC people become trapped in communal politics and are sent to jail. The play was performed to spread awareness about communal harmony.

British Come Back to India	2007	This play was created to protest some of the colonial laws, which are still in action across the country.
Choli Ke Piche Kya Hai	2007	This play is based on Bengali writer Mahasveta Devi's short story 'Breast Giver,' which depicts various oppression women face in the society, along with some possible solutions.
Ghoomantu	2007	This play was produced out of a workshop conducted with the students of FLAME institute, Pune.
HallaBol	2007	This play depicts issues concerning the resettlement of displaced slum residents.
Ulgulan	2006	This play discusses the life of great tribal warrior Birsa Munda and his struggles against fundamentalism and the British colonizers. The play was inspired by Mahasweta Devi's book <i>Arenyar Adhikar</i> .
Save Girl Child	2006	This play was created in PD Malaviya college, Rajkot to spread awareness about the Save Girl Child initiative.
Ek Chhoti Si Laadai	2005	This play discusses the social movement of denotified tribes through theatre to inspire youth to become leaders and change makers.
Hamari Zindagi and Jeet	2005	This play was made out of a theatre workshop conducted with SEWA women who used to work as street vendors and who fought for their livelihood rights in the High Court with the help of SEWA (and they won!)
Khoj	2005	This play was produced out of a 20-day workshop with students of DA-IICT, Gandhinagar. It focuses on the issue of trafficking girls and women in nearby countries.
Prati 54 Minutes	2005	This play is based on Mahasveta Devi's book concerning rape in India. It focuses on the trauma experienced by rape victims in rural and urban parts of the country. According to statistics, there is one person raped every 54 minutes in India.
Swaraj	2005	This play is based on the Gandhian philosophy of Swaraj, which teaches to empower villages in India.

Bhoma	2004	<i>Bhoma</i> is an imaginative character who has been hungry for many years because of the state the administrative system and its policies.
Bhrashtachar Ke Rang	2004	This is a hard hitting play based on day to day corruption in urban and rural places in the country.
Hamare Gaun	2004	This play was designed to show the importance of villages, village lives, and natural resources, for sustainable development.
Prem Chand Ke Rang Chhara Baccho Ke Sang	2004	This play includes three stories of Premchand, Bade Bhaisaab, Thakur Saab kaKuva and Idgahwho are children of the Chhara community.
Ek Chhoti Si Asha	2003	This play is intended to show solidarity for the DNT movement in the country for social and political justice.
Hemlet in Chharanagar	2003	This is a poetic play, based on Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> . It came out of a workshop developed by renowned theatre practitioner Pronob Mukharjee.
Sangharsh Aur Siddhi	2003	This play is based on experiences faced by Muslim widows of communal riots in Ahmedabad. It was an attempt to bring out their hidden aspiration and pain through theatre.
Majhab Hame Sikhata Aapas Main Bair	2002	This play is a theatrical interpretation of the 2002 violence against minorities in Gujarat.
Encounter	2001	This play concerns Deepak Pawar, a beggar who belonged to the Pardhi denotified tribe, who was encountered police for allegedly smuggling weapons. The play raises questions about security, violence, and human rights abuses experienced by denotified tribes.
Pinya Hari Kale Ki Maut	1999	This play focuses on the illegal arrest of daily wage labourer PinyaHari Kale, a Pardhi denotified tribal man in Maharashtra, and his illegal detention by police, which resulted in his death due to police brutality while he was in custody. The play dealt with issues related to the 'born criminal' social stigma.
Budhan	1998	This play is based on the brutal police atrocity committed against Budhan Sabar, an innocent

		‘denotified’ tribal man in West Bengal who was killed by police. The play discusses the constitutional and human rights abuses regularly faced by India’s denotified tribal population.
--	--	---

The written text might be a point of departure, which is documented may be after its hundredth performance, but gradually the written text is left behind or changed beyond recognition. Speeches are often improvised and they refer to or enter into a dialogue with other texts like *Bulldozer* (2008) and *The Lower Depth* (2012). Susie J. Tharu writes in *The Sense of Performance: Studies in Post- Artaud Theatre* (1984):

The text may even be a phrase or a speech gesture from the real world, framed like an *objet trouve* by the staging, such that we focus on its meaning as it arises in the theatre for the spectator. Narrative is reduced to the minimum. Here the performance as a whole is the theatrical work, and the ‘event’ that takes place is of the body. Speech is one element, but not the most important, for it is not the ground from which the performance arises. And even when language *is* used, its basis is gestural. In the theatre it is a vast pre-verbal concourse that speaks (26)

Cultural texts by Budhan theatre emphasizes on projecting the bodies who have been through all the events being narrated. The verbal language becomes an important medium to communicate along with the bodily gestures. In case of the Indigenous performance traditions in Canada, especially what I had encountered in Penny Couchie’s show “When Will You Rage” language becomes a major trope of debate as English/ French/Spanish was been imposed in the schools and Aboriginal languages were made to vanish like the “vanishing race” and Aboriginal bodies were scrutinised, studied and violated in the public and private, the language is more gestural

and transcends linguistic borders. This was precisely the overlap that I had mentioned earlier. This overlaps became the mode of expression when we conducted the theatre workshop with Lee and Columpa at Chharanagar library and the performance narrative was presented at the Indian Institute of Management in Dec, 2012. Spoken words were merged with gestures that narrated a history of survival of Indigenous people in both the countries.

Monique Mojica aptly articulates the essence of Indigenous existence on Turtle Island:

...our bodies are our libraries-fully referenced in memory, an endless resource, a giant database of stories. Some we lived, some were passed on, some dreamt, some forgotten, some we are unaware of, dormant, awaiting the key that will release them ( 2009, 97)

Native Earth Performing Arts (NEPA) is Canada's oldest professional Indigenous theatre company dedicated to developing, producing and presenting professional artistic expressions of the Indigenous experience in Canada. Through stage productions (theatre, dance and multi-disciplinary art), new script development, apprenticeships and internships, Native Earth seeks to fulfill a community of artistic visions. It is a vision that is inclusive and reflective of the artistic directions of members of the Indigenous community who actively participate in the arts. Mojica is one of most acclaimed actors of the journey of NEPA and the above quotation can be cited to construct a history of a performance tradition in North America. Since the title of my dissertation located the 'body' as the trope of all resistance and healing, and my experience of working closely with the "bodies in dissent" prompted an understanding of human cognition, where the idea is to examine

the mind, body, soul as major coordinates, I would reinstate that each body has a story to narrate, each body is a repository of fact and fancy-a way toward historical understanding of events. Bodies are store houses of experiences like injury, trauma, our ability or inability to communicate and waiting to be told. This telling can be reflected in multiple forms beginning with body painting and all the way to the clothes. Experience can be shared through spoken languages, ceremony, sports, ritual and games and many more.

Since this chapter deals with performance as intervention, one needs to locate the economy of the production of these performances within the two forms of economies almost along a similar critical engagement of contextualising the two forms of colonies. This is an exercise I have already done in the Chapter 1. There are two ways of looking at the cultural production of the Indigenous population in both the countries. The perspective from which Non-Native theorists and culturalists look at the various cultural expression of the diverse groups is different from how indigenous scholars and cultural activists look at the performance tradition. As a researcher who is both an outsider and as someone who had participated in the various calls for cultural recognition of the groups I am dealing with, which I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, formulating a methodology to read these cultural production was difficult as I became an object of my study myself as my body was also a part of the reception of plays like the *Lower Depth* by Budhan theatre in Maninagar basti in Ahmedabad and the Luna show in Toronto .

My primary aim is to establish these performances as strategies of cultural revivalism and not merely as something situated in the past or an urge



to reclaim that glorious, uncontaminated past. The idea is to negotiate with the contaminated space which the body simultaneously inhabits and cohabits. Though I have dealt with the colonial policies to construct the history of deprivation, the context of the cultural revivalism is a contemporary phenomenon as it has connections with the economic policies of both the countries vis-à-vis the indigenous population. This understanding requires a separate research and the scope of my research will not allow me to deal with it here but will have a tangential reference to how the economics of deprivation became the *rohstoff* of several performance pieces. The Indian Government made special provision by including these tribes in question through several reservations at the legislative levels to secure jobs and opportunities for the tribes without understanding the cultural ethos of the people. Similarly all meaningful attempts to eradicate the social stigma have failed because the tribes in question were never consulted during the process of drafting of policies. Special provisions have only distanced them from the mainstream. In such a situation, performative strategies have been deployed to articulate the discrimination they face in the public sphere and effectively theorise the essence of the political struggle to gain visibility in the public domain and simultaneously achieve their demands.

The broader thematics of these performances can be broadly categorised into:

- Land Claims
- Racial Discrimination
- Social Exclusion

- Cultural Stereotyping
- Substance abuse and Alcoholism
- Child Abuse
- Rape
- Exclusion of Women

As a student of Comparative Literature, my idea was not to integrate the available sources to conduct a thematic analysis of the two performance traditions as I have pointed out earlier. The idea was more to assess these performances from my location as someone trained in comparative literature wanting to explore the multiple alterities within the trope of Indigenous activism on an international platform.

As Maria Lyytinen rightly points out:

The late 1960s and early 1970s also saw an increase in Native American political activism following the general movement for civil rights in the United States. There were significant developments in Native American civil rights in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of legal victories in land claims and increased tribal rights. This political and cultural process has also inspired writers and artists to critically evaluate the past and present of their people after five hundred years of colonial occupation(85)

The point that needs special attention in the above quotation is the influence of the American Indian Movement (AIM)<sup>1</sup>. Amongst the various important interventions since 1968, which includes the organised patrol to address issues of extensive police atrocities in and around Minneapolis, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to <http://www.aimovement.org/ggc/history.html> for a official AIM page

establishment of a legal rights centre to assist and secure rights of Indigenous Peoples, establishment of K-12 programmes for Indigenous Peoples, the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1973, 1998 commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the movement which coincided with the birth of a new movement called Budhan in India. As students of Comparative Literature the idea is also to forge these connections with extra literary cultural events that triggers the production of cultural texts from multiple locations and contexts. It is important to situate this “politics of location” within the discipline of Comparative Literature. The basic anxiety being ‘accountability to communities who are/ have been subjects of research. Accountability must be politically and ethically enacted continuously with and in research, an ethic that calls for us to shift, change, or disinherit some of our ideas, practices, methods, and interpretations...’ (herising, 139).

I have tried to document the brief history of the performance tradition of Native Earth Performing Arts which culminated as a major theatrical intervention as far Indigenous alterity in the city of Toronto is concerned. One history that need to be documented here is the intervention of Tomson Highway vis-à-vis the formative years of Native Earth Performing Arts and the alliance of the Rez plays. This is precisely necessary to see this chapter as a corollary to Chapter 2: From Rez to City: City to Rez. And the point of departure for this would be De-ba-ji-mujik theatre which still operates from the Manitoulin. This will also help us to understand the Reserve and Off-Reserve Native intervention and the inherent politics of theorising performance in these two forms of colonies, whose policies are articulated in the formation and execution of an urban aesthetics of resistance, an ethics of

engaging with the various convergences and divergences visavis race, ethnicity, gender, class, caste, sexuality etc.

The history of colonisation in Canada is a history of land theft as I have mentioned earlier. Reservations were created to push the native population into ghettos and were forced to transform their way of life from hunter gatherer to agricultural labourers. Often the First Nations people were forced to relocate to vast wilderness and again that piece of land was taken away when the coloniser saw chances of generating resources from that land. The 1836 cession of lands of the Manitoulin is an important historical document that can be read along the story line of *The Rez Sisters*. William McDougal was a major player who was “trained in the law, experienced in progressive journalism and politics, followed expansionist policies that included opening up new farmlands and building a colonisation road to remote Parry Sound” ( Miller, 2009, 119). I have precisely discussed the policies of construction of roads and railways as expansionists policies that deprived several tribes from their traditional occupations in India. The Manitoulin’s primary attraction was the fisheries and there were vested non-native interest in these islands ( 119). There was a serious resistance from the people of the Manitoulin. McDougal was a shrewd politician and he ‘succeeded in getting most groups to sign the treaty, although the Wikwemikong area bands still held aloof’ (Miller, 121). Interestingly Tomson Highway was appointed to run De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig theatre group in 1984/85. Drew Hayden Taylor records this phase as:

During his time on the island, Tomson visited a nearby community, about 45 minutes away, called Wikwemikong, or

Wiky to the local people. And it was there that he first formulated the idea for a play he had been contemplating. He was noticing all these women from the community rushing around to play this interesting game, one that he soon became indoctrinated into-bingo (1997, 145)

It is interesting to note that ‘gambling was actually part of Native American Tradition’ (Frazier, 82) and it becomes the kern motif of ‘escape’ for the sisters in *The Rez Sisters*. The play also alludes to the colonial history of the reserves where there were ban on traditional occupation but licence were issued for Indian Casinos. Frazier elaborates the economic exploitation of the government in describing the success of Indian Casinos:

In the 1980s, perhaps revived by the new awareness of tribal sovereignty that was part of the Indian protest movement of the decade before, some tribes realized that they could offer gambling opportunities( larger jackpots, for example) in their little bingo parlors, which the states around them did not allow....Frightened at the idea of tribes amassing untaxable gambling riches and building gambling empires within their borders, the state pressed Congress to pass a law regulating Indian Gambling....The IGRA<sup>2</sup> said that a federally recognised tribe could offer gambling on its reservation only after entering into a compact agreement with the state in which its reservation lies. The practical result of this was usually some kind of compromise between the tribe and the state involving a sharing of casino revenues in lieu of tax...( 83)

*Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* records several atrocities and violation against the Native Woman who was portrayed as the squaw and was available. Incidents of missing Aboriginal Women who were murdered in a pig farm in BC between 1997-2001, the murder of a Cree woman working as a prostitute in 1889, murder of nineteen year old Helen

---

<sup>2</sup> Indian Gambling Regulatory Act of 1988.

Betty Osborne of Pas in 1971, where she was beaten and stabbed to death with a screwdriver culminates into the violence we encounter in these performances. All these corroborate to racism and the final verdict is “Keep the Indians out of Town” ( Calgary Herald, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1889).

Now what is Toronto? A word derived from the Mohawk Tkaronto, an urban centre of North America that houses TIFF? What is the history of Toronto? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed to understand the alienation of the Native person shifting her/his base to the city from the reserve.

Urban Toronto is settled on the traditional lands of the Wendat-Huron, the Neutral, and Seneca- Iroquois peoples, succeeded by the southerly migration of the Anishnaabek-Mississaugas, who reside near us today at Six Nations of the Grand River. In their gentle, ephemeral movement patterns, and sometimes conflicted encounters with the Mohawk, they shared the land base on which this modern city is founded.( Woodworth, 25)

Amidst its history of occupation and racism, “in 1982, a theatre company called Native Earth Performing Arts was formed by a loose group of artistic friends-urban Indians who wanted to act” (Taylor, 146). There is a sharp contrast between a native theatre company that operates from the city and the one which had Toronto as its base. In an interview given in 2000, Shirley Cheechoo, artistic Director of Debaj during that season was quite curt about the theatre formed for the youth and being based on the reserves:

...Native theatre was really not recognised if you weren't in Toronto and we were not in Toronto. People didn't even know we existed for a while. We had already been doing a lot of plays before people realized we were around. It is never ever said –I've never seen anywhere where it says –that *The Rez Sisters* was developed by De-ba-je-mu-jig. It always looks like it came out of Toronto and it's not true (Hengen ,7) .

When he was asked how did the theatre move to Wiky, Shirley answered “ I think the community found a home” ( Hengen, 11). This is precisely what happened at the Chharanagar library. People expressed their angst through theatre. Another important issue that was raised in an interview with Tomson Highway where Hegen had asked “Its been said that the future of Native Theatre depends on Canada Council Funding” (15) and this is what I had hinted in the section on the Neo-Liberal Dance and will percolate in the theoretical premise of the next chapter. The following table will enable me to emphasise the broader thematic of NEP A's production and how I situate them as a response, a dialogue with the Neo-liberal economy and the salient features of the straightjacket of a Po-Co theatre practice in the colonies.

**Table 2: The Historical Journey of Native Earth Performing Arts.**

Name of Play	Year	Synopsis of the play
Rez Sisters	1986	A Two act play by Tomson Highway paved the way for establishing a professional Indigenous theatre tradition in Canada. This play deals with the life in a reserve and the desperation of three women to win a Bingo. Exposing the vice planted by the colonial enterprise, Tomson uses Native humour to contextualise the pangs of lost generations.

Dry Lips	1989	This play by Tomson Highway is a continuation of the angst we encounter in Rez Sisters. In both the plays Highway had used Cree passages which were translated by characters on stage but in 2010 a Cree version of the play was produced. The reception of these writing in Native language was a major move and prompted him to compose many compositions in Cree, his mother tongue and then finally a Cree opera.
Rose	1992	This play is the third one in the Rez series by Highway. The play reintroduces several characters from the previous plays. Rose, as the name suggests becomes the first woman to run a Band council by becoming a chief. The casino is still a reality and Big Joey plans to open a multi-million dollar casino in the community hall in the reserve. It also deals with ideas of liberation of Women in the context of Indian Women with his overdose of humour.
The Post Mistress	2013	Another masterpiece by Highway is a musical which was produced in Cree as Kisageetin is set in 1960s in a small Northern Ontario town where Marie Louis, the postmistress has supernatural powers of reading through the sealed envelopes and thus transforms into a keeper of secret of the small community.
All Mighty Voice and his Wife	2010	Though it was produced and published earlier, I shall refer the 2010 production as I was auditing the workshop at NEPA then. Produced by NEPA at the Black Box Theatre in 55 Mill Street, this intriguing play by Daniel David Moses delves with a historical document and the myths associated with the cultural hero Almighty who was killed for killing a cow. This play is a cultural history of the Aboriginal People and their existence on Canada which unsettles the ostrich like efforts to deal with reconciliation.
Princess Pochahontas and The Blue Spots	1991	This play by Monique Mojica deals with gender violence and the Indigenous Women in North America. She evokes figures from across the Americas to ridicule colonial policies and unveils the policies that have and are still subjugating Native Women in



