CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the natural world has been more than just a subject of inspiration. The representation of nature and the exploration of the human relationship with nature can be said to permeate all aspects of life. It is a medium to express human self-understanding and enables the articulation of subtle as well as the most profound human emotions. Examining the depiction of nature in literature provides us a means to delve into the interpretation and relationship between man and nature.

Nature in literature is sub-divided into different categories and one among them is landscape. It presents nature with its distinctive features and makes it challenging as well as inspiring. Since its coinage, the term has undergone tremendous changes. It has embraced diverse meanings, definitions and approaches, which vary according to its usage. The term basically suggests a particular location viewed from a particular point and represented, either in words or in pictorial images. The location generally features an area of land, which includes physical features, flora and fauna as well as abstract elements.

Landscape is one of the oldest forms of human communication with Nature. It has also played a vital role in almost every society in the world. For the primitive man, landscape was a tool used to communicate with the gods and spirits. It was an indissoluble part of life. In the modern world, landscape is used in establishing social, political, cultural and economic identities. It is modified and transformed into the desired landscape, which
enables the individual to bring about a social change and add distinctiveness to a particular landscape.

The interpretation and significance of landscape keeps changing with time. Each interpretation is influenced by a particular culture, beliefs, customs and traditions. As Meining says:

"it will soon become apparent that even though we gather together and look in the same direction at the same instant, we will not, we cannot, see the same landscape. We may certainly agree that we will see many of the same elements—houses, roads, trees, hills—in terms of such denotations as number, form, dimension and colour. But such facts take on meaning only through association; they must be fitted together according to some coherent body of ideas...."¹

Thus landscape interpretation by a sculptor will be different from that of a landscapist; the way a poet looks at the landscape will be different from the way a farmer looks at it. Landscape interpretation is therefore, both collective and individualistic. One cannot interpret landscape or view landscape from one angle alone; landscape is multi-dimensional and multi-layered in character and thus interpreting landscape and its many forms is an uphill task.

The present research will analyse what makes one accept a landscape? What and how does landscape influence an individual? What is the relevance of landscape in a society? Why is

¹ D. W. Meining ed., The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.33-34
the interpretation of a landscape important? Lastly, why do we need to maintain ‘harmony’ while interpreting landscape in the case of Australia?

Discovered ‘officially’ in the year 1606, Australia is celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2006. In its 400 years of ‘existence’, Australia’s landscape continues to be multi-faceted, inexplicable and mysterious. It is a continent, which has one of the most biologically diverse outbacks—rainforests and coastal regions—as well as man-made landscapes—suburbs and pastoral ones—in the world. As Australia is the lowest, flattest and driest continent of the world, its landscapes are extremely delicate and infertile. Brown is more prominent than green on its vast expanses. The magnificence of its landscape adds to its unpredictability. According to Parfit, “Australian landscape is raw, dramatic, difficult ... and hard to maintain and if one flies around Australia, it is like taking a spaceship to Mars.”

Australian landscape is extremely hard to predict and even harder to understand. A look at its geographical constitution reveals that six per cent of its surface is above 600 metres in height while the remaining 91 percent is below this altitude. It is mostly an arid continent—about one-third of it is desert, one-third steppe and a third, moderately humid. It is home to the world’s oldest continuous cultural traditions. Australia also boasts of being one of the oldest landmasses that have been populated for an estimated 2

2 Cited in Project Gutenberg of Australia, available at http://gutenberg.net.au

3 Michael Parfit, “Australia: A Harsh Awakening”, in National Geographic, no.1, July 2000, p.8

4 Australia was part of the ancient supercontinent named Gondwana. After it split from the supercontinent some 50 millions years back and its landscape “hardly” changed.
60,000 years. And it is the only country to govern an entire continent.

Its geographical location means that it has some of the worst climatic conditions in the whole world. With the Tropic of Cancer passing almost through the middle of the continent and also being in the sub-tropical high-pressure zone, Australia has a very dry climate. The rainfall pattern is highly imbalanced. Only 10 per cent of the land receives 100 cm rainfall or more. Moreover, the hot and dry condition reduces the effectiveness of the rainfall because of high rates of evaporation.

Australia’s history of separation from other continents, its isolation and exclusiveness has added uniqueness to its flora and fauna. Its natural vegetation, like its climate, is unique. It mostly consists of deserts, vegetation, grassland, shrub land and open woodland. Eucalyptus and acacia are the dominant trees. Most of the flora consists of xerophytic plants and animals are marsupials.

