INTRODUCTION

The future of Australia confidently lies in acknowledging the various forces that have shaped the contemporary Australian experience. Knowing Australia is studying Aboriginal history and literature as an inevitable aspect in acquiring self-knowledge. Through Aboriginal literature and history, we can hope to understand not only the actions and attitudes of Aboriginal Australians, but something of the nature of Australians as well. Since 1788, the history and literature of Australia has been a story of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals acting upon, influencing and interacting with each other. Yet, most of the Aboriginal Australians have not appeared in the mainstream Australian literature and history and were presented with half a history which was promoted as complete Australian experience. The relations of Aboriginals and settlers in Australia have often been hegemonic and proved the dominance of Europeans over Aborigines. Led by superior numbers, uncontrolled resources and fire power, European Australians assumed the dehumanized role of oppressors while Aboriginals have been denigrated and oppressed. This has created false sense of superiority among European Australians and inferiority among Aboriginals. All the Australians should genuinely examine their literature and history for what they were. They were representatives of dark movements in colonial history and the growth of admirable democracy. Any mature Australian outlook can develop only by understanding the settler’s invasion and Aboriginal resistance equally. It is
only on the honesty of Australians, equity and justice for all Australians can be achieved. Aboriginal people must be given their due and right place in history and literature.

Considering the dire necessity in redefining the Australian identity, it was Paul Keating, the former Prime Minister of Australia, who urged Australians to redefine Australian national identity by claiming the culture and identity of Aboriginals as the central source of Australian culture. John Howard, the successor of Keating considered this as an attempt to distort mainstream Australian history. He argued: “National identity develops in an organic way over a period of time and social engineers should not try to manipulate it or create a sense of crisis about identity. Australian history risks being further distorted if highly selective views of Australian history are used as the basis for endless and agonized navel gazing about who we are or…as part of perpetual seminar for literary opinion about our national identity” (J. Howard. The Australian. Nov. 19. P.13). Howard is of the opinion that Australians should not engage themselves in constant search for a new or different identity. Since 1970, there is a popular and scholarly interest to explore Australian literature which has resulted in exposing the contesting discourses on nation and identity in Australia. (R. White. Inventing Australia: Images and Identity. (1988). A new trend has emerged in Australian historiography to rewrite the history of Australia with the help of dairies, journals and official records of colonizers and the colonized. In contrast to
the attempts made by earlier historians to trace Australia’s past from the settlement of Europeans, new initiates have been taken to write about those who were denied recognition in the making of Australia. The so-called mainstream history proclaimed that the real history of Australia began with the colonization. It is assumed that the colonizers have brought culture, prosperity and order to Australia. The assertion of Aboriginal history and literature had dismantled these perceptions: “Australia, like any nation with a history of colonization and invasion is morally bound to come to terms with us, the indigenous people. The history of this colonization is only just becoming known. It was denied for hundreds of years and based on the convenient legal fiction that Australia was ‘terra nullius’ an uninhabited land. The British used this to justify massacres…There are no war memorials to our people who died defending their country” (R. Moody. The Indigenous voice: Visions and Realities. 256-87).

The attempts of redefining Australia’s past have conveyed the necessity of perceiving the different streams of narratives found in evolution and consolidation of Aboriginal literature. The essential classifications in Aboriginal literature have become crucial in considering the evolution of Australian literature. Mudrooroo in Indigenous Literature of Australia (1988) has laid out the divisions of Aboriginal literature as: 1. the time of dreaming, beginning with 1788; prehistory before the Europeans- 2. The time of invasions (1901) coming into being the foundations of Australian colonies- 3.
Punitive expeditions and protections – 4. Colonial period: paternalism and assimilation - 5. Period of self determination and assimilation from 1967-1988 - 6. Period of reconciliation and sharing of cultures. This division of placing the Aborigines in the centre of Australian history has become the essential barometer to be observed in every sphere of Australian life. Some of the writers who considered the white’s sympathetic attempts of assimilation have contested the pertinent issues related to the centrality of Aboriginals to Australian history.

Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss’s *The Oxford Literary History of Australia* (1998) considered the issue of ‘settling of English’ as the most crucial aspect in the structural evolution of Australian literature. Exploring the beginnings of European settlement in Australia is significant to understand the narratives of Australian Colonisation. Early narrations of European history displayed the dialectical tension that prevailed between the Colonisers and the Aborigines. The sporadic violence that broke out between the Aborigines and the settlers formed the subjective content of early Australian history. The very presence of Aborigines was regarded as an encumbrance in the way of white progress. During this period, while the Aborigines were embroiled in solving the existential problems, the English in the Australian colonies were seriously engaged in white washing the identities of every race, particularly Aboriginals. As a result, Aborigines were portrayed as unfavourable and imputative in the early versions of
Australian history. In this process, the ruthless exploitation of the whites has mercilessly reduced the number of Aboriginals. Aboriginals were forced to assimilate to the ways of majority, while the whites confronted the changed social, historical and natural circumstances of the world of exile. The Aboriginals, who suffered negative portrayal in early colonial literature, rectified their representations through Aboriginal literature.

Aboriginal literature has consolidated its discourse deriving its sustenance from the concept of ‘Fourth World Identity’. The Fourth world perspective has associated the Aboriginals of Australia with the Indigenous groups of America, Canada, New Zealand, India etc. This has consolidated the universal historical, cultural and religious reflections and resonances of Aboriginals across the globe. This universal spectrum of Aboriginal identity has elicited overseas interest in exploring the enigmatic world of Aboriginals. Bernard Smith in *The Spectre of Truganini* (1980) observes: “…A Spirit of nationalism…is uniting people of Aboriginal descent …throughout commonwealth… but there can be little doubt that it is now the most important and vocal national minority in the country… and is developing widespread international connections” (36). But it is believed that Aboriginal literature has emerged only from 1960s. The argument that the Aboriginal societies are primarily oral societies and it is only with the colonialism that written text is inhabited by Aborigines proves to be a white lie. The written text has been employed by Indigenous Australians as a mode of political and
cultural self representation much earlier than colonialism. The petition submitted by Tasmanian Aborigines in March 1847 to Queen Victoria’s secretary of state for the colonies as a response to the forced relocation effected from 1830 to 1834 is an evidence of their early proficiency with written alphabetical order. The genesis of Fourth World identity and consciousness is attributed to the circumstances of 1960s. Contemporary Aboriginal critical writing has its historical foundations in much a longer history of Aboriginal political and cultural critique. The post colonial caption ‘The Empire Writes Back’ (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith & Helen Tiffin) should be accurately read as: ‘The Empire has already written back’ in view of the significance of Aboriginal literature.

It is pertinent to observe that Australian Aboriginal literature and Aboriginal movement had emerged influenced by the similar political, social and cultural conditions. The referendum of 1967 on the racial discrimination clauses in Australian constitution and the establishment of Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of National parliament in 1972 illustrated the arrival of new era in Aboriginal affairs. The autonomy and the political influence of Aboriginals increased throughout the entire country and led to the granting of franchise to Aboriginals in 1961 and ‘freedom rides’ organized by Charles Perkins in 1965. These social and political movements consolidated around the values such as sovereignty, self determination and community control in the areas of social action. This has brought in the issues of land rights,
cultural heritage, health, education and housing for more concentration and equal availability. These important socio-political changes altered the Aboriginal culture and prepared them to invite the literary experiments of Aboriginal literature. This has further consolidated the fundamental relationship between the socio-political milieu and Aboriginal creative writing in English. Adam Shoemaker in *Black Words White Page: Aboriginal Literature-1929-1988* (2000) analyses the relationship that existed between social consciousness and literary consciousness: “It is complex relationship. It is not one in which the literature demonstrably operates as a direct reaction to socio-political events (although this is occasionally the case); nor is it a relationship in which literature observably influences Aboriginal behaviour or political action” (10). Shoemaker is of the view that Aboriginal literature has to be understood as a close proximate reflection of social events. The naturalism conveyed in Aboriginal novels and the inspiration espoused by Aboriginal plays stem from the personal experiences of Aboriginal writers. Most of the Aboriginal characters are modeled upon individuals to a great extent on the familiarity of Aboriginal writers. In short, it must be examined and evaluated that Aboriginal literature cannot be studied in isolation but always in terms of social environment, the historical events and in the midst of responsible circumstances. However, the approach to Aboriginal literature is explicitly historical, sociological and cultural and it refuses to be deterministic under all the situations. These perspectives demonstrate that
Aboriginal literature is a phenomenon worthy of serious cultural and critical considerations.

