Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter I

Theorizing ‘Memory’, ‘History’ and ‘Identity’ of the Indigenous Communities: An Introduction

This chapter gives a theoretical and thematic introductory framework to the dissertation. The chapter introduces various issues related to the Indigenous identity in the contemporary scenario. Highlighting the significant role played by the land, nature and cosmos in defining the Native Sensibility, the chapter argues the importance of Indigenous epistemology. It further discusses the importance of theorizing the issues related to the imposed history and identity by methods of questioning, problematizing, decentering and deconstructing. The crucial role played by the collective cultural memory in such an endeavor is also discussed in detail.

Chapter II

Indigenous People of Australia, Canada, US and Tamil Nadu: A Study of their (Hi)story

This chapter is a detailed discussion on the history of the Indigenous people of Australia, Canada, US and Tamil Nadu. Rather being dependent on the ‘authoritative’ and ‘objective’ academic texts for understanding the history of the Indigenous peoples, the memories cherished by the Indigenous peoples in the forms of origin myths, oral histories, songs and other legends are used for the study in this chapter. The chapter is divided into the following three parts, 1. Pre-Colonial Past, 2. Colonial Encounters and 3. Aftermaths of Colonialism.

1. Pre-Colonial Past:

This part of the chapter uses references from the origin myths and other legends of the Sioux and Ojebways of Canada; Piquets of US and Narrinyeris of South Australia to study the
Pre-Colonial legacy of the indigenous communities of Canada, US and Australia respectively. Works of the Intellectuals from the Indigenous communities and also from the west are used for an objective study of the history of these communities. Writings from Sangam and Post-Sangam poetry, and the scholarly research writings of Ambedkar, Raj Gowthaman, Caldwell and Karthikesu Sivathambi are used for the study of the Pre-Aryan period of Tamil Nadu.

2. Colonial Encounters:

This part of the chapter is the study of the history of the arrival of the invaders in Canada, US, Australia and Southern India. It looks into the politics of wars, pacts and deals, and other modes of dealings with the Native communities and their systems of governance of the Natives. The chapter also discusses the tools they used to ‘know’ the Natives to ‘rule’ the Natives.

3. Aftermaths of Colonialism:

This part of the chapter discusses the sufferings of the Indigenous peoples in terms of 1. displacement, 2. dispossession, 3. domination, 4. oppression and 5. social exclusion as a result of colonialism in the contemporary scenario.

Chapter III

Assimilation, Indoctrination and Acculturation: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of the Colonial Discourses

This chapter makes a comparative discourse analysis of a set of select colonial discourses. The objective of such a comparative discourse analysis is to highlight the ideologies of the hidden symbolic and systematic hierarchical power structure of the imperial legacies. The chapter further discusses the finding of such a study. As a result of such a study, it is understood that the language used in such colonial doctrines and discourses could be categorized as,
1. language of binary opposition, 2. language of hierarchy, 3. language of denial, 4. language of animosity and 5. language of patronizing. The chapter discusses how these five kinds of languages are used to concretize the colonial control over the native cultures by imposing negative identity for the Indigenous peoples. It further explores how the colonial policies, having been legitimized by the necessity to “civilize” the Natives and thereby involving in indoctrination, assimilation and acculturation, leading a brutal assault over the Indigenous peoples and their lifestyle.

Chapter IV

Reliving Memory, Retelling History and Restoring Identity: Native Sensibility and the Indigenous Epistemology

This chapter begins the discussion on the significance of Indigenous epistemology by highlighting how the indigenous communities who have assimilated the cultures of the dominant invading cultures have suffered from cultural dislocation, social disorientation and in total an existential fragmentation. By doing a comparative study of the works of David Unaipon (Australian Aborigine), Iyothee Thassar (Indigenous Tamil (India)), William Apess (Native American), David Cusick (Native American), George Copway (Native Canadian) and Peter Jones (Native Canadian), the chapter studies the significant nature of the collective cultural Native memory as an emancipatory model of resistance and resurgene. The chapter is divided into the following four parts:

i. The first part of the chapter titled “Retracing the Resistance: Life and Works of the Select Indigenous Intellectuals” critically introduces the life and contributions of the select Indigenous Intellectuals.

ii. The second part of the chapter titled “Reliving Memory: Narration of the Glorious Past” details the different methodologies employed by the Intellectuals that gives prominence to the ‘Memory’ of the Indigenous Peoples.
iii. The third part of the chapter titled “Retelling History: Questioning the Imposed Past” critically comments on the different modes employed by these Intellectuals in rewriting the history which was imposed upon the Indigenous peoples by drawing reference from their Native ‘Memory’.

iv. The fourth part of the chapter titled “Restoring Identity: ‘Of’ the Past and ‘For’ the Future” concludes the chapter by analyzing how the process of reliving the memory and retelling the history helps in restoring and revitalizing the lost vibrant identity among the Indigenous peoples.

V Chapter

Conclusion

Summarizing the arguments of the previous chapters this chapter concludes the research findings. Noting on the significance of this particular research, the chapter also gives possible future directions as scope for further research in the field of Indigenous studies. The chapter establishes the idea that it becomes imperative in the contemporary scenario, that emancipatory endeavors of resistance and resurgence among the Indigenous communities must be acknowledged and encouraged by the academia with increased number of researches on their accomplishments. The chapter further notes that a Native comparative literary aesthetic and epistemological model becomes an indispensable part of the emergence of such a research process.
Chapter I

Theorizing ‘Memory’, ‘History’ and ‘Identity’
of the Indigenous Communities: An Introduction

“From the vantage point of the colonized…
the word ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest
words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary”

- Linda Tuhiway Smith
Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (1999) P.1

“As long as a group of people maintains
and cultivates a common cultural memory,
this group of people exists”.

- Agnes Heller
“Cultural Memory, Identity and Civil Society”(2001) P.139

According to UN’s State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples -2009, there are “more
than 370 million (Indigenous people living) in some 90 countries” (1) across the continents.
Although Indigenous peoples make up less than 6 per cent of the global population, they
speak more than 4,000 of the world’s 7,000 languages. These Indigenous people are the
progenies of those peoples who have inhabited in a “nation” long before the colonial
establishments. Descended from the original inhabitants of an area colonized by more powerful
outsiders, the Indigenous people remain distinct from their country’s dominant groups in
their culture and practices.

