

**Triumph and Trauma: Reconfiguring Self and Ethnicity through
Cultural Memories in Select Aboriginal Narratives of Maurice
Kenny and Narayan**

**Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the award of the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

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December 2023

DECLARATION

I, **Alaka Theres Babu**, hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Triumph and Trauma: Reconfiguring Self and Ethnicity through Cultural Memories in Select Aboriginal Narratives of Maurice Kenny and Narayan**” submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an original record of observations and bona fide research carried out by me under the guidance of **Dr. Wilson Rockey**, Associate Professor of English, St. Joseph’s College (Autonomous), Devagiri, Calicut and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma or similar titles.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled: **“Triumph and Trauma: Reconfiguring Self and Ethnicity through Cultural Memories in Select Aboriginal Narratives of Maurice Kenny and Narayan”** submitted by **Alaka Theres Babu** to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an original record of observations and bona fide research carried out by her under my supervision and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma or similar titles.

Place: Calicut

Dr. Wilson Rockey

Date:

Acknowledgement

To completely translate the sense of gratitude and the feeling of fulfilment that I feel on the completion of my thesis work is rather impossible. Yet, I am trying to recognize the people who have been kind enough to complement my research work with their scholarship and emotional support. First and foremost I thank God Almighty, for I believe it is all according to God's plan that my life goes forward. I thank Dr. Wilson Rockey, my research supervisor, who took pains to guide and encourage me throughout the period. His meticulous involvement in the research work and timely interventions proved valuable and constructive to the present study. I am greatly indebted to all the faculty members of the PG and Research Department of English, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Devagiri, Calicut, especially Dr. Salil Varma R, Head of the Department, who has been rendering his selfless and constant sustenance to all the research scholars of the department. Let me also extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. S. Nagesh, former Head of the Department and our beloved teacher without whose erudite guidance and suggestions the study wouldn't have been turned out in its present form. I also thank the librarian Mr. Tomson A. J. for his help at accessing various sources and for the technical mentoring. Let me also be grateful to the principal of the institution Dr. Satheesh George for his constant encouragement and mentoring.

I thank Fr. Niju Thalachirayil CST, Director, Little Flower Institute of Social Sciences and Health (LISSAH) for his support and prayers and for giving me the freedom to use the library of the institution even though I was not a member there. I was always welcomed in LISSAH whenever I turned in. I am truly indebted to Mr.

Vipin M. J. librarian at LISSAH for his help and support. I thank all my dear friends at LISSAH for being a source of encouragement.

I would like to single out my friend Dr. Jinan T. K. who has been a relentless source of inspiration and guidance in all my academic pursuits. All our discussions on research and theory contributed significantly to my work. I also thank my colleagues, Namitha V. S., Smrithi M. Venugopal, Dr. Aysha Thasni K., Shradha Sudhir, Anjana Mathew, Jyosthna M Ramesh and Anjana Treesa Joseph who have been backing me empathetically for no one else could perfectly understand the struggles that I had to overcome.

I love you amma and I can in no way express my thanks to you. I have always watched you sharing my pain and struggle, which only a mother can do. This thesis is dedicated for you amma, since we had this dream together. Dear husband, Thank you that you waited patiently for so long, and for supporting me in countless ways. Tessu, you are my most favourite distraction, my joy and my love. Thank you dear sister, just for being there for me and listening me more than anyone else. Thank you Elsiamma and Nimmy, for your unfailing support and practical suggestions. Though you are not with me Achacha, I know the love of language and literature that I have in me is your contribution to my genetic pool, I am truly indebted to you for that. I am sure that Achan would have been proud and happy when I successfully complete my work, if he were with me. Thank you Gayu for your belief in me, you were confident about me even when I was not.

Last but not the least; I extend my sincere gratitude to Rev. Dr. Vincent Ezhanikatt and Dr. Pius Joseph for their constant support, advices, guidance and prayers.

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ABSTRACT

Key Words: cultural memory, cultural trauma, cultural identity, counter memory, aboriginal, hegemony

The thesis titled “Triumph and Trauma: Reconfiguring Self and Ethnicity through Cultural Memories in Select Aboriginal Narratives of Maurice Kenny and Narayan” is an attempt to analyse and decipher the function of the representation of cultural memories in the aboriginal narratives of Maurice Kenny and Narayan. Maurice Kenny is a Native American author from the Mohawk tribe of North America and Narayan is from the Malayaraya tribe of Kerala. The thesis pays attention to the recurring and constant presence of the cultural memories of trauma and triumph in the works of these authors, the modes of operation of the cultural memories, the convergence and divergence in the writing style of these writers and the results that they aim at while rigorously accommodating the cultural memories in their works. The cultural memories can be the memories of the traumatic incidents that happened to the tribal communities that effectively constituted to the dismantling of the cultural and social fabric of the community. Such traumatic incidents are called cultural trauma. These cultural memories also signify the memories of the days of grandeur and glory of the tribal communities.

Adhering to the theoretical frame work of cultural memory and cultural trauma the thesis argues that the repeated representation of the cultural memories of triumph and trauma in literature adequately constitutes to the reintegration of the cultural identity of the aboriginal communities, which is fragmented in the process of external as well as internal invasions. Thus the tribal communities can regain their ethnic pride and act collectively for the common goal of resisting hegemony and reclaiming social and political agency. The cultural memories of the aboriginal communities can be hence called counter memories.

The works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny are active spaces of cultural memory reiteration. The thesis has analysed the short stories and novels of Narayan and the short stories and poems of Maurice Kenny. An invariable presence of the cultural memories of triumph and trauma constitutes the narrative fabric of both the writers, even though both the writers diverge in their treatment of the same theme. When Maurice Kenny and Narayan represent the cultural memories of the tradition, culture, vision on life and nature and the tragic plight of their respective aboriginal communities, they act as cohesive agents of cultural identity reintegration. The dispossessed and displaced communities are thereby enabled to act collectively for a common political cause.

സംഗ്രഹം

പ്രധാന പദങ്ങൾ: കൾച്ചറൽ മെമ്മറി, കൾച്ചറൽ ട്രോമാ, കൾച്ചറൽ ഐഡന്റിറ്റി, അബൊറിജിനൽ, കൗണ്ടർ മെമ്മറി, ഹെജിമണി

അബൊറിജിനൽ എഴുത്തുകാരായ മൗറിസ് കെന്നിയുടെയും നാരായണന്റെയും സൃഷ്ടികളിൽ കൾച്ചറൽ മെമ്മറി അഥവാ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികളുടെ ആവിഷ്കാരങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ, എന്തിനുവേണ്ടി നടക്കുന്നു എന്നറിയാനുള്ള ഒരു അന്വേഷണമാണ് ഈ പഠനം. കേരളത്തിലെ മലയരയ ഗോത്ര സമൂഹത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട എഴുത്തുകാരനായ നാരായണന്റെയും നോർത്ത് അമേരിക്കയിലെ മോഹോക് ഗോത്രത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട മൗറിസ് കെന്നിയുടെയും സാഹിത്യവിഷ്കാരങ്ങളിലുള്ള ശക്തമായ സമാനതകളിൽ നിന്നാണ് ഈ പഠനം ഉരുത്തിരിയുന്നത്. സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികൾ എങ്ങനെയാണ് ഇവരുടെ കൃതികളിലേയ്ക്ക് ഇഴചേർക്കപ്പെടുന്നത് എന്നതും സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികളുടെ നിരന്തരവും സ്ഥിരവുമായ കടന്നുകൂടലിലൂടെ സംഭവിക്കുന്ന സ്വതഃ പരിണാമങ്ങളും പ്രസ്തുത എഴുത്തുകാരുടെ തനത് രചനാശൈലികളിലെ പ്രത്യേകതകളുമാണ് കൾച്ചറൽ മെമ്മറി, കൾച്ചറൽ ട്രോമാ തുടങ്ങിയ സൈദ്ധാന്തിക തത്വങ്ങളിൽ ഊന്നിക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള ഈ പഠനത്തിന്റെ ഇതിവൃത്തം.

ഗോത്രവർഗ സമൂഹങ്ങൾ പോലെ ഒരേ സംസ്കാരവും, പാരമ്പര്യവും ജീവിത ശൈലികളും, ദർശനങ്ങളും പങ്കിട്ടുപോരുന്ന വംശീയ സമൂഹങ്ങൾക്ക് അവരുടെ സാംസ്കാരിക പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ നിന്നും മാറിനിന്നുകൊണ്ടുള്ള ഒരു സ്വതഃ വ്യാഖ്യാനം അസാധ്യമാണ്. ഇതിനെ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്വതഃ അഥവാ കൾച്ചറൽ ഐഡന്റിറ്റി എന്ന് വിളിക്കാം. അങ്ങനെ വരുമ്പോൾ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്വതഃ രൂപീകരണത്തിലും പുനരേകീകരണത്തിലും സ്മൃതികളുടെ പ്രാധാന്യം അനിഷേധ്യമായി മാറും. ഈ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികൾ കഴിഞ്ഞുപോയ ഒരു നല്ല കാലത്തിന്റെ ശേഷിപ്പുകളോ ഓർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തലുകളോ, സംസ്കാരത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ച വ്യവസ്ഥിതിയെയും ശിഥിലീകരിച്ച സംഭവപരമ്പരകളുടെ ഓർമ്മകളോ ആവാം. ഇത്തരത്തിൽ ഉള്ള ആഘാതങ്ങളെ കൾച്ചറൽ ട്രോമാ അഥവാ സാംസ്കാരിക ആഘാതം എന്ന് വിളിക്കാം. സമൃദ്ധമായ ഒരു നല്ലകാലത്തിന്റെയും സംസ്കാരത്തെ നശിപ്പിച്ച ദുരവസ്ഥകളുടെയും ഓർമ്മകളുടെ നിരന്തരമായ ആലേഖനങ്ങൾ സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ സംഭവിക്കുമ്പോൾ അത് ഒരു സാംസ്കാരിക സ്വതഃ പുനർനിർമ്മിതിയിലേക്കും നവ വംശീയബോധ രൂപീകരണത്തിലേയ്ക്കും ഒടുവിൽ നിലനിന്നു പോരുന്ന സാംസ്കാരിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ മേൽക്കോയ്മകളെ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്യുന്നതിലേയ്ക്കും പ്രതിരോധിക്കുന്നതിലേയ്ക്കും ചെന്നെത്തുന്നു. ഇത്തരത്തിലുള്ള ചെറുത്തുനിൽപ്പുകൾ സാമൂഹിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ പ്രഖ്യാപനങ്ങളായി മാറുന്നു. അത്തരത്തിൽ ചിന്തിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഗോത്ര സംസ്കൃതിയുടെ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികളെ കൗണ്ടർ മെമ്മറീസ് അഥവാ എതിരോർമ്മകൾ എന്ന് വിളിക്കാം.

നാരായണന്റെയും കെന്നിയുടെയും രചനാഭൂപടം കഴിഞ്ഞുപോയ നല്ലകാലങ്ങളുടെയും ഇന്നും അവസാനിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്ത ദുരവസ്ഥകളുടെയും സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികളുടെ ആവിഷ്കാര ഇടങ്ങളാണ്. സാംസ്കാരിക ആഘാതങ്ങളുടെ ഓർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തലും തനത് സാംസ്കാരിക ചിഹ്നങ്ങളുടെയും ബിംബങ്ങളുടെയും വീണ്ടെടുക്കലും അവിടങ്ങളിൽ ഊർജ്ജിതമായി നടക്കുന്നു. ഈ വിധമുള്ള സമാനതകൾ പ്രകടമാവുമ്പോഴും നാരായണന്റെയും കെന്നിയുടെയും എഴുത്തിന്റെ രീതി വ്യത്യസ്തമാണ്. ഇന്നത്തെ നേറ്റീവ് അമേരിക്കൻ ജീവിതവും നിലനിൽപ്പും കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടെ മാനസിക വ്യവഹാരവുമാണ് കെന്നിയുടെ കൃതികളിൽ മുന്നിട്ട് നിൽക്കുന്നതെങ്കിൽ നാരായൻ സാമൂഹിക പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചാണ് വാചാലനാവുന്നത്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കൃതികൾ വ്യത്യസ്ത കാലഘട്ടങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് എഴുതപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളവയാണ്. നാരായണന്റെയും കെന്നിയുടെയും രചനകൾ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്മൃതികളുടെ ആലേഖനങ്ങളാവുമ്പോൾ അവ സാംസ്കാരിക സ്വതഃ പുനർവ്യാഖ്യാനത്തിനും സാംസ്കാരിക പുനർനിർമ്മിതിക്കുതക്കുന്ന ഉപകാരണങ്ങളാവുന്നു. അതുവഴി പാർശ്വവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഗോത്ര സംസ്കൃതികൾക്ക് മുന്നേറാനുള്ള അവസരവും അവകാശങ്ങൾക്ക് വേണ്ടി ഒന്നിച്ചു നിൽക്കാനുള്ള കാരണമാകുന്നു.

INTRODUCTION

Literature often carries the political function of transformation. It acts as a surrogate space to address the voids of history. For the marginalized tribal communities across the globe, the realm of literature with its potency to regulate and co-regulate human action, works as a political tool of social cohesion and identity revision. The present thesis is based on the works of Narayan, a writer from the Malayaraya tribal community of Kerala and Maurice Kenny, a writer from the Mohawk tribe of North America. Both of them are with huge literary output. Narayan won the Kerala Sahithya Academy Award for his novel *Kocharethi* in 1999 and Maurice Kenny was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize twice and is much admired for his poems, short stories and autobiographical essays. The impact of the re-inscription of cultural memories in the texts of these tribal writers is investigated in the corpus of the project.

The two authors selected for the study are from two extremely different regions in terms of culture, politics and geography. Despite these massive disparities, and the distinctiveness in terms of the experiences of the past, the result that both the writers try to achieve through the representation of culture specific memories in literature is the same. Both the writers employ evident and repeated usage of culture defining themes and motifs in their writings. It is worthwhile to note the similarity in the representation of memories by them and how these representations operate at a collective level. Selecting two writers from two different spaces effectively adds to the investigation to identify the uniform pattern of the working of memories and their attributes despite the spatio-temporal disparities.

The theoretical framework to the study is rendered from the area of Memory Studies and Trauma Theory. The postulations of the theory of cultural memories and cultural trauma are being used extensively to analyse the context within which they attempt a revisit to their collective past, the peculiarities of their narrative space, and the results of such a venture. Memory, trauma and identity are three inter-related terms that are impossible to consider in isolation. The thesis attempts to scrutinize how the traumatic experiences of the tribal communities become cultural trauma and the memories of this cultural trauma and the glorious past of tradition they often tend to revisit become cultural memories. Furthermore, how the memories of this cultural trauma as well as ethnic grandeur or triumph are inscribed in the works of the authors is also studied.

The investigation addresses the memory of the good old days of glory that the tribal communities remember as ‘the cultural memory of triumph’ and the memories of oppression as the ‘cultural memory of trauma’ or ‘the memories of cultural trauma’. The narrative meditations of cultural memories are significant for an ethnic community to imagine its collective identity. The memories of triumph and trauma are to be imagined, re-narrated, and carried over. The memory of triumph often alludes to the figure of a hero or some culture specific symbols, images and other correlatives and that of trauma refers to the memory of collective struggle, dispossession, marginalisation and oppression of the victims. The reiteration of these cultural memories in literature aims at the configuration of a collective ethnic identity. The enquiry also brings to light the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of both the writers in terms of their use of stylistic devices and themes. Though the elements of the collective past, cultural memories of trauma and triumph converge in both the writers, the techniques they adopt for the crafting of their fictional worlds often diverge.

The present study locates aboriginal literature in the domain of the ethnic literature and the literature of the marginality. An ethnic group can be a large group of people with a common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or, cultural origin or background. These common identifications get strengthened as the people move away from the group or they are displaced and disintegrated by force. Though the writers outside the ethnic domain can write about the ethnicity, when the writers within the collective write about their past, present and the future, it promises credibility and authenticity. These narratives in themselves hold the potential to configure collective identity.

Ethnic literature generally adopts recurring themes and motifs that reflect the cultural background of the specific ethnic community or group. These culture specific symbols and images collectively contribute to the reinforcement of the cultural memory. Throughout their literature they celebrate ethnicity and critically position the foreign culture to which they get assimilated into. The literatures of the Afro-Americans, Asian-Americans and the Native Americans are generally considered as ethnic literature. There are regional variants of the ethnic writings such as the American ethnic writing and the Canadian ethnic writing.

The Native American literature is generally categorized as 'ethnic literature' by the academia and the literature from the tribal communities in India is commonly designated as 'subaltern literature' or 'literature of the marginality'. The Gramscian term 'subaltern' technically signifies a person of lower or inferior rank. Literature for the subaltern is a room to let loose the muted voices. The people of the marginal and doubly marginal communities raise their voice against the hegemonic social structure through various artistic media. Their narratives thus become counter narratives and their memories counter memories as they contrast and often contradict the accepted

metanarratives. The negotiation and validation of individual memories with the recorded history are explicit in those literatures.

The literature of the aboriginal communities can be included in the blanket term the Fourth World literature as it shares many of the characteristics of other literatures under the title. The Fourth World literature includes the works of the literature of the doubly marginalized communities of the world such as ethnic minorities, black women, Dalits of India, LGBT and the aboriginal communities across the globe. The literatures from these tropes are gaining political attention from the final decades of the twentieth century. With the Postmodern concern for mini-narratives, the voices from the margins gained prominence. The Fourth World literature obviously includes the writings of the Native people living in a land that has been taken over by the non-Natives. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples after its formation in 1972 used the term “Fourth World” for the first time incorporating the original indigenous inhabitants, those who existed even before the European or other colonisers’ invasion. They are people of the tribal settlements, culturally vibrant, heterogeneous and opaque to technological advancements of the times.

The literature from the authors of tribal communities can be considered as Minor Literature with its specific thematic and linguistic features as well as political impacts. The French writers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their work *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* discuss the features of ‘minor literature’. They define minor literature as a literature that “doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (16). Thus the narratives of the minorities or the marginalized communities are linguistic operations in the language of the majority or the privileged. They continue to attribute certain characteristics to minor literature and most of them are significant to the present study: “...everything in them is

political. In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background;... Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics” (17). The political orientation of the literature of the marginalized is signified by Deleuz and Guattari. Within the boundaries of the present research both Maurice Kenny and Narayan write for the ultimate goal of political emancipation.

When represented in minor literature the memories of trauma and triumph become politically charged. The individual and the personal traits of narration tend to give its space for the nuances of collective aspects and needs. Even the narration of someone’s personal life too can be read politically in this respect:

In minor literature everything takes on a collective value. Indeed, precisely because talent isn't abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that “master” and that could be separated from a collective enunciation... literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; ...The literary machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in this milieu: literature is the people's concern. (17)

The connection of the individual to a collective immediacy and the cultural assemblage of enunciation are the basic premises to which the present thesis pays attention. This

collective assemblage pursues the writers from the minority narrate their cultural memory at two levels, the first one being the memories of the days before contact with colonisers to which the writers now do not have any direct access. And the next is the memories of the immediate past of trauma that still continues. The features that Deleuze and Guattari talk about are evident in the literatures of the Native Americans and the aborigines of Kerala. They write to cure, to belong and to resist. The peculiar dimensions of their writings can be identified as both protest and therapeutic. Through their literary expressions they try to define and locate themselves in the present social political and cultural scenario.

Being a medium of protest and resistance the literary aesthetics of the minority is often different from that of the mainstream writers. They speak about the culture specific and explore the collective psyche. The private life of an individual especially the psychological realm is seldom taken into consideration in their literature, unless it can achieve some effect that helps to make the outer world aware of the existence and agonies of the person as a member of the particular community. The exploited people resort to literature and through it they write back to the marginalizing and oppressing forces. Through their discussions of the ways in which they are marginalized and suppressed, they are in fact pointing their finger at the privileged classes of the society. Creating a collective ethnic identity is mandatory for the disintegrated communities to stand for a political cause. The significance of ethnic identity is described in the work *Tribals, Rehabilitation and Development*:

Ethnic identity systems generally incorporate political goals, i.e. the need to protect culture, religion, language and autonomy of the group. Cultural boundaries and their maintenance are important to understand how they define ethnicity and generate group identity. The

symbols of these are sacred to the 'self and ethnic identity'. These symbols are consciously formulated as a unique identity system and is used by culturally subordinate groups to rejuvenate and revive a pride in their own culture, traditions, institutions, religion, food and clothes, etc. and above all language. They are also used to distinguish between the categories of "self" and "other" and to reinforce the collective identity internally and externally. Thus these boundaries are more of a psychological nature. (Alexander 74)

The literature from the aboriginal space predominantly engaged in the process of identity reinforcement resorting to their unique past at different levels.

Indigenous or aboriginal people, being the earliest inhabitants of any location, lived intricately attached to their land. They are signified by different names in different places such as the Native Americans in the USA, the First Nations in Canada, the Aboriginals in Australia and the Tribes in India. They lived in complete isolation from the external world with their unique tradition and culture. An inseparable connection with nature is a feature that all the different indigenous communities commonly exhibit. Foreign colonisers and settler colonisers have intruded upon their land and turned their peaceful life miserable. In his *A Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations* authorized by the United Nations' Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Martinez Cobo stresses the strong connection between indigenous peoples and their territory and defines indigenous peoples:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies

that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form, at present, nondominant forms of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system. (5)

The life of the indigenous communities worldwide is marked with the stories of exploitation, suppression and oppression, so is the literature of their younger generation. Aboriginals are primarily found in the forest and its surroundings or similar secluded geographical terrains. In the earliest days the tribal people were independent and self-reliant. They led a life with their own unique culture, tradition and the ways of life, unadulterated by any other cultures. Later on, trapped in a completely helpless and hopeless condition, they led a life full of the agony of dispossession. The United Nation's Publication *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* in 2009 states:

The situation of indigenous peoples in many parts of the world continues to be critical: indigenous peoples face systemic discrimination and exclusion from political and economic power; they continue to be over-represented among the poorest, the illiterate, the destitute; they are displaced by wars and environmental disasters; the weapon of rape and sexual humiliation is also turned against indigenous women for the ethnic cleansing and demoralization of indigenous communities; indigenous peoples are dispossessed of their ancestral lands and deprived of their resources for survival, both physical and cultural; they are even robbed of their very right to life. In more modern versions of market

exploitation, indigenous peoples see their traditional knowledge and cultural expressions marketed and patented without their consent or participation. (12)

An evaluation of the political and social history of the respective regions brings to light the extent to which the aboriginals are suppressed and marginalized. The dominant class of the society has always side-lined and subdued the aboriginals on the basis of many factors such as race, way of life and culture. Since these people were settled mostly in forests and away from the cleared land, they were not able to acquire the so called civilized lifestyle. The extravagant need for land of the privileged sections of the society put the life of the aborigines at stake.

In the article “Politics of Language, Religion and Identity: Tribes in India”, Virginius Xaxa expands the term ‘tribe’ as a colonial construction. According to the elaborations of Xaxa, the political categorization of the forest dwellers as different tribes in India is a colonial invention. Xaxa explains the physical, political and the psychological invasion of the tribal communities in India:

They enjoyed social security and protection as a result of the control they had over land and other resources. Control over resources was based on either ownership rights or usufructuary rights. These traditional rights are being eroded. The incorporation of tribes into the colonial state structure through annexation also led to their incorporation into the larger system...These processes drastically altered the traditional relationship of the tribes with land, forest, and other resources. Traditionally, these resources were either individually or collectively owned. (48)

The power holders of the society, colonisers or conquerors, were the major threats to the aboriginals. With this intrusion the aboriginal people or the indigenous people lost their place of being and they were planted to a totally new soil or left to the strange world to find their own new settlements. As the outer world is completely strange to them, they found themselves misplaced. People from outside have seldom considered them as complete human beings and thus inflicted torture at greater magnitudes. With the marginalization and subjugation experienced by the indigenous people, their life changed completely. In the history of the world there can be cited instances of exploitation and unparalleled torments imposed upon the aboriginals. There are recorded mass persecutions of the aboriginals to take over their land. The methods used for this differ with respect to places.

According to historical records, the history of the Dalit people in India starts around BC 1300. Before the intrusion of the Aryans, people lived in the geographical locale now called Kerala. The Aryans infused inequality, untouchability and degradation of certain jobs to the land. By the 8th century BC, the civilization of the Aryans got completely infused into the land with the decline of the Buddhist and the Jain religions. The people of the land were stratified according to the job they did. The people of the forest were not even considered as human beings who could be included in any of these strata. The work *Identity, Gender and Poverty in Indian Tribes* notes the political and cultural changes that accelerated the plight of the tribals:

The term 'adivasi', a Sanskrit derivation meaning 'original inhabitant' has come to define a population of nearly one hundred million people in India.... Through current processes of modernization, the adivasis are increasingly being subjugated, dispossessed, and usurped-in large part-by the politics of economic development. The

monolithic character of modern India has made uncertain the future of an adivasi identity. (Prasad 23)

Since they are out of the social strata, they had a peaceful existence in the forest away from the land while compared to the people in the lower strata of the society such as the Pulayas, Parayas and the Thiyyas. Yet with the process of colonisation, Britain and other imperial powers intruded into the land and the forest of India alike. They started plantations clearing the forests which affected the existence of the aboriginals in the forests. After the imperial powers left India, the settler colonialism started which proved utterly disastrous to the tribal life. The Christian communities of the central Kerala moved to the northern parts rich with forests and high ranges. These regions were the habitat of the tribal people and thus this intrusion made their lives in their own land impossible. The renowned historian and the author of the famous book *Keralathile Africa*, K. Panoor, records in his later work *Keralathile America* the development of settler colonialism in the high ranges of Kerala and its after-effects:

A very important incident which Kerala and Keralites have seen and have pretended not to have seen after 1947 is the powerful surge of lakhs of emigrants into the valley of the Western Ghats. The negative impact of this is not only that the forests have been destroyed but also the children of the forest were driven out of their last sanctuary. The tribals became completely homeless. They are perishing unknown in their own land as strangers deprived of the living facilities which they enjoyed earlier. (7)

The indigenous communities' sensibility towards land is entirely different from that of the intruders. The aboriginal people never marked the boundaries of their land and they never had private ownership. As K. Panoor notes:

Our hills and valleys were once the Africa of the tribals. May be it was so because of geographical or historical reasons. But after 1947, a lot of both pleasant and unpleasant changes have happened in the independent India. One of the most significant changes was that the sections of lands which were the Africa of the tribals, the hills and valleys in the Western Ghats have become the America of lakhs of emigrants within a few decades. The world of those who owned and used the forests and the forest resources and who lived comfortably for centuries according to the rights beyond the documents was being attacked. An attack which is undeclared. (25)

Thus it is easy for the intruders to cheat the illiterate tribal people and grasp their land by crafting fake documents and by manipulating them by offering alcohol and money. The intruders owned huge forest area through crooked ways and made the tribal people work there for a small amount as wage. The life of the aboriginals turned out to be more and more impossible due to famine and diseases. They were completely displaced from their place of origin in the course of time. When the government implemented plans for the upliftment of the tribal people, the younger generation got partially educated and they reached the mainstream society as people seeking higher education and employment. The story of humiliation continued even then as they were viewed with contempt by the privileged class. The tribal people of India are still in a miserable condition. Kerala though being a literate and socially developed state compared to the northern states of India, fails to fulfil the demands of the tribal population. The literacy rate and living conditions of the tribal population of Kerala is

not up to the mark when compared to the other sections of the society. The literary output from the region also is scarce even though there are several tribal settlements in the state. Yet, apart from Narayan other writers from the area include Pratheepan Pampirikunnu, C. K. Janu and V. Ravikumar Kani. The central thesis of Narayan's fiction is the huge gulf between the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless. From the numerous novels and short stories of Narayan, the selected short stories and novels are scrutinized here to investigate the gravity with which Narayan explores the past of the tribal people of Kerala.

The physical power asserted upon the tribal settlements ensured the plunder of their land and resources and, later on, the psychological assertion of power through ideology and discourse ensured their complete surrender to the system of hegemony. Illiteracy and lack of knowledge about the modern ways of life cemented their lower position in the social ladder. Counter discourses are mandatory for them to regain their lost self and ethnic esteem. In his work *Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, Teun A. van Dijk observes the functioning of the ideological discourses in controlling the society:

If power is defined here in terms of the control one group has over (the actions of the members of) another group, ideologies function as the mental dimension of this form of control. That is, ideologies are the basis of dominant group members' practices (say of discrimination). They provide the principles by which these forms of power abuse may be justified, legitimized, condoned or accepted. (35)

Narayan's fiction engages with the issue of the tribal people in Kerala from the period of settler colonialism. He also speaks of their old culture and their vision of life

and nature. In the interview “Unending Abuses in Terms of Caste” by M K Harikumar, which is included in the anthology *Puliyampulli Thampuran* by Narayan, he speaks of the discrimination he experienced from his contemporary writers just because of the fact that he is from the tribal background:

I had to experience scorn, neglect and contempt even from the members of Sahithya Academy who claim to be the proud doyens of literature. The interesting aspect of this is that all these happened not from the people of the upper caste. The upper caste writers when we meet would dismiss me in a formal manner. I do not expect anything else from them but the experience which I had with the lower caste writers was bitter. I suffer from several caste based tortures even today. (9)

Narayan is the first novelist from a tribal community of Kerala. He was born on the 26th of September 1940 at Kudayathur in Idukki district, which is known for its second largest tribal population in the state. Narayan passed away on 16th August 2022 at the age of 82. He had retired from the Indian Postal department. Most of his novels deal with the lives of the tribal communities of Kerala and there are a few that deal with his professional life. Narayan, in an interview with Catherine Thankamma, his translator, which appeared in the translation of *Kocharethi (The Araya Woman)* comments:

The Adivasi when represented appeared as a monochromatic figure; like the rakshasan or nishacharan of mythological stories. It was always a negative picture; he was depicted as apathetic, unable to react to injustice or worse, inhuman or sub-human, vicious.... He existed for the sole purpose of being defeated and/ or killed by the forces of virtue and goodness, represented by the upper castes.... We wanted to tell the world that we have our own distinctive way of life, our own value system. We

are not demons lacking in humanity but a strong, hardworking and self-reliant community. (208)

Apart from *Kocharethi* (1998) which received the Kerala Sahithya Academi award for the best novel in 1999, Narayan has written a handful of novels and short stories, all portraying the tribal life and its tribulations. His works are *Uralikkudi* (1999), *Chengarum Kuttalum* (2012), *Vandanam* (2003), *Aaranu Tholkunnavar* (2006), *Ee Vazhiyil Aalere Illa* (2010), *Manasum Dehavum Kondu Njan Ninne* (2010) and *Vannalakkal* (2016). The short story collections include *Nissahayante Nilavili* (2006), *Pela Marutha* (2006), *Kadhakal Narayan* (2011), *Narayante Theranjedutha Kadhakal* (2012) and *Puliyampulli Thampuram* (2013). Rather than an intricate pattern in narration, Narayan gives attention to the simple mode of storytelling which is identifiable with the oral tradition of the past. He brings to the forefront the question of subaltern identity, critiques the dominant ideology and tries to restore the tribal history through the narration of the nuances of the past.

As the title 'Malayaraya' signifies, the tribal community to which Narayan belonged once lived as the monarchs of the hilly areas of Idukki, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala. In Malayalam 'mala' means hills and 'arayan' means king. The tribe, according to several studies, is the most educated and employed set of people among the tribes of the state. They traditionally practiced agriculture and collected forest produce for their livelihood. Though they were followers of the Hindu religion many have been converted to Christianity in the course of time. Yet during ancient times they worshipped nature.

Narayan uses the elements of the past in his works profusely in order to nurture ethnic pride and thereby locate himself and his people in the current socio-cultural

scenario. His novels as well as short stories clearly reflect the culture and tradition into which he was born, in one way or another. In one of his novels' preface he points out:

Though entered into modern life and circumstances, the memories about the past and its effects for the aboriginals and Dalit people would be different from that of the people of the mainstream. It doesn't mean these people are not prone for changes. The reminder by the African revolutionary and writer Franz Fanon that, the authors of colonies and once colonies turning back to their childhoods, get back their memories and treating it along with modern age they must create works, is get realized now.

(*Vannalakkal 2*)

Narayan is very much aware of the effects of articulating the past and the memories in the works of the aboriginal writers. Hence a deliberate attempt is evident in his literary ventures to incorporate them. His fiction is primarily set in the tribal settlements and the tribal people appear as major characters and portrays their ways of life and traditional practices.

The political, social and cultural dimensions of the life of the tribal people become the focal point of Narayan's fiction. He has incorporated the tribal dialects too in his novels without being translated. These dialects differ with respect to each tribal community. His short stories are solid pictures of the tribal tradition and their agony of dispossession. In the anthology *Cries in the Wilderness* (2008), a collection of ten translated short stories, edited by Prof. K. M. Sherrif, the memories of the past and the unique cultural symbols are dealt with in detail. The tribal communities of Kerala form a strange group alien to the mainstream culture of Kerala. Narayan states in his interview, (which is included in the anthology *Cries in the Wilderness*), with Prof. K.

M. Sheriff: “I was provoked by the horrible misrepresentation of Adivasis in fiction by non-Adivasi writers. I had no higher aim than giving a true picture of the Adivasi community” (98). The works of the aboriginal communities in general and the works of Narayan in particular call for the deconstruction of the cultural as well as literary aesthetics, which is mandatory for placing them in the mainstream society. The literary critic Balachandran Vadakkedath in his critical study “Aparam” observes how a history of exploitation is getting evolved in the writings from the tribal communities: “Narayan mainly addresses the Malayaraya and other tribal communities. In the present scenario it is impossible for the tribal dalit to forget his history. The claims related to the innovations which Narayan points out could emerge from some quaters. But his cultural history is the history of how the masters of power have made him the victim” (24).

Rather than focusing on the stylistics and the prevailing aesthetic standards, indigenous literature reflected the plain realities of indigenous life. The primary aim of the indigenous or Dalit literature is to instil a spirit of survival within them. An unembellished language would help to convey the harsh realities of life directly to the people who faced it and to the hegemonic sectors to realize their privileged state of being, which has been obtained at the cost of diminishing the status of the other groups. The manner in which the formation and propagation of a discourse limits or restricts the agency of the underprivileged sectors is what Edward Said denoted in his introduction to *Orientalism* with regard to the condition of the oriental people, it is a psychological state of invasion, “because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action” (11).

Stereotyping of the tribal people in the mainstream literature forced Narayan to come up with authentic renderings about the tribal life and culture. In the interview with

M. K. Harikumar, “Unending Abuses in Terms of Caste”, Narayan explains the ways in which they are stereotyped in the popular media:

I understood that, in the periodicals..., the tribals and their rituals were represented in an absolutely wrong manner. When I realized the conscious efforts by most of the literary works to label the tribals, especially the Malayarayas, the community to which I belong, as a wild species who doesn't have any culture, knowledge or any ritualistic order, I felt it necessary to inform the public i.e, the civilized world that the tribals are masters of several things and to present the foundations of their heritage, pride and dignity. When I reached the town after acquiring a job, I realized the difference between the tribal society and the city culture. It is from this that I attained the will and courage to reveal the tribal reality and its uniqueness even without any external support. (8)

The literature of the Dalits in India, which aesthetically represents the social, political and cultural issues of them, is inseparably linked to the expression of their identity politics. Through his works Narayan gives a realistic reflection of the life and culture of the tribal communities across Kerala. His works become counter discourses to the discourse of privileged class ideology. The tribal communities in India had a glorious past before the invasion of the Aryans, and centuries later the colonialism of the Europeans, and the settler colonialism. A prominent American scholar, Angela Cavender Wilson, in her study “Reclaiming our Humanity: Decolonisation and Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge” notes: “The recovery of Indigenous knowledge is deeply intertwined with the process of decolonisation because for many of us it is only through a consciously critical assessment of how historical process of colonisation has

systematically devalued our Indigenous ways that we can begin to reverse the damage wrought from those assaults” (72).

The ‘nativist’ impulse which is identified by the postcolonial critics in the works of the postcolonial authors is explicit in Narayan’s fiction. The post-colonialist theorists identified the impulse of the Native writers to reassert the traditional culture and practices with the term ‘nativism’. Bill Ashcroft et al. describe in *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* about ‘nativism’:

The desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms as they existed in pre-colonial society. The term is most frequently encountered to refer to the rhetoric of decolonization which argues that colonialism needs to be replaced by the recovery and promotion of pre-colonial, indigenous ways...Minorities from these areas have thus argued against the idea that the post-colonial oppressed form a homogenous group who can be decolonized and liberated by a nativist recovery of a pre-colonial culture. (Ashcroft 143-144)

Their past and present of exploitation and the humiliation as well as the nostalgic description of the past culture of the different tribes are narrated by Narayan as a strategy to make themselves aware of their existence and identity. Unless the tribal people revive their collective identity and belonging, a revolt for change would be rather impossible. Bina Saklani in her essay “The Identity Question Among the Tribals of India” signifies the link between ethnicity and collective identity:

Ethnicity lies at the core of all processes of group identity. All human beings and groups of human make an active self-conscious attempt to construct definitions of who they are as “a people”. In their culture they have many symbols of ‘peoplehood’. These can be called

“ethnicity” that is the symbols of cultural boundaries. People draw selective symbols from their cultures to create ethnic identity system... Ethnicity therefore, is the composition of historically derived symbols as vehicle of conceptualising ethnic identity. These symbolic systems are self-conscious formulations of group’s distinctiveness, creatively drawn from the collection of political and religious images of their ethnicity and to evolve a functional conception of their identity. (Shukla 74)

As it is the case with the literary expressions of all the aboriginal spaces, the literature from the aboriginal space of Kerala too is tuned to achieve the end of cultural revival through evoking the elements of culture specific memories. The memories of the painful past of the settler colonialism and of the independent and the glorious tribal past lingering in their lives are intertwined into their literature to re-map their space in the current socio-cultural scenario which has marked them as under-privileged. The literature of the tribal people of Kerala is embedded in their cultural matrix and proclaims a pride over their various culture specific elements. Memories of old culture and tradition, narration of marginalization and exploitation, revisiting the old legends and myths, revival of Native dialects and the revival of the tribal vision are recurring in Narayan’s fiction.

The history of the Native Americans in the Americas began thousands of years before the founding of the country. There were millions of people living in the continent as tribal groups and they had wars with each other. The destruction of the tribal communities and the domination of one over the other were part of their lives. They spoke hundreds of different languages and practised unique customs. Some of the tribes of early times were, Cheyenne, Navajo, Sioux, Mohawk, Cherokee, Crow People, Odawa, Yakama, Sauk People, Haudenosaunee, Shoshone, Houma People, Biloxi

People, Meskwaki, Chumash People, Miami People, Lakota People, Omaha People, Nez Perce, Ho-Chunk, Chinookan People, Quinnipiac, Tillamook People, Hidatsa, Arikara, Mandan, Hopi, and Iroquois, to name a few. The history of the European invasion in the Native American land is marked with numerous incidents of conflicts, allegations, revolts, wars and peace treaties. According to historical records, Christopher Columbus landed on the Caribbean island in 1492 to find the Native people dwelling there. In the following centuries explorers from Spain, England and France intruded into the land and had wars with the Indian tribes as well as one another. 1754 witnessed the French-Indian war and 1756, the Seven Years' War between the British and the French. The European invasion and expansion were rationalised with the assumption that they are in the mission of saving the pagans by spreading the Christianity. The deplorable plight of the Native Americans was caused by the epidemic diseases, violence, warfare, enslavement, poverty and displacement from the native land and genocide. Though the native people aligned with the British in the war with the newly formed United States, the Peace Treaty of Paris between the two opposing groups ignored the natives completely. The state of New York made small reservations to dump the Natives. Though there were numerous peace treaties signed with the Natives, the hunger for land of the European powers encroached into the native settlements and made their life more and more impossible.

The Red Indians were huge in number and they were subjugated at the hands of the European powers. Their history of ruthless exploitation and massacres spans over centuries. The European imperial powers with the advantage of technology and crookedness got their grip on the Red Indians so fast. The plan of termination that the intruders executed for the Natives is clear with the well-known statement by an imperialist colonel, 'Kill every buffalo you can, every buffalo dead is an Indian gone'.

The Natives were innocent people with primitive weapons and a holistic vision of life. Even then they managed to fight back and resist. They made numerous futile efforts to defend themselves from the European powers. The authentic culture of the Native Americans was deeply ecological. Their all-encompassing way of life was disturbed with the intrusion of the conquerors. In his speech “The End of Living and the Beginning of Survival” compiled in the book *Zeitgeist: Readings on Society and Culture*, Chief Seattle comments:

To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget. The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors -- the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people. (31)

Being a Native American tribal chief, Chief Seattle speaks of the agony of losing their culture and the degradation of the ecological balance that happens along with it. He reminds the world of the fast growing Western culture and the irreversible impact it creates on the ecology. The Native American spirit of the deep ecological existence is evident in his speech where he considers the elements of nature as the blood relations of the tribal people and the dissolved spirit of their ancestors:

There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but a mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor

reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame. (*Zeitgeist* 31)

Even when the colonial expansion had politically ended and the colonised nations received freedom from the conquerors, the colonial relic survived and a new colonial hegemony began to develop creating new masters and new minor colonies. Thus the phenomenon of internal colonisation emerged and the marginalized status of a set of people continued. The Native Americans thus subdued under perpetual colonization imbibing the colonial ideology. The new Free States were trying to unify as a single body ignoring the heterogeneity abiding in it. In the project of homogenization the Natives have not gained any status other than being the owners of a strange culture. Maurice Kenny's works reflect the cultural memory of both the stages of colonisation and its physical as well as psychological aspects. Colonisation had its impact on all the realms of the Native American existence according to *Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*,

There were differences in how each colonizing nation related to Indians, but these differences were more to do with the different social and governmental organization of the native societies they encountered and the different terrains they inhabited than they were to do with essential divergence in approach. Spain, France, and England all competed to raise national and personal prestige through colonization, to maximize public and private wealth through trade, and to spread their version of the Christian faith through conversion. Each impetus radically affected cultural cohesion within Indian communities through eroding traditional politics and economics, displacing traditional gender roles,

and imposing conflicting allegiances within Indian spiritual life. (Porter 60)

In the introduction to *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Dee Brown notes about the great record of the Red Indian history published:

During that time the culture and civilization of the American Indian was destroyed, and out of that time came virtually all the great myth of the American West – tales of fur traders, mountain men, steamboat pilots, goldseekers, gamblers, gunmen, cavalrymen, cowboys, harlots, missionaries, schoolmarms, and homesteaders. Only occasionally was the voice of an Indian heard, and then more often than not it was the dark menace of the myths, and even if he had known how to write in English, where would he have found a printer or a publisher. (xxiii)

Brown's elaboration speaks of the situation of the Red Indians where it is not easy for them to write and get it published. They watch their history and experiences being described by others. The history of the Red Indians from their own perspective began to appear much later and now it has been widely read and accepted. The people from the aboriginal spaces themselves have started to record their past and events and also numerous writers come up with fictional and poetic recounting of the past and the present. Uncle Luther, a character in Louis Owen's *The Sharpest Sight*, comments on the way history should be dealt with. He says, "a man's got to know the stories of his people, and then, he's got to make his own story, too... we got to be aware of the stories they're making about us, and the way they change the stories we already know" (Owens 91). Thus revisiting the tropes of memory through various narrative techniques is a common feature in the Native American literature and the characters often proclaim its need being the mouthpieces of the authors: "The great transformative power of Indian

literature from any era derives in part from its ability to invoke a past with direct implications for the present. Indians, after all, are not just fictional, they are real. The strength and agency of Indian America today testifies to the survival of diverse Indian nations and individuals in spite of a brutal colonial past” (Porter 54).

Maurice Kenny was born in to the Mohawk tribe of North America. Patrick Barron wrote in “Maurice Kenny's Tekonwatonti, Molly Brant: Poetic Memory and History”: “With its rivers, mountains, valleys, flora, and fauna, Mohawk land is the unflagging constant behind Tekonwatonti. The call for the remembrance of silenced but unvanquished, Mohawk cultural structures rise from this land to Kenny. He is a champion of forgotten voices, and Molly Brant is one of these voices” (2). Calling him the ‘champion of forgotten voices’ Barron elaborates on Kenny’s attitude towards the past and the memory recounting. The elements of the past and the memories recur in the works of Kenny as it is with that of any other writer from an uprooted community. Patrick Barron notes:

That Kenny partly bases his history on myths, various recollections, and poetic revivification cannot be denied, yet he does provide a factual basis for his work. He includes an introduction, a glossary, and a historical chronology. These succinct references, although by no means exhaustive, give helpful hints, such as brief biographical sketches of historical actors and dates of important wars and colonial discoveries. (32)

The better standard of living that the Native American communities experience can be owed to the political and economic background of the USA. The literary, academic and the political worlds have recognized the Native American literature at least from the latter half of the twentieth century with Scott N. Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn*.