The above physical description of the Australian landscape creates a picture of confusion and wonder. Its uniqueness and inimitability are unquestionable. As mentioned, its vast monotonous plains and plateaus, its limited hills and sluggish streams that often dry up altogether, add to the landscape’s uniqueness and exclusivity. Two distinct groups, the Aboriginal people and the Europeans, have managed to successfully survive in these exigent conditions. The Aboriginal people have been living in the continent for more than 60,000 years and the Europeans for the past 200
years. Both the groups have become attuned to the land and adjusted itself to the changing landscape. They have both 'accepted' the challenges it has offered, especially in the last two hundred years.

Since the landing of the Europeans, the Australian landscape has undergone some radical physical as well as psychological changes. These changes led to two distinct interpretations of the Australian landscape. The Aboriginal people described the 'landscape' as a creation of their ancestors. They were the 'guardians' of the land. On the other hand, for the Europeans, the 'landscape' was for their material and political benefit. They were the 'owners' of the land. Both the interpretations form an integral part of Australian history and culture, which is yet to solve the question of 'guardianship' and 'ownership' with regards to the interpretation of landscape.

These two interpretations are not only contrary, but also run parallel to each other. The Aboriginal people believed in the philosophy that 'people are a part of Nature' and the Europeans believed in the philosophy that 'people are above Nature'. Both the views have left a deep impact on the interpretation, significance and importance of landscape in Australia. Both the groups follow two distinct philosophies in interpreting the landscape that question each another's interpretation. The divergent interpretations give rise to the question of 'authenticity' with regard to the way Australian landscape is to be interpreted.

The Aboriginal people's interpretation of landscape is based on their 60,000 years of inhabiting one of the oldest landmasses in
the world. Their existence revolved around the dictums laid by Nature and their interpretation of landscape was the exact opposite of that of the Europeans. Their interpretation was guided by diverse ideas, values, norms, customs and perceptions about landscape. According to the Aboriginal people, landscape is their 'spirit country'. To them, each landscape had a story of its own and it was not just about viewing nature, but associating themselves with it. They lived in complete harmony with nature.

Their life was shaped by their Dreamtime stories, which explained how the world came to be and how they must conduct themselves. According to traditional beliefs, people were the caretakers of the land. For the Aboriginal people, "landscape is an externalisation of the ancestral being; through paintings and scared objects their human descendants re-internalise landscape in the form of a living and transforming code." Their survival and success was guided by the relation they had with landscape. Through their beliefs and ceremonies they sustain this relationship with landscape.

However, with the arrival of the Europeans, their beliefs and life underwent a major change, as did their outlook and interpretation of the landscape. The most prominent change was the shift from landscape to cityscape. They were uprooted from their original set-up, and was gradually 'detribalised' and urbanised. With change in habitat, there was also change in the landscape and the way it was interpreted and analysed. The

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Aboriginal people interpretation of landscape oscillates between their past and present connection with the landscape.

The new landscape was an assortment of their surviving culture. With urbanisation, the interpretation of landscape was further complicated. The Aboriginal people had to survive in harsh 'city' conditions, where the challenge was not only with regards to basic amenities, but also how to safeguard the remaining Dreamtime landscape. These landscapes constantly reminded them of their glorious past that had been brutally uprooted by the Europeans. The question is which landscape they should keep in mind while interpreting and describing the landscape - their past 'Dreamtime' landscape or their present 'cityscape'.

On the other hand, the European interpretation of the Australian landscape starts with the search for Terra Australis Incognita, a land that was popularised by Ptolemy in 150 AD as a land rich in spices, minerals and inhabited by 'mythical beasts'. Mapmakers described it as "an indeterminate continent and decorated it with lush vegetation and barbarous splendour." A landing by Dutch seamen then paved the way for other European navigators, who then landed at different areas of the continent. The table given on the next page has details of the numerous European navigators and pioneers who landed on the newly found continent. Also given are details of their achievements, some of which are a first in the navigational history.