		Canada.
Agowke	2008	Produced at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, written, enacted by Waawaate Fobister is a personal narrative of a two spirited boy growing up in the Grassy Narrow reserve, engaging with the prejudices again Gay people post contact as most Indigenous Peoples believed Two-Spirited peoples to be balanced by nature.
Death of a Chief	2006	Directed and by Yvette Nolan and Kennedy C. MacKinnon this play is an adaptation of Julies Caesar. With an ensemble stellar cast of Falen Johnson, Jani Lauzon, Cheri Maracle and Michelle St. John; Michaela Washburn (Dreary and Izzy) and emerging artists, Waawaate Fobister and Keith Barker, reconfigures the political hierarchies, ambition in Native communities and questions the accountability of Aboriginal leadership. .
A Very Polite Genocide	2006	A Very Polite Genocide or The Girl who fell to Earth is a play by Melanie J. Murray which was produced in Winnipeg in 2008 which deals with the Metis population in the city of Winnipeg. Invoking history and Myth, interweaving fictional characters like drunken Elders, the Rougaro who can metamorphose into human, black dog and werewolf, this play raises serious question about governance, traditional believes, the Metis issues post revolution in Canada. The most interesting thing is the period in which this play is being produced by NEPA, which is based in Toronto which had promoted anti Metis sentiments at a given moment in history in Canada.
Red River	1998	A two Act play by Jim Millan and Daniel David Moses, is an adaptation of George Buchner's <i>Woyzeck</i> . This historical play with a setting of the Red River unveils the political upheaval of 1870 under the leadership of Louis Riel and the subsequent military interventions that triggered several

		other movements across Canada. The play also deals with the Metis, Cree and alliances with other tribes in Western Canada which also happens to be the locations I have worked-Toronto to Winnipeg.
Night of the Trickster	1992	Written by Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, the central characters of this play are Rachael, a Metis Woman who works for Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Wendy is a Treaty Indian who works for an Urban Indian Newspaper, Eileen is a divorced Metis who manages a beauty salon, Sam is a Treaty Indian who works for Assembly of First Nations and married to Rachael and Roz is a 19 year old Metis Woman who grew up in foster homes in Winnipeg. The central theme of the play is sexual violence and how Aboriginal people are negotiating with it. This play can be a major trope in understanding all the issues I have raised in the previous chapters – Prejudices that circumvent the Urban Indigenous existence.
Fireweed	1998	William G. Merasty, better known as Billy directed this ‘Indigeni Fairy Tale’. Daniel David Moses wrote the foreword of this play which deals with the life of an Aboriginal two-spirited man, homosexuality and incest-all post-contact notions of subjugation. Interestingly the name of the protagonist is Rainbow. This play was first produced by Native Earth Performing Arts in 1992. And the journey of the play coincides with the journey undertaken by me in 2010 ie-Toronto to Winnipeg.
Tales of an Urban Indian	2003	An interesting One Act Play by Darrell Dennis is a power packed performance which disenchants the “feathered Indian” within the Urban context who never had a dream of the trickster, who fails to adjust in the woods and further extends into a critical engagement with memory and history.
The Beavers	1990	Directed by Tomson Highway and choreographed by Rene Highway, this play is political play with characters like Pandemonia and Professor Philosophostophos commenting on the

		situation of the ‘average normal’ Canadian’s quest for identity which is heightened with queries into whether Canada should be bilingual, trilingual, quadrilingual, quintilingual or quasilingual. Banking on neologism, this humorous account takes a dig into the language that had been imposed.
Annie Mae’s Movement	2006	A play by Yvette Nolan deals with multiple historical events triggers renewed questions into Wounded knee and activities of the American Indian Movement.
The Sage, The Dancer and the Fool	1989	Written by Tomson Highway and Choreographed by Rene Highway, deals with the dilemma of the Indigenous peoples “off-reserve” negotiating with the stony city built on the land of their ancestors. Sage as a traditional healing and smudging element enter into a dialogue with each other. Humour is the primary essence with which Tomson unfolds the journey.
Moon Lodge	1990	A play by Margo Kane is a dramatic monologue which deals with the plight of Aboriginal Women and concepts like Welfare and the supplies on reserves that is mediated by a schooling system that educates in an alien world view that determines the existence of Aboriginal People in Canada.
The Tripple Truth	2005	Featuring three powerhouse performers Jani Lauzon, Michelle St. John and Monique Mojica, is a perfect ensemble example of how traditional dance forms like Stomp are introduced into the major thematic of the story which deals with Colonisation and the plight of the Indigenous population. Historical Figures like Columbus, Jacque Cartier are evoked to contest areas like land rights and fishing rights.
The Diary of a Crazy Boy.	2002	Deals with Alcoholism and Life in aRez. T further accentuates the deplorable economic condition on the reserves and the play is heightened with the dynamics of Indigenous/Non-Indigenous interactions on Turtle Island. The entire plot is interwoven with the essence of spiritual quest which forms the basis of the process of healing.

## **Chapter 5: Mimicry and the Nation: Decoding the text and the textual practice.**

---

As I had mentioned in the third chapter that each 'theatre activity' has a particular sociological context, within which its experimentation has to be done. The immediate point that comes as a corollary is the unique usage of language and the problematic of defining cultural production on the basis of language. Whose and which English are we talking about and what do we understand by translating experiential categories? There are playwrights who are raising their voices and are coming up with questions which are bothering them. It is particularly in this direction that my explorations were directed.

The previous chapter has contested the foundational values of Nationalism where the idea of Area studies and Comparative Literature was read simultaneously. How and when as Comparatists do we choose areas to explore plausible convergences. The Indian Act, social ideologies, residential schools, images, etc. have all contributed to nationalistic discourses that center around white bodies. These discourses of dominance influence contemporary institutional systems like schools by erasing memories of imperial legacies of subjugation. Narrating stories of discontent were relegated to hushed conversations within and without academia.

Autobiographical memories and narratives can be seen as a tool/ methodology for complicating accounts of the unified and whole nation and unsettles historical accounts of the nation. Lee Maracle's writes in her account:

My interest in politics was mainly because of all the hassles and racist crap we had to take from the cops. They'd always address you by using some racist label. Black people they called "niggers", Italians were "wops" and Indians were always "squaws" or "redskins". They had these little class and racist slots they'd put you into and were pretty brutal-pushing and shoving everyone around.(Maracle, 1990, 93)

Memories can contribute to alternative history making of the national landscape. Personal narratives serve as a lens onto history and the contemporary world. The idea is to destabilize whiteness as a fixed category by shifting the boundaries of what it means to belong in a white settler society. Memorised tales of the body ( where it doubles as a palimpsest), threatens the precarious boundaries of nationalism. The body ( which constitutes the title of my dissertation), the "I" situates itself within the various constructs of society vis-à-vis desire, where the body, has been assigned a particular meaning within the nation. Only certain bodies are experientially different. The body is thus scrutinized and understood in relation to the presence of the Other. Colonial narratives construct a closed category of a good national subject. Such good subjects, as representatives of nationalism, are necessarily agents of colonial violence. Creating categories of racial difference is intrinsic to the formulation of the Neo-liberal nation that supposedly endorses normativity .

Since whiteness is seen as the "default position" for central structures of power, the character of White Girl in David Moses' *Almighty Voice and His Wife* is particularly a significant trope of decoding dominant ( read Colonial) educational systems and their configurations. European settlers obtain senses of selves through the formation of rigid boundaries that demarcate particular spaces as places reserved for national subjects. In turn,

this creates a cycle of knowledge production that articulates the boundaries of space inhabited by the racial Other. Space becomes a significant tool of differentiation. As spaces become demarcated as degenerate, the public comes to understand racialized bodies as necessarily less human than the national norm endorsed through various agencies.

These practices are not exclusive to Western civilization or even to the city of Toronto or Ahmedabad alone. Histories of land theft and violent colonial encounters for the placement of reserves on poor quality land and we shall encounter that in the Rez cycle of Tomson Highway.

According to the Indian Act, 1876, a reserve is defined as a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band council. The Indian Act has dictated who can and cannot be considered an Aboriginal person and, consequently, who would have access to rights of citizenship and national power. By illustrating the problems that arise with the schooling of “good” citizens, passive empathy and teaching about racialized others reinforce supremacy of the neo-colonial agencies and the texts in discussion are situated at this cross roads. Performance has always been a fundamental essence of Aboriginal societies. The performing ‘bodies in dissent’ in contemporary Aboriginal performances in India and Canada, address essential ways of communicating memory, history, belief and tradition which are directly related to issues of Indigeneity, Ethnicity, Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality within the neocolonial space.

## **The Other Solitude**

---

As I have already mentioned, the Government of India considered it necessary and desirable to keep the movements and activities of the non-sedentary tribes in control and accordingly decided to enact a suitable law to monitor the activities of these diverse groups who had no fixed places of residence at least for part of the year. The reason was the exceedingly difficult situation of dealing with tribes which had no place of residence but perpetually wandered all of the place. To prevent them from wandering might in many cases be equivalent to preventing them from earning their living. That is exactly what happened not only in India, but across the colonies. Their ostensible occupation was seen as a mere pretence for the purpose of enabling them to commit crimes with more convenience. The Law was repealed again and again and these groups were marginalized on the basis of their occupation. One needs to understand the social construction of crimes which is directly related to an unequal distribution of resources and schemes amongst these communities who were identified as criminals.

The Criminal Tribes Act (1871) had its conceptual origins also in Indian systems and structures. Through the yardstick of Brahmanical, in addition to Victorian notions and norms, even individual cases of crime in India were also seen to stem from a hereditary cause. Thus itinerant communities were considered to be, for various reasons, more criminal than others, their 'restlessness' being a troublesome feature in a milieu where members of sedentary communities defined notions of respectability. This

relationship between itinerant and sedentary communities has become more problematic in modern times. The more the itinerant communities get marginalised to the main sphere of society because of transformative processes, the more they become suspect from the point of view of the sedentary society they interact with.

First and most importantly, the nomads' lack of property, and supposed lack of due regard for others' property, is seen to be a threat to the established order. Hence, the category 'criminal tribe' was not really a sudden development – there were complex power dynamic that formulated a 'criminal' which I have explained earlier in my discussion on undernourishment and reserve/ settlement poverty.

While the criminal tribes settlements protected by barbed wires have vanished, yet in many areas, the DNT population continued to live in isolation and often in ghettos with the tag of 'criminality' etched in the minds of the police and more unfortunately of the people.

Juxtaposing 'Tales' and 'Testimonials' followed by 'Contemporary', 'Aboriginal', 'Writing', 'Canada' might reflect the confused stature of the researcher's psyche. Grappling hard to provide a certain structure, construct something out of sheer 'Chaos', are some of the few challenges encountered by any researcher trying to get her/his foothold in this area, not yet much explored. Aboriginal 'writing' is new; not Aboriginal tales. The sense of 'community' is deeply rooted in the aboriginal psyche. For the contemporary writer the challenge is within as well as without. On one hand, there has



always been the constant pressure of assimilation coupled with the hegemony of the white racist culture, and on the other hand the community imposes certain restrictions on the individual, the evolving 'self'. Thus contemporary aboriginal writing is fraught with this tension. The community prevents the writer from inscribing sacred, seasonal tales but the creative zeal tries to explore all plausible avenues, available myths and legends which constitute the Aboriginal worldview. The techniques deployed by the Aboriginal writer in her/his usage of language, form to bring about the desired effect of nativeness, the indigenizing of the 'written' English is also one of my major concerns. 'Writing' in English with the various gaps and deliberate attempts to tamper with the English vocabulary is the self-proclaimed 'jihad' against the western literary mode of production. The memoirs, testimonials cited by me will bear testimony to this conjecture. For the contemporary writer the challenge, or rather the motive, is not to construct a pre-contact idealized community, but to expose all the evils of alcoholism, sex, residential school systems, reserves in all their possible manifestations- the facts of living the life of an Aboriginal. The trickster is the metonym for the native psyche, the aboriginal way of life. The contemporary writer often deploys this traditional figure to comment on alternative sexuality as well.

It would be interesting to look at the reception of these productions in their formative years. Barbara Godard records the academic challenges these productions signaled in turbulent waters of the late 80s in "The Politics of Representation" :

Native Canadian Culture had never before received such public attention as it did in Toronto in the spring of 1989. At the Theatre Passe Muraille, *Dry Lips Oughta Go to Kapuskasing*, the latest play by Manitoba Cree Tomson Highway, played to packed houses and critical acclaim. Like its complement, *The Rez Sisters* (1986-87), which also-though from the women's perspectives –explored Reserve life, the traditional culture of the trickster, and gender politics, *Dry Lips* won the annual Dora award for the best production on the Toronto stage. Incidentally, this was Highway's third play to premiere in Toronto this year, *The Sage, the Fool and the Dancer* having played to equally full houses at the Native Centre in February....Later in May, Native Earth Performing Arts invited everyone back to the Passe Muraille for “*Weegageechak Begins to Dance*”, a festival showcasing Native plays and playwrights including, among others, *Deep Shit City*, a new text by playwright Daniel David Moses ( Mohawak), and *Princess Pochahontas & the Blue Spots* by the gifted actress and performance artist Monique Mojica...( Godard, 1990, 183)

Interacting with Native artists in Canada and the members of Budhan theatre group in Ahmedabad and then closely working with them, I must record that the journey of any artist has always been difficult and might have been even more difficult for those people who initiated a cultural revolution in the 1980s and 90s within a new economic structure in Canada and India. There is a long journey between the actual product being displayed and the process driven performance. Coming all the way from the reserve, dealing with the residential school abuse, dealing with poverty on the reserve and not having a penny in the pocket when they had just arrived in the city for opportunities is a historical truth. On the other hand, the moment they engage with a non-Native audience, in a different space, in a different context, the stories change and they evolve into texts to be dissected by critics and academics. It is also important to consider the agencies who are producing these cultural productions. In case of Canada, it is the Canada Council for the Arts cultural

which promotes reconciliation by funding projects by First Nations, Inuit and Metis people of Canada. It is important to understand the politics of the Neo-liberal economy by being critical about such patronage. How long will a culture survive with funding from the same agencies that had once forced the Aboriginal people to be dependent on the Welfare money and there were still many people on the reserves who had vehemently protested to be on Welfare money. I must admit that this anxiety has been triggered by my experience of working with the Budhan Theatre company who are surviving with serious fund crunch and they are seriously looking for funding agencies to run the resource centre within the Chhara colony.

To me, contemporary Aboriginal writing is thus a journey from the community tales to the personal accounts of survival/resistance. It is to be noted that this 'personal' is never completely detached from the 'community'. The 'fictional' world of the Coyote leaving for greener pastures due to dearth of salmon in a particular area, bears resemblance to the well documented 'factual' details recorded in testimonials of Aboriginal people's claims pertaining to land and other natural resources. The theme of displacement is quite prominent in these narratives. Be it the issue of land, language, education, poverty, culture, the plight of the marginalized people in this part of the globe, they can all, be read across if not similar but identical patterns.

Despite the apparent freedom of choice in the arts, people's artistic preferences are strongly tied in with their social position. It can be shown easily in this context how social classes, especially the ruling and intellectual classes, preserve their social privileges across generations despite the myth

that contemporary post-industrial-globalised society boasts about equality of opportunity and social mobility, achieved through an equal distribution of education and ‘knowledge’, to be more specific, resources. How one chooses to display herself within the social space and aesthetic realm is mediated by her position in comparison with other dominant modes of expression. This presence of a neighbouring superior culture is internalized at an early age and subsequently reflected in the personal narratives.

Though ‘performance’ is not new amongst the various indigenous people of the world, writing plays in English Language is a political act which comes immediately under the scanner and is attributed as something profane, at work within the dominant culture. My first proposition is, by participating, or making its presence felt in the ‘mainstream’ are these plays or to be more specific these alterities adopting the available models blindly? Or are they actually mimicking them?

The story with which I began, has got something to do with questions of authenticity and a quest for the ‘real’ Indian with its diverse manifestations, which corroborates to the concept of the “the shopping mall of cultural exotica” which encourages difference, juxtaposed with notions of hybridity which are charged with subversive possibilities. But my basic concern is the “impurity”, “contamination” of native cultures and the ‘body’ as a critical category which is so well manifested in various works of contemporary Aboriginal playwrights. This contamination is also mutual where the theatrical space/performative space has itself been contaminated like the ‘body’ with the advent of the coloniser. Notions of “purity” have annihilated generations and

are also responsible for mass pogrom. The quest for an authentic Indian is the search for a dead Indian and this quest regulates the reception of cultural productions of the First Peoples. This aspect of critical reception has been addressed and incorporated strategically in the plays of Tomson Highway which often answer or open up new questions since this is a process of negotiation. Why negotiation at all, is a point I shall come to later. What I intend to do in this endeavour of mine is to position myself in this process of questioning, investigating tendencies, re-addressing and re-negotiating positions and the political goals of this area of investigation within the framework of comparative literary studies by using basic tools like the reception of these performance texts as I have mentioned earlier. The debate associated with this is the nature of cultural resistance. Is it there in the 'text' or is it produced and reproduced in and through communities of readers/spectators and is being mediated by their own culturally specific history? In this context I quote from Stephen Slemon:

Do literary resistances [in that way any form of resistance, can be even from the angle of performance] escape the constitutive purchase of genre, trope, and figure and mode, which operate elsewhere as a contract between text and the Reader and thus a set of centralizing codes, or are literary resistances in fact necessarily embedded in the representational technologies of those literary and social "texts" whose structures and whose referential codes they seek to oppose? (1990,31)

The representation of the 'body', as a critical category of investigation in various Indigenous performance texts, challenges in many ways the colonial grand narrative in the way it constructs the body of the colonized 'other' by subverting the referential codes of social pretexts of colonization, which

remained embedded in the techniques of former colonial representations. In this process they do not abide by prescribed rules of genre and trope which operate as a contract between the 'text' and the receiver. Thomson Highway interfuses waltz, popular culture, and oral tradition of the First Peoples to escalate it to level of hybridism which is recognizable.

Highway is a Cree, hails from a reserve with limited resources, situated in a remote almost inaccessible, most underprivileged and most troubled Indian reserves in Brochet, Manitoba. The language spoken there is Cree. 'It is far far away from Toronto or Vancouver' as Highway says and suggests the urban dilemma of how to make one's presence felt in a space so alien. So apart from the linguistic barrier, distance is a potential hurdle. Cree is different from English. According to Highway, 'the two languages are often completely at odds with each other. In one language, just for instance, God is male, in the other, female. And that's just the start...'( Highway, 2003, 153)

Monique Mojica speaks of taking the language of colonization and transforming it into a new theatrical language. In this context, I think it would be wise to mention that one should not forget that sharing of cultural knowledge through storytelling is something that occurred prior to contact and has been preserved by several communities and continues to shape the realm of Native Performance culture. The core of contemporary Native performances is not bereft of that Native knowledge system with its unique images, symbols, actions and humours in the process of artistic change which challenges the politics of construction of a unified, homogeneous, political Aboriginal identity-the "squaw".

If Orality is often addressed as the embodiment of verbal meaning-making, then social categories like the 'body' relies more on these verbal modes in circulation. It can be historically traced how these meanings are circulated and changed in the process of circulation itself. The politics of identity or the mechanism of how 'identity categories' operate is directly proportional to this process of circulation and this again marks the dynamics of meaning-making. The emphasis is on 'making' because meanings are manipulated even at the level of circulation. In this context we can offer a contrast between the static Aboriginal identities as propagated by the colonizers and the dominant culture and the 'performed aboriginality' which breaks certain existing codes and creates new ones to accommodate the alter-Native meaning making which I have already mentioned. Now, if we consider the social construction of the 'body' of the colonized subject it has always drawn the attention of the colonizer. A careful analysis of the various performance texts by Aboriginal playwrights in Canada will expose how the First peoples of Canada are responding to the colonizing grammars of constructing the 'Aboriginal'. The Aboriginal 'body' then becomes the first theatrical element to take on new iconic possibilities. The 'body' in the Aboriginal theatre is not the prehistoric body but the body itself manifests the urban dilemma in the way it is invested and presented. What I have tried to explore is the dynamics of the desiring 'self' entrapped in the triangle of desire in which the subject-object relation is interchangeable in the urban context.

If we may assume that the presence of the colonizers has been so overpowering that the colonized subject no longer chooses her/his own desire

and everything is being determined for her/him (be it education, religion, preferences and practices everything is prescribed by the colonizer), the colonizer or the standards set by the colonizers become the mediator. The body of the noble savage which has to be tamed, keeping in mind the sobriety of the white colonizers. It can be extended that, alcoholism is a ‘disease’ and should be cured. It is projected that the desire to replicate this model is but spontaneous. So far so good, but the problem arises with the colonial subject trying to redefine and reassert her/his identity and reaches a peak the moment he makes his presence felt in the sphere of discourse which challenges power equations. The subject-object relation immediately changes. When the subject interrogates the discourse of the colonizers in his own context, what happens is that the object retains the actual semblance of the authoritative symbol that has been designated but re-values its presence by re-citing it as the signifier of *Entstellung* (distortion) (Nunn, 87).