Aboriginal literature is primarily concerned with Aboriginal themes. But, there are also many White Australian writers who have dealt with Aboriginal themes. Some of the Australian writers deriving inspiration from Aboriginality depicted Aboriginal themes. This has brought in the question of Aboriginal identity to be defined on the lines of exclusive Aboriginality. The Aboriginal consciousness has defined that Aboriginal literature strictly should comprise of the writings by Aboriginals only. Though, this perspective limits the subject of Aboriginality as the property of Aboriginal writers, it has exposed the politics of representation. Representation of some one on behalf of community, race or class is viewed as act of domination. It is also viewed as an act of independence and self proclamation. Every race, community, class, caste etc., is expected to carry the representation on its own irrespective of the disunity involved. The sagacity of idealism, progressivism and humanism is found to be in the efforts involved in making the subjugated groups learn the act of representation. Ernie Blackmore in Speaking out Black (2008) probes the issue of who is speaking out whom? in relation to Urban/Indigenous voice reflected in Australian theatre argues the voice that speaks for the large number of Aboriginals should necessarily be an Aboriginal voice. Though literature is the product of cross cultural communication, Aboriginal literature is particular about the concerns of few
Europeans who established genuine criticism against their own dominant society. It is also very particular about the parallel and contrastive approaches adopted by Aboriginal and non Aboriginal writers in dealing with controversial Aboriginal subjects. So, in the gradual evolution of Aboriginal literature, Aboriginal subjectivity has been shaped and moved from passive representation to deterministic uncompromising portrayal of ultra post colonial Aboriginality.

The thesis entitled “Fourth World Literature: A Cartography Of The Determined Strategic Quest Of Aboriginal Literature” is an attempt at presenting the issues involved in the evolution of Aboriginality subjectivity from the times of Judith Wright to the times of Anita Heiss. It is a conscious evolution of the travesty of Aboriginality elevated by the conscious endeavors of Aboriginal writers. The first chapter entitled ‘Fourth World Literature’ presents the genesis of ‘Fourth world identity’ and its consolidation in the attempts of George Manuel in circumscribing the indigenous people across the globe. The chapter introduces how the concept of ‘Fourth World Identity’ caught like wild fire and inflated the literary reflections in the works of Adam Shoemaker and Gordon Brotherston. After introducing the concept of ‘Fourth world identity’, the chapter examines the evolution of Aboriginal literature of Australia in relation to socio, economic, literary and cultural circumstances. It presents a brief history of how Aboriginals came into conflict with white settlers. It examines the popular
perceptions of Aboriginals in the writings of Australian writers during the period of world wide economic depression 1929-1945. It establishes how the portrayal of Aboriginal subjectivity acted as precursor for more enlightened views about Aboriginals. The chapter particularly mentions the contribution of David Unaipon, the first Aboriginal writer in English whose contribution is assessed with the colonial prejudice. The perceptions of Aboriginals assisted by anthropological perspectives during 1945-1961 are examined in the middle of the chapter bringing the required intensity to the argument. The literary contributions of Mary Durack, Patrick White, Randolph Stow, Donald Robert Stuart, and Douglas Lockwood are examined as illustration of Aboriginal stereotypes. After the end of this period, proclaiming the emergence of Independent Aboriginal literature, the chapter examines the theme of Australian history reflected in the plays of Kevin Gilbert, Jack Davis, Robert Merrit and in the novels of Colin Johnson. The chapter examines the contemporary themes of Australian Aboriginal novels. It presents the synthesis of Australian cultural past and present, the relationship between sex and violence, integral components between sex and violence etc. as the themes reflected in the novels of Colin Johnson, Faith Bandler, and Archie Weller. As the next component in the chapter the themes of Aboriginal poetry in the contribution of Woodgeroo Noonucal, Jack Davis, Kevin Gilbert are examined. It also examines the exclusive contribution of Aboriginal Drama in presenting Aboriginal subjectivity in the plays of Jack
Davis, Kevin Gilbert and Gerald Bostock. Presenting the credentials of Aboriginal literature, the chapter ends with the proposition of examining the transformation of Aboriginal identity found in the works of Judith Wright, Sally Morgan, Kim Scott and Anita Heiss.

