Chapter - VI

The New Historicist
(Armand Garnet Ruffo)

New historicism rejects the polarity of literature and history. The radical ideological alternative is foregrounded in restoring the pluralities of self and ‘mental set’ of all the people. The transformations self of Armand Ruffo and the characters in his poetry is political, ideological and self-motivated. In Native Canadian discourse political commitments reflect in their literary production. This is evident in poetry of Armand Ruffo.

Significantly, New historicist (re)vision of Renaissance textual production extend the possibilities in articulating the existence of self of the masses by taking a poststructuralist stand in dismantling the binary of literary and non-literary texts which includes ‘refashioning’ the self of the excluded individuals in history. As an educated person Ruffo is conscious of repression of his people in the process of Colonialism. This element is included in his poetry. The theme of domination in any means is a recursive structure in his poetry. Ultimately, the self-realization enlightens the author to employ discursive strategies to dichotomize the self of the author and the self of characters.

Transformation of self of an individual depends on the dialectics of social condition. The dialectical nature of Historical materialism and its
‘refashion’ in taking a stand in interpreting history and the marginalized voices is the essence of New historicism.

Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From more to Shakespeare* reads of the dramas of William Shakespeare in the light of Renaissance Culture and Class division problematises the so-called ‘literariness’ of the period. Theoretically, in the post enlightenment age, the radical definition of self has been a problematic element in literary criticism. Retrospectively, the hybridity of the self is a complex definition in the poetry of Armand Ruffo in the New historicist reading of ‘self’.

The New historicist ideology of reading history and literary texts of the past has made a larger impact on the discursive practices of literature. Though much of the stuff of theory has come from the American New Historicist school and British Cultural Materialist school, the influence of Michael Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey, Michel de Certeau, Pierre Bourdieu, James Clifford and Clifford Geertz and Mikhail Bakhtin.

New Historicism as a literary theory and as an ideology is in opposition to traditional criticism. The dominance of New Criticism in America and Formalism of Russia during the first half of the twentieth century have produced textual strategies of verbal selection within the text by isolating other factors. For these schools of criticism, a text is not a
historical document. The conflicting ideas of New Historicist thinkers regarding the nature of New historicism in embracing post structuralism, Deconstruction and other subversive ideologies such as Feminist, Marxist, Post colonialism, Minority literature, Subaltern studies and Indigenous literature are obviously present in Armand Ruffo’s Poetic Canon.

New historicist’s relation to post structuralism seems at one time not a free flow of historical meaning. But at the same time it is a strategically dominance of historical meanings and readings. But still the dominant ideology is the subversion of the fixity of semeiotics. It is away from politics, history and ethics. The relevance of this notion remains as a challenge to the very reading of literature and its fixity of meaning and ideology. Louis Montrose’s slogan of New historicism is an essential factor in dismantling the binary of literary and non-literary texts. He theorizes ‘historicity of texts and the textuality of history’.

New historicism and its strategy of interpreting history and literary texts are heterogeneous. It varies from author to author and theorist to theorist. In another sense there is no New historicism but New historicisms.

The definition of literature and non-literature itself is problematic. So is history and a history. David Caute’s observation in his introduction to Jean-Paul Sartre’s What is literature? Becomes a pertinent thing:
The writer is urged to try and embrace the human condition in its totality and, in exploring a situation, to unite the specific with the absolute. Literature must help the reader to make himself a full and free man in and through history [...] Literature should not be a sedative but an irritant, a catalyst provoking men to change the world in which they live and in so doing to change themselves. By adopting this role the writer ensures that the content of his work will avoid sterile dogmatism. By anticipating the point of view of the potentially free reader, he frees himself. The process is dialectical and reciprocal (IX-X).

The relation between history, literature and ideology results in producing dialectical tensions. The mutual understanding between a writer and a reader is dialectic to history where literature is not a process of ‘art for art’s sake’. Ideology that confines only to its own rules stands negated in the perspective of Karl Marx ideology of interpreting and changing the world. This is the quintessential perspective of Sartre on the commitment of a writer. So the role of a writer and a reader is always coexisting and dual.

New historicism and formalism gave emphasis on norms and forms in selecting poetry rather than giving importance to taste and feeling. In his book *The New Criticism* (1941) John Crowe Ransom reviews the theoretical mode of I.A. Richards, T.S.Eliot and Yvour Winters. To
Ransom, New Criticism begins with these three writers. Richard’s theories are related to Tone, Intention and Dramatic situation. These are his formalistic structure of poetry. Where as his pupil William Empson traced the multiplicity of meaning in poetry. To Ransom T.S. Eliot is religious poet in the Anglican tradition and pin points religious elements in his poetry. His poetry is stuffed with forms and beliefs of the past that showed his intuition. His rules have appeared in his essays and advocates the individual talent of a poet is only to valuate when he is being influenced by classicist for the literary understanding. In his study on Yvour Winters, Ransom says that he is one of the best critics in interpreting the structure of a poem.

The relation between New historicism and Michel de Certeau , Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault lies in the use similar strategies of discursive practices, a New historicist reading of ‘dominant histories’. In many ways Michel de Certeau is a New historicist. His perception on consumption as production is the major theoretical frame work because a text cannot isolate from its reception. It plays an active part in the production and consumption of a text’s meaning.

For Certeau the political meaning is always the intention of an author because at some level some ideology is excluded and included. The concept of ‘everyday meaning’ and ‘local’ meaning for Certeau is
theoretical outbreak from the dominant strategy. For him the former ideology is the dominant strategy, challenging the dominant historiography and strategy. Thus infact Certeau’s strategies of reading culture, philosophy and history reveal the truth by unmasking the epistemological foreground in the entire genre. Thus the ‘local’ reading of a text always gains prominence during the process of reading against the grain of structural theory of ‘closure’ interpretation. In Certeau’s discourse every reader is consumer. It is they who gives emphasis on the unexplored area of ‘silent history’. There is a conscious dichotomy between the dominant interpretation and the resistant reader or reading which an active ‘tactics’. is More than giving emphasis on interpreting a text’s meaning, Certeau gives importance to the ‘tactics’, a term he uses in his theoretical frame work.