This, I argue is inescapable. So the plays by Highway remind the audience that Aboriginal peoples have unique political and social concerns which need to be urgently addressed. Then the plays become a kind of dialogue between the Native and the non-native. The hybridity of experience is exalted by the participation of non-Natives’ participation as audience or actors because the knowledge he is sharing is not sacred; rather he is sharing an existence which has already been contaminated and this precisely what Highway meant in “Should Only Native Actors Have the Right to Play Native



Roles?”<sup>3</sup> Who understands this better than a residential school survivor? The schooling is not only the torture of the ‘body’ but of the soul as well.

Highway’s unleashes fluidity of gender in the *Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips* by the intriguing traditional trickster figures Coyote, Nanabush, Raven. The sexuality of the aborigines are projected as a dis-order which can be pathologically cured. On the other hand, the bodies can be ordered and delimited by available models of the colonisers. Hence, the process of investing the characters becomes a very important category in the discussions of the cultural production by the First Peoples. The pictures of the first production of *Rez Sisters* preserved in the archives of NEPA emphatically decode the assigned conventional female characteristics of the Native Woman.

I quote Sheilla Rabillard :

Native North Americans are doubly feminized: not only the passive objects of knowledge, unable to represent themselves, but strongly associated with the feminine side of traditional Western division between reason and emotion, between the rational, language using mind and the irrational body(emphasis added).” (2005, 10)

The historical, anthropological, poetic, linguistic knowledge which censors the ‘body’ and speech is thwarted by the presence of the feminine energy on stage who participate in swearing, farting, epic slanging, oozing, releasing body fluids, shits, puked to pollute the sensibilities and the theatrical space. We encounter equal dose of brutality in *Mujhe Maat Maro Sab* by

---

<sup>3</sup>This essay was published in *PraireFire* Vol 22, No. 3, Autumn, 2001

Budhan Theatre. The Police atrocities inflicted on the DNT communities are enacted on stage. Men are taken away to the Police barracks and do not return.

The impurity of Highway's play lies in the fact that he also threatens and challenges the gender and cultural boundaries associated with the masculine stereotype of the Indian male as opposed to the feminized culture of the Indigene. It is not only the penetrability of the women's 'body', but even her culture is penetrated, hooked, bruised and it finds its culmination in the rape of Zaboonigan in *Rez Sisiters* who was raped by with a 'screw-driver' by white boys. I have already discussed the historical context of the event earlier. Rape as a violation reappears at a very crucial point in *Dry Lips* also where Patsy is being raped by Dickie Bird but with what? The holy Cross! Here Highway actually attacks Christian morality which introduced the concept of impurity of the 'body' in the schools. This idea is further strengthened by the brutal rapes of Aboriginal women. The puncturing of their wombs are represented on stage and they move a step ahead by converting their bodily fluids into existence and transforms them into an energy that will continue decolonization. The way Nanabush ties artificial breast on top of her original ones in *Dry Lips* with Monroe as the backdrop, challenges the very notion of beauty and pageantry. The fatal alcohol syndrome, child birth related issues, have special reference in the plays by Highway.

All the attacks are not directed towards the white male or the settler society, the reserves are unsafe for the women and they are at the receiving end. Highway extends his *Rez* trilogy by presenting Rose as the first woman, preparing to be elected as the chief of the Wasaychigan Hill Indian Reserve,

Manitoulin Island, Ontario. It is a complex journey of the women in the reserve who still dream of autonomy and the men dream of engaging the local mafia to establish a casino right inside the Community centre of the reserve which is a space that the Women cherish.

**CHIEF BIG ROSE:** Them Mangy curs. I wiped the shit from off tgeir naked bums when they were but babes in their mother's arms and what do they do to thank me? Six this morning, a knock comes on door, I open it, and there's a fire on my step so I stomp it out and what do I get? A bedroom slipper covered in shit. Some monkey went and filled a paper bag with shit, left it on my porch, set it on fire, and stood back like a spineless coward to watch me stomp it out and get my bedroom slipper covered in it...shit.

**PHILOMENA:** Pelajia Rosella Patchnose? A woman trying to run a Band Council made up of men who think women were born to give birth, wash dishes, eat chocolates and watch soap opera is asking for ...

(Rose, Act 1, Scene Two, 18)

At this juncture one might take cognizance of the point with which I began. The native actor on stage can be read as the realistic depiction of the plight of the "real Indian" but that only caters as the material for cultural tourism. Is Highway trying to contest this by roping in non-native actors? Or is it just the non-availability/ accessibility of Native actors? How can one ignore the speech aspect of these performances where English utterances are tinged with the rhythm and inflections of a First Nation's language? like "Tansi, niweecheewaganuk, tansi, Tapwee geechi kapeegee-ogeeyik;..."( Highway, 2003, 18). Especially when the casting comprises non-native performers? Is this hybridity invented? Is it the survival strategy? Or is it a kind of healing

which is deliberately seeking solace outside Shamanism, yet another marker of aboriginality?

I personally think that through myriads indeterminacies of performance, issues like translating between identities, world views, performance modes are being redressed. With a mixed audience comprising of Natives and non-Natives, the reception of such performances is also quite political like its production. For the Native spectator, a play by a Native author is an affirmation and celebration of indigenous culture and an act of resistance. The non-Native spectator is almost inevitably obliged to engage in the “effort of interpretation”, rereading the mimicry his/her own culture. I am at once reminded of an interesting performance by Santhali performers at Santiniketan. They were deliberating on their native knowledge systems. They were showing how to catch a bird. One of them directly looked into my eyes and said “*Ghughu dekhechho Faand dekhoni*”( trans: You have seen the *ghughu* bird but haven't yet seen the trap)—he was showing how to catch a ‘*ghughu*’. An old adage, with which I was so well acquainted, came to me with renewed codes. I also participated in the process of meaning making! The third category/space of the triangle is then shared by non-native participants like us who have become an integral part of the Native existence.

The healing quality is still retained in various cultural productions of the first peoples. This is also another aspect of the oral tradition of the first peoples. Healing involves reclaiming. But the aim is definitely not to go back to the pre-contact, uncontaminated past. Spiritual healing involves healing of the body which has endured the residential school system, rape, alcoholism to

mention a few, which has shaped the aboriginal existence and left an indelible mark on generations of survivors and their progeny. Hence the act of re-telling stories is nuanced. The journey oscillates from stilettos to ‘moccasins’.

### **Text, Textuality and the Body**

If we agree that the idea of the ‘text’ is not limited to its boundaries of being merely a written discourse, then we can assume that intertextuality embraces discourses associated with the ‘text’ *per se*, in its uttered, illustrated, written, mimed or gestured manifestations.

Within the frame work of Comparative Literature, Intertextuality represents a critical tradition that can be used to shed light on characteristic ways of ‘imagining’ relations between national and international literature. This can also be extended to domestic and foreign literature. Since Comparative Literature focuses on influences between various authors both in domestic and international contexts, it is also oriented toward the relationships between texts. Comparative Literature reacts and highlights the continuity within the literary developments within a particular country or between countries. The most useful metaphor in this context is of currents. Literary development is described in terms of emergent, dominant, residual, all of which correspond to different currents of thoughts which corroborates to the literary process or production. Seen from the point of view of the reader or the receiver to be more specific, this cultural interaction is a complex one where a strange foreign text/s becomes/become a part of the reading elite or a indigenous ‘text’ which has remained outside the discursive space is brought

into highlight by intermediaries. Through translation, imitations and adaptations, a gradual restructuring of the text/s occurs/occur. Gradually the imported texts get dissolved in the receiving culture. New texts develop. The new text is the organic restructuring of the imported text which has undergone many transformations. In case of the indigenous text a similar restructuring might take place. The concept of intertextuality is indispensable and problematic because of the contingent growth and recirculation of texts on a global scale. It points to the much-needed research on the nature of the relations among these texts. The discourse also explores the social and cultural context and subjectivities, which shape the production of the 'text'. This can also include 'texts' with static and moving images.

My primary concern is the reading/ seeing/ speaking/ writing/ painting/ thinking subject/s who actively participate/s in this process of textual productions. Here language itself in its written and uttered form is an important category that requires special attention.

Since Comparative Literature does not restrict itself only with the study of a single literature and literary theory and criticism which corroborates to this 'singleness', it also thrives on exploring the relation of literary production to other contexts, historicities, disciplines and media, I would like to historically trace the contribution of the child reader in exploring this inter-relationship between various forms of textuality and subjectivities. I shall read the schooling, contamination, the hybridism of the space in which the child operates which can be as simple and complicated as the space of 'storytelling'. But my primary objective is to connect all these within the broader canvass of

‘Nationhood’ and the construction of a national identity. At the very onset I would like to confess that this proposition is definitely not ‘original’ in the sense it has been uttered long ago (as the post-structuralists would suggest) and this endeavor of mine is a kind of *déjà vu*. Each time we revisit, the textual space offers new signifiers. To put it in complex theoretical ambit—a restoration of context, a rereading of texts, a reinterpretation of codes, and opening of textual containment (Turner , 14-15). It somehow represents the essence of stories or rather storytelling. At times when we hear a story from a different culture, time, space, we feel an old acquaintance with the apparently unheard story. Stories survive and travel across time, place and generations suggestive of fruitful enquiries as in how, which stories are told again and again across culture, how a story enters a system or is rejected— indicates the politics of dissemination of knowledge as we know stories are repositories of community as well individual knowledge and demands a special attention form researchers working in the area of reception studies. How stories become an active agent in endorsing the changing façade of modernity which again defines the national character of cultural productions is what I wanted to unveil. When these stories are designed for children or to put it in a more commercial way — when the target is kids, the very act of storytelling, the ideology behind selection of stories with iconic possibilities requires special attention. The popular representation of the child-adult can be explored to expose the mechanism of power politics which defines the ‘child’. At this point it is wise to note that the ‘child’ has changed so has the representation of the ‘child’. ‘Who is the child?’ is the question that bugs most production houses who target kids.

At first we can accept a simple fact that with the flourish of a nationhood and national identity, India like many other countries who had a history of colonial subjugation, had been negotiating with a pre-colonial past to resist the sweeping power of colonization as one possible option. But this negotiation continued in the post independence era also, when these countries were trying to reconcile the lingering affects of colonialism and the country's new role as an independent nation. Along with political debates and economic policies of these times, the struggles and challenges that shaped various movements, the various ideological tensions that marked the milieu, had influenced the cultural expressions of these countries. Now one has to take into cognizance that this entire discourse was the terrain of the middle class educated *bhadroloks* and the 'child' in this case was the would be elite and of course MALE. The Disney *Pochahontas* is a specific moment in history and an important text that was decoded by Mojica in her ambitious project *Princess Pochahontas and the Blue spots*.

**"When will you Rage?"<sup>4</sup> Contemporary Indigenous Performance in Canada and India**

The use of such notions as 'cultures', 'perspective', 'ideology' and 'world view' has not only been intended to convey the idea that members' activities are to be construed by reference to some corpus of knowledge but also that corpus of knowledge itself must be viewed as being in some way associated with the collectivity in which the actors have membership.

---

<sup>4</sup> Dance Theatre directed by Penny Couchie that addressed several representation of the Indigenous bodies on a global scale.



The history of colonization in Canada is the history of Aboriginal children removed from communities as a result of ongoing colonization policies like the residential school system, termination and relocation, the theft of Aboriginal children and removing Indian Status from Native Women and their descendants.

At this point I would like to introduce the work of Kent Monkman. Prior to colonization, queer identity, known in Native communities as Two-Spirit in honour of the existence of both the male and female spirit in one body was widely accepted among many different North American tribes. “Alternative gender roles were among the most widely shared features of North American societies...”(Roscoe, 6). Monkman reclaims that history by cross-dressing as “ the most visible marker of berdache gender status was some form of cross dressing...” (8). Monkman uses the transformative forces of this in-betweenness to subvert dominant normative discourses that over rules Native American diversity. Waawaate precisely narrates this in *Agokwe* where he deploys the transformative forces of Nanabush and enacts multiple characters from his reserve where he was brutally abused for being gay. Waawaate’s testimonio is both a personal account and a collective voice of all those young Indigenous people who migrated to the city for better opportunities and freedom from the shackles of Welfare economics.

Monkman not only challenges the famous group of seven or the colonial art history , but also those institutions that have overlooked Native creative energy by storing them as artifacts in museums. Monkman populates

the vast emptiness of the white canvas with his colourful Miss-Chief in a regalia and artificial breasts like the trickster in Highway.

Closely aligned with this, the Gomez-Peña show emphasizes on the border zones of identity formation by banking on their mixed ancestry and then extending it to various tropes of marginalities. Monkman de-stabilises the Christian preaching in the schools and Gomez- Peña attacks the institutions responsible for the mass pogrom conducted by the North American societies who want to colonise the entire world.

If we extract categories like ritualistic representation of the body, where the actor's body is the major symbol ( Gilbert, 203) the costume, dance, set becomes signifiers with which the body interacts. It might not be the signifiers which have been identified the moment the body moves away from an enclosure and participates or performs in the street. There is a code of conduct of the street with mobile as well as static signifiers like the commuters, or a State building. The body becomes an object of enquiry which simultaneously decodes the National myth represented on Bill boards. It might also corroborate to a graffiti on the wall for example in the city of Toronto where the Art itself is an intervention by blacks. Race and gender can also be contested. 'In other words, the perceived (constructed) binary categories of male/female and white/black are never merely biological determined but are also historically and ideologically conditioned' ( Gilbert, 205). We must admit how the Nation shapes ideology. It is to be understood that bodies are also framed within the discourse of nationality. Hence my idea of presenting Monkman and Peña-Luna show was to dis-entangle the various authenticities

and social constructs being challenged through the body. Mimicry becomes a tool to contest the borders imposed by the nations. One needs to understand that beyond this aesthetics of reception there is also another function of these bodies. The sense of community that is evoked in the performances can also be constructively used for theatre of development<sup>5</sup> that has been used by Budhan theatre.

---

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to *Unnayan Theatre o Amader Chorchha* by Samsul Alam Bokul.

## Chapter 6: Almighty(s) and Budhan (s): A plausible Dialogue

---

Theatre, of course, retains the 'cult' status in that work is live, the performers are sharing the same space and time as the audience and, as the work tours, the performers age along with the piece...For live performance this notion of the 'cult' status of the live event, the real space, real time nature of the encounter with the audience is what makes the art form vibrant while at the same time making it less commercially viable than art forms which either lend themselves to reproduction, like music, or are infact wholly based on reproduction like film. So notions of 'place' in performance studies relates back to Benjamin's notion of the cult event-real space, real time experiences. Performance can be viewed as uniquely rooted to place because it happens in shared time and space with its audience, but it can also be said to be placeless in that it is non-object oriented and non-commodity based (Hill, 2006, 3)

Indigenous performance traditions in North America are rooted in their storytelling traditions. Storytelling is intrinsic to the sense of community. It has always been a tool to respond to external phenomena and a document showing how those affected the community, be it the contact with the colonizers or the impact of the residential school system, or the contemporary negotiation with the State mechanism. The idea of performance as we understand and subsequent theories that read 'performance' as a major trope of engaging with the politics that was interwoven in the texture of the performance, are definitely different from the Indigenous worldview on performance. The Powwow dance and the other forms of dance and throat singing traditions of the Indigenous population in Canada are an extension of their way of life. There is an inherent fetishism associated with looking at

these cultural expressions as something extraneous to the living patterns of the communities that could be analysed, dissected and read. Reading and understanding are activities which require special attention vis-à-vis the representation of Indigenous peoples and the popular readings of cultural productions by the First Peoples. The tradition of the Warrior Dance, or the grass dance or the traditional hoop, when performed out of context, lose their immediacy as each and every movement that the dancer recollects and enacts, should be seen as a specific interfaces with nature which is again closely aligned with human existence. Since Nature is not extraneous to the body, the movements should be contextualized within the geographical location and culture. As the Aboriginal dance movements and songs resonate with various elements of the earth, and the way the body responds to the seasonal cycles, any reference to these particular patterns within a particular performance text requires a systemic understanding of the complex web of customs and beliefs which is often overlooked or patronized as Indigenous Spirituality. The quest for a connection with the elements of nature is an alternative understanding of “scientific knowledge”, which in itself is an extension of the colonial agencies. The rhetoric of knowledge production is thus under the scanner. Drew Hayden Taylor summarises the act of storytelling as:

...if you look at its origin, it was, at its most basic, a way of relating the history of the community; it was a way of explaining human nature; it had metaphorical, philosophical, psychological implications-all within the story (140)

As a researcher I can recollect two instances of stories and how the contexts prompted me to de-code the textual praxis of stories. My initial encounter with Lee Maracle in 2010 at First Nations House in Toronto dealt

with my reactions vis-à-vis preparing my MA dissertation on the Creation stories of First Nations people and the Santhali *Jom Sim Binti*. I had said in my first interview that I was interested in the creation myths of the First Nations people. I was immediately corrected by Maracle and she said that those were not in fact Myths but stories that had actually happened. She further accentuated her claim by saying that if you believe in stories then within the short span that I was there on Turtle Island, stories would come back to me. Now how would one read this ‘prophecy’<sup>1</sup>? The Second important intervention was a course that I audited at University of Manitoba on Indigenous story telling. It was at this juncture that I met elder Louis Bird, a reputed story teller from the Hudson Bay Area. I was introduced to the cycles of stories and the various characters that re-appeared in various versions in stories across North America. Wittigo, Ayaaash, Coyote were some of the important cultural codes that were introduced to my literary system. The cognitive zone immediately tried to relate it to the immediate readings I had and that helped me to formulate this chapter, which in itself is a retelling of a story.

Hayden rightly points out that:

Unfortunately, in today’s society the Native legends of history have been relegated to quaint children’s stories. But legends and stories were never meant to be strictly for children. They were always told for adults-as well as for children-because as you get older, you can tap into a whole new understanding of the story. Its like an onion: you can always peel away more and more to the core of the story. (The Drama Review 41, 3 1997)

---

<sup>1</sup> I wanted to allude to the story ‘Prophecy’ by Basil Johnston

Probably Lee had hinted at this particular aspect of stories in Aboriginal societies. But the history that Drew talks about is definitely not the history as we understand it as a discipline, but a legacy of remembering, the act of remembering through repetition. Thus locating repetitiveness of themes in the stories became my first point of departure. But the re-enactment of similar themes had different connotations depending on the location, time and the generic classification which accommodated a particular theme. The two important themes were the impact of the residential school system and the Indigenous negotiation within the urban context. Through these two broader thematic actually two different points of contact could be established. If residential schooling changed the pattern of thinking, then it also had a direct impact on story-telling; the second was the lost generations engaging with the Neo-liberal economy that continuously represents the Aboriginal as the potential other who needs to be referred to every now and then to justify the ways of land theft across the colonies.

