INTRODUCTION

This thesis tries to introduce the culture, history and position of Native American women. This is an attempt to strike out the way of Native American Women’s life and their position in their society. This thesis tries to depict the Europeans’ opinion about the position and importance of Native American women. The representation of these women both by White women writers and Native American male writers is very different to that represented by Native women writers. This thesis tries to discuss the important themes of Native American women writers, about their life in their communities, culture, history and traditions at the backdrop of the works of three famous Native American women: Paula Gunn Allen, Leslie Marmon Silko and Louis Erdrich.

The way the literature of Native Americans began, spread and gained recognition is discussed. Native American literature is rich in diversity and imagery. It is universal in significance and ancient in tradition. Native literature comes under Fourth World literature. In 1980s as a result of progress many modern nation states were forced to unite with their indigenous minorities instead of articulating their aims and grievances independently. This in 1975 gave birth to World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) which was officially sectioned by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization. Fourth World identity was propounded by George Manuel; a Native Canadian Who became the first President of WCIP. At the inaugural meeting of the WCIP, the concept of ‘The Fourth World’ was introduced by George Manuel. To consolidate the concept of the Fourth World George Manuel with his friend
Michael Posluns has co-authored the book *The Fourth World: Indian Reality* (1974). It is a book about the political and cultural rights of the indigenous population across the globe.

George Manuel was born in 1921 on Neskonlith Reserve within Secwepemc territory. His grandparents raised him and he attended Kamloops Residential School. But at the age of 12 he was affected by tuberculosis and was thus confined to a Sanatorium. He was self-educated. Andrew Paul was Manuel’s mentor in politics. Manuel served as a Secwepemc Chief and became President of the North American Indian Brotherhood in 1959. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1969 announced Canada’s intention to promote “assimilation of Indian people into Canadian society.” Manuel in opposition to Trudeau plan again got himself elected as president of the National Indian Brotherhood. Manuel was influenced and inspired by Julius Nyerere in Tanzania and gave a visit in 1971 to the Maori of New Zealand. Nyerere who was a Tanzanian said to Manuel “When the Indian peoples come into their own that will be the Fourth World” (*Exploring Fourth World Literatures* ed., Raja Sekhar Patteti, 2011:13). Manuel also went to Washington DC, United States to meet Mel Tonasket, President of the National Congress of American Indians. This meeting laid foundation for affiliations between indigenous peoples around the world. Manuel traveled around the world to spread his message of unification of indigenous people of the world. He traveled to the aboriginal villages in northern Argentina, to Quechua villages in Peru, to Sami land in Sweden, to Indian reservations in the United States to Yapti Tasbia in Eastern Nicaragua to
Mapuche villages in Chile and to Mayan refugee camps on the border between Mexico and Guatemala. Manuel declared the Universal Rights of Indigenous peoples. He wanted them to establish their own ideology. Manuel served as National Indian Brotherhood President from 1970 to 1976, as President of the Union of B.C. Indians Chiefs from 1979 to 1981, and as the first President of the World Council of Indigenous peoples from 1975 to 1981.

*The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* promoted the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This book is informative as it presents important historical document which traces the struggle for Indian survival as a nation, culture, and as a reality. In this book the authors contrast the lives and cultures existing on the North American continent. Next to the Old World and the Third World comes the alternative of the New World that is the Fourth world. The culture of the Native Indians is of sharing, with an economy which is one with the land; their culture is quite opposite to the culture of new world of the Europeans which has technology, manifest destiny and the need to accumulate. The authors say that Europeans have always tried to dominate and exploit the natives trying to assimilate their culture and destroy the native culture. The authors feel that in order to the native life to survive and for the European culture to continue and prosper a new order must be developed. Thus they call for the Fourth World nation where both natives and Europeans can live together without dominating each other with respect for different ways of life. The thoughts in this book are not only provocative but also historically informative. The thoughts of authors in this book are not of one man, but of a culture which lives with the earth.
Manuel was one of the most powerful and revered Indigenous leaders in Canada. The phrase ‘Fourth World’ coined by him described indigenous minorities throughout the earth. As a result of globalization aborigines delegates traveled to different parts of the world such as Republic of China, the United States, Europe, Nigeria, Canada, and the United States. Their dancers attended cultural festivals in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Tahiti, Nigeria and Canada.

