CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION

Search for identity is a universal phenomena. Many things have close association with it. Basically it is related with the human progress, as well as human development in toto. It is deeply related with socio-cultural contexts. “Who am I? and who are we? are very closely related questions in human identity. The first question leads to recognition where as the second question leads to self awareness.¹

Self recognition and self awareness are purely mental activities. Their main concern is with the human “mind”, which has great significance in human development. As it is related to thought – an intellectual activity, it is supposed as the central element in human life. Broadly speaking

“the mind” is taken to include everything one is inclined to call “mental”- thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions, sensation, moods, dispositions, but intellectual activity has always been its most central element.²

Intellectual activity helps in understanding so many things. Famous philosopher David Hume said that “the mind” or “self” is nothing but a bundle…. of different perceptions.³ Individual learns a lot of things from the society. In isolation, one may not be able to
know who one is? In fact, it is very true that “every person is a sample of the whole human race.”

What Shinn says and the great psychologist Erich Fromm says is of the same meaning. Fromm puts it in this way:

“Men generally are part of people with a shared history, shared customs, shared goals, shared symbols.”

Fromm very realistically said that “One becomes a self only within a group or people.”

One can develop his self personality in association with the people. He comes to know his real place and recognition in the society:

“Being a member of society he is a member of several groups. He may be a member of intimate groups like family, or larger group like vocational or organizational groups or a member of very large groups like religious or national and ethnic groups. All these groups have some character, some self consciousness.”

It’s perhaps significant that the word “self” has been more frequently used than the word “person” in the formulation of metaphysical quest. A famous metaphysical thinker Shoemaker said that “the expression of “personal identity” and “self identity” are often used interchangeably. The term “self” is commonly used by philosophers as a synonym to the word “person”. The term
“self knowledge” clearly does not mean “knowledge of a person”. One’s knowledge of oneself is self knowledge.

To have “self knowledge” means to know who one is. Basically to be conscious of one’s own personality is the crux of self knowledge. According to the great psychologist Carl Jung:

“total personality consists of number of differentiated but interacting systems. The principle one are the “ego”, the personal unconscious and its complexes, the collective unconscious and its archetypes, the persona, the anima and animus and the shadow. In addition to these interdependent systems these are the attitudes of introversion and extraversion and the function of thinking, feeling, seeing and intuiting. Finally, there is the “Self” which is the center of the whole personality.”

Elaborating the same point in connection with self, Hall and Lindzey said that

“the self is the midpoint of personality, around which all of the other systems are constellated. It holds these systems together and provides the personality with unity, equilibrium and stability. The self is life’s goal. That people constantly strive for but rarely reach. Like all archetypes it motivates human behaviour is provided by religion.”
It clearly means that, in everybody’s life, “self” is the pivotal component. It is life’s goal. Almost all people strive for it. As “self” and identity are synonym to “person” many psychologist and philosophers tried to interpret and define it on different levels. Neo Freudian Psychologist Erickson explained it very elaborately. Regarding the theory of human development he gave great importance to the state of adolescence in building, confirming reasonably stable identity. He said that

“identity in simple terms is composed of the answers an individual gives to the question – who am I? and who am I to be? “Identity” is a person’s sense of placement within the world, the meaning that one attaches to one self in the broader context of life.”¹¹

Psychological theory of the “self” treat a person’s self in terms of his “self-concept”. Same thing is true in the case of oneself. As per the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Psychology:

“According to many psychologist such description necessarily situate on a social world as a person among persons. They do this because they are learnt from others and are not logically only applicable to oneself. What can truly be said of one self can also, in principle be truly said of someone else.”¹²

The society plays core role in the development of “self concept”. An individual learns a lot of things from others. “Self” in the
consideration of psychological usage, the Encyclopaedic Dictionary describes it as –

“A person’s framework of self referential meaning – cognitive and affective perceptions percept; one self as object arising from innate dispositions and social interactions across a life time, characterized by thought, feeling, and action relative to a social structure of roles, rules, norms and values.”

By becoming a member of society an individual observes certain roles, rules and symbolic expressions. Particularly, a child enacts through partial performances and observes the family members. These performances in play contexts reflect rules of relationship of independent roles, attitudinally supported by norms and values. These interactions and symbolic expressions play vital role in building self and knowledge of identity. Encyclopaedic Dictionary of psychology puts it as follows:

“From these process of symbolization and performance a concept of self arises - a system of self-referential meaning, a synthesis of imagined notions of “me” culturally emergent and defined in social interaction, therefore engenders a global sense of identity comprising “I”, the experiencing aspect of personal experience, the knowledge of self as object or self as known”
The process of learning in association with the people leads man to know himself. The knowledge of “self” helps to understand the world; the process of understanding self is very significant for so many things.

Erik H. Erikson said that

“identity points to an individual’s link with the unique values, fostered by a unique history of his people. It (Identity) also relates to the cornerstone of this individual’s unique development. Identity expresses a mutual relations, it connotes both persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of same kind of essential character with others.”

Describing the term identity in biographic and theoretical aspects Erikson says:

“at one time it is a conscious sense of individual identity, at another it is an unconscious thriving for a continuity of personal character, at third, it is a criterion for the silent doing of ego synthesis; and finally it is a maintenance of an inner solidarity with a group’s ideal inner solidarity with a group’s ideal and identity.

While giving an exact definition of identity Erikson says:

“A sense of identity means a sense of being at one with one self as one grows and develops; and it means, at the same
time, a sense of affinity with a community’s sense of being with its future as well as its history or mythology”.17

Erikson, as a socio-psychologist treats identity on different levels. It is not limited to oneself but it has a link with his present, past and future also. In this connection he further says that

“identity is a coherence sense of self, it depends upon the awareness that they are meaningful in the context in which life is lived. It depends upon stable values and upon the conventions that one’s actions and values are harmoniously related. It is a sense of whole, sense of integration, of knowing what is right and what is wrong and being able to choose.”18

The above discussion helps us to understand that “identity and self” are synonymous to each other. It is also useful to understand the notion of one’s own self and one’s own personality are one and the same.

“Self” indicates the entire being of an individual. A person’s individual character, the body, emotions, thoughts sensations etc. ‘Constitute’ the individuality of a person”.19

Here, “self” means the individual and the special features of the person. Along with the body – emotions, thoughts and interest of a person are very important. Therefore identity stands for the individuality and uniqueness of the particular person.
When we talk about identity of a person it also means that we talk about his nature, behaviour, and his mental and physical health. It clearly means to talk about his ‘self’.

“In fact, the self is an integration of bodily activities focalized in a personal image whose incarnation is ever more an ideal a gradient to follow, than a condition to maintain”

‘Self Concept’ and self acetualization are very important components in the identity formation. ‘Self concept” is a process which helps to know his own capabilities and limitations:

“Self Concept is the way a person sees herself or himself from a process of self awareness in interaction with others, that is, the individual’s attitude about the self. The individual’s sense of his identity, worth, capabilities and limitations.”

Self actualisation as M. Basavanna defines it is

“an individual’s attempt to attain his ideal self or to attain a healthy, optimal forms of psychological functioning. As formulated by Goldstein, a striving towards becoming a complete person. As elaborated by Maslow, inborn tendency to make the most of one’s possibilities as a person.”

As per Erikson, identity formation

“employees a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual
judges himself in the light of what he perceives to the way in which others judges him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him.”

A continuous striving of an individual to become a ‘complete man’ compels him to become aware of himself and the circumstance in which he lives. As an individual he goes through the process of observation, comparison and contrast. Such process helps him in understanding what he is and what he wishes to be. In fact, this is nothing but the notion of ‘self-concept’ in the background of situations where he lives in. The development of self-concept is nothing but an image of himself in his own eyes. In one sense “it is the image or mental picture one has of oneself as a set of attitudes about one’s own mental and physical capabilities, one’s social stimulus value (that is, the image one thinks one’s appearance present to other), and one’s ideologies and values. In other sense, however, self-concept reflects one’s set of roles, if roles are defined as the expectations other have about behaviours required by and appropriate to one self…. The perceived reactions of others are internalised as guide to behaviour those reactions have become the part of the self-concept.” Self concept plays vital role in all activities of the person. In fact, self-concept works as a guide to
behaviour and inter-personal relationships. Socio-Psychological and cultural forces act as the compelling factors on the individual. The roles, conducts, norms, status and behaviour of an individual is controlled by these forces. Sometimes it is quite possible that if somebody does not follow the set values of the society may become the cause of conflict or controversy. The simple reason for this is that the expectation of the society and the role played by the individual or group are controversial to each other. At such time multifaceted personality can cope up with such type of situation.