Commenting on the significance of the word ‘peoples’ in the term ‘Indigenous peoples’,
Linda Tuhiway Smith, a Maori scholar in her Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and
Indigenous Peoples (1999) observes: “‘Indigenous peoples’ is a relatively recent term which
emerged in the 1970s out of the struggles primarily of the American Indian Movement(AIM)
and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood…the final ‘s’ in ‘indigenous peoples’…is also used as
a way of recognizing that there are real difference between indigenous peoples “ and that
“the term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena” (7). These different Indigenous people are referred by a variety of terms in different parts of the world. Terms such as “aboriginals”, “tribes”, “first peoples”, “first nations”, “native peoples”, “ethnic groups”, “Adivasis” and “autochthonous” (derived from Greek, meaning ‘sprung from the earth’) are used to allude to their distinct cultural and social identity.

The hallmark of Indigenous culture is living in ‘oneness with nature’. In the present scenario, the Indigenous peoples are unfortunately forced to move away from the nature. Across the globe, a large section of the Indigenous people have migrated themselves (and in most cases driven out) to urban areas in the name of developmental measures. According to The Indigenous World 2010, nearly 75% of the Australian Aboriginals now live in cities and in regional centers. Among the Indigenous people of Canada (Inuits, Metis and Indians), about “55% live on-reserve and 45% reside off-reserve in urban, rural, special access and remote areas” (56). Similarly, “more than half of the American Indians live off-reservation and many in large cities” (65). Despite the fact that these Indigenous people have been moved to the urban areas, and sent to live in the ‘reserves’ (the place allotted by the government where the Indigenous people are to live segregated by barbed wires from the ‘mainstream’ people) where the access to progress is quite minimal, they continue to cherish their traditional ways of life. Though a majority of the Indigenous population is sent to live in urban areas and reserves, owing to the loss of land and because of poor living conditions, many Indigenous people have still managed to adhere to their traditional life styles in their own territories. One can broadly distinguish these Indigenous peoples into the following three different categories- Pastoralists, Hunter-gatherers and Farmers.

2. **Hunter-gatherers** hunt for the game and they are often referred by the term ‘Pygmies’. The *Ogiek, Sengwer, Yaaku, Waata, El Molo, Boni (Bajuni), Malakote, Wagoshi* and *Sanya* of Kenya, *Twa* and *Benet* of Uganda, *Akie* and *Hadzabe* of Tanzania, *Inuits* of Greenland, *Evenks*, *Saami*, *Yupiq* (Eskimo) and the *Nenets* of Russia and the Indigenous people of Southern Thailand namely *Ngo, Ngko, Ngok Pa* or *Sakai* are some of the major hunter-gatherer Indigenous peoples.


   These Indigenous peoples often have a distinctive perception on progress. Unlike the western societies which consider nature as natural resources, the Indigenous world view respects nature for its intrinsic ability to provide life for their sustenance. The *Dayak*’s perspective of culture and way of life can be cited as an example to highlight this idea. *Dayak* or *Orang Ulu* collectively includes the Indigenous communities of *Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan, Kedayan, Murut, Punan, Bisayah, Kelabit, Penan* and *Berawan* of Malaysia. In the “Cultural Poverty: A Dayak Perspective” of *UN Document of State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples* (2009), it is noted that,

   The following seven principles summarize the way in which the *Dayak* achieve their ideal way of life based on their cultural values and how they compare with modern values:
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<th>Sustainability (biodiversity)</th>
<th>Vs</th>
<th>Productivity (monoculture)</th>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Collectivity (cooperation)</td>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>Individuality (competition)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Naturality (organic)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Spirituality (rituality)</td>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>Rationality (scientific)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Process (effectiveness)</td>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>Result (efficiency)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Subsistence (domesticity)</td>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>Commerciality (market)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Customary law (locality)</td>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>State law (global)</td>
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This distinction of perspectives of life in its various facets defines the Indigenous world view in its entirety. The Indigenous people across the globe share the same sentiments of the *Dayak* with respect to the principles of nature, law, spirituality and progress. The above mentioned Indigenous perspective represents a shift away from the preoccupation with the centralized, efficiency oriented solutions that focuses primarily on the individuality and commerciality, towards a broader, collective process aimed at the subsistence of life. The significance of such a shift in the world view stands for the idea of ‘Native Sensibility’. The essence of the Native Sensibility can be best understood in the following prayer recited to be at the closing of the sun dance rituals of the *Sioux*, and *Cheyenne* Native Americans in praise of their God *Wakan-Taka*:

> You have taught us out relationship with all …beings, and for this we give thanks…may we be continually aware of this relationship which exists between the four-leggeds, the two-leggeds, and the winged. May we all rejoice and live in peace. (Brown 98)

The Indigenous peoples with their Native Sensibility consider existence not as an entity but a cycle that consists of energy. Indigenous peoples believe that all things are animate
and are in constant motion. This crucial idea that all things being in constant motion leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world. The songs, stories, dances, rituals and renewal ceremonies of the Indigenous peoples manifest the cyclical or repetitive patterns of the Nature. This constant motion, as manifested in cyclical or repetitive patterns, emphasizes the idea of ‘process’ as opposed to ‘product’ in the Indigenous way of life.

Arising out of this Indigenous world view of constant motion or flux is the value of wholeness or totality. The value of wholeness insists on the totality of creation and the idea of group as opposed to the individual. This value is reflected in the customs and organization of the Indigenous peoples, where the locus of social organization is the extended family, not the immediate biological family. Several extended families combine to form a band. Several bands combine to form a tribe or nation; several tribes or nations combine to form confederacies. With this perspective of Indigenous peoples, where the ‘whole’ is more important than the ‘part’, they educate and inculcate the Native sensibilities through praise, reward, recognition and renewal ceremonies. What is more significant in this process of education is that they teach through their actual experience and storytelling. This teaching through actual experience is done by relatives who would take a young child under his or her wing and would teach all he or she knew about the culture and survival. Storytelling becomes a very important part of this educational process. It is only through the stories that customs and values are taught and shared. And it is through these stories an Indigenous child comes to realize his/her identity.