As a follow-up to Manuel’s book Adam Shoemaker in his book *Black words, white page: Aboriginal literature 1929-1988* discusses in detail the nature and the extent of Aboriginal writing in English from the 1920s to 1988. He introduced the concept of the Fourth World in his book as part of introduction. He talks about a number of specific issues in which Fourth World literature represents the social world around it the role which it plays in articulating the black past and contemporary aboriginal identity. He also writes about the relationship between aboriginal writing and other forms of Australian literature. Shoemaker demonstrates in this book that Aboriginal authors have produced literary works which merit serious attention, analysis and public recognition. They describe and evaluate Black Australian literature within both literary and socio-political contexts. Apart from this he emphasizes that Black Australian novel is a meaningful and impassioned from of cultural communication.

As a Follow-up to this Gordon Brotherston’s *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas through their Literature* (1992) offers a detailed
analysis of the texts that range far back into the centuries of civilized life from Latin America. Gordon believed that the term Fourth World was claimed by the Natives to describe their own world which explored the threatened present condition and political history that stretches beyond the discovery of Columbus. He argued that right from the time of discovery itself America was identified as the Fourth World. His ideas were discussed in detail by many other writers who followed him.

Apart from these male writers we have Native Women writer Penny Petrone whose *Native Literature in Canada from the Oral Tradition to the Present* (1990) is a survey of the literature of Indians and Métis writing in English. The author offers this critical study of Native literature as a beginning analysis of this growing field. She comments on the oratory, sermons, petitions, letters, journals, autobiographies, historical and travel writings, and journalism, as well as short stories, novels, poetry, drama, traditional stories and essays by Native writers from the seventeenth century to 1989.

William H New’s *Native Writers and Canadian Writing* (ed., 1990), Leslie Monkman’s *Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English Canadian Literature* (1991) have established the idea of The Fourth World. *Native Writings and Canadian Writings* have a special double issue which focuses on literature. It contains original articles and poems which are written not only by Natives but also by non-Natives. The purpose of the writers is to make the non-natives who have misunderstood their rituals, myths, and songs to understand to understand their importance. These songs and articles reflect the importance
of contemporary Native writing and direct the reader to traditional literature. The essays are conventional portrayals of Native writers from explorer Alexander Mackenzie’s eighteenth century journal to James Fenimore Cooper’s novels and to early writers in Canada such as historian-humorist Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Native literature focuses on the oral literary traditions of the Haida and Inuit and their transcribers and on modern works by playwright Tomson Highway, authors Lee Maracle and Thomas King including others. These works reflect how Native writers view themselves and their disparate worlds, their fights for pathos, humor and self-parody. It includes their search for their own voices and distinct forms of communication. This book also explores prejudices and misconceptions regarding Native societies and their moral, spiritual and political values since colonial days. It reflects the values embodied in their hereditary literature. In contemporary era Native visual art has flourished and this book records the initiatives which are now being taken by Native societies to preserve and promote their own cultural identity through the spoken and written word. Native societies have started to concentrate on their own education, creative writing programs, projects to extant languages, folklore, songs, and rituals and the founding of Native publishing house. Apart from these endeavors they have stated to give valuable contributions to tribal cultures and to the past and present literary heritage of Canada as a nation. The main goal of *Native Writers and Canadian Writing* is to bring recognition to Native literature as an integral part of the Canadian
cultural scene. W.H. New says that this book is a place where the writers can raise their voice and where they get an opportunity to begin listening.