The second chapter entitled “An Australian Experience” examines the poetry of Judith Wright. Poems from the anthologies of The Moving Image, Woman to Man, The Gateway, The Two Fires and Five Senses are examined critically and analytically. Judith Wright as a poet and activist dispelled the European perspectives in understanding the landscape of Australia. Celebrating the enigmatic nature of Australia, she unfurled the terror of Colonial history of Australia and oriented the minds of Australians to accept the burden of guilt conscience for subjugating the Aboriginals. Believing the truth of the imagination, she developed profound respect for Aboriginal lives in Australia. She propagated the ethical sense of human dignity and professed an essential world view. But her poetry was denounced as a mere representation of politics. The current Aboriginal consciousness probed the unexplored aspects of depicted Aboriginal life in Wright’s poetry. Her significant poems ‘Bora Ring’ ‘Nigger’s Leap, New England’ and ‘Half-Caste Girl’ considered as representative Aboriginal poems are accused of conveying politics involved in exploiting Aboriginal subjectivity despite the identified profound sense of Aboriginal history, place and environment. She is criticized for exploiting Aboriginality as a poetic symbol for her own end.
Wright’s engagement with Aboriginality is considered purely artistic and philosophical. These accusations are substantiated with her admittance that she had very little contact with Aborigines in her life. Wright is understood to have accepted that the awareness of historical guilt is her own developed perspective. From this it is obvious, that the sensibilities, the new synthesis and the guilty consciousness in recognizing the Aboriginal identity is understood as part of larger aesthetic and philosophical framework. The chapter addresses the inconsistency in Judith Wright’s engagement with Aboriginality, besides providing an elaborate analysis of most of her significant poems. The phase in which Judith Wright addressed the themes of Aboriginality is considered as an ambiguous phase. The chapter ends with the note to study the situation that paved the way for the representation mixed Aboriginal identity found in the works of Sally Morgan.

The third Chapter entitled as “A Conscious Compromised Quest” examines Sally Morgan’s *My Place* and *Wanamurragany* analytically in the light of Post colonial feminist logistics. Sally Morgan’s *My Place* is considered as ground breaking autobiographical adventure that surpassed the works of earlier Aboriginal women writers such as Monica Clare, Shirely Smith, Margaret Tucker and Oodgeroo Noonucal. The chapter conveys that one needs to go beyond the classified notions of Feminism (First World, Second world and Third World Feminism) to examine the issues involved in *My Place*. The historical and textual discourses latent in *My Place* illustrate
autobiography and historiography as exemplifications to be emulated by Aboriginal writers. Apart from this *My Place* is also projected as ‘autoethnography’ as the oral narratives as counter narratives to autobiographical versions. Going beyond these literary sign posts, *My Place* contains split identities, dual loyalties in a mix of autobiography, sociography, ethnography and transcription. *My Place* as a hybridized text with two layers of narration, was proclaimed as the representative text of Aboriginality by the west. It is due to the presence of hybridized nature of utterances, *My Place* is accused of failure in representing a single definition of Aboriginality. The readers are positioned in several incompatible ways. Its appeal to the white readers is considered as the strong recommendation for the racial cohabitation in Australia. This breakthrough initiated by *My Place* in Aboriginal narrations is vehemently criticized by Aboriginal critics and writers. Mudrooroo considered *My Place* as the publishing ploy. Jackie Huggins expressing her reservation criticized that *My Place* has paraded Aboriginality to the white literary world. Emphasizing that Aboriginality cannot be understood by Non Aboriginals, Huggins makes a pertinent observation that reclaiming history and place in Australian society is an act of Aboriginal consciousness and identity. Analyzing the critical response of the Aboriginal critics, the chapter establishes the unwillingness of Aborigines to accept the Aboriginality defined by Sally Morgan in *My Place*. The Chapter presents the thematic illustration of Sally’s *Wanamurruganya*. It is the
autobiography of her grandfather Jack McPhee’s life. The issues of displacement, loss of love and people and the enforced life on Aboriginals are portrayed at the backdrop of Jack McPhee’s narration of life. Though the work is not as influential as My Place, the chapter provides the examination of Wanamurraganya to establish the flexibilities in Sally’s representation of knowing the Aboriginals. In its own way, Wanamurraganya is understood to have provoked serious rhetorical questions: where are the Aboriginal intellectuals? Examining the two works of Sally Morgan, the chapter has shown that the subject of Aboriginality is the centrality of Australian culture. The chapter concludes that Aboriginal writers have perceived the representation of Aboriginality in different way well ahead of Sally’s representation.