Numerous Native American writers of all the genres have claimed their position in the scenario of world literature such as Gerald Vizenor, Leslie Marmon Silko, Paula Gunn Allen, Duane Niatum, James Welch, Janet Campbell Hale, Joseph Bruchac, David Treuer, Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, Simon J. Ortiz, Louise Erdrich, Thomas King, Eddie Chuculate, Heid E. Erdrich, Melissa Febos, Tommy Orange, Billy-Ray Belcourt, Elissa Washuta, Diane Glancy, Darcie Little Badger, Joshua Whitehead and Dennis E. Staples to name a few.

The works of Maurice Kenny are abounding in strategic turns that are tuned to achieve a collective ethnic identity through different measures for claiming an individual as well as a collective space among the hegemonic classes. The diverse methods adopted in the works of Kenny can be analysed at different levels to negotiate the gravity of those strategies and its effects. The prompting feature of his works such as the frequent imagery of the collective as well as the personal trauma of exploitation and marginalization, recurring motifs of the ethnic correlatives, and the addressing of personal dilemma of existence are potential spaces to evaluate the correlation between memories, trauma and identity.

Maurice Kenny's literary oeuvre comprises of short fictions, poems, plays and prose pieces. The themes of reclamation of the past, existential dilemma, displacement and misplacement, agony of the dispossessed, and the cultural alienation are woven so well in the literary fabric of Kenny. His incorporates cultural memories and the erased history of his tribal ancestry explicitly or implicitly in his works. Through his characters Kenny voices the need for the repossession of the past for the future.

Maurice Kenny's popularity lies in his poetry and his short fiction, which are conversant of his Mohawk ancestry and the contemporary Native American life.

Kenny's works also mirrors the wide range of his personal experiences, exploring the countryside as well as the metropolitan life of Brooklyn. The first published anthology of Kenny was *Dead Letters Sent and Other Poems*, in 1958. It is after nearly two decades that his second volume appeared in the literary world in 1977 and the volume was titled *North: Poems of Home*. This award-winning work is an aesthetic account of the initial encounters of between the French Jesuits and the Mohawk Iroquois in the North America.

In the year 1984 Maurice Kenny's popularity got accelerated with the publication of *The Mama Poems*. The poems of the volume reclaim the poet's connections with the ancestral past at various junctures of his life. In the beginning he narrates the creation myth that his forefathers shared to the younger generation learned. The work also portrays the deceased ancestors appear to talk to him and remind him of his roots. The recurring images of flora and fauna permanently plant him in the natural soil of the Mohawk tradition. His first published volume of short stories came out in the year 1985 with the title *Rain and Other Fictions*. In the title piece, a Mohawk takes a road trip with a Pueblo family. As the story progresses the narrator contemplates on his feeling of rootlessness. A traditional Native American rain festival to which they are travelling to becomes the background of the short story. The dilemma of the Native Americans who are caught between two cultures is a focal theme of the collection. Kenny's use of figurative language perfectly imparts the feelings of uprootedness of the characters. The theme is further exemplified in "Leave the Driving to Us", which follows a Native American teenager on a Greyhound bus as he travels across the states to meet his father for the first time.

Between Two Rivers, published in 1987, discusses the Kenny's experiences as a Native American and a resident of urban America. In the poem, "Going Home", a

Native American who has left the Reservation discovers a rejuvenation of his traditional beliefs at the new place. “Wild Strawberry” perfectly captures the mythical significance of the berry in the Mohawk culture. The author was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for the work *Between Two Rivers*. The poetry in the volume *Greyhounding This America: Poems and Dialog* revolves around the bus trips that the author had across the country in the late 1970s. The volume explores various topics, including the history of the native people and the unpleasant aspects of the contemporary American life. Kenny’s works are deeply rooted in the Mohawk culture to which he belongs and it is impossible to separate his ethnic consciousness from those works. The Mohawk tradition, the tribal culture, the days of exploitation that his people faced and their present condition of personal and collective dilemmas are elaborately described in his works.

The Mohawk tribe into which Maurice Kenny was born is one of the Iroquoian confederacies. They were sedentary half the year and nomadic otherwise. The women generally engaged in cultivation and men hunting. They were people with strong familial affiliations and social values. The tribe had three clans namely the Turtle, Wolf and the Bear. As in the case of all the Native American tribes the Mohawk population was also declined after the European contact. The Mohawks were acclaimed for their bravery and hunting spirit. The harvesting period of the wild strawberries is a time of celebration for them. They live in close harmony with nature and the ripening and harvesting of the berries assert the continuation of life cycle. Many of Kenny’s works celebrate berries as a motif in them. In his poem “Wild Strawberries” he calls them ‘blood berries’, indicating his intimate connection with his tradition and culture.

Despite the fact that Kenny’s works unveil the cultural memories of the Mohawks in particular and the Native Americans in general, it is not fully possible to capture the essence of the entire Indian existence from the works of a single writer. As Arnold

Krupat puts it in his work *The Turn to the Native*, “Indian experience is not always and everywhere the same, nor is it ever unproblematically given to consciousness nor is consciousness unproblematically represented in writing” (4). Yet Kenny’s treatment of the theme of the tribal life and its nuances in the colonial and the postcolonial phases mirrors the being of any Native American wounded psyche. The characters of Kenny are deeply rooted in the soil of the Native American tribal culture so that they are wounded in the process of colonisation, cultural assimilation and hegemony. His plots are driven by characters and their dilemmas. The theme of tradition versus modernity too is delineated in his short stories where the ultimate cure is rendered by the reiteration of cultural memories. Kenny’s statement from his prose collection *Backward to Forward* clearly shows his inclination for the past and the culture:

For the most part, the Anglo world, the non-Indian, non-tribal world, has lost its sense of tribalism and will probably never regain that communicative and spiritual experience, which indeed is shameful, tragic. Cultural roots must be respected, guarded, and practised or the contemporary lifestyle will cloud and destroy this primal awareness, these sensations that touch the earth. Contemporary Indian roots are deep, but too many Native Americans, their feet sod, no longer touch earth, either, allowing the root to dry and turn to dust. And without roots, humankind is nothing. (96)

Maurice Kenny’s works exhibit the impulse of resistance and are articulations against the colonial hegemony. In the history of the tribes of America there was a period of foreign colonization that lasts over many hundred years. But for them the status of being colonised still continues as the land is now occupied almost completely by the invaders and other migrants. ‘Ethnic cleansing’ is how Anthony F. C. Wallace describes the calculated strategy to purchase Indian land, linked to President Jefferson that applied

throughout the period 1801 to 1829, even though Jefferson justified the process of removing the Indians from their homeland as a means of ultimately ‘civilizing’ them.

The marginalized status of the Natives still continues though they are politically free. Resorting to the past through cultural memories at multiple layers, Kenny resists the colonial hegemony and attains a personal as well as collective cure. As Rauna Kuokkanen in the article “Alter-Native Natitions and Narrations in the Works of Dewitt Clinton Duncan (Too-qua-stee), Charles A Eastman (Ohiyesa) and E Pauline Johnson” notes: “the past is a crucial element in the current negotiation of nationhood in the Native American nationalist literature” (68-69). Kenny’s invocation of the past through literature is exceptionally multilayered to render a spectrum of significations. It instills a spirit to move forward with a collective enthusiasm derived from revisiting the past of collective trauma and the ancient tribal glory.

The reclamation of the past and tradition, elaborations upon the periods of oppression, reinvention of the traditional elements, glorification of cultural legacy and anti-assimilationist themes are common to Maurice Kenny’s works. Through his literary renderings Kenny strives to repossess the past at two levels, on the first level his works reclaim the past of colonisation and on the second level the past of unique ethnicity. Kenny portrays personal and collective trauma through present day characters, who are still traumatized. He uses fictional situations to intensify the effect of being traumatized. These narrations furthermore reflect the prevailing hegemony and the ideological dissemination. The manner of propagation of colonial ideology and the way in which they were excluded from the historiography of the privileged class are detailed in Joy Porter’s *Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*:

As the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries progressed, colonizing countries increasingly thought of themselves as “European” and perceived indigenous peoples not on their own terms but as counter-images of aspects of themselves. European culture was considered superior to Indian culture of any sort, but from the beginning non-Indians differentiated Indians into “good” and “bad”, with “good” Indians having noble, innocent, and virtuous qualities and “bad” Indians having fiendish, warlike, and occult ones. Non-Indians understood Indians in antithesis to themselves: because they thought themselves civilized, dynamic, and in history they judged Indians to be culturally static and somehow outside of history. (60)

The conventional binary of ‘natives’ and ‘non-natives’ has been associated with negative and positive attributes respectively in order to reaffirm the inferiority of the natives and thereby let the non-natives to assert their superiority. Moving out of the state of inferiority is a task that demands greater efforts. Reclamation of cultural memories helps to achieve this end to a greater extent. Krupat notes Appiah’s words and describes the ways in which postcolonial African novels reclaimed their past strategically in his essay “Postcolonialism, Ideology and Native American Literature”, through “the imaginative re-creation of a common cultural past that is crafted into a shared tradition by the writer...” (149).

Maurice Kenny’s works undoubtedly follow retrospection and representation as a strategy to work against the colonial hegemony. Kenny achieves this through his characters and their action that are deeply rooted in the Native American cultural soil. The two layers of making a nation are noted above as one for the world and one for themselves. Inventing an Africa for the world helps them to register their space in the

socio-cultural scenario resisting the hegemonic structures, and inventing an Africa for themselves would aid in reclaiming the ethnic pride that is being lost in the process of colonialism. Thus it becomes a counter discourse in every respect. As the oppressed class of people is excluded from the historiography of the dominant class or their history is being manipulated by the dominant for their vested interests, it becomes important for them to produce knowledge, according to Krupat. The writers including Maurice Kenny are creating a new system of knowledge through the counter discourse of cultural memories to resist hegemony. For Krupat the case of the three novels, *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony* and *The Ancient Child* offer an “ideological image of Indianness for the Native Americans and for the rest of the world...to insist on the “reality” of the “mythic” is part of the ideological function of these novels” (42). An image of ‘Indianness’ is skilfully crafted through the literary renderings of the Native American writers in general and Kenny’s in particular.

Both Maurice Kenny and Narayan retrospectively reconsider their past at various levels in their works. Their literary consciousness is historically motivated. They skilfully and purposefully impart certain images and ideologies with regard to their ethnicity through their narrative landscape. Despite the disparities that the Kerala tribal space and the Native American space hold, the thematic concern of the literary outputs of both the writers evidently converges. This is due to the similarity at the level of cultural trauma they experienced. The propagation of ideology, stereotypical constructions and the perpetuation of hegemony are the same in its level of experience. They are still suppressed and the stigmatic existence which the upper class inflicted upon them never ends. Through their literature they discuss with great vigour the levels of exploitation they confront. The social and political right of the aboriginal people is a major topic of discussion nowadays. The process of adaptation with the new ways of

life and the new circumstances is extremely challenging for the uprooted tribal community. Historical records and other documents of specific areas give details about the ways in which the aboriginal people are oppressed and suppressed and even erased massively. The art and literature of the marginalized communities are politically triggered toward a cause. Rather than an aesthetic medium of expression, they use their arts and literature for the achievement of their rights in the socio-political realm. As Dr. Chester J Fontenot Jr. asserts in his work *Franz Fanon: Language as the God Gone Astray in the Flesh*:

Minority cultures do not distinguish art from social manifesto and “use.”

They reject the idea that the work of art should not mean but be. For them art ought to have a definite purpose, which is explicitly linked to social movements and which is to express oppressed people’s social awareness or to condemn the oppressor and propose ways to alleviate the oppressive situation. Though the typical minority stance toward literature may seem simplistic, the fact remains that there is an inherent drive in minority movements to give art a social function, probably as the result of minorities having realized the importance of artistic activity in formulating people’s outlook toward the world. (Fontenot 2)

In order to reclaim their agency in the current socio-political scenario, the aboriginal writers narrate their past. Their past is two layered as it involves an era of privileged life in the forests with no external hands to manipulate them and a later period of oppression and dispossession. This first phase of history with their own unique ways of life and visions on life are elaborated in their works. The second one is the phase of history where they endured oppressions and suppressions of extreme intensity. After getting into contact with the external world, in the hands of the intruders they had the worst kind of subjugation that affected them mentally as well as physically. These two phases

of history are being narrated aesthetically in the literary renderings of Narayan and Maurice Kenny.

The past reviews on the works of Narayan are primarily concentrated on his well acclaimed novel *Kocharethi*. There are a handful of research articles based on this novel. All these past reviews can be considered under two titles: those which explore the nuances of tribal culture and its implications and those which examine the aspects of exploitation, marginalisation and the resistance to hegemony through literature.

“Cultural Troves in Tribal Literature: A Study of *Kocharethi* by Narayan”, a research article by Sruthi Palliyalil published in *JOUR*, tries to trace elements of culture and traditional practices of Malayaraya community and thereby identifying and acknowledging the role they play in maintaining the social and cultural equilibrium. According to the author, merging history with culture, the novel portrays the struggles of the tribal community; from challenges of preserving myths, rituals, social customs, and the belief systems to the possession and dispossession of the land.

Furthermore, in the article “Acculturation as a Challenge in Narayan’s *Kocharethi*” which appeared in the *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, the author, Livea Thekkekkara Paul, explores the theme of the mixing of culture and its adverse effect on tribal cultures. The novel is analysed in depth to identify the various aspects of tribal existence with the advent of different people and different cultures. The process of modernisation proved detrimental in the traditional life of the tribal people and they are in perpetual strife to cope with the new scenario.

By incorporating the theories of cultural identity and cultural resistance, the paper titled “Tribal, Cultural Identity and Development in Narayan’s *Kocharethi* - *The Araya Woman*”, the author Pramod Kumar Gond comments on the link with the issue of

reconstruction of reality and the issues concerning the quality of tribal life in the rapidly changing environment. According to the paper, the tribal writers are not against modernisation as such but against the modernisation with increasing effect of westernisation, eroding identity and the cultural value of tribal society.

Into the same trope of research, the article “Social and Cultural Aspects of Araya Tribes in Narayan’s *Kocharethi: A Case Study*” by authors Manjappa Mudakammanvar published in *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, explores the lifestyle of the Adivasi communities and brings into light their oral tales, stories, myths, legends and their social and cultural customs. It focuses on the social and cultural aspects of the Malayaraya tribe and its interface with modernity which results in the painful separation from the past, culture, myths, rituals and the ways of life.

In addition to this, in the article “Author as Ethnographer – A Study of Narayan’s *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman*” published in *YMER*, the author Namrata Mohan asserts that Narayan can be called an ethnographer as he incorporates the ethnographic and cultural aspects, customs, practices and beliefs of the Malayaraya tribal community. The article also talks about the process of internal colonisation and rendering of cultural identity through literary writings. According to the author the novel can be viewed as a blend of reality, ethnography and fiction that is balanced perfectly by Narayan. Likewise, the research paper by Sruthi Palliyil and Geetha Pai titled “Folkloric Elements in the Novel *Kocharethi* by Narayan” published in the *International Journal of English and Literature*, uses postcolonial tools to examine the folkloric elements in the novel. The novel is evaluated with the aid of the concepts of hybridity, cross-culturalism and cultural identity. The paper tries to point out how and why tribal communities are culturally unique. And scrupulously vents out manners, customs, belief, economic life and the folk tradition of the Malayaraya community.

Nonetheless, the author Uma Maheswari K in her article “Voice for the Voiceless in Narayan’s *Kocharethi*” appeared in *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, comes up with the argument that the novel acts as a space for articulation of the muted subaltern community of the Malayaraya tribe in Kerala. In the words of the author “Through *Kocharethi* Narayan defines and defends his own tribal community and giving its cultural identity. His voice represents the community’s perspective, struggles and shows the challenges faced by them such as pain, discrimination, racism, violence, looting of their resources and the land. Narayan’s voice unmutes the years of long silent passivity endured by them” (630).

Additionally, “Echoes of Defiance: Unveiling Tribal Resistance in Narayan’s *Kocharethi, The Araya Woman*”, the research article by Rupam Kumari explores the aspect of resistance through the literature of tribal authors. Incorporating the theoretical tools of postcolonial criticism the paper questions the hegemonic power structures that forever denegated the position of tribal communities as inferior. The nuances of the writing style of aboriginal communities’ that equip them with the potential of resistance are studied in the article, which is published in *Aryavart Shodh Vikas Patrika*.

The thesis entitled, “From Places to Non-Places: The Inscription of the Trajectory of Aboriginal Displacement in the Works of Mudrooroo and Narayan”, the author Harish Jose elaborates on how the tribal communities value their habitat and how they are deeply affected by displacement. The major analytical terminologies of the thesis include Yi Fu Tuan’s ‘Topophilia’, ‘Rootedness’ and care for place, and Edward Relph’s existential ‘insideness’ and ‘outsideness’. The study is a close reading of increasing displacement of the Adivasis which inevitably leads to the necessity for creation of a literary space for them in order to attach their self and identity. Within the

scope of the study comes the intricate relation that the indigenous people nurture with the land.

The thesis, “Poetics and Politics: A Comparative Study of the Select Works of Alexis Wright and Narayan” attempts to analyse the novels of Alexis Wright and compares the sufferings of the Aborigines of Australia with those of the Tribals of Kerala. For exploring the key elements, Wright’s *Plains of Promise* (1997), *Carpentaria* (2006), *The Swan Book* (2013) and Narayan’s *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* (2011) are scrutinised in the thesis to evaluate how these narratives act politically. Australian Aboriginal Novelists and Kerala Tribal Novelists have created a dramatic and sensitive account of the sufferings of Australia’s aboriginal people and the Adivasis of Kerala based on elements of history, anthropology and post-colonial theory.

The research paper “Centre Vs. Periphery: The Flux of Identity and the Tribal World”, published in *The Criterion: An International Journal of English* discusses the identity crisis that the tribal communities like the Malayaraya face with its exposure to foreign cultures. The author, Dr. Sona Agarwal, has given much attention to the process of ‘othering’ by the mainstream society whereby the tribal communities are forced to occupy the ex-centric and marginal position. Furthermore, in the article “*Kocharethi: The Araya Woman – A Tale of Convergence and Dependence of Nature and Culture*”, the author Sneha Ann Mathai reads the novel in an anthropological perspective. Mathai analyses the peculiar ways in which the influence of nature and culture shines forth in the novel. The paper establishes the researcher’s finding that Nature and Culture are mutually dependent and in the words of the author “...just two sides of the very same coin and not a binary” (57), supplements the on-going discussion of the literatures on Maurice Kenny and Narayan. The research paper titled “Re-evaluating the Select Short Stories of Narayan (a Dalit Writer in Malayalam): A Case Study of Minor Literature”

by Anju Antony which appeared in *Research Journal of English Language and Literature* Volume 1. Issue 4: 2014 focused on the problems of identity of the tribals as constructed and their self-assertion through writings in the present cultural and political context of Kerala. Limna P. in her research paper “A Saga of Loss: Representing Native Ethos in Narayan’s *Kocharethi*” examines the native images and what it means to be living as a tribal in their own land. *No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South India* edited by K. Satyanarayana and Susie Tharu proposes a detailed description of the cultural and political evolution of the Dalits, their political, cultural and literary activities in Kerala and Tamilnadu.

Though there are numerous available works on Native American literature in general, studies on the works of Maurice Kenny are rather rare. Patric Barron’s research article “Poetic Memory and History: Maurice Kenny’s Tekonwatonti; Molly Brant” gives a critical analysis of the select poems of Kenny to show how they act as a surrogate space for the articulation of forgotten voices. The function of memories in the poetry of Kenny is studied by the author. The article was published in the journal *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*.

In the article “Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics and Literature” which appeared in the journal *Studies in Native American Literature*, the author Michael Snyder critically explores the theme of queer identity in Native American literature. Select short stories of Kenny too have been analysed using the tools of Queer theory. The same aspect is being studied by the author Jane Scudelar in the select works of Maurice Kenny along with the works of other Native American authors in the article “The Queerness of Native American Literature” which appeared in the journal, *Studies in Native American Literature*. Researcher Gayatri Balakrishnan in her article “Bound in Spirit: An Explication of the Mohawk Legend of Man – Nature

Kinship in Maurice Kenny's "They Tell Me I am Lost" which appeared in the *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, explicates the traditional and cultural peculiarities of the Mohawk community.

Universities and forums in the United States most often conduct seminars and invite research papers on the issue of the Native American literature and culture. The latest among such is an invitation by the journal *Transmotion: An Online Journal of Postmodernism Indigenous Studies* on the theme "Native American Narratives in the Global Context". Janette K Murray's scholarly article "What is Native American Literature?" appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* offers a brief overview of the Native American literature and its classifications. The multitudes of the Native American literature are carefully listed in the article. Universities in India have accepted PhD theses on the Native American literature especially on the Native American fictional and non-fictional narratives and poetry. "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning", an article by the scholar Gilad Hirschberger specifically details the function of cultural trauma in the redefining of collective identity.

The past reviews on the works of Maurice Kenny and Narayan speak copiously regarding various aspects such as culture, assimilation, marginalization, exploitation, queerness, nature and cultural identity. The discourse on cultural memory and cultural identity are occurring in the academic circles actively from the first decades of the twenty-first century. Yet an exclusive study on the aspect of cultural memories and its function in remapping a cultural identity towards igniting political action is hardly done. The present study tries to address this research gap and adequately. A comparative study of both Kerala tribal literature and the Native American literature founded on the theories of cultural memory, cultural trauma and cultural identity is being done for the first time.

The present study stands at the intersectional paradigm of cultural memory, cultural trauma and cultural identity. The correlation between these theoretical notions and its complementary effect form the basis of this analysis. Cultural memory, in the words of the social anthropologist and theorist Lorena Anton, is:

The social memory of collectivities (i.e., individual memories collectively shared) transmitted via cultural artifacts, and in this form, available to people to construct and (re)define their relation to the past, the present, and, sometimes, the future. Its appearance as a concept in the social sciences and humanities is generally related to the writings of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and of the German art historian Aby Warburg, although others too contributed to the beginning of the field in almost the same period. (*Protest Cultures* 130)

The collective memories of the tribal people sharing a common cultural background are embedded in the cultural trauma. Collective trauma and cultural trauma are terms used interchangeably. Yet, when collective trauma: “refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society” and “does not merely reflect an historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people” (Hirschberger 1), cultural trauma reaches beyond the mere collective level to a cultural level. Cultural trauma signifies the trauma of the degradation of a community’s culture, tradition and the disruption of the cultural identity. When the identity of a cultural group is identified with the common denominator of the notion of culture it can be designated as cultural identity. The common cultural and traditional elements of a group render it with a common identity on the same basis. In the case of tribal communities the cultural identity is eroded as a result of the traumatic events they

have undergone. Through their literature they relive this trauma, repossess cultural memories and reintegrate cultural identity.

Maurice Kenny and Narayan become crucial voices of cultural memory in their respective tribal spaces through the authentic narrative of the painful and glorious past. The works of both the writers exhibit thematic resemblances that perhaps no other authors from these specific aboriginal spaces share in common. There are striking similarities at the level of incorporating the elements of the memories of cultural trauma and triumph into the fictional trope of these writers. Within the scope of the present study these two writers fit in so well because the gravity and magnitude with which they strive to repossess their past is unique and unparalleled.

Literature for them is a tool to effectively reclaim the cultural memories of trauma, tradition and culture of the tribal people and thus to create a collective identity and pride. As Narayan notes in his interview, “It is heartening to note that the marginalized sections of our society – whether they are Dalits, Adivasis or Muslims – have become aware of their identities. They can certainly turn this awareness into a weapon...That Dalits and Adivasis have become conscious of the art and literature they create is the greatest cultural revolution of our age” (Thankamma 99). The literature of the aboriginal communities across the world thus becomes apparatuses of cultural revolution.

This thesis is divided into four chapters and an introductory and a concluding segment. The introduction explains the basic arguments, research question, objectives and the hypothesis of the study. It also outlines the key terms of the study such as aboriginal literature, cultural memory, cultural trauma and cultural identity. A bio-note

of both the authors also becomes part of the introduction along with a review of past literature.

The first chapter, “An Unbroken Continuum: The Correlatives of Cultural Memory, Cultural Trauma and Cultural Identity” offers a methodological framework to the study, discussing the theoretical postulations of memory, trauma and identity in detail. It states a correlation between these terms and describes the ways in which one complements the other. The following two chapters analyse the short stories of Kenny and Narayan with this theoretical background. The second chapter is titled “Blood Berries: Trauma in the Trope of Fiction”. It investigates the representation and function of explicit and implicit trauma in the fictional fabric of both the writers. The third chapter is titled “The Memory Kinetics: Reclaiming the Glorious Past in Fiction”. The chapter is an attempt to analyse the select short stories paying attention to the aspect of the past glory, tradition and custom of the specific tribal communities. The fourth chapter studies the selected novels of Narayan and the selected poems of Maurice Kenny. It is titled “Remembrance and Resistance: Memory and Trauma across Genres” and attempts to read how the writers successfully explore the theme of cultural memory and cultural trauma in different genres. The final segment, which is a conclusion to the thesis, sums up the findings and re-asserts the basic arguments. The thesis is thus an attempt to address the recurrence of cultural memories in the works of Maurice Kenny and Narayan, its theoretical implications and function at a political realm. The thesis develops from the essential premise that the representation of the cultural memories of trauma and triumph effectively re-establishes cultural identity. It analyses the short stories, novels and the poems of both the writers to figure out the points of convergence at the thematic levels and the idiosyncrasies at the structural level.

Chapter I

An Unbroken Continuum: The Correlatives of Cultural Memory, Cultural Trauma and Cultural Identity

In order to give a methodological basis to the present study this chapter is devoted to institute a correlation between the aspects of memory, trauma and identity in a collective and cultural sense. It also marks the space of literature as a generative, reclaiming and preserving space of cultural memory for the fragmented ethnic communities. Through the act of cultural memory representation the aboriginal people envision to reunite, act for a political cause, resist the hegemony and restore the political agency. The thesis argues that the narratives from the tribal spaces are mainly responses to their marginalised and traumatic past. In these literary responses, the writers infuse collectively significant cultural elements for the readers to relive them, restore ethnic pride, cultural identity and belongingness. Both Maurice Kenny and Narayan write primarily about the traumatic events that the people of their community came across as well as the dignified days of the ethnic past. The cultural memory preserved through the literary scape of both the writers helps individuals of the community to reclaim their identity and belongingness to a group. Cultural memory, for the marginalised communities, predominantly includes memories of cultural trauma.

The academic scenario of the present century is well occupied with the scholarship of cultural memory, cultural trauma and collective identity. The theories of Maurice Halbwachs, Jeffrey K. Olick, Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann, Rosanne Kennedy, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Vamik Volkan, Michelle Balaev, Aby Warburg, James

Olney, Nicholas Pethes, Pierre Nora, Alon Confino, Geisen Bernhard, Astrid Erll, Brigit Neumann and Ann Rigney have contributed to the establishment of the area of theory. The fictional as well as historical events that the authors narrated are scrutinized here, to identify the modalities of these postulations. The political trajectory of memory, trauma and identity is the realm to which the discussion concludes into. The thesis specifies the line of action in which the ideological manipulations and hegemonic structures disrupt the cultural identity of the tribal people.

While the project aims to declare the literature of the tribal communities as the archival space in which they seek to conjure up the spirit to reunite and reaffirm their self and ethnicity through the representation of the cultural memories of trauma and tradition, the aspect of counter memory and its functions in the praxis of meta-histories and hegemonic power structures are also paid attention to in the course of the study. The reliving of cultural trauma becomes preordained in the process of reconfiguration of cultural identity. It also evaluates the inevitability of an integrated ethnic identity in the course of a collective political action.

The chapter attempts a detailed expounding of the theoretical framework starting from the basic notions of memory in general. It then develops into the specific aspect of cultural memory and cultural trauma. The crucial correlation between cultural memory and collective identity is mapped with a special attention given to the notion of cultural trauma. The role of ideology, power, discourse and hegemony in the disruption of collective identity with respect to the aboriginal communities is also evaluated in the chapter. It also develops the idea of the transformation of cultural memories represented in aboriginal literary works as counter memories and its function in the coagulation of cultural identity and collective political action.

A discussion foregrounding the theories of the present work could be initiated with fashioning memory as the definitive foundation of the self. The Introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader* edited by Jeffrey K. Olick et al. notes: "...John Locke found in memory the ultimate source of the self, namely the awareness of self-sameness through time, presaging our contemporary discourse of identity" (10). A subject understands and defines oneself primarily from the memories of the past it possesses and secondarily from its connections and disconnections in the present. These associations with the past and the present are synthesised with memory.

Drawing attention to the theories of the French scholar Maurice Halbwachs, a pioneer in the discussions of collective memory, Olick discusses the significance of the 'social framework of memory':

The "social frameworks of memory," which can be understood as related to this process of the individual finding him- or herself in the stories of his or her group. By the same token, groups as well as individuals are constituted by the stories they tell. Without shared stories about the Past of the group, there would be no group identities, or at least they would be fleeting...Halbwachs highlighted the role of shared memory in constituting group identities (including the identities of the Working class) over time. But these identities must be activated in rituals of solidarity- commemoration,... (Olick 177)

The currency of the term collective memory is traceable chiefly to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, through his pivotal work *Social Frameworks of Memory* published in 1925. Halbwachs's interest in the notion of memory shared insights from two significant figures in the late nineteenth-century France, the philosopher Henri Bergson and the sociologist Emile Durkheim. Memory, of course,

has been a chief preoccupation for social thinkers since the time of the ancient Greeks. Yet it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that a particularly social perception on memory became prominent.

Human beings are social animals with historic sensibility and shared memories. They identify themselves as part of a group and generate a sense of belongingness through the shared stories and memories. This lineage to the past is important for the existence of an individual. Frederic Nietzsche in his essay “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” compiled in the volume *Untimely Meditations* speaks about how human mind is so vigorous in reproducing connections with the past:

He cannot learn to forget but clings relentlessly to the past: however far and fast he may run, this chain runs with him....the man says ‘I remember’ and envies the animal, who at once forgets and for whom every moment really dies, sinks back into night and fog and is extinguished forever. Thus the animal lives *unhistorically*:...Man, on the other hand, braces himself against the great and ever greater pressure of what is Past:... (61)

What Nietzsche gives is the basic instinct of the human mind to cling to the past whether individual or collective. He differentiates between the ‘unhistorical’ life of animals and the ‘historical’ one of the human beings. Human beings are constantly in the chains of the past which they could never leave behind as their existence is founded upon it and the associated memories. The force of the bygone acts upon human lives and determines the actions of the present and thus the future.

Moreover, to be part of a society and bind oneself to the social fabric, remembrance is essential. It involves not only the commemoration of the peaceful and prideful days of the past but also retrospection of the days of misery and struggle. Aboriginal authors

write profusely about their days of collective life during the span of invasion. In the Introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader*, Olick et al. establish the significance of a sense of the past in gluing the social fabric and attaching oneself into it. This belongingness is essential for an individual to assert his/her worth:

Commemoration of certain historical events is essential, so the argument goes, to our sense of national unity; without substantial consensus on the past, social solidarity is in danger; there is either a “deep structure” or a stored-up legacy of shared culture that binds us together; without its pervasive influence, there is no “us” to bind. In more extreme versions, the “truth” of such accounts is seen as irrelevant in face of the need for them: any myth of belonging, it sometimes seems, even a patently absurd one, is better than none. (34)

Social cohesion and solidarity of the marginalized and the fragmented communities rest at the evocation of the shared memory or the collective remembrances. This recollection is fundamentally generated over a loss. Since the aboriginal communities lost the old days of community life and ethnic pride, they need to reclaim them through the re-inscription of the cultural memories through various channels.

To this point of re-inscription of cultural memories, Derrida’s concept of ‘archive’ can be associated. He developed the concept in line with the theories of Sigmund Freud. According to Freud “there probably exists in the mental life of the individual not only what he has experienced himself, but also what he brought with him at birth, fragments of phylogenetic origin, an archaic heritage” (*Moses* 125). He further states: “The archaic heritage of mankind includes not only dispositions, but also ideational contents, memory traces of the experiences of former generations” (127). And these inherent traits are “not carried on by word of mouth” (127). With the theory

of archaic heritage Freud's theory consolidates how human beings unconsciously inherit a memory of archives and how it gets operated within them. Freud elaborates on the importance of an ancient unconscious memory and this is important while analysing the works of the aboriginal writers. Evoking ancestral memory is a common tool in the works of them. Despite from where they write, almost all the aboriginal writers evoke the past which can be a near past of oppression or an unknown past of glory. This archaic heritage bounds them together to find out their space in the current socio-cultural scenario.

Working more intensely on Freud's concept, Derrida in his work *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* brings out a deconstructive reading of the 'archive'. His elaborations include the reasoning of the nostalgic desire of humans for their past of which Freud comments in his work *Beyond Pleasure Principle*. The archive can thus be understood as a concept that captures and produces knowledge about the past. It can also function as a broader metaphor or concept that relates to the body of knowledge produced about the past. Derrida conceptualizes the 'archive' as a body of knowledge preserved in memory which is activated upon the loss of these things. Archive is thus the site of memory inaugurated upon a loss. With the process of 'archivisation' aboriginal writers preserve the past and reclaim history which is already gone and permanently lost. Thus the process becomes essential in the works of the aboriginals. Since the recorded history is a narration to preserve the hegemony of a particular set of people and the process of this historiography would create the binary of the privileged and the unprivileged in the society, it is the onus of the writers from the marginalized communities to fill the gaps in history by looking into the 'archives'. The memories of each epoch of the collective cultural lives are preserved, and these are continually

reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of one's identity is contested and registered.

The reproduction of cultural memories in this respect is a complex process in itself as the collective past of the tribal communities is in a crisis. Due to various factors their sense of historical consciousness is endangered. This intensifies the vigour for the reclaiming of cultural memories. The 'memory crisis' which is evolved in their psyche calls for an intense search of the cultural relics as Olick notes, "Any threats to the sense of the shared past by dislocation, rampant growth, or the general unmooring of cultures from their origins produced a 'memory crisis' and a redoubled search for its hidden recesses" (Olick 10). There are points of time in the history of uprooted communities in which an assertion of the collective gains huge significance:

Before the age of the individual, then, the bonds of civility and foundations of solidarity were less *problematic* in the authentic sense of that term: how we belong together, and are constituted as groups, seemed more obvious and less in need of contemplation and special measures. The problem of *collective* memory thus arises in a particular time and a particular place (which is not to say there are no other versions of the problem elsewhere), namely where collective identity is no longer as obvious as it once was. (22)

The nuance of the cultural memory arises in such a socio-political scenario where it is not possible for the individuals to experience and articulate the cultural identity any longer. The repossession of the past and the invocation of the connection with the ancestral culture are made probable through evoking the elements buried in the collective consciousness of the people. Digging the past would help to recollect the fragmented memories of the collective spaces and to generate a sense of belonging:

“Remembering is a realization of belonging, even a social obligation. One has to remember in order to belong” (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 114).

In the process of construction of a collective identity the aspect of memory can hardly be dispensed. Memory provisions or at times generates the assumption of stability, balance, permanence, and continuity in contrast to the fleeting and ever transforming material world and, thereby, a space of possible pasts is created. This space is envisioned by alluding to the past traumas or/and triumphs. There is no way to imagine a land beyond the liminal horizon of triumph and trauma. This allusion to triumph or trauma can be expressed or repressed, yet, its presence is solid and welcomes the subjects to represent, whether spoken out or silenced; it is always there, enabling us to represent.

Nevertheless, cultural memory is the reconstruction of the past as “no memory can preserve the past. Each society reconstructs the past within its contemporary framework of reference” (Anton 130). Literature performs the dual function of representing the present and delves into the archives of history and tries to dig out and re-consider or represent the past/history of its respective sites and thus renders new visions on history.

According to the cultural memory critic Bernhard Geison, the correlation between collective identity and collective past is undeniable: “...constructions of national identity cannot escape from an orientation toward the past, which does not pass away, whether traumatic or triumphant. Traumas and triumphs constitute the “mythomoteurs” of national identity” (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 112). The memories of trauma and triumph represent the threshold experiences of the collective self and the vital boundaries for the self-constitution of a collective subject as

exactly in the way birth and death give the ultimate horizon for the existential experience of an individual.

The process of securing a space in the cultural memory archive is rigorous and selective which affirms the position of certain cultural artefacts in the cultural memory of a community. This memory is perpetually contested and re-fixed. This process is called canonization. Through the process of canonization certain texts, persons, artefacts and monuments achieve a sanctified position with great value and significance. The creation and preservation of cultural memory is achieved through various contemporary systems: “Cultural memory is constituted by a host of different media, operating within various symbolic systems: religious texts, historical painting, historiography, TV documentaries, monuments, and commemorative rituals, for example. Each of these media has its specific way of remembering and will leave its trace on the memory it creates” (“Literature, Film, and the Mediality of Cultural Memory” 389).

The theoretical development of the concept of cultural memory and its differentiation from collective memory are initiated by the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, though Maurice Halbwachs, Jeffrey K. Olick and Perrie Nora, the French historian, laid its foundations. Cultural memory is, as Jan Assmann points out: “...a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and that it conveys to these people a collective, that is, cultural, identity” (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 110). It helps human beings to construct a narrative portrait of the bygone era and by this practice creates an identity for themselves. Furthermore, cultural identity is different from collective identity in the sense that cultural identity is specific to a group who shares a unique culture. To exemplify this aspect the identity of ethnic groups or religious groups can be cited. The people of an ethnic community such as a tribe share a common culture and tradition. The notion of collective identity, on the

other hand, can be understood without ascribing any common cultural affiliations. Thus cultural memory is the storehouse of culture specific symbols, motifs and knowledge. This fact prompted totalitarian regimes to destroy the museums, libraries and the monuments in order to undermine the memory of the invaded communities. If the archives are destroyed and thereby memories erased, they can create a new cultural identity for the invaded communities. By controlling the past they can control the present and the future. Hence the space of cultural memory breeds and nourishes cultural identity. Memories work as a collective unifying force in the existence of a community. Apart from being a nostalgic remembrance, cultural memory preserves the past for the future.

While discussing cultural memory, it is vital to differentiate it from collective memory, as mentioned before, which is a significant contribution of Halbwachs to the area of memory studies. Both seem alike but hold different significations at an analytical level. To put it simple when collective memory points towards the daily mundane activities and its remembrance as a group, cultural memory relates to the culturally significant facet of memory. Cultural memory predominantly locates the junctures that give meaning to a culture or a group of people as a community. This helps to place them within a group.

Halbwachs being the forerunner of the concept of collective memory, in his seminal text *On Collective Memory* identified memory in a social context with the notion that it is constructed socially. Deviating from Halbwachs' argument, Jan Assmann brought a new term 'cultural memory' which is politically charged. For Assmann: "Memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level. Identity, in its turn, is related to time. A human self is a "diachronic identity," built "of the stuff of time" (Luckmann).

This synthesis of time and identity is effectuated by memory” (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 109). Assmann separated collective memory which is based on the social sense from cultural memory which is based on the cultural sense. He detailed the concept of cultural memory in his 1955 essay “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” and termed Halbwachs’ collective memory as communicative memory. Echoing the vision of Nietzsche, Assmann notes:

According to Nietzsche, while in the world of animals genetic programs guarantee the survival of the species, humans must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations. The solution to this problem is offered by cultural memory, a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation. (126)

The cultural characteristic that cultural memory potentially holds is absent in everyday memory or communicative memory. The memory studies scholar Nicholas Pethes notes: “Theories of cultural memories differ from psychological or neurobiological descriptions of individual memory processes and instead take “cultural” - that is to say, social, historical, philosophical, artistic, etc. - aspects of the phenomenon of “memory” into consideration (*Cultural Memory Studies* 1). Communicative memory is more proximate to everyday activities. According to Assmann cultural memory is sustained through cultural formations and institutional communication. The events of the past which are significant and crucial in the history of a community or group become cultural memory.

In the process of stabilization of a group's cultural identity and belongingness cultural memory has a vital function to perform. The praxis of cultural memory through cultural institutions such as art and literature thus unifies the people of a community. The media or channels through which these cultural memories reach the destination also are significant to the study. Literature is one among the media that represent, generate and solidify cultural memories.

The American critic James Olney expressed this concept as: "Memory enables and vitalizes narrative; in return, narrative provides form for memory, supplements it, and sometimes displaces it" (417). The mutually complementing and transforming characteristic of cultural memory and narratives is worthwhile to attend. On the one hand literature preserves and represents cultural memories from the past and on the other hand it becomes a cultural memory in itself for the future generations to come. In the context of the present study the works of Maurice Kenny and Narayan are based on cultural memories of their respective tribal communities and also they are in the way to become part of the cultural memory of the communities. These literary texts can also be called as cultural formation: "Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance.). We call these 'figures of memory'" ("Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" 126).

Cultural memory has its function across the millennia. In his elaborations on cultural memory and its significance over hundreds of generations Assmann refers to the German art historian Aby Warburg who pointed out the mnemonic energy associated with the material attributes of culture such as art, literature, fashion and so on. These are cultural memory cites which assure the concretisation of memories and

their transference from generation to generation. Warburg claims a connection between memory and the dialects of cultural artefacts. Halbwachs, on the other hand, related memory and group. Assmann's attempt is to correlate all these aspects to contribute a novel decorum to the theories regarding the memory of a community. The community that Assmann signifies here owes its origin in some common cultural and traditional background. Thus the community has a common cultural identity based on a common past of triumph and trauma. Some of the characteristics that Assmann attributes to cultural memory are significant to the present study.

A major feature that Assmann identifies with cultural memory is that it works on an inclusion/exclusion basis. Cultural memory works through the demarcation between oneself and foreign: "The supply of knowledge in the cultural memory is characterized by sharp distinction made between those who belong to and those who do not, i.e., between what appertains to oneself and what is foreign" ("Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" 6). It includes all that are specific to a community and strictly excludes the opposite. It helps the people of the community to identify themselves and create a sense of unity. The next feature that Assmann finds is the reconstructive capacity of cultural memory. The knowledge of cultural memory is in constant contestation with the contemporary system of realities. Out of the archives a new knowledge is derived with its mingling and co-mingling with the contemporary system of socio-cultural significations.

The 'objectivisation' or 'concretization' of the knowledge of the shared past is another feature of cultural memory. This is referred to as 'formation' and is not entirely dependent on the written text. Any pictorial, linguistic or ritualistic representation of the past becomes a 'formation'. Literature in this respect satisfies the criteria to be a 'formation'. Cultural memory is also self-reflexive. It is practice reflexive as it

interprets common practices of a community through knowledge fragments such as proverbs. With a preoccupation on its own social system it reflects its own image.

These features are vital to the analysis of the texts considered for the research. It places these texts within the domain of cultural memory and tries to look into the rudiments of the textual universe that capacitate it to be called formations of cultural memory. The following chapters of the thesis render an in depth analysis of the works of the two writers in selection within the theoretical practice of cultural memory and conclude into its political implication.

Moreover, the methodological affiliations that memory and cultural history hold are to be understood in order to analyse the texts in the light of cultural memory and cultural identity. As memory theorist Alon Confino notes: “study of memory undertakes to explore how people imagine the past, not how the past actually happened,...” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 80). The past whether it is personal or collective, is not available to the present and what is available is its representations. Maurice Kenny and Narayan imaginatively recollect the culturally significant memories in their respective literary spaces. Transmission of memories of a culture to the coming generations is vital to the people of the specific community to stay connected to the past, present and the future. From the past the people define themselves as belonging to a group and assert their space in the present. This transmission of memories is not biological. It is transferred via modes of representations and retellings. The notion of culture in itself can be understood as a result of the transmission of these socially significant memories. As the German memory studies scholar Aleida Assmann envisions:

Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspenskij have defined culture as “the memory of a society that is not genetically transmitted” (3) but, we may add, by

external symbols. Through culture, humans create a temporal framework that transcends the individual life span relating past, present, and future. Cultures create a contract between the living, the dead, and the not yet living. In recalling, iterating, reading, commenting, criticizing, discussing what was deposited in the remote or recent past, humans participate in extended horizons of meaning-production. (“Canon and Archive” 97)

It is through the reiteration of cultural memories that human beings create meanings, decipher and negotiate with them and finally act accordingly. This action that comes as a result of repossessing cultural memories often turns out to be politically transforming. The significance of cultural memory is enormous as it defines the cultural identity of people and formulates their actions.