Foucault’s power discourse and Certeau’s conception go on the similar lines. A question that gives importance to their strategical and ‘tactical’ interpretation of history, a way of reading or re-reading a text which is far from the phenomenological approach. Foucault adopted Jeremy Bentham’s model of panoptic on structure – a construction of a prison for observing the prisoners without himself being seen. Foucault’s theory of power discourse always gives upper hand to the dominant mainly because of his genealogical conception of “power/ knowledge”. In the
application of the theory we can discern different strategies that created knowledge. This is radically different from the hierarchical power structure in Marxist ideology. Instead it is a web of power, always interconnected. Moreover it is a very complex system. Where is the voice of ‘silent histories’? it is here that foucauldian theory of strategy of power and Certeau’s ‘tactics’ in subverting the dominant structure and in forming another centre by the method of resistant reading becomes apt. Thus the politics of a text or an author shifts from the politics of reader’s or a consumer’s.

Thus Certeau’s theory of interpreting a text is also away from the Reader response school that more or less structures the semantic or meaning. The various theoretical framework of Pierre Machery, Louis Althusser, Fredric Jameson and Michel Foucault, Created a space for the ideological foreground. Whereas when we analyze Certeau’s ‘tactics’, even the monolithic ideology is dismantled because for him reading is a ‘play’ of consumerism.

The consumer’s activity in reading a text may consciously (de) re-Evaluate the textual meaning and ideology. Mainly this is because the shift of traditional critical analysis to the heterogeneous cultural and discursive strategies of New historicist interpretation is a significant aspect to examine.
Certeau’s tool of historical research is the concept called ‘silent history’ which is opposite to the dominant strategies of historiography. Hence ‘opposition practice’ is counter discursive and counter-strategy rather than creating a monolithic power structure like that of Foucauldian strategy. Thus the hidden is voiced against the dominant voice, resulting in the formation of an argument that the ‘other’ reading is also possible.

Certeau’s theory of oppositional practices is also the counter knowledge, a way of dissimilar and contradicting the nature of the dominant ideology. It never tries to locate within that particular power structure. It gives power to individual reading, a subjective analysis that result in the multiple readings of various consumers.

Strategies of a consumer are also the process of resistance to the dominant, always conscious and active, resulting in the formation of the pluralities of histories. As a ‘consumer’ we can differentiate the ideology and strategy of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau on many grounds. Claire Colebrook in his book New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism (1997) distinguishes this:

The traditional sociological method of describing societies which uses statistics and generalizations from statistics has a similar strategic effect. It takes the contingent multiplicity of everyday life and transcribes
it according to an overarching logic. De Certeau’s theory therefore assumes that a culture is formed according to strategic boundaries, but there is also an essentially unbounded or plural life which the boundary limits. It is only because of de Certeau’s commitment to the pre-strategic chaos of everyday life, that forms of order are seen as ‘missing’ the full of existence. As such, the act of strategy is a form of power. Like Foucault, de Certeau does not relate power to knowledge; he sees power as a condition for knowledge. But, unlike Foucault, de Certeau posists an ‘other’ to power’s productive divisions; this ‘otherness’ is given or known in its disruptive effects on strategies. By spatialising temporally shifting forms of life, knowledge is a form of power which appropriates and orders that which it describes. (122)

The unvoiced culture is the ‘other’. Certeau’s analysis of power/knowledge is similar to Foucauldian discourse. Certeau’s multiple voices contradicts the Foucauldian single power/knowledge structure. The ‘tactics’ of Certeau contradicts the dominant. His concept of heterology or science of other is also the marginalized ideology that incorporated with the dominant knowledge. For instance, in John Milton’s Paradise Lost, the ‘other’ could be the stereotype of Orient. Milton could be an ‘Orientalist’, in the Saidian concept. The popular myth of Western was that Eastern countries were rich in silver, gold and precious stones. When Milton
compared the description of paradise with the royal palaces of the Orient. The ‘other’ is the stereotype that never interpreted in those days Milton. We should also remember that the period when Milton wrote the text was also the period of colonial expansion. Similarly, the travel literature could be the ‘other’ because certain genres dominated over the Other.

The other comes to centre only when we-read a text or culture from a multiple perspective. This is one of the ‘tactics’ of Certeau, where the dominant comes to margin and the ‘other’ comes to the centre. Certeau’s concept of ‘heterology’ is one of the ‘tactics’ of New historicist reading, a post structural theoretical framework in deconstructing the dominant. Unlike in Certeau’s the ‘other’ is out Foucauldian power discourse. Instead we could hear the dominant voice not the other. The contribution of Michel de Certeau to the New historicism gives insight into a depth possibility in interpreting history, literary texts and culture.

The re-working of historical characters in any genre is not merely an attempt to foreground historical period alone. However, the postmodern strategies of historiographic meta-poetry find unique position in revisioning discursive strategies in the light of contemporary social practices. Significantly in the light of Certeau’s New historicism, Grey Owl: The Mystery of Archie Belaney is placed in historical period to
rewrite history. Grey Owl is a consumer and producer of Native Canadian discourse. The Chief Cochise made an impact when he was in his teenage in England. He migrated to Canada probably at the age of sixteen and claimed to have been adopted by an Ojibway parents.

The characters in Grey Owl are producers and consumers of discourse. In other words all of them are true products whose ideological point of view on Native discourse challenges the notion of inclusion and exclusion of political issues. Henceforth the political discourse of Grey Owl and other characters is conscious.