**Indigenous Identity:**

The Indigenous peoples never had any reason to define the Indigenous identity since it is very much part of their lived-life reality. As Aua, and Ingluik Shaman says: “In our ordinary, everyday life we do not think much about all these things” (Beck and Walters 8).
The academicians however, find the task of defining the term ‘Indigenous’ very difficult. Commenting on the difficulty in giving a concrete definition for Indigenous identity, Hilary N. Weaver comments in her article “Indigenous Identity What Is It, and Who Really Has It?” with the following thought provoking argument:

Indigenous identity is a truly complex and somewhat controversial topic. There is little agreement on precisely what constitutes an Indigenous identity, how to measure it, and who truly has it. Indeed, there is not even a consensus on appropriate terms...The topic of Indigenous identity opens a Pandora’s box of possibilities, and to try to address them all would mean doing justice to none. (240)

In reality the various aspects of Indigenous identity are inextricably linked making the process of providing a concrete definition for the Indigenous identity quite difficult. Added to such inextricably linked aspects of the Indigenous identity are the problems of state-centric and bureaucratic practices making such a task all the more complex.

In spite of the complexities involved in defining the Indigenous identity, academicians and scholars have come out with some highly influential definitions for the same. Fred Riggs for example, in his “Who is Indigenous?: A Conceptual Enquiry” comes out with four categorical variables to define the Indigenous identity. For him, a community can be recognized as Indigenous by considering the following variables,

1. **Cultural level**, ranging from primitive to more complex societies;
2. Historical sequence (**age**), who came first and who followed;
3. Political position (**power**), i.e. marginalized vs dominant communities
4. Geographical area (**place**) (Corntrassel 81)
The significance of this definition is that it presupposes the importance of the culture, land and the age along with the notion of the ‘power’ for defining the Indigenous peoples. With this consideration of the status of the ‘power’, the ongoing crisis related to their rights as much as the violation of such rights is brought into consideration with increased emphasis.

Frank Wilmer, on the other hand, in her work, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics* (1993) defines the Indigenous identity in a broad sense. Using the systematic analysis she made on the historical process of the exclusion of the Indigenous peoples, she defines the Indigenous people in its broadest sense- as peoples,

1. with tradition-based cultures

2. who were politically autonomous before colonization

3. who, in the aftermath of Colonialization and/or De-colonization, continue to struggle for the preservation of their cultural integrity, economic self reliance, and political independence by resisting the assimilationist policies of nation-states. (97)

Frank Wilmer here gives a definition that is broader in its sense of ‘Indigeneity’ which tries to ‘fit-in’ the Indigenous peoples of different geographical locations. By including the issues of both “colonization and /or decolonization”, she has quite effectively brought into limelight the significance of including a variety of contemporary issues (directly linked to the colonial exploitation). James Anaya, an Indigenous scholar, in contrast, defines the Indigenous peoples in his *Indigenous Peoples in International Law* (1996) with an inclusive identity. The Indigenous peoples for him are,

the living descendants of pre-invasion inhabitants of lands now dominated by others…They are Indigenous because their ancestral roots are embedded in
the lands in which they live, or would like to live, much more deeply than the roots of more powerful sectors of society living on the same lands or in close proximity. Furthermore, they are *peoples* to the extent they comprise distinct communities with a continuity of existence and identity that links them to communities, tribes or nations of their ancestral part. (3)

Summarizing the arguments of Jeff J. Corntrassel regarding the significance of the above mentioned definition of Anaya, it can be noted that this definition highlights the continued colonial domination of Indigenous homelands as well as the ancestral roots of these ‘pre-invasion inhabitants’ and that it also acknowledges Indigenous peoples as distinct communities with extensive kinship networks, which clearly distinguishes them from minority groups. (79)

Despite these highly influential definitions that are used to categorically define and determine the Indigenous identity, certain loopholes and ambiguities in these definitions continue to harm the developmental process of the Indigenous peoples. In a relative sense, the notion of “self-identification” has proved to overcome such difficulties. Jeff J. Corntrassel notes that “the question of ‘who is Indigenous?’ is best answered by the Indigenous communities themselves” (1) and he further elaborates that WCIP (World Council for Indigenous Peoples) have passed a resolution that ‘only Indigenous peoples could Indigenous peoples’ in 1977 and that it was approved and accepted by ILO (International Labour Organisation) and United Nation’s WGIP (World Group on Indigenous Populations). Similarly, as a significant progress, the Article 33 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of Indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.

Consolidating all these concerns and criteria, Jose R. Martinez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in his famous *Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations* defines the Indigenous communities as:

those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system. (refword.org)

He further elaborates that, one or more of the following categories can be used for the consideration of a community to be known Indigenous,

1. Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them;

2. Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands;

3. Culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an Indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.);
4. Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language);

5. Residence on certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world;

6. Other relevant factors.

Regarding the issue of ‘self-identification’, he further notes, “an Indigenous person is one who belongs to these Indigenous populations through self-identification as Indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group).” And that “it preserves for these communities the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference”.

It has to be noted here of Madeline Dion Stout’s emancipatory model of Aboriginal identity. Madeline Dion Stout, a Cree educator has made an extensive framework incorporating the following key components related to the construction of the Aboriginal identity:

1. Discovering the centrality of self, especially individual will and ability

2. Transmitting individual power to family through values, attitudes, behavior and institutions

3. Extending the family to the broader end of community and developing agency to connect divers groups of people

4. Challenging the existing imbalances between the cultural/structural divide of all peoples of the world; and
5. Recreating self in solidarity with those who are, those who have been and those who are yet to be (Graveline, Frye Jean 57)

While the definitions suggested by the western systems of knowledges branded and categorized the Indigenous identity, such models suggested by Madeline Dion Stout symbolized the significant phase of emancipatory nature. Another significant aspect about such a model is, while the definitions given by the western systems of knowledges were linear and hierarchical, Madeline Dion Stout’s model is circular. Her dentition began with the concept of ‘self’ and ended in the recreation of the ‘self’.