The contemporary Native writers and critics Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, and Robert Warrior, assert being a "nationalist" is a legitimate perspective from which to approach Native American literature and criticism. They consider such a methodology not only defensible but also crucial to supporting Native national sovereignty and self-determination, an important goal of Native American studies, generally. However, the authors do not believe the nationalism suggested in American Indian Literary Nationalism is the only possible approach to Native literature. Each invites Natives and non-Native allies who support tribal national sovereignty and nationalist readings of Native literature to join the discussion.

Given the contemporary significant recognition, each author acknowledges and honors the foundational contribution of Simon Ortiz in his 1981 MELUS essay, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism." It has been over thirty-five years since academe has accepted the legitimacy of American Indian literature. Weaver, Warrior, and Womack now call for more Native voices to articulate literary criticism and for clearer thinking about what links the literature to Native communities.

Craig Womack is an author and professor of Native American literature. Creek-Cherokee by ancestry, Womack is best known for Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism (1999), a book of literary criticism which argues that the dominant approach to academic study of Native American literature is
incorrect. Instead of using post structural and postcolonial approaches that do not have their basis in Native culture or experience, Womack claims the work of the Native critic should be to develop tribal models of criticism. Along with Robert Allen Warrior, Jace Weaver and Greg Sarris, Womack is seen as a second-generation Native American literary scholar, a group that has significantly altered the critical methodologies used to approach Native American literature. Womack has also produced a novel, *Drowning in Fire*, about the lives of young gay Native Americans. Currently, Womack is employed as a professor at Emory University, specializing in Native American literature. That is Craig Womack's argument in *Red on Red*. Indian communities have their own intellectual and cultural traditions that are well equipped to analyze Native literary production. These traditions should be the eyes through which the texts are viewed. To analyze a Native text with the methods currently dominant in the academy, according to the author, is like studying the stars with a magnifying glass.

In an unconventional and piercingly humorous appeal, Womack creates a dialogue between essays on Native literature and fictional letters from Creek characters who comment on the essays. Through this conceit, Womack demonstrates an alternative approach to American Indian literature, with the letters serving as a "Creek Chorus" that offers answers to the questions raised in his more traditional essays. Topics range from a comparison of contemporary oral versions of Creek stories and the translations of those stories dating back to the early twentieth century, to a queer reading of Cherokee
author Lynn Riggs's play *The Cherokee Night* (1936), Womack argues that the meaning of works by Native peoples inevitably changes through evaluation by the dominant culture. *Red onRed* is a call for self-determination on the part of Native writers and a demonstration of an important new approach to studying Native works—one that engages not only the literature, but also the community from which the work grew.

Chadwick Allen’s *Blood Narrative* (2002), is a comparative literary and cultural study of post-World War II literary and activist texts by New Zealand Maori and American Indians—groups who share much in their responses to European settler colonialism. Chadwick Allen reveals the complex narrative tactics employed by writers and activists in these societies that enabled them to realize unprecedented practical power in making both their voices and their own sense of indigeneity heard. Allen shows how both Maori and Native Americans resisted the assimilationist tide rising out of World War II and how, in the 1960s and 1970s, they each experienced a renaissance of political and cultural activism and literary production that culminated in the formation of the first general assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. He focuses his comparison on two fronts: first, the blood/land/memory complex that refers to these groups' struggles to define indigeneity and to be freed from the definitions of authenticity imposed by dominant settler cultures. Allen's second focus is on the discourse of treaties between American Indians and the U.S. government and between Maori and Great Britain, which he contends offers strong legal and moral bases from which these indigenous minorities can argue
land and resource rights as well as cultural and identity politics. With its implicit critique of multiculturalism and of postcolonial studies that have tended to neglect the colonized status of indigenous First World minorities, *Blood Narrative* has established the relation with contemporary multiculturalism.