Moreover, the psychological, external appearance and his perspective of Native discourse is interconnected in numerous ways. Apparently, Grey Owl whose concerns are directly connected to Indian political, religious and philosophical discourse. When he was in England, as a white boy, the production and consumption of discourse had a direct relationship with his English nativity. This has been changing since his migration to Canada in general and in particular as an ‘Indian’. Ruffo writes about this dialectical transformation of self of Archie Belaney. He embraces the authenticity of indigenous culture. He constantly dreams because his ‘mind’ is over there. The transformation of Archie Belaney to an Indian Ojibway is more or less a complex identity. The self realization of Grey Owl reject the polarities of racial identity and transformation. It
seems Armand Ruffo rejects the polarities of racial identity and transformation. It seems Armand Ruffo rejects the objectivity study of Indigene-white European relation. In *Fear and Temptation*. Terry Goldie says “Grey Owl, the Englishman turned Indian who perfectly grasped that the signifiers of the indigene are the essence, not the signified, the most assuredly not the referent” (Goldie, 215). If this analytical study is essential, then we can reject this stuff by asking several questions regarding his discourse on Native cultural, religious, social, philosophical and ontological dimension. Leslie Monkman says that Owl is a mediator between red and white cultures and “seems to have been acutely aware of the impact of his assumption of and Indian name (Monkman, 99). It seems that Owl is conscious of the Ojibway heritage that made an impact on him as an “ecologist and conservationist”. Ruffo writes about this dialectical transformation:

After school rather than go directly home to his Grandmother Belaney’s at 36 St. Mary’s Terrace, Archie, II years old and alone, walks for miles along the grassy cliff overlooking Hastings and the English Channel. Come sunset, he heads for a favourite bluff where he sits with his arms around his knees and looks west, out past the waves and rising fog, and dreams of America, of a long –lost father who in Archie’s mind is living somewhere out there among the Red Indians. The
Books Archie carries, Great Chiefs of the Wild West and Two Little Savages: The Adventures of Two Boys Who Lived as Indians and What They Learned, tell him what he already knows, that he too can do it, and that his real life will begin when he joins his father and like him is also adopted by the Apache. Let his classmates jeer as loud as they want, because up here on this cliff he can see how small they really are, and he no longer cares what they say about him or his father. His mind made up, this he reconfirms as he repeats the words of his hero Cohise, his thin legs hurrying him back to his Grandmother’s before his Aunts miss him and decide to punish him with a strapping or, worse, lock him indoors. (2-3)

The dominant historiography of Grey Owl and the ‘local meaning’ is parallel. The writers who have written biography of Owl never pictured his psychological transformation. Moreover these biographical sketches were written by non-Indians. Armand Ruffo’s Grey Owl is poetic biography where there are no binaries between literary and non-literary as well as biography and non-biography.

In Certeau’s discursive Strategy, every reader and writer is a consumer. Significantly, both Grey Owl and Armand Ruffo are writers and readers who consumed and produced ideology. Ruffo uses his “tactics”
like photograph, conversations, lectures, newspaper extracts, songs, poems, dramatic sequences and intertextual elements for a scrupulous reading of dominant historiography. Certeau gives importance to “tactics” rather than interpretation of text. Whereas Ruffo, as a writer employs discursive strategies and “tactics” for a radical historical interpretation. The relationship of Grey Owl with his wife, Indians and Canadians including government servants subverts the historical narratives form a subjective ‘Indian’ perspective. The discourse of Owl is the theoretical frame work of Native discourse of Armand Ruffo:

The current is faster than I expect.

Suddenly my articles break into demand.

Letters of congratulations come flying

In from across Britain and the United States

(few from Canada which I find disconcerting)

Strangers want to visit me.

Reporters want to interview me.

They announce that I’m the first

To promote conservation:

The Beaver

The forests, the

Indian

Way of life.
But the thrust of self-promotion is upon me,
And head first into it, I hear myself
Convincing myself that nobody’s going to listen
To an immigrant ex-trapper from England,
Promote and indigenous philosophy for Canada.
And if this is the only way
To get Canadians to listen,
Then I’ll do it, and more
If I have to. I’ll be
What I have to be.
Without hesitation (71-72).

Readers, in New Historicist interpretation have equal role. Every reader executes “resistance” strategies for the inclusion of oppositional practices to foreground the “counter knowledge”. Both Armand Ruffo and Grey Owl are readers who consumed ideology. They have read texts to produce texts. Even when Owl was in England he had heard about the Indians who had been influenced Owl. Owl writes about the “oppositional practice” in 1935 about his attitude to Indians. This discursive practice is “silent history” in Canadian history. Ruffo reworks history to bring Native discourse to centre from marginal displacement. We hear the voice of Grey Owl through the poet:
Why have you come? The reporters ask
as they jostle for position,
Try to get me to crack my grimace
For the flashing cameras.
To offer hope, I announce.
I come bearing a green leaf.
I come to speak to your tired and
Factory beaten, to the colliers
With their coal-blackened eyes.
To say that you too can find refuge
Beyond the smokestacks,
The daily toil of your civilization,
And escape to a place of peace
And contentment.
I speak of life, of the animals
Great and small, and of the land
We share in harmony across the ocean.
For it too is now threatened,
Overwhelmed by the hungry maw
You all know so well. But hark!
I exclaim. All is not lost.
Recognize that what has been forsaken
By your forefathers exists,

Here in books and films,

For I am the voice of Nature (107).

New historicism as a literary theory and criticism in America has given much emphasis by the works of Stephen Greenblatt. His Renaissance *Self-Fashioning* (1980) and *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988) theorized the new historicist reading of the Renaissance texts. In fact his term ‘self-fashioning’ is a theoretical mode against the traditional historical narratives. The extension of this ideology is that the narratives of the past are unique and codified by their dominant power structures. It could be the Bourgeois or the Church or could be the King or Historians. It could be the privileged artist or writer. It could be the patriarchal structure or any ideological structure. There are numerous influential elements on a writer in the production of a literary text. Greenblatt in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* analyses the “cultural transaction” which is silent in history. He says:

I propose that we begin by taking seriously that collective production of literary pleasure and interest. We know that this production is collective since language itself, which is at the heart of literary power, is the supreme instance of a collective
creation. But this knowledge has for the most part remained inert, either cordoned off in prefatory acknowledgments or diffused in textual analyzed that convey almost nothing of the social dimension of literature’s power. Instead the work seems to stand only for the skill and effort of the individual artist, as if whole cultures possessed their shard emotions, stories, and dreams only because a professional caste invented them and parceled them out [...] if the textual traces in which we ask interest and pleasure are not sources of numinous authority, if they are the signs of contingent social practices, then the questions we ask of them cannot profitably center on a search for their untranslatable essence. Instead we can ask how collective beliefs and experiences were shaped, moved from one medium to another, concentrated in manageable aesthetic form, offered for consumption. We can examine how the boundaries were marked between cultural practices understood to be art forms and other, contiguous, forms of expressions[...] I have termed this general enterprises—study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices and enquiry into the relations among these practices--a poetics of culture(4-5).
Greeblatt re-reading of Renaissance “half-hidden cultural transaction” (4) gives possibilities to rework the period’s textual production on a different interpretation. The subtitle of Shakespearean Negotiations, ‘The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance’ is a diverse ideology. He explains the difficulties in defining what is known as “Social energy”. But still it is “……manifested in the capacity of certain verbal, aural, and visual traces to produce, shape, and organize collective physical and mental experiences” (6). Moreover, New historicism is a new radical interpretation of ‘literary historicity’ of a period which gives unheard voices power to come to the centre from the marginal position.

The emergence of New historicism has entered to a new formula of studying power relations of people. The textual and intertextual characters and their power relations and ideological stand gains prominence in what many (have) consider to be the post-Marxist theory of power. There is no greater literary text or greatest literary text, but all are seen on the basic ground for interpreting the ‘mental set’ of the people. There is no linear narration instead it a complicated multiple discursive practices that form ideologies, a similar idea of Nietzsche’s interpretation that there no facts but interpretation.

Literary studies and power relation of new historicist interpretation pay the way for a new approach in explicating the hierarchical Marxist
analysis. Unlike in the Marxian tradition, here it is a complicated one. The marginal interpretation gains power. It is here Greenblatt’s ‘self-fashioning’ adds new dimension. He applies the power discourse of Foucault. Similarly to Michel de Certeau and unlike to Foucault, Greenblatt’s discourse questions the authority of the ‘Master’. But still Foucault’s concept of Ideology, Semiology, Dialectic, Power and History shows the various strategies of dominants but there are no strategies to dismantle the power structure. Foucault says in Power/Knowledge:

The problem is at once to distinguish among events, to differentiate the networks and levels to which they belong, and to reconstitute the lines along which they are connected and engender one another. From this follows a refusal of analyses couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures, and a recourse to analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic development, and tactics. Here I believe one’s point of reference should not be to the great model of languages (langue) and signs, but to that of war and battle. The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning. History has no ‘meaning’ though this is not to say that it is absurd or incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be susceptible of analysis.
down to the smallest detail—but this is accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics. Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semeiotic, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. ‘Dialectic’ is a way of evading the always open the hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and ‘semiology’ is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm platonic form of language and dialogue. (Power/Knowledge, 114)

To Foucault semiotic interpretation of history is ‘Violent’. It never questions the power but shows various power structures. For example in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* we can see the power of Prospero in subjugating Caliban. The very notion of advocating the political interpretation and literary interpretation of the text as a binary is dismantled. In fact New historicism is the study of all the ‘mental experience’ of all the people. Thus when we analyze a text we can see conflicting ideologies a ‘free play’ of meaning.

New historicism deviates from the classical Marxism to include “collective feelings and experiences”. This is because certain voices were excluded from the canon formation of literature. Thus historical narratives
are unique in structuring official culture. Meaningfully, Grey Owl should
be read in the light of New historicist strategies. The text rereads the
dominant history. The multiple perspectives of characters are ideological
motive. In other words the text is structured to include all the “collective
feelings and experiences” to possess “their shared emotions stories and
dreams”. Similarly Edward Said in *The World The Text and the Critic*
(1978) analyses the colonial narratives of continental literature. Similarly,
Grey Owl is also narrated during the colonial period. In the text Armand
Ruffo re-writes the colonial history by forecasting the ideological
Manichean structure of religions, namely Native religion and Christianity.
For the Europeans Christianity means civilization and Indian religion is
archaic.

Christianity unsuited For Indians

Famous Red man Thinks

--Toronto Star, 1936.

In Toronto I make a mistake. I tell the press what I think
about organized religion, and I awake to glaring headlines
and a blaring telephone. Reporters wanting more interviews.
ministers wanting me to repent. Crank callers wanting me to
get out of town.

Among other things that stampede out of me, I say
that in this world we are all travelling one great trail
towards one great end. And that all religions
preach the great fundamental truths, which if properly
understood, would all confer great benefits on a struggling,
bewildered humanity.
I say that if missionaries want to do good, their first duty
towards the Indian should be to give him the means to live
in a changing world, give him employment and self-sufficiency,
so that he may once again raise his head with dignity.
besides, is it not difficult to teach Christianity
to someone with an empty belly? (121).

In this poem Grey Owl criticizes the missionaries who propagate the
“fundamental truth”. The religion of Grey Owl, remains obscure. He is
conscious in analyzing the fundamental difference of religious values of
Christianity and Native religion:

Tolerance, I say. For us, the forests and all the works of God
have a soul must be treated as such, with respect.
Yet, in my meager research I have failed to find in Christianity
any emphasis on tolerance to what is known as the lower forms
of life. Is it not sad to see all the countless good people
scrambling to provide themselves with safe passage
to the hereafter while treating the rest of creation with disdain?
What I find strange is that we are told to accept another man’s interpretation of the world and life when we have our own. Does not the old Indian faith reach honesty, integrity, reverence, love of nature and love of fellow man? What is more, it is a faith filled with music, dance and poetic beauty.

Speaking as a pagan, I tell them I must say what I believe. to the Indian, those who still practice the ancient rites prayer has never become the servile supplication it has for the Whiteman. I say this—you might say I’m throwing fat on the fire—and the first thing I know the city is up in arms. And I admit, it’s kind of nice to see all those white collars get a little sweaty (121-122).