As Drew Hayden writes in his essay, prior to World War II it was illegal for the Aboriginal Peoples to leave their reserves without written permission (pass) from the Indian Agent. The situation was similar for the denotified tribes in the settlements. As there was this warrior tradition in Aboriginal communities, many went to serve the crown and was exposed to the world outside. Subsequent developments like the right to vote in the year 1960, native civil rights movement, were also gaining a momentum. Events like Wounded Knee were fresh wounds in the minds of the Aboriginal population. The foundations of a city based urban discourse on Indigeneity

began with the creation of the Toronto based Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts. The idea was to start a dialogue with Native and non-native communities. With the help of Denis Lacroix, the company adapted *October Stranger* for a festival in Monaco. Hayden emphasizes the reception of this play in Monaco in the following words:

It seems people in Europe were expecting buckskin, feathers, and beads, and then these contemporary Native youths in their mid-twenties came in doing a serious play about a person leaving the Reserve to go and live in a city, and becoming urbanized. This was not what the people of Monaco and of this theatre festival expected to see...( Taylor, 145)

Another milestone in the history of Aboriginal theatre and performance tradition in Canada was the appointment of Tomson Highway to run the De-Ba-Jeh-Muh-Jig theatre of the Manitoulin Islands. Taylor writes:

During his time on the island, Tomson visited a nearby community, about 45 minutes away, called Wikwemikong, or Wiky to the local people. And it was there that he first formulated the idea of a play he had been contemplating. He was noticing all these women from the community rushing around to play this interesting game, one that he soon became indoctrinated into-bingo. People would be talking away, then they'd just be dense smoke floating through the room. And that's where he first developed the idea of a play called *The Rez Sisters* (1986). ( Taylor, 145)

One could actually trace an identical pattern in the development of Budhan theatre in India. As members of traditional performers and contortionists, their intervention in the theatre scenario in the Indian context was essentially an urban engagement with the problems faced by the non-sedantary communities in the ruralis and the Urban Centres with their diverse ramifications. Stories told in these performances do not have resolutions as in



what can be the alternative to Neo-liberalism, but they connect with the problems of the communities in question. According to Taylor the emergence of Native Earth Performing Arts changed the scenario of Aboriginal theatre in Canada in the late 1980s. Native Earth's history can be divided into two phases. From 1982 to 1986 there was no full time staff, the shows were collective creations that were few and far between, and the structure of the company was very loose. 1986 was the glorious second phase when Tomson Highway was hired as the artistic director and Elaine Bomberry as administrator. 2004-5 were the flourishing years . 'Weesaygecchak begins to Dance', the annual festival for showcasing young talents which was introduced in 1989 produced some of the most promising figures like the very young and talented Waawaate Fobister.

The point that needs to be addressed at this juncture would be the idea of decolonization through the Arts. Is Aboriginal theatre an instrument of recovery, where the language of the colonizer becomes the major trope of engaging with Aboriginality, 'where a new language is developed though theatre practice itself may appear to be a part of dominant culture' (Nun, 75). The ghost of an erstwhile Indigenous performance traditions haunts the contemporary theatre practice in Canada. The invocation of the Trickster figure at important junctures actually highlights the in-between space where the Aboriginal body resides. Aboriginality is a political identity. It exhibits the trials of a hybrid individual in a hybrid space contesting with imposed authenticities and de-coding them at time exploring and creating new

stereotypes-‘The Dirty Indian’, ‘The Cigar Store Scaw’, ‘The Drunken Indian’ and the ‘Indian Elite’.

Emma LaRocque substantiates her views on the various representations:

The myth of the Dirty Indian was likely reinforced when Native Peoples began to migrate into cities and towns. Initially, cities and towns were strange and frightening places ( and they still are for many Northern Natives). Many come with hopes of finding jobs or simply searching for new life-styles. Most were totally unprepared for what they found ( or did not find, such as jobs). Disillusioned, and dazed with culture shock, if not future shock, many Native people had few alternatives but resort to welfare. ( LaRocque, 35-36)

Talking about the ‘Urban Dilemma’ vis-à-vis the Indigenous populations, the average Canadians feel that they feed the ideal, drunken Aboriginal through their taxes without acknowledging the land on which they have erected their pleasure domes. I have analysed the dislocation from the Reserves to the Urban centres as one of the recurring *rohfstoffs* in several contemporary Indigenous performance. Be it Toronto or Ahmedabad, most people who are homeless on the streets are the Indigenous peoples. Systematically depriving many communities of their traditional livelihood in the name of educating them has resulted into this national disaster. The social problem which can be translated from the old adage “the Indian Problem” is a National Crime a la Miloy and needs to be understood theoretically. So performing their alterity on the streets, which is a code of the street, is a way of contesting the stereotypes that formulates the identity of the bodies in dissent. Alcoholism can be seen as a metaphor or a tool to forget oneself, a tool to combat poverty. Thus alcoholism has always been a serious problem

even amongst the denotified tribes in India and another important motif in Indigenous cultural productions.

A close analyses of the Canadian problem will help me to explain the identical graph in the lives of the Kheria Sabars of West Bengal, India and show how they are reflected in the performance texts I shall discuss later.

In Canada, Indian cultures were permanently altered when the buffalo was systematically annihilated. Because the Indians could nor accept the cow as a replacement for the buffalo ( the buffalo was the basis of the biggest single tradition among the Plain Indians), a social vacuum was ultimately created. Disease, starvation, the missionaries, the police, and the whiskey traders compounded the problems. The death of a livelihood is the death of self-sufficiency. ( LaRocque, 36)

The disappearance of the buffalo in North America was the result of government supported hunting companies killing anywhere between 50,000 and 100,000 buffaloes per day. The government wanted to eliminate buffalo herds that often impeded trains from efficient travel. The government also had a second motive, "The military was keenly aware that a substantial decline in buffalo would pose a serious setback to the Indian's ability to resist colonization and further expansion of It would also spell an end to their seemingly nomadic lifestyle and force their move to reservations (reserves)" The buffalo population, once the most numerous large mammal on Earth and a substantial part of the diet of many Aboriginal tribes, declined to less than a 1000 by the 1890's.

Daniel David Moses turns the story of *Almighty* into *Almighty Voice and His Wife* by cross-pollinating the vaudeville genre and the minstrel show in the second act of the play with both actors' faces painted white which

exposed the anxieties of the formation of the aboriginal identity which is mediated by the presence of white culture which defines the Aboriginal existence. I have explained this in the previous Chapters.

Minstrel shows started in the early 1830s and became hugely popular across North America until the 1930s. White actors would paint their faces black with large red lips to depict a comical, exaggerated, stereotypical African-American person. Almighty Voice was a young Cree warrior who lived in Saskatchewan near the end of the last century. He became a symbol of resistance in the Cree speaking world. He was arrested for killing a cow and later died in the hands of the Mounties. The ghost speaks the truth and Moses sets the stage for the Ghost to speak about the dead Indians in the ghost cities, where they relocate for better opportunities. In an interesting exchange, the INTERLOCUTOR in Act 2 of *Almighty Voice and His Wife*, is actually White Girl, addresses the Ghost as ‘ savagely beautiful appearance’ and asks him to dance for the show. When he refuses, the INTERLOCUTOR says “You choose to booze and you’re back on the street where I found you”. Interestingly, the scene when the INTERLOCUTOR asks GHOST to talk about Wounded Knee, the intended pun simultaneously reads two events in history. One being the Wounded Knee Masacre and the other being Almighty Voice who was shot in one of his knees.

If we can read this play as an anxiety of becoming the Indian and disrobing her identity, then it also speaks about one of the most striking Urban anxieties of assimilation. By allowing the Interlocutor to speak of the cultural stereotypes, the play unfolds the codes which forms the Indigenous identity

and it is an eternal struggle for the urban youth to come out of it or contest with a discourse which is another trap. Almost at the end of the complex minstrel show, when the characters wipe their paints and become who they are not, it marks the process of un-investing oneself as a political call from within to resist the ongoing colonisations. I have tried to read in realign the complex realities of the Aboriginal existence in the urban space. I have tried to read the various realities through an imaginary conversation between Budhan Sabar and Almighty Voice and other 'alterities' who haunted my imagination as I penned this 'chapter' of my journey...

In an informal conversation Dakxin Bajarange Chhara, Artistic Director of Budhan Theatre had urged the importance of introducing theatre or any form of performance in all the non-sedentary communities in India. His argument came from a lived experience of growing up in a Chhara settlement in Ahmedabad. The Denotified groups, according to him are all *kalakars* (artists) and they have always used their art to entertain others, but never used it to tell their own tales. It is high time that people heard their stories. He said how tales of subjugation of the DNT groups across the subcontinent is so identical that when they encountered the narrative of Budhan Sabar's custodial death in the district of Purulia, West Bengal, it was not much difficult for them to narrate their own stories in the Western part of India through the retelling. Kalpana Gagdekar, who plays the character of Shyamali said that she used to visit the *Maiyat* (funeral event ) to closely watch how a woman reacted when her husband died either in police custody or due to illness. Stories connect. When Lee came to India with Columpa, who worked

with the young members of Aboriginal communities in Winnipeg, and they shared their stories with the Chhara Youth, they connected with their anxieties immediately. Subsequently a performance narrative was formed when we were convinced that one language that could connect these two realities would be theatre which is beyond the written codifications of human emotions. The One Act play which forms part of this chapter, was conceived to give back to the communities who had so much and wanted this dissertation to have a performance narrative connecting the two distinct realities which they could perform. Working as a theatre practitioner for the last fourteen years I also felt that this would be a way to honour the story telling session from where I have accumulated my wealth of references for this dissertation.

## **Desert Bones: One Act play**

(Inspired by Rabindranath's *Kshudito Pashan, Almighty Voice and His Wife* by Daniel David Moses, *Budhan* by Dakxin Bajarange Chhara and *Aloukik Samlap* by Sisir Kumar Das)

---

This play can be performed in a deserted *Haveli* , Old Warehouse, Cemetery, or a black box theatre.

### **Scene 1**

*(An old haveli in Ahmednagar , a desert town situated in the western part of this world. An old river Rupmanti once nourished this old town before her banks were cemented and plastered to change its direction and the city was divided into two halves. On one bank there is a remnant of an Ashram where people still gather to mime their songs, hopeful of getting their voice back. A watch tower from where a radio station plays only patriotic songs. The other bank is the glorious City of Hope with glass walls. No sound from this side can penetrate nor does sound from the City of Hope infiltrate this desert town. The City of Hope is a spectacle from the desert town. The City of Hope illumines the desert town throughout the month as the lights from its pleasure domes penetrate through the glass walls and the desert town becomes an enchanting spectacle with multiple silhouettes of old structures, a lost*

*civilization. The City of Hope has constructed watch towers near the glass walls where people buy tickets to watch this ghost town. On full moon nights the tickets are sold in dollars. Since the river was cemented and the glass Wall was erected, engineers and scientists of the City of Hope have failed to arrest power-cuts on every full moon night and thus the Neo-liberal Municipal Corporation decided to bank on this –they declared the full moon nights as eco-friendly nights when people live in darkness-a state sponsored ritual commemorating their guilt where the Mayor delivers a speech at 18 hrs 71 mins on what went wrong in the past and how they have reformed the legislature. On the other hand, the ghost town awakens on the full moon night. The tributary of the dead river overflows with water and the old fountains brim with the juice of ambrosia. The ghost town celebrates this and the entire town and its buildings are animated with movements. It is heard that the stones of the Haveli become alive whenever a curious stranger enters through a small gap in the glass wall and a flower blossoms. The stage gradually illumines and the remnant of an old Haveli can be seen in the vast expanse of the desert. A follow spot locates the silhouette of a stranger in the city who moves around aimlessly in the poorly lit town. Suddenly he sees a man in blood stained clothes digging the ground like a madman...a red flower blooms at the spot)*

Stranger: Excuse me

Man: ( *Continues digging without answering*)

Stranger: Hello, I have just managed to enter but don't know a way out...can you help?



*(Suddenly excavates bones from the spot and starts a Ghost dance leaving the stranger confused...bursts into laughter..gathers more bones)*

Man: There is no way out...you have to listen to our stories...the flower blooms and bleeds...so does the moon...

*( runs to stage up...follow spot locates him on the rostrum...he is conjuring something with the bones...gradually the figurines multiply and all engage in the ghost dance and the drum beats overpower the voice of the stranger who is spell bound by the sight...he cannot locate the other silhouettes but follows the man...the stage overflows with Red light)*

Stranger: Hey Stop...I need your help

Man: Help? Ha ha ha...please help us...who are you? A Man or a Ghost?

Stranger: I am a researcher...

Man: What? Is that so? What do you eat?

Stranger: I mean I study ghost towns and ghost peoples...part of the assignment I am doing for my post-colonial course...

Man: *Ikde Aaa* ( come near)

Stranger: What?

Man: *Ikde Aaa*

*( farts and disappears...hysterical laughter breaks the silence of the stage...the ghost dance continues on stage up. A follow spot locates a woman covering the earth dug by the man. She places the khatia on top and starts*

*feeding a bundle of clothes resembling her child. As she attempts to breast feed her child, a sheet of cloth comes out which reads Scene 2)*

## **Scene 2**

*(The woman murmurs “ only the Ghost and the child tell truth”. A group of old women draped in black performs the death song of the Rudalis)*

Song: O lado tu kis mitti ke?

So rahi hey jis mitti pe o sukh gaya

Na bahi ansoo thado...o lado tu kis mitti ke?

Na apni kokh ujaro...mitti se apni godh bharo

O lado tu kis mitti ke?

Dhul pey jo lal phool khili o lado dekh jara

Ankh mey uski ansoo thado

Apni laaj sambhalo...lado tu kis mitti ke?

Dhul pey apni suhaag bichaye kyun baithi tu

O lado sukh gayi pani Mati ke

Na bahi ansoo thado...tu kis mitti ki?

*(The Woman feeds the child , unfolds the piece of cloth and drapes herself in a red cloth and starts screaming)*

Woman: They have sprinkled *mirchi* inside me...my child died inside...my womb bleeds...I saw it in my dreams...now I sit on the graveyard...hiding the corpse of my dead husband who was shot...*nah*...beaten...*nah* hanged...*nah* the dogs ate him...ahhhhh...Oh Budhna...they took away my husband like the predators...like they do whenever there is a case of robbery in my area...they come and take away our men...we are born criminals...if we wear pullovers in winter given by NGO wallahs the Babus think we stole it from their households, if the *samiti* lables our clothes, they don't allow us in the bus...where do we go? The forests have disappeared...I don't know how to grow crops...I have been a gatherer all my life...we always had food...my breast was always full to feed my baby...now we starve in our brick huts...with undernourished kids and a bunch of mad men-folk who have gone crazy with no occupation...nothing to feed us...feasting on alcohol...the *babus* buy our *jhoris* in Sabar mela...whatever money we bring back home goes to feed the lawyer...our husbands and sons in jails...500 rupees per case...500 years...and we are still alive...

*(Fades into the song O laddoo...the group of women undrapes and spreads the black clothes one by one on the floor. Now they are in denims with placards "Save the Girl Child", "TAG report", "Renke Commission", " Educational Attainment of Denotified Tribes", " Inter-generational Prostitution", " Missing Aboriginal Women", " Bill C-31", "CTA-1871", " The Indian Act", "Red Power" ...turns the placard and they read..S-C-E-N-E-T-H-R-E-E)*

### Scene 3

*(The Man reappears...screaming...)*

Man: *Mey..chor Nahin hoon saab...Mujhe Maat Maro...ha ha ha...jail bharo...jail bharo...ha ha ha...Go away..this place will strangle you...you eat crow...*

*(he pisses on back stage...and disappears .The Woman reappears)*

Woman: Can you hear the call every 54 minutes? Before I could dress my wound I heard another cry...before that was addressed another...my *jhuggi* was demolished near the railway tracks of Ahmednagar, I do not have running water in my hut in the Saugeen Island, you will find me in the slums or on the reserve or on the streets of Toronto...cheap labour...near OCAP...coz I have no access to my forest or land... lost my tongue...I speak yours...I read your books...now its time for you to read my *Agyankosh*...the book of the unlettered...you have to feed my Bhoma who is hungry for generations...

*(The Man..shouts overpowering the voice of the Woman...)*

Man: ...you will become Mad...go away...or perish...ha ha ha...

Woman: They said my husband committed suicide in jail. He had used his *gamchha*. We never use the *gamchha*...where did he get one...did he steal? I hid his body in my room for days to ...only the dead speak the truth...I am the widow of Budhan, I am the Widow of Pinhare Kale, I am the widow of all those aboriginal Men who step out of the house never to return...they perish in the jails across the world...or die constructing roads in the cities...we

perish on the dark side of the Cities of Hope...Our daughters disappear from the Rez...you will find them near the Highway at Sawai Madhopur... Will you write about us like the others who visited us do? What do you write? Who will read your story? How much will you get if you write our story? I am a Lodha woman in my thirties...I am a graduate...I earn 13 rupees everyday...I get up early in the morning, catch a local train to cut grass and come back with 13 rupees...no work no pay...an alcoholic husband and two kids to feed...we are Poverty...we are hunger...you make our men criminal...my father died coz he cudn't feed us...he sold maps before the river was cemented and the glass wall was erected... my sister Chuni Kotal went to your school...she had a lover...she learnt your language...she committed suicide like so many other Aboriginal women across the world...we are your cigar store squaw...will you buy me tonight? Please...the man with beard says on the TV...it's good to have a tribal girl every full moon day for an everlasting youth...try me... I am the *la-Chingada, la Malinche*, buttered on both sides...

( *She pretends to detach the lapel hidden in her jacket...* )

See this is the traditional jacket used by our ancestors to preserve the stolen objects. It has been displayed in the Museum of Hope...touch it...you will get a first hand feel...Those *didis* in Jeans took me for a show...the fiery woman...the day everybody saw me on TV...I died that night...please save my children...and please transfer the money you had promised after the show...also the shoes you wore...I wanted to walk extra miles...send your *lipistick*...my younger sister would need it...no one to feed Baba and Maa after I am gone.

*(The stranger approaches and the figure disappears...he feels the cloths...turns it...it is a huge Star Blanket...Scene 4 written on it)*

#### **Scene 4**

(A young woman knitting the Starblanket)

Young Woman: I weave my stories...in this blanket. They say I am different. I was adopted...I lost my stories...this is my ceremony...they say I am ugly...fat...bitch...I did not get a room in the city at first...the Indians do not like we kinda Indians...I share my room with a Carribean woman...my name is Christine Starblanket...they laugh hearing my name...they call me granddaughter of shitty Bull...I bead my stories in the blanket...I feel happy...I am brown...I am happy...I am a halfbreed...I keep beading...I am a law graduate...elders say we need more lawyers to save our men perishing in jails...to claim our lands...to pressurize the new government...to be less colonial...I stink as I do not have a toilet...my apartment full of cousins who have escaped the *basti* or the Rez...I study law...I talk about the justice of the long house...the medicine wheel in my dissertation...I smudge in class...they encourage me for being different...I also know they laugh...my school will have more donations next semester for having me in the course...I weave my story for myself...

*( a feisty Kanjar woman dressed in lehenga choli enters the stage and drapes herself in the starblanket...comes centre stage and animatedly performs this)*

Mujhe to Filmfare milne chaiyethe

Jitney jhut maine bole

Jitne mukhotey maine pehne

Lekin who hum kanjar ko Filmfare kyun dey?

Meri angrezi kitni tutiphuti hey na?

Lekin aab to meri bolti hi band...