My thesis is an attempt to examine how the definition and classification of literature has been applied to Native American women literature. I have tried to depict the role of female characters in Native American works. There are more than 500 tribes in Native Society but in spite of the presence of various distractive cultural traits their literatures are unique and are culturally specific. Thus cultural context is vital in understanding Native American literature. Natives perform ceremonies for celebration and healing. Through oral traditions they learn their culture. Their oral traditions of stories, legends, myths, songs, ceremonies have singular uniformity. They use repetitions and images of cultural significance. We find the trickster tales in all the tribal writings. Tribal literature began in the form of oral literature which includes myths, legends, songs, chants and speeches. All these aspects are very clearly discussed in my first chapter titled “The Genesis (Native American Literary History)”.

Native American authors in addition to autobiographies wrote sermons, protest literature, tribal histories and travel accounts. Through their writings they wanted to depict the significance of their tribal cultures. Whatever they wrote was based on their oral traditions. The works of Native Americans
reminded the white readers of the essential humanity of Native Americans. The land of natives and their people were destroyed or demoralized by the European society. They were declined due to diseases, dispossession and massacres. They lived in a simple state of nature. White settlers by the disposition of ancestral lands permanently changed the life and culture of Native Americans. When Europeans realized that natives were more in numbers they thought of assimilating them into mainstream society. As a result attempts were made to civilize them through educating them and imposing white religion and culture on them. In almost all the works of Native American writings we find the characters striving to perceive white society’s higher moral and civil standards. But inspite of that they were restricted to reservation lands. This made them lose the employment opportunity.

In the past natives used to pass on their history orally. But once they became educated natives started to collect their history and reproduce it in the written form. They even recorded their history on tapes. This widely made people to know about the culture and tradition of natives. Europeans’ attempt to assimilated native people into their white culture and tradition was not successful. Natives loved and respected their land very much and thus they strived hard to protect their land and their culture. They wanted Europeans to vacate their land so that they would be the people in sole occupancy of the land. Native American society and their culture were destroyed by the US government. Native writers in almost all their writing very clearly depict the issue of natives becoming insane if at all they give up native culture and adopt
the white culture. They proved through their writings that such types of people who become insane are cured if they return back to their own culture and tradition. Natives were cut off from the traditions and mores of their ancestors. Europeans forced natives to join the army. Indian veterans suffered from physical and psychological ailments. This made them lead a life of poverty and they found solace in alcohol which led to self-destruction. This aspect is very clearly depicted in almost all works of native writers. Native American women writer Leslie Marmon Silko in her novel *Ceremony* shows how her female character June gets addicted to alcohol. June is separated from her husband and children. She tries to rebuild her life. She leaves her family seeking self-awareness but meets tragic death. The writers try to use the tribal and contemporary influences on their relation to the landscape. Thus the theme of contemporary Native American writers is violation, violence and cruelty of Europeans on Native Americans. The main theme of their writing is that the individuals and the tribe can survive the destructive forces present in the mythic and real world. They write about a missed blood’s search for his place, importance of oral traditions to the cultural survival of the tribe.

The common theme of native writers is the struggle of Native Americans to reconnect with the rich heritage of the past. They write about its folkways, values and tradition highlighting the theme of struggle to establish identity in white dominated world. We find all these themes in both males and female native writers such as N Scott Momaday, a Kiowa, Leslie Marmon Silko, a Laguna Pueblo and Louise Erdrich, an Oglala. They draw their themes
from rich traditions of Native literature, the myths, legends and folk tales. They use story telling technique and styles of their ancestors in their novels. Modern Native American literature began with the publication of N. Scott Momaday’s novel House made of Dawn (1968). This novel depicts the problems faced by Indians in contemporary society. Momaday writes about the importance of oral tradition and rituals and use of memory to structure plot in his writings. He portrays a mixed blood’s quest for a sense of place, tribe, and self. Though all these writers believe that natives can establish their identity following their own native culture they say that it is essential to adapt to the changing environments in which they find themselves.