Literature is not the only means through which we generate cultures. Beyond this there are several practices and production. It includes every action and thought that is represented in texts as well as “outside literature”. We cannot isolate a text from its reception and cultural aspects in which it locates, says Tony Bennett in Outside Literature. To him this binary is being deconstructed. He says about his studies on literature and the elements of “Outside literature”.
There are, of course, many fields of politics outside literature; but no literary politics. And so, of course, no literary theory; not even of a historical or sociological kind. If literature has no political outside, so it lacks a theoretical outside, a position from which the history of its functions might be written that is not implicated in the theoretical and political constitution of the prevailing field of literary institutions, practices and debates[…]Far from being a natural horizon, the aesthetic conception of ‘literature’ is now clearly visible as one whose social and historical co-ordinates and institutional and discursive rims are becoming even more readily perceptible. As customary contrasts between the ‘literary’ and the non-literary, for example-lose their purchase, it is now possible to see not merely their edges but beyond their edges and, in realizing the full implications of their historicality, to glimpse the possibility of a situation in which they may no longer order or organize the terms of literary production and reception. This is not merely to query the effect of a category (literature) but concerns its functioning within and across an array of institutions and, accordingly, the challenge of organizing positions-discursive and institutional which will be not just outside ‘literature’ but beyond it in the sense of opening up new fields of knowledge and actions (5-7).
Both New historicism and Cultural materialism embrace the elements of “outside literature”. The father of Cultural materialist school of criticism is Raymond Williams, whose *Culture and Society 1780-1980* (1963) revolutionized traditional literary analysis. His *Marxism and Literature* (1977) too is a radical Post-Marxist, reading of cultural semiology. ‘Cultural semiology’ is not a easy task in interpreting culture or any given text. It always questions the uniqueness of interpretation.

The deviation of cultural materialism form the Marxian analysis of economic determination is fore grounded. A work of art may have heterogeneous elements of contradictory relations when it is being consumed. Similarly the New historicist reading of *Shakespearean Negotiations* Stephen Greenblatt uses new historicist strategies for the inclusion of elements that of “outside literature”. As a cultural materialist, Raymond Williams argued that every text at any movement of time would change its stable meaning. This is because there are dominant, residual and emerging elements which produces conflicting ideological frame work.

In what ways does cultural materialism is different from Marxism? It challenges any criticism based on base superstructure relation. A text is not a single entity. Mainly because of its production and conception varies culture to culture relating to various historical discursive strategies.
A cultural materialist would argue that a text is not a united and not appropriate to analyze based on base super structure alone. Raymond Williams coined the term ‘Structure of feeling’ to interpret culture. To him it is a sense of the disconnection between individual experience and cultural meaning, as well as a striving for reunification. In another words ‘structure of feeling’ means the coexistence of an individual experience and all the cultural aspects of life. Culture in William’s discourse is not produced by the economic base alone but includes diverse practices. He says that in every culture there are dominant, residual and emergent elements. Unlike New historicism, cultural materialism is contemporary. New historicism is historical analyses of literary and non-literary texts.

New historicism and Cultural materialism subverts the traditional literary history by reading cultural production. Significantly the poetry of Armand Ruffo should be read in the realm of cultural specificity of ‘strategic essentialism’. The identity of Indians in Grey Owl raises several cultural aspects. Moreover Indian oral traditions, rituals, ecological diversities, songs, myths and beliefs share a unique factor in the poetry of Armand Ruffo. In opening In the sky Ruffo employs caricature of Indians between poems. There are several poems on traditional Indian way of life. The life of hunters, fishermen and warriors finds place in his poetry. His poetry reflects the cultural practices of European emigrants who devastated
Indian Culture. In the poem ‘Settlers’ the poet asks the emigrants, ‘what is it you fear?’ (29). He writes:

Tonight you are safe, your
Family is safe, behind
The walls you’ve built, logs peeled perfectly
Hammered into place
But out there is the bush,
Where you feel things lurk
Ready to kill and devour.
So each night you lock yourself
In and listen to animal sounds,
Watch for the bush to stir.
There are also other sounds
You hear dark and wild, the ones
You think are human
But aren’t quite sure.
These sounds you approach only
In the safety of daylight
And never alone
And unarmed. (29)
In this poem we can observe the cultural production of Indians and non-Indian, who are the immigrants. It is also in parallel. Indians are safe in their environment but they fear armed person. The settlers built walls to protect and intrude into bush to destroy the Indian’s land and forest resources along terminating Indians. Colonial culture of Europeans and postcolonial writing significantly deals with in the conscious cultural paradigm. Genocide of Indians is a major thematic concern of Armand Ruffo. The colonial strategies of Europeans are narrated in his poetry. In the poem ‘Theatre Indigenous’ the poet narrates these strategies.

In brief you say they take the land
like common bandits armed with the wrath
of law and greed. Consider it.
Families lined up like trees, limbs spread and sliced.
You say women and children alike
uprooted drying brittle leaves
on the edge of a newly consecrated road.
And we are wrong, man is forged
in the image of man—the thirstiest beast. (23)

Relating to cultural materialism and New historicism extensive explorations were carried on in Sociology and Anthropology by various scholars including Claude Levi-Strauss. But literature was not interpreted
in the light of sociological perspective. This is one of the main thematic concerns of Pierre Bourdieu. To him history consists of events and representation of culture. He says history includes contrary beliefs and practices. So history remains ‘Orthodox’ in his perspective.

Bourdieu’s critical term in interpreting culture is ‘habitus’ a complex strategy. To him every culture acts according to the text existing or preexisted culture or rules. To him cultural is a symbolic act. Similarly every culture has its own symbolic act and is rational. Rational acts are also diverse. It is a diverse system of rational acts where dominant or official and local culture differs in their own codes of conducts, beliefs and laws.

Interpreting literature and history through Bourdieu’s strategies becomes incomprehensible. The systematic order or hierarchical systems of knowledge or practices are questioned. In other words all the practices and communication follows a symbolic act. The politics of ‘symbolic act’ is problematic when we ask questions whose symbolic act? Or whose knowledge?