Besides, the notions of ‘canon’ being the active institutional cite of cultural memory and ‘archive’ the passive cite of the same is discussed by Alieda Assman: “The institutions of active memory preserve the past as present while the institutions of passive memory preserve the past as past. The tension between the pastness of the past and its presence is an important key to understanding the dynamics of cultural memory” (“Canon and Archive” 98). It is in this friction between the dual aspects of active memory that the differentiation between canon and archive evolves. The literature from a cultural trope works as canon in these respects as the writers actively attempt to assert the presence of the past. This presence of the past is continually remembered and reasserted. Yet, it also actively participates in the space of the archives and takes it out of the passive realm.

Nevertheless, the notion of collective forgetting too is important in identity formation. Collective forgetting can be strategic or natural. While representing memories in literature or other potential media, people at times purposefully deny certain aspects of their collective past, culture and tradition. This is an active way of collective forgetting. This happens since that may ruin the pride of the people over their common collective past. According to Alieida Assman: “The natural modes of collective forgetting are passive and non-intentional. The passive form of cultural forgetting is related to non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind” (98). These acts of forgetting are necessary for social transformation. To distance oneself from the ancestors is as much as necessary for a community to generate a cultural identity, as finding connections.

Furthermore, the Swiss cultural historian Jakob Burckhardt differentiates the two aspects of cultural memory ‘traces’ and ‘messages’ where ‘traces’ are neutral, unintentional and unmediated testimonies of the past. On the other hand ‘messages’ are addressed to the future generation with an intention. Burckhardt identifies an association of the ideologies of the power to ‘messages’ and the ‘traces’ are devoid of any such associations. Hence for him traces can act as counter histories opposed to the constructed history of the ruling class. The literature from a marginalized community takes the space in between ‘traces’ and ‘messages’ (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* 64). It is not unintentional and unaddressed as it is written by the members of the community to their fellow beings and holds a specific function. Yet it is not by power holders and hence cannot be associated with their ideology propagation as well. Thus the literature from the tribal spaces, which is the corpus of this study, belongs not completely to any of the two poles but shares the features of both. Though messages,

they act as counter-histories. The identity formation of the tribal communities is based on the cultural memories they imbibe and decipher.

The temporality of cultural memories is yet another aspect to deal with. Writers from the tribal spaces infuse the elements of the recent past and distant past into the narrative fabric. The demarcation between the relics of memory from the remote past and the recounting of the immediate past marks the contours of the notion of memory as cultural memory and collective memory. The historical consciousness of a community rests on this space of convergence. And it is the same space where the literature from tribal authors develops.

In addition to this Jan Assmann details on the fluidity of cultural memory. It is not one that is passed to the next generation as such. What is available through institutions and formations are representations of the past events, often creative and imaginative, at times more factual:

Even in the cultural memory, the past is not preserved as such but is cast in symbols as they are represented in oral myths or in writings, performed in feasts, and as they are continually illuminating a changing present. In the context of cultural memory, the distinction between myth and history vanishes. Not the past as such, as it is investigated and reconstructed by archaeologists and historians, counts for the cultural memory, but only the past as it is remembered. Here, in the context of cultural memory, it is the temporal horizon of cultural memory which is important. (“Communicative and Cultural memory” 113)

The scope of cultural memory helps to fuse the compartments of myth and history, as Jan Assmann notes. Literature also possesses the same ability to merge myth and

history. It offers what is remembered and imagined not necessarily the factual records of history.

The literatures from the tribal spaces are repositories of cultural memory. The cultural identities of the people of these spaces are formed based on the re-inscription of these memories through various media. According to Jan Assmann :“Memory is knowledge with an identity-index, it is knowledge about oneself, that is, one’s own diachronic identity, be it as an individual or as a member of a family, a generation, a community, a nation, or a cultural and religious tradition” (114). The identity of an individual as part of a group is to be negotiated and re-negotiated with the memories which are culturally significant. This process becomes the fundamental principle of tribal literature. Cultural memory is read, re-read, interpreted, contested and thus achieved new meanings constantly as it is displayed in new backgrounds:

For an individual, as well as for a nation, cultural memory is a complex and stratified entity strictly connected not only to the history and the experience of either the individual or the nation, but also to the way in which that very history and experience are read in time, individually and collectively. Each time, the past acquires new meanings and the same fact, even though it stays the same, is nevertheless shaped through remembrance; inevitably, it is juxtaposed against new backgrounds, new biographies, and new recollections. (128)

Cultural memory of the tribal people is often the memory of cultural trauma. Even the memory of the ancient traditions and rituals too is remembered with a pain of loss. The traumatic past is reiterated throughout the literature of both the writers selected for the study. The traumatic events that both the tribal communities confront in

their past are cultural traumas as they caused dispossession and dislocation for them culturally and collectively. According to Nicolas Demertzis and Ron Eyerman “A cultural trauma occurs as the taken-for-granted foundations of individual and collective identity are shattered, setting in motion a discursive process to understand what happened, assign blame, and find pathways to repair an interpreted situation” (“Covid 19 as Cultural Trauma” 429). Cultural trauma can be an invasive and exceptional event which destabilizes or overpowers a culture as a whole or any of its components such as values, norms, beliefs, ideologies and knowledge that constitute a group’s system of signification. Thus, a cultural trauma refers to the breakdown of a group’s meaning system and a threat to collective identity.

Racial trauma, which comes under the domain of cultural trauma, is significant to note in the context of the present analysis. It refers to the emotional and psychological damage resulted from ethnic discrimination and racial bias. The indigenous people of colour in the USA are likely to be victims of RBTS (Race-based Traumatic Stress) as they are living under a system of White supremacy. All the symptoms that are associated with the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be identified with RBTS also such as recurring thoughts of the event, depression, the loss of self-esteem and mental distancing from the event. Both the authors considered for the study are the victims of racial trauma so as their characters. The trauma of forced slavery is not something that the present generation of tribal community directly experiences. Yet it comes as a central event in the attempt to forge a collective identity as a group. The remembrances of this subordination to the power-holders and its representations potentially unite the respective groups.

The cultural memory of the collective past in which the tribal groups are ruthlessly exploited, oppressed and murdered are reimagined and represented by both

the writers. The traumatic events that are inscribed in the collective memory of the people are recalled through literature as a tactic:

Any given trauma may be community- and identity-disrupting or community-and identity-solidifying—usually some mixture of both (Erikson 1994). In any event, this line of reasoning suggests why the ideas of collective trauma, collective memory, and collective (e.g., national) identity are so frequently associated with one another in the literature on sociocultural trauma. (“Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity” 44)

The different phases of physical and psychological manipulation that the tribal communities have undergone eventually lead to their plight in the social scenario. Since they experienced the events of oppression and exploitation as a group it can be called cultural trauma: “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (“Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity” 1). Translating the memories of cultural trauma into language and embedding it in literature appear as a strategy in Maurice Kenny and Narayan as it calls for political action: “Cultural trauma is first of all an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions. But this new scientific concept also illuminates an emerging domain of social responsibility and political action” (1).

To designate a traumatic event to a cultural trauma is an intricate social process. The traumatic event in consideration should be one that affected a community in

collection. The agents of trauma, the perpetrators, are to be identified along with the description of the collective wound. Finally the aftermaths of the event also are to be identified. As Todd Madigan asserts in the essay “Theories of Cultural Trauma”: “The principal mechanism for this process is narration, and usually there are numerous incompatible narratives being put forward by competing social groups in an effort to establish the accepted version of the event in question” (*The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma* 46). Hence an event of collective trauma is ordained as cultural trauma principally through narration. Literature in this respect plays a massive role in the representation of trauma, though there are many other institutions such as media, religion, pedagogy, politics and even social conversations to broadcast it.

Though different discourses claim to represent the events of trauma and try to designate it as cultural trauma, there are certain conditions to satisfy. Todd Madigan puts forward those criteria as follows: “...the struggle over the event’s meaning must be significantly widespread throughout a society, a narrative that frames the event as catastrophic must emerge as the most widely accepted way of understanding the event, and this accepted narrative must become part of the collective memory of the social group” (47).

The narratives of traumatic events contest each other to code it as a cultural event and this process is termed as ‘trauma drama’ by scholars. It is a play of narrative forces to signify an event as traumatic or ordinary. Fundamentally for an event to be designated as a cultural trauma it must revise the collective identity of a community. As in the essay “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma” Jeffrey C. Alexander argues:

A society can be considered traumatized when, in response to this event, its collective identity [becomes] significantly revised. This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the

collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity's earlier life. (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 22)

The function of the past in shaping and reshaping a cultural identity is not trivial. The traumatic events of the past, if it is a cultural trauma, would impair the collectivities' cultural identity permanently. The identity would then enter into a field of perpetual revision and re-revision seeking the energy to cure from the past. Hence literature renders a space of retrieval of the cultural trauma, its reiteration and revisit. Through this process, identities strive to purge endlessly. Though a cure from any kind of trauma is a matter of dispute, its reliving offers the possibility of defining a cultural identity. Quoting Alexander, Madigan says about the complementing relationship between narratives and national identity as: "When a trauma narrative becomes the accepted understanding of an event, a new sense of "who we really were all along" dawns on the group. At the national level, this new understanding amounts to a significant "reconstruction of national identity" (Alexander 23). The convergence of the individual and the social aspect of traumatic enunciation is claimed by the critic Michelle Balaev in the introduction to his work *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*: "If the self is conceived as a product of both culture and individual idiosyncratic tendencies and behaviours, then it follows that the meaning of trauma is found between the poles of the individual and society" (17). The impact of large scale traumatic events oscillates in the space of signification between the personal and the social. The private and the public here is complementary as the subject is re-emerged in

the larger social context and the society gets shaped out of the interactions of different subjects.

An event becomes traumatic for a culture primarily because of the culture specific emotions of the community. The event proves to be contradictory to the sense of self and of the group and thus they struggle to comprehend themselves and the unified whole within the scheme of the traumatic event. A re-deciphering and re-identification of the collective cultural self becomes imperative for the community to shape the social fabric again. Through addressing and acknowledging the trauma with various narratives they locate themselves and adapt into a revised collective identity.

An identification of the cause of trauma is inevitable to create an association and thereby achieve a new consciousness for collective action “as they identify the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral responsibility, members of collectivities define their solitary relationships in ways that, in principle, allow them to share the sufferings of others” (Alexander 1). The traumatic cultural memories re-possessed and re-lived through literature significantly contribute to cement social textures. It represents a society’s cultural self-image which is traumatized and strives to get healed. Literatures of traumatic cultural memories function to construct a cohesive whole of fragmented self and ethnicity.

The representation of the memories of traumatic past through narratives is vital to the present and the future of the tribal communities. The authors from tribal communities venture to fictionalise the past envisioning the future. Their narrative fabric is principally structured with the elements of cultural memories whether it is of a traumatic past or the past of glory. The notion of trauma lies in its representation because it is actualised in repetitions and reliving:

Events are not, in and themselves, traumatic.... instead, they must be represented as traumatic. That is, they must be interpreted and articulated as such by members of a society. This involves a complex, often contentious, social process through which the nature of the collective injury is described, victims and perpetrators are identified and consequences are meted out. The principal mechanism for this process is narration.... (Alexander 46).

The narration of trauma often becomes the narration of cultural memory and vice versa in the case of the tribal communities. The theories of trauma and memory share the common feature of remembering the traumatic events of the past. The faculty of memory is vital to the discourse of trauma and also the memory of the tribal people is embedded in trauma. Hence the aspect of cultural trauma is inseparable from the cultural memory matrix as “the discourse on trauma always implies a dialogue between memory and oblivion, memories and counter memories, the ethics of bearing witness and the difficulty of telling and representing” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 130).

The traumatic recurrences that are carried over to generations play a vital role in the fictional arena of both the writers in consideration, especially Maurice Kenny. This transgenerational aspect of trauma operates in every new generation with a traumatised older generation. The new generation is born into the traces of trauma. While in the case of a marginalized and dispossessed community the cultural trauma of the past renders, meaning to their existence. Trauma is being narrated from one generation to the next as a way of deciphering the complex modalities of its operation. Going back to history by engaging in a narration of traumatic memories is an endeavour to try to comprehend the trauma completely. The famous trauma theorist Cathy Caruth argues, “...the history of a

trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another” (*Trauma* 12).

Furthermore, one of the main components of an ethnic identity is the aspect of chosen trauma. An ethnic identity evolves out of the subjective experiences of a number of people who are connected by an insistent feeling of likeness. To maintain, protect and repair the collective identity is inevitable in this respect. As psychologist Vamik Volkan in the essay “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large Group Identity” claims, the term ‘chosen trauma’ refers to “the shared mental representations of a massive trauma that the group’s ancestors suffered at the hands of an enemy” (1).

In addition to these aspects, writing trauma and writing about trauma are two different notions. According to Dominick LaCapra, the trauma theorist, the artistic practice of writing trauma is the process of acting it out, an action of cure. Through the narratives of cultural trauma the writers from the tribal spaces attempt to act out and thus attain a future redemption, for them and for the respective society. These are surrogate post-traumatic narrations in this respect. LaCapra identifies this as compulsive repetition, an infinite urge to replicate the original traumatic event. These notions of cultural memory and cultural trauma with its myriad significations finally reach at the point of reintegration of cultural identity which is ruined at some historical contingencies. “The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (Caruth 5). Though not towards a healing of the traumatic wound, the narration or re-storying of the event of trauma is important for the acceptance of the reality. The impossibility of complete comprehension and complete recovery lies as a footnote to any trauma narration; it becomes indispensable for the integration of the individual self

and the collective self. The present meaning of the traumatised subject is evolved out of the haunting of the past event of trauma and re-living of the same. Their identity is negotiated in this act of revisit. The narration and representation of a past trauma is in a way an attempt to comprehend the meaning of it and thereby redefine themselves as an individual and as a community.

A complementing exchange between memory and forgetfulness, memories and counter memories, the ethics of witnessing and the struggle of telling and representing are constantly involved in the discourse on trauma. Literature acts as a significant channel for the representation of, and transmission of trauma. According to Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti:

Literature, in its diverse expressions, and theoretical studies have played an important role in the representation, the transmission, and the critical (or mystifying) elaboration of traumatic events.... Memory becomes not a mere instrument for the construction of an identity, both individual and collective, but also a method of deconstruction of those very processes leading to the definition and elaboration of individual and collective identities...The accent placed on the possibility of “re-constructing” and representing trauma has foregrounded sources such as diaries, autobiographies, testimonies, and narrations (fictions) not only as individual expressions, but also as cultural structures exposing narratives of imagination and opposition. (*Cultural Memory Studies* 130)

The fragmentation or disintegration of cultural identity of the tribal people is a historical fact which holds its implications in the current socio-political status of the people of tribal communities. To satisfy the necessity of enquiring the causes behind the

lost ethnic pride and cultural identity of the tribal communities, the role of dissemination of ideologies through discourses, the perpetuation of hegemony in the process of disruption of cultural identity and self are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Remembering and forgetting are political acts when it is concerned with the political identity of a marginalised group. The tribal communities in consideration are suppressed groups which lack political agency. Since, according to the principles of Marxism, agency is defined as the agent's capacity to determine an action and act it out in a given environment, the tribal people are at an unfavourable position in this regard. Thus writers from the tribal spaces aim to fuel a political action to resist hegemony and reassert their space and agency in the society. The physical and psychological servitude that the people of the tribal communities experienced was prolonged with the operation of the upper class ideology and the system of hegemony.

There is a complex process of ideological construction, its dissemination through discourses of the powerful and the perpetuation of hegemony. The cultural memories mediated through literature of the marginalized communities question and contest the perilous stereotypical formations. These stereotypes are products of the ideological propagation and hegemonic discourses: "...memory has been, over the centuries, subject to manipulation and exploitation by hegemonic states" (Fortunati and Lamberti 127). The history of tribal communities is marked with a plight from a self-reliant and peaceful life to a subordinated and subjugated existence. The postcolonial critic Om P. Juneja writes about the psychological plight of the colonised: "The internalized myth of the inferiority of the colonised eats into the fabric of the social, religious and cultural life of the colonised. Thus having been thrown out of the history making process, the colonised loses interest in his self-hood and accepts the myth of his

intellectual, social, cultural, religious and even physical inferiority” (*Post Colonial Novel: Narratives of Colonial Consciousness* 3). This aspect is identical with the existence of the tribal communities as well. They were interpellated into the ideological construction of inferiority. The condition of being displaced and dispossessed accelerates the rate of the loss of self-esteem as Chinua Achebe cites in *Home and Exile*: “An erosion of self-esteem is one of the commonest symptoms of dispossession” (81). They exhibited tendencies of assimilation as well as they imbibed the stereotypical constructions of the hegemonic class about them and deteriorated ethnic pride. In this respect Jan Assman adds: “Assimilation, the transition of one group into another one, is usually accompanied by an imperative to forget the memories connected with the original identity” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 114). It is to this juncture of ruined cultural identity and ethnic pride that cultural memory works as an agent of the reintegration of fragmented cultural identity. The agency of human beings rests upon their spatio-temporal fixations and without which they are incapable of any operation. In the anthology *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*, Clifford J. argues, “Human beings become reflexive agents capable of effective action only when they are sustained “in place” through social and historical connections and disconnections ...this is the work of culture...taking up discourses of the present and the past” (96). Literature as a medium of cultural memory transmission generates connection with the past, present and the future. In an unbroken continuum it instils the collective spirit for the marginalized people to counter the prevailing hegemonic structures.

In this respect the cultural memory of the marginalized ethnic groups can be considered as counter memories as they eventually reach at the point of countering and resisting hegemonic structures. The political aspect of remembrance and oblivion is pointed out in *Cultural Memory Studies* as:

It is a memory which wants to bring to light traumatic, repressed, and censored memories and again questions dangerous stereotypes which have been lurking over some historical events. Thus in “gender studies” and in postcolonial studies what becomes pivotal is the concept of “counter-memory”— where the term “counter” emphasizes the fact that these are *other* memories belonging to minority groups and thus marginalized by the dominant cultures. Memory becomes an “act of survival,” of consciousness and creativity, fundamental to the formation and rewriting of identity as both an individual and a political act. (129)

Counter memories are significant in the reclamation of cultural identity of the marginalized. In the article “Collective Memory and Forgetting: A Theoretical Discussion” Minarova-Banjac and Cindy observe the interrelation between memory and politics,

The connection between memory and politics becomes clear when representations of the past are subject to dispute as political elites and their opponents use and abuse memory for political or ideological purposes. In this process, dominant groups exercise public control by restricting and destroying what Foucault calls ‘counter-memories’ or memories directed against official histories. (4)

The significance of counter memories arises at the conflicting space of history which is an incomplete reconstruction of the past. History caters gaps and voids and is manipulated with ideological constructs. Counter memories of marginalized communities are represented as political tool to counter the hegemonic social system. In opposition to the historical grand narratives, mainstream mass media, official government records and the historiography of the power holders, counter memories

work as independent and detached pieces of historical knowledge. It is a collective cultural practice of relearning and recounting of the repressed and debarred histories.

Furthermore, considering the literature of tribal communities as a protest against the hegemonic grand-narratives, cultural memory takes a crucial part in it. Cultural memory in protest literature acts as the marker of identity and the causal factor of the group's collective future: "For protest cultures, cultural memory could be a powerful operational category of analysis, as it is always the complex phenomenon of remembering, which determines a group's identity, thus making future collective claims possible" (*Protest Cultures* 131). She designates it as: "an influential tool in ethnic or national construction" (131), since the past of a community is recollected in the present.

A political action is the final end to which the representation of the memories of cultural trauma and the glorious past in literature aims at. The writers of the tribal space thus strategically incorporate these elements as cohesive agents of cultural identity. The space of literature for aboriginal communities becomes the space of the operation of cultural memories of painful and glorious days of the past. The re-enactment of cultural trauma and reclaiming of the memories of both trauma and triumph signal the reintegration of cultural identity and thereby a collective political action is stimulated. The following chapters categorise and analyse the short stories, novels and poems of Maurice Kenny and Narayan within the scope of these theoretical postulations.

Chapter II

Blood Berries: Trauma in the Trope of Fiction

The cultural trauma and its memories represented in the selected short stories of Maurice Kenny and Narayan is the focal aspect of this chapter. The traumatic recollection interwoven in the narrative fabric of the fictional pieces is studied analysing the plots, characters and the situations. All the short stories selected for the chapter portray the traumatic events that the tribal communities experienced at different epochs of time. The political function of these traumatic cultural memories or cultural traumas and its modes of navigation are scrutinized theoretically. The short stories “Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse”, “She-Who-Speaks-With-Bear”, “The Girl on the Beach” and “Salmon” from the anthology *Tortured Skins and Other Fictions* and “A Quart of Bourbon” from *Rain and Other Fictions* by Maurice Kenny and “Taxes for Heads and Breasts”, “Footprints of the Predator”, “The Evil Spirit”, “Their Boats are Burnt” and “Driftwood” from the anthology *Cries in the Wilderness* by Narayan are studied in the light of the representation of the memories of cultural trauma. Recounting of cultural trauma has its impact upon the victims, the perpetrators and the readers. The collective purpose of narrating the memories of trauma for a community, and the emotional responses of the readers both inside and outside the community are examined henceforth.

The explicit narration of the collective past of trauma and aligned memories carries a definite function to perform in the process of reconfiguration of the self and the ethnic identity for the people of the tribal communities. The fictional translations of the

past events of exploitation and oppression that both the Native American and the Kerala tribal communities experienced, act as agents of integration. The fragmented ethnic identity of the people of the respective tribal communities re-evolves since the aspects of the collective past, collective memories, cultural trauma and the collective identity are correlated accordingly. The narration of cultural trauma and individual trauma is studied to locate the particular space in which they converge with the reconfiguration of cultural identity.

The short stories chosen for the analysis form two groups, the first group portrays the exploitation and struggles that the tribal people faced individually, and the second as a group. “Taxes for Heads and Breasts”, “Footprints of the Predator”, “Their Boats are Burnt” and “Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse” represent the traumatic events of the past that the people of the specific tribal communities experienced collectively. Meanwhile the short stories “She-Who-Speaks-with-Bear”, “The Girl on the Beach”, “The Evil spirit” and “Driftwood” offer the aspect of an individual’s ordeal. Furthermore, “Salmon” is a group in itself as it depicts the perpetrators’ trauma. Yet the chapter tries to establish the argument that the trauma of an individual from a tribal community reaches the realm of the collective as it gets a cultural significance. An individual’s suffering in this respect is contagious with the potential to happen to anyone of the community.

All these short stories carry the images of the traumatic past which call the readers to participate in it. The narrative space that Kenny and Narayan design infuses an aesthetic energy to channelize readers’ historical sensibilities and ethical responses for a future political goal. The narratives are highly engaging with the depiction of the historic turbulences through penetrating situations and intense characterization. They let the readers travel through the landscape of disastrous events that the tribal communities

experienced in the history of their plight. The collective and cultural aspects of trauma are imparted to the readers of the community to trigger a sense of the collective. Being realistic in theme and structure, these narratives disseminate a vigour for social transformation.

The description of the collective injury and the identification of the victims and the perpetrators, who are the agents of trauma, are explicitly narrated in the short stories, “Taxes for Heads and Breasts” and “Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse”. The images of trauma entwined in the plot of both the narratives are powerful enough to carry the readers to the realm of empathy and vigorous action. The space of action as well as the victims and the perpetrators differs in the plot of the short stories yet both make similar effect to the readers. Both stories speak of a collective struggle that two different tribal communities from two extremely different parts of the globe undertake. The suffering of the two tribal communities and the inhumanity of the agents of trauma create a fictional space imparting the emotions of menace and empathy. The ecosystem in which tribal communities thrive offers nothing but unparalleled atrocities. This is decoded into the format of stories to delineate the aspects of exploitation, marginalization and oppression.

“Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse” is a documentary fiction which describes chief Black Kettle’s attempt to achieve a peace settlement with the White invaders. Since being a documentary fiction it appeals greatly to the historic consciousness of the readers and has the potential to become a recounting of the cultural memory. The historic incident of callous decisions that the invaders made in order to seize the land of the natives is inscribed in the cultural memory archive of the tribal people. The genealogy of the African American and the Western History Resources digital archive of Denver Public Library website records the life of Black Kettle as a chief of southern

Cheyenne people. He fought for peace even as his people suffered brutality and death at the hands of the government. It was in 1854 that Black Kettle was made the chief of his people. The fictional arena of the story is marked with instances, images and symbols of the traumatic cultural memories. The whole story is in the backdrop of the fierce winter in the Washita tribal settlement where, as the unfavourable weather, the political weather too is troublesome. Kenny uses pathetic fallacy to parallel the turbulence in nature and the turbulence in the tribal community. The trees are almost bare, and rattled by the heavy winds just like the minds of the people living in the settlement. The “near-skeletal frames” (1) and the “watchful eyes” (1) of the ponies also refer to the similar condition of the people. When the author notes; “Monahsetah dreaded this cold weather” (1), it signifies the uncertainty of Monahsetah, the tribal chief’s daughter, and her tribe’s situation which is concretised with a number of questions to which no one could render an answer: “Would there be no end ever to this hunger? Would the buffalo return to their lands? Would the pony soldiers and the Whites leave the country? Would it ever be easier to endure, to survive?” (2). Uncertainty is even more traumatic when the situation is unendurable. Monahsetah is the character who appears first in the story and she represents the traumatic collective psyche of the female victim. Since as a woman she has to stay back at home and long for the return of the warriors who fought at the front. The memory of the fight and the death of her people, the slaughters she witnessed haunt her forever: “If she lived to be a hundred, she would never forget the horrors at Ponoehoe, the slaughters of her sisters and brothers... her own terror as she escaped...” (2). The recurrence of the traumatic memory is acknowledged by the author through Monahsetah. According to the psychologists, Horowitz and Reidbord: “The more a person experiences extreme terror during the event, the more likely the imagery of that event will be inscribed in the same sensory modalities of memory as perceptions.

These memory inscriptions tend to return to conscious representation in that same modality and, because of their vividness, tend to re-evoked the same emotions as the original experience” (“Memory, Emotion and Response to Trauma” 347). The return of traumatic memories is more resiliently inscribed to the character of Black Kettle.

The possibility of unending suffering loomed over the lives of the Natives and this marked their existence. The fictional universe of the short story is dark, cloudy and tragic. The helpless and hopeless situation of the tribe is commenced and maintained throughout the narrative: “Her people could never be out of danger as long as the Whiteman remained. Their villages grew larger as her own village grew smaller” (2). The foreign invasion caused collective injury to the people of the tribal communities and their culture. The tribal spaces grew thinner and the tribal population declined. Monahsetah remembers and mourns the loss of her people who went North for peace treaties with the Whitemen and have never returned. Her nights are now sleepless: “She looked up from her thoughts. Day was approaching” (2). When Kenny documents historical incidents in fiction using the name of places and people as such, it helps the tribal readers to connect easily with the plot and characters. This connection creates a space where the trauma is experienced again. Meanwhile these narratives address the external readers as potential collaborators of the disaster: “Rather than inviting the reader to become a vicarious victim, these texts denounce and fight the indifference of a privileged and empowered Western public to the suffering of the racial, ethnic, or cultural other (*Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* 53). It is essential for a cultural trauma narrative to mark the victims, the cause and the perpetrators clearly. Along with this, these narratives evidently mark the position of the readers as well.

The central character of the short story is the chief Black Kettle. Maurice Kenny draws the picture of the titular character as courageous, daring and traditional. As the

story progresses the transformation in Black Kettle's character and the causes for this change and its after-effects are detailed specifically. His transformation from a brave and daring chief to a peace loving, naïve man accelerates the kinetics of trauma. According to historical records Black Kettle was murdered in 1868 at the Washita by troops of the 7th cavalry.

As the story moves towards the experiences and the memories of Black Kettle, the representation of trauma becomes more intense. After witnessing the catastrophes that his tribe has experienced, Black Kettle lives in the traumatic memory and any minor incident that happens before his eyes now is a potential agent of evoking it. The character experiences perpetual effects of trauma through his memories. While at the sight of a wound on a boy's leg, the brave chief "reared back, startled" (3). Kenny continues: "The boy's whimpering and his naked flesh awoke painful memories. He placed his blanket about the child's shoulders and with a pat and half a shove sent him on to his mother....The Washita ran red as had Sand Creek – Ponoehohe- four years before" (3). The boy's wound initiates in the mind of Black Kettle a series of traumatic events that his tribe experienced in the past. His responses to the incident can be analysed as an instance of 'amplified memory' in psychoanalytic terms. The victims of trauma often experience more trauma than the actual event through their amplified memories. Sending the boy to his mother is an action that signifies a therapeutic act that cures the deep wound of the tribal community. For Black Kettle it is his obligation to safeguard his tribe, he becomes the guarding figure of safety, comfort and solace. Thus the action of sending the wounded boy to his mother reinforces the chief's duty of protecting his people. The memory of the traumatic event which happened years back left deep imprints upon his psyche:

He thought of the boy, his wound, his blood on the river- only a spot, a tickle. He remembered his young men laughing and spotting in the freezing stream, and his thoughts clouded. He saw these same men floating on the river, their faces down, their backs riddled with black holes from which blood seeped in profusion. The Washita ran red. (3)

His memory of trauma is not unified and linear. A triggering image of the present brings to his mind a series of disturbing images of the past. Memory of the past events haunts Black Kettle and they affect his present day actions and activities as well: “Shuddering, he spilled the broth on to the floor” (3). Memories and the act of remembrance form the underlying principle of the short story. Monahsetah’s memory of the days of war, Black Kettle’s memories of the spilled blood of his people and the glorious days of battles won and peaceful life in the settlement, and the old woman’s memories of the tradition and custom of the tribe converge in the fabric of the fiction.

The narration of the atrocities that the tribal people experienced act as the re-enactment of trauma and this would help them to identify their selves and reassert their ethnicity. Trauma of the younger ones and trauma of the elders are differentiated by Kenny, when the younger generation strives to survive, the elder ones try not to become a burden on the people. The fight for survival is reflected through the eyes of many. Mixed emotions rule their mind: “The people would survive...The people would all die of hunger” (6, 7). Their traumatic memory is primarily associated with hunger: “The Whitemen had pushed the buffaloes away and brought hunger to their bellies... There was no way to counsel with ravaging hunger. It does not parley, only cries pain in the belly” (7). Depicting a situation where not even the basic need of the human being, hunger, is satisfied, intensifies the depth of the situation and affects the readers more.

The hunger motif is scattered across the narration. It becomes a universally recognizable signifier of trauma and immediately calls upon the readers to participate in it.

As Maurice Kenny adds the notes of the White officials in the narrative, it makes the readers effortless to identify the agent of trauma or the perpetrators: “In creating a compelling trauma narrative it is critical to establish the identity of the perpetrator, the antagonist” (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 26). The note of George Custer, the White officer ended with the statement: “There was no confidence to be placed in any of these Indians. They were a bad lot. They all needed killing, and the more they were fed and taken care of the worse they became...” (10). The words of the agents of trauma are explicit and direct, since it is given as a written note, an official document by an officer. The note is given in italics and calls the attention of the readers specifically into it. And this instantly gets the participation of the reader in the process of the re-enactment of trauma.

Maurice Kenny records the decision of the White officers to drive the Indians into the reservations which are poorly maintained. They were dispossessed of their land displaced and misplaced. As a community they have experienced trauma at different levels. Kenny has chosen images and symbols to make the narrative intense for the readers to experience the trauma of invasion and dispossession: “The important defining characteristic of social traumas is that the affected arenas are society’s social structures” (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 36). The destruction of the structure of the tribal community is described and it becomes a part of the cultural memory of the community. The winter and its features are entwined in the narrative to parallel with the condition of the natives.

Black Kettle's memories of his elder generation who fought with the Whites and died are profuse in Kenny's narration. He keeps on remembering the tales of Yellow Wolf, the elder chief and the way he fought with the Whites and finally died:

As Yellow Wolf had fled north, now Black Kettle fled south for protection from the bluecoats and the Great White Father who could never understand the Indian way nor his way of life. Yellow Wolf was finished: a soldier's bullet had taken him down at Sand Creek, had taken him as it had his friends War Bonnet and Standing Water and White Antelope. Those were bad thoughts to keep alive, like burning coals in Black Kettle's mind. (14)

Though he tries not to think about the past and stay focused to the goal of a peace treaty with the Whites keeping in mind only the hungry people of the tribe, his memories push him back to the past days of trauma: "They had ripped the Mother Earth with the deep blades of their plows. They had driven off the buffalo when their bullet did not stop him in his roaming tracks. They had carried their diseases under their blankets, and they shook those same blankets of disease out upon the people" (15). The spread of blanket disease was yet another dark phase in the history of invasion of the natives. The colonialists had gifted the natives virus infected blankets and linen as a means of biological warfare. Those who used the blankets died of viral fevers like small pox.

A chief, for the Native American tribe, is obliged to safeguard his people at any cost. Black Kettle's trauma is intensified at this obligation since he helplessly witnessed the destruction of his land and his people. Since he knew the crookedness of the Whitemen he decided to become a man of peace when selected as the chief: "This great warrior, when proclaimed chief, became a man of peace, a statesman whom the young

men laughed at, ridiculed, and cursed” (17). It is improper for a warrior chief to cling to peace but Black Kettle knew for certain that his people can never fight and win with the Whites. The word ‘death’ repeatedly evokes in the mind of Black Kettle: “Death...Death” (17). Black Kettle has witnessed the good old days of his tribe and the days of struggle which continue even now. The tribal vision encompassing every tiny organism around is evident when Black Kettle thinks about future. He gets lost in the thoughts about the future and the past every now and then. Black Kettle relives the trauma of the past and experiences the present day trauma at the same time. His existence is marked with the time to time slip and dip into the past, present and the future.

The chief and his men have undertaken the peace mission for the future of the tribe. The meeting with the White officers brought fear, doubt, anger and disappointment to Black Kettle. It offered nothing and he was prepared for an eventual attack. For the chief, the night when he returned to the settlement was of mental turbulence: “Hearing the baby cry, he remembered the young child’s blood smearing the ice edging the creek. He shuddered and entered the lodge” (24). The thoughts and memories in the brave warrior made him fear even a small sound. The story ends at this pathetic note on Black Kettle’s feelings and emotions. The process of foreign invasion and colonisation is a traumatic event for the Native American communities. It is a collective and cultural trauma as it affects all the different facets of the community from the personal to the collective: “Cultural trauma is, above all, a threat to a culture with which individuals in that society presumably have an identification. To put it differently, a cultural trauma is a threat to some part of their personal identities. As such, this threat, if experienced, arouses negative affects” (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 40). A cultural trauma thus has devastating impacts upon a culture

as well as its individuals. The narration of past trauma in literature aims at the restructuring of the ethnic self and the social structure. Cultural traumas are impending causes to redefine and redesign the collective identity of a society as well as its individuals. Representations and re-representations of the same potentially re-design the personal and the collective identity of the victims. Black Kettle's life is a part of the memories of cultural trauma of the tribal community in every sense.

Narayan's "Taxes for Heads and Breasts" is a perfect parallel to "Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse" as it also depicts the plight of a tribal community. The extremity of cultural trauma that the tribal communities of Kerala experienced is described by Narayan through a single yet atrocious incident. When Kenny speaks of the oppression that the natives faced through the memories of the characters, Narayan explicitly depicts a scene of ruthless oppression. The instances of exploitation, humiliation and the harsh face of the hegemonic structures are portrayed by him with a deep sense of involvement. It depicts the inhuman attitude that the privileged classes of the society imposed at the tribal communities. The whole story speaks of the atrocities unleashed upon a tribal community after the settler colonialists looted their land and resources. The new order of taxation fell upon them as a final blow and without having any other option they revolted. The short story starts with a subtle reference to the current status of the tribal people. "They came from the different parts of the hill, hesitantly and terrified, and assembled together. The dark and fair bodied Arayas of the Hills" (13). Though they had been a powerful group of people who lived in the forest independently without the interference of any external forces, they are now dispersed and almost dispossessed. The description of their arrival marks the reality of their traumatic situation. They are isolated, hesitant and terrified. This position of the tribal people is

the result of both physical and psychological trauma. The Valiyaveedans of the story are intruders upon their land and the forest produce that they once consumed freely.

The scene that Narayan describes is a clear depiction of how ideology worked psychologically and contributes to the trauma of the victims. The upper class ideology worked in such a way as to cement the inferior position of the tribal people. Ideologies work as false consciousness upon the people and initiate disparities in societies, thus propagating the hegemony of a particular class. This causes perpetual marginalization of the unprivileged class and their constant stereotyping. Moreover it imparts physical and psychological oppression and exploitation. When hegemony becomes the practical form of perpetual power assertion, ideology becomes its theoretical basis. Louis Althusser speaks of Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) of a state to maintain power, where RSA being coercive threats of violence disseminated through the agencies like the police, the army, the courts and the prisons. In the essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” he claims:

The Repressive State Apparatus functions “by violence”, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function “by ideology”. Every State Apparatus, whether Repressive or Ideological, “functions” both by violence and by ideology, but with one very important distinction which makes it imperative not to confuse the Ideological State Apparatuses with the (Repressive) State Apparatus. This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus.)

When the repressive state apparatus works by force, the ideological state apparatus works on the consciousness. The power holders who propagate ideologies for their benefits become the agents of trauma. In the history of any marginalized and oppressed classes the ISA is found to be more powerful as well as long lasting. Since ideology works psychologically there are all possibilities to transfer it from one generation to the other through various means. Narayan's story voices the play of both ideology and repression where repression generates resistance. Even though the tribal people are physically strong and collectively powerful the ideologies propagated by the hegemonic class normalised their status as inferior and powerless. The atrocities that the community experienced collectively concretise their traumatic existence as a group. Narayan authentically recaptures the memories of atrocities on his people.

The intruders with their force and crookedness started plantations in the forest land and made the tribal people work in it. Two groups thus formed as the owners and the slaves. The slaves were always terrified and hesitant to come in front of the owners. They are perpetually traumatized and devoid of power. "They were always tense when they came down to the valley. By the time they reached their destination their feet would be too exhausted to take them any further. They never talked much" (13). The social and political agency of the tribal people is curtailed by the system. Speech, being the most important aspect of self-expression is no longer their right as they are conditioned to obey without question. Their position from an independent, powerful set in the forest has been transformed into one helpless and dispossessed group, with the encroachment of the settlers.

Narayan through his fiction imaginatively recounts the trauma that the community underwent. Thus he invites the readers of the community as well as the readers outside to take part in the trauma. The condition of the tribal community is

primarily signified with uncertainty and fear. When the police asked Adichan, the Mooppan of the Arayas, and others to come to the house of the Valiyaveedans they don't know the purpose of the call. "What are we going down for?" (13). Uncertainty loomed over their lives. The house of a wealthy landlord of the place becomes the official place in which the police officers and other government officials gather in order to inform the tribal people of the new tax regulations from the Maharaja. Without having any proper knowledge about how the system has to work and how it is working, the people of the tribal community followed it. No one is concerned about the situation of the underprivileged when they pass new laws of tax imposition disfavouring them. They have no choice other than obeying the order: "The choice they give us. If we obey them we will get away with a mere beating. If we defy them, we will be killed. But there is no way we can stay away when they called us" (13). The gravity of the physical torture that the tribal people experienced is evident from the author's narration. It is with physical abuse that fear is inculcated within the tribal group and this helped the upper class to control them for long and intensified their trauma. The political and social turbulences emanating from the short story thus stem from historic references to many of the collective struggles of the tribal communities.

Fear worked as a tool of subjugation when it comes to the lives of the aborigines. "When they reached Valiyaveedan's palatial house they stood behind a jackfruit tree peeping out. They saw policemen with peaked caps and recognized the Head Constable Velupillai among them. His fat belly, moustache, red eyes and angry shouts were enough - no need for kicks and beatings - to scare one to death" (13). Without having the courage to stand in front of the power holders they hide behind a tree. Fear is one among the foundations upon which the powerful class built their hegemonic existence. They manipulated the fear of the downtrodden and imparted more

fear. Since the mere sight of the powerful people inculcates fear in the tribal people it is much easier for them to reign over the unprivileged. The Arayas murmured in fear to one another: “Looks like they are going to kill us all” (14). The situation of the Arayas is in itself traumatic since they are physically as well as psychologically manipulated.

The description of the landlords, the Parvathyakar and Valiyaveettil Ittira, marks a clear contrast with the impoverishment of the Arayas. The Parvathyakar is on a “cushioned bed with a pillow” (14) and Valiyaveettil Ittira has tied a “dhoti above his belly and a second dhoti around it...The officer reclined on the cot, fanned by his assistant, chatted peacefully with Ittira...” (14). The luxury that the landlords now enjoy is through the exploitation of the land, the resources and the labour of the Arayas. The Arayas now do not even have enough to eat. The gulf between the haves and the have-nots is getting wider as the gravity of exploitation increases. Joining their hands with the landlords for some profit the police officers too exploit and humiliate the Arayas. Their fear is more elaborated in the following descriptions, “Who among the Arayas will dare to show his face first? “If we step into the courtyard without being asked to we will be beaten on the spot” (14). Each and every move they have to take is decided by the power holders. The ultimate end of all these physical tortures is the perpetration of hegemony and the prolonging of physical and mental servitude. This servitude links their life in perpetual trauma.

The traumatic social condition of the tribal people is exemplified through the narrative reflection of their mindscape. Ittira’s reaction when Adichan and others entered the courtyard is significant in this context: “It was Adichan who entered the courtyard first, though with diffidence and trepidation. Munden, Kadutha and others who were seen just behind him still did not dare to walk into the courtyard. Ittira glanced at them and shouted, “Only this bunch? Do you know who is here? All of you

will be beaten to death” (14). The unbridgeable gap between them is pronounced at Adichan’s mannerisms, “Bowing his head with as much reverence as he could, Adichan said: “Those who are ill and those who cannot walk have not come” (14). In the system of power, the powerless always remain in their position and act intuitively submissive which maintains the hegemonic structure intact. The erosion of a culture and the ethnic pride of its members are marked by the hegemonic system of dominance and subservience. The trauma that the members of the tribal communities experience is hence the cultural trauma.

In his article “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities” the American historian T. J. Jackson Lears discusses the implications of cultural hegemony. Lears’ deliberations develop from the basis of victimization of the subordinate class and the prevalence of a specific social structure which is the product of the propagandist ideas reinforced. He also speaks about the significations of cultural symbols on a political realm. He further claims: “...The emerging hegemonic culture is not merely an ideological mystification but serves the interests of ruling groups at the expense of subordinate ones” (571). When the hegemony of the powerful becomes cultural hegemony as it is asserted upon a cultural group, the trauma associated with this becomes cultural trauma. All the privileges that the upper class enjoys, whether it is economic or social, are at the expense of the unprivileged group. The trauma of the unprivileged group stays as long as the system is intact. Even after the system has transformed, the traces of the trauma that the older generation experienced would pass to the next, proving their existence immersed in representing and reliving of it.

When the officer of Narayan’s story reads the order from the Maharaja on the new system of tax remittance, the illiteracy of the tribal people is focused: “Looking around him he cleared his throat. “Let everybody hear”, The Arayas held their breath,

waiting for the devastating blow. “Most honored, devotee of Rajya Rajya...” “Can these unlettered dunces make head or tail if he reads like this.” Isn’t it enough to tell them the gist of the order?” (15). According to the discourse in the King’s order, the tribal communities like the Arayas and the Ooralies clear the forest which belongs to the Maharaja. These tribal men can be considered as the rightful hands of the forest land as they live there from time immemorial. Their heritage and culture are inseparable from the land they dwell and they live in a peaceful co-existence with their surroundings. All the others are intruders upon their habitat. The tribal communities never owned any land because according to their vision the entire forest land belongs to everyone who dwells there including plants and animals. The intruders from the land seized forest land and crafted documents to prove their ownership and thus the tribal people turned out to be illegal encroachers according to the law. The well-known activist and writer K. Panoor in his work *Keralathile America* explains how the tribal people lost their land and became slaves in due course of time:

The strategy of being recognized as tribals and at the same time seizing their lands in the forest and estranging them in their own land is the same trick which the Red Indians in America experienced. Their lands were captured, many were killed and the rest of them surrendered and were made destitutes. They were turned into a class living in the isolated reservations. The similar pattern of turning the owners into slaves was experienced by the tribals in Wayanad. Those who have come from the Southern Kerala as immigrants and others who have come with the support of the Bishops and the Churches exploited the helpless and illiterate tribals who were without any influence and with little knowledge regarding the legal system, by bribing the officials asserting

the dictum that the powerful will reign. Their ladies didn't have any security. Their lands continued to slip away from them. Owners of yester years become the slaves of today. Their culture also decays like them.