Self concept is the key in individual’s behaviour but at the same time it is in need of feedback from the society. Many events affect the individual and inscribe permanent mark on the psyche of the individual. Such experiences may be of good or bad quality but they have certain effect in the development of self-concept. “Self-consciousness” and “self-awareness” and “self-confidence” are the concepts which help an individual to survive in the society. Therefore, when we talk about “self” it has plurality of dimensions like ‘self’ related to one-individual, him or her, and ‘self’ as an outcome of socio-political and cultural product of particular circumstances. Because of this, the notion of the self is one of the most central and focal aspects in the life of an individual. It is true that there is not any possibility of individual development or
formation of self-concept in isolation so it has to be understood on
the socio-cultural framework. It has to be understood with an
interaction of “other”. Hence, the ‘self’ and ‘other’ mutually define
each-other, and each concept of self serves as a point of reference
for the other. Ziller, an important psychologist has rightly said that

“definition of the self necessarily involves
the other and its reverse.”

In connection with the aspect of self it is said that

“there are two major aspects of self: first, a
set of relatively private self-regarding
attitudes; and second, a set of internalised
perceptions of the expectations and
attitudes others have about oneself”.

The microscopic understanding of ‘self’ shows that, “self = a person’s
inner being including the mind and spirit and identity = the state of
being very like or the same as” which has a deep concern with
‘who’ or what and it ultimately comes to the “state of consciousness”
or mind. So to get clear insight of “self” and “identity” one has to go
to find roots of it. And its roots are in the life of man itself. Dr.
Babasaheb Ambedkar, an eminent scholar on Buddhist ideology
analyzed Lord Buddha’s concept. He says that, “it is true that
consciousness arises with birth and dies with death”.

The Buddha clarified it by saying that

“the coexistence or aggregation of the
physical elements produces consciousness
wherever there was Rupa or Kaya there was consciousness accompanying it”.  

Lord Buddha has tried to establish a link between body and mind. He has done a pioneering work on human mind, consciousness and the effect of the bad or good work on human psyche. In fact, he has weaved the past journey of man with the scientific vision with the coming future. This type of thinking on ‘mana’ or mind or consciousness in Buddhist philosophy carries great significance throughout the human history. Regarding consciousness he remarked:

“Consciousness is cognitive, emotional, and volitional. When it is cognitive it gives knowledge, information, as appreciating or apprehending, whether it be appreciation of internal facts or of external things and events”.  

If we think ‘consciousness’ and identity in Freudian terminology, identity is a manifestation of the ego, super ego and identity (the conscious). But in Kantian phraseology, however ‘self’ is empirical self. It has to go through various phases.

By keeping “soul” as a centre, Hindu philosophy considered “self” as the gross assortment of mana (mind), chitta (intelligence) and ahankara (egotism) surrounding the soul. In this consideration “self” seems to be glorified at the spiritual level, where as Buddhist philosophy followed the golden midpath and thought it on
practical ground and kept it on human level as “self is consciousness”.

If we compare Buddhist and Lockian understanding regarding conscious, we can find great similarities in them. What Lord Buddha thought twenty five hundred years ago, same thing is there in modern psychology of Lock. He defined human consciousness as, “the perception of what passes in man’s own mind.” Further he says that “consciousness or reflection is a person’s observing or noticing the “internal operations” of his mind. It is by means of consciousness that a person acquires the ideas of the various operations or mental states, such as the ideas of perceiving, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing and willing and learns of his mental states at the given time. It “might be properly enough to be called as “internal sense” because “the understanding turns inwards upon itself, reflects on its own operations, and makes them the object of its own contemplation.”

The internal functioning of mind at various levels and the presence of mind regarding the situations where the person dwells affects him. His thinking regarding himself and the outer circumstances may change very drastically. Existentialism, an outcome of the 20th century, is the best example of it. As per this approach of an individual is concern he is a “stranger” and
alienated in the society. Due to the lack of meaningful set of values and an absence of regular pattern of experience there are very few chances of real development in such social context. The harsh realities of the life could not be soothed with philosophical or simply ideal solutions. Jean Paul Sartre, a pioneer of existentialism says that “man is a vast emptiness which he carries with him as a snail carries its shell.”

So, by considering these different types of views we come to know that the understanding of an individual about “self” or his real being is his “identity”. To identify one’s being means to identify one’s selfhood. It has been a continuous search of man throughout the human history. Some proponent are of the view that “personal identity consists in psychological continuity and connectedness… what is really important to us is not the identity per se but rather the psychological relationships that are (normally) constitutive of it”.

It clearly means that in search of the self or an identity consists in psychological continuity. Man, being an active member of the vast universe tries to link himself with the inner self and with the social reality and consciousness. And the process of consciousness deals with the fundamental constituents of human life like feeling, knowing, thinking, sensing and the curiosity of so
many things. Though consciousness helps him in activity as a “dynamic self”, the subconscious and unconscious motives and impulses are at the background of all these things. As a “dynamic self” the subconscious and unconscious motives and impulses are at the background of all these things.

In connection with the personal identity, Lock very persistently said that

“personal identity consists not in the identity of any substance (whether material or immaterial) but in sameness of consciousness”.\textsuperscript{35}

It can be interpreted on the level of memory. Lock further states that

“personal identity is somehow definable in terms of memory: roughly, that someone now is identical to someone who existed yesterday - if and only if he remembers in a certain way (from the inside as it were) or is capable of so remembering, that person’s actions and experiences.”\textsuperscript{36}

In the gradual development of an individual psychological continuity plays the vital role. Imitation leads to conscious learning, conscious efforts help in the development of self-concept and self concept results into a particular person or personality. This person may have his own ideas, philosophical approach or particular opinion. He may be a member of a particular group, follower of some religion, of particular political ideology or party.
Such type of person we can say has his deep roots in the history and has clarity about his own identification.

As per Maslow’s theory there are certain needs of man, if they are fulfilled at the right time he can make progress properly, if not he may have to face certain problems. Maslow gives hierarchy of human needs in the paramedic manner in human progression as, “physiological needs like, food, water, safety needs - security and safety, social needs - to have friends and to be accepted by others self-esteem-to have self-confidence and self respect and self-actualization developing all one’s potential.” Maslow gives prime importance to “basic” needs; he calls them as lower needs.” Considering basic needs as a base of personality, after fulfilment of these needs man goes for the social needs and to self esteem and self-actualization. One can identify oneself properly if one’s needs are fulfilled. Otherwise he may have to face problems like suppression or diffusion of personality.

Human beings have a long history of development. He has survived from the ravages of time and tossing again and again on the waves of time has taught him how to face the calamities. Being a “naked” member of the unknown – ‘strange’ – thick forest with full of dangers and uncertainties is successful in keeping face with
numerous changes on the earth. Many volcanic realities and cruelties of the nature have force him to learn many things.

There has always been a narrow distance between his life and death. His struggle for survival is always under the dark shadow of death. The experience of victimization of close ones either by severe changes in nature or by the cruelties of savages or many unknown reasons implanted ‘a fear of death’ in his mind. It has either weakened him or compelled him to surrender to some unknown superpower. This hidden force has taken permanent place in his subconscious mind. His struggle for food and to fulfil the hunger has taught him a lot. In fact his continuous struggle of survival and inner urge of life converted him into a well-equipped and strong person.

Being a member of ‘thinking animal group’ has changed his nature as well as the surrounding in which he lives. For the sake of better life and prosperity he migrated from one corner to other corner of the earth. After getting the basic needs fulfilled the seed of selfishness and power seeking nature has germinated in him. And it has grown and branched out to control everything on the earth. He tried to divide the land and marked it as his “own” area, “own” cattles, “own” property and “own” slaves. He tried to become “master” or king of certain area in totality. This has given
birth to monarchic approach, feudalistic and colonial mentality. The division and mastery over the materialistic things was understandable but the “division of man” in different categories created so many problems. The conversion of “self” into “selfish man” endangered the existence of man himself. Taking extra advantages on the basis of the birth generated many complexities. Racial differences, prejudices on the basis of birth and colours, different socio-religious and political ideologies put forth numerous complexities and challenges to man. Many a time “nationalism” and “patriotism” has also been resulted as a threat to humanity. War and glorification of “warrior” attitude has also given birth to superiority and inferiority complexes. So, man has to struggle on his personal level to cope up with such things. World War I and II have great impact on him and created many physical and psychological problems. Atomic power and advancement in the weapons is alarming the danger to the establishment and stability of man. The notion of alienation is one of the results of it.

In short, selfishness, prejudices, power seeking nature of some people started dominating the world. The wide spread of this mentality started exploiting physically and mentally to the weaker. Such exploitation resulted into problems like superiority and inferiority complex. Due to such type of treatment the
exploited one lost their confidence in themselves. At the same time they started suffering from lack of identity. There are various people in various countries who are the victims of these complexes. Search for identity is not an individual problem for them but it is a problem of ‘community’ or ‘group’. It is as good as a struggle for fulfilling the basic needs like food, water and shelter.

People like Dalits and Aadivasis in India, African American or Afro-Americans and American Indians in the United States are suffering from the domination of certain people. Dalits and Aadivasis are the victims of caste hierarchical system correlated with the religious safeguards created by the upper caste people. The inhuman treatment and exploitation of all sorts, they are facing throughout in the human history, has resulted into the loss of their own identity and selfhood.