Meanfully Native Canadian discourse share the uniqueness in crossing the political issues. The poetic strategies of parody and pastiche of Ruffo redefine the traditional definitions of poetry. The ideological production in the poetry of Ruffo is multidisciplinary challenging the
homogeneous historical context. The intertextual elements and polyphonic political, philosophical, cultural, religious and economic issues are conscious theoretical framework of the author to create a space for native Canadian discourse. In the poem ‘Creating a Country’, Armand Ruffo questions the historical imaginative property of the Europeans who stereotyped the Indian in their literature. Here the historical person is Susanna Moodie:

In Canada, Susanna Moodie arrived to take notes. After writing anti-slavery tracks in England, she thought it only natural to document the burden of roughing it in the bush. Susanna shied away from both mosquitoes and Indians. One day, however, quite by accident, she met a young Mohawk whom she thought handsome and for a period flirted with the notion of what it would be like to be swept away by him. But she soon tired of such thoughts and nothing ever became of it. Later she would say neither Indians nor mosquitoes make good company. She did make it perfectly clear that she bore no grudge. She believed everything has a place (33).

She believed that “she was turning life into art and creating the first resemblance of culture/in a god forsaken land/ (33)” The poet narrates about the historical individuals who played a role in ‘Creating a country’.
Ruffo writes, “They all came to North America in search of a new life, clinging to their few possessions, hungry for prosperity’ (33). One among this category is Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer:

South of the border, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer

Never once worried about mosquitoes

It’s said that he too was interested in culture

And for this reason carried a gun.

He was a soldier, not an artist, and made no pretence

About it. Custer rarely wrote and never spoke

Unless formally addressed. Yet, he was a passionate man

Who dreamed the same dream every night.

He fancied that he had discovered the final solution.

Each night he rounded up all the buffalo

In what is now Montana and shot every last one of them.

As a son of European peasantry, he had heard stories

About what it was like to go hungry.

He also knew Indian could starve

Just like white people. As a patriot,

He believed his solution was perfectly reasonable.

He also Believed American politicians

Would see to it that both the buffalo and the Indian

Would find a new home
On the American nickel (33-34).

Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony seems to have influenced Ruffo. Foucauldian power discourse and Gramscian ‘hegemony’ are two concepts that analyses political and cultural power relations. The former’s is not specific whereas ‘Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is specified on the account of political and cultural relations under Capitalism or Civil society where there are the relations of hierarchy.

Reading a literary text in the light of Foucauldian and Gramscian theories of always dialogic in separate categories of the former’s discourse on power and latter’s concept of the ‘Subaltern’. The political perspectives of Gramsci and Foucault have marked subalterns to realize various strategies. Gramsci says:

[…]if yesterday the subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but a historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible[…] now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative (Gramsci, 336-7).

The foregrounding of ideological characters in literature stresses the politics of aesthetics rather than poetics of aesthetics rather say Art for Arts sake literary tradition. Foucauldian theory of power discourse shows the power of the dominant whereas Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’ and
‘subaltern’ challenges their dominants. Tony Bennet in *Outside Literature* says that Gramscian theory is problematic when we use it as a tool in analyzing literary history. He says:

For the political conspectus of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is, essentially, that of a politics of consciousness—and one which is, relatively speaking, indifferent to the specific properties of the particular institutional sites in which it is conducted while Gramsci is conventionally, and rightly, credited with stressing the material and institutionally embedded characters of ideologies, the fact remains those specific institutional sites are—again, by and large—conceived merely as empty vehicles for the ideologies they relay. As a consequence, cultural politics are cast in essentially the same light—that of disorganizing consent to prevailing forms of hegemony and Winning support for a counter-hegemony—matter what the institutional domain of their occurrence. (268)

The dialectics of ‘counter-hehemonic’ perspective is scattered because the presence of the plural aesthetics. Even when literary texts are analyzed the dominant’s strategies of knowledge production is unified. It is due to the fact that history was always with the dominant. Contrary to this
the voices of the marginalized sections are subjective. These factors further adds difficulty in the transformation of power relations and knowledge system. Thus the intellectual property of the dominants in history should be re-visioned in the light of Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’ and ‘subaltern’.

The poetic canon of Armand Ruffo raises the subaltern/subordinated issues. He has written several poems “for justice”. The historical content of Canadian history excluded Indian history. However Ruffo uses history and contemporaneity to emphasize canonical aesthetics of politics of the “oppressed” Ruffo writes:

Let the oppressed sing of Chile,
the Ojibway who last night
 told me he had just got out of prison
after being inside for eight years,
 the warrior who lifted his tattooed arm
to the ceiling which for a moment
became the sky
 and clenched his fist in proud defiance
 looking me straight in the eye
after being told that I told had Ojibway blood.
let the oppressed sing of Chile,
Minnie Sutherland, a Native woman struck by a car New Years’ morning in Hull, Quebec, and dragged to the side of the road just doing their duty(To Serve&Protect?) while witnesses pleaded an ambulance be called (42).

Multicultural fraternity is a myth in Canada. Grey Owl says that there are “So-Called Great Canadians/who pass and continue to pass their king of legacy/ on to their heirs, always at the expense of the country/ (151). For Grey Owl, understands the history of Canada and Europeans brings Indian discourse to the center of the Canadian literary history. Owl declares that he is not a harmful person:

Dishonesty? Yes, I will even admit that. But
Let me ask you, where is the harm? Compared
To all those others who fill their pockets
And become millionaires at the expense
Of the country, solely because of connections,
Because somehow they have access to Indian land,
To timber, fur, booze, you name it (151).

Michel Foucault is mainly a historian of ideas. But it is very difficult to compartmentalize his ideas in this category. Mainly, because of his
influence on multi-disciplinary studies and theory. His study is seen as a dialogic reactionary to humanist and phenomenological interpretation of meaning. His discursive strategies on power relations and various strategies on the emergence of systems show his progression of thoughts. He was interested in studying the formation of various knowledges in society. He was an observer on the elements of division between reason and madness and the qualities that makes sense and senseless thoughts.