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### LANDINGS IN AUSTRALIA FROM 1606-1896

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Willem Janszoon (Jansz)</td>
<td>Made the first authenticated discovery of Australia, while in command of the <em>Duyfken</em>. Charted about 300 km of the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Luis Vaez de Torres</td>
<td>Sailed through the Torres Strait in the San Pedro and Los Tres Reyes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>Dirk Hartog</td>
<td>Landed the Eendracht on Dirk Hartog Island on the west coast of Australia. Erected a pewter plate to mark his arrivals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>Frederik de Houtman</td>
<td>Landed at Bunbury on the west coast of Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1621-22</td>
<td>John Brooke</td>
<td>Shipwrecked in the Trial, off the western coast of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Jan Carstensz</td>
<td>Landed on the north-eastern coast of mainland Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>Pieter Nuyts</td>
<td>Stumbled upon the south coast of Western Australia and followed it eastward for about 1500 km.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>Francois Thijssen</td>
<td>Charted part of southwest coast of Australia and Nuyts Archipelago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>Gerrit Frederikszoon de Witt</td>
<td>Ship ran aground off the west coast of Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1628-29</td>
<td>Francois Pelsart</td>
<td>The Dutch ship <em>Batavia</em> was wrecked on the west coast of New Holland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1636</td>
<td>Gerrit Pool and Pieter Pietersz</td>
<td>Missed Torres Strait, but sighted Dundas Strait and names Van Diemen Gulf.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1642-43</td>
<td>Abel Tasman</td>
<td>Circumnavigated Australia; discovered and took possession of Tasmania, New Zealand and some Fijian and Tongan islands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1644</td>
<td>Abel Tasman</td>
<td>On his second voyage, he established that areas now known as Western Australia and Queensland were part of the same land mass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>John Daniel</td>
<td>Sighted the New Holland coastline and made a sketch survey of the Wallabi group of Houtman Abrolhos.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>William Dampier</td>
<td>Visited the northwest coast of Australia. First Englishman to suggest that New Holland should be explored by the English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1696-97</td>
<td>Willem de Vlamingh</td>
<td>Looking for the Ridderschap van Holland, Willem De Vlamingh charted the Perth region on the vessels <em>Geelvinck</em>, <em>Nijptang</em> and <em>Weseltje</em>. He travelled 80 km inland on the Swan River with ship’s artist Victorszoon, making pictorials of the coast. De Vlamingh replaced Hartog’s pewter plate and then charted Christmas Island on his return trip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>William Dampier</td>
<td>Visited Shark’s Bay in the Roebuck.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>Chevalier de Bougainville</td>
<td>Hoped to discover east coast of New Holland and claim it for France, but turned northward at Bougainville Reef.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>James Cook</td>
<td>Landed at Botany Bay and took possession for England. Mapped part of the coastline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>James Cook</td>
<td>First explorer to cross the Antarctic circle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>Comte de Laperouse</td>
<td>Sailed into Botany Bay at roughly the same time as the First Fleet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Watkin Tench</td>
<td>Sailed to Australia with First Fleet, which arrived at Botany Bay in 1788.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Arthur Phillip</td>
<td>Commanded the First Fleet to Botany Bay and was the first Governor of New South Wales. Discovered the Hawkesbury River.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>Watkin Tench</td>
<td>Explored inland from Port Jackson along Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>William Dawes</td>
<td>Explored to the west and southwest of Port Jackson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>William Bligh</td>
<td>Mutiny on the <em>Bounty</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>George Bass and Matthew Flinders</td>
<td>Both explored the Australian coastline and circumnavigated Tasmania, proving it to be an island. Flinders circumnavigated Australia.</td>
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*Source: Adapted from <http://gutenberg.net.au/pages>*

The first authenticated landing on Australian soil was in March 1606, by the Dutch East India Company. Led by Captain Wilhelm
Jantz and Jan Lodewijkszoon van Rosinger charted the west coast of Great Southland (now referred to as Queensland). They named the land New Holland.

The map depicts the first few European expeditions to reach the Australian shores, most of which took place in the first decade of the 17th century. Wilhelm Janszoon (on the Duyfken) is regarded as the discoverer of Australia. He reached the western coast of the Cape York Peninsula in 1606 AD. However, Portuguese or possibly even Spanish ships may have sighted the coasts of Australia before this time. Some historians believe that a Portuguese expedition under the command of Manuel Godinho de Eredia had reached the Top End already in 1601 AD. Portuguese expeditions are coloured light green, Spanish yellow, and Dutch orange. Shaded areas refer to lands possibly unknown to the Europeans in 1610 AD.