Analyzing various kinds of definitions given to the Indigenous identity one could conclude that though the idea of ‘Indigenous identity’ is complex and multi-dimensional and impossible to universalize, one could still assert that the idea of Indigenous identity very much depends on the land they live in, their cultural practices, the language they speak and their socio-economic position. Across the world, among the variety of resources, the Indigenous peoples are found most attached to the land they live in. Such an affinity goes deep to the extent of being the most important factor that determines their identity.

**Land and the Indigenous Identity:**

The essential basis of any Indigenous society, irrespective of the geographical region is their ‘community’ that exists principally as an ‘extended family’. Living in such a community, most Indigenous peoples consider themselves custodians and caretakers (not owners) of their land. As noted by Julian Burger in *The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples* (1990), “for most Indigenous peoples, land is not viewed as a commodity” (1). The land for them is rather perceived as an embodiment of a variety of resources endowed with consecrated meanings which primarily define their essence, existence and identity. Similarly, the trees, plants, animals, and fish, which inhabit the land are not ‘natural resources’, but highly personal beings which
form part of their social and spiritual universe. Reflecting the same idea, S Knight, an Aboriginal Australian claims:

We (the Indigenous people) don’t own the land, the land owns us. The land is my mother, my mother is the land. Land is the starting point to where it all began. It’s like picking up a piece of dirt and saying this is where I started and this is where I’ll go. The land is our food, our culture, our spirit and identity.

(creativespirits.info)

The land for the Indigenous communities therefore, is the source of origin- ‘the starting point to where it all began’ and the very reason for their sustenance. On a similar note, citing on the relationship between the Boruca Indigenous community of Costa Rica and the land they live-in, Ofri Tischler in the video “Identity and Land- The Boruca Indigenous Community in Costa Rica” observes:

For the Boruca Indigenous community, their land is what defines their identity, their culture. Their territory is at large what defines who and what they are, as individuals and as a community. When I tried to ask what would happen if they lost their land, or were moved to another plot of land, the response was that it was impossible. The mere thought of me even bringing up the possibility of losing the land was unheard of. Nonetheless, I received an answer, and was stunned by how strong the response was. I asked what would be the consequence of losing the land in Boruca. If Boruca did not live there, it simply would not exist; it would no longer be Boruca.

(annualgobalcollegeconference.com)

This close attachment to the land and environment which has been described as the ‘stewardship of the earth’ is one of the major defining characteristics of the Indigenous
peoples. This attachment makes their ancestral land, the integral source of the Indigenous culture and also their harbinger of life.

The relationship between the land and the Indigenous peoples exists in a significant distinctive dimension in the form of their memory. The memories they cherish in various forms of their oral histories, myths, tales and legends hold their lands, the spirits, the birds, the animals and the Indigenous way of life close to their heart. When such memories are disrupted by the changes in the environment, economic globalization, and a continuation of Western forms of development that is when the survival of Indigenous cultures, languages, and communities gets affected by the modern industrialized world which lacks respect for the sacredness of Earth Mother. As a response to this, the Indigenous people across the world gather around often and protest against such oppressions. The Albuquerque Declaration, from the “Circles of Wisdom” during Native Peoples/Native Homelands Climate Change Workshop Summit can be cited as an example for this symbolic insistence of their stance. The elders from different Indigenous communities proclaim to the world in that declaration, that,

Because of our relationship with our lands, waters and natural surroundings which has sustained us since time immemorial, we carry the knowledge and ideas that the world needs today. We know how to live with this land: we have done so for thousands of years. We are a powerful spiritual people. It is this spiritual connection to Mother Earth, Father Sky, and all Creation that is lacking in the rest of the world. Our extended family includes our Mother Earth, Father Sky, and our brothers and sisters, the animal and plant life. We must speak for the plants, for the animals, for the rest of Creation. It is our responsibility, given to us by our Creator, to speak on their behalf to the rest of the world. (Goldtooth 12-13)
Unfortunately, for centuries, the dominant cultures have rarely listened to the Indigenous communities. Not only did they not listen to them, they also refused to allow them to voice their concerns. Furthermore, history informs one that the Native knowledge of “knowing how to live with the land” was predominantly considered as something that was “uncivilized”, “barbaric”, and “unauthentic” by the mainstream cultures. The Native sensibilities and its relation to the nature as propounded through their myths, oral legends, languages and artifacts were dismissed through the course of what Albert Memmi calls in his *Colonizer and the Colonized* (1999), “a series of negation (i.e.,) - they were not fully human; they were not fully civilized enough to have systems; they were not literate; their languages and modes of thought were inadequate” (83). The same history would also inform one, that the colonial ideologies have indulged primarily in a hegemonic erasure of their essence and existence through a variety of means which includes ruthless violence on their body and scheming acculturation of their mind. As Ronald Niezen points out in his *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (2003), “Indigenous peoples, like some ethnic groups, derive much of their identity from histories of state-sponsored genocide, forced settlement, relocation, political marginalization, and various formal attempts at cultural destruction” (5), the very identity of the Indigenous people depends unfortunately on the amount of violence they undergone and the trauma they had suffered. Gord Hill notes in his *Five Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance* (2009), that the entire 500-year-long history of the expansion of European states into what are now called the Americas, Africa, and Asia—and, more recently, the Pacific and the Arctic—as a genocidal enterprise. Commenting on the same in the “Editor’s Introduction” to the journal *Genocide Studies and Prevention* it is noted that “In its headlong rush toward “progress,” “civilized” society has inexorably gobbled up land and resources for its own benefit, not caring a whit about crushing, destroying, or wiping out anything in its path—be it flora, fauna, or people (particularly Indigenous
peoples)” (1). Thus, here again, the Native sensibility which is reflected in their affinity towards the land is challenged and undermined by the West in its most brutal form. This process of demoralizing their close affinity with the land reflects one of the most serious phases of the identity crisis among the Indigenous peoples.