This chapter gives outline of Native Americans, history of their literature, writers, themes, works so on and so forth. Information about the names Amerindians, Amerinds, indigenous, aboriginal, Red Indians, Native Americans used to identify indigenous people is provided. We learn here how Whites decreased the native population through disease, displacement, enslavement, internal warfare etc. This chapter informs about the policies of Europeans, Indian Citizenship Act, and information about World War I along with various myths and rituals of Native Americans. These myths and rituals were passed on from one generation to the other orally. Different songs, stories and ritual dramas, role of ghosts, oral speeches, and autobiographies of tribes are discussed. Maya tribe had excellent astronomers and historian. A brief record of Mayan tribe is provided. As mentioned earlier the main theme of Native Americans is their reverence to land. This aspect is mentioned in I
chapter in brief and discussed again and again in the rest of the chapters. We
learn about the formation of American Philosophical society in 1743.
Information about Frank Cushing, Zuni literature’s translator is provided.

Information about Native American women whose voices speak through
private diaries, journals and letters where they record events of their lives is
included. Biographies of few important Native American women writers such
as Humishuma, Ella Deloria, Pauline Johnson are added. These writers wrote
and recorded tribal stories. Detailed information about three important
contemporary native women writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Paula Gunn
Allen and Louise Erdrich and their works Ceremony, Almanac of the Dead, The
Woman Who Owned Shadows, Love Medicine and Tracks is included. In this
chapter apart from female writers and their works I have discussed few
important male writers James Welch, Gerald Vizenor, N. Scott Momaday and
their works.

The II chapter titled “Native Viw of Feminism (Women Characters of
Paula Gunn Allen)”, gives description of Allen’s novel The Woman who
Owned Shadows and few of her poems, highlighting female characters of
Allen. Few anthologies of Allen too are discussed in this chapter. The
importance of mother and grandmother in Native American culture is
highlighted. A brief biography of Allen is included. I have depicted few aspects
of “Spiderwoman’s Grand Daughters” where Allen examines the female
deities. She gives importance to lesbians and females in indigenous cultures.
Autobiographical elements in Allen’s novel are discussed. A detailed
description of the novel is provide where the female character Ephanie is confused and is later healed spiritually through religious ceremonies and psychologically through psychotherapy. This chapter depicts Native American symbolisms, tribal tradition, myth, role of Spiderwoman, role of mother, grandmother, men, importance of dreams, mixed blood heritages, western influence of natives so on and so forth. Many textual quotations, critical responses are discussed in this chapter.

Besides few of Allen’s poems are included to discuss few more different aspects of Native Americans. In one of her poems she shows her own plight as a Native American woman. The agonies of women due to loss of new awareness (Return), due to loss of love (Paradigm) are discussed in few more poems. Some poems in “The Blind Lion” describe the interior journey searching for self. Few poems of Allen explore aesthetic possibilities within the world of disaster and defeat that surrounded America’s racial minorities. These poems emphasize the female journey to spiritual transcendence. Her sonnet “Coda” is one where she raises question and she herself answers those questions. This sonnet very clearly proves that healing is found within the self. Allen, through her poems gives a voice to Indian women. She discusses the brutalization of ethnic women. Allen honors women through her poems. Her poem “Off Reservation Blues” is included where Allen feels that women of her culture are imprisoned. Few details of her volume of poems “Coyote’s Daylight Trip” and “Shadow Country” are included. Allen here tries to say that women are the protectors and carriers of Native American culture and tradition. Allen’s
poem “Grandmother of the Light” collects creation myths concerning Native American Goddesses. Women’s spiritual traditions are highlighted in almost all works of Allen. Allen writes in one of her poems that the role of women is confined to food and water, clothing and shelter, birthing and continuation. She even includes in her poems issues relating to desire and grief, confusion and rage. Allen’s views on contemporary women too are included. Her poem “Dear World” reflects the question of identity of Native Americans who are neither fully White nor fully Native American. Thus this chapter very clearly shows the aspect that Allen is a dedicated feminist and all her works are written to educate mainstream people about Native American themes, structures, issues and contexts emphasizing the importance of feminism.