Background map taken from Microsoft Encarta Weltatlas 2001 and authored by Urion Argador
The Dutch landings were mostly confined to the coastal area and when they "found nothing in their sighting to confirm what had been expressed either in Arcadian images of fertile land, often imagined as supporting a white race living in paradise, or in material hope of lands rich in spices or precious metals: nothing to rouse the colonising or the plundering ambitions of their nation states,"7 the continent lost its commercial curiosity and remained 'a place of invention.' As Abel Tasman stated, there were "only poor naked people walking along beaches; without rice or many fruits, very poor and bad-tempered."8

After the Dutch, it was the English who navigated the Australian coast. William Dampier was the first Englishman who landed on the north-west coast in 1688. Dampier was not at all impressed by the landscape and described it as follows.

"The land is of dry sandy soil, destitute of Water... yet producing diverse sorts of Trees: but the woods are not thick, nor the Trees very big...They are like our Apple-trees, and about the same height...There was pretty long Grass... We saw no trees that bore Fruits or Berries. We saw no sort of Animal, nor any Track of Beast...Here are a few small Land-birds, but none as bigger Than a Blackbird. Neither is the Sea very plentifully stored with Fish...Manatee and turtle...is plenty...."9

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8 Ibid., p.24
This interpretation of Australian landscape disappointed the 'acquisitive European voyager seeking trade. It was nowhere near to the Arcadian and Utopian image that they had been expecting. The landscape did not fit their notions of beauty nor did it appear to be beneficial economically. It took nearly 20 years, to change the existing interpretation of Australia and its landscape.

In 1768, when British Lieutenant James Cook was sent from England on an expedition to the Pacific Ocean to observe the transit of Venus from Tahiti, sailing westwards in the *HMS Bark Endeavour*, he sighted the south-eastern corner of the Australian continent on April 20, 1770 (see map given below).
Cook was the first European to document the eastern coastline. He described it as follows:

The land is generally low and level with few hill or mountains...but hardly...can be called a Mountainous Country...it is indifferently well watered, even in dry seasons...The Mountains or Hills are chequered with Woods and Lawns...Land animals are scares ...and the land Fowels are Bustards, Eagles, Hawks, Crows such as we have in England...The sea is indifferently well stock'd with Fish of various sorts...

Both the versions described different parts of Australia. As indicated in the map, different navigators landed in different parts of the Australian coastline. Therefore, the description of the landscape depended on which part of Australia one had landed on. When Cook found Botany Bay in the east, it had a different

10 Ibid., pp.48-51
landscape, compared to New Holland, which was according to Dampier a barren and ‘miserable country’. It was:

...diversified with woods, Lawns and Marshes, the woods are free from under wood of every kind and the trees are at such a distance from one another that the whole country of at least great parts of it might be cultivated without being oblige’d to cut down a single tree...the soil...except in the marshes to be light white sand and producing a quantity of good grass in little tufts about as big as one can hold in his hand and pretty close to one another, in this manner the surface of the ground is coated in the woods between the trees...although wood is here in great plenty yet there is very little variety the largest trees are as large or larger than our oaks in England and grows a good deal like them...there are a few sorts of Shrubs and several Palm trees, and Mangroves...the country is woody low and flat...in the woods are a variety of very boutiful birds such as Cocatoo’s, Lorryquets, Parrots and Crows exactly like those we have in England - water fowls are in plenty...On the sand and mud banks are oysters, Mussels...are the chief support of the inhabitants.11

Both Dampier’s and Cook’s descriptions were based on particular areas in Australia, not the whole continent. Malouf explains this description, “In a continent as large as ours, there are many kinds of landscape, each of them typical of a particular region, no more authentically Australian than the other...the old

11 Ibid., pp.44-47
idea that everywhere in Australia looks the same ... was a myth...."12 Their interpretation was based on the instruction and facts they were asked to look out for in the 'new land'.

Cook undertook the voyage at the request of the Royal Society, which had mainly two purposes. The first purpose was to 'observe the transit of the planet Venus from Tahiti' and the second was the strategic and imperialist purpose, designs to verify if a 'continent existed in the South Seas' and if so to annex it.' According to Bird, "Dampier's version of the land as degraded and barren, and Cook's as offering a fertile future, establishes the terms of a dialectical paradigm ... moving between ... prison and paradise, gloom and optimism...."13 Thereby with changing social, political and economic factors, the interpretation and at the same time misinterpretation of the landscape, presented Australia as a land which over all was either 'hell' or 'heaven'.