**Indigenous People and Identity Crisis:**

In the contemporary world, the advancement in science and technologies, industrialization and commodification of the Indigenous knowledge, and the western world’s blind faith in globalization persists to refuse to acknowledge the significance of the Native Sensibility; nor does it approve of their spiritual connection to the ‘Mother Earth and Father Sky’, and as observed by Battiste “their stories are often silenced as they are made to endure other atrocities” (xxii). Similarly, the western agendas related to the arguments of ‘authenticity’ and ‘objectivity’ repudiate the very memory they treasure and indulge in undermining their history and also in devalidating their identity. Besides this, instead of learning from them, the mainstream society continues to selfishly indulge in a number of unfair means to appropriate and commercialise the knowledge and ideas of the Indigenous communities. This rather depressing reality helps one to witness obvious the certainty of the sorry state of the contemporary Indigenous community.

The case of Costa Rica, where the Indigenous community of Boruca (the people who insisted that “their land is what that defines their identity and their culture”) dwells is a clear example of the pitiable state of the contemporary Indigenous community. As noted by *The Indigenous World 2010*:

The Indigenous peoples of Costa Rica suffer from some of the worst social exclusion in the country, particularly those living on their territories where public services (health, education, drinking water, electricity, roads, transport
and communications etc.) are scarce and the quality frequently below that found in non-Indigenous areas. (120)

Indigenous peoples continue to suffer discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict. Some are being evicted from their traditional lands and their livelihoods are being undermined. Correspondingly their belief systems, cultures, languages and ways of life continue to be in jeopardy, sometimes to the extent of getting extinct.

The persistent problem of lack of recognition and redress for the Indigenous communities has become a global phenomenon that continues to haunt them across the world. Many governments do not even recognize peoples within their borders as Indigenous. In Asia, for example, only one country, the Philippines, has officially adopted the term “Indigenous peoples,” and has a law aimed specifically at protecting the rights of the Indigenous peoples according to Robert Hitchcock and Samuel Totten. For example, according to *The Indigenous World 2010*,

461 ethnic groups are recognized as Scheduled Tribes in India, and these are considered to be India’s Indigenous peoples. In mainland India, the Scheduled Tribes are usually referred to as *Adivasis*, which literally means Indigenous peoples. With an estimated population of 84.3 million, they comprise 8.2% of the total population. **There are, however, many more ethnic groups that would qualify for Scheduled Tribe status but which are not officially recognized.** India has several laws and constitutional provisions, such as the Fifth Schedule for mainland India and the Sixth Schedule for certain areas of north-east India, which recognize Indigenous peoples’ rights to land and self-governance. **The laws aimed at protecting Indigenous peoples have numerous shortcomings and their implementation is far from satisfactory.** (406) (Emphasis added by the researcher).
Lack of recognition and acknowledgement for the Indigenous identity continues to haunt the Indigenous people across the globe. Added to this is a number of other related issues that challenge the serenity of the Indigenous way of life.

The very term ‘Indigenous’ in the contemporary context continues to carry the sense of ‘displacement’, ‘dispossession’, ‘domination’, ‘oppression’, ‘social exclusion’, ‘marginalization’ and ‘discrimination’. It is only natural that a displaced, dispossessed, dominated, oppressed and excluded Indigenous will be refused of a voice to express his pains. The silenced Indigenous often becomes an object of ridicule in the media and a subject for study in the academia that celebrates objectivity (undermining his sensibility). This struggle for a voice for a silenced Indigenous resonates in the words of Leone Pihama in “Are Films Dangerous? A Maori Woman’s Perspective on The Piano”:

Maori people struggle to gain a voice, struggle to be heard from the margins, to have our stories heard, to have our descriptions of ourselves validated, to have access to the domain within which we can control and define those images which are held up as reflections of our realities (241).

It has to be noted here that, while commenting on the silenced voiceless state of the Indigenous communities of Maoris, Leone Pihama has also made an important statement on the misrepresentation of the reality. This struggle for access to the “domain within which WE (Indigenous community) can control and define images…” calls for the arguments regarding the representation of the Indigenous identity. Unfortunately, much of what is popularly known as Indigenous identities are framed by the dominant societies and they often carry negative stereotypes and overt generalizations. By devaluing the reality and undermining the Indigenous identity, the dominant society alienates the Indigenous people from their own histories, landscapes, memories and way of thinking. For Linda Tuhiway Smith, this is a “process of
systematic fragmentation” (28). J.W. Berry in “Aboriginal Cultural Identity” claims that such serious acts create “cultural disruption, leading to reduced well-being and to identity confusion and loss” (39) among the Aboriginals. Since the knowledge produced by the west continues to oppress, exclude, undermine, dispossess and displace the Indigenous peoples from their own memory and identity, it becomes imperative that the Indigenous peoples themselves must start looking for an alternative source of knowledge. Indigenous scholars across the world have found inspiration from the knowledge that was already prevalent among the Indigenous peoples. The rich knowledge transmitted through oral histories, myths, tales, legends, and in practices of native medicine, rituals and customs were significant sources of inspiration for the Indigenous scholars. Such sources, unlike the knowledge of the west, created a sense of belonging in the Indigenous people and thus an alternated identity.

**Indigenous Epistemology:**

Despite the exertions of fragmentation, disorientation and cultural dislocation of the indigenous communities, instances of attempts to alternate the understanding of the invading cultures are found in abundance across the history, especially in the modes of celebration of the native knowledge. Such an acknowledgement among the indigenous communities shows a great potent for resurgence. As noted earlier, to reclaim and restore their disoriented identity, the intellectuals from the indigenous communities across the world have relied on methodologies that are far removed from the conceptual realities of the west. Rather depending on the textbooks of histories, anthropology and sociology, the intellectuals from the Indigenous communities have entrusted their endeavors with their cultural consciousness and a collective memory.