As the African Americans or American Indians are concerned – they are also suffering from racism. They are being exploited on various level. To become free from the domination and exploitation of these white people is a core question for these African Americans and Native American Indians.

If history is a subject that deals about past, the Native American writers want to establish a co-related link between the past and the present of their cultural saga. Although the United
States is a powerful, modern world leader, she was actually a comparative late comer to the ranks of the major nations. Man had organized governments and noted their histories more than five thousand years far before the first European settlements in the New World. England, France, Spain and Portugal were firmly established nations even before they planted their flags of conquest on this soil in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Explorers representing these countries came in search of the wealth of the fabled Indies- the gold, silver, jewels, and spices. While they did not find all that were seeking, they discovered a large continent, rich in resources and in opportunities for development. They could hardly have hoped for amazing growth, an expansion of this country, the United States, let alone the development of many other independent nations which today dot the world map. It is not difficult to understand why the first European explorers and settlers could not foresee future growth of the American Continent. The land now occupied by the United States looks particularly uncompromising.

The Europeans viewed the inhabitants of the New World with mixed reactions. The Spanish, who invaded Mexico and Peru, certainly were impressed with the magnificent cities, and their wealth and prosperity. Most other European explorers,
however, had nothing but contempt for somewhat primitive “Indian” or “Amerinds” or “Red Indians”, as those Indians who lived in North America are called. The land as it existed in the late 1400s was a primitive wilderness, which guarded well the secret of its rich resources between two rough and rugged coastlines. “Indian” origins approximately twenty to forty thousands years ago as groups of wandering Asiatic tribes crossed Siberia to Alaska by the way of a neck of land or ice, now called Bering Strait.

The achievements of these Indians or “Amerinds”, as they are properly known, in the New World are every bit as confusing as their reasons are for coming to it. On the one hand, there can be little doubt as to the intelligence and creativity of pyramid building Aztecs of Mexico or temple constructing Incas of Peru. Their systems of worship, governments, mathematics, astronomy and architecture testify to their advanced civilizations; on the other hand, some of the Californian Indians had advanced little beyond the basket weaving stage. They had a hand to mouth existence which found them constantly scurrying about in order to gather nuts. They leached and ground into a type of flour. In between these two extremes the primitive California Indians and advanced Aztecs and Incas-were, hundreds of other Indian cultures, most of them mastered at least the basic skills of agriculture, and most
wove baskets and turned out pottery. Some wove fabrics for their clothing; others went naked in the summer and wore animal’s hides in the winter. Almost all had some type of bow and arrow to kill the wild animals, which roamed most of North and South America. All the Indians seem to have constructed some sort of “shelter”. The dwellings varied greatly. The Plains Indian used buffalo hides to make their tepees, while the forest Indians of Ohio and Hudson River area used long poles and bark for constructing homes. The Pueblo Indians of the South West were probably the most advanced of the Amerind’s who lived in what is now the United States. Their apartment-like wood and abode structures, indicated not only their advanced building structural technique but also their system of governing themselves.

The general development of technology of the Amerind’s was noticeably lacking in two major areas. First, they had not discovered how to make use of the plentiful iron ore in the New World. Of course, the wheel and iron tools had been in common use in Europe for thousand of years. The Indians are also called as Amerinds, their way of life was strikingly in contrast to that of the Western Europeans who came to America. Where in Europe ordinary people desperately need more land and resources to
support themselves, the Amerind’s had not made, and never did make, full use of their continent and its natural resources.

The European immigrants descended upon the Americas like a swarm and locusts. The power hungry Europeans with the advanced weapons, Europeans diseases, predecided colonial mind entered in the land of innocent people. They fought with these people, defeated them and captured their land.

At the time of arrival of Christopher Columbus

“the estimated population of the aborigine in the New World was ranged from as low as 8,000000 to as highest 75,000000. Modern authorities accepted the figure between 15,000000 and 20,000000. By the year 1910, the population figure declined to 2,20000.”39

The well established American Indians had almost more than 550 different types of cultures,40 and more than 1200 indigenous languages41 and good habit of cultivating land and producing crops like-squash, green corn, beans, guards and cotton.42 All these people were living by their own ways. Their identity was known with their own tribal religion, culture, tradition, faiths and their names were associated with it. It had its own uniqueness and sanctity. There was a kind of strong bond of sacredness with this identity. They had their own socio-economic and political culture with strong belief in Nature and spiritual power. All this set up
has got a kind of shock like a shock to the silent going ship and everything started shattering here and there. The European invaders like Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Ireland, Netherland, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Scandinavian land, and ultimately the Englishmen pierced their octopusian tentacles to suck all the power and energy from the life and life giving source of these people.

The materialistic mind and metallic weaponry affected very strongly on the American Indians and they were unable to face the situation. They were bit confused and greatly shocked by the sight of these people. The Europeans took an extra benefit of it.

They aggravated their mission of spreading colonialism with the skills. From the advent point i.e. 1492 to the twentieth century i.e. 1910, the Europeans used all sorts of skills for capturing the land and killing the masses. The popular manifesto they practised in this land of innocence was “either to convert or to kill.” Killing was not considered as sin. As there was no reference to such kind of people in the holy Bible, they were considered as heathen, Satan or inhuman beings. So either to convert them to Christianity or to kill them was the motto of these religious missionaries. Hence, there was a huge genocide and bloodshed all over in America. The Europeans applied their vigorous mind with full of cruelty in
crushing all the established systems as well as human beings. Destroying the buildings, palaces and religious places erected by the Native Americans was continuously in process. At the same time to create confusion among the Natives, “divide and rule” policy was also applied by these white people. “Throughout the nineteenth century, European Americans proved adept at exploiting internal tribal conflict, intertribal rivalries, and the personal ambitions of individual Indians.”

Such kind of policy of these white people not only paralysed the American Indians but also took away the confidence of survival from them. So, most of them ran away in the deep forest or started surrendering before these cruel people and their belief and religion. The result of this was that there was a kind of complete erosion of their originality. “The European colonizers at their utmost efforts tried to erode and eradicate the identity of the Amerindians. To force them to forget their history, culture, and traditions, they were forced to forget their language.” To be offensive, power hungry and practical in nature were some of the features of European invaders. Due to this only they started certain new facilities in this land but the main aim behind all these activities was to exploit the original inhabitants of this particular land.
The movement of the railroads, cattlemen and farmers to the Great Plains and to the North West resulted in the final chapter of the American Indians struggle against the white man and his government. From the coming of the Europeans the Indians of the East had been pushed westward from their tribal grounds, eventually, to the Great Plains, where they had learned to live with Plain Indians. This area was still designated on maps as “the Great American Desert” after 1850. Most Americans had felt that nothing could be grown on the lands, which now support the wheat crops of the Dakotas and Nebraska, the potato harvest of Idaho, and the corn of Iowa and Kansas. Therefore, they had willingly given them to the Indians. With railroad expansion and with the need for new lands of support, the growing population of the country, the lands of “The Great American Desert” suddenly became far more attractive to the government and settlers. The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres of western land free to any head of a family who would pay a small filling fee and remain on it for five years. A great amount of free western land was distributed in this manner after the civil war.

As the railroad builders, miners, cattlemen and settlers moved westward, they came in contact and conflict with these Indians who moved whenever, and whatever, the white man
discovered. Although he had treaties assuring him of the eternal possession of his hunting grounds, the Indian land was needed for mining or for laying railroad track. Some of the Indians accepted this type of deception peacefully, and went off quietly to less desirable grounds, or later to reservations.

Other Indians decided to fight for what they considered to be rightfully theirs. Approximately thirty years of continuous Plains Indian warfare first broke out in Colorado, in 1861, after the Pike’s Peak Prospectors had over run the lands of the Cheyenne. Invading miners then stirred up the Sioux for a two-year war, beginning in 1865. But the real hell of Plains Indian warfare raged from 1869 to 1890, when hundreds of pitched battles were waged between the Indians and the units of the United States Army. The Indians were clever and persistent foes, and made the cavalry adapted to their ways of fighting. At the final stage most of the fighting had taken place in what are now the states of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona; the Indians had been crushed. Due to the dominance of white invaders the traditional way of life was no more. They were forced to live on reservations, and were restricted from using their once widespread hunting grounds. There was little left to hunt anyway.
The hopeless situation of the Indian in his fight against the might and number of the white man is best summed up by the chief Joseph of the Nez Pearce’s tribe of Oregon. He said to his chiefs, as the strength of their uprising died before the attacks of the U.S. cavalry:

“Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. The Chiefs are killed. It is the young men now who say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets people, some of them have run away too. The little children are freezing to death. My hills have no blankets, No food. No one knows where they are perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. May be I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my Chiefs, I am tired. My heart is sick and sad from where the sun stands, I shall fight no more forever”.