In both the interpretations, the landscape was compared to the 'perceived' landscape they were familiar with. The 'real' landscape of Australia was totally different from the European landscape. Europeans had to adjust to the soil, climate, flora and fauna, etc. Where as the 'perceived' landscape of the Great Southland was extremely different from its Utopian image. The Europeans already had a pre-conceived notion of what they were looking for and they were thwarted when it did not match with their expected and familiar interpretations. With each exploration into the interiors of Australia and with each new group of people,

12 David Malouf, The Spirit Of Play (Sydney: ABC Books, 1999), pp.48-49
13 Delys Bird, no.7, p.23
interpretations of both the 'real' and the 'perceived' landscape kept changing.

To the Europeans who arrived in 1788, the landscape appeared harsh and forbidding. They found themselves trapped in a bewildering land at the very end of the world. The challenge, which the convicts faced, was not only against the authorities, but also against the harsh landscape. To them Australia was a material paradise, but a spiritual and 'cultural desert'. Their lack of words to describe the uniqueness, as mentioned above, and with no traditional knowledge about the country, contributed to the negative interpretation of Australia and its landscape. Gradual exploration into the interiors, followed by economic prosperity, political stability and cultural identity led to the Europeans, 'acceptance' of the landscape.

OBJECTIVE OF THE THESIS

Both the Aboriginal people and the Europeans were influenced by their own cultures, beliefs, customs and traditions. Their acceptance of the 'landscape' was not really a matter of choice. Both the groups are still undergoing a lot to adjustment to the changing perception of landscape that each one of them had to adjust with. The changes had social, political, economic and cultural implications. The problem for both the groups lay in their 'perceived' notion of landscape, which meant accepting and interpreting the landscape within a fixed parameter.

As mentioned above, the main question is of 'accepting' and 'interpreting' the landscape. Both the Aboriginal people and
the Europeans failed to 'root' and associate themselves to the 'new' landscape. The Aboriginal people are still struggling to acclimatise themselves with the urban set-up and the Europeans are still apprehensive and confused in their interpretation of the Australian landscape. The sense of being 'rootless' continues to influence both the groups, at different levels, even today.

In the last 200 years, both the groups have had to adjust not only among themselves—the Aboriginal society was divided into rural and urban; the Europeans comprised of different groups of people, e.g., convicts, settlers, gold diggers, nationalists, migrants and the like—but with landscapes as well. The main question is where and which landscape they are referring to when they talk about Australia's 'landscape'?

For the Aboriginal people, the fundamental question, which comes to mind, is the balancing act, which they are performing. On one hand they want to 'return' and 'save' whatever is left of their 'spirit country'; on the other hand they have to survive in the new urban landscape, where they stand out. Since 1788 interpretation, significance and relevance of landscape has changed within the Aboriginal society. It has undergone tremendous changes. For the Aboriginal people, landscape corresponds to life and in spite of all the hardship, their link with the landscape continues.

It is similar for the Europeans also. They had to 'accept' the new 'harsh' landscape as they had no choice. Uprooted from their land, they had limited choice. The process was gradual where they had to find a way of linking themselves to the landscape. They had
to re-create the landscape to something, which enabled them to associate with it. This led to 'Europeanising' the landscape, which acted both as a boon and a bane. In this process of 'linking', they completely changed the landscape, without considering the views of the Aboriginal people. This also led to irreparable damage of the Australian landscape. The question is what made them make these changes? Were these changes required? If so, why is there a sense of confusion, a sense of utter failure, at their not being able to associate with the landscape?

Both the communities had time and again, linked, de-linked and re-linked themselves with the landscape. Above all accepting 'the' landscape, also means accepting the challenges it brings forth, which is complex and multidimensional in nature. Thereby two simultaneously opposite and parallel interpretations of landscape exist in Australia. These opposite interpretations of landscape, when compared, highlight the circumstances, which changed the issue of accepting the landscape for both the groups.

The divergent views of the Aboriginal people and Europeans regarding Australia's landscape have raised a number of questions. Were these views guided by pre-conceived notions or were they spontaneous reactions to the land? Do cultural values affect people's view about their surroundings? It has also brought forth the question of whether such qualities are objectively present in the things they appear to qualify or whether they exist only in the mind of the individual? What are the parameters used while comparing and interpreting the Australian landscape by the Aboriginal people and the Europeans? Finally, why is landscape so important in Australia?
For a better understanding and analysis of the above questions, poetry written on landscape, by Aboriginal and Europeans poets, will be evaluated. This will help analyse the role of landscape and how it has affected the Aboriginal people and the Europeans, especially, in the past two hundred years. Landscape poetry—written since 1778, in the case of Europeans and since 1967 in the case of the Aboriginal people—will be analysed.