(11)

Narayan's story is an exemplification of what Panoor states in his work. He clearly notes the decay of the culture of the tribal people of Kerala. The exploitation and oppression that the tribal communities of Kerala had undergone caused the decay of their culture, initiating cultural trauma. They lost their culture, space and ethnic integrity. The displacement and dispossession of tribal communities is documented by both the writers in two different genres. Narayan explicitly states the modes of discourse formation and how that aids to create and concretize the pejorative position of the aborigines. Establishing a legal discourse which traps the tribal people as criminals made it normal for the privileged class to release further torture upon them. Since they document the eroded culture and tribal life of the tribal communities, it becomes part of the cultural memory of the communities. These retrospective texts gain significance as it acts as a means of ethnic integration.

There is an ontological gap between the event of trauma and its representation. The analysis of trauma lies in this gap and is expressed as a struggle of interpretation of meaning of the event. The event of trauma and its representation by the author develop emotional responses in the reader as a way of their participation in trauma. The consistent status of being unprivileged is one of the worst traumatic cultural memories and the readers of the community relive the same through the representation. Narayan depicts the ways in which the tribal people are stereotyped as criminals. Branding a group as mad or criminals is a way to assert power upon them and to keep them as

underprivileged forever. Further discussions regarding the ‘unlawful’ activities of the Arayas astonished them as the reality is far away from what the officers claim:

“Do you understand?” Asked the Head Constable.

“Yes sir we do”, replied the Arayas trembling with fear.

“Then why have none of you given a grain of pepper or cardamom to the government.” The Arayas gaped in amazement. They wanted to say that all the produce they had stored were seized from them without paying for it. But they were terrified and tongue-tied. Their shoulder bones still ached from carrying pepper and cardamom to Ittira’s home.

This was clean swindle. (15)

The author shows how the discourses are being generated and transmitted by the powerful for their vested interests. As Michel Foucault observes, “Discourse transmits and produces power; reinforces it,…” (*The History of Sexuality* 101). The arguments of the officers and the demands they now put forward are undoubtedly making their life unbearable. After forcefully making them carry the forest produce to the Valiyaveedans, they are now accused of not selling the produce to the government. All the accusations directed upon them ensured the marginalized position of the Arayas. The new rule of taxation that is about to be implemented is rather strange: “There are taxes for heads and breasts... Pay two annas per head for every girl whose breasts have grown, and for every boy whose head stands on shoulders strong enough to work..”/ “This is the end.”, the Arayas were now beating their breasts in despair. “The last shred of our self-respect” (16). Narayan’s plot resonates with the history of the tribal communities of the specific historical epoch.

As per the new order by the Maharaja all the Arayas are obliged to pay taxes for all the grown up persons of the tribe. Heads and breasts are counted and tax imposed

without checking whether they are given payments for the work they have done. The Arayas are dumbfound while listening to the new order, “The Head Constable shouted: “Didn't you hear what you were told to do”. He threw one of them to the ground and trampled on him when he fell flat on his back” (16). The deadline for the tax payment was announced as a death blow to them, “All you scoundrels should pay the tax before the 30th of Makaram. Those who do not pay will be tied to trees and given a sound thrashing. Their huts will be burnt and their women will be given to the Pulayas. Their children will be made to beg in the streets” (16). The Arayas are threatened by the officers with incomparable physical tortures. “One of the constables raised his foot and kicked Adichan viciously on the head: “Hey, you thick-skinned buffalo swear that you will obey the order.” He turned to the officer: “I have to take a bath if I touch these fellows” (17). The casteist ideology of untouchability which prevailed in Kerala during the temporal setting of the short story is explored through the words of the officer. According to the system of ‘chaturvarna’ the people of the society are divided into four different strata according to their vocation and those of the lowest strata of the society are untouchables. The tribal people are even out of the system. They are not even considered as human beings.

When the officers allowed the Arayas to return to the hills, they felt a relief as they are getting out of the sight of those who are always trying to humiliate them physically and psychologically. The relief is temporary because at any moment the Arayas could be summoned by the oppressors or they could climb up the hills, “With downcast faces they began their trudge back to the hills - helpless sons of the soil who grew gold with their toil” (17). The author’s fundamental strategy of glorifying the tribal people and their culture is apparent in the final statement. The way they are close

to nature, their hard work and its results are encapsulated into a single sentence. He also recounts the current status of their being helpless.

The image of the 'hungry and exhausted' Arayas is getting magnified at the narration of the extravagant life style of the Valiyaveedans, "As the smell of cooked meat and arrack watered the mouths of Ittira and the Parvathyakar, the Arayas, hungry and exhausted, crouched behind the huge rock before the Melekkavu temple" (18). Taking the tougher fate of a new tax imposition into the heads, the Arayas are getting back to their hills and they have nothing else to hope and pray for other than the death of Valiyaveedans, they were pondering and talking in low voices about Valiyaveedan's atrocities and about finding a way to escape them. "O, Mother Goddess, let a poisonous snake bite Valiyaveedan" (18). Their faith in their god too is now deteriorating for they have faced as much atrocities from the Valiyaveedans. Now they are with the conviction that even their Mother Goddess too is in favour of Valiyaveedans and others: "She will just look the other way when Valiyaveedan makes mincemeat of us all. It's the King's orders. You have to pay tax for everything - pissing, shitting or farting. If you try to stand up to them, they will send their goons. The goons will loot our crops, rape our women and set fire to our huts" (18). Narayan turns to the traumatic phases of tribal history as a leitmotif in his fictional space in order to interrogate the hegemonic metanarrative of the inferiority of the tribal people.

Paying the tax is beyond their ability because they work for the Valiyaveedans without payment and all their produce was seized by them. Though the Valiyaveedans are aware of the pathetic situation of the Arayas they are asked to pay taxes according to the order. Getting out of this humiliating situation is beyond their reach, "We Arayas are good for nothing, scared like mice."/ "We'll just look the other way even if we see one of us being hacked to death."/ "I think the only way out is to burn our crops and hide in

the forest” (18). Hiding away from the sight of the exploiters is the only solution they found. Deep inside they are mindful of the fact that only the inner depth of the forest would be the only succour for them. The literary critic Balachandran Vadakkedath’s study notes the historic events which Narayan fictionalised in the short story:

It is not a new story that a tribal who hasn’t committed any mistake is being tortured. The reminiscence of the age where ‘taxes for the heads and the breasts’ are implemented is included in another story. The backdrop of the story is the circumstances that led to the ban of tax for breasts and tax for heads by the King of Travancore. Two chakras as tax when Arayathi’s breasts are grown. Two chakras as tax for each head when the men are grown up to work. A fate which couldn’t be questioned! Narayan has explained how the tribal people have resisted this fate in the story. (25)

As Vadakkedath notes, the story is a fictional documentation of a historical fact. Thus the story reinforces the cultural memory of the Araya tribal community. The punishment for not paying the tax is terrific. Encroaching into an Araya village everything was looted by the policemen and the Arayas and Arayathis were taken to the house of the Valiyaveedans. Not even their animals were spared from punishment.

The village was turned into a battleground. At the end of it all, the Arayas with loads of pepper and cardamom on their heads and the Arayathis, their hands tied up in pairs, were marched off, the unwilling cow dragged by the rope tied round its neck with inebriated goons singing dirty songs in tow... The Arayathis were bundled into a room and a guard posted outside. The Arayas who still had some fight left in

them were beaten to pulp....The men were going to be slaughtered like pigs anyway. No questions asked. (19-20)

They were thoroughly beaten and all their belongings were ransacked. All of them were taken to the Valiyaveedans which is ironically the government office, police station and the court for the Arayas. When he knew that his people were at the Valiyaveedans, Adichan reached the place to witness the cruelties his people are being subjected to.

The brutality that his people experienced breaks his heart and a new courage that evolved from his fear and anger exploded. Witnessing the chopped head of his cow Karumbi, Adichan's emotions were uncontrollable since he thought of the cow as his own kin. The unique way in which tribal people are connected with all the living organisms is reflected in Adichan's sentiments for his cow. According to this all the beings of nature are related to each other. The police officer, Mathan forced Adichan to eat Karumbi's meat. Narayan's description of the unparalleled brutalities that the community faced is a reminder not only to the tribal communities of the present day but also to the power holders of the society as well. The traumatic past which is being inscribed in the cultural memory of the tribal community generates the tribal identity and its institutional mechanisms. Sociologist, Ron Eyerman comments on these institutional mechanisms with respect to the Afro-American community as: "If slavery was traumatic for this generation, it was so in retrospect, mediated through recollection and reflection, and some black readers and intellectuals, tinged with a bit of strategic, practical and political interest" (61).

The Arayas of the short story struggled physically as well as psychologically in the system of power and hegemony. When the psychological aspect of dominance ensures the prolongation of the same, the physical aspect generated resistance and

protest. The higher officials such as the Tahsildar showed an indifferent attitude towards the Arayas. Even at the middle of the massive atrocities the officers asked the Arayas about their failure in tax remittance, “The Tahsildar turned to the Arayas again: “Have you all paid the head tax and the breast tax?”...“Don’t you know that the punishment for violating His Majesty's orders is death?” (23). As a reply to the entire system that is responsible for the pathetic plight of the Arayas, Kadutha chopped the head of his son, “Suddenly Kadutha rushed into the midst. On one of his hands was the severed head of his son. On the other a chopper dripping with blood” (23). They revolted shedding their own blood:

Kadutha, his eyes blazing, glared at the Tahsildar. “Here, take this you scoundrel. Your King wants his head tax, doesn't he? Give the head to him. Let him stuff it.” The next instant he hacked at his own head with the chopper and fell bleeding and writhing on the ground. It was now Kadutha's daughter's turn. Glaring at the Tahsildar she struck with the sickle. “Here, take my breast. This is what the tax is for.” Blood spurted and one of her breasts rolled on the ground. She threw the sickle at the Tahsildar and collapsed on the ground. (23)

There is no clearer vision of the exploitation and oppression that the tribal communities faced than what is offered by the narration of Narayan. The memories and the narratives of marginalization and oppression that the tribal communities faced collectively would aid them to achieve a revived collective spirit to assert their space. The fictional space of the short story offers Kadutha and his daughter as the ultimate figures of suffering and revolution. He strives to cure the wounded collective psyche through the revisiting of trauma:

“Experiencing trauma” can be understood as a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. In so far as traumas are so experienced, and thus imagined and represented, the collective identity will become significantly revised. This identity revision means that there will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, for memory is not only social and fluid but deeply connected to the contemporary sense of the self. Identities are continuously constructed and secured not only by facing the present and future but also by reconstructing the collectivity’s earlier life. (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 22)

The fragmented identity of the people of the tribal communities is reconstructed with the revisits to the past of trauma. As Narayan ventures to reimagine and represent trauma in his fiction the cultural identity of the community is revised and reconstructed.

Another short story of Narayan “The Evil Spirit” depicts the trauma of an individual from a tribal background. Though the trauma here is of rape and is individual, it too acquires cultural significance as the stories of rape are common in the tribal communities. The reciprocal interaction between the personal responses to collective trauma and cultural impact of personal trauma converges in Narayan’s universe.

The trauma of sexual exploitation that the women of the tribal communities experience from the government officials is explored in depth in the short story “The Evil Spirit”. The negligence of the officers of the tribal welfare projects and their poor implementation are also critically presented. When an era of exploitation by the settlers

has ended, the new era has commenced where the exploiters are the government officials who are in charge of the welfare activities of the tribal communities. The central character of the short story is Gomati, an ambitious girl from a tribal settlement who is now admitted to a new skill development project by the government. The atrocities that she faced while staying in the tribal hostel are at the centre of the plot. The initial narration about the tribal hostel itself shows the negligence of the government and the officials concerned towards tribal welfare activities, “A tribal hostel, offered for free, when the Department of Harijan Welfare deserted it, stood on a lonely hillside, away from the playing fields of the privileged and the colonies of the middle class. Maintenance was never attempted perhaps, because the building itself had turned out to be a supreme folly” (69). Just like the lives of the tribal people being exploited and neglected by the outer world, the tribal hostel too is deserted. What the tribal people are offered is the leftover by another marginalized community. Needless to say, the tribal hostel building is constructed far away from the settlements of the privileged community. The trauma of the marginalized communities is perpetual as their social position is never getting upgraded. In his interview with M K Harikumar, Narayan explains the condition of the governmental projects targeting the welfare of the tribes:

Nobody did anything with common sense to make the adivasis stand on their own feet. It is said that the government has spent a lot of money for the Harijana Welfare Department. But the adivasis didn't receive its profit or benefit. The reservation which the law permits for the entry to the educational institutions and to get jobs for those who have completed their studies and the financial support from the government for education are the only support which has benefited the adivasis. (16)

In the short story Narayan explores the same theme and its after-effects along with a gripping narration of the double marginalization that the women experience and the trauma associated with it. The government officials treat the tribal people in such a way as if it is not necessary for them to have any basic facility because they are used to the life in the forest. “The inmates were not used to electric lights and fans anyway, born in remote valleys and woods, brought up in one-room huts paved with mud and cow dung, cavorting and reveling in the glory of nature and later transported to ‘institutions of knowledge’ to be trained in the artistry of the sophisticated” (69). The phrases ‘institutions of knowledge’ and ‘artistry of the sophisticated’ are used to increase the effect of irony. The ‘institutions of knowledge’ for the tribal people are turning out to have the opposite effect as they become spaces of torture for them. The ‘artistry of the sophisticated’ becomes disastrous and traumatic to the marginalized.

At the tribal hostel where the girls of the tribal settlements are brought to learn new skills and develop the traditional tribal skills, they are becoming objects to satisfy the sexual desires of the government officials. “A few officials would arrive occasionally in jeeps to check if the Adivasis had put on flesh” (69). The hostel in which Gomati resides is poorly maintained and barely provided any facilities to the inmates, even drinking water. As a senior inmate of the hostel Nalini looks through the window through which nothing is visible other than the dilapidated compound wall. Nalini’s gaze beyond the fence symbolises the uncertainty in the lives of the tribal girls who are brought to the hostel.

The situation of complete isolation and alienation of the inmates of tribal hostel is signified through the image of the plants that Nalini describes. On the dried up banana plant was a creeper, the few leaves and the flowers on it wilting and worm infested. Gomati held Nalini by her shoulders “Look at those flowers, when you have no

one to look after you, not just the leaves and flowers but the stem too will rot” (70). Nalini’s description seems to be the desperate imagery of a traumatised soul. Being senior to Gomati, Nalini is more experienced and realistic. She is aware of what could happen to a tribal girl at a tribal hostel. Gomati is new to the hostel and she is still hopeful about the future.

An inevitable fate doomed upon Gomati as the officer came to see the inmates and spotted her. Offering a bright future for her in the field of athletics, the officer takes Gomati with him. The in-charge of the hostel supported the officer even though she knew what is going to happen. Gomati was ready to go with the officer: “When she began to climb on to the back seat he said: “Sit in front. There is no one else to pick up. I am fed up with you girls. Eat, drink and be merry - that is all you do. As if you are on a holiday...“Look at the trouble I have to take!” Gomati was amused. She agreed it was indeed a great botheration for him” (70). The irony of the situation is even more emphasized in the honeyed words of the officer. When we realise the atrocities that Gomati experienced, the words emerge like a cruel mockery. The officer looked at Gomati as an object to satisfy his sexual needs.

Gomathi sipped the lime juice. She noticed that Rajan drank only a glass of water. Feeling more comfortable after the drink, Gomati took up the papers to put her signature on them. The man who had brought the juice and the biscuits took away the glass. Gomati signed on one or two sheets. She felt the letters wobble. A dizziness was overtaking her. As her eyelids closed she felt someone carrying her out and undressing her. (71)

She was not even completely conscious when the officers raped her. They tactically gave her sedative drugs and thus she doesn’t have any clear memory of what is

happening to her, “A nightmare assaulted her” (71). Narayan’s descriptions about the post-rape scenes are realistic and capable of evoking an empathetic feeling towards Gomati. “When cold water was sprinkled on her face she tried to open her eyes. She was lying naked on the floor. All her blood seemed to have been sucked out. She screamed” (71-72). These details let the reader to realize how cruelly the girls of the tribal communities are treated by the privileged class. The helplessness and the marginalized condition of them were cunningly manipulated by the powerful:

Gomati ran out like she was raving mad. The man who had brought her lime juice was at the door. Sprinkling water was an attempt to find out if she was still alive. She stared at him in a rage,... He flashed a mocking grin. “Where do you think you are going without any clothes?” She realized with a shock that she was naked,... She was about to scream again when the man stopped her... “Don't bring the house down, there is no one here”. Prathapan and Rajan had left after having got what they wanted. The fate of their victim did not concern them. The stranger’s greedy eyes were on her blood stained breasts, she realized. Lusting after left-overs. (72)

Narayan’s gripping description of the trauma of rape and the immediate reaction of the girl call for an ethical response from the readers. The author documents the trauma that many of the tribal women experienced for years and even now. He is destined to write down realistically the experiences of tribal communities from the time of their prosperous days to the modern times. Narayan describes her life after being raped: “The pain of being betrayed. The awareness that everything is irrevocably lost... Fear of the unknown. Gomati looked out, wasted and exhausted” (72). The trauma of a sexual

assault destroyed her. Gomati's life after the traumatic event can be read as a response to it, which culminates in her suicide.

Later with a shock Gomati realized that Nalini too is a victim of an earlier assault. Nalini is now accustomed to the fact that this is what fate stored for a girl from the tribal background. The repeated incidents of rape that the women of the tribal communities face can be seen as a cascading collective trauma. It is not an isolated incident but regular and repeated. Gomati's realisation that Nalini too is a victim increases her pain. According to the psychologist Roxane Cohen Silver: "Cascading collective traumas are defined as a series of compounding catastrophes that may be both historic and concurrent in nature and yield stronger emotional responses with each new exposure" (Silver 20). The story of sexual exploitation is not new to the tribal women. As they reach the tribal hostel for training they become sexual objects at the hands of higher officials. Everyone knew what happens yet no one is courageous enough to utter a word against them. Gomati too has decided to be silent: "...she fell into Nalini's arms and sobbed. "I know what he has done to you. The cat cannot be indifferent to fish. Don't let anyone else know..." "It is all part of the training" Nalini muttered. Later Gomati thought it best not to tell anyone else about it. "Yet, Rajan, Prathapan, the stranger, Ammini, and Nalini ...oh!" (72).

Her life after getting back to her tribal settlement is even more disastrous. She became pregnant and her people ostracized her and her mother from the community. The doubly marginalized condition of the women in a tribal settlement is scrutinized by Narayan through the life of Gomati and her mother:

Somehow Gomati managed to reach her ooru. Sobbing, she sat in a corner of her shack and did not reply to the persistent questions put to

her by her mother Marathakam and father Chinnaswami. Days went by. Marathakam scolded her daughter who hid in a corner of the hut. Her mother did not know yet that her sweet dreams had been shattered... Some men confronted Chinnaswamy and accused him of sheltering a tainted daughter. Why didn't he confess before the Kani (village headman), disinherit her and cast her out of our village, they demanded. The community would now hold a meeting and ostracize his family, set fire to their hut and drive them out of the village. (74)

The responsibility of an exploited girl falls solely upon the mother. Along with the girl, the mother too will be punished. Yet the father is safe. He can abandon them and marry another woman: “When Chinnaswami came in, sickle in hand, his mouth red with betel juice, Marathakam trembled. Now he would cut off her head, O God! Chinnaswami did not use the sickle. His gaze seared her eyes. Thoo! He spat hard into her face. Too numb to wipe off the spittle, Marathakam could not look up at him. She was left to face everything alone” (75).

The short story concludes with the portrayal of the government officials who are trying to save their faces by crafting new stories on one side, and on the other side Gomati as an evil spirit haunting the pregnant ladies in the ‘ooru’. The short story ends with the statement “She is not clean yet” (76), referring to the evil spirit of Gomati which indicates her exploited body, and her dried up hopes on a deeper level signify the entire tribal community which is exploited, manipulated and marginalized for decades.

K. Panoor records the violence that the tribal communities faced:

To what plight that we the so called civilized sections of the society have taken the land owned tribal people, against all humanitarian

justice? To sheer denial of rights, to utter landlessness and to slavery. Their women are being raped. Their children are being denied the right for education. They are getting killed day by day. They do not have hospitals, no medicine. The mediators take away the government offered concessions. Laws are being passed creating a false belief that they will get their land back. (10)

The evil spirit of Gomati haunted the tribal settlement for ever. Gomati's spirit symbolizes the traumatic recurrences that the members of the community are reliving again and again, especially the women of the community. Narayan reasserts the point that collective traumas never allow a complete escape. Those are to be recounted and relived through narratives in order to redesign a collective identity. Gomati's individual experience of trauma becomes collective and cultural as it has enough potential to happen to any member of the tribe.

Maurice Kenny's fiction also incorporates the trauma of sexual exploitation but in a different way. His concept of both the perpetrator's cultural trauma and individual trauma is materialised in the short story "The Girl on the Beach". This imaginative record of the struggles and stereotyping that the natives faced appeared in the collection *Tortured Skin and Other Fiction*. It depicts a girl who constantly says "I'm India" (50). She is someone who identifies herself with her existence as an Indian, a culturally traumatised, suppressed minority. When Narayan's Gomati commits suicide after the sexual assault, Kenny's protagonist continues to fight with life, with numerous traumatic inscriptions. The traces of cultural alienation, assimilation, individual and collective oppression, marginalization and sexual assaults constitute her psyche. Throughout the short story the gripping memories of her struggle as a marginalized identity is narrated in her own words. Yet as the short story ends the entire plot takes a

new turn and the girl turns out to be an imaginary presence fabricated by the traumatised psyche of the narrator. The story ends with the unnatural death of him as well.

As per what the narrator listens from the girl, her life forced her to take up prostitution and now she is devoid of any tender feelings. Her encounters with traumatic events of life made her confront anything with a stony face: "...neither a smile nor any indication of emotion expressed on her face" (47). The other character of the story, one from the hegemonic class is curious to know more about the girl whom he saw on the beach and approaches her. The girl is an image of the culture and tradition of the Native Americans which is completely disintegrated. The entire story is in the third person narration and divided into smaller sections. The third person narration gives the plot a documenting and factual effect. Pictured against the setting sun, the initial part of the story highlights the motif of red colour through its repeated usage: 'bloody waves', 'red water', 'scarlet sun', 'strawberry coloured hair' and 'blood red' sand. The colour red is a signifier for the natives as they are also called the Red Indians. She is a Red Indian woman and the narrator is a white male, a strict contrast. He could be thus identified as one from the group of the perpetrator or the agent of trauma. It is also significant in the context of the story as the protagonist of the story is a rape victim and a prostitute. The first and second parts of the story are impressions of the middle aged man about the unknown girl. The middle aged man who watches the girl is 'fascinated' by her lovely appearance, youth and vitality. He finds her strawberry red in the dusk and silver in the dawn. These primary impressions are in fact ironic as she is a shattered and traumatised identity. Till the last section of the story it seems as the tale of a victim of cultural as well as individual trauma, but as it ends, it evidently turns out to be an enactment of perpetrator's trauma. The perpetrators as we have already seen have 'dehumanized other

subjects', 'pervert the sovereign subjectivity of the victims' and 'challenged their own sacredness'. The old tales of oppression that still continue are inscribed in the psyche of the nameless man of the story and it works in such a way to generate the perpetrators' trauma.

The middle aged man who confronts the girl at the beach feels a kind of strange air around her. The girl's constant assertion of her ethnic identity evidently helps to a demarcation between the authentic native identity and the oppressive identity of the perpetrator:

"You wanted to know who I am. I am telling you. I am India"

"Your name is India"?

"No. I am India."

"Really"

"Yes, I am India."

"You are from India?"

"No"

"Then why are you India?"

"Because I am India." (51)

The memory of cultural trauma and individual trauma works in her in combination and gets represented and re-represented through her words. The repeated assertion of the same thing echoes her traumatized psyche. She asserts her ethnic identity vigourously and repeatedly. She never felt any hesitation to share her personal life with a stranger. This confession signifies the cultural and collective aspect of her personal trauma.

The story that she shares with the narrator is rather depressive, “When I was six my new father ... my stepfather ... the new man my mother then lived with ... raped me” (52). This is an explicit depiction of the traumatic circumstance which the unprivileged member of a marginalized community undergoes. Being a Native American she is marginalized in the social fabric of the USA and being a female she is again marginalized by the patriarchal structure. Thus she becomes a victim of double marginalization. The girl expresses her pride over the Olmec blood clan into which she was born. “My mother was a full-blooded Olmec. Proud. My real father... too was a full-blooded Olmec. Proud” (60). Yet the life of the girl was in utter misery adding a tinge of irony to her description of how proud she is over her heritage. “I am India. I am Olmec. I am proud, too, like my dead mother and my dead father, my biological father, not those monsters who rented my mother’s body after my good father died” (61). From her description of her past and experiences it is clear that all that are foreign ruined her. Identical is the case with the Native American land as well. The foreign cultures intruded into the Red Indian space ruined the native culture. The trauma of her personal life can be thus paralleled with the trauma of the tribal life: “My second mother adopted me. She bought me from my country to this place, this land...Then the sniffers came. My people dispersed, they ran into jungle. They were afraid. They knew their lives were in danger. They hid the women and children from those who came to sniff the body” (65). Through the recounting of the cultural trauma that her community experienced she relives it and tries to cure the wounded psyche. “...men rape little girls and little boys too, all the time in our communities. Men are cruel” (53). Kenny strives for the same effect of healing through his fiction. Remembrance and representation of trauma, in fiction, regenerates the identity of the victims and re-establishes it.

As the girl's narration of her and her communities' trauma continues, the middle aged man exhibits signs of the perpetrators' trauma. The girl hates foreigners who invaded her land and later became Americans. And she hates men because, for her, men are rapists. The man identifies himself as fitting to both these titles and thus finds himself as the agent of trauma. This manifests within him emotional imbalances: "The gentleman squirmed in his chair....His tubby body tightened....Beads of perspiration jumped out on his forehead even though the temperature of the lobby was cool, cooled by an air conditioner...He stopped, stone, cement. No words would budge. His mouth open..." (53-54). In order to channelize his inner emotions of being the agent of trauma he himself projects a character and through her he relives the trauma and tries to attain cure.

The story of her life that Miss India recounts is disturbing to the listeners. There were four step fathers for her and some raped her and some tried to kill her. Her mother shot her fourth stepfather and she then shot herself dead. The atrocities unleashed upon the Native American tribes are recounted by the girl who becomes the mouthpiece of the author in the process of the strategic reclaiming of the cultural memories. She speaks of her tribe, the Olmec, its days of glory and the difficult days of unparalleled suffering. The trauma of being alienated from the native culture is apparent in the remarks of the girl, "My second mother taught me language, your language. I speak your language as if I had been born to it, as if it had flown from my first mother's breast with her milk" (65). Through the verbal repetition of cultural memories of trauma she tries to re-generate and assert her identity.

The readers' participation in the trauma and their emotional responses are accelerated with the thoughts and reactions of the middle aged man: "Why can't she get into the point he must have asked himself. Why all this folderol of a confession. That

doesn't make this illegal act any more romantic. No. She's leading up to a higher price by reciting this list of violence and lewdness against her body" (52). The stereotyping of the Native American tribal women is evident from the internal monologue of the man. She repeatedly says her father is good and the other men are monsters. The text doesn't give any proof for the goodness of her father and it is evident that he might have been dead when the child was at a very young age to remember anything. Yet the woman attributes goodness with her biological father to whom she has no connection other than the biological. Her traumatic memories necessitate a demarcation between the perpetrators of trauma and the victims.

Her recollections were shocking, disturbing and has enough potential to engage the readers:

I went to the streets of my village. I begged. No one offered a single tortilla. Nor a rotted tomato. Not even the cooked balls of their roasted pig, nor the eye of a dead fish. They brushed me away with a kitchen broom. They pushed me off. I was eight. I tried to rent my body to old men and very young men. Nor even the little adolescents, masturbating boys would buy me, not even with a Chicle nor half of a brown banana covered with fly shit. There was nothing to do. But leave my village... my village contaminated with half-breeds. Olmec blood was slowly dripping out of the veins into the sands which the northern winds blew down the emptied streets and into the doors of the huts...I went to the city streets and became a whore. I opened my legs for any bastard who wanted a sniff... (62)

Kenny leaves the central character without any particular name other than the one she calls herself that is 'India'. She herself says it is not her name or the native place but she herself is 'India'. The woman symbolizes her native land which is equally traumatized as she is. Thus the personal trauma of the girl becomes the cultural trauma of the community. As the short story reaches its conclusion with more meetings between the woman and the middle aged man, more stories of trauma have been narrated by her. The story takes a surreal and mysterious turn as it ends. The same woman whom he initially thought a teenaged girl becomes an old woman with white hair, withered face and saggy breasts. And finally an old mad woman. From being a story that reflects the trauma of a native woman, "The Girl on the Beach" as it ends becomes a perfect reflection of the perpetrators' trauma. The middle aged man dies giving the impression that Miss India is a reflection of his own mind. The traces of the past trauma haunt the man and eventually lead to his death as he identifies himself as the agent of trauma. The death seems to be the reward that he himself bestows upon him for being part of the group of the perpetrators.

The short story thus showcases the various aspects of the Indian existence such as an effort to re-possess the pride over the community, the trauma of leading a marginalized life and the re-assertion of the old culture and a re-telling of the personal and cultural trauma of the past. The agents of trauma or the perpetrator becomes the focus of the plot as it reaches the concluding part. The meetings and the recounting of the past by the girl on the beach become the hallucinated reflections of the tormented psyche of the perpetrator.

The same theme of the perpetrators' trauma is fictionally recorded in Maurice Kenny's "Salmon". The collective aspect of the perpetrator's trauma is intricately infused in the plot structure of the short story. The story deals with a group of salmon

hunters at an old Native American settlement. The natives were no longer there as they were dispossessed and displaced. The salmon hunters of the story are non-natives who perceived the history of dispossession and oppression of the natives of the land and their role in it. Though their conversation asserts the stereotypical constructions of the Natives, the fact that they are the agents of trauma is rooted within them. Thus they have evidently damaged their own identity: “If a community has to recognize that its members, instead of being heroes, have been perpetrators who violated the cultural premises of their own identity, the reference to the past is indeed traumatic. The community can cope with the fundamental contradiction between identity claims and recognition only by a collective schizophrenia, by denial, by decoupling or withdrawal” (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 114). From the discourse of the salmon hunters it is evident that they are trying to deny their role in the process of traumatic dispossession and displacement of the natives.

The stigmatized view of the dominant section of the Indians and the pride that all the Indians are exterminated from their homeland intensify the terrible situation of dispossession that the Indians underwent. The agents of trauma in fact deny their action as traumatic. They give the impression that the trauma that the natives experienced is essential and inevitable or even something good. It is depicted in the short story “Salmon” collected in *Tortured Skins and Other Fictions*:

“This was old Oneida lands”, a man offered.

“Oneida what?” Someone called out without too much interest.

“Indians.”

The group sang out.

“Indians. There's Indians here?” the disbeliever asked, showing a trace of ancient fear.

“Not an Indian for miles,” Pete said.

“Thank God.”

“No, man. We got rid of 'em hundreds of years ago.”

“Thank God,” Pete proffered.

“Sure left us a great river,” one voice in the group proclaimed. “And some great salmon.”

“Sure did,” the group agreed.

“Nope, not a single Indian here. Not one Oneida.”

Some of the men applauded at this revelation.

“Used to be. Thousands of blood hungry savages roamed these river shores”. (165)

The prejudice of the group towards the Indians is evident from their discourse. The trauma that the native people experienced was not unknown to the new generation of the agents of trauma. Their psyche is designed in such a way as to accommodate the trauma of the natives. Identifying themselves as the perpetrators of trauma causes those to experience a traumatic condition and this drives their actions. They were the actual intruders into the natural habitat of the Indians yet they consider the Indians as an intrusion upon them. This prejudiced mind-set makes them say “We got rid of ‘em hundreds of years ago” (165). When the group discusses the presence of the Indians in the place where they are now to hunt the salmons, an ancient fear creeps into their minds. This signifies the extent to which they are biased towards the Indians, “Thousands of blood hungry savages roamed these river shores” (165). They were thoroughly terrified at the sight of a bear catching the salmons, something that they are not able to do even after the effort of several hours. “Who said there wasn’t any Indians here”? (169). They take the bear as an image of the Indians and it catches the salmon

when the non-natives are unable to do so. From a land which is devoid of any Indian, the perpetrators feel their presence. The story thus is a brilliant exemplification of the trauma of the agents. The agents of the cultural trauma are not opaque to the experience of trauma. Their reliving of the trauma is different from that of the victims. As the salmon hunters are the new generation of the direct agents of trauma, their recurring experiences can be considered as perpetrators' trauma in the transgenerational domain.

The trauma imparted by hegemonic institutions is the focal aspect of the short story "She-Who-Speaks-with-Bear" which appeared in Maurice Kenny's anthology *Tortured Skins and Other Fictions*. The protagonist Mary Margaret and her experience at a new place foreground the situation of any Indian child who was uprooted from the native land and planted into a new culture. The cultural trauma of dispossession and displacement forms the thematic universe of the story. From the juncture of a girl's alienation and displacement, the plot develops to include the traumatic mindscape of cultural dispossession, stereotyping and marginalization.

The new school to which Mary Margaret got admitted offers her nothing but a claustrophobic existence. The trauma of space is signified with repeated references to the room: "A silent room can be overpowering...A large dark silent room is frightening..." (99). Mary Margaret's room at the new school is a strict contrast to her home: "All the child could then think of was home. Montana, the open plains coddled by the sun and cleaned, brushed by free breezes. She hated this place; she truly hated this school...House of the Faithful, this prison, really" (101). While compared to her home, the new room is suffocating, dark and isolated. Being uprooted from her community and planted in an alien land she feels depressed and lonely. The whole story revolves around a small bear (a stuffed toy) that her grandmother had given her. It is cherished as a precious and magical one by her family and she carried it while moving

to a new place. For her it signifies the culture to which she belongs. Yet for the Christian nuns at the convent the bear is something evil. The conflict between these two cultures and the trauma that the girl experiences out of the stigma of ethnic roots form the heart of the story. The initial impression that she had at the new place itself is the intimidation of being alone: “Mary Margaret Buford hated being alone. She had never experienced aloneness, being completely by herself in her entire young life. There was always someone from her large family nearby. Always. Aloneness was the most dreaded state ever. Cut away from all human beings would be unbearable for her” (100). Her trauma of being lonely is the trauma of thousands of native children displaced in Christian convent schools. This phase from the life of the Native American children becomes a cultural memory not only because it appeals to a large number of people of a community but also it places the dichotomy between the native and the foreign cultures in question.

The children of the Native American space were being sent to the Christian schools as part of the civilizing mission of the European settlers. A foreign religion, language and culture were forcefully given to them. As Franz Fanon points out in his work *The Wretched of the Earth*, “The church in the colonies is a White man’s church. It does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the White man, the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor” (7). At the new place, the Christian convent, the young girl was interrogated and convicted as if she did some crime: “I haven’t done anything wrong.” The fourteen year old child faced the nun. Tears spilled. Right then she didn’t much care if it wasn’t Indian to cry...” (100). For the girl the bear in her bag is a constant divine companion who speaks about her tribe, her family and the future. When the girl tells the nuns that the bear speaks, they found it illogical and blasphemous: “Bear speaks.” Mary Margaret was biting her lip. A speck of blood

spurred out onto the flesh. “It tells me...things.” She hit deeper into her lip. “Things I am supposed to know about.” (101).

Kenny explores the situation of the girl and her feelings about the new place into which she has been admitted:

She'd give just about anything in the world to go home. She'd jump the walls. Break the windows and slip down and out of the “house”. Mom was sick, dying may be. Bear said so. It never lied to her. And Bear knew. Bear knew everything. To go home and be with Mom and Grandmom and the other kids, her sisters and brothers. Away from this hellhole, the “house” as the other students called the school, this school for wayward girls, students at risk. She wondered why the nuns didn't call it a school for wayward Natives. Indians. “That's all that is here,” she realized. Only Indian girls are at risk? She pondered this often during her stay at the school. (102)

Through the perceptions of Mary Margaret, Kenny conveys the attitude of the people of the European educational institutions towards the Natives. Considering the Indian students as uncivilized and treating them accordingly, the schools shatter the pride and the confidence of the Native children. In the essay “Tortured Skins, Bears, and Our Responsibilities to the Natural World” anthologized in the work *Celebrations of a Mohawk Writer*, Nicholle Dragone comments on the “...inability of boarding school survivors to develop and / or maintain healthy emotional and spiritual relationships with their families, home communities, and the natural world” (49). Dragone's statement signals the symptoms of boarding school trauma on the victims' later life. To retrieve the lost sense of pride and self-esteem of the Indians, they need to create and propagate

counter-discourses. James Thomas Stevens' "The Breath and Skin of History" argues that the aim of Kenny's literary renderings and its function is, "... giving voice to the Native people who were affected by mission, people like Kiosaeton, Wolf Aunt, Kateri Tekakwitha, and the People of the Flint (Mohawks) themselves" (18). Kenny's poetry as well as fiction is politically directed towards the purpose of giving voice to the silenced. The marginalized set of people is to be given space and instill in them a sense of belonging and ethnic pride to articulate their position. Kenny narrates trauma for both personal and political cure.

The nuns of Mary Margaret's school cannot understand the value of her tribal culture which is foreign for them. They consider the culture of the Natives as pagan and inferior and it should be civilized. The way in which the Natives are being treated even in a place like an educational institution is appalling. Kenny purposefully describes the details of the subjugation that the Indians suffer from the hegemonic sectors of the society. The traumatic experiences of the girl are captured vividly in such a way to evoke an ethical response from the readers:

She collared the girl, clutched her blouse and dragged her from the office. Down a long corridor, the nun pulled Mary Margaret and pushed her through the open kitchen door. The corridor was cold and dim....The bear claw fell upon the red coals. Mary Margaret watched and heard it sizzle. Flames had caught it...Quickly it turned to ash, and the ash fell between the burning coals... She squeaked unrecognizable sounds. She mumbled. And then words of a prayer in her language escaped her lips. Sister didn't hear the prayer for she confronted by Sister Agnes.

“This monster's been carrying a bear claw around her neck. I was sure it was drugs in that bag might as well have been. This is worse. Devil worship. Satanism.” (106)

When the nuns forced the girl to leave her bear to the flames, they were acting out their supremacy of being members of the privileged group. To create the ‘other’ is the basic necessity for the perpetual dominance of one group over the other. The legacy of colonialism is carried over even after the political freedom of the colonised countries because of this strong process of ‘othering’. Within the praxis of the concept of the ‘other’ “if the ‘self’ is ordered, rational, masculine, good, then the ‘other’ is chaotic, irrational, feminine, and evil” (Al-Saidi 96). The trauma of colonialism and imperialism primarily emerges from this creation of the other. The foreign communities intruded into the land of the Native Americans, stamped them as pagans and tried to civilize them. The stereotypical construction of the Native Americans in the discourse of the hegemonic section proved to be disastrous to Mary Margaret. At the new convent school Mary Margaret was under constant surveillance. She felt it as if in a prison.

The nuns of the convent wanted to inspect the tiny bag Mary Margaret carries with her, inside which she claims is the bear who speaks. When she refused to show it, the punishments she received were brutal: “...sent to bed without supper for three nights running; beaten with a horse whip; shorn of her braids; made to sleep in a bed soaked in the urine of a classmate bed-wetter...Mary Margaret pleaded silently. Only her eyes betrayed her fear” (103). For Mary Margaret what is inside the bag was a sacred secret and it should not be shown to anyone. In spite of all the physical harassments she saves her bag and the bear inside. What is sacred for the girl is pagan for the nuns. The physical traumas along with the trauma of cultural alienation made her life unbearable and as the story ends she slips into madness. Yet when the nuns punish the girl they

believe that it is done to save the soul of her from: “sloth, ignorance and paganism” (103). Maurice Kenny elaborates upon the trauma of the girl and the cruel treatment she received from the school.

Mary Margaret huddled in the chair. The vinyl was cold. She had neither a coat nor blanket to wrap in. She had been humiliated by the nun. She was forced to kneel on the naked floor which had never been carpeted due to lack of funds. She was told to recite four rosaries, and then she was left alone in the dark. She was shamed. All night she cried bitter tears; she sang songs, she prayed; she told herself stories, she spoke to Bear and to the bear claw she herself had tossed into the burning flames of the stove. (107)

Thus the story becomes yet another record of the cultural memory of traumatic past that the Native American children have to face. The dichotomy between the native culture and the foreign culture leads the children to a chaotic psyche and traumatic existence. Mary Margaret’s final lonely murmur to herself can be symptomatic of her experience of trauma. The personal trauma that the children of different tribes experience becomes a cultural trauma as it questions and denies the cultural identity of the children and pursues them to assimilate to the new culture. Through the re-representation of cultural trauma Kenny tries to re-integrate the fragmented cultural identity of a generation of the Native people.

Narayan’s short story “Footprints of the Predator” is another account of intense traumatic cultural memory, where the hegemonic system of power proves to be traumatic to the tribal people. The protagonist Kannan becomes a victim of the ruthless cruelties by the privileged class. Narayan explores how the power holders use the innocent tribal people to accuse them of the crimes of others. All the unlawful activities

of the greedy are purposefully attributed to them by the system. The police officers inflicted on them cruel physical tortures to make them admit those crimes which they even haven't dreamt of. Kannan is one such accused who is now under the custody of the police, "He would be yanked by the locks of his hair, punched on the pit of the stomach, kicked in the small of the back and, as he pitched headlong on to the floor, the boots would come crunching on his spine. Then they would bark at him all over again: say what you did with them, you son of a bitch - the ivory, the ganja, the oil, the girls you seduced and sold in the city?" (45). The trauma of physical and mental tortures is not new to the people of the tribal communities. The recounting of them in fiction becomes a remembrance of their cultural memory since they appeal to their ethnicity and culture.

The police registered a lot of cases against Kannan, and forced him to admit it all. The marginalized people are silenced and discourses were propagated for labelling their identity as perpetual criminals. When the police enquired about the charged crimes, "Kannan had only one answer: I didn't do anything. It was a week now and he had almost become bored with the routine. What they wanted was not his confession, but his silence about the people who had done everything" (45). What the accused speak of his innocence is not considered by the police. They want nothing but somebody to shoulder the crimes. "Come out", the voice was as harsh as any, but new. A new bunch ready with a fresh set of methods to try out on his body. As he limped to the grills, he heard another of them say: "You can get out and beat it" (45). When Kenny's Mary Margaret is accused of blasphemy by the nuns, Kannan and his family are accused of illegal activities.

Through the description of the life of Kannan, the author clearly states the plight of the tribal culture from its triumphant position. The encroachers planted new ways of

life and culture in their land, “The settlers had cleared it all, planted bananas and jackfruit trees and built their houses. The giant teaks, eettis and anjilis came crashing down to the earth with a roar. The trees with monstrously thick trunks, which even a herd of elephants heaving together could not uproot, went down the river as logs to unknown destinations” (48-49). As the settlers ruined the system of agriculture and their land, the life of the tribal people turned out to be miserable. The settlers thus become a threat to their life, tradition and culture.

Though the government initially took measures to stop the encroachers as they were a small group in the beginning, later on, become a powerful set through more and more illegal activities and converted the police force as one of their tools to prosper: “The Forest Department sent their teams to inquire. They burned a couple of settlers' huts and destroyed their crops. But more settlers came and more trees came crashing down. The settlers soon organized themselves into an invincible phalanx. The teams of inquiry that came afterwards merely looked the other way” (49). The members of all the privileged classes become the agents of trauma including the government officials and the police officers.

The major way of getting the consent for the ownership of the land that the government had given to the tribal people is giving them some money and alcohol, “Kannan heard one of the settlers talking to his chithappan. “Why, what is biting you? See that? Stretching endlessly. You got it all free, didn't you? Five acres will do. We'll give you ten times what you get for a day's work. And a bottle of the strongest stuff” (49). Without much knowledge about the value of the land ownership in the current scenario and the ways to get the maximum profit from it, the tribal people fall for the offers of the manipulators. The pathetic living condition, illiteracy, and the fear that they inculcated inside together persuaded the tribals to give their thumb impressions on any

paper that the exploiters show them. Seizing the land without notice too was practised by the manipulators. The story of deception is thus normalised in the history of the tribal communities. With physical force they controlled the tribal people and grabbed their land. “The settlers seized his chithappan's land. Then they quarrelled over it. One of them died in the scuffle. The police arrested chithappan for the murder. They lynched his wife and strung her upon a tree. Nobody saw Vanaja, his fifteen-year-old daughter after that” (49).