The third chapter titled “A Genuine Literary Reminder (Ceremony and Almanac of the Dead),” includes the works of Leslie Marmon Silko, a Laguna woman who is the first female Native-American novelist. It shows how Native American women were honored in their family. Besides, the rights and the different roles of women in native culture are highlighted. The lives of Native Women in comparison to Native men and the issues of Native American ceremonies are discussed. Her novel Ceremony illustrates the importance of recovering the old stories and merging them with modern reality to create a stronger culture. In Ceremony, in the very beginning, Leslie Marmon Silko introduces the Pueblo creation myth and its goddess Thought Woman. Thought Woman thinks and creates a story. Silko here tells about the story of a Laguna war veteran Tayo’s quest for sanity which he achieves through reopening the
lifeline to the constructive elements in his roots. Tayo is of mixed parentage. He returns to his home on the Laguna Reservation after World War II. Tayo must go through the stages of alienation, rejection, and finally reconciliation with his cultural heritage. Thus in *Ceremony*, the protagonist, Tayo finds his cure and salvation within an Indian context. Silko’s novel is a literary reminder for Americans to acknowledge Native American heritage as first true national heritage and remember that the Native American heritage is still alive and well today. Per Seyersted has given seven approaches to Silko’s novel *Ceremony* which is a literary reminder for Americans to acknowledge Native American heritage as first true national heritage and remember that the Native American heritage is still alive and well today. The second approach is related to Literary Concerns such as style, devices used prototypes, and character development. The third approach is related to Sources of Power such as names, stories, spoken and written words, knowledge, and witchery. The fourth approach is related to Religious Issues such as conflicts with Christianity, and aspects of traditional beliefs such as healing and ceremony. The fifth approach is related to Cultural and Social Issues such as community influence, group and tribal identity, effects of the war, and effects of racism. The sixth approach is related to Cultural Substance such as use of language, connections to oral traditions, and authenticity of perspective and voice. The seventh and final approach is Relationship with Environment such as land and water, seasons as well as celestial, and animals. Apart from these discussions this chapter gives a
detailed analysis of *Ceremony* and *Almanac of the Dead* which includes summary, critical responses and textual quotations.

Silko very clearly depicts in *Ceremony* that preserving tradition is essential to saving the Native American community. Both for Tayo and in the ancient stories, forgetting tradition brings massive drought and disaster. A key role of the medicine men is to preserve tradition, as is symbolized by the crates of artifacts they store. However, in order for tradition to survive, it must change with the times opines Silko. Silko’s use of poetry invokes the rhythmic, communal storytelling patterns of the Native Americans, while her use of prose belongs to a Western narrative tradition. By combining the two in her novel, Silko asserts that the form as well as the content of the story is about the blending of the two cultures. Thematically, white and Native American cultures clash with each other more often than they complement each other, but the prose and poetry weave together easily.

Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* is a fiction of grand scale. The acclaimed author of *Ceremony* has undertaken a weaving of ideas and lives, fate and history, passion and conquest in an attempt to re-create the moral history of the Americas, told from the point of view of the conquered, not the conquerors. In *Almanac of the Dead* the visionary or mystical mode of storytelling is represented by the almanac itself, as well as by the visionary Lecha and by a character named Tacho, who offers prophecies about "The Reign of the Fire-Eye Macaw" (the present era). When this novel is concluded we understand that Silko has painted a picture of the white man as a sadist, self-centered, self-
destructive force who has raped, pillaged and killed her people. The white man has violated mother Earth. Most horrible are the forces for evil and the contemporary social contract in the Americas. The overall movement toward the destruction of decadent Western culture in North America is associated with the rapid decline of late capitalism predicted by Marx.