These poems narrate events of the past, the experience of the people, and the turbulent social, political and cultural changes that the Aboriginal people and the Europeans went through in the last 200 years. It will be a thematic study and will analyse the poems from social, political, and economic points of view. These developments brought drastic changes in the landscape as well as in the attitude of the Aboriginal people and the Europeans.

The research will analyse the multi-dimensional aspect of poetry written and inspired by the changing landscape. It will critically analyse the reasons and events, which gave rise to different emotions, generated by the change in the landscape. These poems also reveal the co-relation between the two groups vis-à-vis the position of landscape in the Australian psyche. The analysis will also stress on the socio-cultural and political aspect, as reflected in the poems of both the groups.

For the analysis of Aboriginal 'landscape poetry', poems written by the first generation writers, starting from Kath Walker till the present time will be analysed. Besides, oral narratives will also be referred to. For the analysis of European 'landscape poetry'
poems written by Barron Field till the present time will be analysed. This will enable us to a better understanding regarding the paradigm of 'changing' landscape in the Australian context.

For poetry acted as a catalyst between them - Aboriginal people and the Europeans - and the changing dimensions of landscapes. It emerged more as a necessity, than as an art. The Aboriginal people were able to connect to the new cityscape, which was different from their 'Dreamtime' landscape. In their poems the comparison between their past and present landscape is unavoidable. They consciously compare both the landscapes in order to harmonise with their present landscape. For the Europeans, poetry enabled them to connect to the new country. It enabled them to understand the landscape, which was 'different' from what they had experienced. It also paved the way to understand the matrix of the landscape in the Australian context, which is multi-layered and multi-dimensional.

The Aboriginal poet's interpretation of landscape has a nostalgic element with regards to its past and a positive approach about its future, but is puzzled with its present interpretation of landscape. Similar is the case of the European landscape poetry; its interpretation is political and economic oriented. It is still in search of an Australian landscape, which is as individualistic as the English or the American landscapes.

For the Europeans, it had everything to do with adapting and accepting a new landscape. They managed to 'Europeanise' the landscape according to their taste and introduced changes as and when social, economical, political, cultural and ecological
demands arose. The search for 'Australianess' in the landscape, led to the question of what 'Australianess' is about? Both the Aboriginal and European versions of landscape are yet to merge with each other. As such when one talks about Australian landscape, one has to consciously decide which view of landscape one is adopting—Aboriginal or European.

**OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

For a systematic study, this thesis is divided into five chapters, which will attempt to study the complex, interrelated and unified patterns of landscape and its role in the Australian consciousnesses.

The introduction will be followed by the second chapter, which will analyse and evaluate the concept of landscape. It will look into the different meanings and approaches that have evolved with time and how these changes have influenced the individual's concept of culture and identity with a particular landscape. The main aim will be to analyse, the multi-dimensional and multi-layered meanings of landscape and its various approaches. It will also examine Australian landscape and how its meaning has changed, in the last 200 years.

The third chapter takes a look at the emergence of landscape as a theme, in Aboriginal poetry. It will also analyse its impact and relevance in the oral and written tradition. The main focus will be to evaluate the past and present 'landscape,' which form an integral part of the Aboriginal people existence. The change in their 'Dreamtime' landscape, and their struggle to adjust
to the new urban landscape, forms the main core of their poetry. It will also analyse how landscape was politicised by the Europeans, which led to the shift of the Aborigines from 'landscape' to 'cityscape'.

The fourth chapter takes a look at the way Europeans interpreted the landscape. The focus of this chapter is to evaluate the impact of landscape on the Europeans and how it has evolved in the 200 years of occupation. It will focus on the multidimensional feature of Australia’s landscape and how it brings out the question of ‘accepting the landscape which links, de-links and re-links the Europeans with the changing concept of landscape. It has brought attitudinal changes among the Europeans, as well as marginalisation and disappearance of one culture and the emergence of a ‘new’ one, as reflected in their landscape poetry.

The fifth chapter, the conclusion, draws inferences by analysing the findings outlined in the previous chapters. While it is certain that the interpretation of the landscape is turning for the better, the question it still remains to be seen whether Aboriginal people and Europeans will merge ‘Euro-Australian and Aboriginal-Australian consciousness’ in their interpretation of Australian landscape, in the future.