*( Video footage of a Bedia Woman on Popular show getting award for fighting sexual violence...this woman being dragged by a group of men...her lehenga thrown into stage from the left wings...reads scene 5)*

### **Scene 5**

*(The stranger gathers the Lehenga, smells... breaks into tears...looks at the audience)*

Stranger: Don't expect me to theorise it...I don't want your shitty arguments of ground level psychology...your isms and your post-manias...this is a dead city...listen when the dead awakens...

*( recites from Giles Beneway)*

if you want to conduct

an Indian ceremony for the dead,

gather a long white sheet

and one coil of rope.

Cut down a few branches from the nearest cedar,

Strip the needles from the wood,

And crush them between your fingers.

Breathe in the scent of the resulting paste,

As you slide warm hands over the chilled body

Paying special attention to the lifeless hands,

Heavy limbs and pallid lips.

Light a waterproof match from your jeans

And toss the weak flame into ashtray,

Smoulder it with dried sage, a few strands of your hair,

And put it out with a dash of whiskey.

Gather the sheet and toss it over the body,

Tie it on tightly so everything is covered,

No loose fingers or exposed toes, just one blank

Bundle of nothing.

Find the tallest tree in the back yard

And using the coil of rope, make a noose

For the feet.

Truss up the woolen sack

Like an oversized cocoon, strain your back



Until the tree branch is bowed from the weight

But remember to tie off the rope securely.

Once properly hoisted, the corpse should rot

In the wind and rain for at least a couple months,

Maybe years depending on your seasonal climate,

And you should make no attempt to release it

To the cold ground.

Do not mention the deceased's name for atleast 13 moons,

Give away everything left

Including houses, clothing, memories

And children.

Every couple of days,

Walk out to your backyard and light up a smoke,

As you stand underneath the tallest tree

And watch your loved one disintegrate into vital fluids,

Lumps of bone shrinking as the once white sheet

Turns red, blue, then black.

Feel nothing except regret

And slow appreciation for the gestational cycle of death...

*(The moon turns red...then yellow, then white, then black out for a while then the entire stage turns blue. A woman performs a jingle bell dance, all draped in red and blue)*

Woman: I am the Red River. I bled with my halfbreeds but never gave up. I could produce more Riels but they cemented me, plastered my banks, removed the children who used to play on my banks. No fish to eat...only dead bones of bygone glory...I stink like the gutters of the cities...I have lost my power to rage...they built dams to dampen my spirit. I feel like the whore...the people brought stories when they traded...now they sit home and buy my parts on which they will erect their tower of babel... I am Red...so is the soil...the red earth trembled with the glory of Kalu birs and Govinda Doms who fought the battles for years to protect their lands before they brought guns and disease...My Men knew the land so they used them...the zamindars and the White Men...and then dumped them in the reserves or the settlements to perish. See the cordoned space near the Ashram...it used to be the settlements of the Chharas. They could not walk out of the settlements without permission. Later they were released...the space was converted into asylum...now it has been sold...part of the land bank...my Men are homeless...did you see the Man who digs the ground all across the ghost town? He is the son of Pinhare Kale...he is in search of his father's bones and his friend Imaan whom he lost in the riots...his batch mate who could not appear for his board examinations as curfew prevailed in his locality...and

their milk were poisoned...Imaan was his only hope after his father disappeared...there he appears again...

Man: I have done it again!...dug another womb...now no one will survive...only the ghosts speak truth...Go away..or you will perish...whom do I see near the signal!...ah the worst sight ever...I should cover myself before the dead occupies the city..oh! I can see them marching along with the procession of the foetus who were ripped off their mother's womb...of poor souls who never returned from those schools where they were sterilised, of children who never saw the daylight...they wake up at midnight to mark their trail...to protest...hence the glass wall...

*(Suddenly the radio station stops for a while and there is an announcement)*

Radio: this programme is brought to you by a multinational who just bought land in Africa. She is an Indian born Oxford failed XXX grade Bollywood starlet now married to twin brothers born on the same date in Ontario and Auckland owner of the Junior Snake Ludo team...live telecast from the field...over to Captain Nicholas Hodt...captain ...can you hear us...*Rang de tu mohe Geruwa*...sorry for the interruption...this is a by default patriotic song channel...captain can you hear us...this is prime time on the national radio channel...

Captain: thanks RJ Dicky...thanks for keeping us alive in the time of cholera with your towering knowledge...it is growing as you keep shifting your office from one high rise to another...reporting from the field..its September 22, 1861...the Navahos, squaws, and children ran in all directions and were shot

dead and bayoneted. I succeeded in forming about twenty men...I then marched out to the east side of the post; there I saw a soldier murdering two little children and a woman. I halloed immediately to the soldier to stop. He looked up, but did not obey my order. I ran up as quick as I could, but could not get there soon enough to prevent him from killing the two innocent children and wounding severely the squaw...the Indians scattered all over the valley below the post, attacked the post herd, wounded the Mexican herder, but did not succeed in getting any stock...After the massacre there were no more Indians to be seen about the post with the exception of a few squaws, favourites of the officers...*( Suddenly a song starts...)*

*I shall not be there. I shall rise and pass. Bury my heart at Wounded Knee...*

RJ Dickey: Stop Stop...cursed night!...pox on the player...*Rukawat ke liye khed hain...hello..hello...can anyone hear me...(sound of a huge explosion)*

*The Man is seen running from one wings to another...collecting newspaper cuttings of the Occupy Movement...he shouts reading one...turns the paper which reads Scene Six*

### **Scene Six**

*(Drum beats...the stage is illuminated with blue lights... silhouette of two men performing the Buffalo dance...a whirlwind on stage and the two silhouettes fall apart in the extreme corner of stage up and rostrum. Henceforth two follow spots divide their zones...they interact with each other. A tall Man in Red coat, his face painted with white paint...he wounded his knee*

*bone...blood oozing out the other chiseled dark body in dhoti and shirt...deep mark of a noose around his neck)*

Red Coat: waciye!

Dhoti: *(confused...stares at the man in coat)*

Red Coat: *( disturbed, a bit louder reflecting his anger)* Waciye! *( hello)*

Dhoti: *checks the red coat..pulls it...*

Red Coat: Kimawapin na kila? *( Are you visiting?)*

Dhoti: *(More confused.. dusts the red earth on his clothes...located the gaping wound on the others' knee...asks about it...)* Tui kohi asis?

Red Coat: Mola ninisihoten *( I don't understand)*

Dhoti: Oh!

Red Coat: tant etohteyin? *(where are you going?)* tan ehtotaman anta *( what are you doing here?)*

Dhoti: I am Budhan

Red Coat: John Baptist...Almighty Ghost...shot two times in my groin and once here...pointing at the the knee...I am the dead Indian...who are you crow eater? Budhan?

Budhan: Did they kill you?

Almighty: ehe! *( yes!)* wiyasiliw

Budhan: for meat!

Almighty: oh yes...I shot a cow and ate beef...you don't know your history?...shame!

Blisters on the soul who brought us here...its so Warm...the sweat lodge is better...even the school was better... than this...look at the fella who brought us here...busy in documenting our plight...pox on the Shallow people

Budhan: They searched your house for the meat?

Almighty: They didn't have to search ...my wife was drying the leather for our future...that is how we survive...but they have a ban on that...

Budhan: We are Mushahars...we are scavengers...they kill us like insects...look I was hanged in police custody...see the mark...

Almigty: Ah the Police killed us! The law killed us!

We never knew how to grow crops. They wanted the wheat...it reduced the Prairie and the buffaloes...there is no meat... we hate beef...but have to survive without the buffalo... they took away our lands ...my father had a gambling business in the reserve...this is what they have done...regulated our economy...and left us with no opportunities...our brothers and sisters move to the cities to disappear for ever...Poverty is us!

Budhan: My wife sits on my graveyard...She has lost her vision ...my Son who was a state level Archer had to return to the village as he was bullied by the fellow archers of the team in the city. He went back to Akarbaid never to return. Budhan is a movement like Anae Mae...but my village is still beyond the reach of GPS. But one word ...you look well nourished...you have a white skin...how come the bone game brought us together? We are different...far

removed from each other...you speak Inklish...I just manage to understand...we are different...but our paths crossed...We never made our History but its our history that connected us...

Almighty: Raven Shaped us. Our stories are similar. Every context is different. The educational Institution created us...we lost our tongues...preserve yours before it is wiped away by the Radio Channel...people will be alive only when it plays its songs...the white Man can transform everything...even our food...the Women preserved our food...Suddenly I realize I speak like the White Men...I do not live in the Long House...how far an Indian am I? this is a Minstrel show...see people on the other side are watching us...playing roles...re-enacting history...justifying what he wants to prove...bang his head...

Budhan: they say if we reach the 9 percent GDP, the new economy will escalate the cause of the people who were left behind in the process of Development...if it is still a myth in your land...how shall we achieve it...?

Almighty: This is a play...not an academic discourse...stop this bull shit...don't politicize everything...Pox on Marx and his compatriots...and these comparatists. My wife says the Brown Women's organization never allowed her to speak...as she was not brown enough...this is an era of brown wash...She was even asked to trace her lineage to be eligible for an upcoming volume on Native Women... a brave woman like her failed the acid taste...she is writing her own book...Death of an Urban Squaw...

Budhan: my wife will lose her vision soon. My son will be in the asylum...

The Man : they have given me this book...this will Pacify me...I will become sane...how beautiful the night, good the dark...gentle the moon...how the dead wait...how much life is hidden in the darkness we fear...how we sleep, the dead and the living...

*(The house light brightens the stage becomes dark...voices....thank you GOD!...show ends for this night...we shall wait for until the deads awaken...the stranger is outside the curtain...)*

Stranger: I have been repeatedly told not to write my dissertation all night...its cold...who gave this starblanket...hello...hello...strange! I'll write to Jackie tomorrow...she will say you are here for a reason...like the man on Spadina told be once: " You look like our Northern brothers"...I need to engage with the issue more theoretically I guess..."Research as Activism"...



## Conclusion

---

But only with *The Rez Sisters* did my work suddenly, finally get noticed by, as I say, a wider public. By which time, I was almost forty. And what I had to go through to get those first five plays self produced, you don't even wanna know! How do you make money standing with your back against a wall in some big city, downtown back alley? Late, late at night? Guess. (Highway 2003, 152)

---

This citation from Highway is an invocation of an apology composed to commemorate all those “bodies in dissent”, cohabiting the in-between spaces, the borderlands of Nations, contesting the disciplinary boundaries that try to ‘read’ the complex web of the making of race and nation across cultures and borders.

Since subjectivities are manufactured, the process of manufacturing subjectivity cannot be adequately understood without situating it in the context of power that is continuously shaping the parameters of the “process”. The production of borderlands that seduces the subject to exhibit her/his subjectivity in relation to the “other” has become the centre of all attraction. It is a site where multiple sovereignties are negotiating with each other to contest the modalities of power that re-produces/multiplies “borders” within borders. The violence of colonial practices continues in the unabashed implementation of laws to identify the potential “other” within the Neo-liberal space. I have

tried to demystify the process of creating these national “borders” within two forms of colonies, India and Canada, and have tried to identify a pattern of how Indigenous people in both the spaces are negotiating with the Neo-liberalism in their performance. As a student of Comparative Literature, it would be wise to acknowledge that reading the two histories from my location only re-confirmed the zeal of a comparatist who tries to engage with the lapses, silences of historiography which is otherwise believed to be static.

Historiography, for most of us, is a self-evidently ordered process of chronological manifestation of events and hence static. Of course, it does not depend on an individual’s sweet will to ascribe a date to an event...Therefore, the materials with which a chronologist or a chronicler works are mostly immutable and consequently leave little room for any modification as such, at least on the surface. But man has ever been keen in discovering a pattern, a rhythm, a system in everything he comes across. And the temporal frame of the story of mankind did not escape his desire for methodisation either.( Majumdar, 37)

The primary objective of this thesis was to situate the formation of the Reserves and Settlements as ‘borderlands’ within the geo-political space called Canada and India as deliberate colonial enterprises to control people and then historically analyse the code-of-conduct of these ghettos within the Neo-liberal economy by deploying the several tools of Comparative Literature methodology. I have tried to extend the idea of ‘code-of-conduct’ as a performance that can dismantle various national and local myths. The immediate contexts behind the formulation of a “method” of understanding the “borderlands” I have mentioned are:

1. Violence of Colonial agencies against Aboriginal Peoples in the various forms of colonies and a plausible “Native Insurgency” in these Colonies
2. Claims for Land and Sovereignty contesting the fantasy of a benevolent, innocent Nation with its liberal origins
3. Visibility of the struggles of Aboriginal Peoples across cultures and borders
4. Code of Conduct of the street.
5. A plausible Native-non-Native alliance at least in the realm of Art.

To start with, the idea was to critically situate two forms of colonies (Canada and India) and read its policies that subjugated the First Peoples and promoted forms of capitals that would create the spatial borderlands like the ruralis and cities and further accentuate the differences by creating ghettos within these categories to label citizenship based on a “deviant model” (which I have borrowed from ethnomethodology and discussed in previous chapters). De-coding the textual practice of this zone, where the deviants live, required a serious engagement with the body politics of the bodies in dissent who are defining the borderland from within the defined spaces of the reserves or the settlements. Dislocation of Indigenous communities from the reserves, ruralis to the urban space for better opportunities created new borderlands within the urban space. Engaging with these borderlands within academic practices also required a cross-pollination of boundaries in the form of disciplinary practices. The available methods of dealing with these realities exposed the

inadequacies/ limitations of our academic practices. A new “aesthetics of understanding” had to be developed. Drawing heavily from my understanding of a relational aesthetics, I developed my methodology. In this kind of a research, the researchers positions herself/ himself within the overlaps of subject-object relationship just like the textual practice of simultaneously engaging with the English and Non-English zone, like in the plays of Tomson Highway. It is important to understand that this language play within the structure of the cultural text was an attempt to decode a hierarchy within the several hierarchies where many texts were lying outside the cognitive domain, waiting to be translated into English to claim identity as texts that could be considered for critical academic engagement, only to be ripped apart, dissected to be judged along parameters set by colonial readership and theories of dead white folks. I have dealt with it in *Ghumantoos*, a monograph that substantiated my field work with the Chhara community in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

I wanted to situate the performance narrative within the trope of multiculturalist policies that adopted a signifying model of tolerance in the form of Neo-liberalism that transformed the very basis of economic, social and political power as pointed out by Sunera Thobani:

Multiculturalism avoided recognition of the critical intersection of institutional power and interpersonal forms of racism, demanding only tolerance at the level of interpersonal interactions. Knowledge about the nature of racism, and the role it has historically played in the Canadian nation-building, has thus been made peripheral. Most public discussions of racism focus only on its individualized and interpersonal aspects and do not include the concept of power, institutional and state practices, and the centrality of these practices to national formation. ( 2007, 160-61)

I have tried to read the regulatory practices of a state sponsored multiculturalism, public policies that are deployed to execute it and the various social sciences that theorise the philosophy of the production of the subjecthood. I have also tried to show how strategically these subjects have been silenced but allowed to perform their diversity within spaces and how they have been voicing their discontent, which I read as alterities.

The re-formulations of Neo-liberal citizenship which is instituted and executed in “an age of terror” ( Thobani, 242), where Muslim immigrants, immigrants from Srilanka are seen as families who have migrated not for prosperous lives but designing mass pogrom in the years to come (242). These anxieties could be and should be read as extensions of the policies adopted in the colonies where identical patterns could be read. There are technologies of surveillance that are introduced in relation to the dangers said to be posed by ‘foreign’ elements that is people who are outside the designated “borders” of citizenship. Hence the process of becoming the citizen is a political project which portrays the national subject with an exalted status, of someone belonging to a higher order of humanity and who is continuously acting as a moral guard to the cause of the nation which has produced her and sending threat signals across borders with aspiring authenticities and inaccuracies (248).

My objective was to read the National policies, be it the Indian Act or the Criminal Tribes Act of the nations which were and are still engaged in the process of continuously imposing the National myth of the nationalism and citizenship by reproducing colonial anxieties of the various encounters with the

potential “Other” in the Native or the DNT or the Muslim, or the Homosexual...the list is endless as modes of censorship are multiplying. My aim was to identify the various transgressions, alterities in such moments of censorship which according to be is a continuation of events that sparked since any contact with diverse groups and I have traced that history in my dissertation.

The point that I want to arrive at by analyzing the various performances, is that, they project the are various lapses in historiography. The various interventions vis-à-vis the various performances are structures of knowledge that can be rearranged and reframed to subvert the dominant ideology of a settler culture that has occupied a centripetal position for centuries. Whether this historiography is from below or not that probably needs to be addressed in a situation like ours where the “position” is continuously being challenged as the loci shift. Within a given literary system, then the peripheral and the canon enters in a complex relationship where the literary system itself can have a peripheral position. So the corollary would be whether these re-alignment of marginal discourses are being channelised towards formulating another canon. That is something that can be explored. I feel time has arrived but I shall not to be able to explore that in this research.

The way a literary system functions can be cited as a primary draft of understanding the various other mores of expressions that engage with ideas of the nation/ nationalism. This is a dubious one from our location, and as a student of Comparative Literature, it is the location that would finally

define my methodology of engaging with these critical categories. If we have developed a methodology of 'reading', then it is precisely this location that determines the tools that we use to situate the 'text'. Historiography is the starting point and the graph it unveils in its journey is fragmented and fractured, if not a happy or unhappy coexistence of multiple graphs, having tangential reference to the truth claim that is contingent to matters which are beyond literary, if not extraliterary.

Nationalism is then the test ride to arrive at the critical cross roads of capitalist societies where "culture" becomes an operative word. "Culture" becomes an important category that can be deployed to demystify the projects of the nation which is definitely unilinear as far as its is subjugation of Other is concerned. The Aboriginal population in the cities and the Denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic groups in the borderlands of the rising city scapes are continuously being realigned with the national allegory. The corollary to Nationalism would be the coalition of hegemony and the 'civil society'. These categories are often mutually self elusive when it comes to dealing with Indigenous population in Canada or the tribal population in India is concerned. The homogenization of spaces resulted in the racist Nationals accusing the Indigenous population benefiting from Welfare who never considered that in case of Aboriginal people in Canada, their efforts in preserving their families from disintegration, cultural practices, sovereignty and claim to land was at the core of Welfare. If colonialism, is a moment of contact, then this ideology of Welfare is that of a market place economy where forms of capital enter into a formalized discursive linguistic practice, where the knowledge produced,

itself becomes a commodity for consummation without actually respecting the diversity of the communities participating in the economy or their opinion regarding 'Welfare'. Essentialism, homogenization, ungrounded abstraction and ahistorical universalism all are parts of the ideological method because they invite us to think outside of history, of socially lived time and experiences. No discussion on Nationalism is possible without discussions on Racism, patriarchy, hegemony ( Bannerji, 2011). The fundamental anxiety of this research was to situate the performances within the shifting national policies of 1990 in Canada that favoured the Welfare State, where no one bothered to examine the conditions of the Aboriginal Peoples. Similarly, in India, Reservation policies to secure jobs for the economically backward failed as everything was caught in the eternal maze of caste as the only operative category, quite effectively used by the multi-party machinery and many people were left out and could be easily disposed in the dance of Neo-liberalism.