Chapter four titled “Exporing Native Heritage (Love Medicine and Tracks),” gives a brief biography of Award-winning author Louise Erdrich, a contemporary Native American Female writer. The themes and character of her works The Beet Queen, Tracks, The Bingo Palace, and Tales of Burning Love, The Antelope Wife, and The Last Report on Miracles at Little No Horse are discussed in brief. Erdrich’s novel Love Medicine and Tracks are discussed in detail. Erdrich through her novels shows how Native American people struggle to regain their nearly forgotten cultural heritage. The feelings of Native American people are very clearly depicted. Erdrich also depicts, what it is meant to be both a rational and a feeling being, to be both an American and a Native American, to be both in catholic and tribal beliefs. Different opinions of critics are included. Erdrich very clearly proves that the values of Native American family are opposite to the values associated with Western nuclear family. Spiritual kinship and clan membership is highlighted in her novel. Apart from this throughout the novel Erdrich creates many conflicting codes involving Christianity versus semantic religion, mechanical time versus ceremonial time, the nuclear family versus tribal kinship systems and main characters versus characters of equal status. Erdrich also writes about
establishing one's own identity. She has used many motifs such as mother motif, twin motif etc. Through this novel she proves that real magic comes from love, not with medicinal herbs. *Love Medicine* is compared to a German Folk tale, “*Hansel and Gretel*”. Erdrich concludes her novel proving in the end that everything is set right. Marie’s life includes risk, transformation, household and medicine, as well as integration of past and present. In her old age Marie helps Lulu, her rival, regain her sight. Her encounter with Leopolda makes her forgive Nector’s attempt at dissertation and to accept him back. Leopolda who seems to be Marie’s antagonist is actually her essential spiritual guide who pulls her up from darkness and death. In this chapter summary and critical analysis of *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* along with textual quotations are provided.

In Erdrich’s novel *Tracks*, place has become property, and it’s an analysis of how the process affects innocent bystanders. In all her novels, women are isolated. In *Tracks*, Erdrich not only chronicles the story of the Chippewa struggle to preserve their land and culture but also gives stories of these stories and their tellers. Discussion is also made that Erdrich's novel *Tracks* is dialogical in many ways, and it unfolds by means of two alternating narrators. In this chapter we learn that, *Tracks* is the story of Fleur and a Native American tribe in the early 20th century. The life style of the tribe is ending and the story is presented by the aging Chippewa, Nanapush the lone survivor of his family line who delivers the odd chapters. He is a wise old tribal leader gifted in the ancient art of story telling. Erdrich through her character Fluer
depicts the magical power of Native American women. In this novel, Fluer Pillager, a Native American woman has magical powers. She is a central figure in both Nanapush’s and Pauline’s stories. Discussion is made about many spirits including Misshepeshu, the water spirit man. In this novel Erdrich has created a powerful female character Pauline Puyat whose one of the most striking characteristics is her devout Catholicism and her desire to be disconnected from the Ojibwa people. Throughout Tracks, Pauline Puyat openly chooses Catholicism over her native religion and abandons her native ways almost completely. Apart from this I have included Erdrich’s purpose of writing this novel. The first purpose of Erdrich’s novel is to provide commentary on Native American society, the importance of oral tradition for example. A second purpose is to analyze the rift between Native Americans who respect and try to hold onto the honor and traditions of their past and those Native Americans who have forgotten their rich history and are now trying to live in a white man’s world.

