PREFACE

Hugh MacLennan in his popular novel *Two Solitudes* (1945) says that Canada is caught in between British Solitude and French Solitude. Canadian Literature in general was tremendously influenced by the British and French Culture. This has obviously shown the dichotomy in Canadian Culture. As Canada has evolved into mosaic nation, there were voices that disagreed with the general perceptions of Canadian literature. Michael Greenstein in *Third Solitude* has identified the Jewish Canadian writers constituting the *Third Solitude*. *Women’s Solitude & South Asian Solitude* are also created through the writings of Margaret Atwood and other South Asian writers such as Uma Parameswaran, Laxmi Gill, Chitra Bennerjee Diwakaruni etc. With the emergence of Fourth world literatures, Native literature in Canada has upsurged as a spring board providing sagacity to these different streams of solitudes. First Nations literature of Canada has made a distinctive stride in consolidating Fourth World literatures. Natives of America, First Nations of Canada, Maori’s of New Zealand, Aboriginals of Australia and indigenous people across the world are addressed as ‘Fourth World’. Among the various streams of Fourth World literatures, First Nations literature of Canada has made a tremendous contribution for the enrichment of Canadian literature.
Native Canadian literature strongly registers a desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms as they existed in pre colonial society. Native Canadian writings often refer to the rhetoric of decolonization which argues that colonialism needs to be replaced by the recovery of pre colonial, indigenous ways. The multicultural nature of Canadian society makes the issue of what constitutes the pre colonial native culture in contradiction to single dominant cultural group. Native literatures have also challenged the homogeneous, unitary concept of the state and the historical and cultural legacies of colonialism.

Native literature is understood to refer only to texts produced by persons of Native descent, India, Inuit and Metis. Texts about Native peoples by non-native authors are often better treated under mainstream literature in English. Native people in Canada are wary of Non-Native authors writing from a Native perspective. But in Canada, particularly, ‘Native literature’ has often been meant to include even Non-Native authors as the anthologies by Nowlan Michele William and Christian Mowat and Thomas King, Calver Chery, Helen Hoy clearly indicate. But in recent years the literary production of texts by Native authors has grown considerably that there are enough texts available in all literary genres and formats by authors of all Indigenous heritage.
Native Canadian literature has transformed the recursive structures of the ontological dimension in the contemporary meta critical and post theoretical literary scenario. The cultural matrix of historical texts is interpreted in a unique way by Native Canadian literature. At its best Native Canadian discourse, identifying marginals in Canadian Mosaic meaningfully places the subject-object of history in the place of Tomson Highway and in the poetry of Armand Garnet Ruffo.

Native Canadian literature has made an impact in the field of Drama. There is an impressive range of short and long stage plays written by Native people from Canada. This includes Minnie Aodla Freeman’s short stage play *Survival in the South*, on which her later autobiography is based, as well as the collection of plays by Metis and Indian playwrights included *The Land Called Morning: Three Plays*, published by Fifth House in Saskatchewan, and even Waubageshig’s early anthology, *The only Good Indian*, the dress by Nona Benedict. Tomson Highway as the best known Native playwright has moved beyond this place with *Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. His plays are firmly rooted in Native life and complexities of a world in which tragedy and burlesque, the sacred and the profane, Native sharing and economic greed, birth and cancer, professional hockey and sacred traditions exist simultaneously. Coming from a large Cree family from Northern Ontario, speaking Cree and
English fluently, Highway moves with ease in both worlds. Tomson Highway sees his own work and that of the other Native Dramatists in Canada as related and essentially tied to the traditions the authors come from.

Poetry is another genre in which Native Canadians have been most prolific. This may have to do with the Economics of poetry production and certain formats of literary traditions i.e. song, oratory and ritual. The body of poetry published by Native Canadians is very small. Significantly, there are only two anthologies of poetry by Native Canadians. The most prestigious recent anthology is Harper’s Anthology of 20th century Native American poetry. Ed. By Duane Niatum. Among the Native Canadian poets, Armond Garnet Ruffo is the most popular and his poetry questions the ontological and existential issues of Natives in Canadian context. Native treatment of Canadianness gains an added significance in the poetry of Garnet Ruffo. It is from this perspective, the thesis presents the plays of Tomson Highway and the poetry of Armand Garnet Ruffo with objective of elucidating Native Canadianness portrayed in the plays and poetry. A literary transformation from Plays to poetry is presented with motive of portraying the literary significance Native Canadian literature.

The first chapter ‘Native Canadian Literary Discourse’ presents a synoptic view of the evolution of Native Canadian Poetry and Drama. The
chapter gives an apt illustration about the significant thematic concerns of the plays of Tomson Highway and the poetry of Garnet Ruffo. The Second Chapter ‘Elucidating Native Reality’ examines Highway popular play *The Rez Sisters*. The thematic illustration of the play is supported by the textual quotations. The chapter argues how Native tradition is by no means an antiquated remnant to an obsolete past but rather a dynamic force which provides perspectives for the future. The third chapter ‘Conflicting Transformative Identities’ elucidates Highway’s *Dry Lips Oughta to Move to Kapuskasing*. The contradictions encountered by Natives, the existing problems and the influence of colonial burden on the Natives are examined in the theme of the play. The fourth chapter ‘Native Perspectives of Life’ provides a critical and analytical elucidation of the two plays in the light contemporary critical terrains. The fifth chapter ‘Beyond Epidermalization of Identity’ presents the life of Armond Garnet Ruffo through his poetic cannon. It presents how Ruffo has transformed his physical identity from the European descent to Native appearance. The depiction of the images well captured and illustrated with Howard Griffin’s example of *Black Like Me*. The chapter thoroughly examines how Armond Garnet Ruffo has remained a mystery for Native identity. The sixth chapter ‘The New Historicist’ evaluates the life and poetic cannon of Ruffo in the light of New Historicism.
colonial and Michael Foucault’s perspectives to authentically justify the life of Ruffo as a representation of New Historicism.