Meanwhile, the Sioux under Red cloud had achieved impressive military victory, which led in 1868 to their receiving in perpetuity the Great Sioux Reservation, stretching from the Missouri River West ward through the Black Hills of Dakota.

The Sioux had fought to preserve their rights to the adjacent Powder River country of Montana, but the terms of the treaty deliberately left sovereignty vague. In spite of his
victories and hoping in the long run to save the lives if not the spirit of his people from further white incursions, Red Cloud led many of the Sioux on the reservation. He stood in contrast to young Sioux militant such as Crazy Horse of the Ogallala band and Sitting Bull of Hunk Papa, who continued to live in freedom along the Powder River. Crazy Horse was a young Chief clear in his distrust of the whites; he refused to participate in the “Peace meal penning” of his People”. He continued to follow the buffalo, as his fathers had done, and to smell the sweet grass of the plains as he willed. Sitting Bull, a shaman as well as a chief, also believed that compromise with the whites led nowhere. Although lamed by a row bullet in his younger years, he remained an active warrior, a constant thorn for the army, and a threat to the whole reservation system.

The complete breakdown of the 1868 agreement began with two developments: (1) the plan of the Northern Pacific Railroad to build across Powder River country and (2) rumor of gold in the Black Hills. A flood of whites to the area was assured when Colonel George A. Custer trumpeted news of the gold discovery. The Sioux rallied in protest and in the ensuing conflict. Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull emerged as leaders of the resistance.
In June 1876, with leaves full in groves along the Powder River and nearby Rosebud and Little Big Horn, Sioux Braves numbered more than four thousand. Two army regiments marched against them, led by General George Crook and General Alfred Terry, each with slightly more than a thousand troops. In the first major contact along the Rosebud, Crazy Horse and Crook fought with roughly equal numbers. Though each side claimed victory, in fact Crook was immobilized for nearly a month.

The players were ready for the most famous, if not most significant, moment of the war for the Plains - Custer’s last stand. General Custer’s VII cavalry, a part of Terry’s army, numbered about two hundred men, including a few civilians. In an action that must be included among man’s most stupid heroics, Custer, disobeying order to wait for reinforcements, charged the Sioux. Neither Custer nor any of his men saw sundown on June 25.

From the standpoint of Indian history, as Vine Loria has implied, Custer died not only for his own sins but for those of his People. He sought personal acclaim, the kind bestowed by the nation on those who sought out Indians and took care of them permanently. But indirectly he was also the instrument of many western interests - the men of the gold rush to the Black Hills, a rush he
helped create; railroad investors who saw their Northern Pacific tracks rusting because the Sioux would not lay down their arms; cattlemen who saw the plains ready for expanded herds from Kansas to Texas; settlers bearing seed of wheat and hollyhocks and dreams of neat furrows across the earth. Compared with the seriousness of Sitting Bull, who felt that his people must have the buffalo country or perish, Custer with his flowing hair, red top boots, and grandiose ambition may seem faintly ridiculous. But placed among the figures he represented, Custer was a historical force of immense magnitude.

Ironically, Custer’s last stand turned within a few months into the major stand of the Sioux. The Indians were defeated in the following winter by General Crook. In freezing January 1877, Crazy Horse’s village was scattered by General Nelson Miles, but not until May did Crazy Horse surrendered to Crook at the Red Cloud Agency in Nebraska. Rumours understandably flew that he remains on the reservation. When the army tried to arrest him, he offered just enough show of resistance to provide the soldiers with a pretext for bayoneting him. Crazy Horse died within an hour.

Sitting Bull had meanwhile escaped with a few followers across the border into Canada. He petitioned the Canadian Government for food and land. Worried about its own Indian’s
problems and the precedent such action might set, Canada refused. Thus he was forced to return to the United States, where he was made a prisoner. The Government allowed him to go off for a while with buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, parading in his sacred feathers before the thrilled capitals of the eastern seaboard and Europe. To the Sioux and most other Indians, however, he remained a dignified and beloved spiritual leader.

With the military threat ended, the government could afford to listen to philanthropist and idealistic reformers like Helen Hunt Jackson and T. A. Bland who for years had called attention to the ill treatment of Indians. Their zeal echoed the call for justice made by Bartolome’ de Lass Casas more than three hundred years earlier. The Daws Act of 1887 resulted. It provided that, with the discretion of the president, reservation land might be allotted to individual Indians and when so done, each Indian would be subject to the laws of the nation and entitled to the rights, privileges and immunities of citizenship. It became ultimately the means of understanding Indian cultures, although philanthropists and government agencies addicted to a myth of individualism considered it the height of benevolence.

Under this same individual philanthropic approach came efforts to educate the Indians as labourers in the white economy.
A former Indian fighter, lieutenant Henry Pratt, founded Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879. The first Indians brought there were Sioux, suggesting the official intention of using children as hostages in case the tribe renewed hostilities. The girls were given white names, dressed as Victorian ladies, and taught to play the piano. The boys were organized like the army and drilled in uniform. It is not hard to imagine the emotions of the Spotted Tail, the Sioux Chief, when he first visited the school. He immediately removed his sons and took them back to reservation at his own expense. The whole episode recalled Mark Twain’s rueful proposal that the country killed half of the Indians and educated the others to death.

With the active resistance less and less feasible, the Indian responded, as the oppressed often do, with an outburst of visionary energy. The Ghost Dance movement was final flame of hope before long resignation. It recalled Tecumseh’s brother, the Shawnee prophet, whose one eye blazed with expectations for the eastern tribes in 1811. Eighty years later, the period of the Ghost Dance saw the beginning of the Peyote Cult, based on hallucinations - induced by the peyote plant. Like the Ghost Dance, it too provided an escape into a world of visions fast becoming the only alternative to active resistance. Quanah Parker,
for example, fiery Comanche Chief, once led as hostile on the plains. After some bitter battles he surrendered and spent thirty years trying to pursue his people to adjust to white culture, holding all the while, however, to the peyote vision.

The Ghost Dance, like the Peyote Cult, was built upon feelings epitomized by the Cheyenne Chief Little Wolf on a sacred bluff above the Platte:

Off by himself on an isolated point the third day of fasting, the Chief looked out over the Grey, Snow patched Prairie for one whole sun’s passing, throwing his eyes back over all the long Cheyenne trial...And now this long sorrowing with all their hearts on the ground. But with wisdom they might pass this trail also, this hard Cheyenne autumn and its frozen winter...... Beyond it must be a new springtime, with grass, for the Roses, with the gees flying north overhead and children laughing in the painteel villages.47

The Ghost Dance emerged with shaman Wovoka, who rekindled an earlier awakening among the plains of Nevada. During an eclipse in 1888 he was transfigured by visions and felt himself inspired by the Great Spirit to speak to all Indians. They must act as brothers but never restore to violence. He foresaw a day when the white man would either be washed away by floods or covered with a wave of rich earth once trod only by Indians, with the white
man would be buried the implements he had brought - guns, whisky, manufactured clothing’s. All great Indian warriors killed by the white man would return. Living Indian warriors would be suspended as the crest of earth cleansed the world, or clad in their white ghost shirts they would dance, keeping themselves above the sacred soil in the company of the returning spirits.

Wovoka’s followers developed the message into a situation that included five days of worship by slow dancing and meditation. Impractical, illusory, beautiful in its simple pathos, rich in spirituality and racial memory, a message of brotherhood weirdly flowering from the depths of despair, it spread rapidly among the tribes throughout far west.

Sitting Bull, still leading the Sioux, sent emissaries to the Wovoka to learn the message. When they returned, he was interested but worried about the possible reaction of the white man. Indian agents called the cult anti-Christian, and the army was not arresting the Seventh-Day Advents, who waited in similar fashion for the imminent coming of their messiah. The army obviously feared another outbreak of resistance. These warriors were shared by nearby settlers, and Jules Sandoz in Nebraska described newspapermen sending cast jittery stories of Indian atrocities. In December 1890, when Sitting Bull sought
permission to go to Pine Ridge to meet the new messiah, the local agent used the request as a pretext for claiming that the aging chief planned to escape and ordered his arrest by agency police. Sitting Bull’s friends and seventeen year son tried to protect him, but after a skirmish, eight men lay shot, including Sitting Bull, dead in the cold.