Foucault’s texts have embraced Poststructuralist ideology of reaction to the centre or fixity of cultural practice. While Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction revolutionized the ideology of dismantling the textual interpretation, Michel Foucault’s discourse revolutionized the strategical power relations and their ideologies in the formations of various systems. Foucault’s studies are Diachronic and Synchronic in nature. It is genealogical and archeological survey of various discursive practices and their influences on society. It is a fact that Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological approach determined a radical revision of traditional historical analysis but he failed to see historical texts as a dialogic to the world reality. In fact, in this regard Foucault was influenced by the Marxism ideology of historical influence on literary production. In this regard what is his influence on literary discourse? It is always a multi-disciplinary influence ranging from system of knowledge and power
relations. Simon during in the section Literature and Literary Theory’ in Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing (1992) says the concept of Literature’s history and history’s literature and connects literature, and history in analyzing his concept of ‘Power/ Knowledge’. He says: “It appears when literature accepts and enacts the impossibility of its own project-that of replacing language by experience, by sensation, from within language, experience, by a rely through other texts”[…]. For Foucault there is “hierarchy of knowledge” (82) and “subjugated knowledge” (82).

Mainly because of his research on various discursive practices and their epistemological survey, Foucault’s texts are kept for analyzing literary texts and history. New historicism is much more radical and has a separate compartment of Foucauldian New historicism. Literature, History, and New historicism try to embrace subversive attitude towards the dominant voices, mainly because certain forms of knowledge were ‘subjugated’. Foucault says “Subjugated knowledges are thus those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticism obviously draws upon scholarship-has been able to reveal”(82).
Retrospectively New historicism gives voices for “[...] the buried knowledge of erudition and those disqualified from the hierarchy of knowledge and sciences” (82).

The identity of Grey Owl as an Indian Ojibway is complex. The gazes of power structure on Owl have started only when he intervened to fight for the Indian issues. The political consciousness of Indian in realizing the strategies that destroy the dignity of their culture is popularized by Grey Owl in his lectures. He is an orator. But he never went to University to attain education. He kept on touring to United States and England to propagate the “philosophy” of Indians. He realized his life is dedicated to Indians. Moreover, he is an “Emissary of Canada’s Indian people” (173). He criticizes man’s selfishness:

Archie Belaney, Notebook, Undated

Conservation: Must appeal to man’s selfishness.

Start with recognition of it.

Tolerance: The right of every living creature to

Follow the path laid out for it by

The master of life.

Security: I do not value it (78).

Grey Owl problematises political issues. So he has taken stand on every ideology. He is also the victim of power structure. Native history is
abundantly carried on in his lectures. So people began to suspect the role of Grey Owl. One of the characters Colonel Wilfred Bovey writes:

The material itself is powerful with its passionate Conservation message, but of course we are skeptical That a half-breed from the bush can speak before an audience. The turnout is good, over a hundred people, And he arrives on stage looking quite dashing and, I might add, even theatrical in his fringed Native attire. He’s clearly nervous and stumbles through his introduction As he tries to read from his notes. The crowd is impatient For him to get on with it, just as he appears to be Impatient with himself, constantly turning his attention From his notes to the audience and back, losing his place. But before anyone is aware of what is happening, has time To applaud his daring, he gathers up his papers and Clenching them in his hand moves the lectern aside. (64)

The theoretical influence in literature and literature’s influence in theory show the radical existence of both challenging the fixity of meaning. The New historicist theories and strategies helped literature to bring about polyphonic voices. The influence of Deconstruction on multi-disciplinary studies or discourse gives greater strength in revaluing and
Foucault criticized Deconstruction as a petty rhetorical box of tricks and dismissed the idea of ‘nothing outside the text’. The theory revolutionized the idea of subversion whether it is in ‘outside the texts’ or ‘inside the texts’.

To Derrida, literary theory or say Deconstruction is having a subordinate position. He says, “The “Economy” of literature sometimes seems to me more powerful than that of other types of discourse: such as, for example, historical or philosophical discourse. Sometimes: it depends upon singularities and contexts. Literature would be potentially more potent”. (Acts of Literature, 43). Aijaz Ahmed’s or says Post-Marxism’s concepts or theories are not merely an addition of the classical Marxian theories, but should be viewed from heterogeneous structures of perspectives in the light of “Post-theoretical’, ‘Post-cultural’, ‘Post-national’, ‘Post-modern’ and ‘Post-structural’ ideologies of power relations”.

Grey Owl is a postmodern text. The structural devices of the text are verbal and non-verbal. The book is divided into section and sub-sections where the fragmentation becomes an ideology. In the sub-section there is the self reflexive narration of Grey Owl, his friends and relatives. It’s an irony that there is not even a single section that is being narrated by an Indian.
The photographs of Grey Owl/ Archie Belaney show the cultural matrix of cultural similarities and dissimilarities between the English ‘Civilization’ and Canadian Indian civilization. This helps us to theorize the visual ideology of the text. Linda Hutcheon says that photograph is a “social fact”. In fact the photograph in Grey Owl narrates the visual ideology of transformation challenging the deconstructionist school of reading that merely undo signifiers. In the photographs Grey Owl is an Indian in appearance.

The photographs in Grey Owl are dialogic sign to the pre-existing culture of Indians. It is both object and subject. As an object we can compare it with other photographs and characters. As a subject, it is to the situation or the object of placing photographs in the text. The printed signifiers and photographic signifiers help us to resist the deconstructive tools that formulate by Deconstruction where there is a mutual understanding between the poet and his readers or viewers. Linda Hutcheon in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) analyses the strategic politics of postmodern literature where the strategical devices of parody and pastiche theorize the epistemological dimension and ontological structure. Here the ideological view of the characters, authors and strategical devices had a unique theoretical framework in adhering the politics of narration and ideology to a reader. Linda Hutcheon writes:
Postmodern par textual insertions of these different kinds of historical traces of event, what historians call documents—be they newspaper Clippings, legal statements, or photographic illustrations—de-naturalize the achieve foregrounding above all the textuality of its representations. These documentary texts appear in footnotes, epigraphs, prefaces, and epilogues; sometimes they are parachuted directly into fictive discourse, as if in a collage. […] (92) what could be called the rhetoric of postmodern apostrophe or better perhaps, its semeiotics of address cannot but be of importance in postmodern art and theory which self-consciously work to ‘situate’ their production and reception and to contextualize the acts of perception and interpretation. The addition of verbal texts of photograph images in photo-ography makes explicit what is usually left implicit in the visual: the implication of an addressed viewer. It is likely that certain earlier forms of context-dependent and context-probematizing here […] these formats also emphasize the daily instrumentally of photography as a social fact. But what the mixing of the text and image often does is to underline, through the use of direct verbal address to a viewer, the fact that, as a signifying system, picture too represents both a scene and the look of a viewer, both an object and a subject (134).