Kannan’s chithappan’s family was uprooted by the exploiters. Now it is the turn of his own family. Narayan realistically narrates the situation of the tribal communities without any exaggeration. The encroachers come with their greed for land and money. Narayan’s narrative depicts the disparity between the perception of the land that exists among the tribal people and the intruders. The intruders are willing to do any cruelty in order to grasp the land. Kannan’s father’s death is clearly a murder for land: “When his body was found floating in the river the story given out was that he had fallen off the log and drowned. But there was not a drop of water in his lungs. There was the mark of a blow on the back of his neck, and a red swelling on his chest. The police thought it was an open and shut case of drowning by accident” (49). The life of each and every member of the family who owns some land would be in danger and here Kannan and his family are now the target of the encroachers. They managed to murder his father first, “One of Kannan's classmates whispered to him: Don’t come to school anymore. And don't talk to anybody. They are after you too” (49). After snatching the land of the family they made Kannan and his mother workers of the plantation. The work *Tribal Development in India: The Contemporary Debate* speaks scientifically about the confiscation of land by the settlers from the tribals:

Land alienation is a dark blot on tribal development in Kerala. Agricultural settlers, mainly from Central Travancore, have been the direct beneficiaries of the alienation of tribal land. Many of them had fraudulently alienated tribal land, exploiting the ignorance and innocence of the tribes. The state had also appropriated forest lands under different schemes... more than half the tribal population in the state (55.47 per cent) is composed of landless agricultural labourers, compared to the all-India average of 32.99 per cent. (Rath 189)

Most ironically Kannan and his family were given the bare minimum wages for working in their own land. The encroachers cultivated 'ganja' in the land illegally and made the most loyal tribal men as carriers of it:

But how could they go hungry - his mother, his two sisters and he? They could not cultivate anything. The settlers' cattle trampled over everything. Stoning them away would invite more trouble. But the poachers, it turned out, had work for him and his mother. Not everyday, of course. And no fancy wages. A hundred and fifty for a night, carrying logs down to the loading point, and food. Then there was the ganja crop, euphemistically called 'cardamom plantations' in the records. The ganja oil was light cargo, but more dangerous. Not everybody got the job, only the most trustworthy. The poachers had their ethics. (49-50)

One day Kannan was arrested with the 'ganja oil' by the police. There are some vested interests behind keeping Kannan in the custody for a week without producing him at the court. The police want to hide those who really do the ganja business. For that the tribal Kannan is victimized. Kannan, after his escape from the police, was

surprised to see his old classmate as the owner of the ganja plantations and out of which he earned a huge profit: “The man who came out with the watchman was a surprise. The old classmate. But he was making an attempt to pretend he had not recognized Kannan... He owed his metamorphosis to the stolen wealth of the forest. Now he was God. I would be God too, Kannan thought with amusement, in spite of himself, if I have the stuff in heaps like him” (51). Narayan’s narration articulates the various phases of physical and psychological trauma that Kannan experienced.

While following the Boss as if in a dream Kannan realizes he too is going to be murdered just like his father. Kannan also comes to know that the same person is the murderer of his father. Even then Kannan followed him without uttering a single word:

Kannan followed the Boss into the house. As his eyes fell on the footprints on the marble floor Kannan recoiled. Was it the same footprint that lay red on his father's chest when they brought him home, lifeless? The Boss turned the shining brass handle and opened the door. They went in and door shut behind them with a click. Kannan turned to look at the one-piece blackwood door, carved and finely polished. He saw his father's face appearing on it as on clear, still water. (52)

The power-holders victimized the tribal communities for their profit for decades and the history repeated, “Don’t you recognize him? He killed me. He will kill you. There was no way out from the lion's den. Not a whiff of what happened here would reach the world outside” (52). Narayan’s realistic narration of a tribal family being exploited and eliminated is a cross-section of all the tribal communities in Kerala. Those people who lived in the forest depending on its products were manipulated by the encroached settlers. Recovering these stories of collective trauma would help them to

segregate themselves as a collective force to resist the domination of the privileged sections. Balachandran Vadakkedath elaborates upon the ways in which the victimization of the tribal people happens at the hands of the hegemonic people:

Though strangers kill the elephants or extract oil from the ganja trees or abduct women, the offence is being imposed on the tribals. By burning the huts and destroying the crops and through various means we replace their old culture of a community the members of which are being pushed to the margins of the society. By planting new cultures, what is being questioned is his true identity, his will power. It can be interpreted as the direction of the vision of the narration of Narayan: the question whether the saga of the identity of the tribal which is being thrashed by the new masters of power can be made possible. It is also narrational justice. (24)

Though the encroachment of settlers has ended to a greater extent, the tribal people are still a marginalized class who lack a social space and privileges. While excavating the history of the marginalization of any of the unprivileged communities, the process would eventually reveal the process of both physical and ideological subjugation, where the latter would follow the former. The hegemonic group constantly acts upon the discursive patterns of the society in order to form discourses that maintain their upper hand in the social structure. These discourses reassert the marginalized position of the suppressed communities by evoking and registering stereotypes. These stereotypes are fixations and they are never dismantled in the discourse of the hegemony. Michel Foucault's contemplations on power and discourse form a perfect background for the study of how power is disseminated through discursive patterns and how it is maintained in the course of time in any social system. His deliberations form

the basic structures upon which any examination on the perpetual subjugation of the marginalized communities can be done. Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*: “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it excludes, it represses, it censors, it abstracts, it masks, it conceals. In fact, power produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production”. (120)

The literature of the Dalits in India, which aesthetically represents the social, political and the cultural trauma of them, is inseparably linked to the expression of their identity politics. Representing and reliving trauma helps them to re-establish the cultural identity. Narayan’s works are counter discourses to the discourse of the privileged class which accelerated the trauma of the tribal people. T V Krishnan and P K Pokker in their essay “Subaltern Consciousness: An Inevitability” (With a Special Reference to Dalit cause in India) which appeared in the *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities* discuss the interpellation of the marginalised communities into the dominant ideology in the Indian context of the caste system:

The upper class/caste used the ‘caste ideology’ as a means to secure their political and economic power and sustain their domination in the society. The compartmentalization of caste is so perfect that the populace from the lower strata/caste failed to share their feelings, etiquettes rationale etc., and thus unable to generate and share protests against the ruling social order.... The ‘mental servitude’, accordingly is made possible by the ideology of the dominant group which acts as hegemonic power in the society. Here, the ‘hegemonic power’ means the

ruling ideology which knowingly or unknowingly subjugates all other groups and their visions. (66)

The hegemony of the privileged group was being constantly maintained through the propagation of the ideological construction of the aboriginal people as inferior and uncivilized. Stereotypical constructs were profusely created and maintained in order not to lose the advantageous position of the invaders in the long run. After being physically repressed for generations, the new generation of dispossessed people was psychologically manipulated and side-lined to a space of stigma. The mental servitude that the authors specify here is the trauma of their existence. The trauma of being dispossessed and displaced is engraved within the psyche of the tribal people.

Narayan's short story "The Boats are Burnt" is an explicit record of the trauma of manipulation, exploitation and cultural alienation that a tribal community experiences from the privileged class. The tribal chief of the short story reminds the readers of Black Kettle who stood for the tribe. The author elaborates upon how the new surge of neo-colonialism and globalization proves to be disastrous for the tribal people. In *Tribal Development in India: The Contemporary Debate* a clear view of how the tribal communities are being displaced from their land and resources is established:

Development-induced displacement has become a major human rights issue in recent decades because, though it is planned, no provision has been made in the law or in practice either to get the consent of the families to be deprived of their livelihood in the name of national development or to minimize its negative effects on those who are thus deprived. It therefore results in the impoverishment and marginalization of a large number of families, most of them from the already powerless communities. (Rath 112)

The short story portrays Kuttykunhan, a tribal chief, who is in conflict with a new business project of prawn cultivation which is about to get implemented in his place. Kuttykunhan feels that it is going to be ruinous to his community yet he feels utterly helpless. “A drone was heard over the house. Puzzled, he stepped out into the courtyard again. A helicopter looking like a gigantic umbrella. A couple of days ago it glided so close as to touch the waterlogged lands lying to the west of the house” (84). His trauma is intensified with his duty to protect his people and the land. He notices with a confused state of mind the helicopter flying above his land. The people inside it inspect the land, whether it is apt for their cultivation. “The terns too once had rice fields and prawn farms to land on. Now it was only a vast marshland. The helicopter came again to destroy Kuttykunhan's peace of mind” (88). The land was the ultimate source of income for the tribal community. Their land was once taken over by the government with his permission for paddy cultivation and later prawn farming which promised job and income for the people of the community. But now it is in the hands of a multinational company which doesn't have any concern for the life of the real owners of the land. The vicious aspect of neo-colonialism is evident in the situation described in the short story. In *Tribal Issues in India*, Neeta Tapan writes:

Earlier, the ecologically fragile and remote regions of the tribals were difficult to approach and uneconomic to exploit. But the technological advancements, privatisation and the power of global capitalists have eased out the capital-intensive development projects in these areas.... Marginalisation is a necessary precondition of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. (246)

In an interview with Prof. K M Sherrif, Narayan elaborates upon the central thesis of the short story “The Boats are Burned”. The ways in which globalization

proves hazardous to the third world countries and primarily the most marginalized sections of the third world countries are discussed by the author with reference to the short story. In Narayan's words, "Global capital is not a messiah who delivers the marginalized sections of Indian society from the Savarna hegemony. In fact the natural allies of global capital in India have always been the Savarna elite. Dalits and Adivasis are the first victims of this alliance. Colonialism always drew its first blood from them" (99). They are the victims of colonial and neo-colonial trauma.

Along with the loss of the land which belonged to the tribal community all the structures that were once the core of their culture too are getting mutilated. "Kaarnnore! The address was jarring to his ears. People used to call him Mooppan. Now-a-days nobody even remembered the word" (89). The word 'Mooppan' is a word of honour. It is respectful to use the word and as per the old tribal system it was mandatory to respect the head of the community and call him 'Mooppan'. The use of the word 'Kaarnnore' evidently reflects the disintegration of the tribal system. Through the character, Narayan laments the degeneration of the tribal system. He intermingles the themes of cultural disintegration and the loss of tradition into the theme of manipulation of the tribal communities by the hegemonic classes.

The short story chronicles the ultimate dispossession, manipulation and the helplessness of the tribal people: "Intermittently they talked through the mouthpieces of their wirelasses. Kuttykunhan was enraged.

"Stop it, stop your dirty games!"

The young men looked at the crowd with an unruffled smile.

"Oh, Kuttykunhan. Are you still the leader? What do you want?"

“These lands belong to us. The jobs here are ours by right. Have you put a single one of us to work here?”

“Sorry, dear old man. We don't know what you are talking about. If you have any complaints, tell the government about it” (91).

In the editor's introduction to the work *Tribal Issues in India* Sisodia elaborates on how the modern developmental projects become disastrous to the tribal communities:

The existing paradigm of development resulted in seriously disturbing the tribal rights over their common property resources. This was possible because tribals across the country were, the least powerful interest groups. The demand for their resources - land, forest and water is still forcing them out of their habitat. Of late, though the eroding resource base and socio-cultural heritage of theirs is being recognised, lack of effective legal protection to them and unimaginative incentives are unable to compensate their loss. The development process even today is unmindful of tribal plight. Their economic integration with non-tribal institutions has also forced non-tribal perceptions of purity and pollution. (Sisodia 19-20)

The new project co-ordinators expressed their indifference towards the pathetic situation of the tribal people. Even the protests that the community organized against the company were taken as a matter of mockery, “This lake measures twenty five thousand hectares. Prawns worth twenty crores of rupees in six months' time. You won't even get twenty paisa of it. Kaarnnore, if some of your old comrades are still alive, band them together again, and their children and grandchildren too, to lament the passing of the

good old days you yourselves have destroyed. Sorry, we can't help you out. Bye. See you" (92). Kuttykunhan was ultimately blamed for the loss of the tribal land. He was the chief of the community and it was his responsibility to safeguard the land. "Yes, I'm responsible for everything, Kuttykunhan confessed to himself. A crime against my own people. I don't deserve a pardon. Even to be allowed to plead for mercy. The time for a rethink had run out. The boats were burned. What retribution lay in store for him? Kuttykunhan slunk away, muttering to himself" (93). Dispossession is the ultimate tragedy of the tribal communities across the globe. This happens at various levels. From being the cast-away people of the forest to the displaced set in the land allotted by the government, the tribal people are perpetually dispossessed. As Balachandran Vadakkedath observes:

Everybody knows that a new culture is engulfing the tribal community. They are trying to get used to it. But that doesn't make them liberated. This new tradition has even deprived them of the freedom which they had enjoyed....What the people who are trying to create a new history over the old land is bringing, is colonization. Narayan has drawn an environment of robot, helicopter and cloning in his story "The Boats are Burned". The theme of the story is how the Constitution which is the symbol of democracy becomes harmful to the people. Kuttykunhan in this story experiences real agony when a group acquires strength to rob in the name of the people.... The estrangement caused by the circumstances, chains him in a place which has not attained the complete civilization and took him nowhere. (23)

About the dispossession that a tribal person experiences in the course of his life and this recurring motif in his fiction, Narayan remarks in an interview to Prof. K. M.

Sherrif: “The entry of Adivasis into civil life is almost always marked by an act of dispossession. As an Adivasi writer the bitter experience of dispossession colours my stories. Perhaps the recurring memory of dispossession is a great weakness in my fiction” (96). Narayan further elaborates on the struggle for survival of the tribal people: “The life of Adivasis – even those with an education or a government job - is a ceaseless struggle for survival. It is so racked by conflicts that there is no peace of mind to write stories or poems. Unlike other communities of Kerala, the majority of the Adivasis do not even have a roof over their heads” (97). Narayan’s works are reflections of his first-hand experience of the tribal life of Kerala.

The effect of the trauma of cultural alienation at its peak is depicted in Maurice Kenny’s short story “A Quart of Bourbon” where the central character, a native youth who is in an intense existential crisis ends his life by drowning. The short story starts by portraying the relationship between an Indian youth and a non-native woman. Irony is the principle in the structure of the story. When the lover of the man recounts the trauma that the Natives experienced, she is actually devoid of any true feelings:

We have been cruel to your people. Cruel. One day we will count for our sins. And pay with blood as your people have paid with their blood. You’ll see. You should have your land, your Mother Earth back to dance upon, to sing of. It is your earth, your Mother. We’ve trampled it, spewed liquor and cancer upon it. You’ll get it back one day. It is our obligation to give it back to you (42).

The lady love of the protagonist of the short story is a foreigner outside the tribal space. Rather than being empathetic her speech reflects an attitude of sympathy and hence it leaves the impression of irony throughout. As part of the civilizing mission of the invaders the tribal people were displaced from their land and misplaced in the

Reservations where they were persuaded to follow Christianity. This transformation from nature worship to a strictly monotheistic and anthropomorphic religion escalated the cultural shock of the natives. The protagonist of the short story points out to his lover the number of missionaries there in the Reservation for the conversion, “Beth. Poets. Missionaries, Christ, we've got enough missionaries right here on the Reservation. I sure don't have to go all the way to New York City for that.” (44)

The protagonist is an existential hero who is with an intense trauma of cultural divide. Being a poet he is more sensitive towards his emotional fluctuations as well as his surroundings. The mindscape of the protagonist is copied to the pages by the author and the irregularities in language signify the trauma of the character:

Stone. Stone. I he stone. is stone. Worry stone. Story stone. Stone as tall and hard and solid as all the Brooklyn piles of cement reaching into the sky, crowding the floor of the earth, snuffing out the voices of the human rats running around the rat holes of that city, that Brooklyn. Tall as the Williamsburg bank tower. Taller than the Brooklyn Bridge. Spanning centuries, spanning time, spanning man himself. . .the stone, his stone, worry stone, story stone.

Click. Click. Stone. Stand on stone not cement. Put your butt down on stone, take your feet off cement, off the brass rail, the brass rail, the brass monkey, the brass knuckles. (45)

The repeated use of words, misspellings, altered stylistics and the unconventional punctuations reflect and record the imbalances of a tormented psyche. When the native culture of the protagonist in which his very existence is rooted disastrously collided with the foreign culture, the result impaired the mind of the protagonist forever. With this crisis in sensibility he drowns himself at the end of the

story: “The river was home./ He was submerged” (49). His identification with the trauma of his native culture is signified throughout. His complicated relationship with his family, his girlfriend, nature and his native culture are portrayed as if to impart the depth of his trauma to the readers. He resorts to nature, the final home as per the vision of his tribe, as the story ends. The trauma that the new culture infused in him culminated in the evocation of his thanathotic instinct. The entire short story is a saga of displacement and misplacement of the protagonist. He is ultimately homeless and he lacks a sense of belonging. The trauma of cultural divide is intensely portrayed in the short story and the protagonist becomes a signifier for the tormented youths of the Native American tribal space. Regarding the identity formation of people with a past of cultural trauma that they may not have directly experienced, Ron Eyerman in “Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity” mentions: “As reflective process, trauma links past to present through representations and imagination. In psychological accounts, this can lead to a distorted identity-formation...” (3). Cultural traumas are thus the potential causes of identity distortion and its representation and reliving offer the subjects with chances to redefine and reintegrate the collective identity.

The short stories of Narayan and Maurice Kenny are productive spaces to interrogate on the ways in which the aboriginal writers strive to establish a collective identity owing to the sites of cultural trauma. All the short stories that have been analysed in the present chapter are conversations on the cultural trauma of tribal communities. Both the writers develop characters and situations meticulously to impart the sense of involvement with the experiences of trauma. The potentiality of trauma narration in designing a space for the author, the text and the readers to re-identify themselves is brilliantly envisioned in all these narratives. The different short stories

analysed within the framework of cultural trauma theory reflect both the collective as well as individual aspects of the trauma at various levels. When Narayan's Gomathi and the traumatised youth of "A Quart of Bourbon" exemplify the personal aspect of the cultural trauma, "Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse" and "Taxes for Heads and Breasts" showcase the collective aspect. Both these aspects presuppose the identity revision on a collective and personal level. In the space of the action of the trauma narration, the culturally traumatic marginal communities re-create their lost cultural identity and the readers outside the community re-evolve as subjects with a novel ethical sense. All these testimonies are thus politically significant and socially transforming.

Chapter III

The Memory Kinetics: Reclaiming the Glorious Past in Fiction

The cultural memory of the days of tribal grandeur and its role in the reshaping of cultural identity are investigated in this chapter through the analysis of the select short stories of Narayan and Maurice Kenny. Though the aspects of memory in tribal narratives are immersed in the experience of cultural trauma, they also profoundly accommodate the elements of their age-old traditional signifiers, rituals and the cultural and ethnic correlatives. All the selected works, “Thenvarikka”, “The Birth of a Prophet”, and “Mythum Vithum” by Narayan and “Blue Jacket”, “Rain”, “Yaikini”, “Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse” and “She-Who-speaks-with-Bear” evidently represent these elements and most of them take tradition and culture as the focal theme. Among the selected short stories of Narayan “Mythum Vithum” is not available in translation. The relevant excerpts of the short story are translated. The plots and characters develop in both the writers in such a way as to appreciate or even glorify their ethnicities. With a detailed study of the selected works, this chapter attempts to analyse the modes in which tradition and culture are synchronised in the fiction of Narayan and Kenny and its function of re-iterating the cultural identity. The points of convergence and divergence of the fictional arena of the two writers are also included within the scope of the analysis of the chapter.

The chapter problematizes how the recurring memories of tradition in its various forms define the characters, who are at the juncture of social, political and cultural marginality. The images of ancient tradition and customs materialised in fiction through

different modes such as traditionalist characters, the use of traditional language, situations to contrast the tribal culture with the foreign and the symbols and the correlatives of ethnicity ignite within the readers of the community a sense of ethnic pride. This defines the meaning of a community's existence, as the American psychologist Barry Schwartz points out: "Collective memory is a model for society - a program that determines the content of its values and defines the meaning of its existence ("Culture and Collective Memory: Comparative Perspectives" 12). When Narayan takes a realistic approach towards the narration of tradition and the loss of tradition, Kenny often deviates into a surrealist and existential approach. This chapter also explores the works of both the writers to see how they use the memories of their unique tribal past to negotiate between their ethnicity and the foreign forces of assimilation.

While dealing with history and cultural memories the fictional narratives render a scope for the proliferation of re-representing the collective past and hence a re-appropriation of collective identity. The hegemonic versions of history as well as the misappropriation of cultural memories are critically engaged in the short stories. The narratives are in themselves the sites of cultural memory of ethnic triumph as they exhibit the cross sections of both the ethnicities and their specificities. They effectively counter the mainstream rationality on tribal modes of life and their vision. Both the writers identify critical sites of their tradition and culture and narrate them through their fictional pieces. Rather than writing about their tribe's history as a whole both of them give relevant instances in their short stories to embark on the cultural memory of the specific tribe. Both the tribal spaces are rich in tradition and culture. The memories of the days of grandeur appropriated to fiction in the form of various correlatives render the scope of identity revision. Along with the celebration of the culture specific symbols

both the writers incorporate instances of the loss of tradition as well. This also gives an opportunity to recognize the significance of tradition and ethnicity. The rest of the chapter analyses the short stories of Narayan and Kenny and tries to identify how they infuse the element of tradition and culture.

A re-imagination of the history of the Mohawk tribe and its assertion through characters are explicit in Kenny's short story "Blue Jacket" which appeared in the collection *Tortured Skin and Other Fiction*. It is a gripping tale which discusses a Mohawk's deeper connection with the ancestral days. The narrator of the short story is nameless and thus represents the common Native American psyche. The titular character can be read as a projection of the inner desire of the narrator to be deeply planted in the native soil. He comes as an apparition from the other world with the message of ancestry and heritage. Blue Jacket is a tool for commemoration and remembering and those are the collective memory's main repositories along with history. The whole story is revolving around the narrator's experience at his newly owned house and premises. Mr. Blue Jacket is introduced in the initial part of the story itself. For the nameless narrator who is assimilated to the foreign culture, Blue Jacket becomes a signifier of the tradition that he has almost forgotten: "He stood thinly straight, a warrior, a matchstick, proud of his being and carriage" (25). Blue Jacket indicates the valour of a warrior from a Native American tribe. The short story projects a cultural memory to the people of the tribal community to "construct and (re) define their relation to the past, the present, and sometimes to the future" (Anton 130).

The narrator identifies a strange abiding aura with Blue Jacket, "Eighty, may be a hundred, he had an almost timeless air about him. Ageless" (25). The words 'timeless' and 'ageless' that Kenny has used to signify Blue Jacket refer to the whole of Native American tradition in general and the legacy of the Mohawk culture in particular. He

tries to attribute permanence to his parent culture. Though a Mohawk, the narrator has internalised the European culture of property ownership and erecting fences. Blue Jacket becomes an antithetical mysterious figure flickering in the life of the narrator whose presence disturbs him. He is an embodiment of the Native American spirit for whom no fence matters and nature belongs to everyone. The narrator notes that Blue Jacket's "Shoes are planted on the muddy ground. They were curious, the shoes, or sneakers rather: red, raspberry red..." (26). The shoes planted in the muddy ground signifies the Mohawk culture which is much immersed in the soil of their land. The 'red' colour motif recurs in the story symbolizing the Indians. The narrator's reply to Blue Jacket's question, "You Indian, too?" (26) is "Yes"... "But not too much" (26). He is a representative of the younger generation of the Mohawks who constantly attempts to assimilate to the European culture. His condition of being caught in-between the two cultures is well represented in the short story. While the narrator is confused over how far away he is from his culture Blue Jacket reminds him, "Either you are Indian or you are not" (26). The narrator's reply again takes an in-between position, "I am Mohawk ... a little" (26). Blue Jacket yet reaffirms the narrator's space in his parent culture though he is alienated from it, "Aaaaah. I guessed you would be Indian even if you are pale as the inside of a cucumber or plucked chicken" (26). As Blue Jacket identified the ancestry of the narrator, Kenny reasserts that even if the external appearance covers the Indian roots of a person there are traits within them that could never be erased. The recurring references to the ethnic roots embedded in the plot mediate cultural memory and actively reshape them.

Blue Jacket is an illusionary character not a physical presence in the story and he is not visible to anyone other than the narrator. Hence he can be considered as the narrator's alter ego or the author's strong affirmation that the culture and tradition

would never leave one even if he/she is not much into it. Blue Jacket is the Indian culture personified in the life of the narrator. In the initial conversation itself he has started to talk about his tribal clan, “I am a big Seneca guy. What clan?” (26). Blue Jacket comes as an intrusion into the life of the narrator and makes him ponder over his cultural roots. As Blue Jacket speaks of his roots: “His chest flared. His eyes softened but brightened like the flame of a night candle. Pride shone on his lips” (26), the author re-affirms the pride that Blue Jacket nurtures over his ancestry. Blue Jacket’s questions invoke a sense of strangeness inside the narrator for he is realizing the fact that it has been too long since he thought of his ancestry, “What clan” I thought. It had been years since I thought of clan. Seemed years since I thought of Indian and all that implied. Years since I had spoken with an Indian. Before I could answer he said, “My mother was bear clan” (26). The narrator has given away all that is Indian long ago yet it starts to haunt him all on a sudden in the form of a stranger. Both the narrator and Blue Jacket are fascinated by berries that are graciously grown in the backyard, whereas the narrator is the new owner of the space and Blue Jacket is a perpetual visitor there since years it seems. The internal conflict of the narrator for Blue Jacket’s claim over the berries and his efforts to protect it intensify the tension of the plot.

The narrator gets even more disturbed when he came to know the reason behind Blue Jacket’s intrusion into his land, “So what you doin’ in this blackberry patch? It’s the best in the whole state of New York and Pennsylvania. I come here every summer, every July, to pick these berries... big as your thumb, round as a full moon, blue as a star. Oh! And sweet, sweet. Sweet enough to tempt all the animals to squabble. Yup, I pick every season” (27). This revelation made the narrator more conscious about his ‘own’ land. He bought the new land, fenced it and the sense of authority he feels is something in contrast to the free spirit of the Indian tradition. For Blue Jacket the land

and its resources belong to all. The two clashing sensibilities, one of the narrator and the other of Blue Jacket are apparently the opposing kinetics of the short story.

The peculiarities of the ethnic clan are deliberately introduced throughout the short story pursuing the native readers to develop an impulse of historic sensibility, “I am a big Seneca guy. Seneca folks like to talk...” (28). Blue Jacket’s further declarations are capable of penetrating into the conflicting psyche of the natives as he differentiates between the wild and the sophisticated, “Store-bought berries never satisfied my passion, my abnormal craving for the wild berries” (30). Through the comparison between the store-bought berries and the wild berries the author specifically delineates the difference between the traditional and the modern, the native and the foreign. The intense craving of Blue Jacket for the wild berries symbolizes the author’s passionate longing for an integrated ethnic existence of the natives.

The voices of the narrator’s psyche make it clear that an Indian would never be cut off from his/her roots. The narrator’s personal memory of his childhood days delineate the cultural memory of the natives with all the culture specific elements of nature, berries, relation with grandparents, and the thanks-giving. Kenny, through these loud proclamations, reclaims the ethnic past and projects it to the readers. The Indian readers take it as an assertion of their tribal identities and would help them to retrieve a pride over their ethnicity. It becomes a treatise of resistance as it claims the space of the tribe in the social scenario with the assertion of their ethnicity through cultural memories.

Though being in the path of assimilation, the narrator’s psyche is deeply submerged in the Mohawk culture: “Grandma taught the sun was Brother, the moon, the Grandmother, and all the fruits were sisters. Though I was born urban, Grandma and

Granddad saw to it I learned a little, at least, of the natural world, especially to respect all living things because they were relatives and they too had their rights under the sun the same as we humans” (31). The inclusive vision of the world that the older generation imparted to the younger would get implanted into their psyche and would recur in their action. Kenny’s character construction follows the strategy of creating an effect of the glorification of his culture. He makes his community as well as the privileged community remember their tribe’s profound vision. While in the progression of the story it is worthwhile to see how the narrator finds correlatives to associate with his tribal ancestry in the new place owned by him:

What totally satisfied me was the study and, of course, the wide and deep swatch of blackberry brambles – forgetting the black flies, mosquitoes, and no-see-ums. There were also canes of raspberries on the property, a few blackcaps, and a single current bush. Obviously there were wild strawberries in the general vicinity, and in the small woods beyond I guessed there would be blueberries and elderberries. I’d make the wine just like Granddad did those years back. (35)

The narrator’s excitement over the berries and the old practices related to berries add to the effect of reclaiming the ethnic images in the short story. The short story clearly portrays how the ethnic correlative of berries is insignificant to the narrator’s Irish wife when it meant a lot to the narrator, “She ignored my blackberry brambles. When I called attention to them, she growled. “They are thorny”. She had no interest. “I found it a lone joy” (36). The narrator points out the joy the natives feel upon their culture specific signifiers and how aloof the foreigners are to them. Though he was initially not concerned about his ethnic clan or tradition, after the intrusion of Blue Jacket into his life he became more conscious about his roots. The narrator and Blue Jacket shared the

same excitement which is in strict contrast with the wife's plain and emotionless response. This demarcation signifies the fact that she belongs to a different culture. Blue Jacket considers the berry patch as his own. According to him the resources of nature belong to all the inhabitants: "I only wanna know if you'll share these blackberries when you buy this house. Share with the birds and the others" (29). Blue Jacket doubted whether the narrator would share the berries after knowing that the latter is not someone who strictly follows the Indian ways. The narrator was in fact not ready to share the berries with anyone.

Blue Jacket's intervention in the life of the narrator re-evolves within him the memories of his ethnic roots and identifies how deeply he is into it. He started to experience the joy of going back to the roots and experienced its therapeutics, "Over the beer, my imagination played with the blackberries, ripening, picking, eating...From our bedroom window I had an excellent and clear view of the berry canes" (37). The inescapability from cultural roots is clearly denoted here. He reaffirms his affinity to his ancestry through the confession of his relation with grandparents and his fascination for blackberries: "It was my real college – living with grandma and granddad – and where my passion for blackberries developed...Nearly everything I own is the colour of crushed blackberries...I demanded that we name my daughter at birth sweet Blackberry" (33). Though the short story narrates a small instance from the life of an Indian who is alienated from his culture and ethnicity, a particular incident in his life makes him realise how strongly his culture attracts him. An embodiment of his tribal culture, Mr. Blue Jacket appears before the narrator to let him remember the legacy of his tribe. "Hadn't he said in our first chat that I must share with the animals? I was, am, willing to have a bird take a few, and to give some to the chipmunks and squirrels" (40). Towards the end of the short story the narrator is projected as someone obsessed

with the berries in his garden which he vowed to protect. “I ignored the coffee...ignored the food...” (44), all to protect the berries, the visible correlative of his culture. Blue Jacket was a trace from the past that haunted the narrator. It could be the projection of his inner feelings. The thematic universe of Kenny’s narrative represents the cultural memory of the Mohawk tribe with respect to their customs and ways of life through the characters Blue Jacket and the unnamed narrator. The story reasserts and reaffirms those cultural memories in order to engender the lost connection between the people of the disconnected tribal community. The narrator of the short story is an image of this dispossessed and displaced tribal status. The people of the community thus need to regain a collective consciousness and cultural identity to resist the hegemonic system. With regard to the role of cultural memory in identity formation the German critic Dietrich Harth in his essay “The Invention of Cultural Memory” points out: “Every culture connects every one of its individual subjects on the basis of shared norms (rules) and stories (memories)... It is only because of this experience that individuals are able to frame their personal identity through the orientating symbols of identity of their social world, symbols which are embodied in the objectified forms of a commonly shared cultural tradition” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 86). As the story proclaims the unbreakable connection that a Mohawk possesses with his or her parent culture, it becomes a tale of retrospection. The story takes its place within the cultural memory of the tribal people and helps to reassert their ethnicity. For the narrator, the author and for the readers of the community Blue Jacket is an embodiment of the common past, culture and the tradition.

Arnold Krupat in his work *The Turn to the Native* comments, “Native cultures were holistic, unified, integral. Of course, they did not rigidly separate the aesthetic, religious, or philosophical dimensions of human experience, one from another” (17).

The native people who followed such a holistic view would struggle to imbibe a new culture, which is far from their system of culture. The deeply buried impulse of the narrator of the short story “Blue Jacket” for his past comes to the front through the voice of him:

I was born in the city, in Crown Hill, a crack in the Brooklyn cement. But I remember well my grandmother and old Granddad. Mr. Blue Jacket reminds me of Granddad. I can still vividly remember visiting the Rez with summer moons on the waters, canoeing, and fishing for lake bass and brook trout. How could I forget the wild strawberries and the June festival, or going to the woods with Granddad in late June to pick luscious blackberries for Grandma’s pies and jams? All those summer berries – the blue from Adirondacks, and particularly the elderberry- and the wine Granddad brewed. He’d sneak me a sip from the tin cup out behind his stacked woodpile where Grandma couldn’t see him. He’d mumble some special words and pour the wine with a wink as he handed the tin cup into my boy’s hand and said, “Repeat after me, adowe, adowe. You must remember to say adowe, thank you. Thank you for the life taken and that you are about to drink or eat. An adowe to the Creator and that which has given up its life that you may live... gift or elderberry, corn, or opossum meat.” (31)

The short story “Rain” by Maurice Kenny which appeared in the collection *Rain and Other Fiction* also speaks of the theme of reasserting the tradition and culture. Dance and rain appear as motifs here. Both these motifs directly point towards the Native American tribal past and culture. Along with the correlatives of bears, berries and storytelling, dance and dancing too signify the Native American culture. The

perpetual lamentation of the Native Americans over the exploitation of nature by human beings is recounted in the short story as well. The ritual dance to receive rain from the heavens is the central theme of the short story:

“Oh! They are going to dance down a rain, I tell you.

The elderly woman’s face shone with something like ecstatic joy.

That’s power, Grandma.

That’s power, Alma...

Rainbow all over the desert. ” (86)

The narrator of the story is from outside the Laguna culture and the culture specific rites invoke his curious attention. The people of the tribe were into a rite of dance to make it rain. The representation of traditional rituals in literature functions as devices of collective remembrance: “Rituals and traditions, or more generally, procedural memories, can serve as mnemonic tools that shape the collective identity of their practitioners, collectively reminding them of declarative memories” (*Cultural memory Studies* 259). Through the narrator’s views on the culture and tradition of his co-passengers, a spectrum of images comes to the forefront offering multiple layers of meanings. The archetype of grandparents as a connecting force imparting tradition and its values to the younger generation is common to literature in general. More specifically in the Native American literature a transmitting of tradition to the younger generation is mandatory to achieve cultural cohesion. Hence being agents of cultural transmission, the old characters are highly significant. The protagonist Tayo’s grandfather in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* and Abel’s grandfather in N Scott Momaday’s *A House Made of Dawn* are envisioned for the same end. In “Rain”

grandparents take the mandatory position of the agents of cultural cohesion. The grandfather in the short story is, “teaching children the rites of wild berry picking” (86). Berry picking for the Mohawk community is a crucial signifier which Kenny recounts repeatedly. The blindness of the grandfather in the short story points towards the inner wisdom of him which the younger generation lacks, “The blind old grandfather sitting with his grandson between his parted knees relaxes in his folding chair, his face to the sky, to the cloud, to the expected rain. He turns the boy's face with his mutton hands to the sky” (93). Though the grandfather is blind his inner eyes are open to receive the rays of tradition and culture from the skies, and impart them to his grandson.

Photographs become yet another image in the short story which is used to signify the past which is still with the people as a constant presence, “The blurred photo swims into focus again” (91). Photographs are archival sites of cultural memory. The way the photo swims to focus the history of the tribes is becoming clearer to the younger generation and the outer world. “The long two lines of dancers stand like falling rain drops caught in the eye of the camera, a photograph” (94). The culture specific correlatives are imprinted in the psyche of the native as in the way something captured in a photo film is preserved. Dancing is ritualistic in the Laguna tradition. And this also reveals the way in which their tradition is so well in connection with nature, “They sure can dance down the rain in that Santa Ana village” (94). The rain dancing ritual is performed to make it rain. And hence revitalizing these rituals is of utmost importance with regard to an uprooted community. The author needs to reclaim the past rituals to impart them to the younger generation and instill the feeling of belongingness that is being deprived off. Kenny in his prose pieces explicitly proclaims the importance of prompting a continuum in order to keep the younger generation attached to the

tradition that he implies through his fiction. In his prose collection *Backward to Forward*, Kenny argues:

In an unbroken continuum, the oral tradition reaches down to our day. Medicine people, elders, singers, poets, storytellers and even children carry this strong commitment, this obligation, to ensure the longevity of the oral tradition. Among them are such native people as Leslie Marmon Silko, Joy Harjo and Peter Blue Cloud. I, myself sing the poem. (95)

Here Kenny speaks of the oral tradition of their community being passed from generation to generation and he asserts that there is an “unbroken continuum” and they “ensure the longevity of the oral tradition” (95). This concretizes the fact that the aboriginal communities strongly stick to their past and traditions in a unique way. They would never break the continuous process of transferring the unique specific elements of their culture to the younger generation. In his prose pieces Maurice Kenny talks about retaining the past directly and in his fiction he connotes the same thing. The commemorative impulse in Kenny’s narrative universe is politically motivated for the empowerment of the tribal people:

The further pluralization of a once-Anglocentric, English-only U.S.-American literature in the wake of the ethnic empowerment movements since the 1960s and the canon revisions since the 1980s have given a more prominent voice to the autobiographical fiction and commemorative identity politics of ethnic writers such as N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, Maxine Hong Kingston, Richard Rodriguez, Sandra Cisneros, and bell hooks. (*Cultural Memory Studies* 50)

Kenny through his short stories, poems and prose pieces gets into this space of commemorative identity politics along with other writers. His works, especially the short stories are tools of ethnic reclamation and empowerment since they impart the cultural memories of the tribal community and thereby assert a space in the socio-political scenario.

The celebration of the past and the ethnic correlatives are prominent in Kenny's short story "Yaikini" from the collection *Rain and Other Fictions*, which tells the story of the central character Lena, a middle aged lady from the Native American space. Through the correlative of berries, Kenny speaks of the agony of Lena who is being alienated from her culture and her realization that only her native culture could bring her healing. The function of cultural memories in rendering a relief and cure to the wounded native identity is suggested in the short story through the character of Lena. With the two initial paragraphs the author elaborately portrays a nature centred culture as well as an extremely important position for berries. "The meadow, covered in chicory blue and hawk weed orange, sloped from a wooden knoll down to a rushing creek bordered by iris and skunk cabbage. A short walk from the village, the meadow had been picked clean every spring for as many years as the oldest villager could remember" (25). The images that Kenny assembles in his short story reassert the Native American way of life and their tradition which follows the practice of a peaceful co-existence with nature. The activity of berry picking, being an active site of cultural memory, makes them revisit their old days of togetherness as an ethnic community and their collective spirit. Berry picking is central to the Mohawk culture and it is deeply imprinted in the psyche of them:

Late June, directly after summer solstice, the berries were always there, usually profusion. And the women always come to pick even though they cultivated hybrid berries in gardens behind the barns. No larger than a thumb-nail, they were always delicious, sweet as rich honey, red as the setting sun. Spring's first gift. Children, of course, usually ate more than they dropped into the berry cans slung on their little arms. (25)

Kenny employs berries as an ethnic correlative and keeps on asserting it throughout the short story. When he says 'berries' he signifies not the hybrid berries which can be considered as a symbol of the hybrid culture of the new America, but the old natural berries that the Mohawk tribe cultivates and harvests and which is a correlative for their culture. Memory as a tool of cultural resistance is used here through the character of Lena:

Lena now recalled the many times she had walked to this patch with her own mother... After many years away from the home village, kin, the patch. She wondered if her nose would bleed now, again. Well, she wouldn't pick too many. Wouldn't bleed. She would just sit quietly, pluck one or two for her own tongue, perhaps tease little Annie with one, and ignore the empty bucket beside her in the grasses. (26)

These memories act as counter memories in the genealogy of the Mohawk tradition. With these memories the aboriginal population claims back the bygone days of splendour. Since they once held a rich tradition and now its reminiscences, they perpetually assert and claim it in order to achieve a collective consciousness. The shadows that the trees make on the meadows are called "fingery shadows" rendering it a

human attribute just as the way the Native American people considered whatever elements of nature they perceive around them as one among themselves. After a long walk through the meadows Lena “ached to find a tall sycamore and sit under it, her leaning against its comforting back” (26). Finding a retreat in nature for them is getting back their traditional patterns of life. She describes her childhood friend Mr. Peters in a unique way: “Still breathing, alive, like herself, wandering like the cow, a dog, ...” (26). Animal imagery and comparison are inescapable in Kenny’s fiction, for animals are part of the web of nature just as the way human beings are a part. He is revisiting the tradition with such comparisons and imageries in order to actively engage with the sites of cultural memory because it “contains a number of cultural messages that are addressed to posterity and intended for continuous repetition and re-use. To this active memory belong, among other things, works of art, which are destined to be repeatedly reread, appreciated, staged, performed, and commented” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 99).

Maurice Kenny adds elaborations on the divide between the old and the new generations to intensify the effect of cultural alienation. “Children had no real appreciation of work, of berries, of being in an open meadow, of the warmth of the sun. Wait until their bones are old and dry, the hollow sockets whistling with wind, break at the touch of a breeze. No appreciation at all” (27). This description by Lena is purely a lament over the lost culture and the new sensibility of the people. Kenny’s description of the berries through his characters and the way in which they indulge with them signify the Mohawk tribe’s deep connection with the berries. This also indicates the Native American vision on nature:

Seven little berries. Seven little dwarfs. Seven little gifts from the Little-People. She felt good, real good, thinking of the stories of the

Little-People her own mother had told in the berry meadows. Of how they gave the strawberries to the ragged boy who had in turn given them his hunt, squirrels, to eat when they were starving. How they protected still to this moment the people from the forest witches. She chuckled. They were good stories. Good stories. The Little-People are good people. She plucked a berry which was slightly larger than the usual. It still had a white bottom, like a baby's bottom. She shrugged and patted the white bottom tenderly and dropped it pell mell into the bucket. It was hard. It rolled around like a boy's marble. (28)

Memories of berry picking and exchange are recollected and thus reclaimed in the above passage. The way of life of the Native American people especially of the Mohawk tribe where a squirrel and a human being are given equal status is celebrated here. The old custom of gathering together and storytelling was also recollected by Lena, Kenny's mouthpiece striving for the same result. "But there weren't many left from the old days. Not many. A few. And she'd forgotten most of them, the stories and the old friends and relatives. Been away toooooo long. Too long" (28). Lena feels her old days with rich traditional ways of life are "tooooo long" away not only because of the temporal shift but also she is now not at all able to get the old ways back. Those are available to her only through memories which she strongly holds back. Lena associates the deep red of the berries with, "...blood, menstrual blood, hospital blood, scarlet like the morning star, crimson like clouds after the sunset, red like the spanked bottom of a naughty child, like anger on the cheek"(29). The instance where Lena recites an old rhyme, an apostrophe for a lady bug, exhibits how fruitlessly she tries to recall the old culture through a rhyme, "She couldn't remember the entire rhyme. She chanted over and over, "Lady-bug, Lady-bug," hoping the rest of the words would follow" (29-30).

Maurice Kenny uses colour symbolism in the short story to reaffirm the aspect of native tradition. Red being the colour of the berries, of the blood and the colour with which the Native Americans are signified, he uses it to elevate the effect of the loss of culture. The blue colour of Lena's dress was turning red with the juice of the berries. "She looked at the old woman among the berries, her faded blue house dress soiled with scarlet juice, her hands and face running red, her bunned white hair framing the startled face was flecked with berry stain"(30). The blue colour symbolizes melancholy which can be equated with the colour of the wounded psyche of the Natives. The 'blue house dress that turned red' signifies the ultimate return of the Natives to their parent culture. When Lena cries out for the Lady bug, she identifies herself with the bug and empathizes with it for its fall as exactly the way the Native American people identify themselves with nature. The eco-centric attitude is personified in this instance. Kenny asserts his view that only a return to the basic principles of the Native American culture would render an ultimate healing to them. "Lena simply stood, her reddened hands immobile at her side, her dress stained with sprinkles of berry juice, her face smeared and contorted, her frizzled white hair lifting gently in the breeze" (31). Her stained hands and dress re-assert the unalterable cultural stains that spread in the lives of the Native Americans. Kenny contemplates over this ethnic correlative deeply in order to reclaim the cultural and traditional elements as well as the ethnic pride which is a general trend in the Native American literature. The sense of past that the ethnic correlatives offer helps the Native American psyche to revive their ethnic past. This historic consciousness is the focal point of the Native American literature: "As in the Western tradition, central to Native American nationalistic writing is the creation of the sense of past and antiquity" (Kuokkanen 6).