In late December, a few days after Sitting Bull’s death, the Sioux moved to north Pine Ridge. Custer’s old regiment, the VII Cavalry, was sent to apprehend them, which they easily did in the freezing cold; at an encampment on a creek called Wounded Knee. With four new efficient machine guns trained on them, the Indians were disarmed. Some how a shot was fired, causing the army to open fire on the men, women, and children in the camp. Before the Sioux warriors were wiped out, they managed to kill twenty five whites. Frantic women and children were pursued, and then shot. More than two hundred Sioux lay massacred and bleeding on the snow. The spirit of Red Cloud’s remaining people, once proud in the bravery of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull and revived by the Ghost Dance movement, was thus obliterated under the winter clouds at Wounded Knee. On the day after the massacre, Jules Sandoz rode to the site:

From a hill to the north he looked down upon a desolate field, upon the dark piles
of men, women and children sprawled among their goods. Dry Snow trailed little ridges of whites over them making them look like strange - limbed animals left for the nights and the wolves. Here in ten minutes on entire community was as the buffalo that bleached on the Plains... There was something loose in the world that hated joy and happiness as it hated brightness and color, reducing everything to drab agony and gray.48

The twentieth century witnessed an intensification of the cultural erosion already well advanced before the end of the Indian wars. Attitudes towards Native Americans remained hostile among settlers who came in close contact with the Indians. One Iowin described people of the nearby reservation as worthless as so many times wolves. When Indians moved away from the tribe in times to cities, they frequently fell into menial occupations and permanent Pamper Dom. In the early 1920s Washington ordered reservation dwellers to cut their hair and at least one group of resisters was handcuffed as they were shown. By then the death rate of Indians had exceeded the birth rate. In this context, Black Elk’s words were a reality: The nation’s hoop is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead.49
Blacks contributed to every phase of western development, as trappers, explorers, cowboys, soldiers, settlers, and city labourers. The nineteenth century myth of the west, however, does not include them in any of these roles; the myth is wholly white. The exclusion of blacks from the legends suggests the extent to which they were excluded from the benefits of expansion. In short, with the exception of a few unusual times and places blacks were no more assimilated into western life than they were elsewhere in America.

For example, many more blacks were engaged in the fur trade than as normally realized. At the managerial level, a few usually West Indians worked their way down the St. Lawrence to Montreal or up the Mississippi to St. Louis. The proverbial French Canadian voyager frequently bore in his veins Negro blood. In the American fur trade in the nineteenth century the black man tended to be menial, a cook or servant, and often a slave. York, for example, on the Lewis and Clark expedition was in bondage to William Clark. Occasionally a black trapper like James Beckworth, whose West Indian mother was a slave, would rise to an important entrepreneurial position. But this tended to occur when the fur trade was not economically mature. As the corporate
structures were established and social pattern solidified, the black man found himself relegated to the ranks of unskilled labour.

The whites to fight the “Indians” sometimes used blacks but on some occasions blacks and Indians felt common cause. Some Indian bought and held blacks as slaves. The relationship tended to be the happy one, with the slave admitted into full fellowship within the tribe, along all southern frontier regions from Missouri through Texas, to Florida. The Seminole tribe in Florida, for example achieved a separate tribal identity as a result of its amalgamation with blacks in the eighteenth century. Providing a haven for fugitive slaves, Seminoles continued to undermine the institution of slavery. Seminole were the largest of Southern fears of both the Indian and the blacks. As a result the three Seminole wars spanning from the years 1816 to 1842 were peculiarly vicious. Their intensity may be judged by the American losses of fifteen hundred dead during the last eight years of the fighting alone. The issue of slavery in the West exposed deep patterns of racial prejudice. Anti-Slavery efforts were often motivated by hatred and fear of the black man and a desire to see him contained in the south and excluded from the West: This Government was made for the benefit of the white race.\textsuperscript{50} Wrote a Michigan editor in 1861.
As a new territories and states faced the question of inclusion or exclusion of slavery, widespread desires surfaced not only to avoid slavery but to keep out free blacks as well.

In Oregon in the spring of 1844, the issue had not yet been written into law when a Blackman, James Smith, was arrested and jailed. He did have an Indian wife and threatened to instigate an Indian uprising if he was not released. So himself was persuaded to leave the area, but his threat to chilled Oregonians. According to their provisional constitution not only was slavery excluded but free blacks were to be whipped periodically until they quit the territory. Blacks were a bad influence on Indians, settlers reasoned, and it was far easier to keep them out than to rid the region of Indians. In December 1844 the law was modified so that any free black man in the territory would be bound to a master as an apprentice for a short time, after which he had to leave. The exclusion law, though un-enforced after the Civil War, remained on the statute books as late as 1920s.

In California, until about 1848, blacks seemed to be accepted as individuals, but when the gold seekers descended, racial prejudice rapidly emerged. The first governor, Peter Burnett, had come down from Oregon, where a few years before he had been a prime mover in anti-black legislatures. In
California he campaigned for governor on a similar platform, publicly vowing that blacks were drunken and improvident. Burnett and his followers were unable to get exclusion written into constitution of 1849, so it became the prime order of business for the first legislature: the principle is no doubt correct,” wrote Burnett, “that when a state, for reasons satisfactory to itself, denies the right of suffrage and office to certain class, it is some times the best humanity also to deny the privilege of residence.51

Exclusion was narrowly defeated, but legal restrictions, such as the bar against blacks’ testimony in court, remained in effective until late in the civil war.

In Oregon and California were sentiments that emerged in practically every territory facing the problems of slavery. Feeling was directed as keeping blacks out and was part of a much large phenomenon of prejudice. The social disruption of emancipation sent Blacks to Westwood for the first time in sizeable numbers, in typical western enterprises-cattle rising, Indian fighting, the settlement of the plain’s blacks and whites worked side by side. As a slave he had laboured on Texas cattle ranches, the freedman quite naturally took his place beside the white cowboy. Subsequent myths have ignored the facts that one-fourth of the
total numbers of cowboys were blacks.\textsuperscript{52} likewise the black’s role as Indian fighter with the army was far greater than his proportionate strength in the population.

On the other hand, small proportion of blacks tried their hands at settling and farming on the plains: Homesteading was a new experience for most of them, for legislation and court action had generally denied premonition’s rights on the public domain to free blacks.\textsuperscript{53}

In spite of most slaves’ experience at farming, post-war recommendations, including some from the Secretary of the Interior, that freedmen be granted agricultural land from the public domain were seldom taken seriously: “Perhaps never in American history” writes V. Jacque Voegeli, has the federal government had a better opportunity both to migrate racial intolerance in the South and to emancipate the freedmen from the heritage of slavery.\textsuperscript{54} Nevertheless, without encouragement or special consideration, some blacks did more to the plains.

One consequence of exclusion and hostility was social banditry, the frequent responses of a persecuted. Robbing the rich to give to the poor, the social bandit was a criminal only in the eyes of the state. To most of the people from whom he sprang, he was virtue itself. The dream behind action, as in the case of the
Ghost Dance with the Indians, was the symbolic destruction of the establishment and the revival of lost past. A variety of Mexican bandits like Tiburcio Vasquez and three Fingered Jack roamed the countryside, usually robbing the Anglos. The most famous of these was Joaquin Murieta, a semi fictional hero who combined the exploits of at least five actual men facts were less important, however, than the legend, which was finally distilled by *Yellow Bird's* book was a beautiful example of one prosecuted minority finding meaning in the story of another. *Yellow Bird* of Murieta unobtrusively working his mining claim when he was driven off by Yankees, later he was publicly whipped for his brother’s crime of horse stealing and, while tied, forced to watch his mistress raped. Murieta’s vow of revenge echoed the frustration of California’s oppressed Mexicans.

The Murieta legend instilled fear in the Anglo community. The governor of California himself placed a bounty of $1000 on the outlaw. Harry a farmer, Texas Ranger, rode with a pose on Murieta’s trial. He found a small group of Mexicans around a camp five, shot their leader, and brought back his head as that of Joaquin Murieta. The head was pickled in alcohol and displaced to thousands. But to California’s Mexicans, Murieta had not been killed; in a real sense he would never die.
No matter where one looks in the West, in areas largely peopled from the south or in regions populated from the North, an attitude toward the black man was notably different. It is hard to believe that an educated and responsible man like William Allen White, *The Kansas* editor, would exhibit so little sensitivity, even late in the century. His reaction was no more than amusement when at a city celebration blacks walked out as the band played.

Though a liberal reformer, White obviously misunderstood the emotions of the social minority. His position suggested that sources of prejudice were not sectional or urban, not southern, western or rural. They lay deep in the natural experience.