Having said that, I must say that there is a psychosexual epistemic violence involved in our discursive elements that destabilizes the subject object position. Who is studying whom then becomes important. We can reveal then how such discourses and representations call for the ideological gestures of dehistoricisation, human classification and repetition of identical patterns of subjugation. The use of colour, physical features, food habits, occupation in classifying social groups is an important exercise of ideology. All the colours in the mosaic are simultaneously differentiated and unified as the others of the 'other colours in the mosaic' and above all the 'white'



European. A series of othersness are continuously being manufactured to satiate the never ending polarizations of the elite, upper class/caste, brahminical, heterosexist, homophobic...never ending list of 'order of things'.

### **The Neo-Liberal Dance**

Articulations of Indigeneity are location specific and contingent on other product of the Neo-liberal state mechanism. It is important to read Neo-liberalism as an operative tool that shapes the spatial and social reconfigurations of landscapes and communities. Like several practices, Neo-liberalism cannot be a monolith. Hence, there are various forms of Neo-liberalisms. It we accept that, then the way Neo-liberal forces transform spaces is not identical in all the spaces. The various alterities I have mentioned are also contingent on the form of Neo-liberalism within which they operate. (Jimenez, 68-69).

Since I am dealing with space as a category, the Reserves in Canada and the Urban Settlements of the Denotified tribes can decode the hegemony of the Neo-liberal policies to expose the process of unfolding the neo-colonial power structures and how they are sanctioned by law. The performance of the bodies in dissent who are located in these spaces of urban poverty, expose the politics of under-development in these urban ghettos, the dark side of the Nation where the criminals live. *The Lower Depths*, an environmental theatre by Budhan theatre actually enacted the plight of the Sansi tribes under the Maninagar railway bridge, right in the middle of the DNT *basti* to systematically expose how crime is manufactured. The Chhara Settlement of Kubernagar, near Ahmedabad city was converted into a mental asylum once

they were denotified in 1952 and they were set free. The settlement was designed to monitor the criminals. Later converted into asylum. When the Chharas reclaimed the land where many of their forefathers were born, were denied access. There are rumours that the entire settlement would now be converted into SEZ and add to the land bank of Neo-liberal democracy. Similarly, Reserves are open prisons on the borders of the prosperous cities lying out there to be visited during Powwows and then labeled as zones of inactions, fed on Federal Welfare. These hinterlands were created to execute the colonial enterprise of the settlers in Canada and the fiscal policies of Post-Independence India. This project only wiped away generations and any attempt to reclaim rights has been labeled as insurgency and immediately controlled by state agencies.

There have been considerable deliberation on Neo-liberalism and the dynamics of Indigenous-Non-Indigenous interface. As there is a economy of producing marginality in both the spaces I have discussed, I must acknowledge that the issue of survival is different. As far as the performance culture in Toronto is considered, the communities receive economic support from Canada Council for The Arts, which actually highlights the issue of the neo-liberal economy allowing to showcase alterities as I have discussed in Chapter 3. It is definitely creating a class of new Canadians who are culturally superior to its Native counterpart. What is then the function of Indigenous performance, to be more specific theatre which has a history of struggle in Canada. We have historical records of how Highway self-financed his early plays. For, Budhan it has always been a difficult journey to use theatre to de-

criminalize themselves. Over the few years I have been associated with the DNTs, I have noticed that economic conditions of DNTs vary in rural to urban centres. As Dakxin feels, theatre has a function in DNT communities across India, theatre of the First peoples in Canada can be classified into several categories like NEPA being situated in the city and Debaj, deliberately operating out of the Manitoulin. The form and content of the performance has been accepted and the content is being reviewed with every new production, but the question remains, are these productions actually going back to communities? What could be the alternatives suggested by these productions except creating an awareness that the Native people are alive and they are doing well despite continuous attacks on their people and way of life. The performance texts create a rupture in the discourse of ongoing colonization of Native peoples and land. On the other hand, who would have known what is happening now in the Canadian Reserves from my location without the interventions of Lee Maracle, Tomson Highway and the other bunch of Native daughters and sons who wore the mask, became the cigar store squaw, danced to the tune of Miss Eagle Testicle to de-stabilise the myth called 'Canada'.

## **Appendix-1: Criminal Tribes Act, 1871**

(Source: Recommendation of the Technical Advisory Group, 2006)

The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, passed by the governor of India in Council, (received the assent of the Governor General on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1871), an Act for the Registration of Criminal Tribes and Eunuchs as modified up to 1<sup>st</sup>, February 1897.

Whereas it is expedient to provide for the registration, surveillance and control of certain criminal tribes and eunuchs, it is thereby enacted as follows:

1. This Act may be called “The Criminal Tribes’ Act, 1871”.  
(Commencement, repealed by Act XVI of 1874, section 1 and Schedule, Part I.)

This section and section 20 extend to the whole of British India: the rest of this act extends only to the interiors under the governments of the Lieutenant Governors of Bengal, the North –Western Province and the Punjab respectively, and under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh.

Provided that any local Government, with the previous sanction of the Governor General in Council, may, by notification in the local official Gazette, declare all or any of the provisions of this act as amended by

subsequent legislation. To be in force in the whole or any part of the territories under its government.

#### Definition of the Tribe, Gang and Class

1A. In this Act the words tribe, gang, and class shall be deemed to include any portion or members of a tribe, gang or class.

#### Part I, Criminal Tribes:

Local Government to report what tribes should be declared criminal

2. If the local government has reason to believe that any tribe, gang, or class of person is addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences, it may report the case to the Governor General in Council, and may request his permission to declare such tribe, gang or class to be a criminal tribe.

3. The report shall state the reason why such tribe, gang or class is considered to be addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offence, and as far as possible, the nature and the circumstances of the offence in which the member of the tribe are proposed to have been concerned; and shall describe the manner in which it is proposed that such tribe, gang or class shall earn its living when the provision hereinafter contained have been applied to it.

4. If such tribe, gang or class has no fixed place of residence, the report shall state whether such tribe, gang, or class follows any lawful occupation, and Government, the real occupation of such tribe, gang, or class, or a pretence for the purpose of facilitating the commission of the crimes, and shall set forth the ground on which such opinion is based; and the report shall also specify the

place of residence in which such wandering tribe, gang, or class were proposed to be made for enabling it to learn its living therein.

5. If upon the consideration of such report, the Governor-General in council is satisfied that the tribe, gang, or class to which it relates ought to be declared criminal, and that the means by which it is proposed that such the tribe, gang, or class shall earn its living are adequate, he may authorize the local government to publish in the local Gazette a notification declaring that such the tribe, gang, or class is a criminal tribe, and thereupon the provision of this act shall become applicable to such the tribe, gang, or class.

6. No court of justice shall question the validity of any such notification on the ground that the provision therein before contained, or any of them, have not been complied with, or entertain in any form whatever the question whether they have been complied with; But every such notification shall be conclusive proof that the provision of this act are applicable to the tribe, gang, or class specified therein.

7. When the notification mentioned in section 5 has been published, the local government may direct the magistrate of any district in which such tribes, gang or class, or any part thereof. The declaration of the local government that any such tribes, gang or class, or any part of it, is resident in any district, shall be conclusive proof of such residence.

8. Upon receiving such direction, the said magistrate shall publish a notice in the place where the register is to be made, calling upon all the members of such tribes, gang or class, or of such portion thereof as is directed to be

registered, to appear, at a time and place therein specified, before such person as he appoints, and to give those persons such information as may be necessary to enable them to make the register.

9. Any member of any such tribes, gang or class, who, without lawful excuse, the burden of proving which shall be lie upon him, shall fail to appear according to such notice, or shall intentionally omit to furnish such information, or who shall furnish, as true, information on the subject which he knows or has reason to believe to be false, shall be deemed guilty of an offence under the first part of section 174 or 176 or 177 of the Indian Penal Code (a), respectively, as the case may be.

10. The register, when made shall be kept by the district superintendent of police, who shall, from time to time, report to the said magistrate any alterations which ought to be made therein, either by way of addition or erasure.

11. No alteration shall be made in such register except by or order of the said Magistrate, and he shall write his initials against every such alteration. Notice shall be given of any such intended alteration, and of the time when, and place where, it is to be made, to every person affected thereby.

12. Any person deeming himself aggrieved by any entry made, or proposed to be made, in such register either when the register is first made or subsequently, may complain to the said Magistrate against such entry, and the Magistrate shall retain such person's name on the register, or enter it therein, or erase it there from, as he may see fit. Every order for the erasure of any

such person's name shall state the grounds on which such person's name is erased. The commissioner shall have power to review any order of entry, retention or erasure, passed by the said magistrate on any such complaint, either on appeal by the person registered or proposed to be registered or otherwise.

13. Any tribes, gang or class, which has been declared to be criminal, and which has no fixed place of residence, may be settled in a place of residence prescribed by the local government.

14. Any tribes, gang or class, which has been declared to be criminal, or any part thereof, may, by order of the local government, be removed to any other place of residence.

15. No tribes, gang or class, shall be settled or removed under this act until such arrangements as the local government shall, with the concurrence of the Governor General in council, consider suitable, have been made for enabling such tribes, gang or class, or such part thereof, as is to be so settled or removed, to earn a living in the place in or which it is to be settled or removed.

16. When the removal of persons has been ordered under the Act, the register of such persons' names shall be transferred to the district superintendent of police of the district to which such persons are removed, and the commissioner of the division in which it is situated, shall there be empowered to exercise the powers provided in sections 11 and 12.



17. The Local Government may, with the sanction of Governor General in council, place any tribe, gang or class, which has been declared to be criminal, or any part thereof, in a reformatory settlement.

17A (1) The local government may establish and maintain settlement for children and may separate and remove them from their parents and place in such a reformatory settlement the children of the registered members of any tribe, gang or class, which has been declared to be criminal.

(2) For every reformatory settlement for children established under subsection (1) a superintendent shall be appointed by the local government.

(3) The superintendent of a reformatory settlement for children shall be deemed to be the guardian, within the meaning of Act No. XIX of 1850 (concerning the binding of apprentices), of every child detained in such settlement; and such superintendent, may if he shall think fit, and subject to any ruler which the local government may make in this behalf, apprentice such child under the provision of the aforesaid act.

“Explanation – the term children in this section includes all persons under the age of 18 and above the age of four years.”

18. The local government may, with the previous consent of the Governor General in council, make rules to prescribe –

(1) the form in which the register shall be made by the said Magistrate

(2) the mode in which the said Magistrate shall publish the notice prescribed in section 8, and means by which persons whom it concerns, and the headmen,

village watchmen, and land owners or the occupiers of the village, in which such persons reside, or the agents of such land owners or occupiers, shall be informed of its publication

(3) the mode in which the notice prescribed in the section 11 shall be given;

(4) the limits within which persons whose names are on the register shall reside;

(5) conditions as to hold passes, under which such persons may be permitted to leave the said limits;

(6) conditions to be inserted in any such pass as to (a) the places where the holder of the pass may go or reside; (b) the officers before whom, from time to time, he shall be bound to present himself; (c) and the time during which he may absent himself;

(7) Conditions as to answering at roll-call or otherwise, in order to satisfy the said magistrate or persons authorized by him, that the reasons whose names are on the register are actually present at given times within the said limits;

(8) The inspection of the residences and villages of any such tribes, gang or class, and the prevention or removal of contrivances for enabling the residents therein to conceal stolen property, or to leave their place of residence without leave;

(9) The terms upon which registered persons may be discharged from the operation of this Act;

(10) The mode in which the criminal tribes shall be settled and removed;

(11) The control and supervision of reformatory settlement;

(12) The works on which and the hours during which persons placed in a reformatory settlement shall be employed, the rates at which they shall be paid, and the dispersal, for the benefit of such persons, of the surplus proceeds of their labor, after defraying the whole or such part of the expenses of their supervision and control as the Local Government shall seem fit;

(13) The discipline to which persons endeavoring to escape from any such settlement, or otherwise offending against the rules for the time being in force, shall be submitted; the periodical visitation of such settlement, and the removal from it of such persons as it shall seem expedient to remove;

(14) And generally, to carry out the purposes of this act.

19. (1) Any person registered under this act violating a rule made under clause (4), clause (5) or clause (6) of section 18 shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend, on a first conviction, to one year, on a second conviction, to two years, and, on any subsequent conviction, to three years, and shall also, whether on the first or any subsequent conviction, be liable to whipping.

(2) Any such person being a member of a proclaimed tribe violating a rule made under any other clause of section 18 shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with whipping or with all or any two of those punishments; and on any subsequent

conviction for a breach of any such rule, with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with whipping, or with all or any two of those punishments.

20. A. Whoever, being a member of any tribe, gang or class which has been declared criminal, and having been convicted of any of the offences under the Indian Penal code specified in the schedule to this act, shall therefore be convicted of the same or any other offence specified in the said schedule, then he shall, in the absence of special reason to the contrary to be mentioned in the judgment of the court, be punished, on such second conviction, with rigorous imprisonment for a term of not less than seven years, and on a third conviction, with transportation for life.

Nothing in this section shall affect the liability of such persons to any further or other punishment to which he may be liable under the Indian Penal Code or any other law.

B. Whoever, being a registered member of any tribe, gang or class which has been declared criminal, is found in any place under such circumstances as to satisfy the court that he was about to commit, or aid in the commission of theft or robbery, or that he was waiting for an opportunity to commit theft or robbery, shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine.

21. Any person registered under the provision of this Act, who is found in any part of British India, beyond the limits so prescribed for his residence, without such pass as may be required by the said rules, or in place or at a time not

permitted by the conditions of his pass, or who escapes from a reformatory settlement, may be arrested without warrant by any police-officer or village watchman, and taken before a Magistrate, who on proof of the facts, shall order him to be removed to the district in which he ought to have resided, or to the reformatory settlement from which he has escaped (as the case may be), there to be dealt with according to the rules under this Act for the time being in force. The rules for the time being in force for the transmission of prisoners shall apply to all persons removed under this section: provided that an order from the local government or from the Inspector General of prisons shall not be necessary for removal of such persons.

22. It shall be the duty of every village headman and village watchman in a village in which any persons belonging to a tribe, gang or class which has been declared criminal reside, and of every owner or occupier of land on which any such person reside, give the earliest information in his power at the nearest police station. (1) The failure of any such person to appear and give information, as directed in section 8(2) the departure of any such person to appear and give or form such land (as the case may be). And it shall be the duty of every village headman and village watchman in a village, and of every owner or occupier of land, or of the agent of such in his power at the nearest police station of the arrival of any persons who may reasonably be suspected of belonging to any such tribe, gang or class.

Any village headman, village watchman, owner or occupier of land or agent of such owner or occupier, who shall fail to comply with the requirements of

section 21, shall be deemed to have committed an offence under the first part of the section 176 of the Indian Penal Code.

## **Appendix 2: The Indian Act, 1876 : Terms and Concepts**

Excerpts that are directly relevant for this dissertation have been identified. The Purpose of citing this document from the official webpage of Government of Canada is to tally with the interplay of history and fiction in this dissertation.

To access the entire document please visit the official page of Government of Canada:[[https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/1876c18\\_1100100010253\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/1876c18_1100100010253_eng.pdf)]

CHAP. 18.

### **An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians.**

[Assented to 12th April, 1876.]

#### **Preamble.**

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians : Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows :-

#### **Short title and extent of Act.**

1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as " The Indian Act, 1876 ; " and shall apply to all the Provinces, and to the North West Territories, including the Territory of Keewatin. Superintendent General.

2. The Minister of the Interior shall be Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, and shall be governed in the supervision of the said affairs, and in the control and management of the reserves, lands, moneys and property of Indians in Canada by the provisions of this Act.

### **TERMS.**

Meanings assigned to terms in this Act.

The following terms contained in this Act shall be held to have the meaning hereinafter assigned to them, unless such meaning be repugnant to the subject or inconsistent with the context :—

**Band.** 1. The term "band" means any tribe, band or body of Indians who own or are interested in a reserve or in Indian lands in common, of which the legal title is vested in the Crown, or who share alike in the distribution of any annuities or interest moneys for which the Government of Canada is responsible ; the term "the band" means the band to which the context relates ; and the term " band," when action is being taken by the band as such, means the band in council.

### **Irregular Band.**

The term "irregular band" means any tribe, band or body of persons of Indian blood who own no interest in any reserve or lands of which the legal title is vested in the Crown, who possess no common fund managed by the Government of Canada, or who have not had any treaty relations with the Crown.



**Indians.3.** The term "Indian" means - Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band ; Secondly. Any child of such person ; Thirdly. Any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person :

**Woman marrying other than an Indian.**

Provided that any Indian woman marrying any other than an Indian or a non-treaty Indian shall cease to be an Indian in any respect within the meaning of this Act, except that she shall be entitled to share equally with the members of the band to which she formerly belonged, in the annual or semi-annual distribution of their annuities, interest moneys and rents ; but this income may be commuted to her at any time at ten years' purchase with the consent of the band.

**Marrying non-treaty Indians.**

Provided that any Indian woman marrying an Indian of any other band, or a non-treaty Indian shall cease to be a member of the band to which she formerly belonged, and become a member of the band or irregular band of which her husband is a member.

**As to half-breeds.**

Provided also that no half-breed in Manitoba who has shared in the distribution of half-breed lands shall be accounted an Indian ; and that no half-breed head of a family (except the widow of an Indian, or a half-breed who has already been admitted into a treaty), shall, unless under very special circumstances, to be determined by the Superintendent-General or his agent, be accounted an Indian, or entitled to be admitted into any Indian treaty.

**Non- treaty Indian.**

The term "non-treaty Indian" means any person of Indian blood who is reputed to belong to an irregular band, or who follows the 3 Indian mode of life, even though such person be only a temporary resident in Canada.

**Enfranchised Indian.**

The term "enfranchised Indian" means any Indian, his wife or minor unmarried child, who has received letters patent granting him in fee simple any portion of the reserve which may have been allotted to him, his wife and minor children, by the band to which he belongs, or any unmarried Indian who may have received letters patent for an allotment of the reserve.

**Reserves.**

The term "reserve" means any tract or tracts of land set apart by treaty or otherwise for the use or benefit of or granted to a particular band of Indians, of which the legal title is in the Crown, but which is unsurrendered, and includes all the trees, wood, timber, soil, stone, minerals, metals, or other valuables thereon or therein.

**Special Reserve.**

The term "special reserve" means any tract or tracts of land and everything belonging thereto set apart for the use or benefit of any band or irregular band of Indians, the title of which is vested in a society, corporation or community legally established, and capable of suing and being sued, or in a person or

persons of European descent, but which land is held in trust for, or benevolently allowed to be used by, such band or irregular band of Indians.

**Indian lands.**

The term "Indian lands" means any reserve or portion of a reserve which has been surrendered to the Crown.

**Intoxicants.**

The term "intoxicants" means and includes all spirits, strong waters, spirituous liquors, wines, or fermented or compounded liquors or intoxicating drink of any kind whatsoever, and any intoxicating liquor or fluid, as also opium and any preparation thereof, whether liquid or solid, and any other intoxicating drug or substance, and tobacco or tea mixed or compounded or impregnated with opium or with other intoxicating drugs, spirits or substances, and whether the same or any of them be liquid or solid

**Superintendent General. 10.**

The term "Superintendent-General" means the SuperintendentGeneral of Indian Affairs.

**Agent.**

The term "agent" means a commissioner, superintendent, agent, or other officer acting under the instructions of the SuperintendentGeneral.

**Person.**

The term "person" means an individual other than an Indian, unless the context clearly requires another construction.