Orality is central to the Native American culture. It is through stories and songs that they transfer the cultural elements from one generation to another. “Well no, I can’t remember her, only the stories and they were wild and thick” (33). The stories remain and continue to exist. Lena was indeed conscious enough to carry over the narratives from one generation to the other. Mr. Peters in the story is an embodiment of the Native American culture. His talks clearly depict the ways of the Native American tribes and their concerns. “Dandelions are withering. The pretty weeds... Already the seeds fly on the morning breeze.” To which Lena adds, “Yes spring came fast, and summer goes fast. Corn is knee high in July. Got squash on the vines” (35). Lena and Mr. Peters are from the native background and both of them could identify each other in terms of their culture, which is evident from their exchanges.

The berry juice that is spotted on Lena’s hair signifies the penetrating cultural roots, “She spotted a blotch of red berry juice stuck hard in the old woman’s white hair. “We missed some, Mama, when we washed you up.” “Yaikini” she swallowed the strawberry juice.”/“Yaikini” Lulu repeated, and screwed the lid in place.”/“Yaikini”, she breathed the word again, and again, and again, “Yaikini” (37). Lulu being repeating the word ‘Yaikini’, which is a culture specific image, signifies the younger generation revisiting the old culture and tradition. The psychological trauma that Lena experienced while getting into contact with the foreign culture continued to hold its influence on her even during her middle age. The abnormalities that the younger generation of Lena identifies in her is nothing but the result of her contact with the foreign imperialist culture, “A normal black child, having grown up with a normal family, will become abnormal at the slightest contact with the white world” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 122). Building a connection with the common cultural past of a community is a political act constituting the identity construction of the younger generation. The need for an

interrogation of the history to find out how it is manipulated by the hegemonic class for their interests and the necessity of an alternate historiography is discussed by Kimberly M Blaeser in his essay “Vizenor and the Power of Transitive Memories”: “We become the stories we tell. They circle round us. They inhabit us. We become the people and places of our past. Our identity levitates from story. Looped together – memory, story, being. And from this centering - survival” (78). According to the author the survival and continuity of the Native Americans are founded on this process of historiography. The stories they propagate would in turn create them and claim their space in the cultural milieu.

Scott N. Momaday’s concept of ‘memory in the blood’ and Gerald Vizenor’s notion of ‘stories in the blood’ go in parallel with the Lockean theory of memory where he argues, if we can remember any experience then in fact we had the experience. The memory of an experience is in fact getting fused into the blood and thus by recounting the memories we are stimulating a new bond with the past. The blood continuum is established again. Kenny calls berries ‘blood berries’ the constantly recurring correlative of his literary works. Kenny through his works strives to maintain the continuum so that the identity of the tribal people would get integrated. The collective memories recounted in literary works thus help them to achieve a collective existence and thus they would be able to claim their space in the hegemonic structure.

In the short story “Black Kettle” Maurice Kenny’s narrative is textured in such a way as to interweave the painful memories as well as the tradition together. Though the plot focuses on the cultural trauma that the Native American tribal community experienced and its recurrences, it also throws glimpse at the ways in which the Native American people preserve their tradition and culture even in their most unfavourable circumstances: “Though the air was bitter, there were daring men who clung to the old

custom of bathing immediately upon waking. Black Kettle was one. He walked along the edge of the partially frozen stream, prompting those too timid to take the plunge, encouraging the bathers” (2-3). Black Kettle showcases the Native American spirit to preserve their tradition and impart it to the next generation.

For instance when Black Kettle spills the broth on the floor as part of his reaction to a traumatic memory, the old woman comes and covers his eyes: “Woman-here-after came quickly and covered his eyes with a robe, and she too then turned to the wall of the lodge. For a brief moment they remained quiet and shielded. The dust disturbed by the fallen broth might well cause blindness. The old rituals were still observed” (3). The reference to an old custom in the short story opens a space for evoking cultural memory and imparting it to the readers.

The natives’ strong connection with the tradition and the ancestors is presented through various instances. Black Kettle’s remembrance of his ancestors and tribalhood reassures the modalities of cultural memory. During the dark days of the tribal existence when Black Kettle being the chief has to go and talk to the Whites for peace, he holds back his customs and tradition in each and every turn. He constantly remembers the Cheyenne ways of life and the days of its surrender to the foreign powers. On the day of the peace talk with the Whites, Black Kettle thinks: “Yes, it was good day to die for your principles, for your blood, for your nation and Creator and the Mother Earth. Hookey” (15). Kenny’s reconstruction of the past, especially the traditional and the cultural aspect of it, helps in resisting the tendencies of cultural assimilation and negligence of ethnicity that the new generation of the native people are prone to. The cultural memory of the natives is kept alive through these means. Through his representations of cultural memory, Kenny suggests a re-reading of the tribal past and ethnic tradition which are hegemonically suppressed and devalued. The German critic

Udo J. Hebel records: “The multiethnic and transnational histories of North America and the hemispheric, Atlantic, and Pacific contexts of North American cultures have always given national U.S.-American sites and ceremonies of commemoration a multidirectional, pluralistic dimension—notwithstanding all historical processes and official acts of repression, exclusion, erasure, and forgetting” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 57). The act of erasing of historic facts from the recorded history is part of the hegemonic system. The literature of marginal ethnic spaces revisits the past to address the blind spots and dismantle the stereotypical constructions.

Maurice Kenny’s Mary Margaret from the short story “She-Who-Speaks-with-Bear” is anxious to protect the culture specific images and the legacy of her tradition. Kenny’s story critically reviews the attitude of the foreigners to the Native American culture. He centres the plot on a tiny bear that the central character Mary Margaret from a Native American tribal settlement keeps with her in a very small hand bag when she moves to the convent school. This short story is primarily about the traumatic and claustrophobic experiences that Mary Margaret receives from the new place. For the nuns of the Christian convent school, the customs and rituals of the Native American tribal people are pagan and alien. The bear for her symbolizes her culture and is transferred to her from her grandmother, so it represents her personal feelings and the collective memories of her tribal life. Being displaced from her community and misplaced among the strangers who view her with contempt, her only relief is the bear that she carries as a symbol of her ethnicity.

Mary Margaret believed in the superpower of the bear and it is a symbol of her strong ethnic connections. As it is with many of Kenny’s stories, the grandparents appear as a significant motif here also. It is the grandmother who gave the bear to the girl. This signifies the unending imparting of the tradition from one generation to the

other. The narrative of the short story incorporates a lot of descriptions about the Native American ways of life. Being accused of paganism when the nuns chastise her, she cries thinking that it is not Indian to cry and besides it is really the men who shouldn't cry or show feelings. The girl receives the news of her mother's sickness from the bear. This supernatural power of the bear is not palpable to the nuns. Though Mary Margaret wants to go to her tribal settlement and visit her mother, the nuns shut her in a dark room. From there she listens to the voice of her mother and realises that she is dead: "Her mother's voice had come down from the Spirit World. Mary Margaret could hear her mom,..." (108).

Through the words of another nun in the house who is empathetic towards the Indians and with a broader mind to accommodate different cultures, Kenny explains the cultural importance of bears, "The bear is very important to Indians. It is a large part of their culture. It is part of their rituals. Very big in Indian thinking. It is a form of medicine. I've heard it is said that the bear has powers ... very special powers" (106-107). The huge gulf between the Native culture and the imported culture is intensely depicted in the short story. The story ends with the note: "Mary Margaret still hears those screams in Montana, her home, as she continues to speak to bear" (109).

Maurice Kenny writes about a passive form of cultural forgetting in which the product of cultural memory is destroyed on one level and he keeps alive the same cultural memory artefact through his fiction. Also his fiction is becoming a cultural memory in itself: "The passive form of cultural forgetting is related to non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind. In these cases the objects are not materially destroyed; they fall out of the frames of attention, valuation, and use" (*Cultural Memory Studies* 98). The amulet that Mary Margaret carries is a site of cultural memory that the collective psyche of the tribe

could ceaselessly associate with. The description of powers associated with the magical bear and the girl's deep connection with it potentially evoke a sense of ethnic bonding among the fragmented tribal communities. Through the narration of their culture specific attributes that are eroded to a certain extent, Kenny concretises the same as part of political resistance.

Kenny explicitly speaks of the losing sense of ethnic pride with respect to the Native American communities in his prose pieces and the same becomes an implicit expression in his short fiction and poems. The effect of a fictional work is different from that of a poem. Imaginative writing has got the capacity of reaching the common man and hence it is with the power of imparting the impetus for a change. The need for continuity in the current Native American scenario and its practicality through transitive memories are exposed in the essay collection *Fugitive Poses*. The way in which Gerald Vizenor incorporates transitive memories in his works and its power are in the same way applicable to other writers of the Native American scenario who follow the same paths of memory and past narration: "The power of transitive memories comes partly through vitality and continuance. We exist and discover our reality through acts of "storying" our relatedness, incorporating the multifaceted butterfly-eyeness of our being" (Vizenor 20).

Kimberly M Blaeser argues how transitive memories employ the connection and link between existence and survivance: "But the significance of this memory telling is to underscore the vital continuance – the connection or transitive nature of memory, the "tease of story", the transmotion that links myth, natural reason, experience, story, and imagination to become an act of survivance" (76). Maurice Kenny's accounts of the past, tradition, and the ethnic correlatives in his fiction and poetry can be paralleled with Blaeser's views.

Maurice Kenny takes an extra effort throughout his oeuvre to retain the tradition and culture of his tribe, the Mohawks. He takes up this strategy in various ways. Both fictional as well as non-fictional pieces from him are replete with his cultural motifs and symbols. In an essay appeared in the collection *Backward to Forward* he speaks about the hunter instinct in him. “And I never become a Wall Street broker but a hunter of words, of songs. I am still hunting” (125). He asserts that, he is a hunter of words, a writer. He compares his process of aesthetic writing with hunting and that was a cultural practice of the people of his tribe. Though the people of his community are not involved in it now, he used the same motif to signify writing. He uses it as a metaphor to refer to his writing profession. The hunter instinct in the author is an invisible connection with the ancestors. When he deliberately brings this to his works it becomes a call for all the people of his tribe. “...I am still at the window staring out at the high peaks of the Adirondacks while ‘winter in residence’ in Saranac Lake during the deer-hunting season. Bear season has just nicely closed, and deer opened this very morning” (125).

When the author speaks about nature passionately, he is in fact searching for memories, for the past, for his old tradition and culture. When he claims himself to be a hunter of words keeping in mind his father’s and ancestors’ profession and hobby of hunting with deep involvement, he is actually longing for his past tradition with words. The web of collective experiences is around him and within him:

I have hunted not only words and images, metaphors, but, to my mother’s relish, also song. I have heard the cedar sing, I have listened to the white pine, I have imitated white-tail deer and hawk and cocked an ear even to the more plain song of robin, a running brook, chinory weaving on summer winds. I have sung the round dance of the Lighthouse feet stomping the wooden floor, drum beating, singers’

throats throbbing. I have sung the *adowe*, I have wailed at death, I have chortled at weddings, I have attempted to lyric all the sounds of the earth, not only of us two-legged but of the four-legged, the winged, and those of the waters. (125-126)

It is from the past and from the predecessors that they find their vision of life: “Surely, because my father found so much beauty and joy in the woods and the lakes and rivers, I too found this same beauty and freedom” (130). Kenny asks the coming generation to follow their ancestors which would only help them, the marginalized community, to come back and occupy their space. This continuity is essential for the marginalized communities to resist hegemonic structures. Regarding the connection between the past and the present in Kenny’s works, Patrick Barrons states: “Assisted with a powerful imagination, Kenny makes the past intelligible; bridges gaps between eras, cultures, and people; and translates time” (4). Kenny’s imaginative fiction and poetry work as a force of celebrating the culture of the Mohawk tribe. Kenny’s poetry incorporates images to convey the significance of the past in the present and the future generations. The rain which falls on a fertile land would be productive and this productivity is what Kenny tries to develop from the Native American land.

The integration of the fragmented collective identity is not an easy task. Kenny’s works aim at such an end. He strongly believes in the continuation of tradition from generation to generation for he trusts that he himself is a product of his ancestors and their cultural legacy. As he notes in his prose collection *Backward to Forward*, “I have created of wolf or berry, my ancestors such as Molly Brant or Ely Parker, my Aunt Jennie...Whose own life-pain is with me still; my father’s dreams and victories...” (133). Kenny considers himself as nothing but an extension of his ancestors. His fiction too is firmly rooted in the Native American soil. “Surely, because my father found so

much beauty and joy in the woods and the lakes and rivers, I too found this same beauty and freedom...I thought I was running away from my father's influence, and the opposite was true... that place, that home is" (130-132). He believes in the inescapable tie with his tradition and the need to carry it over to the coming generations.

Rites and rituals are central to the Indian culture: "There is no doubt in my mind that picking wild strawberries was a ceremony, and to this day it has offered me a better look at the grasses of the world ... this better and enrichment" (138). A cultural ceremony is something sacred which inculcates a sense of togetherness and antiquity and also continued over generations. Kenny celebrates his culture specific activities as a ceremony and makes sure it is carried over to the next generation. And he also makes a clear distinction of the Native Americans from the other people so that the fragmented self of the Natives would get cured in the realization of how unique and once unified they are in terms of their culture and tradition, "Making clear separation from them and us, we are Native Americans not like you in outlook, visions and even in eating habits" (139). Kenny's ethnic consciousness and the determination to carry over the traditional elements to the next generation get reflected in all his writings. He writes about his tribal legacy and proclaims the uniqueness, thus invites the tribal people to participate in the continuity of ethnicity.

According to the essay "The Ground of Memory: Vizenor, Land, Language" the correlation between memory, consciousness and language is:

Whatever consciousness may ultimately be, memory is the mirror of consciousness. If an ancient linguist conceived, consciousness is "thinking together", i.e., the awareness that exists in relationship, in movement, in juxtaposition, in the existential realities of interconnection,

then memory is the record, the mirror, the further discursive loop of those interconnections that are consciousness. Imagination, further, might be direct experience of the energy itself, and memory might be that energy reflected through consciousness, of matter and mind. (*Native American Survivance* 91-92)

The attempt of survival of the Native American writers is in language. They construct a past in language which becomes a reference to their own communities and the world outside. The narrative construction or the reclamation of the past is primarily founded on memories, “Memory is perhaps a universal term that may act as a cross-cultural gateway to that Indigenous world view of an animate presence in matter” (97). Gerald Vizenor speaks of how ancestral knowledge works through the repeated usage of them in literary works: “Recurring theme of “heirs” and “heirship” both invoke and perform this ancient value... focusing memory as inheritance, as genealogy, as the ground of family and nation...The dynamic of ground as remembering posterity is the genealogical application of morality, where death is not a terminal creed but one part of a cycle of the generations” (98-99). Kenny’s narrative space thus profusely incorporates the elements of the culture and the tradition of the Native American tribal communities in general and his tribe in particular.

The same indulgence with the native culture and tradition can be identified with the writings of Narayan also. The short story “Thenvarikka” by him chronicles the tribal vision on nature and envisages human being’s indivisible relationship with it. Ayyappan, the central character of the story, is the eldest member of a tribal family in the modern period. He carries with him the traditional attitude towards every being in the world. Ayyappan attributes humaneness to all the beings of nature, as for the tribal people each and every organism in the world is eternally connected to each other. The

plot of “Thenvarikka” revolves around an old jackfruit tree which is about to be cut down in order to plant rubber saplings. The thenvarikka becomes a mnemonic object that signifies a plethora of cultural memories. Remembering the ideas of Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann puts: “On the social level, with respect to groups and societies, the role of external symbols becomes even more important, because groups which, of course, do not “have” a memory tend to “make” themselves one by means of things meant as reminders such as monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and other mnemonic institutions” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 111).

Ayyappan could not even imagine his yard without the jackfruit tree, “Do the leaves fall with a cry, Ayyappan wondered as he looked at the Thenvarikka. A great grandfather who looked down benevolently at his home” (33). While looking at the tree now he feels as if it cries in despair, because he attributes his own feelings upon it. The memories of his ancestors too are associated with the tree. For Ayyappan the thenvarikka encapsulates everything of the tribal tradition that is gone for ever. Being an elderly member of a displaced and misplaced community, he strives to hold back what is left as a signifier to his ethnic past. In the essay “From Collective Memory to the Sociology of Mnemonic Practices and Products”, Jeffrey K. Olick points out that objects that signify the past, memories of a shared past and its representations come under the categorisation of collective memories:

For upon closer examination, collective memory really refers to a wide variety of mnemonic products and practices, often quite different from one another. The former (products) include stories, rituals, books, statues, presentations, speeches, images, pictures, records, historical studies, surveys, etc.; the latter (practices) include reminiscence, recall, representation, commemoration, celebration, regret, renunciation,

disavowal, denial, rationalization, excuse, acknowledgment, and many others. (Olick 158)

It is Ayyappan's son who has decided to cut down the tree though his children too love the tree just as Ayyappan, "Surendran's children stood in the yard watching their grandfather's expression. "Muthacha, please don't sell the thenvarikka." "Tell it to your father", he replies. With a smarting pain in his heart Ayyappan gazed at the thenvarikka again. There were birds on the branches. But only a few. There used to be hundreds of all kinds" (33). Ayyappan could not control his pain when he is near the tree which is shelter for hundreds of birds and other creatures. The interconnectedness of human beings with other organisms is well placed in the narration, which is something that the tribal communities value deeply.

His gratitude towards the tree is deep because it helped the family to escape from famine with its fruits. "Ayyappan had brought up his children without ever letting them feel the pinch of hunger. He had to thank the thenvarikka for it. Fruits would appear all over the tree in Thulam, two or three on each stalk. Some would fall off, the rest would be half ripe by Makaram. The second crop would also appear in Makaram" (33-34). For Ayyappan and his family the jackfruit tree is far more than just a tree rooted in the soil. It has got roots penetrating into the collective cultural psyche of the old man. The interdependency of all the organisms is convinced by the tribal people and they had systematized their life according to this awareness. Even before cutting a fruit from the tree Ayyappan was deeply concerned about it:

Ayyappan's gaze would suddenly become wistful. The thenvarikka was losing a child. He had to ask the tree's consent before he cut it. He would close his eyes and stand still for a moment as if in

meditation. He would hear the tree speak: Take it, everything I have on me is yours. Sometimes the jackfruit he selected would be high up and he would have to go up the bamboo ladder, tie it up with a rope and let it down gently. (34)

Within the conceptual paradigm of the tribal people, nature provides not only for the humans but also for all the other creatures. Ayyappan used to leave a portion of the jackfruits to the birds, squirrels and other creatures and they leave the seeds on the ground, “Nature's way of ensuring that new jack fruit trees replaced the old” (35). He speaks to the tree as if it is another being with a mind and soul, “It was dusk. Ayyappan leaned on the thenvarikka. A wind blew like a long sigh. How thick the trunk was! Thick enough to hide a man standing on the other side from sight. Why didn't you stay trim, Ayyappan asked the tree, it's your bulging middle that makes people eye you with greed” (35). His monologue to the tree proves his feeling of empathy for it which is integral to a tribal psyche. It also reflects the attitude of those who are not part of the tribal community. Narayan’s narration reflects the separation between the attitude of the elder generation of the tribal community and that of the younger generation who are under the influence of foreign cultures. The dichotomy of both the visions helps to enhance the superiority of the tribal tradition.

Ayyappan as well as Surendran’s wife Leela tried to convince Surendran not to cut down the tree but in vain. With an intense sense of remorse Ayyappan listens to the tree. He feels as if the tree asks him to remember the old days and his ancestors who planted it there. Narayan’s use of pathetic fallacy helps the reader to imagine the powerful connection of human beings with nature. When Ayyappan looks at the tree, it takes human attributes and talks to him. For him the tree is a signifier of his tradition. And it is in this tradition that he finds the meaning of his existence:

Have you forgotten your grandfather who planted me, the thenvarikka seemed to ask Ayyappan. He was the one who fiercely protected me. Forget being thin or fat. I wouldn't have lasted a full year if my fruits were watery or sour. Think of the generations of children who have eaten my fruit and played under my shade. But some of you thought of selling me. Ayyappan tried to convince Surendran against selling the thenvarikka. Surendran did not look at his father's face... 'Ayyappan staggered out of the house and walked away down the path. He felt the earth rumbling under his feet.' (36)

Ayyappan felt that cutting down of the tree as a blow to his own existence. Surendran and Ayyappan are representatives of two opposing world views. As the rubber saplings grew in the place of the 'thenvarikka' the balance of that small unit of ecosystem has been lost. Water in the well dried up and the heavy rain caused soil erosion and later on land sliding. More than a provider of food during the tough times, the thenvarikka was the protector of the land. It helped the soil to be firm and the water to retain. The rubber saplings grew faster yet it disrupted the balance of nature, "For water Leela had now to walk to the house down the hill" (37). Narayan narrates the sudden changes in the ecosystem after the cutting down of the thenvarikka and the hazards followed:

The land on the slope had slipped. Boulders and stones were littered all over the yard. Did he hear his father's derisive laugh, Surendran looked back startled. He thought he heard Ayyappan's gentle voice: Son, you don't know anything about the bond between a tree and the earth which sustains it. Cut the tree and the earth is angry. It withdraws all the water from human beings, shakes the top soil loose and sends the hills tumbling. "Go, go away to where mother earth will take you into her lap.

Go away". Surendran stared at the darkening sky. Where shall I go, father. (37)

Celebrating the tribal ways is a step towards claiming space in the modern socio-political scenario. Narayan's literary endeavours are directed towards this aim of reclaiming. These narrations help to elevate the status of the tribal ways of life above the foreign cultures. Balachandran Vadakkedath's view on the short story "Thenvarikka" focuses on the unending connective force that a tree creates among the generations:

The central character of the story "Thenvarikka" is a huge, old jackfruit tree. A tree! According to Ayyappan is not a piece of wood which can be cut down at any time...It has become a historical transaction now. The tale of it can reach the ages of grandfathers who lived long ago. It means that Thenvarikka is the symbol of an age and a culture. When power is applied on that symbol, the plot evolves as a discourse of nature-human relationship. Ayyappan realizes that the discourse of his cultural history is being lost when that tree was chopped. (20)

The tree for Ayyappan is a mnemonic object that takes him to the legacy of his culture. Narayan's short story takes the readers to the commemorative space to identify the significance of loss and lament over it. Through the short story the cultural memory of the tribal community is revisited. As exactly in the way the tree is a discourse of historic transaction for Ayyappan, the entire tribal tradition for Narayan is a powerful cultural as well as historic counter discourse. In that sense he is an alter ego of the author himself. Both of them recognise the power of traditional elements. When Ayyappan identifies

how the old jackfruit tree helps to balance the ecosystem, Narayan identifies how the tradition and culture of the tribal communities act as a cohesive force to strengthen the bond between the tribal people who are marginalised and scattered.

Narayan's short story "The Birth of a Prophet" is indeed a critical comment on the degradation of the tribal culture and tradition through religious conversion. It portrays a tribal, Chandran, who gets converted to the Pentecostal church for he wants to cure his only son. Through the recollection of the process of conversion of the tribal people, Narayan records the loss of their culture. Though the conversion gave them all the necessary means to live, it perpetually erased the entire cultural elements specific to their tribe. The short story portrays a family whose members are in poverty and ailment getting converted and thereby achieving a better life. Ravi Shankar Prasad et. al. in the work *Identity, Gender and Poverty in Indian Tribes* note the reasons for the adoption of alien religions by the tribals: "The adoption of alien religions and practices can create disharmony. Many of the Christian missions openly advise the tribal people to change their religion and rid themselves of the wrath of traditional deities..." (*Identity, Gender and Poverty in Indian Tribes* 7). The process of conversion is part of the cultural memory of the tribal people yet rather than projecting the tribal grandeur of explicit trauma, it reflects a period of transformation and also records the loss of tribal tradition and culture.

Narayan laments the loss of tribal culture which is an aftermath of the encroachment of foreign religions into the tribal communities. What makes them think about a conversion is worthy of attention. They get attracted to the new systems as their own tribal background fails to offer them any comfort. This is because of the intrusion of the hegemonic classes and their exploitative measures. And also because of the government, which is opaque to the issues of them. Balachandran Vadakkedath in his

essay “Aparam” analyses the condition of the tribal communities and how they are forced to leave their tradition and customs behind and embrace new cultures:

A community which is attacked by different cultures before acquiring consciousness about the knowledge of their own identity gradually becomes influenced by it. More precisely they began to experience the heaviness of colonization. In a sense being a tribal Dalit, is a system of colonization. Even their system of devotion itself is being alienated. They are being alienated intellectually also. A family rejoicing within an ideological surrounding is described in the story “Pravachakante Piravi”.... Narayan shares various examples of how hunger and poverty leads to the exploitation of a community. The disease becomes the reason for religious exploitation. It is not a fresh news, of how the faith in God enters in the name of service and how a society is completely transformed by putting forward certain values, but for Narayan it is an agony of losing the reality and the values of identity.

(22)

An awareness of the value of ethnic identity is absent in the people of tribal communities as a result of the ideologies propagated by the power-holders in course of time. This eventually leads the tribal people to betray their tradition when they feel that an unknown religion or culture would yield them good. In his interview to M. K. Harikmar, Narayan speaks of the same issue that is being portrayed in the short story. The conversion of the tribal people into other communities proved deceptive to the unique tribal culture and tradition. Though the conversion helps the tribal people at various levels, Narayan openly admits his pain over the loss of tribal culture:

Another problem is the conversion of the tribals. The tribals had been converted by offering them financial and medical support and education. The converted tribals were able to move ahead in the social strata because they had the support from the new religion and a few among them had become influential officers. But along with that it had an adverse impact on the tribal strength and their tradition. Another problem which hinders the progress of the tribals is that the reservation and the financial concessions provided for the genuine tribals were seized by the converted tribals. It should be noted that the tribals who have accepted the new religion while applying for the jobs, use the old caste name. If reservation concessions are made legally favourable to the converted tribals who enjoy a comparatively good living condition, support and encouragement, the harm caused to the traditional tribals is indescribable. This results in the extinction of the traditional tribals. (16-17)

Through the portrayal of the process of conversion of a tribal family Narayan critically comments on one among the many ways in which the tribal tradition and culture get dispossessed. In the political act of raising the voice for the rights of the tribal people they need to retain their connection with their ethnic roots and reclaim their belongingness. Religious conversion becomes a threat to this united action. Yet from the short story it is apparent that the reason for the conversion is of the basic and unquenchable thirst for life. In the rudimentary social process of the marginalization of the tribal communities they lost the essential prospects of living. Narayan has crafted the short story in such a way as to place Chandran in a flawless plane and blames the system that forces him to convert. Through the short story rather than reasserting culture

specific symbols Narayan speaks of the fragmentation and the disintegration of the ethnic tradition. The short story thus becomes a cultural memory of a specific transforming phase.

Narayan's short story "Mythum Vithum" written in Malayalam which has not yet been translated into English revisits the cultural memory of the old rituals and other culture specific elements. The short story portrays Mutharayan and his family who strictly follow the tribal culture into which they are born. The story introduces Mutharayan and his grandson Thandan as the last members of the glorious past of the Araya community. After the betrayal, Mutharayan's family and the community got disintegrated and dispossessed. Though essentially the story focuses on the disintegration of the Araya community, Narayan elaborates upon the rituals and customs practised by the tribal clan. Reinvention and reclaiming of the cultural memories of the old rituals is a strategic move towards the achievement of a collective identity. Narayan being an author from a fragmented tribal community, strives to achieve the collective identity of the community and hence the collective spirit to resist. There is a brilliant narration of the rituals that the Araya community follow and with which they identify their cultural bonding. The ritual acts as a medium to bond them together with a pride over their culture:

Five men are there for melam, three uruttu chenda and three ilathalam. "Kochenne bring a panambu", the Karanavar ordered. The girl brought the panambu. She spread it on the tents. "Please sit down, I will come back soon". Saying this, the little girl went inside to take something. By wiping his sweat with a towel one among the melakkar said to the Karanavar: "There are two more places to visit. Shall we

begin". They stood in a circle in the tent, after praying with the lamp, they started performing on the chenda. (109)

The amplifications over the ritual impart the deep sense of prestige and legacy of the Araya community which was a strong clan with its own unique tradition and belief system and also enjoyed a prestigious position in the society.

The people around came with burning lamps to watch the Garudan Thookkam Parava and to give offerings. It is the night of Pooyam star in the month of Makaram. The Garudan Thookkam is the most important ritual for the Karikkottamma. The Arayas are the subjects of Keezhmala. The leaders among them conduct the Garudan Thookkam as ritual and others give offerings when they can afford. The palace of the King Adithya Varma, who ruled the place, and the temple of the Goddess Bhadrakali are at Karikkott. The Arayas who are loyal to the king and devoted to the Goddess Bhadrakali will offer anything needed for Karikkottamma. One of the days of the temple festival is their right. There are Arayas in the south. They have not become a group. Many who are in the south and east are those who came from Punnatt, south of Koodathoor Vindhyan. There are temples of the Devi in the colony of the Arayas. They themselves are the priests and the oracle there. The importance is for Karikkottamma. (109-110)

Mutharayan's grandson, Thandan is the central character of the story who is destined to carry over the legacy of the community forward. Thandan carries with him all the unique features of the tribal clan, "There is 'kuduma' on his forehead and a shining 'kundala' in his ear" (110). The grand mythical story of betrayal of the Araya

community is revisited by Narayan through his narrative and the cultural memory is thus revisited and retained.

The ritual of the ‘Garudan Parava’ forms the basis of the cultural background of the Araya community. With the ritual, they assert their strong bond with the King and thereby register their space in the social system. Though they are a class lesser in prestige than many other classes, they enjoy their unique privileges. They have their own culture specific correlatives that bind them together:

Garudan parava is not a game. A practice to be learnt from a skilled ‘guru’, with rigorous fasting, and with good flexibility of body, and with a proper sense of rhythm. We can realise his (Thandan’s) talent today. To fly as an eagle in the house of Illikkunel Arayan is a privilege. Mutharayan was not only a chief but a strict and generous person in the neighbourhood. It is the ‘guru’ himself who dressed the costume on the child. Kacha which is seven ‘muzham’ in length, folded four times, is tied around the waist. An outer garment of white and red which covers the knees, a robe like a blouse which is back open and with long sleeves,...The little boy who prayed to the Bhagavathi and bowed before the guru and the chief after exchanging the dakshina, addressed the audience also. Within seconds of the rhythm falling on the ‘uruttuchenda’, the steps of garudan changed. (111)

The story passes its initial phase as the ritual ends and the narrative of the betrayal starts. According to the custom the King used to meet the Arayas after the ritual of the ‘Garudan Parava’ every year. The community considers it as an esteemed moment which re-assures their harmony with the King and other sections of the society. Their

existence as a community and their relevance are displayed through the meeting with the King. Yet as the King hasn't come to meet the Arayas that year, they have the intuition of a betrayal, "When the ritual ends, the King should meet the Arayas. But on this occasion it didn't happen. The awful face of the minister Thimmayyan was filled with resentment. Anxiety and fear rushed into the minds of most of the people. Some danger is brewing somewhere. The Arayas prayed to the Devi fervently. Have mercy on us Bhagavathy" (113). Through the fictional representation of the ritual and the myth of the Araya community Narayan concretises it in the popular culture and render it with the possibility to travel across centuries.

When the King denies to meet the Arayas, Mutharayan smells the cheating of Thimmayyan. He knows that Thimmayyan is greedy and he has an eye on the precious belongings that the Araya community own as hereditary possessions:

Mutharayan was startled when the King refused to meet them. The minister Thimmayyan is cruel and a fraud. He has his eyes not only on his own family but also on the Araya community: the golden bunch of fruits studded with jewels, a cow named Kamadhenu with five nipples and fitting features, and a copper vessel with four ears. When ten thousand 'para' rice is ripened, only after one-sixth of it is given to the needs of the kingdom, the rest is taken for their own use. But the inefficient King who doesn't have any children or heir would only listen to the words of the cruel Thimmayyan. (113).

Mutharayan's clever move of building a carved pillar and keeping the belongings inside it, can be considered as a correlative to his desire to keep his tradition and culture forever. The traditional possessions are signifiers to his culture which he is

destined to preserve. Mutharayan held all his hopes upon Thandan, he was brilliant and brave. He believed that Thandan would be capable of carrying forward the legacy of his tribal clan at any cost: “It is true; the scripts were lost long ago. If so, as per the tradition, when Thandan was a kid, he had been taught the stories in the *Puranas*, the parables and the traditional medicines orally and also the basics of martial arts. Pleased with his exceptional intelligence and skill two earrings of a special fashion have been made for him. He has the courage to lead the community” (114). Mutharayan is aware of the fact that the authentic signifiers such as the script of the tribal language are lost in course of time. He now realizes that what is left of his tradition must be preserved anyway. And for this mission he identifies Thandan and he bestows all his hope of perpetuating the tribal tradition on him.

Since Narayan through the short story builds up a mythical world which imparts the Araya community’s story of past glory and struggle for survival, he explores a mythical world of magic and realism:

Nobody dared to harm Thandan. There was a command to the priest to close the altar before he arrived. Thandan was downhearted at not being able to get the Devi darshanam. I wasn’t late to set off from home. Didn’t the priest come yet? Or is the temple closed at the wrong time? Devi, please grant me darshanam. When standing and praying devotedly with hands joined together, a voice of a lady is heard, “Let’s go”. When about to look back, she objected. “You can walk. Needn’t look at me.” Thandan reached the middle of a forest following a beam of light which fell at his feet. Though the Devi is in my mind and tongue, who will be in my back? He stayed there thinking like this. (115)

The goddess herself is coming with Thandan, an ultimate signifier of the glory of the Araya community. While recounting the story again in his narrative, Narayan moves to the direction of instilling the spirit of ethnic pride within the community, “He crossed the Thandaru chanting the Devi manthras. Then stopped abruptly when he reached the middle of the Illikkunnu. The flowers of the pala tree have bloomed. Sweet fragrance spread around. “I will sit on this stone. You needn’t go anywhere searching for me. I am in your mind,” he heard the words of the Devi. (115)

Thimmayyan, being the king’s minister, represents the hegemonic class who tries to exploit and manipulate the Araya community. In order to get hold of the possessions of Mutharayan forever and to end the privileges of the Araya community Thimmayyan implemented his plan of killing Thandan:

To kill Thandan, Thimmayyan sent two swordsmen. They stabbed from either side of the way when Thandan came back after his bath in the river. Not only that he was not wounded but also the swords were captured by Thandan. As fast as lightning he conquered both of them. “Hum... Is it possible to kill me who has the blessings of the Devi? That too without my permission. Tell me. Who are you? (116)

Narayan focuses on Thandan’s power to make the decision upon his own death which the goddess herself has given him. Repossessing the old legend would evoke a collective pride over the past of the community which is indeed important for any marginalized community to resist:

“Didn’t you spellbind and take away the Goddess through black magic? You and your community will perish”.

“I didn’t commit any mistake.”

“It is a bigger mistake that you are still alive. There is only one way not to destroy the community. That will be your death”.

“Please give an order. If the community can be saved by my death, I am here. You yourself can do it.” (116)

For the people of the Araya community it was important to keep the tribal clan intact than losing one's life. Thandan was thus ready to lose his life if it is necessary to protect his tribal clan. Thimmayyan thus murdered Thandan and made it possible to get the possessions and stop the privileges of the Arayas:

The troop of soldiers, who demolished the pillar, confiscated Mutharayan's treasure. The houses were set on fire. Thimmayyan brought the Vellalas to the Keezhmala from where the Arayas had left altogether. Three hundred Munnoottikkar from Nanchinadu and five hundred Anjoottikkar from Tenkasi were also brought. May be it is because of the curse of the Devi that after the death of Adithya Varma, the royal line became extinct. Thimmayyan also died. (118)

When the goddess herself avenges for the Araya community it again shows the glory of the community and the tragic fate they faced. The transformation that the land of the Arayas underwent in course of time and the new inhabitants and owners are mentioned in the short story: “Keezhmalanadu then became part of Travancore. The deserted land became the property of certain Namboothiri illams and was known as ‘Cherikkal’” (118). The Arayas who had flown from the land later became inhabitants of the hilly areas and thus they became known as Malayarayas, “At the time of Thimmayyan, the Arayas who withdrew from the plains due to their inability to secure their agriculture

from the animals, found refuge on the valleys. The forests and the hills were no one's property" (119).

The people of the new land too offered them nothing but exploitation. They were hardworking and innocent, thus they were manipulated by the upper class people:

The Arayas won't go to others for wages or share cultivation with strangers. The Janmis summoned the Arayas, who were innocent and honest. The trick of yielding gold from the soil is known only to them who were hard working. They were more conservative in matters of untouchability than the Namboothiris. After the cultivation of the land you can harvest the crops. A portion of the land cleared will be given to you. The Arayas believed that. A fragment of the rest of the land was given to the Catholics who came from the mid-Travancore for cultivation. (119)

About the life and plight of the Arayas there are many stories, yet the Arayas themselves are the victims of exploitation in all of them, "A rumour spread that Thandan is an Eezhava and his story is different. Failure and rejection were still upon the Arayas" (119). Prasad and Sinha explain the necessity to articulate counter narratives as:

The need for highlighting the idea of 'past' in a tradition seems to be a post-colonial articulation. Since it was coined as a counterpoise to modernity it has ideationally accepted the arrival of a phenomenon called modernity. Tradition is always seen from the prism of the present even if conceived as a process. Our past does not remain independent in isolation in pure form... All that we know or claim to know is about

what we perceive. And what we perceive is through a prism already construed and formalised. Tradition is perceived through a prism, and is not divorced from the present and a desired future. (*Identity, Gender and Poverty in Indian Tribes* 42)

Myths and rituals are material as well as symbolic negotiations between the individual and the collective. Those in particular render an individual with a sense of belongingness and inculcate a collective identity. This helps in perpetuating the unity and continuity of an ethnic group. Rituals and myths thus cement the social fabric and strengthen the collective spirit. It is hence impossible to separate the traces of ancient belief systems from the literary renderings of the indigenous communities. As Balachandran Vadakkedath observes,

A literature where the black people proclaimed their identity has not yet appeared in Malayalam in its own way. But the strangeness which they suffer has been expressed in the works of Narayan and some others. In that there is a regret at confronting the sophisticated masses. Though the people in this community don't consider colour as a major problem, there is surrender to the symbols of the old culture. It emphasizes the need for the social exchange of the black culture. So the symbols of that old cultural lesson cannot be avoided from the attempts of the teachings of the black writings of the tribals and the Dalits. (20)

With great emphasis Narayan revisits the old customs and culture of the tribal clan. The details of the past tradition are keenly elaborated here as exactly as he does in most of his fiction. This reclaiming is strategic as it helps to re-configure the self and the ethnicity of the tribal community. This re-configuring in course of time would aid to resist the hegemonic structures effectively.

The works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny are narratives of the tradition and the culture of their respective tribes through multi-layered perspectives. Though both the writers use different modes to approach the same theme both of them finally reach at the point of resisting and superseding the existing paradigm of their history and cultural memory that are rendered by the hegemonic system. The narrative scenario and cultural elements that both the writers offer through their fictional universe reinvent and preserve the cultural memories of the tribes and act as agents of ethnic integration and identity revision.

All the works considered for the study in this chapter can justifiably be brought under the scope of the theory of cultural memory of triumph. With the word 'triumph' the chapter signifies all the elements that are unique to tribal tradition and culture that would inculcate an emotion of pride, oneness and belongingness. For both the Mohawk and the Malayaraya communities there are unique cultural and ethnic signifiers that the members of the new generation would comfortably forget. These elements, they strategically use in their fiction to induce a political mobilization through the evoking of their ethnic pride. All these short stories are commemorative spaces of literary expression.

Chapter IV

Remembrance and Resistance: Memory and Trauma across Genres

This chapter is an attempt to analyse how the authors in consideration have successfully explored the aspect of memories of cultural trauma and triumph in the genres other than short fiction which is common to both of them. Apart from short fiction Maurice Kenny has written numerous poems. There are a handful of novels to Narayan's credit. The thesis has already offered an in-depth analysis of how the short stories of both the writers represent cultural memories of trauma and glory. Even though the same theme is infused in other genres by the authors, the way in which they have executed it is different. It is obvious that the stylistic parameters change while analysing a short story, a poem and a novel. Maurice Kenny's poetry abounds with images and symbols of trauma and tradition. He successfully manipulates the stylistics of poetry at different levels in order to communicate the theme of trauma and glory with the readers. An analysis of the poetry of Kenny forms the first part of the chapter. The various poetic devices that Kenny used and the ways in which he crafted the structure and diction of his poems to effectively represent cultural memories of cultural trauma and triumph are scrutinised. The second part of the chapter brings to light the execution of the same theme by Narayan in his novels. Through the vast canvas of a novel with numerous characters, situations and detailed plot structure, Narayan loudly proclaims the cultural alienation and dispossession that the different tribal communities of Kerala have experienced.

As it is evident in the fiction of Maurice Kenny, his poetry is also a space of prolific cultural expression. His verse aptly presents the process of the dismantling of the cultural fabric of the indigenous people and the vehement strife of them to restore it. In his poetry also Kenny constitutes the elements of cultural memories at various levels as a tool to restore the cultural fabric. The poetic expressions of Kenny are intensely concerned with the mnemonic presence of the past in the present. All his works expose the connection between the past and the present and they elucidate the various functions that memories realise in the constitution of identity. The repeated use of certain images and symbols in Maurice Kenny can be considered as an exemplification of how memory representation is viable to purposeful selection and denial. The production of meaning in every culture depends on the process of mnemonic practices where the transaction between the past and the present determines a sense of the self in isolation and as belonging to a collection. Kenny works in reaction to the dominant culture's practice of purposeful and violent process of cultural destruction.

The cultural memory of tradition and trauma are brilliantly mixed together by Maurice Kenny in the poem "I Am the Sun" from which it is rather impossible to separate the two. The poem is subtitled "A Song of Praise, Defiance and Determination" and starts with an epilogue from Black Elk, the medicine man of the Oglala Lakota people. Lakota is one of the two divisions of the Sioux, the Native American tribe, divided on the basis of language. Oglala is one of the seven tribes of the Lakota people. The poem is an act of repetition in which the notorious Wounded Knee Massacre is remembered and relived. The representation of the traumatic incident defines the Native American cultural identity in the contemporary cultural scenario. The significance of factual documentation in fiction as discussed in the

preceding chapters can be applied here as well. The vital role of cultural memory in the case of the marginalised communities arises from the fact that they are victims of the trauma of assimilation. The process of assimilation invariably incorporates the violent act of forgetting: “Assimilation, the transition of one group into another one, is usually accompanied by an imperative to forget the memories connected with the original identity” (Assmann 114). The act of perpetual commemoration is thus a realisation of belonging and a re-concretisation of one’s ethnic and cultural associations.

The epilogue from Black Elk’s words reasserts the cultural memory of the Native Americans in general and it functions as a reliving of the trauma since his words translate the traumatic mass killings that had occurred among the various Native American tribes:

I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back from this high hill of old age, I can see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there, and was buried in blizzard. A people’s dream died there. It was a beautiful dream... the nation’s hoop is broken and scattered. (39)

The intensity of cultural trauma is being re-narrated with much pain in these lines. Along with the death of the people of the community their dreams are also withered and diminished. Thus it resulted in the disintegration of a culture and the existence of the rest of the people of the community. As he relives his pain through words, the trauma is revisited and relieved. This representation aids the cultural community to reinvent themselves as a group with a common painful past and thus

reconfigure the collective identity. Hence, it is the resurrection of the dead and buried dreams of the collective ethnic set. The significance of narrating cultural trauma is asserted when Black Elk identifies it as a metaphor of a community's endless dream deferment. The brutal massacre of 1890 at Wounded Knee wiped out around two hundred lives from the Lakota people, finally suppressing their last acts of resistance and thereby washing out their dreams of being independent and free. He glorifies the buried dreams of the people as beautiful, re-registering their pride over their ethnicity. Inculcating ethnic pride is important for the Native American literature as the culture of them is being degraded, devalued and degenerated. Elk's words reintegrate the broken and scattered system of the specific Native American tribe. The cultural trauma of the tribal people is represented and negotiated in the poetic fabric of Kenny. Through each representation the cultural group is deriving new meanings and defines their cultural identity in the contemporary scenario. The traumatic incidents of the past are getting articulated in Kenny's narrative memory.