unique to given cultures, localities and societies” and that “Indigenous knowledges are those acquired by local peoples through daily experience” (19). Indigenous knowledge therefore is a reflection of the lived life reality unlike the ‘objective’ world view of the western world. Mary Battiste notes in “Indigenous Knowledge: Foundations for First Nations” published in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (2009) that, Indigenous knowledge is systemic, covering both what can be observed and what can be thought. It compromises the rural and the urban, the settled and the nomadic, original inhabitants and migrants. Other names for Indigenous knowledge (or closely related concepts) are “folk knowledge,” “local knowledge or wisdom,” “nonformal knowledge,” “culture,” “Indigenous technical knowledge,” “traditional ecological knowledge,” and “traditional knowledge.” (1)

On a similar note, “Indigenous Ways of Knowing” notes that there are four significant features in the Indigenous Epistemology (posted in the website- www.earthlink.net):

1. walking in balance with nature, self, and community;
2. the reality of other dimensions;
3. the knowledge that all things are alive, and have consciousness; and
4. the concept of spirits

For Indigenous peoples, everything in the cosmos is intimately interrelated. Among the Indigenous peoples, this distinctive interrelation is symbolized as a circle. Many Indigenous people hold the circle sacred because it is infinite and that it has neither beginning nor end. Synonymous to the Native sensibility, Indigenous epistemology believes in the idea of the interrelation of elements of the cosmos. The traditional healing and medicinal practices and the oral histories are rich sources of such knowledge. Unfortunately, the significance of the
sources of the Indigenous epistemology is not given due recognition among the academia. Dr. Mary Battiste notes that the western systems of knowledge indulge in “cognitive imperialism” to subjugate this Indigenous way of thinking. For her, Cognitive imperialism is a form of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values. Validated through one’s knowledge base and empowered through public education, it has been the means by which whole groups of people have been denied existence and have had their wealth confiscated. Cognitive imperialism denies people their language and cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference

The western systems of knowledge insist on the idea of ‘Universalism’ and ‘Eurocentrism’ and indulge in the epistemological diffusionism of the Indigenous knowledges to undermine the validity of such sources of knowledge. The Indigenous people see this ‘Eurocentrism’ as the ‘anti-trickster’. James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson in his “Post-Colonial Ghost Dancing” published in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision notes that this ‘Anti-trickster’, “represents a cognitive force of artificial European thought, a differentiated consciousness, ever changing in its creativity to justify the oppression and domination of contemporary Indigenous peoples and their spiritual guardians” (58). Apart from devalidating the traditional knowledges the western world further indulges in appropriating them, and has long began to commit ‘bio-piracy’ and ‘intellectual piracy’ by robbing of the sources of Indigenous Epistemology.

David Welchman Gegeo and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo in their article “‘How We Know”: Kwaraae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology” defines the term ‘Epistemology’ as that which,
is concerned with who can be a knower, what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, sources of evidence for constructing knowledge, what constitutes truth, how truth is to be verified, how evidence becomes truth, how valid inferences are to be drawn, the role of belief in evidence, and related issues.(57)

As seen earlier, much of the interpretation to the Indigenous knowledges are regrettably produced only by the dominant cultures. And much of these knowledges are painfully partial and prejudiced, and factually false. Since the western systems of knowledge prescribes that the ‘knower’, and the source of ‘knowledge’ is to be detached from the sensibilities of the ‘subject’ in the name of objectivity and authenticity, the “truths” in the western epistemological sources remains mere unconnected facts far removed from the reality. Foucault’s notion of ‘repression’ has to be considered here for an alternative understanding of this problem of ‘misrepresentation’. Using Foucault’s principle of ‘repression’ which he elaborately discusses in his *History of Sexuality* (1980), one could say that such ‘misrepresentation’ themselves can be perceived as strategies of ‘repression’.  Such misrepresentation in the western epistemology was resourcefully used in exerting control over the Indigenous way of life—“it was necessary first to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present” (Haig Brown 93172). As a powerful tool to alternate such perceptions, the Indigenous knowledge has come to the fore.

By being “ways of thinking, creating, reformulating, and theorizing about knowledge via traditional discourses…. (and) anchoring the truth of the discourse in culture” (Welchman Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 58), Indigenous Epistemology has become a tool pitched against the hegemonic and institutionalized systems of power and knowledge of the oppressive mainstream regimes. Despite the persistent attempts to silence the sources of Indigenous
Epistemology, instances of indefatigable endeavours to recover those sources are also evident in different stages of history in different parts of the world. For Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, this “Indigenous knowledge recovery is an anti-colonial project” (359). In the article “Indigenous Knowledge Recovery Is Indigenous Empowerment”, Waziyatawin Angela Wilson notes that,

> It (Indigenous knowledge recovery) is a project that gains its momentum from the anguish of the loss of what was and the determined hope for what will be. It springs from the disaster resulting from the centuries of colonialism’s efforts to methodically eradicate our ways of seeing, being, and interacting with the world. (359)

This alternative source of knowledge called Indigenous Epistemology comprises a vast array of resources. The Oral history, myths, tales and legends, autobiographies, Testimonios, letters, journals and etc- all these constitute the Indigenous Epistemology. All these sources of Indigenous Epistemology continues to challenge the powerful institutions of colonization and also have become an indispensable part of the process of de-colonization.

**History of/by Indigenous Peoples:**

As identified by Barry Schwartz there are three significant features of the twentieth century that challenged the traditional historical narratives of the west, namely,

1. **Multiculturalism** that identifies historiography as a source of cultural domination and challenge the dominant historical narratives in the name of repressed groups

2. **Post Modernism** that attacks the conceptual underpinnings of linear historicity, truth and identity and thereby raising interest in the relation linking history, memory, and power and
3. **Hegemony** (theorists) who provide a class-based account of politics of memory, highlighting memory contestation, popular memory, and the instrumentalisation of the past. (275-82)

While theorists of multiculturalism, postmodernism, and hegemony continue to question and undermine the validity of the ‘history’ in the academic circles, the Indigenous epistemology in the forms of their oral history, testimonios, songs, legends, myths and tales also have challenged the authoritative, ‘authentic’, ‘objective’ historical accounts of the west. This challenge raised by the Indigenous people proves to be a call for the recognition and respect for the Indigenous way of life and the Native sensibility. Writing on the essentiality of this significant project of rewriting the history of the Indigenous people, Linda Tuhiway Smith observes:

> Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying. (28)

Thus the very act of retelling the history becomes an act aimed at the restoration of the Indigenous identity which is clouded by the ‘knowledge’ of the mainstream cultures.