**Protection of Reserves: Who only may settle in thereon.**

No person, or Indian other than an Indian of the band, shall settle, reside or hunt upon, occupy or use any land or marsh, or shall settle, reside upon or occupy any road, or allowance for roads running through any reserve belonging to or occupied by such band ; and all mortgages or hypothecs given or consented to by any Indian, and all leases, contracts and agreements made or purporting to be made by any Indian, whereby persons or Indians other than Indians of the band are permitted to reside hunt upon reserve, shall be absolutely void. Power to remove persons unlawfully occupying. If any person or Indian other than an Indian of the band, without the license of the Superintendent-General (which license, however, he may at any time revoke), settles, resides or hunts upon or occupies or uses any such land or marsh ; or settles, resides upon or occupies any such roads or allowances for roads, on such reserve, or if any Indian is illegally in possession of any lot or part of a lot in a subdivided reserve, the Superintendent-General or such officer or person as he may thereunto depute and authorize, shall, on complaint made to him, and on proof of the fact to his satisfaction, issue his warrant signed and sealed, directed to the sheriff of the proper county or district, or if the said reserve be not situated within any county or district, then directed to any literate person willing to act in the premises, commanding him forthwith to remove from the said land or marsh, *or roads or allowances for roads*

(emphasis mine), or lots or parts 6 of lots, every such person or Indian and his family so settled, residing or hunting upon or occupying, or being illegally in possession of the same, or to notify such person or Indian to cease using as aforesaid the said lands, marshes, roads or allowances for roads ; and such sheriff or other person shall accordingly remove or notify such person or Indian, and for that purpose shall have the same powers as in the execution of criminal process

**Warrant to arrest.**

If any person or Indian, after having been removed or notified as aforesaid, returns to, settles upon, resides or hunts upon or occupies, or uses as aforesaid, any of the said land, marsh or lots, or parts of lots ; or settles, resides upon or occupies any of the said roads, allowances for roads, or lots or parts of lots, the SuperintendentGeneral, or any officer or person deputed and authorized as aforesaid, upon view, or upon proof on oath made before him, or to his satisfaction, that the said person or Indian has returned to, settled, resided or hunted upon or occupied or used as aforesaid any of the said lands, marshes, lots or parts of lots, or has returned to, settled or resided upon or occupied any of the said roads or allowances for roads, or lots or parts of lots, shall direct and send his warrant signed and sealed to the sheriff of the proper county or district

**Appoint of arbitrator when property is taken from a band for improvements.**

If any railway, road, or public work passes through or causes injury to any reserve belonging to or in possession of any band of Indians, or if any act occasioning damage to any reserve be done under the authority of any Act of Parliament, or of the legislature of any province, compensation shall be made to them therefor in the same manner as is provided with respect to the lands or rights of other persons.

**Indian Labour**

Indians residing upon any reserve, and engaged in the pursuit of agriculture as their then principal means of support, shall be liable, if so directed by the Superintendent-General, or any officer or person by him thereunto authorized, to perform labor on the public roads laid out or used in or through, or abutting upon such reserve, such labor to be performed under the sole control of the said Superintendent-General, officer or person, who may direct when, where and how and in what manner the said labor shall be applied, and to what extent the same shall be imposed upon Indians who may be resident upon any of the said lands.

**Surrender of Reserve Land.**

No reserve or portion of a reserve shall be sold, alienated or leased until it has been released or surrendered to the Crown for the purposes of this Act.

### **License to cut trees and supply of intoxicants.**

But nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the Superintendent-General from issuing a license to any person or Indian to cut and remove trees, wood, timber and hay, or to quarry and remove stone and gravel on and from the reserve ; Provided he, or his agent acting by his instructions, first obtain the consent of the band thereto in the ordinary manner as hereinafter provided.

No intoxicant to be permitted at council of Indians. It shall not be lawful to introduce at any council or meeting of Indians held for the purpose of discussing or of assenting to a release or surrender of a reserve or portion thereof, or of assenting to the issuing of a timber or other license, any intoxicant ; and any person introducing at such meeting and any agent or officer employed by the Superintendent-General, or by the Governor in Council, introducing, allowing or countenancing by his presence the use of such intoxicant among such Indians a week before, at, or a week after, any such council or meeting, shall forfeit two hundred dollars, recoverable by action in any of the superior courts of law, one half of which penalty shall go to the informer.

### **Councils and Chiefs.**

At the election of a chief or chiefs, or the granting of any ordinary consent required of a band of Indians under this Act, those entitled to vote at the council or meeting thereof shall be the male members of the band of the full age of twenty-one years ; and the vote of a majority of such members at a council or meeting of the band summoned according to their rules, and held in

the presence of the Superintendent-General, or an agent acting under his instructions.

**Privileges of Indians.**

No Indian or non-treaty Indian shall be liable to be taxed for any real or personal property, unless he holds real estate under lease or in fee simple, or personal property, outside of the reserve or special reserve, in which case he shall be liable to be taxed for such real or personal property at the same rate as other persons in the locality in which it is situate. Lands held in trust for Indians not taxable.

**Evidence of non-Christian Indians.**

Upon any inquest, or upon any enquiry into any matter involving a criminal charge, or upon the trial of any crime or offence whatsoever or by whomsoever committed, it shall be lawful for any court, judge, stipendiary magistrate, coroner or justice of the peace to receive the evidence of any Indian or non-treaty Indian, who is destitute of the knowledge of God and of any fixed and clear belief in religion or in a future state of rewards and punishments, without administering the usual form of oath to any such Indian, or non-treaty Indian, as aforesaid, upon his solemn affirmation or declaration to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, or in such form as may be approved by such court, judge, stipendiary magistrate, coroner or justice of the peace as most binding on the conscience of such Indian or non-treaty Indian Substance of evidence to be reduced to writing and attested.

(Document accessed on 15th May, 2016 at 4 A.M.)



# **Pictorial Glossary**

The glossary of pictures was initially conceived to support my theoretical claim. As far as my 'understanding' of the methodology is concerned, this is a visual documentation, that has been narrated across my dissertation. The pictures of the Cape Croker Powwow, the city of Toronto and Manitoba were taken by me, during my stint in Canada in 2010-11. I have labeled the pictures for quick references. I have used pictures taken by me in Chharanagar, Gujarat and other parts of West Bengal, India. The Black and White picture of Tomson Highway and other Theatre practitioner is from NEPA's archive. But I regret that keeping in mind the scope of a Ph.D dissertation, I could not include more pictures. I shall later develop this into a separate project of displaying video as well as still photographs as a performance installation at the French Museum in Chandernagore, India as part of my ongoing intervention within the various urban spaces are concerned.



**Pic: 1**



**Pic: 2**



**Pic:3a**



**Pic: 3b**



Pic 4a



Pic 4b



Pic: 5



Pic: 6



Pic: 7



Pic: 8

 A poster for Buhan Theatre. On the left, there is a list of film credits and workshop information. On the right, there is a photograph of a woman in traditional Indian attire (sari and headscarf) holding a large golden plate, and a man in a white dhoti. The Buhan Theatre logo is visible at the bottom.
 

**Film Credits of Buhan Theatre**

Fight for Survival (Awarded Jeeva 2005, South Asia Livelihood documentary film Award)  
 The Last Water (2007)  
 Bulbawa (2008)  
 Thought for Development (2005)  
 Bhauja (Ten) (2006)  
 It is The Music (2008)  
 Actors are Born Here (2006)  
 Acting Like a Thief (Dr. Rishi Prasad and Shaheed Takkar)  
 Chhara Yatra (2008)  
 Vrakas? (2005)

Workshops and other theatre groups supported by Buhan Theatre

- Ujjain Tribal Theatre, Advani Academy, Tezpath
- KKVY Girls Theatre Group, Rajkot
- Da-DCT Theatre Group, Gandhinagar
- FID Malviya Arts College Theatre Group, Rajkot
- English Department Theatre Group, Rajkot University

Buhan Theatre is grateful to Ford Foundation and Dr. Ravina Aggarwal for substantial funding support to its activities.

Contact:  
**Buhan Theatre**  
 131, Bhavad, Chhannagar Road,  
 Kubernagar, Ahmedabad - 382340  
 Gujarat, India  
 Call: +9179 22803021

Dakshin Chhara  
 Call: +91 9928979474  
 dakshincha@gmail.com

Ravi Chhara  
 Call: +91 9679762358  
 ravi.gopalwala@gmail.com

www.buhantheatre.org

Pic: 9

 A poster for the 11th Annual ImagineNative Film + Media Arts Festival. The poster features a hand holding a smartphone displaying a woman in a white top and blue shorts. The background is filled with various icons and symbols, including a globe, a film camera, a horse, and a person. The text on the poster includes the festival name, dates, and website.
 

Presenting Sponsor: CTV

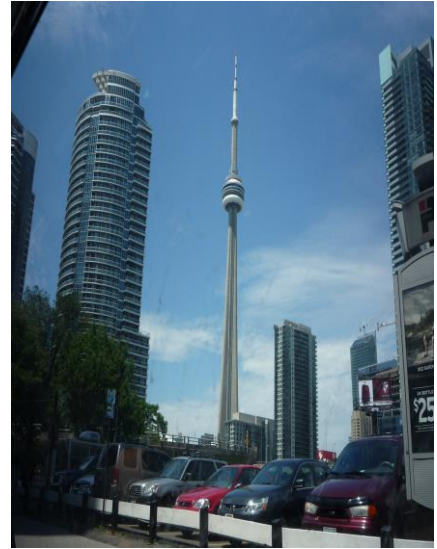
11th ANNUAL  
**imagineNATIVE**  
 FILM + MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL

October 20 - 24, 2010  
 www.imagineNATIVE.org

Pic:10



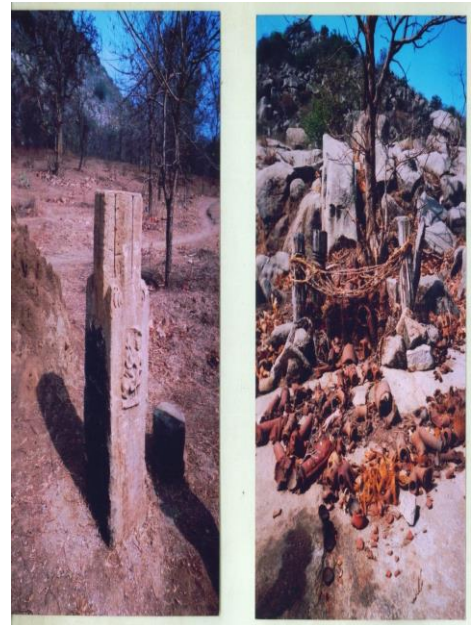
**Pic: 11 a**



**Pic: 11b**



**12 a**



**12b**



**Pic: 13a**



**Pic 13 b**



**Pic: 14a**



**Pic: 14b**



**Pic: 15a**



**Pic: 15b**



**Pic: 16 a**



**Pic: 16 b**

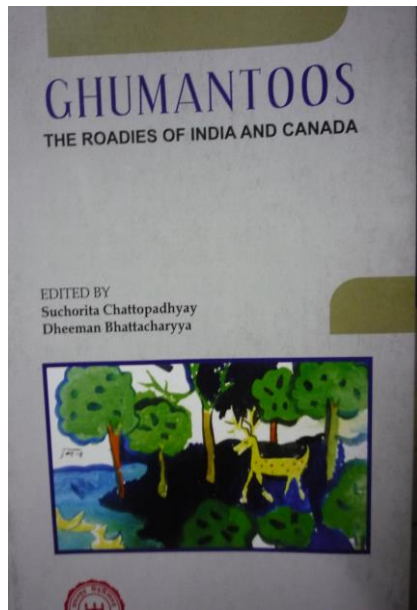




Pic: 17



Pic: 18



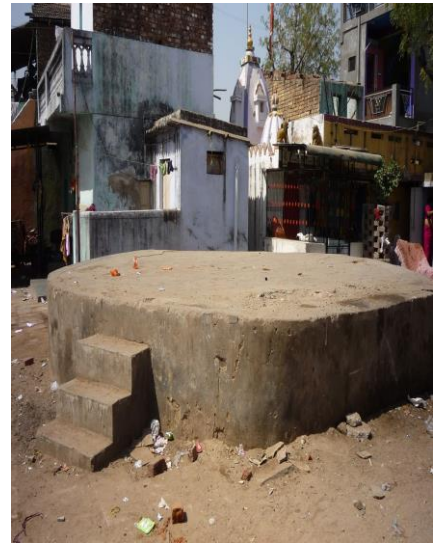
Pic: 19 a



Pic: 19b



**Pic: 20 a**



**Pic: 20 b**



**Pic: 21**



**Pic: 22**



**Pic: 23 a**



**Pic: 23b**



**Pic : 24 a**



**Pic: 24b**



**Pic: 25a**



**Pic: 25 b**



**Pic: 26a**



**Pic: 26b**

**Pic 1:** The Chharanagar Library doubles as the rehearsal space

**Pic 2:** 55, Mill Street where Native Earth Performing Arts was located during my stint in 2010-11

**Pic 3 a:** Male Grass Dancer during Cape Croker Powwow

**Pic 3b:** Grand Entry during Cape Croker Powwow

**Pic 4a:** Traditional Trading from Niagara to Tobermory

**Pic 4b:** The Trail

**Pic 5:** People camping during the Powwow

**Pic 6:** The Cape Croker First Nation Elementary School

**Pic 7:** Lee Maracle addressing a group during the Indigenous Week at the Native Centre on Spadina, Toronto

**Pic 8:** Elder Louis Bird during a story telling session

**Pic 9:** Production Brochure of Budhan Theatre

**Pic 10:** Poster of Imaginative 2010 in Toronto

**Pic 11 a:** The 'cross-roads' in a reserve

**Pic 11b:** The Neo-liberal city

**Pic 12 a:** Totem Poles, Museum of Civilization, Canada

**Pic 12 b:** Village deities in Tejgadh village, Chhote Udaipur, Gujarat

**Pic 13 a:** Curtain call of 'When Will You Rage', a dance-theatre directed by Pennie Couchie in Toronto

**Pic 13 b:** A traditional dancer

**Pic 14 a:** The people of the Longhouse inside a museum

**Pic 14b:** The Bruce Peninsula, Cape Croker Reserve

**Pic 15 a:** Members of Budhan Theatre performing *An Accidental Death of an Anarchist* at Jadavpur University

**Pic 15b:** Members of Budhan Theatre with Smt. Mahasweta Devi ( Amma) who cofounded the Chharanagar Library with Professor Ganesh Devy and others. Mahasweta Devi worked extensively with the DNTs in West Bengal.

**Pic16 a:** Members of Budhan Theatre performing Ajnankosh

**Pic 16b:** Poetry reading session in Toronto

**Pic 17 :** I rented my first space near York University and shared an apartment with a Vietnamese family who had migrated to Toronto during the war. We have tangential reference of the war in the works of several Native Writers in Canada.

**Pic 18:** Poster of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*

**Pic 19 a and b:** Two interventions vis-à-vis DNT population in India

**Pic 20 a:** Painting by a Chhara child during an Art Workshop conducted by a group of young people from Kolkata who visited Chharanagar in 2012 during 31<sup>st</sup> August, the day which is celebrated as Denotified day or *Vimukta Diwas* by the DNT population across India

**Pic 20b:** The Performance space at Chharanagar is the base of a water tank.

**Pic 21:** Members of Budhan Theatre learning more about theatre in the evening at the library.

**Pic 22:** The production of *The Lower Depth* at the Maninagar *basti*

**Pic 23 a:** The barren land where the Kheria Sabars live in Purulia, West Bengal.

**Pic 23 b:** The concrete building received by a Kheria Sabar Family from a Government scheme. The Sabar family lives in their mud hut house. Domesticated animals are housed in the concrete gift.

**Pic 24 a:** Dakxin Chhara during an advocacy programme in Assam.

**Pic 24 b:** Ganesh Devy at the last *Chhotro* held in Tejgadh.

**Pic 25 a:** The highest concentration of the Lodhas in West Bengal is in the district of Medipur. Police vigilance during an advocacy programme in West Medinipur in the year 2013.

**Pic 25b:** Tomson Highway ( second from left) with a group of Native actors like Monique Mojica, Billy Meratsy, Gloria Mugiél and others during the formative years of an Indigenous Performance culture in Toronto.

**Pic 26 a and b:** The ‘Museum of Hope’ a new space inside the Chharanagar *basti* within the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

## **Works Cited**

Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Canada: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

---. *Wasase: Indigenous pathways of action and freedom*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Print.

Altamirano-Jimenez, Isabel. *Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism: Place, Woman, and the Environment in Canada and Mexico*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013. Print.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. Print.

Anderson, Cronlund Mark and Carmen L. Robertson eds. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011. Print.

Appleford, Rob. "Daniel David Moses: Ghostwriter With a Vengeance". Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English*. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 150-165. Print.

Armstrong, Jeanette C. 'This is a Story'. Thomas King ed. *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc, 1990. 129-35. Print.

---. Comp. *Looking At The Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature*. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd. 1993. Print.



Ashcroft, Bill Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Bakul, Samsul Alam. *Unnayan Theatre o Amader Charcha*. Dhaka: Shamabesh, 2001. Print.

Bandyopadhyay, Sibaji. *Thematology*. Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2004. Print. Literary Studies in India series.

Bannerji, Himani. *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1995. Print.

---. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Inc, 2000. Print.

---. *Demography & Democracy : Essays on Nationalism, Gender and Ideology*. Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2011. Print.

Benaway, Giles. *Ceremonies for the Dead*. Cape Croker Reserve: Kegedonce Press, 2013. Print.

Bennet, Tony. "Art And Theory: The Politics of the Invisible" . Jody Berland *et al* eds. *Theory Rules: Art As Theory/ Theory And Art*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 297-313. Print.

Berland, Jody, Will Straw, and David Tomas eds. *Theory Rules: Arts as Theory/ Theory as Art*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. Print.

Bernheimer, Charles. "The Anxieties of Comparison" in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*. Michigan: John Hopkins U Press, 1995. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. ed. *Nation and Narration*. London & New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

---. *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Bharucha, Rustam. *Terror and Performance*. Delhi: Tulika Books, 2014. Print.

Bhasha Research and Publication and Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. *Chotro Four 2012: Imagining the Intangible: Languages, Literature and Visual Arts*. Vadodara: Bhasha and ACLLS, 6-8 Jan. 2012. Print.

Bhattacharyya, Dheeman. Trans. *Asamka* (Santhali to Bangla), Dasgupta, Sayantan et al eds. *Sabda Khonje Edesh O Desh*. Kolkata: Ababhas, 2006. Print.

Bhattacharyya, Pranabananda. *Pargana Senpahari Thana Kankshar Samkshipto Itishas*. Burdawan: Tepantor Natya Gram, 2013. Print.

Bird, Louis. Susane Elaine Gray Comp and ed. *The Spirit Lives in The Mind: Omushkego Stories, Lives, and Dreams*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. Print.

Bird, Pat. *Of Dust and Time and Dreams And Agonies: A Short History of Canadian People*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1980.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. USA: Urizen Books, 1979. Print.

Boler, Megan. "The Risks of Empathy: Interrogating Multiculturalism's Gaze". *Cultural Studies* Vol 11, No 2, Canada: May 1997. Print.

Bolton, Stephanie. "Museums Taken to Task: Representing First Peoples at the McCord Museum of Canadian History". Annis May Timpson ed. *First Nations, First Thoughts: The Impact of Indigenous Thought in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009.147-69. Print.

Borrows, John. *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. Print.