The fifth chapter titled Reviewing Fourth World Feminism is a detailed description of women right from the beginning to contemporary period. It tells about the changes Native American women have undergone since the arrival of European settlers and the way they adopted the modern life. The way they developed the literature and the way they spread the Native American culture throughout the globe. This chapter discusses the violence, racism, sexism on women and their struggle to establish identity through cultural background. The works discussed in this chapter depict the aspect that tribal culture is
women centered and it was they who were held in high respect and had great power, autonomy and equality. They were the decision makers as they were wise and just. Few women like Molly Brant, Lozen etc who were wonderful mothers and superior leaders prove this aspect. This chapter proves the aspect that women in tribal tradition had political, spiritual, medicinal power at the backdrop of few important Native American novels such as *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, *Ceremony*, *Almanac of the Dead* and *The Woman Who Owned Shadows*. This chapter highlights female characters and their familial relationships such as mother, aunt, grandmother, lover, wife etc. it also shows how women are the carriers of Native American culture and tradition. It gives a brief discussion of Europeans and their culture and the influence of Christianity on Native American women. It also introduces few female deities of Native Americans such as Buffalo woman, Grandmother Spider, Corn woman, Earth Woman, Thinking Woman Iyatico so on and so forth. The traditional role of women in the past and their role in the contemporary society are outlined in brief. The self identity of Native American women is discussed through the female character Ephanie of Allen’s *The Woman Who Owned Shadows*. Ephanie who is found self alienated in the beginning of the novel later establishes her own identity and becomes successful at the end. Few other Allen’s works, volumes of poetry, essays are included.

Later Silko’s novel *Ceremony* where Silko attributes different roles to women is included. Silko highlights the mythological elements and dual functions in female characters and through her works she tries to depict the
strength and power of Native American women. though the protagonist of the novel Tayo is a male character he finds his identity through women and his mental ailment is cured only through female characters. Silko depicts the aspects of modern culture in her next novel *Almanac of the Dead* where the roles attributed to women are different when compared to the women of the past. This chapter defines modern female characters Lecha, Zeta, traditional grandmother Yoeme, political leader Angelita of *Almanac*. Apart from this the chapter describes Chippewa struggle to preserve land and culture through Erdrich’s novel *Tracks*. Erdrich’s another novel *Love Medicine* educates non Natives the themes, contexts and structures of Native Americans.

The chapter provides a brief history of Native American women who were denied of many rights including suffrage. It informs about suffrage, women’s education, and birth of feminism, its definition, feminists, feminist texts and the different movements of that period. Important Native American leaders and their struggle to establish identity for all Native American women is highlighted in this chapter. Ideas of few popular feminist critics such as Elaine Showalter, Sojourner Truth, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are included. Discussion is also made about the four different world feminisms such as First World Feminism, Second World Feminism, Third World Feminism, and Fourth World Feminism. The evolution of these feminisms, the feminists of each world their struggles are included. Fourth World Feminism which embodies the Aboriginal Women’s conceptions of human nature, their political philosophy and their strategy for social change and liberation is depicted in this chapter.
This chapter concludes with the fact that Fourth World Feminism was born because no feminist organization concentrated on Native American philosophy, theory and thought. As the natives wanted their voice to reach all non native readers they started writing under fourth world literature.

I have concluded my thesis outlining the aspect that Fourth world feminism embodies Aboriginal women’s conceptions of human nature, their political philosophy and their strategy for social change and liberation. Many Euro-Canadian feminists consider that the only source of oppression for all women is nothing but male domination. They don’t give importance to racism or national oppression as source of oppression for aboriginals or black women. Native American feminism very clearly shows a distinction from the oceans of radicalization etc which are the issues of other three feminisms. Fourth world feminism is not worried about submission; they believe salvation lies only within their society. They don’t want to disintegrate from native society. They don’t want to leave native traditional society or dismantle native society. They realize that complete protection and preservation of native society is possible only when nature is protected, family is taken care of and male partners are taken care of. The only resistance in the family is the male egoism within their native culture. They do not propagate the complete obliteration of native societies like First World, Second World and Third World feminisms. The works that I have examined in my thesis are the works which are considered as the representative works of these qualities. The writers discussed are the Fourth World writers who have projected the propositions of Fourth World. I have
ended my research with the opinion that in the present situation Americans should go in the way of Australia. Australia has recognized the honored place of the first Australians. The Australian Government has openly reconciled Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Thus America can right now withstand the threats of global terrorism, financial crunch and global emigrations only by accepting the native literature, culture and by assimilating them into the mainstream society.

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