When Maurice Kenny incorporates the extract to his poetry it becomes a testimony of truth. It indicates the historical fact that once happened. Kenny's poetic imagination, when it mingles with the facts of collective history of numerous Native American tribal communities, attains the potential to revoke the cultural memory sites. The poetic as well as literary renderings are reconstructions of the past in response to the need of the present day. These reconstructions are viable to ideological and conceptual predispositions. As Brigit Neumann suggests in "The Literary Representation of Memory":

Literary representations of memory are always prefigured by culture-specific configurations of memory and current discourses about the operation of memory... They configure memory representations

because they select and edit elements of culturally given discourse: They combine the real and the imaginary, the remembered and forgotten, and, by means of narrative devices, imaginatively explore the workings of memory, thus offering new perspectives on the past. (334)

Black Elk's narration of the cultural trauma is in itself an evocation of the painful cultural memory. The memory discourse of Kenny infuses both the real and the poetic when he incorporates the words of Black Elk. The ideological and repressive apparatuses that the invaders applied upon the Natives are signified in his words. The poem "I am the Sun" in totality is an assemblage of the native language usages, Kenny's imagination and his cultural reaffirmations. The poem is rendered in simple language yet powerfully captures the trauma that the community experiences. He speaks on behalf of his people. He renders a channel to purge trauma in language. Kenny's lines carry the loss and despair of the past. The lost dreams of the people of his community are expressed vividly. Maurice Kenny uses 'hunting', the traditional vocation of his community as the central image of the poem in simple language with repeated words:

Father, I come;

Mother, I come;

Brother I come;

Father, give us the arrows.

Chankpe Opi Wakpapa! (39)

Kenny's practice of using repeating words and short lines signify the ritualistic chanting of the tribal tradition. It can also be analysed as a tool to adapt the language of

the invaders into his native tongue. The line ‘Chankpe Opi Wakpapa’ (the place where the notorious Wounded Knee massacre happened) given at the end of each stanza of the poem with an exclamation mark is the name of the place where the Wounded Knee Massacre occurred. The repetition of the name of this place renders new meanings to the traumatic incident. While incorporating the phrases of the native language the poem seeks from the reader a familiarity with the tribal language. The peculiarity of poetic diction and the verse structure can be identified as a technique of resisting the hegemonic system of power.

Maurice Kenny’s lines are a validation of remembrance and a return. The return is to his ancestral culture and the traumatic past. He endeavours to inculcate a sense of pride among the scattered people of his tribe. Kenny’s poetic persona remembers the great warriors of his tribe, Big Foot, Black Coyote and Yellow Bird. Throughout the poem Kenny repeatedly asks for arrows. The arrows symbolize the power to fight and resist. In the history, with these arrows the tribal men resisted the imperial powers though in vain. Kenny’s recurring use of the symbol of arrows signifies his intense desire for cultural reintegration and resistance. The poem is a call for the generation of the Native Americans whose dreams are mutilated. It evokes the cultural memory sites of family, relationships, nature worship and hunting. All these aspects are of great significance to the collective tribal memory of the Native American people. Recounting the names of the great warriors of the tribe inculcates among the people of the tribe a cause of pride and a collective urge to reunite.

Like individual remembering, social remembering also needs motives and occasions which are regulated by cultures of remembering; thus it can support the making of social identities over time. In order to systematise such occasions, societies have invented “remembering

occasions” of different kinds, such as commemoration days, monuments, special places, or museums... social identity processes operate upon the basic difference of we/the others. This difference has to be accepted by the members of a society as well as by other societies; only then can it be attributed in socially reliable way. (*Cultural Memory Studies* 196-9)

The poet asks his father to give him the “sky”, the “sun in the east”, and the “night in the west”. This signifies his desire to reintegrate the fragmented cultural fabric by evoking the forces of nature. The anthropocentric sensibility of the invaders discarded the sacredness that the natives associated with nature and its elements. The tribal people’s relationship with nature was mutually complementing:

Father, give us sky;

Father, give us sun in the east;

Father, give us night in the west;

Father, watch our shadows;

Father, give us back our arrows. (39)

The sky, the sun and the night for the people of the Native American tribes are signifiers of their glorious days of the past. Being a group of people who achieves oneness with nature, these elements are inseparable from their life as exactly in the way freedom, belongingness and relationships are inseparable. As Kenny explores these elements in his poetry he reclaims the cultural memories of the community and re-scribes them as a strategic tool. The Native American tribal people generally give importance to relationships and family, this specific tendency is exemplified in the lines along with the trauma of being dispossessed:

Mother, your breast is bare;
 Mother, your breast was not enough
 to sustain us;
 Mother, hold our bones now;
 Mother, we search for our arrows. (40)

Maurice Kenny addresses a mother who is incapable of nourishing her children. In accordance with the tradition of the Native Americans, the land they live is their mother. They call earth 'mother earth'. The mother earth for them is now bare and barren. Hence Kenny searches for his arrows to claim the land back. The revolt that he initiates is with his poetry of remembrance. He asserts the need for a revolt in order to regain social and political agency. The poem is a promise to each and every one of the tribe that one day the land will be their own: "Brother, when our arrows are returned we will seek you" (40). When Kenny calls the sky and the earth "diseased", the displacement, dispossession and the diseased status of the tribal people are attributed to the elements of nature ceaselessly. He expresses his agony of utmost dispossession and displacement through the lines:

Our father is gone;
 Our father is fled
 Our mother has closed her eyes;
 Our mother has closed her mouth;
 Our brother has wandered away;
 Our brother has gone down (40-41).

In the Native American system, the father is the central figure of the family, the bread winner and the protector. The situation of the father being gone and fled marks complete helplessness. The trauma of being alienated from the native culture, ancestry and tradition is being implied in these lines. The experience of trauma is intense since the mother, the solace and nourisher, too closes her mouth, heart and eyes. The relived trauma of being ultimately dispossessed is conveyed through the images of the father and the mother. Kenny's language often takes a ritualistic tone as the lines and images are repeated. The refrain of the poem "Chankpe Opi Wakpapa!" in particular makes the poem nativist and ritualistic and signifies a traumatic recurrence. These stylistic tools are essential for the Native American people to identify themselves and feel a deep connection to Kenny's ritual of writing. Kenny repossesses the blood of Bigfoot, the fear of Black Coyote and the dream of Yellow Bird. Kenny's revolutionary assertions are evident in the lines: "We will put the centre back... In your country" (41). The process of putting the centre back for Kenny is a signifier of relocating the topographies of his ethnic roots and placing it in the soil of a new country that the foreigners have created. Kenny's repeated use of the phrase "your country" creates an effect of irony. The space that once belonged solely to the numerous Native American tribes is now the homeland of foreign invaders. They call it their country.

Maurice Kenny signifies the power of narrating trauma in the lines: "For I am...I stand above the world" (42). The superior position that Kenny attributes to himself is achieved through language and literature. According to Brigit Neumann: "Literature becomes a formative medium within the memory culture which, on the basis of symbol specific characteristics, can fulfil particular functions, functions which cannot be served by other symbol systems" (341). The ultimate provider and source of energy for the earth is the sun and Kenny's poetry becomes the vehicle of the Native American

trauma and memory and thereby energizing the community to attain a unified collective identity. His final cry is to get the arrows back for a new and sacred revolt. The revolt is to recapture his parent culture and tradition. Kenny's poem thus becomes a perfect evocation of cultural memory and it is in itself a fragment of cultural memory as Renate Lachmann observes in the essay "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature":

Literature is culture's memory, not as simple recording device but as a body of commemorative actions that include the knowledge stored by a culture, and virtually all texts a culture has produced and by which a culture is constituted. Writing is both an act of memory and a new interpretation, by which every new text is etched into memory space.
(301)

The trauma of cultural invasion, cultural alienation and disintegration are proclaimed in the poem "I See with My Own Eyes" by Kenny. The recouping through evocation of cultural memories is evident in the poem. It is a traumatic recounting of a desperate youth alienated from the parent culture longing to create a sense of connection. The instinct to fight for the people and achieve integrity and belongingness is the basic assumptions of the poem. 'Arrows' appear as a crucial image in this poem as well. It signifies an intense desire to fight for the culture and for the people: "Give me the arrows, Father give them to me" (43). These lines speak of the situation of the author incapable of any action as he is devoid of a weapon. He seeks to receive the weapon to fight from his father, his parent culture, and his ancestors. The image of the father connotes the ancestral and primordial system of culture. The "paper flowers" and "wreaths" in the poem signify the burial ground of his culture. The poet desperately desires to bring back his culture and generate ethnic consciousness and thereby ethnic cohesion in the people of his tribe. Being a writer, Kenny's arrows are his words. With

his arrows he instigates the sites of memory and trauma and thereby recast an identity for his people. The aspect of literature being the archival space of culture is reflected in Kenny's poetry: "Every concrete text, as a sketched-out memory space, connotes the micro-space of memory that either represents a culture or appears as that culture" (*Cultural Memory Studies* 301).

The disturbing images of violation such as "brain crushed", "breast crushed", "dried river", "empty prairie" and "leafless cottonwoods" signify the cultural ground acutely traumatised and lifeless. Kenny infuses the images of human world and nature together conveying the essential vision of his tribal ancestry. An in-depth identification of oneself with one's own culture is clear in the poem. The death of his culture is his own death and the culture's burial ground is his own burial ground. The remembering and the representation of the wounds of the cultural community carry within them a revived spirit to fight and resist:

I found out I could fight for my people

I found out

I could fight

for my people

people! (44)

Being a marginalized and dispossessed set of people, Kenny's tribe should work collectively to achieve their agency and resist the hegemonic power structure. For this process of collective action, they have to reconfigure their collective ethnic identity and reclaim their existence. The memories of the marginalised community are counter memories. Literature's role in inseminating cultural identity through the reinvention of cultural memories is inevitable:

Narrative psychologists have pointed out that literature, with their conventionalised narration and highly suggestive myths, provide powerful, often normative models for our own self-narration and interpretation of the past. Apparently when interpreting our own experience, we constantly, and often unconsciously, draw on pre-existing narrative pattern supplied by literature. Thus, by disseminating new interpretations of the past and new models of identity, fictions of memory may also influence how we, as readers, narrate our pasts and ourselves into existence. (*Cultural Memory Studies* 341)

Kenny invokes the power to reintegrate identity and resistance from the archives of cultural memories. Nature for the Native American communities is an archival site of cultural memory as their tradition and culture are interlinked with it. Maurice Kenny's poetry exemplifies the aspect of nature being an ultimate resource of cultural memory. The strong connection with it is the core of their culture. Ethnic identity and existence of the Native people are invariably mixed with the elements of nature. The tradition, rituals and even language have got deep imprints of its elements. Thus nature is a co-text and a context for the literature of the Native Americans. Rather than writing about culture they write about nature and they inscribe trauma and memory in it:

I went to the mountain,

I went to the spirit

of the sky,

of the river.

To await the dream

The mountain rumbled;

Springs broke open from the rock;

I drank clear water. (44-45)

The poet's process of becoming a man and the process of viewing through one's own eyes occur with the forces of nature. It becomes the source of energy, realisation and resistance. The author attributes the cultural trauma to it: "Dizzy in the sun dream,/ I became a man./ I see with my own eye" (45). Kenny infuses several images of pain and destruction in the following lines. All these traumatic scenes are consciously paralleled with urban images:

There is a dry river

A felled cottonwood

An empty prairie,

An open grave...!

There is a saloon in Tulsa

A jail in Denver,

A welfare office in Oakland,

A grave in Dakota. (45)

Equating urban scenes of sophistication and development with devastating scenes of nature offers a telescopic view of how nature and the life of the Natives have drastically changed. The process of invasion in every respect is a cultural trauma that invariably disturbed the basic social and cultural fabric. The cultural trauma of the Native American communities is an on-going process of contemplation that perpetually

generate of meaning. The generations to come would reiterate, identify, articulate and acknowledge the past trauma even though they were not physically present to experience the event of trauma. They define their identity as belonging to a cultural group and locate themselves in the present through identifying the cultural trauma. The transformed social realities of the Natives are implicitly depicted by Kenny. From these images of traumatic cultural transformation the poetic voice emerges into the topography of determination and inspiration. Within Maurice Kenny's poetic universe the re-iterated images of trauma render new definitions to his identity as a person of tribal descent. From this acknowledgement of ethnic identity a new action is propelled:

Give me the arrows
 I will place them in hands
 Not to avenge blood
 But to keep strong hearts;
 To hold the lodge
 To hold the sacred tree,
 To tighten the sacred hoop
 Surrounding the holy fire. (46)

Thus through his poetry Kenny seeks to cop up with the trauma of the past. He takes up language as his weapon, the arrow and writes down trauma. While writing out trauma, the affected community can achieve a sense of unity and cohesion. According to the sociologist Kai Erikson, trauma can produce a kind of paradox: that out of one's deepest sense of isolation and separateness, a sense of kinship and camaraderie may be born: "There is a spiritual kinship there, a sense of identity, even when feelings of

affection are deadened and the ability to care numbed” (Erikson 186). The recounting of trauma in language channelizes it and holds a therapeutic value along with its value to create cultural cohesion. Cultural trauma works in antithetical ways as per the observation of Erikson. It takes the victim away from the core of the culture and at the same time the reliving of the trauma creates a kinship and social connectedness. Kenny also talks of the process of trauma alleviation and its transgenerational aspect: “In the grey and toothless age/ For the people/ Given the arrows the arrows” (46).

Maurice Kenny is addressing a whole cultural community, its agonies and aspirations. He re-inscribes the memories of cultural trauma and cultural triumph as a means of cultural identity reclamation. As the individuals of the cultural group acknowledge and identify the trauma of the past: “Traumatic experiences work their way so thoroughly into the grain of the affected community that they come to supply its prevailing mood and temper, dominate its imagery and its sense of self, govern the way its members relate to one another” (Erikson 190). Rather than the atrocity itself it is actually the shared experience and the repeated representation of the suffering that glues the individuals together. Kenny’s poetry creates a space of identification, acknowledgement and reiteration of trauma.

A testimony of the resilient connection of the tribes with nature is exemplified in the poem “Mulleins are My Arms”: “Mulleins are my arms/ And chicory/ The sinew of my flesh” (55). The most recurring cultural image in Kenny’s writing is wild strawberries and it reappears in this poem as well. The strawberries are his blood and maples are his head. The poem is yet another site of cultural memory. He equates his body with the elements of nature.

The wild berry for Kenny is a recurring image to signify the native culture. His poem “Wild Strawberries” anthologized in *Carving Hawk* (2002) is an absolute contemplation over the theme of the clash between the native culture and the imported cultures. He uses the same correlative of wild berries in the poem too. Kenny explores the loss of their tribal culture of cultivating and harvesting strawberries. It is a communal activity so much close to nature with which Kenny could identify himself and with his community. With an intense passion he laments the lost culture of strawberry farming while eating “woody strawberries” (75) imported from Mexico grown by Mexican farmers. Being someone with a rich tradition of growing strawberries he feels that the imported berries are “without colour or sweetness” (75). The lost colour and sweetness of the berries can be associated with the lost splendour of being in a community and the togetherness thus obtained. Discovering that the imported things cannot give him happiness, he contemplates on the berries of his fields. He calls those berries “my wild blood berries” (75), he is in fact identifying himself with the tribal culture he belongs to, the berries and the berry cultivation symbolize the same. For Kenny, those berries stained his face, honeyed his tongue and healed the sorrow in his flesh. This signifies that only the tradition of his tribe could heal the trauma of assimilation. All the imported things fail to render any healing. The author seeks consolation from his tribal past, from where the wounds of colonialism and its after effects are to be cured. The nostalgia for the good old days of co-existence with nature is explored deeply in the poem, “Wines nourished our youth and heralded / iris,...”(75). “We laughed in the morning dew like worms and / grubs; we scented age and wisdom” (75). Throughout the poem Kenny used the plural nouns “we” and “our” and this signifies the collective feeling that the tribe shares. “We ate / wild berries with their juices running / down the roots of our mouths and our joy” (76). These lines show how

intensely he feels for his aboriginal culture. "I sat here in Brooklyn eating Mexican / berries which I did not pick, nor do/ I know the hands which did, nor their stories..." (76), the poem ends at a desperate note.

Maurice Kenny's poem "Resignation" brings in the image of a pine tree being shaken and scattered by the wind to signify the European invasion and its aftermath upon tribal population. Kenny calls the pine "The voiceless pines", signifying the powerless and helpless condition of them. The tribal population is silenced physically and ideologically throughout the history of invasion. The imperial system has curtailed the agency of the Native Americans and muted them. The helplessness of the pine trees is further elaborated as: "Have no anger,/ Cannot shout/ At the wind as it rages/ Through needles and limbs" (25).

The muted communities are aptly signified through his representation of pine trees as voiceless and helpless. The trees are plundered as exactly in the way the natives are plundered off their land and resources: "The quiet hum of plundered pine,/ Raped as though a closed-eyed child" (25). Even an extreme experience of trauma does not make the trees scream but only let the 'quiet hum' 'lifts or lowers' the tone. The trees never voice the 'brutal violation'. Kenny through his poetry represents and narrates trauma in language. The trauma of invasion, cultural alienation and assimilation is buried deep within the psyche of the Native Americans unaddressed and unvoiced. The unaddressed traumas of the natives are given a perfect space to get represented. In the last stanza of the poem, with a tinge of irony, Kenny represents the intensity of pain and agony that his people have experienced. The memories of cultural trauma and the tribal vision on nature are simultaneously reclaimed in the poem. According to the views of the American sociologist Neil Smelser, cultural traumas are "made, not born" ("Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma" 37). For an event to be designated as

cultural trauma, it requires a deliberate and communicative generation of meaning, that is, a system produced and maintained by those within the affected community (either directly or indirectly). The event in question “must be remembered, or made to be remembered” in order to qualify as culturally traumatic (Smelser 36). The poem “Resignation” in this respect makes the affected community remember the catastrophic invasion and thus qualifies it as traumatic and thereby re-defines cultural identity.

The trauma of cultural invasion is once again proclaimed by Maurice Kenny in his poem “Land” which ends with the lines:

1976
 the gooseberry is diseased,
 and the elm,
 stone walls broken, sky
 cracked, pheasants
 and young muskrats
 sterilized, and fields. (56)

The poem offers a detached and factual detailing of the invasion from two different perspectives. One is obviously the effect on nature which is more or less the same with the effect on tribal populace. The people of the Native American communities effortlessly identify themselves with nature, since an eco-centric attitude is part of their collective unconscious. This essential vision on nature generally shared by the people serves as an agent to recognize and articulate the trauma that they experienced as a group. The images of nature from the poem thus reveal the aspect of trauma more vigorously. The poem is divided into different sections with titles of years such as

1970, 1812 and 1976. These title years give the impression of being factual. The first stanza 1976 scatters the images of destruction and fragmentation. “Torn, tattered, yet rugged/ In the quick incline of bouldered hills/ Crab appled, cragged, lightning – struck/ Birch, cedar” (56).

The traumatic experience of a community is directly linked with the collective identity of the cultural group. Hence the Native American tribal communities have experienced trauma at the level of their identities. The writers from the space endeavour to represent trauma in literature as a means to relive it and thereby reclaim their cultural identity. Jeffrey C Alexander claims in his work *Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma*: “Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity” (10). Trauma is not something that is automatically generated yet it is created as a result of perpetual identification of the event of pain. Through this constant process of acknowledgement, the damaged cultural identity of the people is being re-defined. The need of trauma to get represented in language is explained by Alexander as:

The gap between event and representation can be conceived as the “trauma process.” Collectivities do not make decisions as such; rather, it is agents who do. The persons who compose collectivities broadcast symbolic representations characterizations of ongoing social events, past, present, and future. They broadcast these representations as members of a social group. These group representations can be seen as “claims” about the shape of social reality, its causes, and the responsibilities for action such causes imply. The cultural construction of trauma begins with such a claim (Thompson 1998). It is a claim to some fundamental injury, an exclamation of the terrifying profanation of some

sacred value, a narrative about a horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution. (*Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* 11)

Maurice Kenny through his writings engaged in a trauma process of reclamation. He claims trauma of invasion since the identity of the tribal group is harmfully affected in the process. In the action of trauma representation the collectivity's identity would be significantly revised. Identity revision involves a retrospective view of the collective past of the community because memory is social, fluid and intrinsically connected with the contemporary sense of the self. The identity of a cultural group is perpetually revised and reconstructed in relation to the group's repeated visits to the collective past. Kenny writes in the poem "Land":

Wilderness muzzled; forests kitchen Tables and bedposts
of foreign countries;
meadows cowed
beyond redemption, endurance, violated
by emigres' feet, and vineyards alien
to indigenous squash and berry,
fragile lupine and iris of the pond;
while wounded willows bend in the snow
blown north by the west wind. (56)

The idea of being transformed and mutilated by invasion and assimilation to foreign cultures is exemplified in these lines. The beyond redemption status of the meadows is more or less the beyond redemption status of the natives. They have endured violation

which left with them long lasting marks. These experiences have damaged their collective sense of self and identity. Thus, trauma claims representation in order to get the identity revised.

Another group of poems by Maurice Kenny such as “Listen, the Old Woman Came Here”, “I Went North”, “Drums”, “The Women”, “Dance” and “Moccasin” are poems reflecting the Native American ritual chanting and the storytelling in its structure as seen before. The lines of these poems are structured asymmetrically with repeated monosyllabic and disyllabic words to render the effect of a ritual chanting. The structure of the poem and its pictorial quality along with the chanting tone of it evoke the cultural memories within the collective unconscious of the Native American communities.

The archetype of the old woman being the symbol of traditional values, prosperity and nourishment who brings seeds, wind and nourishes children is explored in these lines. The seeds that the woman brings are a symbol of the traditional values and the vision that the woman intends to propagate among the young generation. The archetype of the old woman also signifies a cultural memory transaction from one generation to the other. The inherent property of memories being perpetually revisionist is implied and concretised. From the past generation memories are transferred to the next.

Listen...

The old woman

came here

she brought seeds

in her fingernails

she brought wind
 she brought children
 The old woman
 came here
 we came here. (61)

The process of memory and recollection is an on-going interaction. In the space of cultural memories, everything is under constant discussion. The cultural memories of the Native American tribes become “an act of survival, of consciousness and creativity, fundamental to the formation and rewriting of identity as both an individual and a political act” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 129).

The poem “Drums” takes the reader to the realm of the ritualistic dancing of different Native American tribal communities. The repeated monosyllabic or disyllabic alliterating words of each line of the poem render the rhythm of dance movements and music:

Listen...
 drums drum
 Dance dance
 Rattle rattle
 Sing sing. (63)

These lines function as tools to engage the Natives in the ritualistic cultural ceremonies. It is a reassertion of the culture specific elements of the tribe. Through the poem Maurice Kenny glorifies and reinvents the long forgotten sites of cultural

memories. These poems also nurture the images of strife for transformation. They ignite a spirit of action within the marginalized communities and their collective identity is revitalised.

The poems “The Woman” and “Dance” also render the same effect of a ritual chanting. Rather than the theme of the poem its structure is significant. These poems are voices from an ancient time to the present times:

Listen

A hundred feet

Move move

Move move

From the ancients

Into grandfather’s shoes. (65)

Maurice Kenny’s lines are communications from the older generation to the new. Kenny encourages the new generation to nurture a culture of remembering. Being rooted in cultural memories through an active participation in the older times, the identity is reasserted and revitalised. The commemorative aspect of cultural correspondence is represented through these poems:

We come

We come to greet

We come to greet and thank

the strawberry plants

growing

growing there

as tall

as tall as high

as tall as high grasses

grasses

To dance. (65)

Dancing in itself is ritualistic to the various Native American tribes especially to the Mohawk tribe to which Maurice Kenny belongs. They do dancing as a ritual to get rain. Most of their festivals are marked by the ritual of dancing.

The poem “Moccasin” also develops a similar scene of cultural assemblage. The theme and the structure of the poem together negotiate with the properties of cultural memories in regenerating cultural identity. The final stanza of the poem “Yaikini” explicitly expresses that the only way to heal cultural trauma is through a revisit to the past. The significance of collective past in rendering a space for the regeneration of the collective identity as well as for the healing of cultural trauma is directly expressed in the lines: “I will walk with old people/ and come May seek the early thistle/ and sweet strawberry/ and be healed” (73).

A return to the old people signifies the poet’s intense desire to recall the ancient culture and tradition. Walking with the old people refers to the chances to know more about the past and the bygone. Old people share stories of the past and they pass them to the next generation. Maurice Kenny through his walk with the old people suggests a transaction with the past and the present in which the memories of the old times are re-

registered in the psyche of the new. These cultural memories transferred from one generation to the other purge the trauma of the community. The collective agonies of the past are relived through the words of the old people and perpetually help in the revision of the cultural identity. For the marginalized communities the memory discourses are vital to the resistance to hegemonic historiography and the reintegration of the cultural identity. According to Brigit Neumann:

Fictions of memory may symbolically empower the culturally marginalized or forgotten and thus figure as an imaginative counter discourse. By bringing together multiple, even incompatible versions of the past, they can keep alive conflict about what exactly the collective past stands for and how it should be remembered. Moreover, to the extent that many fictions of memory link the hegemonic discourse to the unrealized and inexpressible possibilities of the past, they can become a force of continual innovation and cultural self-renewal. (341)

Maurice Kenny's poetry as well as fiction in this aspect serves to fulfil the function of reinforcing new concepts of memory rather than merely disseminating culturally pre-existing memories.

In these poetic expressions Kenny is intensely concerned with the mnemonic presence of the past in the present. His works in general are rooted in the Native American soil and specifically represent the memories and trauma of the culture. They scrutinize the locales where the past and the present are connected. It is through these spaces of connection that Kenny urges his readers to re-identify themselves and their culture. The aspect of commemoration in Maurice Kenny's works is an act of conscious rebuilding of the cultural fabric. The various functions that memories realise in the

process of identity reconstruction and reconfiguration are elucidated within the nuances of the intricacies of the past and the present. The repeated use of certain images and symbols in Kenny can be understood as exemplification of memory representation and is viable to purposeful selection and denial.

The above discussed poems, thematically and formally, are closely interwoven with the complex linking between memory and identity. Kenny's works portray the nexus of memory and identity as the object of explicit reflection and also carry this nexus with the narrative and semantic formulations. He strategically recovers and glorifies the nature centric cultural orientation of the tribal people. When the formal features of Kenny's poetry become in themselves a revocation of the cultural memories as seen in poems like "Drum", "Dance" and "I am Sun", they are extra textual realities of memory. As the poetic space of Kenny is loud about cultural practices and tradition and the visions of the Native American tribes, it simultaneously forms a cultural memory domain of its own. For the present generation the only access to their ancestral culture would be through the texts that speak about it.

From the Native American cultural scenario Maurice Kenny's poetry functions as an agent of cultural memory and cultural trauma representation. His poetry is a commemorative space of the memories of both cultural trauma and tradition of the Native American past. The trauma of invasion and cultural assimilation is identified and repeated by Kenny in order to give it the status of cultural trauma. These repeated acknowledgements make the people of the community connect with one another and revive their ethnic identity. Cultural memories are agents of cultural cohesion that aids in the reconfiguration of cultural identity. In Kenny's poetic space nature becomes the ultimate source of cultural memory. The trauma and the tradition of the community are inseparably linked with and projected through nature.

Narayan's narrative space dynamically represents cultural memories of both cultural trauma and the triumphant days of the past within the scope of the stylistics and structural framework of both short stories and novels. The succeeding paragraphs of the chapter attempt to study the incorporation of cultural memories in the novels of Narayan. An exploration of the tribal life through the culture specific attributes and trauma is unique to his narration. He identifies the trauma of colonialism as well as the settler colonialism and the displacement and dispossession that followed. Narayan's novels *Uralikkudi*, *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman*, *Vannalakal* and *Chengarum Kuttalum* are analysed in this chapter. Among these novels *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* is the only one that is available in translation. So the relevant excerpts of the other novels are translated into English. Though the thesis primarily focuses on the short fiction of Narayan, an analysis of his novels helps to recognize the evident play of the cultural memories of trauma and triumph in all the literary ventures of the author. Narayan's characters carry within them the memories of tradition as well as unhealed wounds of the past. Being a tribal author with the first-hand experience of the culture specificities and cultural trauma, Narayan represents them with utmost authenticity.

Narayan's novels represent the agonies and the traditional characteristics of the different tribal communities of Kerala including his own tribe Malayaraya. The tribal communities of the Urali, Muthuvan and the Malayan are also adequately represented by Narayan in his novels. His novel *Chengarum Kuttalum* published in the year 2012 depicts the glory of tradition and the trauma of the tribal community of the Muthuvans in a gripping storyline. The title of the novel when translated to English gives the meaning, the bride and the groom. In an interview with the journalist and critic M. K. Harikumar, Narayan comments on his views of sharing the tribal language and vision through literature: "The tribal characters and their dialogues in novels reflect the tribal

language, their culture and authenticity in order to share and retain them through literature. When I wrote my third novel *Chengarum Kuttalum* I employed the technique of mixing Malayalam with the authentic tribal language and idioms according to the contexts for the general public to understand it well” (*Puliyampulli Thampuran*, no page number). The narrative of the novel perfectly incorporated the elements of the cultural memory of tradition and trauma in a unique way. The novel is set in a Muthuvan tribal settlement. The Muthuvan tribal community is found in Adimali and Devikulam forest regions of Idukki district in Kerala and also in the hilly areas of Coimbatore and Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

The plot of the novel *Chengarum Kuttalum* primarily explores the hardships of a tribal lady teacher Sudha in running an alternative school in a Muthuva settlement called Adichithodi. The tribal people of the settlement are being exploited by the government officials and the other privileged people of the place. The trauma of dispossession, cultural alienation and exploitation abounds in the life of the Muthuvans. They also carry the memory of their ancestral ways of life, and practice them to a great extent. The tradition and culture of the Muthuvans and the traumatic experiences of them are adequately chronicled through Narayan’s literary voice. The novel is thus a saga of both the cultural memory of tradition and trauma. His description of the cultural practices and the unique dialect of the community that he used widely in his narrative help it to be categorized as a cultural archive of the Muthuvan community. The aspect of memory in this context takes a socio-cultural significance: “Societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity inherent in the creation of versions of the past according to present knowledge and needs” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 5).

Narayan through the novel, revisits the cultural history of the community and creates a new version of the old days to the present generation of the community and also to the generations to come.

The Alternative School System is a government venture to ensure primary education to the children of the tribal community which was launched in 1997 under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), and later brought under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The main objective of such an initiative is to provide a learning space for the tribal children within their natural habitat and rooted in their tradition and culture. It renders a scope to retain their cultural elements and learn through them. The existence of the tribal communities is underscored by the shared cultural memories manifested in the form of myths, legends and other elements of tradition.

The myths of the Muthuvan community that Narayan narrates through the character Saankaran form a chapter of the cultural memory archive of the Muthuvans. Saankaran conveys the stories of how the mountains and rivers are created in their place. According to the myth of the creation of the Muthuvans, there was a great flood. After the flood, streams of water ooze out from the tender earth. The earth must be hardened for life to emerge. The presence of living organisms is mandatory for the cycle of life to retain in the earth. The Trimurti (the three major gods of the Hindu religion - Bhrahma, Vishnu and Shiva) came to the earth as three kings and recognises that the water originates from the navel of the earth. Mahavishnu, who is also called Mayamperumal, without finding any other way to stop the flow of the water, after many calculations cuts his little finger and used it as a nail to block the leak. The water hasn't stopped even then and in course of time it has transformed as a great river. As years pass by, the peak of the mountain (or aani

mudi) was signified with the title 'Aanamudi Mountain'. 'Periyar' was the name given to the river, which emerged from the peak. Country mallow, a medicinal herb, planted by the three gods grew abundantly in the region and transformed into a huge forest. Through the myths and legends, Narayan revisits the cultural memories of the tribal community. After listening to the cultural myths from Saankaran, they discuss about the culture and rituals of the community and their origin. He also speaks about their unique dialect which is a mixed variety of Tamil and Malayalam. Through all these elements Narayan initiates a retrospective journey to the unaddressed cultural history of the tribe. Narayan's literary fabric acts as a dynamic space for the cultural memories to perpetually gain new meanings. This process of investing new significations to already existing cultural memory sites is crucial since otherwise they may forever be immersed in oblivion. As the Irish/Dutch cultural scholar Ann Rigney comments:

In this ongoing process, existing memory sites become invested with new meanings and gain a new lease of life. But they may also be upstaged by alternative sites and become effectively obsolete or inert. Indeed, the "dynamic" perspective on cultural remembrance suggests that "memory sites," while they come into being as points where many acts of remembrance converge, only stay alive as long as people consider it worthwhile to argue their meaning. (346)

Narayan, through his works, concretises the vitality of the tribal cultural memories and opens their space for interrogations and newer significations. The unaddressed cultural memories of the tribal communities thus revitalise and withstand the test of time.

Chengarum Kuttalum tries to expose the victimisation of the Adivasis to the unfortunate and spoiled governance and the irresponsible execution of the government projects. Sudha, is the central character of the novel and she is beleaguered by the Tribal Extension Officer Premanandan, for rejecting his sexual advances. Due to this, Sudha faced a lot of hindrances in the smooth and successful running of the school. The Adivasis of Adichithodi are constantly exploited by the government officials, the police and even the previous teacher of their settlement. For them Sudha becomes the final source of hope. The plight of the Muthuvans from a well-structured Adivasi kingdom to a fragmented set is traumatic with well-defined perpetrators. With great agony, Saankaran narrates their history of tragic plight. The king of Muthuvans Meluvakka or Muthuvakka received great support from Koottathalavanmar or Headmen. As they try to please the king, there happened to have conflicts among them, which caused the interference of the Princely State. In due course authority of the Muthuvan kingdom was lost forever as they were branded as the dwellers of forest by the mainstream society. From the archive of orally transmitted stories shared by his forefathers Saankaran tries to recollect the borders of the old Muthuvan kingdom. The transfer of cultural memories from one generation to the other reinforces ethnic pride. As per the memories of Saankaran regarding the boundaries of the former kingdom, in the western part situates Bhoothathan Kettu, the south was where Idukkipperiyar located, Bodimet and Palakkad were in the east and in the north respectively. He asserts that there are stone engraved documents, as proof of these boundaries, still exist. As Narayan passes these cultural memories through his novel the orally transmitted memories are concretised and the tribal people are drawn towards it more intensely. This helps them to repossess their cultural identity. According to Ann Rigney: “The celebration

of literary “monuments” from the past (whether or not these themselves have a mnemonic dimension) helps reinforce communality in the present” (350). These narratives mixing the cultural memory of tradition and trauma evoke within the tribal people a sense of unity, oneness and belongingness. Nothing other than the evoked ethnic pride and reintegrated collective identity help them to get united for a collective political cause. Critic Udo J. Hebel comments about the significance of evoking memories and representing them for a collective cause in his essay “Sites of Memory in U. S. American Histories and Cultures”: “The autobiographies of women and ethnic writers as well as the early autobiographies of representatives of religiously and politically dissenting groups illustrate the usefulness of acts of individual remembering for oppositional, if not subversive, expressions of group concern” (*Cultural Memory Studies* 49). Though the author specifically speaks about autobiographies, being a space of representing memories Narayan’s narratives effectively raise concerns of different tribal communities.

Saankaran’s memories are immersed in the melancholy of loss. He could clearly remember a time when land was allotted for the members of the community for cultivation by the Headman. That was a time when forest land was there for the community to use for agriculture but now due to deforestation and the tribal people are unable to find land to cultivate. This has affected their life and sustenance. The trauma of the ‘head’ of a tribe is both a matter of collective and personal grief. All the characters, who are the chiefs of different tribal settlements, previously analysed in the thesis share a similar traumatic sensibility. They are destined to protect the respective community and their trauma evolves from the incapability of themselves in fulfilling their responsibilities. Narayan critically implies some powerful social forces surrounding Sudha’s attempts to protect Adivasis from the exploitation of the

people from the mainstream society, which only helps to worsen the situation of the Adivasis. Later she comes to the realisation that not only the corrupt politicians but also the marijuana plantation owners are there behind the manipulation of the tribal people. Even the students in her school are being sent to the plantations by their parents when offered a meagre amount of money as wage. Through the eyes of Sudha, the readers learn the tradition of the Muthuvan community as well as the traumatic experiences that mark their existence.

The migrants take over the cardamom plantations of the Muthuvans on lease for some insignificant amount which the Muthuvans spend on alcohol and drugs. Through Andrews Muthalali, the villain of the novel and one of the perpetrators of trauma, Narayan evokes readers' conscience against the invaders. The life of Sudha as well as the entire tribal settlement was threatened by Andrews Muthalali. He was completely opaque to the tradition and culture of the community. Meanwhile, Kuriyakku, another Christian migrant at the place, married Velamma, an Adivasi woman and started to use the Muthuvan dialect and follow their dressing style. He is with many years of experience in the Muthuvan community and the owner of more than twenty acres of land. He acts as a mediator in organizing the cardamom plantations of the Muthuvans for lease to the outsiders. Sudha realises the story of Kuriyakku, who was initially a merchant, and the crooked ways of him to own plenty of land from the Muthuvans. He managed to influence the government officials to get the cardamom plantations registered in his name, claiming that he is one among the Muthuvans, since he got married to a lady from the community. Displacement, dispossession and cultural alienation are severely traumatic for the tribal communities as they define themselves as deeply rooted in their land and culture. Their trauma is a collective and cultural one since it destroys the culture of the tribal

community. The exploitation and the oppression of the tribal community continue without failure as the agents of exploitation are the power-holders of the society. The tribal life and existence are stereotyped as inferior in the dominant discourse. Since the tribal people have been interpellated into the ideology of the power holders, they take their inferior position as normal. This, as time passes, deprives them of the courage to resist. The representation of the memories of cultural trauma in literature acts as the agent of identity reintegration and eventually a political action of resistance is instilled. The Italian scholars Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti denote the significance of memories in the act of ‘rewriting identity’ in order to awake and act for a political cause:

Memory becomes an “act of survival,” of consciousness and creativity, fundamental to the formation and rewriting of identity as both an individual and a political act. In such a perspective, memory and recollection have a critical impact, as Benjamin states, because they bring out unresolved difficulties of history and represent the most efficient protest against suffering and injustice. (*Cultural Memory Studies* 130)

In *Chengaram Kuttalum* Narayan showcases how the projects of the Government for the empowerment and development of the tribal communities are delayed by the system of governance itself. While passing the bills for the food allowance of the school children and the salary of the teacher, the Tribal Development Officer, Premanandan and the Assistant Director, Johnson illegally loot the allocated government funds. Even the Project Officer who tried to solve these issues was transferred with the influence of Premanandan. The seemingly everlasting hopelessness of the tribal community is reasserted as Sudha loses her job at the end

of the novel. Government decides to stop the functioning of the one-teacher school in order to start a new dispensary and training centre in the same building. The novel is rich in the recounting of the age old traditions and the rituals of the Muthuvan community and it also becomes the space for the reliving of the trauma that they perpetually experience. Narayan's use of the Muthuvan tribal dialect is worthy of attention. It also helps the tribal people to revive their pride over the ethnicity and get united for a political cause.

In the novel *Uralikkudi*, published in the year 1999, Narayan depicts the life of another tribal community of Kerala called the Uralis. The title itself signifies an Urali settlement; 'kudi' in Malayalam refers to a house or a settlement. The Uralis are tribal people who migrated from Tamil Nadu to the interiors of the Western Ghats. They are found in the district of Idukki at various settlements. In the previous novel *Chengaram Kuttalum* Saankaran was the spokesperson for the author to impart cultural memory and cultural trauma to the readers. Likewise Kolumban in *Uralikkudi* tries to remember extracts from their oral history for the younger generation. An uninterrupted correspondence from one generation to the other is evidently signified by Narayan through these characters. In the past, the Uralis were affluent and wealthy. Their golden period was marked with a good population and peaceful life. They were agricultural people dwelling in the banks of the Periyar in various settlements. Many of them were great warriors with exceptional archery skills.

According to the myth of the Uralis, another tribal community, the Mannans who were inferior to the Uralis depended on black magic to annihilate the community. The black magic of the Muthuvans, who are the experts invited by Mannans, killed a number of Uralis. After the ritual when the Mannans visited the

Urali settlement they found most of the Uralis dead and some fatally wounded. To the king of the Uralis, who is about to die, the Mannans offered water on the condition that he must be ready to forsake his power as a king. The Mannans achieved more power after these heinous acts and they constricted the Uralis to live as a community. They restricted the Uralis from using the bow and the arrow. They were not allowed to do settled cultivation and follow their religious practices. They were also restricted from cleaning the surroundings. The Mannans spread a fake story that the Uralis meant to do black magic for some other purpose and it went wrong and ended up in the extinction of the community. Through his act of commemoration Kolumban establishes a link from the past to the present. It is also the memory of dispossession and the decrease in the number of the Uralis: "Forest does not feed according to man's greed. All tubers have been dug out. Animals are dead and gone. There are no more bee hives. Nobody cares and none thinks about future" (55).

As it is with the other works of Narayan, *Uralikkudi* also proclaims a saga of invasion and the disruption of the peaceful existence of the tribal people. When the Uralis, Thenan and Charan in their way to sell the collected forest produce, they are tactically interfered and looted by the people assigned by the merchant. As they reach the market in disappointment, the merchant ironically showed them pity and offered rice, tobacco and clothes as a compensation. Trapping them in debt the merchant made a condition that they should bring him coffee beans and pepper as soon as they harvested. In a similar manner, the toddy shop owners too exploit the tribal men by offering them toddy, on the condition that they must pay the money later. The stories of exploitation, oppression and marginalization of the Uralis are numerous and

Narayan tries to relive their trauma for the entire tribal community to get identified with.

Narayan recurrently depicts the theme of subjugation and exploitation that the tribal people experience at the hands of the merchants and the migrants. Even though Charan sends his children to school to escape discrimination, the teachers never allow them to sit near the upper class students. Thus they face severe discrimination at the school. They are given nicknames depending on their physical appearance. Even the teachers feel that these students may bring disgrace to the school. It can affect the quality of the entire class. Thus the mainstream people through their strategic moves attributed inferiority to the tribal people which is extended even to children at schools. Besides physical invasion, the psychological aspect of it which normalises the marginalised status of the oppressed, accustomed the tribal people to accept their attributed inferiority as normal. The recounting of the memories of cultural trauma and cultural triumph generates space to rework on this fallacy of inferiority. The events of trauma when represented by Narayan in his literary space gain public recognition and acknowledgement. In the essay "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma" Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weillnbock comment, "...many media representations of traumatic historical events,... have shaped identities in ways that helped social minorities gain public recognition for past suffering" (*Cultural Memory Studies* 235). These acts of recognition in due course aid in the process of re-shaping collective cultural identities.

In the novel, the author endeavours to discuss the issue of intrusion of the inland migrants to the forest land of the tribal people. Konnan in the novel with great agony witnesses timber workers and their trucks entering their forests. The forest became a space for exploiting natural resources for outsiders. The place where the timber

workers stop for rest in due course of time turned out to be an official space of recreation where Kunjuvarkey a small scale merchant from Travancore starts a small shop. He set up a small near the tribal settlement and later becomes a drug sale agent there. The tribal people fell for the shrewd merchant who offered them food and tea free. In order to get the agricultural products of the tribal people for a cheaper price, he offered them alcohol. He started cultivating tapioca, plantain and green chilly in the place.

Onachan, another plainsman appeared as a destitute before the tribal headman. The Headman Eravi muthan, offered him some land to survive. The Urali community just like any other tribal community of Kerala strongly believes in the philosophy that the land is no one's personal property. They are people with the belief that it is a sin to neglect somebody who seeks help. When he received the land, with the help of some tribal boys, Onachan cleared the land and made a small shed. Since the tribal people do not believe in the land ownership they began to resist. This resulted in the segregation of migrants. As they are threatened of eviction, under the leadership of Kunjuvarkey they bribed the Forest Range Officer. Realising the fact that any officer would stand with those who offer money the Range Officer accepted the money and offered his help. The migrants of the region prospered and Onachan acquired fifteen acres with several cash crops. Kunjuvarkey physique changed, he became fatter with a fairer complexion. The pigmented spots on his face disappeared and the grey hairs of his head have changed to black. The transformation from an impoverished to a powerful person is evidently reflected when he changed his name from Kunjuvarkey (small Varkey) to Varkkichen. His younger son Thankachan took charge of the shop and Eeppachan, the elder son looked after the plantations. Kunjuvarkey and Onachan continued to conspire luring the tribal community. These cunning migrants took the

cardamom plantations allotted for the tribal people by the government and made them work in it for a small amount of money. Being unaware of their rights and the government allowances, they surrendered before the migrants and worked hard in the plantations. Vellan, Kadutha, Konnan and Kumaran are forced to give their thumb impression on a contract to get the plantations under the migrants' ownership.