The Mexican is the product of a variety of cultures. The Spaniard had conquered the Indian and had then partially absorbed his way of life. Thus by the time Mexico declared its independence from Spain, its people had hammered out a distinctive culture. Within a decade after the American conquest up to the southwest, the Mexican majority, at least in California, was reduced to a minority by the flood of Anglo Americans. During the period of transition of Mexican, like the Indian, clung tenaciously to major elements to his culture, such as the Spanish language and the Catholic Church. The Anglo culture, steeped in Puritanism, legalism, and rationalism, demanded conformity. The
Mexican did not adopt, and he was relegated to positions of low economic and social status. However, the unskilled labour of the Mexican was essential, particularly in agriculture. Unlike blacks, who lived and competed in close proximity with white man, Mexican lived apart in farming communities. They were socially less threatening and thus may have suffered a shade less from prejudice than did the blacks. Nevertheless, Mexican and Anglo cultures remained polarized. The Mexican continued to think of Anglo - the American as marauding and materialistic. The Anglos in the 1850s going through their worst periods of nativism and anti-Catholicism, continued to label Mexicans lazy and shapeless. According to the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans who wished to remain in ceded territory would be allowed all the rights of citizen of the United States. However, that followed the decades to come made a mockery of that guarantee. In mines in California, for example, when the Mexicans were no longer needed to give advice about mining techniques, they were driven out of the camps, taxed as “foreigners” and refused legal recourse. In such circumstances it was hardly surprising that a Mexican girl in Downieville, known only a Juanita, was hanged for the killing of whites a man after a mockery trial.
A thousand miles east in Texas and only five years later, another cultural hero emerged whose actions were more historic than legendary. Juan Cortinas was the son of a displaced landed family. Feeling keenly his people’s plight, he assumed the role of Robin Hood, stealing from the rich Anglos to give to the Mexican poor. He once wrote: “to me is entrusted the breaking of the chains of your slavery”.55

In 1859 Cortinas with a hundred men raided Brownville, the only centre in American strength between the Nucces and the Rio Grande. The raiders shot three Americans, released all the prisoners in the jail, and then retreated to the camp, which began to attract flocks of frustrated Mexican Americans. Cortinas was eventually defeated in a battle with the United States army in which sixty of his followers were killed, but he retreated across the border and continued his raids. A band of Texas Rangers early in 1860 crossed the boundary. Though they killed thirty Mexicans, they did not capture the leader. Cortinas himself was silenced only after colonel Robert E. Lee was sent by the United States army with instructions to cross into Mexico if necessary. Under the threat of invasion, the Mexican Army imprisoned Cortinas, effectively ending his carrier along the border. Two hundred forty-five men had died, testimony to the fact that racial discontent
along the Rio-Grande had moved beyond social banditry to the level of guerrilla warfare. Mexican Americans in Texas sometimes found themselves supported by other minorities, notably the Indians and the Blacks. The latter were usually escaped slaves seeking asylum along the border and willingly to fight against their penetration of their land. The Mexican-Americans had inherited a tradition of hostility from two wars and were in addition becoming aware that Anglo law was undermining their power as landowners. The three discontented people did not always work in concert, but neither were they as distant as historians sometimes imply. He said on Corpus Christi, in 1849 is sometimes described as an Indian Foray, but actually it included escaped black slaves and Mexican-American as well. One indication of this discontent is that Cortinas first directed his activity against a city, Brownsville, virtually the only place in the region where Anglos were to be found. Most Anglos there were not yet land owners but were recently arrived merchants. But now economic forces were developing, soon railroads would be spreading a commercial, industrial economy into the South west. Movement like that the Cortinas were based partly on premonitions that the new commercial and industrial power would threaten the Mexican American position. Meanwhile, industrializing influences were creating larger and larger
agricultural units, just as they were on bonanza farms of the northern faced with the need for agriculture labour.

The Anglos turned to Mexican-Americans as the next ethnic group to be exploited for this purpose. Farm labour rapidly became the occupation most open to the multitudes of Mexican immigrants entering the Southwest, especially during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The new migrants, though a completely different class from the older landholders, could harkens back to men like Cortinas and Murieta who had fought for their people. More recently Cesar Chavez in California and Reis Tijerina in New Mexico, like their early counterparts, continue to seek ways for Mexican-Americans to partake more fully in the dominant society without losing their identity.

As far as self-selfhood and identity is concerned, the quest of the sequester is to find meaning of self, from where the self is originated. What are the parameters to understand self and selfhood, what are the sources to describe the term identity. What are those prominent forces, which have forced the Native American writers to describe rather than to define. In the gallery of Native American writings these writers have made an attempt to describe the harsh realities of life on two levels. It is a physical journey and physical destruction of the Natives and the nature’s,
what past Natives had experienced. On the other hand the present Native American writers try to internalize purely in memorable past. It is obvious that they seek the help of literature as a form which is the only alternative or media left for them in order to communicate or express the past. As per as their culture is concerned memory is the only last resource for them, that they are forced to bring their historical past into present. When you read Native American literature you find reflection of the past captured in a language, which is the source of communication in order to establish the fact, not the fiction. The Native American writer is trying to project a kind of conflict between history and science. It is very easy to define rather than to describe because science is based on definitions where as history is based on descriptions.

To describe, in fact is a painful job. These Native American writers had tried their level best to capture historical facts with the help of powerful imagination. If literature is a channel in order to express, it is deeply rooted with the ground realities, where one finds that it is a dark journey in which thoughts of these writers are groping in order to attain salvation.

But salvation from what? From past or from harsh realities of the present? It is a quest that leads to understand self, selfhood and identity. These writers have very meticulously applied those
narrative techniques which touch at a time both heart and mind of
the readers. In their writing the narration is a kind of storming
experiences of course they are the product of their ancestral past.
These writers in their entire literary writings try to explore, what is
self, selfhood and identity. In fact is burning issue in which Native
American literature is a fact are reflected in their literary work of
art, and a product of historical past. It is an attempt by the Native
American writers, is so called total recall which is deeply rooted in
their conscious and subconscious state of mind. One finds traces of
historical facts that leads to mass killing or both innocent human
being and creatures. It is an act against mankind and nature. If
history is a subject of past, naturally at one level there is
displacement and on the other level placement of human race.

“Native” is basically a geographical term, which is co-related
with history. As far as history as a subject is concerned, it is in fact
a term coined by the whites. History as subject, that revolves on
the axis of past then naturally sociology, economics and politics
operates on the axis of present. It means that the whole theory of
human evolution is part and parcel of human history.

If one takes a close and symbolic look of present United
States’ structure, it appears that, it is a product that speaks of in the
name of Statue of Liberty at New York stands inert giving a
gloomy looks with a torch, itself becomes a symbol, what she tries to communicate either the torch is a metaphor which is more predictable notions of the whites. It is true that what one sees is not illusion or deception of mind but in fact, the whole structure of United States in its structural form is build upon the graveyard of the Native Americans. The American Indians, who were victims or were victimized by the so called white supremacy. They were killed in the name of progress or modernization. If the term modernization is applicable in the name of killing innocent Native Americans how one can claim the term stands for the progress of human beings.

As a matter of fact, history had never played favourable role in the life of Native Americans, but a brutal role. These humiliations committed to them, by history are available in literary forms, where you find reflections of harassment and struggle against the white supremacy. As per as human history is concerned the whole Native American race was erased who believed and followed all natural code of nature. In fact, while dealing with this complex subject, it appears, that it is a conflict between two sections of human beings: One who believes in natural code and the other the in so called deceptive social code.
The most important and tragic part as per as self, selfhood and self identity is concerned the Native American writers are forced to accept the language of whites not by will and wish but it is the only resource left for them as far as choice is concerned. Those historical pictographs, sketches, murals, and whatever material available, which is in fact a mosaic pattern where these writers make extensive use of these preservations along with memories on the larger scale. In order to communicate self, selfhood, identity, myths, symbols, and cryptography they are the products of historical past. The past plays vital role in the life and history of these creative writers of the Native Americans. In order to understand the difference between two conflicting world, a world that believes in nature where pictograph, myths, symbols, murals and cryptography which are so identical for the contemporary writers. The other world which is constituted of self, selfhood which locate their identity. Which is inner one. It is only possible to understand these parameters, were the Native American writers are forced to go into past in order to understand their own self, selfhood and identity.

Battles and wars are historical past but when one seeks help from memory, which is very much rooted in the subconscious of these writers. These writers project themselves and their past
about those conflicts between civilized and savage world. Therefore, the writers are speculative purely in historical term. Hence they asked to themselves through their writing: Who is the winner and who is the looser?

People who are victim, and who have victimized them is a matter of speculation. The entire gallery of Native American writers through their writing do not at any cost seek sympathy from the readers or from the so-called civilized society. Their literary work of art is a projection of untold-told.

The whole body of American Indian literature from its traditional, ceremonial aspects to its formal literary aspects forms a field, or, we might say, a hoop dance, and as such is a dynamic, vital whole whose different expression refers to a tradition that is breath taking in its aesthetic realization and fundamental to coherent understanding of non-Indian verities of American literature.

In the twentieth century Native Americans continue to perform their traditional oral literature while increasing numbers of them have become highly polished and sophisticated writers. Especially during the last thirty years, tribes and individuals have initiated strong efforts to maintain and restore their oral traditions. They reflect the basic belief of tribal life. Ceremonies, stories,
dances, songs and oratory remain an important part of Native American life, both on and off the reservation.

During the first half of the twentieth century, many Indians trained in anthropology or linguistics collected and translated oral literature of their own. Among these are Ella C. Deloria (Sioux); William Jones (Fox), Archie Phinney (Nez Perce), John N.B. Hewitt (Tuscarora), Francis Lafelesche (Omaha), William Morgan (Navajo) and Arthur C. Parker (Seneca). Contemporary scholars like Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O’odham) Carry on this tradition.