Brooks, Daphne A. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom*. Duke University Press, 2006. Print.

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. US and Canada: Bantam Book, 1970. Print.

Brown, Leslie and Susan Strega eds. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-oppressive Approaches*. Toronto: Canada Scholar's Press, 2005. Print.

Brown, S.H. and Elizabeth Vibert eds. *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ontario: Broadview Press, 2003. Print.

Canadian Multiculturalism Act, Department of Justice  
<http://www.justice.gc.ca> accessed on 10/07/2008. Web.

Castellano, Marlene Brant, Linda Archibald, and Mike DeGagne. Comp. Intro. *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of the Residential Schools*. Vol 1. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008. 2-3. Print.

Chakraborty, Mridula Nath. "Nostalgic Narratives and the Otherness Industry". Laura Moss ed. *Is Canada Postcolonial?: Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2003. 127-39. Print.

Chansonneuve, Deborah. *Addictive Behaviours Among Aboriginal People in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007. Print.

Chattaopadhyay, Suchorita and Dheeman Bhattacharyya eds. *Ghumantoos: The Roadies of India and Canada*. Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2013. Print. CAS Work in Progress II.

Chhara, Dakxin Bajarange. *Budhan Bolta Hey: Autobiography and Plays*. Vadodara: Bhasha Samsodhan Prakashan Kendra, 2010. Print.

---. *Budhan*. Trans. Sonal Baxi. Vadodara: Bhasha Research and Publication, 2010. Print.

*Chinook Winds: Aboriginal Dance Project*. Banff: Banff Centre for the Arts, 1997. Print.

Clark, Ella Elizabeth. *Indian Legends of Canada*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977. Print.

Clements, Marie. *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian*. Rehearsal Script. Toronto: Native Earth Performing Arts, 2010. Print.

Coates, K.S. and W.R. Morrison. "A Drunken Impulse: Aboriginal Justice Confronts Canadian Law". *The Western Historical Quarterly* 27.4 (Winter 1996): 453-477. Web. *JSTOR*. 13 Jan 2009.

Culhane, Dara. "Their Spirits Live with Us: Aboriginal Women in Downtown Eastside Vancouver Emerging into Visibility". *American Indian Quarterly* 27.3/4 (Summer-Autum 2003): 593-606. *JSTOR*. Web. 31 Jan 2009.

Damm, Kateri Akiwenzie. *Without Reservation: Indigenous Erotica*. Cape Croker Reserve: Kegedonce Press, 2003. Print.

Das, Sisir Kumar. "The Idea of Literary History". Ipshita Chanda ed. *Literary Historiography*. Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2004. 42-48. Print. Literary Studies in India Series.

Dasgupta, Subha. *Genelogy*. Kolkata: Jadavpur University, 2004. Print. Literary Studies in India Series.

Davis, Lynne. *Alliances: Re/ Envisioning Indigenous-Non-Indigenous Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. Print.

DePasquale, Paul, Renate Eigenbrod, and Emma LaRocque eds. *Across Cultures/ Across Borders: Canadian Aboriginal and Native American Literatures*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2010. Print.

Dennis, Darrell. *Tales of an Urban Indian*. Production Revision Copy. Toronto: Native Earth Performing Arts, Oct 2003. Print.

Devy, Ganesh. "A Nomad Called Thief". *Adivasis : Legal Provisions, Languages, Locations*. Vadodara: Adivasi Academy and Bhasha Research & Publication Centre, 2004. 127-40. Print.

Dickason, Olive P. *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*. Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print

---. "Metis". Paul Robert Magocsi ed. *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. 189-213. Print.

*Directory of Residential Schools in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2007. Print.

Doerfler, Jill, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark eds. *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World through Stories*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013. Print.

Dosman, Edgar J. *Indians: The Urban Dilemma*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972. Print.

Driskill, Qwo-Li. "Theatre as Suture: Grassroots Performance, Decolonisation and Healing". Hulan, Renee and Renate Eigenbrod eds. *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory, Practice, Ethics*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008. 155-68. Print.

Ellis, C Douglas. *Spoken Cree: Level 1*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2000. Print.

Emberly, Julia V. *Defamiliarizing the Aboiginal: Cultural Practices and Decolonisation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.

Episknew, Jo-Ann. *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, And Healing*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009. Print.

---. Conference proceedings. "Living and Dying with the Madness of Colonial Policies: The Aesthetics of Resistance in Daniel David Moses' Almighty Voice and His Wife." Hartmut Lutz *et al* eds. *What is Your Place? : Indigeneity and Immigration in Canada*. Germany:Wibner-Verlag, 2007. 41-54. Print.

Fagan, Kristina. "Teasing, Tolerating, Teaching: Laughter and Community in Native Literature" . Drew Hayden Taylor ed. *Funny*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd, 2005. 23-46. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, 1993. Print.

---.*The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962. Print.

Filewood, Alan. " Receiving Aboriginality: Tomson Highway and the Crisis of Cultural Authenticity". Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre*. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol 1.Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 37-48. Print.

Frazier, Ian. *On The Rez*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. Print.

Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins eds. *Post- Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Godard, Barbara. " The Politics of Representation : Some Native Canadian Women Writers". W.H. New ed. *Native Writers and Canadian Writing*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990. Print.

Government of Canada. The Indian Act 1876. (<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca>). Accessed on 15th May, 2016 at 4 A.M.

Grant, Agnes. *Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature*. 4th Edition. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc, 1999. Print.

Hall, Stuart and P. du Gay eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 1996. Print.

Harris. Cole. *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002. Print.

Hedican, Edward J. *Applied Anthropology in Canada: Understanding Aboriginal Issues*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Print.

Hengen, Shannon. *Where Stories Meet: An Oral History of De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre*. Toronto: Playwright Canada Press, 2007. 13-15. Print.

herising, Fairn. "Interrupting Positions: Critical Thresholds And Queer Pro/Positions." Leslie Brown and Susan Strega eds. *Research As Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-oppressive Approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005. 127-51. Print.

Highway, Tomson. *The Rez Sisters*. Calgary: Fifth House Ltd, 1988. Print.

---. "Should Only Native Actors Have the Right to Play Native Roles?" Thomas King ed. *First Voices: First Words* Vol 22.3 (Autumn 2001): 20-25. Print.

---. *Rose*. Vancouver: Talon Books, 2003. Print.

---. "On Native Mythology". *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre: Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English*. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwright Canada Press, 2005. Print.



---. *The (Post) Mistress*. Canada: Talon Books, 2013. Print.

Hill, Leslie and Helen Paris eds. *Performance and Place*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print.

Hulan, Renee and Renate Eigenbrod. *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory Practice Ethics*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2008. Print.

Hunter, William Wilson. *The Annals of Rural Bengal, 1868*. Vol 1. Forgotten Books, 2013. ([www.forgottenbooks.org](http://www.forgottenbooks.org)). Web. 10 May 2016.

Hutcheon, Linda. “The End(s) of Irony: The Politics of Appropriateness” in Ajay Heble *et al* eds. *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Toronto: Broadview Press. (366-404) 1997. Print.

Hutton, J.H. *Census of India 1931*. Intro by K.S.Singh. 3 Vols. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2013. Print.

Imaginative Film+ Media Arts Festival. *11<sup>th</sup> Annual imaginative: Film+ Media Arts Festival*. Toronto, 20-24 Oct. 2010. Print.

Irwin, Rita L., Tony Rogers, and Yuh-Yao Wan. “Making Connections Through Cultural Memory, Cultural Performance, and Cultral Translation.” *Studies in Art Education* 40.3 (Spring 1999): 198-212. Web. *JSTOR*. 11 Sept 2008.

Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1995. Print.

James, Carl E. *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Ethnicity, Race and Culture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc, 1999. Print.

Johnston, Basil. *The Bear-Walker and Other Stories*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2005. Print.

---. *Think Indian: Languages Are Beyond Price*. Cape Croker Reserve: Kegeponce Press, 2011. Print.

Jones, Amelia and Andrew Stephenson eds. *Performing the Body/ Performing the Text*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Justice, Daniel Heath. "A Relevant Resonance: Considering the Study of Indigenous National Literatures". DePasquale *et al* eds. *Across Cultures/ Across Borders: Canadian Aboriginal And Native American Literatures*. Canada : Broadview Press, 2010. 61-76. Print

*Kahani Meri Tumhari*. Vadodara: Bhasha Samsodhan Prakashan Kendra, 2012. Print.

Kanaganyakam, Chelva. *Moveable Margins: The Shifting Spaces of Canadian Literature*. Toronto: TSAR, 2005. Print.

Kane, Sean. *Wisdom of the Myhtellers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Toronto: Broadview Press, 1998. Print.

Keefer, Tom. "The Politics of Solidarity: Six Nations, Leadership, and the Settler Left". Aidan Conway *et al* eds. *Upping The Anti: A journal of theory and action*. Vol 4. Montreal: Katasoho Press, May 2007. 107- 23. Print.

King, Thomas. ed. *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc, 1990. Print.

---. *One Good Story That One*. Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd, 1993. Print.

---. "A Short History of Indians in Canada" in Thomas King ed. *A Short History of Indians in Canada*. Toronto: Harper Collins. (1-4) 2005, Print.

Knopf, Kerstin. *Aboriginal Canada Revisited*. Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 2008. Print.

Knowles, Ric. " Translators, Traitors, Mistresses, and Whores: Monique Mojica and the Mothers of the Métis Nations." Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre*. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 106-23. Print.

Kroetsch, Robert. "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy". Ajay Heble *et al* eds. *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 1997. 356-357. Print.

Kulchysci, Peter. *The Red Indians: An Episodic, Informal Collection of Tales from the History of Aboriginal People's Struggles in Canada*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007, Print.

Ladner, Kiera L. " Take 35: Reconciling Constitutional Orders". Annis May Timpson ed. *First Nations, First Thoughts: The Impact of Indigenous Thought in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009. 279-300. Print.

LaRoque, Emma. *Defeathering the Indian*. Canada: The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1975. Print.

---. *When the Other is Me: Native Resistance Discourse 1850-1990*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010. Print.

Lawrence, Bonita. *“Real” Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood*. Canada: UBC Press, 2004. Print.

Leggatt, Judith. “Native Writing, Academic Theory: Post Colonialism across the Cultural Divide”. Laura Moss ed. *Is Canada Postcolonial?: Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press. 111- 127 (2003) Print.

Li, Peter S. and Bolaria Singh eds. *Racial Oppression in Canada*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988. Print.

Li, Peter S. ed. *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*. Ontario: Oxford U Press, 1990. Print.

Lopez, Barry Holstun. *Giving Birth to Thunder: Sleeping With His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America*. New York: Avon Books, 1977. Print.

Lutz, Hartmut. Conference proceedings. “To Know Where Home Is: An Introduction to Indigeneity and Immigration”. Hartmut Lutz and Thomas Rafico Ruiz eds. *What is Your Place? : Indigeneity and Immigration in Canada*. Germany: Wibner-Verlag, 2007. 9-28. Print.

Lyytinen, Maria. “The Pocahontas Myth and Its Deconstruction in Monique Mojica’s Play *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots*”. S.E. Wilmer ed. *Native American Performance and Representation*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2009. 78-96. Print.

Majumdar, Swapan. *Comparative Literature: Indian Dimensions*. Kolkata: Papyrus, 1987. 37-38. Print.

Makey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Print.

Maki, Joel T. *Let the Drums Be Your Heart: New Native Voices*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996. Print.

Maossa, Geraldine. "The Beginning of a Cree performance Culture." Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English*. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 124-33. Print.

Maracle, Lee. *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1990. Print.

---. *I am Woman : A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism*. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1996. Print.

---. *First Wives Club: Coast Salish Style*. Penticton: Theytus Books, 2010. Print.

Mathur, Ashok. *Rhetoric of Approval: theorizing race through the little magazine and other places*. Burnaby: The Production House, 1996. 1-25. Print. The Space of Race in a Class.

Maufort, Marc and Franca Bellarsi eds. *Reconfigurations: Canadian Literatures and Postcolonial Identities*. Brussels: Lang, 2002. Print.

Meharada, B.L. "The Girasia *Ekki* Movement". G.N. Sharma ed. *Social and Political Awakening Among the Tribals of Rajasthan*. Proceedings of a seminar with same title. Jaipur: Rajasthan University Press. n.d. 51-60. Print.

Miller, J. R. Intro. Paul Robert Magocsi ed. *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Short Introduction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. 3-37. Print.

---. *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2009. Print.

Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and The Residential School System 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 2006. Print.

Mojica, Monique and Ric Kmnowles eds. *Staging Coyote's Dream: An Anthology of First Nations Drama in English*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2003. Print.

---. "Stories from the Body: Blood Memory and Organic Texts". S. E. Wilmer ed. *Native American Performance and Representation*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009. 97- 109. Print.

Morin, Skyblue. ' This is a Reserve'. Joel T. Maki ed. *Let the Drums Be Your Heart*. Vancouver: Douglas &McIntyre, 1996. 14-15. Print.

Moses, Daniel David. *Almighty Voice and His Wife*. Second Scene Editions. Toronto: Playrights Canada Press, 1991. Print.

Moss, Laura. "Is Canada Postcolonial? Introducing the Question". Intro. Laura Moss ed. *Is Canada Postcolonial: Unsettling Canadian Literature*. Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2003. 1-23. Print.

Murray, Laura J. and Keren Rice eds. Proceedings of Thirty-Second Annual Conference on Editorial Problems UofT Nov 14-16 1996. *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. Print.

Newhouse, David R. Cora J. Voyageur and Dan Beavon eds. *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.

Niezen, Ronald. *The Rediscovered Self: Indigenous Identity and Cultural Justice*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009. Print.

Nolan, Yvette. Ed. *Beyond the Pale: Dramatic Writing from First Nations Writers and Writers of Colour*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2004. Print.

Nunn, Robert. "Hybridity and Mimicry in the plays of Drew Hayden Taylor." Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol 1*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 74-94. Print.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*. London: Routledge, 1982. Print.

Paul, Daniel N. *We Were Not The Savages: Collision between European and Native American Civilizations*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2006. Print.

Pollner, Melvin. "Sociological and Common-Sense Models of the Labelling Process". Roy Turner ed. *Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings*. Canada: Penguin Books, 1974. 27-40. Print.

Preston, Jennifer. "Weesageechak Begins to Dance: Native Earth Performing Arts Inc." *TDR*(1988-) 36.1 (Spring 1992): 135-159. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 May 2009.

Preziosi, Donald. "Performing Modernity: The art of art history". Amelia Jones *et al* eds. *Performing the Body/ Performing the Text*. London: Routledge, 1999. 29-38. Print.

Rabillard, Sheila. "Absorption, Elimination, and the Hybrid: Some Impure Questions of Gender and Culture in the Trickster Drama of Tomson Highway." Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol 1*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 4-31. Print.

Radhakrishna, Meena. *Dishonoured By History: Criminal Tribes and British Colonial Policy*. Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2001. Print.

Rice, Brian and Anna Snyder eds. "Reconciliation in the Context of a Settler Society: Healing the legacy of Colonialism in Canada". Castellano, Marlene Brant *et al* eds. *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008. Print.

Roscoe, Will. *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin-St. Martin's Press, 1998. 6-11. Print.



Ruffo, Armand Garnet. Ed. *(Ad) dressing Our Words: Aboriginal Perspectives on Aboriginal Literatures*. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd, 2001. Print.

---. "A Windigo Tale: Contemporizing and Mythologizing the Residential School Experience." Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English*. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 166-80. Print.

Ruppert, James and John W. Berne eds. *Our voices: Native Stories of Alaska and Yukon*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Print.

Ryan, Simon. "Inscribing the Emptiness: Cartography, exploration and the construction of Australia". Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson eds. *De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*. London: Routledge, 1994. 115-130. Print.

Satzewich, Vic. "The Political Economy of Race and Ethnicity". Peter S. Li ed. *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*. Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999. 311-46. Print.

Saville-Trike, Muriel. *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd, 1982. Print.

Shane, Nina de. "Powwow Dancing and the Warrior Tradition". *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, T. 33.1/4 ( 1991): 375-399. Web. *JSTOR*. 11 Sept 2008.

Sharma, GN. Proceedings of a seminar with same title "Tribals of Rajasthan: Social Reforms and Political Awakening". G.N. Sharma ed. *Social and Political Awakening Among the Tribals of Rajasthan..* Jaipur: Rajasthan University Press, n.d. 5-10. Print.

Simpson, Leanne. *Lighting The Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2008. Print.

Sircar, Badal. *The Third Theatre*. Kolkata: n.p. 1978. Print. Based on a project entitled Workshop for a Theatre of Synthesis as a Rural-Urban Link carried out with the assistance of a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (June 1971-May 1973).

---. *On Theatre*. Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2009. Print.

Slemon, Slemon. "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World." *World Literature Written in English*, 30. 2 (1990): 30-41. Print.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2006. Print.

Starr, Floyd Favel. "The Artificial Tree: Native Performance Culture Research 1991-1996". *Canadian Theatre Review* Vol.90. (Spring, 1997) :83-85. Print.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Furious Observations of A Blue-Eyed Ojibway: Funny, You Don't Look Like One Two Three*. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd, 2002. Print.

---. "Alive and well: Native theatre in Canada". Rob Appleford ed. *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre. Critical Perspective on Canadian Theatre in English*. Vol 1. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005. 61-68. Print.

---. "Storytelling to Stage: The Growth of Native Theatre in Canada". *TDR* (1988-) 41.3 (Autumn, 1997): 140-152. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 May 2008.

---. *Me Sexy: An Exploration of Native Sex and Sexuality*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008. Print.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG). *The TAG Report*. 2006. Print

Tester, Frank James. *Tammarniit: Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic 1939-63*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994. Print.

Tharu. Susie J. *The Sense of Performance: Studies in Post-Artaud Theatre*. New Delhi: Arnold- Heinemann Publishers (India), 1984. Print.

Thatcher, Richard W. *Fighting Firewater Fictions: Moving beyond the Disease Model of Alcoholism in First Nations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Print.

Thobani, Sunera. *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.

Tiffin, Chris and Alan Lawson eds. *De-Scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Tiwari, Reena. *Space-Body- Ritual: Performativity in the City*. USA: Lexington Books, 2010. Print.

Toronto Indigenous Sovereignty Week 2010. *Toronto Indigenous Sovereignty Week: Resistance and Renewal*. Toronto, 21-28 Nov. 2010. Print.

Turner, Roy. *Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings*. Canada: Penguin Books, 1974. Print.

Twigg, Alan. *Aboriginality: The Literary Origins of British Columbia*. Vol 2. Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2005. Print.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Native Stories: Five Selections*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. Print.

Waldrum, James. B. *Revenge of the Windigo: Construction of the Mind and Mental Health of North American Aboriginal Peoples*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Print.

Wallace, Robert. "Homo Creation: Towards a Poetics of Gay Male Theatre." *Essays on Canadian Writing: The Gender Issue* 54 (Winter 1994): 212-59. Print.

Wa Thiongo. Ngugi. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Culture*. Delhi: Worlview-Book Land Co.,2007. Print.

Weisstein, Ulrich. *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction*. Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1973. Print.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society*. England: Penguin Books, 1958. Print.

---. *Keywords: A vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Great Britain: Fontana Press, 1976. Print.

Woodworth, William. "Iroquoian Condolence Practiced on a Civic Scale". Lynne Davis ed. *Alliances: Re/ Envisioning Indigenous-Non-Indigenous Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. 25-41. Print.