The backbreaking work they had to do in the plantations was considered normal by the Uralis as they adapted to it. They are not even realising the fact that they are being exploited. When Onachan is killed by a wild tusker, the Kanikkaran (headman) considered it as the vengeance by the deities of the Uralis. He had disrespected and polluted the sacred Urali's burial ground by using the land for cultivation. Kuttichan initiates an enmity between Kadutha, a tribal man and Raghavan, a migrant who had appropriated Kadutha's land. According to the plans of Kuttichan, Kadutha was arrested for the murder of Raghavan. The cops produced the contract of land transaction which bears the thumb impression of Kadutha. A case was filed and the police crafted a story as even though Kadutha does not own any document to prove his ownership, he has sold the land to Raghavan's father for two thousand and five hundred rupees, which is illegal. In the court, Kadutha was not able to have an advocate to argue for him. Kadutha's helpless situation is intensified when Narayan depicts the failure of Kadutha in producing somebody to get him a bail. As per the rules of the court the person who is present to take the bail must be a tax payer. The Uralis do not own property and thus do not pay tax. Thus they are accused of not obeying the orders of the authorities: "It is not new that the tribal people are punished though they are innocent" (24), comments Balachandran Vadakkedath in his critical essay "Aparam". The tribal communities across Kerala are oppressed, exploited and marginalised in a similar and other numerous ways.

Later Kuttichan kills Gopalan and Kadutha in order to grab their land. No one gets any clue about the murderer. These incidents can be read as exemplifications of internal colonisation. All the theoretical aspects of post-colonialism are applicable in this context as well. Hence the process of remembrance that Narayan carries out through his fiction can be considered as a post-colonial act. In the case of the marginalised communities remembering is an intensely political act. Cultural memories redefine cultural identity, counter the narratives of power holders, dismantle the ideologically formed fixations and stereotypes and also perpetually resist hegemony.

All the elements that could define tribal life such as the space they dwell, the culture they follow and their jobs have transformed drastically with the transformation of migrants from penniless visitors to affluent land owners. Their prosperity is marked with exploitation and extermination of the tribal people. They tried different cash crops occasionally in the forest land. When a significant area of forest is cleared and the huge logs of wood were smuggled through the river Chemben. Yet the Forest Department was only concerned with the tribal people's use of timber for their basic needs like building the house. Narayan depicts the complete dispossession of the tribal people with the invasion of the outsiders to their space. The migrants celebrate when Prabhakaran gets a license as a rubber dealer. Thus rubber became the marker of the landscape, as the novelist notes "rubber trees- cash trees- stood in line instead of coconut trees and areca nut trees, giving latex and craving to invade the land" (158). The smuggling of timber from the forest continued and as the migrants managed to bribe the forest officers.

This brought a significant change in the landscape of the Urali settlement. Being people who develop an in-depth relationship with the place they dwell, this drastic

change of the land accelerated their trauma of dispossession. Narayan satirically notes the great speed of ‘developmental activities’ happening in the forest: “People like Kunjuvarkey cut trees in forest. Carpenters worked. Those who carried it, took arrack and slept. The construction was over when they woke up. Then trucks appeared with iron rods and cement” (161).

The migrant community completely took over the space of the Uralis negating the ways of life and the culture of the tribal community. The Uralis of the place thus experience the trauma of exploitation, cultural alienation and stereotyping. The migrants from different places considered the tribals as inferior and propagated an ideology of inferiority. Thus they were branded as criminals and thieves. The tradition and culture of the Uralis got degenerated as the group itself considered their myths as inferior. Ignoring the degradation of the tribal culture and the trauma they experience, perpetrators continued to exploit and oppress them. As the migrants took over the settlement, the Uralis got completely marginalized.

Narayan’s novel *Vannalakal* published in the year 2016 depicts the tribal culture, tradition and their way of life more than any other novel by him. In English the word ‘vannalakal’ means ‘huge waves’. In the preface to the novel the critic P K Pokker writes, the tribal narratives “for Adivasis these are physical spaces for identity reformation. The historical consciousness of Adivasis evolve from their unsure memories of the lost past and anxieties of the present day” (no page number). Being a tribal author, Narayan looks into the communities’ life, rather than his experiences as a person. He becomes the voice of various tribal communities of Kerala. He remembers and records the memories of cultural trauma and triumph on behalf of them. Narayan introduces the rituals, ceremonies, language and the philosophies of tribal existence along with their agonies. *Vannalakal* is an unparalleled novel in these respects.

Vannalakkal is set in the pre-independent period when Travancore was under the rule of the Diwan. It depicts the dispossession and displacement of the Araya community. The rituals and the ceremonies of the community are vividly portrayed by the author. The plot of the novel starts with the displacement of Malayan, the Headman of the Araya community, and people of his tribe. They have reached a different place to start a new life. The cultural practice of the tribal communities which is an antithesis to the modern anthropocentric world view is exemplified as the community shows their reverence to the Mother Earth by ceremoniously touching the soil. Their ritual of veneration of the sun is yet another example for the same. As the temporal setting of the novel is a time when the hilly areas of Kerala were covered with forests, Narayan is able to depict the deep connection between man and nature. The unadulterated life style of the tribal community which is in close harmony with nature can be seen when they construct tree houses, hunt animals, make fire using ancient methods and depend completely on the forest produce for food.

Malayan believes in the presence of heavenly beings around them in the forest: “There are vanadevathamar, nature deities, in the forest. Even though nobody can see them, a cry from the heart with pure body and soul will melt their mind and they will help to spade a large portion of the land” (51). This belief of the Headman is a part of the cultural memory of the community. Narayan elaborately speaks of other traditions and rituals of the community that are vital to their existence. Invoking the blessings of the ancestors is a fundamental part of Arayas’ life. Following the ritual of reverence to the ancestors, Malayan ceremoniously offered them meat cooked traditionally on a bamboo pole. According to the custom he served it with the leaves of arrowroot plant and toddy: “My dear forefathers come and have this and keep a watch on our paddy fields” (53), Malayan prays. They have also followed the custom of offering their

agricultural produce to the God of grains. As per the community's belief the god of grains gives them seeds and good harvest. Deities and ancestors are always worshipped by the community and a portion of the yield is offered to them as well.

Malayan's adherence to his ancestral tradition is more evident when he expresses his mental agony while cutting a tree. He finds a tree in the forest and wants to cut it to build a house. With great reverence and pain he takes the permission of the tree before cutting: "To build a house, I am fated to cut this tree; please bless me. Please bear with the pain and forgive my transgression. Forgive..." (111). Malayan deciphers the murmur of the leaves as: "Oh, son of the soil, I have gleaned water and manure from this land, allowed birds to rest and prepare nest on my twigs. They have all gone. For the future generations I also have left seeds on the ground and I am not afraid of extinction of my kind... you never destroy anything. You are free to cut as you require" (111). The strong bonding of the tribal community with nature is exemplified through the incident.

The narrative of the novel develops around a set of tribal people from the Araya community and it advances with their attempts to achieve and retain harmony in the heterogeneous and mutilating forces of modernity. Narayan crafts the character Malayan as an archetypal character marking the link between tradition and modernity. Malayan shares with the members of his community the myths and the legends that his ancestors have passed on to him. He in a way acts as an archive of cultural memories and renders his vital part in re-generating cultural identity. Rather than preparing his people for the inevitable exile and displacement that are connoted in their mythic stories, Malayan acts as an agent of cultural memory reassertion and identity re-registration. Through the character Malayan, Narayan shares the cultural memory of the community with the readers. He retells history in a different way. Narayan's version of

the past and the legacy of the Chera dynasty of South India evolve as counter history and thereby aids in resisting the hegemonic power structures.

According to the counter history that Narayan offers, Keezhmalainadu, with Araya majority, was under the reign of Aditya Varma of the Chera dynasty. Thimmayya, the minister of Aditya Varma, being jealous of the position and the privileges that the tribal community receives from the King, conspired to ruin the relationship. Hence he crafted a story that the Arayas are conspiring against the King and they plan to conquer the kingdom. Upon the alleged reason of preventing this, he brought five hundred Vellalar from Nanchinadu and three hundred Vellalar from Thenkasi. The Arayas in order to escape from the brutal hands of the external forces fled into the darker corners of the forest leaving their wealth and weapons behind. The land of the Arayas later has turned into rubber plantations as the newcomers leased the area to the foreign plantation capitalists. Narayan in his short story "Mythum Vithum" gives the same story from a different perspective. Through the re-narration of history in an altered viewpoint to the younger generation of the tribal community, Narayan ventures to rediscover the erased pages of history that are subdued by the hegemonic narration of history. These rediscoveries and sharing significantly help to constitute the cultural identity of the tribal people. These counter narratives are inherently revolutionary as Balachandran Vadakkedath opines in his critical essay "Aparam" that the writings of Narayan are "Verbalisations of the revolutionary consciousness that the tribal people perpetually seek for the reintegration of their identity" (26).

The Arayas were oppressed by two different forces where the first one is the local smugglers called meenappelayans. They loot the tribal people when they are on their way to market to sell their agricultural produce. As per the custom and belief of the Araya community, a woman becomes impure if a meenappelayan touches her. The same

is the case with their agricultural produce. According to their tradition, they are not permitted to use impure things. They are also exploited by the tax collectors of the native king who heartlessly loot the Arayas without considering whether they got good harvest or not. The fluctuations in climate adversely affect their harvest. These factors together drain their wealth and force them to seek the innermost spaces of the forest. The novel thus depicts the displacement and fragmentation of the Araya community.

Narayan clearly portrays the hierarchical structuring of the society where the Arayas are destined for the lowest strata. They are forced to leave their land and culture at various points of history. The trauma of this loss for them is eternal and perpetual. The trauma of dispossession and displacement becomes unbearable as it also signifies the trauma of cultural alienation. The repossession of their culture is only possible through the repeated representation of cultural memories of trauma and triumph. In the case of the dispossessed, the trauma and memories are constantly undergoing a process of rewriting. Since the representation of memories and trauma helps them to reconfigure their cultural identity it becomes a political act: “The words of a person who lost everything are evolved politically” (Vadakkedath 24).

Narayan, in the novel, undertakes a journey of ceremonial recollection as he narrates the subdued versions of history through Malayan. Malayan’s memories of the cultural trauma narrate the efforts of the Forest Department to pull apart their community. He memorises the conflicts between the tribes, prompted by the forest guards to upset their relationship. The two Araya clans of Kizhakkumkara and Vadakkumkara started a rivalry as the latter encroached into the land that is left by the former for recuperation. Meanwhile, the Forest Department falsely accused the Arayas of hunting an elephant. A guard told, the Headman, of the Kizhakkumkara that he has proofs of the crime committed by the Vadakkumkara Arayas. The Headman went to ask

about this and found their land being intruded by the people of the Vadakkumkara Arayas. The enmity was fuelled by the Forest Department and thus the tribes and their lands disintegrate.

The Christian evangelists who approached the tribal people in order to convert them into Christianity were another threat to the social as well as the cultural cohesion of the various tribal communities. With their greater sense of superiority and the promise of social status and money, the tribal people fell for them unconditionally. Narayan explores the same theme in his short story “The Way of the Prophet”. Kunjerukkan in *Vannalakkal* explains the strategy of these people as, the vethakkar (the Christian evangelists with the mission of converting the rivals) assimilate people by upsetting families. They get hold of the incapable one from a tribal family. They trickily make them eat beef and thus the person will be out of the family as the tribal people do not eat beef by tradition. The burial ground of the Arayas where their ancestors were buried and their fields were desecrated by the Evangelists by throwing the leftovers of the slaughtered cattle. As these places were polluted they are forced to leave the place. The Evangelists occupied those places in no time. The strange ways of life that the tribal community is exposed to essentially alienates them from their life and culture: “The incapability to accustom into new cultural images is not only the issue of common men. Tribal people also confront the same situation. The effect of alienation that circumstances inscribe upon the tribal people, chains them in a strange space” (24). The novel is thus a perfect chronicle of the trauma of dispossession that the Araya community experiences and an in depth depiction of their culture and tradition.

Narayan’s most acclaimed and award winning novel *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman*, published in the year 1998, depicts the life and culture of the Malayaraya community of Idukki district. The novel develops through the portrayal of four

generations from pre-independent to post-independent era. As the novel depicts the tradition and customs of the Malayaraya community, it portrays the cultural memory of the community at multiple levels. The novel apparently indicates the development of the Malayaraya community from a group of agricultural people to become educated and employed in the cities. The title of the novel refers to the name that the merchants who visit the Araya huts address the young Araya women.

The plot of the novel centres on Ittyathi, a widower, son of the chief manthravadi Valiyamundan, and his two children Kunjadichan and Kunjippennu. Kunjippennu was married off to Raman, an outsider. Though a fire took their first child and wounded them fatally, after many years a daughter, Parvathy and a son, Shekharan were born to them. The Malayaraya community being a minority and of the margins was constantly exploited by the merchants, landlords, and the government officials. The people of the community, realising the power of education, started to educate their children.

Valiyamundan and Ittyathi are characters who strive to perpetuate the tribal culture in its originality. Though Valiyamundan is not a major character influencing the kinetics of the plot, through him the tradition and the culture of the Malayaraya community get reflected. As per the tribal tradition he refuses to take medication even when he was terminally ill. Being the 'velichappadu' he handed over the worshipped gods to his son Ittyathi. The cultural universe of the Malayaraya community from the pre-independent to the post-independent era is depicted in the novel. The traditional style of architecture is evident from Kochuraman's construction of his house. As Narayan declares in his novel *Kocharethi* "We have among us, manners that cannot be erased with education. Those are our own" (9). These permanent marks of tradition

inscribed with each and every member of the community are part of the cultural memory of them.

The Malayaraya community is subject to exploitation at various levels. The circumstances in which they lived after the encroachment of external forces were extremely oppressive. They were living in the forest land which was owned by the King and later the government. As per tradition they have to pay heavy taxes in order to live and cultivate in the land during the reign of the King. 'Thalakkaram' and 'mulakkaram' were two taxes levied on them. Narayan speaks about the same issue in one of his short stories titled "Taxes for Heads and Breasts". Though the community is secluded from the mainstream society both culturally and geographically, their rights were constantly curtailed by the external authority. The land in which they lived and cultivated was forcefully seized from them by the authority to extract resources such as timber. These changes disturbed their existence. The process of modernisation drastically affected the culture and tradition of the Malayaraya community. Their mode of living, cultivation, vision on nature and society are considerably transformed. Plantation owners, merchants and government officials turned into oppressors and exploiters of the tribal community. The dilemma of cultural and social transformation along with the oppression and exploitation of the mainstream people marked the plight of the tribal people.

In an interview Narayan speaks about the impact of different religious sets on Adivasis; "The Christians came and started English medium schools. They said worshipping trees and stones was wrong... Then the RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad came and did the same. They replaced Puliampulli and Marutha with Vishnu and Dhurga; ochre robes replaced the gowns of priests and nuns, no one was really interested in us as people" (*Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* 212). The proponents of new religions and the Forest Department together destructed the tribal school

constructed to impart literacy among the tribal people for their better future. Narayan fictionally documents the account of the displacement that the Malayarayas experienced from the time of the princely states.

Narayan notes Ittyathi's traditionalist mindset in *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman*: "At the time of harvest Ittyathi invokes the goddess of harvest, the sun, and the moon, and turns to face the east. Gripping a bunch of shoots, he murmured a prayer, begging forgiveness for the act of violence" (27). With every living organism the tribal people identify an element of divinity abiding. Thus their life is deeply connected with nature and they worship various forces of nature. Taking permission before cutting a tree and being apologetic while harming an organism mark the existence of the tribal people. Narayan glorifies these aspects of tribal life in most of his narratives. Even at the time of digging a burial ground they take the permission of the earth: "Please provide me some place for the burial of the dead. The deceased did not commit any offence to the earth, the community and other living beings. Let the soul rest in peace" (96). Odiyan speaks to the earth when he is to dig the ground to bury Matheyi, a member of the tribal community. Their reverence to the soil is perfectly indicated when Odiyan reassures the purity of Matheyi's soul. The strong connection that the tribal communities nourish with nature is exemplified by the author in these instances. The collective memory archives that Narayan resorts to, while composing his literary pieces are resources to re-inscribe collective identity. Through his narration of culture and tradition a harmony is achieved and this aids them to comprehend themselves as part of a temporal continuum: "Collective memory specifies the temporal parameters of past and future, where we came from and where we are going, and also why we are here now. Within the narrative provided by this collective memory, individual identities are

shaped as experiential frameworks formed out of, as they are embedded within, narratives of past, present, and future” (Eyerman 66).

In *Kocharethi* also Nrayan portrays the degradation and disintegration of the tribal community due to the deceiving strategies of the outsiders. The money-lender Metheen exploits the tribal people manipulating their helpless situations. Metheen asked Kunjadichan to allow him to pluck the pepper when it is ripened in return to twenty five rupees that he borrowed from him to buy medicines for his father. The stationary shop owner Hassan too exploited Kunjadichan in a similar way. In return to his stationary items that Kunjadichan bought from Hassan’s shop, he was asked to give his pepper. He agreed and Hassan and his men collected the pepper. After some calculations Hassan said “Part of the debt still remains Kunjadicha. You owed me three hundred and seventy-five. The pepper comes around three hundred and fourteen. Now you have to pay me sixty one rupees. When can you repay?” (65). Both Metheen and Hassan together cheat the innocent and illiterate Kunjadichan. He gave his thumb impression on a document that Metheen brought and he settled the debt of Kunjadichan. Thus Metheen cunningly took two acres of land from Kunjadichan.

In the final part of the novel the Forest guards come to the tribal community and give a command: “You should not cut down many trees. Do not kill animals. You should collect the forest produce and bring them to the range office regularly. We are the ones who have been deputed by the Maharaja to safeguard the forests. We are his officers, is that clear kanikkara?”(87). The forest guards thus restricted them from their only traditional way of livelihood. From that point onwards they were forced to depend on cash crops; they were also forced to build walls around their area of cultivation. All these are practices against their tradition and slowly their tradition and culture began to degrade. External hands strategically manipulated them and erased their culture for their

vested interests. The ruining of the native culture buried within them as an unconsolated wound. The cultural trauma of the Malayaraya community is thus clearly portrayed by Narayan. About the representation and re-representation of the cultural trauma, the scholar and critic Ron Eyerman comments:

As with physical or psychic trauma, the articulating discourse surrounding cultural trauma is a process of mediation involving alternative strategies and alternative voices. It is a process that aims to reconstitute or reconfigure a collective identity, as in repairing a tear in the social fabric. A traumatic tear evokes the need to “narrate new foundations” (Hale 1998, 6), which includes reinterpreting the past as a means toward reconciling present/future needs. There may be several or many possible responses to cultural trauma that emerge in a specific historical context, but all of them in some way or another involve identity and memory. (“Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity” 63)

The act of reconfiguration of a collective identity is inherently connected with the representation of cultural trauma. There are many other instances of traumatic oppression and exploitation that Narayan documents in the novel. There is an incident in which the innocent Kunjumundan and his son were branded as thieves when in reality they were looted by criminals. In return for the pepper they sold to the merchant Pareeth, he gave them money which included different currencies and coins of various denominations including the Maharaja’s coins and British rupee. Though Kunjumundan and his son were unable to count the amount they took it with them. On their way back they were looted by the people of Pareeth. At the police station, Pareeth acted innocent and Kunjumundan and his son were insulted and stamped as thieves.

Narayan describes yet another incident where a local merchant Karim Rowther sells a piece of cloth to Kunjumundan for thrice the price on the condition that he has to pay it at the time of the next harvest. Another person named Pattathil Kunjunni Pilla, who is in charge of the Sastha Temple and the Devaswom, exploited the tribal mercilessly claiming that they polluted the forest which is the holy abode of the lord Ayyappan. Pilla asked the Arayas to pay one third of their cash crops to please the god and as compensation to their so called act of irreverence. These are different instances that Narayan narrates to portray the mode of exploitation and oppression that the tribal community experienced. Through these acts of violation the tribal people are marginalized, suppressed and their culture and economy get collapsed. The trauma of oppression is forever with them and Narayan ventures to heal the trauma through his representation of the same.

Narayan documents the tradition and trauma of the Malayaraya community in an unparalleled way. The life style of the community is exemplified through the characters like Ittyathi, Kunjumundan and Matheyi. Their perception of land is significant in considering their life style. Land for them is not a property to be bought and sold. This aspect of their tradition intensifies their oppression as for the external powers, land is just a commodity. The local merchants, the Forest department and the Christians who tactfully convert tribal people to an alien religion together make their situation the worst.

Narayan skilfully narrates the tradition of the Malayaraya community when Kunjipennu's brother Kunjadichan speaks about the matter of his sister's marriage. Ittyathi brings in the tribal custom of marriages from within the clan: "Ittyathi sat silent for a while then said: 'Kunjayicha, we have a custom. Should we be the ones to beak it?'... (*Kocharethi* 15). When Kochuraman refuses to have cooked beef as an

offering in return for his medical services by strictly following the traditions of the Araya community, exemplifies his adherence to the tradition. Eating beef was taboo for his community.

Narayan explores the tribal religion and their mode of worship in detail. Marutha, Puliampulli, Chathan, and Kandakaran are the traditional gods of the Malayaraya community though they venerate other gods too. Narayan comments about the tribal way of worshipping mainstream gods. At some point of time some tribal people had begun to worship the mainstream gods like Ayyappan and Ganapathi and the practice continued. The traditionalists of the community continued to practice rituals to alleviate illness. Ittyathi performs a ritual when Kadutha falls ill upon the belief that the illness is the result of the evil possession. Narayan also glorifies the knowledge of the Malayaraya community about herbal medicines. They have a medical solution for almost all the diseases. They use roots, leaves, stem or a plant as a whole in order to produce medicines. These are indigenous knowledge that the community transfers from one generation to the other. According to Jan Assmann: "Memory is knowledge with an identity-index, it is knowledge about oneself, that is, one's own diachronic identity, be it as an individual or as a member of a family, a generation, a community, a nation, or a cultural and religious tradition" ("Communicative and Cultural Memory" 114). Thus they function as part of the cultural memory of the community. As Narayan reclaims these memories in his fiction, it acts as a space for identity reconfiguration.

In all the above discussed novels the author has incorporated elements of tribal tradition, indigenous knowledge and the cultural trauma of different tribal communities. Tribal life is an amalgamation of these factors. The memories of tradition and trauma together form their identity. The representation of these

elements, in the narrative space of the aboriginal literature, functions as a tool of re-evocation of the ethnic pride and the collective consciousness. Narayan moves between the duality of tradition and modernity and upholds the merits of adapting to positive changes like education. Yet he strongly advocates and glorifies tradition. Through various characters and situations he laments the loss of culture and tradition. Narayan tries to achieve a sense of the past while re-ascribing new aspects to the already written history. The oblique aspects of the tribal history that the mainstream people neglected consciously or unconsciously are recovered by him through his fiction. He strives to console the pain of imposed past upon the tribal people by the hegemonic class. Narayan skilfully adheres to the forgotten past of different tribal communities of Kerala and reconstructs it.

The reclaiming of cultural memories of trauma and triumph invariably appears in the different genres attempted by both the writers. This transcendental presence of the past at different realm proves the necessity of the recounting of cultural memories. As the cultural identity of the aboriginal communities is reconfigured and their existence is defined through the recurring task of inventing the tradition and culture and also reliving the cultural trauma, both Narayan and Kenny actively participate in the representation of these culture specific elements in their narratives. These representations escape all generic boundaries and constantly appear and reappear in various genres.

CONCLUSION

Cultural memory preserves cultural identity and often contradicts the officially recorded history which represents the ideologically appropriated versions of the past. While represented in literature, the cultural memories are reclaimed and cultural identity is reconfigured. The retrospective consciousness of a literary narrative, therefore, functions as a revisionary agent for a marginalized cultural entity whose collective identity is in chaos. The kinetics of aboriginal literary narratives is accelerated to unravel the oblique inner lives, the dark areas and the ambiguities that mainstream historic as well as fictional narratives fail to address or purposefully evade. Cultural memory representations by aboriginal writers thus function as the counter memories to resist the hegemonic narrative constructions. This thesis assessed the select works of the aboriginal writers, Maurice Kenny and Narayan, to identify the reconstructive and unifying aspects of the cultural memory and its correlation with the collective cultural identity.

Moreover, within the scope of the analysis of the thesis included the aspects of ideological constructions, power relations and the hegemonic perpetuation with respect to the tribal communities as represented by Narayan and Kenny, as these factors potentially contribute to the erosion of the collective ethnic identity of the aborigines, their disintegration and dispossession. The theoretical framework to the thesis eventually has incorporated the aforementioned concepts along with the major tenants of cultural memory, cultural trauma, cultural identity, counter memory and resistance. Since the cultural memory of the aborigines, irrespective of spatial and temporal disparities, could hardly evade the memory of trauma, the concept of cultural trauma

has been a significant part of the analysis, considered within the boundaries of the cultural memory.

The revisionary task of the aboriginal literature is asserted in the thesis owing to the theory of cultural memory and thereby propagating cultural identity which otherwise will be obliterated. Furthermore, these critical postulations on memory and identity converge at the common assertion that there are ideologically manipulated spots in history making it incomplete and politically motivated. While critically placing them within the praxis of memory theory, the nuances of psychological invasion and the normalisation of stereotypical constructions come to light along with its repercussion of cultural identity degradation.

As it is seen, the first chapter titled “An Unbroken Continuum: The Correlatives of Cultural Memory, Cultural Trauma and Cultural Identity” sketches the theoretical tools for the analysis, and the subsequent chapters “Blood Berries: Trauma in the Trope of Fiction” and “The Memory Kinetics: Reclaiming the Glorious Past in Fiction” investigate the interconnectedness of memory, trauma and identity in the select short stories of Narayan and Maurice Kenny. The final chapter of the thesis “Remembrance and Resistance: Memories across Genres” has attempted to examine the exploration of cultural memory and cultural trauma in different genres like poems and novels of the authors. They also have revealed the play of ideology, power and the hegemony in the inception and prolongation of the psychological and the physical invasion of the aboriginal communities.

The thesis has developed from the basic vogue of the repeated use of cultural memories in the form of culture specific images, symbols and other correlatives and its function in the narratives of Maurice Kenny and Narayan. The critical evaluation of the

works adhering to the theories brought to light the function of cultural memories in these narratives, their role in the cultural identity reconfiguration and their metamorphosis into counter memories. Nonetheless, as the thesis concludes, it also finds the political aspect of cultural memories in the aboriginal literary space to become a tool for resistance to hegemonic structures.

The chapters “Blood Berries: Trauma in the Trope of Fiction” and “The Memory Kinetics: Reclaiming the Glorious Past in Fiction” are designed to evaluate the role of the two realms of cultural memory, that is, the memory of the painful past of the invasion, exploitation, dispossession and death and the memories of the glorious past of the culture specific customs, rituals, language, lifestyle and the vision on nature and life. As it is evident from the analysis, both the writers represent cultural memories of trauma and triumph profusely in their works and at times trauma overpowers triumph. The former chapter exclusively deals with the representation of individual trauma, cultural trauma and the perpetrators’ trauma and its role in the regeneration and redefinition of cultural identity. The analysis solely adheres to the theoretical framework of cultural trauma. The latter chapter tries to investigate the representation of the unique culture, tradition and the ethnic correlatives in the works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny. The cultural memory of the glorious days of the past and its remnants are strategically recalled and celebrated by both the writers along with the representation of their lament over the loss of their culture. Both these readings eventually lead to the finding that the commemoration and its representation of the cultural past render an identity reconfiguration and thereby initiate a collective action.

The works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny clearly exhibit premeditated trends of the implementation of the memories of cultural trauma and cultural triumph. Maurice Kenny writes about the Mohawk culture through the inculcation of culture specific

images and symbols. He speaks to his people and the outer world through his writings about these cultural artefacts. For his people he becomes the prophet of the past legacy, to make them feel proud of their collective cultural identity. Another dimension of this act is that, the outer world also realises that the aboriginal culture is no longer inferior to the canonical culture. These motives merged into the writings of any tribal author as it is with Maurice Kenny. Narayan's writing is also rich with the expression of the age-old cultural practices, traditional beliefs, myths and the legends. With a revived spirit he encapsulates these elements in his works and successfully achieves his end. Narayan belongs to the Malayaraya community of the hilly areas of the South-east Kerala and his literary renderings are replete with culture specific elements.

Yet on a deeper level of analysis and comparison, the differences in the writing style of Maurice Kenny and Narayan are palpable. Kenny profoundly portrays the inner traumas that the Native Americans experience in the present day as a result of the process of colonialism. Narayan, on the other hand, intensely voices the stories of traumatic dispossession and exploitation that the tribal communities of Kerala have undergone at different historical time periods. Both the writers approach the same theme in two different ways but ultimately they aim at political visibility. While the narratives of Kenny take a synchronic fashion, Narayan's narration often deviates to a diachronic approach. When Kenny explores the contemporary Native American psyche and existence setting his fictions predominantly in the contemporary scenario, Narayan's fictional settings shift from pre-colonial to neo-colonial times.

An analysis of the select works of Narayan clearly depicts the cultural trauma of different time periods rather than the inner turmoil and identity crisis of the characters. The cultural memory of the past tradition, reinvention of the old myths, legends, rituals and the unique cultural practices are also explicit. Among the short stories under

consideration, “Thenvarikka”, “Mythum Vithum”, and “The Birth of a Prophet” deal with the theme of the tradition and the loss of the tradition. “Thenvarikka” explores the theme of the loss of the eco-centric life style of the tribal communities and how it affects nature and thereby the future generations. “The Birth of a Prophet” also deals with the same theme of the degradation of the culture but on a different level. Here Narayan laments the loss of tribal culture as the tribal families are converted to other cultures for their basic material needs. “Mythum Vithum” is a vibrant depiction of the rituals and customs of the Araya community. The ancient ritual of ‘garudan parava’ and the plight of the Arayas are elaborated in the short story.

None of Kenny’s short stories evades the theme of the Native American tradition and culture. The short story “Blue Jacket” treats tradition as an inescapable trace that continuously haunts the tribal psyche and thus reaffirms the cultural memories through numerous tribal signifiers. When the character Blue Jacket visits the nameless narrator as an apparition from the other world, he regains the forgotten memories of his tribal past. Along with depicting the trauma of the central character the short story “Yaikini” is a revisit to the archives of the Native American tribal past. The traumatic psyche of the protagonist Lena remembers the old traditions, customs and the tribal culture in which nature holds a prominent position. As Lena repossesses these memories, the readers are also called to participate in the process of reclaiming the past and thus a collective identity. Through the short story “Rain”, Kenny reasserts the significance of the old rituals and ceremonies along with comments on the Native American vision on nature. It also depicts the grandparents as a medium of cultural transfer. Kenny’s “She-Who-Speaks-with-Bear” showcases the Native American tradition that holds a magical connection with the members of the community. The magical bear that the protagonist Mary Margaret carries with her is a signifier of her entire tradition. Though the short

story “Black Kettle: Fear and Recourse” is explicitly a record of the cultural trauma of invasion that the tribes of the Native American space experienced, it also gives instances to remember the old customs of the tribe. The fictional universe of these short stories is operational sites of cultural memory which proliferates through various symbols, images and motifs that signify the tribal tradition. Thus in both the authors the quest to repossess the old customs, tradition and the ways of life is evident, though in varying degrees.

The cultural trauma of exploitation and marginalization is at the heart of the works of Narayan, as explored in “Taxes for Heads and Breasts” which depicts a pre-independent scenario of revolt. The story is a gripping narrative of the utmost exploitation that the tribal communities face and their revolt. The stories “Driftwood” and “Footprints of the Predator” represent the helpless protagonists from the tribal background incapable of questioning the flaws of the system. Kannan in “Footprints of the Predator” is an ultimate victim of the traumatic system of power where the power-holders exploit and even terminate the powerless for their greed for wealth. “The Evil Spirit” speaks of the negligence of the government officials regarding the tribal welfare programmes and the sexual exploitation that the women of the communities experience. Gomati, the ambitious protagonist of the short story, falls prey to the lust of the officers. The story also depicts the pathetic condition of the tribal hostels and the failure of the welfare programmes. “The Boats are Burnt” is another tale of oppression and exploitation where the oppressor is a multinational company. All these are tales which exhibit the trauma of marginalization that the tribal communities go through at different historical settings from the pre-independent times to the neo-colonial times.

Maurice Kenny also pays greater attention to narrate the cultural trauma that the tribes of the Native American space confront. The people of the tribal communities are

reliving the trauma and redefining it every moment, giving them a consolidated vision on their selves and ethnicity. The cultural identity is re-established in this process of trauma narration. As it is studied in detail, in one of the chapters, Kenny's narration of trauma is vivid and multidimensional. When "Black Kettle" offers the explicit narration of the cultural trauma of an old period, "Blue Jacket" deals with the traumatic imprints of the Native American people who have been assimilated to the foreign cultures. Their psyche carries the trauma of invasion as well as cultural assimilation. "The Girl on the Beach" speaks of the trauma of a tribal woman through the eyes of the perpetrator. It takes a surreal narrative style and discusses the trauma of rape and dispossession. The perpetrators' trauma is the theme of the short story "Salmon".

Maurice Kenny's poems and the novels of Narayan are also potential sites to evaluate the play of memory and trauma. Kenny's treatment of the theme is evidently different as he moves from the realm of fiction to poetry. The representation of memories and trauma in the language of poetry makes use of more complex symbols and images. The language often takes a revolutionary tone and it also incorporates the native language more intensely. With the use of poetic devices the poet is able to speak a lot in a few lines. Both the writers use the same stories in different genres, but the treatment is apparently similar. Narayan in the vast canvas of novels engages with the same themes in detail. He exposes the tribal past and the memories associated with it in his short stories and novels alike.

As it is with the memory of tradition and culture, the memories of trauma and their representation also render an impetus for the achievement of a collective identity. When a cultural trauma is relived through its narrative representation, the affected community's collective identity is reaffirmed and rejuvenated. Since the event of trauma

caused the fragmentation of the collective identity of the cultural community, they have to define and narrate the trauma again in order to re-establish the same.

Apart from the psychological expounding of the trauma and dispossession depicted by the writers with an aim to strengthen the bonding of the individual to the matrix of the larger community, these narratives handle a very crucial role of cultural decolonialisation through the process of commemoration. Through their works they offer a deconstructive re-reading of their constructed history in order to give political and psychological insight to the various aspects of marginalization. The cultural memories that are narrated through the fictional trope of these writers thus become counter memories. As a basic agenda, the political visibility of the tribal writers with the expression of life through the aesthetic media of literature is a grave matter of concern. And this political visibility allows them to effectively articulate their experiences of suppression and the dispossession and also the rich past of cultural uniqueness to the outer world.

The psychological subjugation resulting from the inverted histories and stereotypes has lasting traumatic effects. A way out of this psychological suppression is a task that demands great efforts. The fiction of both Kenny and Narayan is directed towards this end, through the vivid retelling of the cultural memories. The memories they narrate act as counter discourses and alternative ideologies. All the discourses that the hegemonic structure generates for the continuation of their privileged position are addressed and dismantled through the memory narratives of the indigenous communities in general and in the works of Kenny and Narayan in particular. Internalizing the histories and stereotypes about themselves delivered by the people outside, the new generation of the tribal community faces a traumatic identity crisis which is a theme that Maurice Kenny often addresses in his fiction. Rather than

depicting the tormented psyche of the tribal people, Narayan questions the system which makes them impossible to live, and portrays their struggle for survival. The works of both Maurice Kenny and Narayan either reflect the past directly or they represent the characters of the present time obsessed with the past. Along with the recreation of a history from the perspective of the victims in order to reclaim the collective identity and the consciousness, they fight back the ideologically interpolative meta-narratives.

Both Maurice Kenny and Narayan propose a new historiography through their retrospective fictional universe. The alternate vision of the past they offer serves to be cultural memories and activates a historic consciousness. Both the authors give authentic depictions of the incidents of the past allowing the readers to penetrate into the lives of the characters, their mindscapes, emotions and the feelings. The cartography of the traumatic psyche of the characters along with their sense of loss of the past tradition and cultural unity is represented to evoke an ethnic response within the readers. Through original characters and authentic situations both the writers reveal some grey areas of history. Cultural memory, being an extension of the memories of the individuals of a cultural space, is best preserved and transmitted through the retrospective narration of the individuals. The realistic narration of Narayan and the postmodern narration of Maurice Kenny cater to counter the grand narratives of the hegemonic classes.

The findings of the thesis can be listed out thus:

- ❖ The thesis has tried to examine the works of both the writers with the help of the theories of cultural memory, cultural trauma and cultural identity.

- ❖ The incompleteness of historiography is addressed by the writers with their retrospective narratives.
- ❖ The study was initiated by the identification of repeated culture specific themes and motifs in the works of both the writers.
- ❖ Within the core chapters two aspects of cultural memory that are represented by the authors are analysed. The first aspect is that of the memories of the glorious days of the past and the other is of the memories of the traumatic past.
- ❖ Maurice Kenny writes about the memories of triumph and trauma of the Native American communities and Narayan talks about the same of the tribal communities of Kerala.
- ❖ The writings of Maurice Kenny and Narayan diverge at certain points such as, while Kenny is more concerned about the psychological aspects of a person, Narayan is concerned about the social aspects.
- ❖ The short stories of both the writers deal with the themes of glorification of the old culture, the lamentation over the loss of tradition and the cultural trauma of marginalisation and exploitation.
- ❖ The people of the tribal communities are re-living the trauma and re-defining it every moment. This gives them a consolidated vision on their selves and ethnicity.
- ❖ Even though both the writers appropriate the theme of cultural memory to different genres like poetry, novel and short fiction, the basic function of this process remains the same.
- ❖ The narratives of both the writers help the people of the tribal communities to re-integrate their cultural identity.

- ❖ These narratives are counter narratives since they question the stereotypical constructions and the hegemonic power structures.

Maurice Kenny and Narayan have employed cultural memories through sites of memory both historical and fictional. These sites of memory include the texts, archives, historical characters, myths, old customs, rituals and the folktales. When Kenny's narratives have investigated the traumatic aboriginal characters and their psychological vibrations through numerous surreal and existential situations, Narayan predominantly deals with explicit scenes of cultural trauma where characters suffer at the hands of the power-holders. Focusing on cultural grandeur and cultural trauma, both the authors ultimately envision fostering the collective identity, ethnic pride and eventually the political action.

The significance of cultural memories in realising cultural identity to the marginalised and the dispossessed ethnic communities is undisputed. There are minor ethnic communities across the globe with a past of cultural triumph and trauma. The power politics of the hegemonic groups perpetrated the marginal position of the ethnic communities in general and the aboriginal communities in particular. Within the scope of the analysis of the thesis, it proclaims theoretically the ways in which evocation of cultural memories, of trauma and triumph, can potentially aid in the reconstruction of the ethnic pride and the collective consciousness. Furthermore, the thesis is relevant in the academic and socio-cultural realms owing to its exploration of the significance and the function of literature in preserving and propagating cultural memories which is crucial to the identity formation and re-registering of every culture.

Recommendations

Every text is open to a multitude of interpretations and analyses. The works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny are potential sites of a plethora of academic investigations. The present study exclusively investigates the representation of cultural memories in the works of both the writers and its political significance. The texts of Narayan and Kenny, written in the aboriginal context, are unique in their thematic concerns. There are many readings possible comparing both the writers as well as discussing them in isolation. Some of the possible areas for further studies are listed below.

- ❖ An analysis of the female characters of Maurice Kenny and Narayan would be a potential area of interrogation. Female characters are well explored in the fiction of both the writers, and can be considered separately as well. The female characters of Kenny and Narayan exist at two different realms: at the aboriginal as well as feminine realm. A feminist reading of the works of both the writers individually, or in comparison, would help to see the aspect of double marginalization of women in the tribal scenario.

- ❖ A study with attention to the foregrounding of nature in the works of Narayan and Maurice Kenny would be insightful. With the parameters of the theory of eco-criticism, such a reading can be effectively conducted. Both the writers unequivocally incorporate representations of nature and environment in their works and this goes in parallel with the native tradition on nature. Hence it is worthwhile to scrutinize the ecological elements in Maurice Kenny and Narayan.

- ❖ Homosexuality appears as a theme in many of Kenny's short fiction. The politics of representing the queer can be a potential area to explore. The dichotomy of homosexuality in the paradigm of the tribal tradition and in the colonisers' cultural background is worthy of academic attention. Sexual diversity is celebrated in the Native American culture. In contrast to the European vision where homosexuality is a sin the Native American tradition as well as the fiction of Kenny reflects it as yet another way of expressing sexuality. The homosexual characters of Kenny offer a fertile ground for future academic study.

- ❖ The aborigines' attachment to their habitat is an area academic interest. An exclusive study of Kenny and Narayan paying attention to the theme of locale has not been yet conducted. The habitat or place of dwelling is culturally and physically significant for the tribal communities. Their lives and culture are deeply connected with the land they live. Land alienation and dispossession are traumatic phases in the history of any tribal community. Kenny and Narayan explore the theme of the aborigines' attachment to the land and displacement profusely in their works. Thus the themes of habitat and displacement can be another area to explore.

- ❖ Maurice Kenny's heroes are existential heroes who seek the meaning of their lives from the chaos of their present and past life. They are all caught in the dichotomy between the tradition and the modern. The trauma of assimilation always haunts their identity. Hence they struggle to find out the meaning of their lives and this struggle marks their being. An analysis of the life and being

of these characters identifying the ways in which they try to cope with reality and often fail would be insightful.

- ❖ Adopting the parameters of spectral criticism, an analysis of Maurice Kenny's short stories would be innovative. Kenny's short stories often incorporate elements of the spectral. There are numerous situations in which he depicts the haunting presence of the ethereal. The spectral representations are often the signifiers of the traumas of the tribal existence. The signification of the spectral representations and its correlation with the characters and situations of the plot are worthy of academic evaluation.
- ❖ Narayan's works are written in Malayalam and only some of them are available in translation. The politics behind the process of translation and its nuances can be a potential area of further research.
- ❖ Maurice Kenny is a prophet of the Native American tribal life and culture. He chronicles the same through his works. The idiosyncrasies of the tradition and the culture of the Mohawk tribe are explored at different levels by him. The tradition, culture, ways of life, customs and the vision on life and nature of the tribal communities are explicated by him through different characters. Kenny crafts his characters at two levels; those who are inclined to the past tradition and those who move away from it. The aspect of the tradition and a lament over the loss of the same are evident in Kenny. An evaluation of the counter historic aspect of the works of Maurice Kenny by giving special attention to the history of the different Native American tribes would be enlightening.

- ❖ The works of Narayan can be justifiably categorised under the title social realism. His works generally evoke the memories of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and other writers of social realism. Narayan demonstrates in a realist manner the plight of the tribal communities of Kerala from a self-reliant and free status of being, to a dependent, dispossessed and exploited state. The elements of social realism in Narayan can be a productive area of analysis.
- ❖ The depiction of the tribal life is prominent in the novels of Narayan. Tribal life is dealt with utmost care and vividness. Through a detailed analysis of the novels of Narayan, the past and the tradition of the tribal people of Kerala can be deciphered. Narayan's works often deviate from the mainstream version of the tribal history. He attempts a new historiography in this respect to dismantle the fixities. An analysis of the version of history that Narayan attempts to reflect through his works would be informative.
- ❖ Narayan's works are critical portrayals of the tension between the tradition and the modernity. The tradition of tribal communities especially the Malayaraya community is often the background of his works. While dealing with the tradition of his community in-depth, he unfurls the theme of modernity and technological advancements in his works. An analysis of the theme of the tradition and the modernity with a focus on the characterization would be a potential area of study in the future.
- ❖ Kenny's images and symbols in poetry are deeply rooted in the Native American tradition. His images and symbols are powerful and invite the attention of the readers to the core of the Native American existence. His correlatives are signifiers of the Mohawk culture and tradition. The intricacies

of his poetry can be evaluated with an in-depth study of the images and the symbols.

- ❖ Most of the short stories and poems of Maurice Kenny portray the trauma of generations or how the trauma of the past generations affect the younger generations, who are not directly involved in the traumatic experience. As trauma got represented and relived through the younger generations, the transgenerational aspect of trauma gets revealed. An exclusive study of the representation of the subconscious transmission of the traumatic experiences to the subsequent generations and the expression of symptoms by the succeeding generations in Kenny's short fiction is worthy of academic attention.
- ❖ Maurice Kenny captures the perpetrators' trauma in his short fiction. Though the present study contemplates the topic of perpetrators' trauma, it is never irrelevant to study the topic exclusively. Trauma and its representation gets a new level of signification when viewed through the perspective of the perpetrator. Perpetrators are the agents of trauma and Kenny depicts their symptoms of trauma though they are not the victims.
- ❖ Narayan's use of the tribal dialect in his works is worthy of attention. Since all his novels are of tribal setting, the language which the characters use is specifically original. Narayan, without any translation uses the dialect in its own. This feature of his fiction is an act of counter discourse and counter hegemonic. The use of tribal dialects not only brings to light the uniqueness of their language and culture but also acts as a political tool of resistance.

- ❖ A stylistic or linguistic study of the use of language in Narayan's and Kenny's works will be an interesting area of future research.

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