Among the Native Americans who has published valuable but less scholarly collections are Percy Bullchild (Blackfeet), George Cluesti (Tlingit), Jesse Cornplanter (Seneca), Charles A. Eastman (Sioux), Mourning Dove (Colville), and ViHilbert (Lushootseed). Narratives published under the aegis of individual tribes includes The Way It Was, Inaku Iwacha: Yakima Indian Legends (1974), project director Virginia Beavert; Nu Mee Poom Tit Wah Tit (Nez Perce Legends) 1972, Compiled by Alan P. Slickpoo, Sr., Scholars have increasingly recognized the need to discuss the cultural and performance dimension of oral literatures. Yaqui Deer Songs / Maso Bwikam (1987), by Larry Evers and Felipe Molina (Yaqui), are especially fine examples of a bilingual text that pays appropriate attention to this aspect.
It is both oral and written that autobiographical element constitutes a bridge between these two forms of literature. The narrated or “as told-to” autobiographical writing has retained the popularity it gained in the nineteenth century. In the first half of this century, anthropologists edited increasing numbers of life histories, primarily those written by males, as they recorded tribal traditions. Among the narrators who collaborated with scholars to create excellent ethnographic autobiographies are Sam Blow Snake [Big Winnebago and Crashing Thunder] (Winnebago). *Mountain Wolf Woman* [Winneloago] Carries writings of Maria Chona (Papago); John Stands in Timber (Cheyenne); James Sewid (Kwakiutl); Left Handed (Navajo); Albert Yova (Tewa/Hopi); and Severt Young Bear (Sioux). *Me and Mine* (1969) by Helen Sekaquaptewa and Louise Udall typifies the form of autobiography in which narrator tells his life history to a friend. The most literary as well as the most widely read autobiographies is in *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) narrated by Black Elk to John C. (.Neihardt.) Less polished but delightful is *Lame Deer: Seeker of Vision* (1972) by John Fire [Lame Deer] (Sioux) and Richard Erdoes. The latter has also recorded the story of activist Mary Crow in *Dog in Lakota Woman* (1990). Several tribal oral life histories, particularly those of the Southwest, have also been recorded: Navajo stories of the *Long Walk Period* (1973), edited by Ruth Roessel; *Stories of Traditional

Some Native Americans recorded their own accounts which were later edited by scholars. Among these are The Warrior Who Killed Custer (1968) by Chief Joseph White Bull, which contains his drawing of the events; Sun Chief (1974) by Don Talayesva (Hopi), extensively revised and restricted by Leo W. Simmons; The Autobiography of Yaqui Poet (1980), by Refugio Savala, edited with far less intrusion by Kathleen Mullen Sands. Important for the Study of Indian Women in Mourning Dove: A Salishan Auto biography (1990) by Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket Colville, 1888 to 1936), which Jay Miller edited from her drafts and fragments.

Increasing numbers of American Indians have published their own written Autobiographies. One of the first and most popular of these twentieth century autobiographers is Charles A. Eastman (Sioux,1858 to 1939) whose Indian Boyhood (1902) describes his life as a traditional Santee Sioux from childhood to age fifteen and whose The Deep Woods to Civilization (1916) chronicles his experiences in the white world. Other Sioux autobiographers who published their life histories during the first half of this century are
Luther Standing Bear (Ca.1869 to 1939) and Zit Kalasa (1876-1938). Francis La Flesche (Omaha, 1857-1932) describes in The Middle Five (1900) his experiences at a Presbyterian mission school in Nebraska. Others who have written autobiographies include James Paytiamo (Acoma; b.ca.1890), Anna Moore Shem (Pima, b.1898); Ted Williams (Tuscarora, b.1930), and James McCarthy (Papago, b. 1895). As was true in the nineteenth Century, most of the narrated and written autobiographies of this century have focused on the individual’s place within the tribal culture.

One of the best literary and philosophical autobiographies is Talking to the Moon (1945) by John Joseph Mathews (Osage, 1894 to 1979), which is strongly influenced by Osage culture as well as by the writers Thoreau and John Muir. An equally sophisticated autobiographer is N. Scott Momaday’s (Kiowa b.1934) The Way to Rainy Mountain (1969) chronicles the Kiowa’s origin and migration to Oklahoma, their life both before and after the reservation period, and his own quest for his tribal roots. Momaday’s The Names (1976) is a fascinating account of a poignant description of his boyhood. Interior Landscape by Gerald Vizenor (Ojibwa, b.1934) is a moving, witty, and satiric account of the author’s youth and his experiences as a soldier, a social worker, journalist, and writer. In Bloodlines (1933), Janet Campbell
Hale (Coeur d’ Alene-Kootenai, b.1947) creates a beautifully written memoir of her family and her own life, chronicling how she triumphed over growing up in a dysfunctional family to become a successful writer. Many Native American authors have published poignant and revealing autobiographies in *I Tell You Now* (1981), edited by Brain Swann and Arnold Krupat.

Twentieth-Century Native American authors increasingly wrote fiction, particularly novels. Many of these deal with quest of mixed-blood protagonist to find their places in society and with the importance of oral tradition to the survival of tribalism. In the first half of the century, E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk, 1861-1913) Mourning Dove, Joseph Mathews, and D’Arcy McNickle (Cree-Salish, 1904-1977) incorporate these themes into their fiction. Johnson’s *Moccasin Maker* (1913), one of the first collections of short stories and essays by a Native American Woman, focuses on the experiences of Canadian Indian and non-Indian women. Several of her heroines are of mixed blood betrayed by their white lovers of husbands. Much of this volume is originally published in *Mother’s Magazine* in the United States. One of the earliest novels by an American Indian woman is *Wynoma, a Child of the Forest* (1891) by Sophia Alice Callahan (Creek, 1868-1893), which describes the acculturation of a white teacher to Creek life and to
Wynoma to that of the southern gentry. Another is *Mourning Dove’s Cogeweia, the Half-Blood* (1927), written in Collaboration with Lucullws V. McWhorter. Here Mourning Dove combines the portrayal of a strong-willed, well-educated heroine, who temporarily rejects her tribal heritage.

Mathew’s *Sundown* (1934) focuses on the problems of a mixed-blood Osage whose abandonment of his ancestral past and inability to adjust to the white dominated present result in alcoholism. Mathew’s earlier *Wah’Koun-Tah* (1932), the first book by an Indian to be a Book-of-the Month selection, is a fictional account of the Osages struggles to retain their traditions after they were forced to go to–reservation camp. Even more sophisticated is in McNickle’s *The Surrounded* (1936), which chronicles the dilemma of a mixed blood hero inadvertently caught up in unpremeditated murders that his mother and girl friend commit. His strongly traditional mother and a tribal elder lead the protagonist back to Salish culture he rejected. Equally powerful in McNickle posthumously published *Wind from an Enemy Sky* (1978), which depicts the difficulties of representatives from Indian and non Indian cultures to communicate with each other. McNickle also wrote *Runner in the Sun* (1954), a novel for young
people that evokes the life, customs, and beliefs of the ancient cliff dwellers in what is now north-western New Mexico.

Closer in theme to mainstream American fiction of 1930s is *Brothers Tree* (1935) by John Oskinson (Cherokee, 1974-1947), a fine example of the regional novel and a vivid portrait of a part-Cherokee family trying again to regain its Oklahoma land and its values. During the 1920s Oskinson wrote series of what he called “South-western” potboilers. An example of the ethnographic novel is *Waterlily* by Ella Deloria (Sioux 1888-1971), completed by 1944 but not published until 1988. This fascinating portrayal of nineteenth-century Sioux life chronicles Water Lily’s life from birth through adulthood. The most prolific novelist during the 1930s was [George] Todd Downing (Choctaw, 1902-1974), who wrote nine mystery novels, including *Murder on Tour* (1931), *The Cat Screams* (1934), and *The Lazy Lawrence Murders* (1941). Most of them were set in Mexico. *The Mexican Earth* (1940), a travel book, contains his most poetic prose.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, American Indian authors wrote in other genres as well. Alexander Posey (Creek, 1873-1908) and Will Rogers (Cherokee, 1879-1935) were accomplished satirists. Both were undoubtedly influenced by columnist writing political dialect humour in Oklahoma Indian
newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century. Using real Creek elders as characters and writing in Creek-style English, Posey, a great admirer of Robert Burns, satirized the politics of Indian Territory in his *Fus Fixico Letters* (1902-1908; rpt.1993), edited by Carol Hunter (Osage) and Daniel F. Littlefield. Its (Cherokee), national and international politics was the main theme of Rogers’s satire. His books and miscellaneous writings are now being published as *Complete Works*, edited by Joseph A. Stout.

Native American Writers published little poetry during this period. Johnson’s *Flint and Feather* (1912) included *White Wampum* (1895) and *Canadian Born* (1903). Posey’s poetry was published posthumously in *The Poems of Alexander Posey* (1910) which primarily consisted of romantic descriptions of nature written in his youth. An example of Indian dialect poetry is *Yon-doo-shah-we-ah* (1924) by Bertrand N. O. Walker [He-toh] (Wyandot, 1870-1927), contains some interesting character sketches and narratives.