The politics of referent employed by Armand Ruffo by placing the photographs and other discursive strategies is an alternative to reconstruct
and deconstruct the ideological dialectics of dominant historiography, as “historiography too is no longer considered the objective and disinterested recording of the past; it is more an attempt to comprehend and master it by means of some working (narrative/explanatory model that, in fact is precisely what grants a particular meaning to the past” (Hutcheon, 64). Significantly in Native Canadian discourse (poetry/literature), we can observe the multidisciplinary discursive strategies in the poetry of Armand Ruffo.

Native Canadian Poetry deconstructs the elements of traditional definitions. It destroys the elements of romanticism. But still absolute resistance is not possible. This is because Deconstruction has its own limits when it erases the textuality of the text, the ‘literariness’ of literature. Jacques Derrida in a interview to Derek Attridge says, “I believe no text resists it absolutely. Absolute resistance to such reading would purely and simply destroy the trace of the text”. (Acts of Literature, 43). Don’t you think there should be subversion in literature? Is it possible to create a centre without destroying another? Native Canadian poetry essentially creates a space for political aesthetics of subversion. The poetic canon of Armand Ruffo celebrates the historical (re)vision by employing facts, photographs and imagination in challenging the historical Chronoschisms.
CONCLUSION

The ideological context in theorizing literary canon is obviously seen in the plays of Tomson Highway and poetry of Armand Garnet Ruffo. For Tomson Highway contemporary Native Canadian Reality is of prime significance in assessing the future predictions of Natives in Canada. For Ruffo history and historical characters are ideological motives in resisting the inclusion of historical dialectics of Native identity and issues. Combining his Cree culture with the best of Western culture and his ‘high art’ training, Highway generates new perspectives, controversies and issue in Native Canadian literature on wider sphere. Highway’s theatrical application of post modern surrealist elements like violence, scatology and sex seem to compound the issues of Native culture. As a gregarious and outspoken humanist, Highway brushes aside the accusations leveled against him both by Native critics and Native women who branded him as a misogynist for the way he has portrayed Native womanhood in his plays. Depicting the vision of Native reality, his plays have succeeded in unfurling the rethinking of Native reality. His plays were radically different Native writings and are extremely introspective. Unlike George Ryga who continue to see Natives as helpless victims of institutionalized racism, Highway points out that Native people must empower themselves to the extent of doing away with internalized racism to make their cultures
relevant to white and Non-Native cultures in Canada and the world at large. Recuperation of Native Spirituality is high on his agenda with the anticipated resurgence of Native cultures.

For Armand Garnet Ruffo self reflexivity is ideologically constructed by intersecting multidisciplinary discursive strategies for the integration and celebration of resistance writing. His poetry strategically presents the potentiality in rewriting history. The re (creation) of self-reflexivity through parody is not merely an attempt in repeating the same historical theme. Ruffo celebrates the pluralities of Native Canadian discourse through subversive aesthetics and dialogical resistance. The poetic canon of Ruffo employs strategic discursive elements to question Indian identity. The identity of Grey Owl is existential. The transformative identity of self seems to be an alternative discourse to problematise identity and to historicize discursive practices. The poetic Canon of Ruffo is not merely a repetition of history but it is method of rewriting history to fill the gap between the cultures. His dialogics of parody brings out ideological construction that often challenges the historical time frame. The racial identity of Grey Owl is complex in the initial stage of the transformation. But he died as an Indian. Historical information says that he is not a Native by birth. He has migrated from England to Canada at the age of sixteen. It seems that the poet re examines
the identity of Grey Owl. The poetic Canon of Armand Garnet Ruffo contains the elements of subversion in deconstructing the strategical constructions of historical characters including Grey Owl, Susanna Moodie, Scott Campbell etc.

Similarly, Tomson Highway’s powers of observation and persistence in describing the personal experiences create riveting moments in all his plays. He makes an outrageous combination of phantasmagoric and factual events. He interprets the life through the line of his characters and expresses firmly that Native way of life is joyous celebration, embodied in the personality of Native Trickster. When the theatrical regalia is peeled off, what remains at the core of his plays is that life is meant to be celebrated and not to be victimized by racism, sexism, discrimination, hegemony, alienation, marginalization, suppression, violence etc. In order to liberate Natives from these forms of victimization, Highway creates Trickster figure infecting it with optimism. Making Trickster relevant to multicultural society, like Thomas King, Highway believes in restricting the Trickster to Native culture. He even presents Trickster as a gay and confronts the heterosexual enmity prevalent in Native society and proves the accommodation of sexual identities in Native cultures.
The poetry of Armand Ruffo challenges a massive ‘historiographic metalepsis’. Colonialism has succeeded in creating stereotypical images of Native identity. Atwood’s perspective that Natives are closer to natural instincts and moral values proves to be true in understanding the Euro Anthropocentric view as it has provided numerous themes to European texts that debased Natives. The self reflexive narration of Ruffo is a textual strategy to narrate the self of the character and the poet. The historical narration is self conscious and is resistant to historical dominant meta narratives where the political unconscious becomes the conscious in the poetry of Ruffo. His poetry stands out to be a meaningful comment on history as ‘history’ and ‘self’ are nightmares to Ruffo.

Tomson Highway and Armand Garnet Ruffo succeed in reinventing the literary tradition through genres and contribute to the construction of national culture with the honest intention of consolidating Native subjectivity.