Smith further notes that this project of rewriting the history of the Indigenous peoples involves the task of questioning, contesting and problematising the following ideas about History:

1. History is a totalizing discourse
2. There is a universal history
3. History is one large chronology
4. History is about development

5. History is about a self-actualizing human subject

6. History can be told in one coherent narrative

7. History as a discipline is innocent

8. History is constructed around binary categories and

9. History is patriarchal (30-31).

The history of the Indigenous peoples when written by them becomes an endeavour that is of the nature of anti-establishment. The history written by the Indigenous peoples insist that the universal and coherent historical narrative is partial and inaccurate.

While history is perceived as the narration of the irrevocable past in the western systems of knowledge (where time is conceived in terms of ‘past’, ‘present’, and ‘future’), the Indigenous way of life considers history as a form of memory, since time for them, just like any other process- is a manifestation of a ‘constant cyclical motion’. For the west, the time began in the past, progresses now in the present and move towards the future. Time for them moves in the ‘linear’ progressive manner. This linearity of the west, itself characteristically highlights its world view which is based on hierarchy. It is because of this insistence on the idea of linearity that the western world relied on ‘observation’ and ‘measurement’ for its objective knowledge. The Indigenous world view on the other hand considers time as a part of the ‘constant cyclical motion’ and that they never had any reason to record their history when they were narrating their memories. The dynamic storytelling and the memory involved in such narrations for them was an integral part of their culture. When the west could not ‘measure’ with their linear perspective the Indigenous history, they branded it unauthentic. The Indigenous epistemology on its own part continues its struggle against such notions.
Theory and/by Indigenous peoples:

Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith identifies the historical forces and power asymmetries that have created a global academia which is founded upon a “text world in which the centre of … knowledge is either in Britain, the United States, or Western Europe” (Smith 35). And as noted in www.uwo.ca, it is in such a “text world” that the theory is naturalized as the invention and provenance of the West and that “Ironically, at the core of such a Western thought, Indigeneity constitutes the repressed and overt catalyst for theorization—the figure of radical alterity, the bearer of “the gift,” the carrier of “secrets” to be colonized for the West’s own self-reinvention.” Further, writing on the importance of theorizing for the Indigenous peoples, Linda Tuhiway Smith notes, “the development of theories by Indigenous scholars which attempt to explain our existence in contemporary society has only just begun… (and that) the new ways of theorizing by Indigenous scholars are grounded in a real sense of, and sensitivity towards, what it means to be an Indigenous person” (38). The significance of theorizing by the Indigenous scholars on the Indigenous issues therefore is, unlike the western modes of theorizing, remains a reflection of the lived life reality which is grounded on the Native Sensibilities.

Smith further defends the process of theorizing against the complaints posed against it by saying, “I am arguing that theory at its most simple level is important for the Indigenous peoples… Theory can also protect us (Indigenous peoples) because it contains within it a way of putting reality into perspective” (38). Theories in everyday life as well as those in social science have a pragmatic motive. While ‘theory’ in the popular parlance is treated as abstract and separated from the real world, in the case of the Indigenous peoples (written by the Indigenous peoples) is very much concrete and real and as noted by Smith, it is also useful in protecting the Indigenous peoples.
Writing on the motives of theorizing the Indigenous issues, Smith argues, “part of the exercise is about recovering our own stories of the past. This is inextricably bound to a recovery of our language and epistemological foundations” (39). Focusing on the relevance and importance of “recovering our own stories of the past” and its relation to the collective memory of the Indigenous peoples as part of theorizing the Indigenous issues, one objective of this dissertation is to study the role of memory and its relation to the history and identity of the Indigenous peoples.

Theorizing Indigenous Memory:

Neurologist Oliver Sacks in his celebrated work on memory, *The Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (1985) makes an interesting statement on the relation between ‘memory’ and ‘identity’. He says, “We have, each of us, a life story, an inner narrative- whose continuity, is our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives a ‘narrative’, and that this narrative is us, our identities” (110). The “inner narrative” i.e. the ‘memory’ for Oliver Sacks is the ‘identity’. While for Oliver Sacks memory is the building block of one’s identity, one must also understand that ‘collective memory’ itself depends on the notion of the identity of the individuals. It is by narrating, sharing and exchanging such individual memories, the collective memory gets shaped. The collective memory therefore is a result of an interaction individuals and very much a dialogical process.

Another significant aspect of the ‘memory’ in relation the ‘identity’ is its role in the present. Paul John Eakin notes in his “Autobiography, Identity and the Fictions of Memory”, Memory is not only literally essential to the constitution of identity, but also crucial in the sense that it is constantly revising and editing the remembered past to square with the needs and requirements of the self we have become in any present. (293-294)
Halbwachs’s “presentist” perspective on memory also refers to a similar idea. For him, “collective memory is essential to a group’s notion of itself and thus must continually be made over to fit historical circumstances.” (Eyerman, Ron 7).

Writing on the importance of cultural memory for the sustenance of identity, Agnes Heller writes in her “Cultural Memory, Identity and Civil Society”:

As long as a group of people maintains and cultivates a common cultural memory, this group of people exists…whenever cultural memory enters into oblivion, a group of people disappear, irrespective of the circumstances whether they will or will not be recorded in the books of history (139).

With the absence of any written records of history, memory proves to be very important for the sustenance of the Indigenous identity. The Indigenous community cherishes the memory of their history and legacy through their myths, oral histories, legends, tales, Testimonios, autobiographies and other forms of narratives.

Memory as an alternative to the established history is a contestable idea. Yet the significance of the memory in the study of history becomes crucial as history itself has been often proved to be narratives of Power and therefore prejudiced and partial. With ‘memory’ gaining ground and being considered as part of the historical research, the research itself reaches a new phase.