The most sophisticated poet of this period is (Rolla) Lynn Riggs (Cherokee, 1899-1954) whose *Iron Dish* (1930) contains delicate lyrics and imaginative descriptions of nature. During the first half of the twentieth century, Riggs was the only major Native American dramatist. He is best known of *Green Grow the Lilacs*
(1931), the powerful folk drama that became the hit musical in
Oklahoma. Also widely praised were his *Borning in Texas*,
produced as *Roadside* (1930). His only play on an Indian theme is
*Cherokee Night* (1936) which is about the Oklahoma mixed blood
sense of cultural loss.

In the late 1960s, the new Native American writers emerged.
The first of these to achieve national recognition was N. Scott
Momaday. He is known as the beginner of “Renaissance” of Native
American Writing. His *The House Made of Dawn* (1968) won the
prestigious Pulitzer Prize. His novel *The Ancient Child* was
published in 1989. In both the novels, Momaday describes the ritual
quest of mixed blood protagonists: one, a World War II veteran and
the other a middle-aged artist, to achieve healing through immersion
into tribal myths and rites. Another powerful fiction writer is Leslie
Marmon Silko (Pueblo Laguna, b.1948). Her *Ceremony* (1977)
demonstrates the healing power of tribal storytelling by reuniting a
mixed-blood World War II veteran with his tribe at the end of the
novel. Her *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) continues the ritual quest
theme in an epic novel that traces the conflicts between and
confluences of Native and non-native cultures of the Americas and
the Southwest. Her short stories and her poetry are collected in
*Storyteller* (1981). Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna-Sioux, b.1939) brings a

In *Winter in the Blood* (1975), James Welch (Blackfeet-Gros Venter’s, 1940) focuses on a nameless hero’s search for the truth about his family background and about his fierce black-feet grandmother’s early life. In Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979), a mixed-blood protagonist also seeks information about Indian family and the white father who psychologically abandons him. The search for identity is also the theme of Welch’s *Indian Lawyer* (1990) in which a successful Blackfeet lawyer ensnared in blackmail scheme that force him to decide who he is and what he wants.

Native Americans have incorporated themes other than the ritual quest in their novels. Louis Erdrich (Ojibwa, b.1954) focuses on family and community interrelationships in *Tracks and Love Medicine* (1984), *Beet Queen* (1986), and *Tracks* (1988). Based on Erdrich’s native North Dakota and part of a projected series of four novels. They have gained Erdrich national recognition. *Tracks and Love Medicine* chronicles the interrelationship between members of a North Dakota Chippewa tribe from 1912 to 1983. *Beet Queen* deals primarily with relationship between non-Indian characters in the off reservation town of Argus which is based on a Montana
reservation. *A Yellow Raft on Blue Water* (1987) by Michael Dorris (Modoc, b.1945), portrays three generations of women turn apart by secrets but bound by kinship. Erdrich and Dorris, who are married and *Columbus* (1991), which humorously describes the adventures of a mixed-blood anthropologist as she copes with both her children and her Wasp, academic lover while tracking down Christopher Columbus’s lost diary.

Among the few historical novels by an Indian is Welch’s *Fool Crow* (1986), which vividly describes the impact of white settlement on a Montana band of Blackfeet in 1870. Robert J. Conley (Cherokee, b. 1940) uses the historical novel form in his *Mountain Windsong* (1992), the love story of a couple separated by the Trail of Tears.

Gerald Vizener’s novels are sharp and perspective satires of Indian – White relations and of modern society. His *Griever: An American Monkey king in China* (1987), describes the adventures of a mixed-blood Indian who teaches English in a Chinese university and triumphs over Chinese bureaucracy as he becomes transformed into Monkey King, the Chinese trickster. His *Trickster of Liberty: Tribal heir to a Wild Baronage at Petronia* (1988) depicts a whole family of Indian tricksters who rebel against conventional system and establish in generous enterprises.
Vizenor takes on the Columbus mythology in *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991), in which a “Cross-blood” trickster, descendant of the explorer establishes a tribal nation where “humour rules and trickster heals.” He asserts that Maya created Columbus, and solves the mystery of some missing artifacts.

Identity is also the major focus of two powerful realistic novels by Louis Owens (Choctow-Cherokee, b. 1948) *The Sharpest Sight* (1991) and *Wolf song* (1991). *The sharpest Sight* portrays the quest of two protagonists, a mixed blood Choctow and a Chicano, to find their roots and to solve the murder of Indian protagonist’s brother. *Wolf Song* chronicles the growing commitment of a returned college student to his tribal community in Washington and to his dead uncle’s battle saves the wilderness from destruction. In *From the River’s Edge*, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Sioux, b. 1930) movingly portrays the attempts by a Dakota cattleman to regain his culture and his honour after his tribal way of life.

In *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* (1985), Janet Campbell Hale portrays the attempts of an urban Indian woman to restructure her life. This novel and her earlier *Owl song* (1974), are among the few works dealing with urban Indians. Anna Walters (Otoe-Pawnee, b. 1946) blends mystery, the Navajo-white relations in her *Ghost Singer* (1988), which attacks
whites’ inhumane practice of storing Indian skeletons and possessions in museums. Other American Indian novelist included Hyemeyohsts (Cheyenne, b. 1935), whose *Seven Arrows* (1972) aroused controversy because of its treatment of Cheyenne religion. The *Song of the Heyoechochah* (1981) deals with a heroine’s quest for ritual knowledge to become a shaman. The only novel by an Eskimo writer in Markoosie’s *Harpoon of the Hunter* (1970).

One of the few American Indian mystery writers is Martin Cruz Smith (Senecu d’el Sur-Yaqui, b. 1942), who has achieved national acclaim for four mystery novels, two of which have Indian themes. Both his *Nightwing* (1977) and *Stallion Gate* (1986), have Indian protagonists who struggle to become reunited with their tribes and traditions. *The Indians Won* (1970) deals more directly with Indian issues. Far different are Smith’s *Gorky Park* (1981) and *Polar Star* (1989), which deal with characters from both the Soviet Union and the United states.

The forms of contemporary Indian Poetry vary from traditional chants and songs to highly individualistic verse. Many Indian poets incorporate into their poems tribal myths such as creation and emergence, earth driver, and the trickster. Common themes include a sense of loss of tribal roots, often associated with
a specific space that is part of the history of the author’s tribe, and
closeness to nature and animals. Native American poets also deal
with the problems of identity that mixed-blood face, the sense of
displacement that urban Indian experience, and the injustice
inflicted on their people by the dominant society. They describe
how the family, as well as tribal values, provide Native Americans
with the sources of strength to withstand attempts to alter their
culture. Native American poets frequently focus on the role of
women. They pay much attention to their tribal culture. Although
much of Indian poetry deals with Indian themes, increasingly,
writers are turning to other subjects in some of their recent poems
on their reaction to personal growth and aging.

Increasing number of Native Americans are beginning to
write drama. Gerald Vizenor, Linda Hogan and Thomas King
have written plays and screenplays. Among the best known
contemporary dramatist is Hanay Geiogamal (Kiowa-Delaware, b.
1945). His new Native American drama includes his satiric dramas
Foghorn, 49, and Body Indian.

Knowledge of the rich oral and written literary heritage
created by Native Americans is essential to understand the
twentieth-century American Indian life. Fortunately, this heritage
is gaining an appreciative general audience and increasingly it is being introduced into literature courses and texts.

The present thesis is an attempt to analyse the loss of self, selfhood and identity due to the invasion of white Europeans in the land of Native Americans. Politically conscious power hungry colonial Europeans grabbed the motherland of the Native Americans and destroyed the culture and civilizations of these people. All the set cultural values, beliefs and socio-economic system were shattered due to the hegemonic approach of the European colonizers. The European domination not only induced fear in the minds of the Native People but also paralysed them in totality. The native American writers are no doubt the product European Education but they are exploiting the master’s language to revolt against the master. Though they are living in technologically advanced and financially super-power country, they can not enjoy it and they have a strong anathema against it. They can not forget their own ancestral world which was far better than the present world. So, their ancestral cultural heritage is an ideal world for the Native American writers. They depict the pain, angst, loss of inheritance as well as the joy and pleasure in living with the pristine nature. In fact, they are interested in reclaiming their lost self, selfhood and identity.
N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko are the most representative writers in this case. Their creative writing not only presents the rich cultural heritage of Native American traditions and their life style but also depicts the microscopic details of the paralytic effect of the colonizers on them. These colonizers beheaded, enslaved and forced them to live in the reservations. In fact, it is a saga of painful experiences, loss of culture, traditions and humanity. Both the writers, N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko reclaim their lost of self, selfhood and identity through their creative writing. The present thesis is sincere attempt to study, analyse and cross examine the quest for identity in the writings of N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Mormon Silko.
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