The fourth chapter entitled as “Facets of Aboriginality” provides a critical elucidation of Kim Scott’s Benang. The chapter provides a through illustration of different facets of discovered Aboriginality. Kim Scott, hailing from mixed heritage of Aboriginal and colonial succeeds in answering the lapses found Morgan’s My Place. Scott identifies the several factors responsible for the formation of Aboriginality. He reveals the stories of the characters Fanny, Harriette, Harley, Jack, William Coolman, Sandy One Mason to prove the existence of Aboriginality in different forms. Particularly, Scott provides an insight into the anxieties over race and miscegenation through A.O. Neville, the central figure of Benang. He refers
to the archival material of Neville’s administration and opens up the dichotomy in the past history. Preventing the mainstream version of history, Scott retrieves the inglorious past hidden under the mask of glorious past. At the narrative level, conveying the necessity of local histories, Scott proves that writing as a means to contest the knowledge of colonial people about Aboriginals and their relations. He settles the debate regarding the identity of Aboriginality and Non Aboriginality by articulating the cultural differences and initiates an empowering process for Aboriginals. The chapter argues that understanding Benang in the light of Aboriginal consciousness obviously reveals many facets of Aboriginality. Further, the chapter tries to exhibit that the transition of Aboriginality from Sally’s finds its completeness in Benang. Aboriginal identity in Benang acquires appreciably universal, intellectual and contemporary cultural paradigms.

The fifth chapter entitled “A Determined Strategic Quest” examines Anita Heiss’s sensational novels ‘Not Meeting Mr. Right’ and ‘Avoiding Mr. Right’. Anita Heiss as a renowned popular Aboriginal novelist, examines the predicament of Aboriginal women’s lives confronted with the current cultural degradation in Australia. Taking a sudden leap from analyzing the inevitable basic necessities in life, Heiss makes a subtle probe into the situation when Aboriginal women try to select a better husband from the wretched culture that exists in the form of dating and surfing. In Not Meeting Mr. Right, Heiss makes Alice Aigner to lay down ten point formula in choosing her husband.
As part of implementing her strategy in locating Mr. Right she subscribes to dating culture and eventually fails in finding Mr. Right. In *Avoiding Mr. Right* she makes Peta one of the central characters of *Not Meeting Mr. Right* to give up desperate search for Mr. Right only to find a better professional career. The chapter argues that the attempt of Heiss is to expose the futility and nullity of mainstream Australian culture. Heiss exposes the sexual incompetence of white Australians. She depicts the contemporary cultural wretchedness through which Aboriginal women are physically and culturally exploited. The chapter also examines the inapplicability classifications of Post colonial feminisms in deciphering these novels. The chapter ends with the proposition of bringing the evaluation of these novels within the framework of Fourth World Feminist literary criticism.