In his celebrated work On Collective Memory (1992), Halbwachs makes a distinction of the following key types of memory:

1. **Autobiographical memory** is the memory of those events that one experience

2. **Historical memory** is memory that reaches one only through historical records
3. **History** (as memory) is the remembered past to which one no longer has organic relations…

4. **Collective or Cultural memory** is plural memory. It is often formed as shared memory.

The ‘history’ as discussed in the earlier paragraphs has been proven to be partial and written with ‘power’ as the motive. In fact the ‘history’ itself has been an object of power. The ‘historical memory’ which is a result of the ‘history’ and its records can also be of such a nature only. With ‘history’ being vulnerable to be tampered, the ‘historical memory’ also proves to be ‘alterable’. When it comes to the Indigenous peoples, the Individual memory and the collective memory equally plays significant role in the formation of their identity. With ‘history’ being (almost) always written by the west, and the ‘historical memory’ of the world is loaded with such ‘history’ (and ‘history’ itself being painfully prejudiced towards the Indigenous peoples), collective consciousness and the cultural memory proves to be very crucial in the sustenance of the Indigenous cultures.

The idea of ‘objectivity’ of the west indulges in the disorientation of such memory. In the words of James (Sakej) Youngblood Handerson,

> To succeed in creating this sense of objectivity, colonizers must obscure Aboriginal memory. To strip Indigenous people of their heritage and identity, the colonial education and legal system induce collective amnesia that alienates Indigenous people from their elders, their linguistic consciousness and their order of the world (65).

This process of “obscuring Aboriginal memory” and “inducing collective amnesia” by the western world is a recurrent practice in imperialism in different stages of history across the
world and therefore as noted by Albert Memmi “the memory which is assigned him is certainly not that of his people…and history which is taught him is not his own” (Smith, Linda Tuhiway 104). In the name of protection or preservation of the Indigenous artifacts in the Museums and in the interests of commercialism, the ‘memory’ of the Indigenous people is alienated from their lives in the contemporary scenario. Oodgeroo Noonuccal, an Australian Aboriginal poet understands this predicament and writes in her poem “The Past”:

Let no one say the past is dead.
The past is all about us and within,
Haunted by tribal memories, I know
This little now, this accidental present
Is not the all of me, whose long making
Is so much of the past …
Now is so small part of time, so small a part
Of all the race years that have moulded me. (poetrylibrary.com)

As narrated by Oodgeroo, the memory of the Indigenous people has been belittled in the contemporary scenario. But the Indigenous intellectuals relish their memory-‘ their race years that has moulded them’. The texts written by the Indigenous Intellectuals cherish the memory and legacy of the Indigenous way of life. The celebration of the Native sensibilities by treasuring their ‘collective and cultural’ memory is a recurrent theme in those texts. These texts written by the Indigenous intellectuals are rich sources of Assmann’s four modes of memory, which being,

1. **Mimetic memory**- the transmission of practical knowledge from the past

2. **Material memory**- the history contained in objects
3. **Communicative memory** - the residues of the past in language and communication and

4. **Cultural memory** (Mark Tamm 500)

These texts which are rich sources for the Indigenous Epistemology play a crucial role in the process of the restoration of Native Identity by giving prominence to the collective memory and cultural consciousness of the Indigenous peoples. And it is with this approach the texts taken for study are analysed. With the following understanding the researcher has approached the idea of Indigenous ‘memory’ and its relation to the ‘history’ and ‘identity’ in the Indigenous Epistemology in the dissertation,

1. Identity ascribed on the Indigenous communities by the west is prejudiced and oppressive.

2. Identity claimed by the Indigenous communities relies on the collective memory they cherish.

3. Such memories are storehouse of Native sensibilities.

4. Such Identities are found in the form of memory in their myths, oral histories, legends, tales, Testimonios, autobiographies and other narratives.

5. Such memories are of the nature of being ‘mimetic’, ‘communicative’ ‘material’ and ‘collective’ and

6. Such Indigenous memories have to be cherished and adapted to the contemporary scenario.

With such an understanding, the dissertation will study the challenges posed by the Indigenous epistemology against the alleged supremacy of the colonial knowledge models perpetrated
through the colonial doctrines and discourses. This dissertation is an attempt to understand how the colonial ideological system has extended its control over the Indigenous peoples in the form of cognitive imperialism and how the Indigenous peoples from different parts of the world challenged those colonial policies.

The dissertation has two objectives. The first objective is to study the colonial ideological policies of homogenization of Native cultures as a model of reference. In order to arrive at such a model, this dissertation makes use of the principles of discourse analysis to study the language used in a set of select colonial doctrines and discourses. The result of such a study is the understanding that the language used in such colonial doctrines and discourses could be categorized as, 1. language of binary opposition, 2. language of hierarchy, 3. language of denial, 4. language of animosity and 5. language of patronizing. The dissertation endeavors to find how these five kinds of languages are used to concretize the colonial control over the native cultures by imposing negative identity for the Indigenous peoples. It further explores how the colonial policies, having been legitimized by the necessity to “civilize” the Natives involves in indoctrination, assimilation and acculturation, and thereby leading a brutal assault over the Indigenous peoples and their lifestyle.

The second objective is to find how the intellectuals from the Indigenous communities have challenged such colonial cognitive manipulation. By doing a comparative study of the works of David Unaipon (Australian Aborigine), Iyothee Thassar (Indigenous Tamil (India)), William Apess (Native American), David Cusick (Native American), George Copway (Native Canadian) and Peter Jones (Native Canadian), the study finds that, 1. these Indigenous intellectuals have believed strongly in the emancipatory nature of the collective cultural Indigenous memory as a powerful tool against the colonial policies of indoctrination, assimilation and acculturation, 2. they believed that the partial and prejudiced identity ascribed
upon the Indigenous peoples can be corrected using the rich cultural legacy of the Indigenous
memory, 3. by reliving such memory which is embedded in the form of rituals, practices, oral
histories, songs, myths and legends they could create an alternate positive identity for the
Indigenous peoples and, 4. using such methods of reliving the rich cultural memory they
could rewrite the misinterpreted history that was haunting their identity for centuries. The
dissertation concludes that such rewriting of history becomes an important phase in the
ongoing struggle of restoring the Indigenous identity.