

## Fourth World Literature: An Introduction

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Fourth World literature refers to the written work of native people living in a land that has been taken over by non-Natives. “Fourth World,” however, is a term that came into use following the formation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1972. Fourth World people are the original indigenous inhabitants those who existed before European or other colonizers invaded, occupied, or otherwise conquered and settled their homelands.

Native people of America, Aboriginals of Australia, Maoris of New Zealand, First Nations of Canada, Dalits / Tribes of India are considered as peoples of Fourth World. George Manuel (1921-1989), the most significant, powerful and revered Indigenous leader of Canada advocated the political unification of indigenous people across the globe by the formation of the Fourth World movement and gave prominence to the concept of Fourth World. As the president of World Council of Indigenous Peoples during 1975-1981, Manuel traveled Sweden, Nicaragua, Chile, and Guatemala and realized that Indigenous people have much in common and in the face of adversity, unity becomes the binding factor. To promote the perspective of the Fourth World, with the assistance of Michael Posluns, he published *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* in the year 1974. Manuel’s campaign from brotherhood to nationhood found its resonance in all the aspects of Indigenous peoples lives. Throughout this work Manuel alludes to a history of shared experiences among the indigenous communities of the world, who are struggling for self-determination and identity. In his narrative, Manuel furthermore registers the language used to divide the world systematically according to a variety of empirical formulations that adhere to notions of economic development. This description of the Fourth World tends to fall into generalities as it is often used to define any community that is marginalized economically and politically. And he suggests, once the Fourth World enters the historical consciousness of the globe, it arguably beacons the most dramatic history of transculturation ever witnessed, carrying within constitutive forces that shape the post-Columbian world in all its manifestations.

Australian writer, Adam Shoemaker provided a comprehensive account of Aboriginal literature in Australia with *Black words, White Page: Aboriginal Literature 1929-1988* (1989). In this influential book, Shoemaker has presented Aboriginal literature as Australia’s Fourth World literature. Upholding the same spirit Gordon Brotherston wrote *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas through their Literature* (1992), arguing that American continent was identified as the “Fourth World” of our planet. The book has explored landscapes and chronologies of this world using indigenous sources as primary sources. It has brought together wide range of evidence from Latin and Anglo America and offered detailed analyses of texts that range back into centuries of civilized life. It is from these sources the literary cartography of Fourth World literature is drawn considering Native American Literature. The consciousness of the Fourth World is the result of constant efforts of aboriginal representatives. The

evolution of Fourth World literature is in reflection with the socio, economic, literary and cultural circumstances that affected the lives of Natives. One of the important inquiries posed by Brotherston in his book is how an understanding of these sources enriches our methods and our knowledge of the historical formation of colonialism, post-colonialism, empire, and even European cultural and social history. He later points to a geographical “identity analogous” to the other three worlds (1). Geographical and historical coherences are continuously corroborated through extensive political legacies that predate Americas’ inclusion on western cartography and have continued until today. This kind of transnational collaboration, which again predates modern formations, is central to postcolonial historization of transnationalism and to a deeper understanding of colonial histories. Arguably, Brotherston’s work makes two key contributions. First, to challenge the inherited linguistic privileging of the script as espoused in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* and Levi- Strauss’s structuralist framework; and second, to illustrate through the literary sources of the peoples of Native America a coherence and continuity of the Fourth World. As a consequence, his work provides a methodological decoding that opens a previously inaccessible corpus of literature logically and continuously structured in a way that reconfigures our navigation through transatlantic history and Amerindian imaginaries. Understanding the sources of historical memory recorded through both verbal and visual languages in the Americas has led not only to fundamental questions of epistemological difference, but also to the clarification of various traditions that have impeded the kinds of transcultural understandings. This reduction led to a homogenous reading of Native American traditions, both political and intellectual, that robs historical agency and political strategy.

Marxist analysis to Fourth World initiates a historical use of the term cultivated in a series of world system classifications. Karl Marx drew a world division based on an analysis of the organization of capital and its monopolistic tendencies in late capitalism, which also informed the contemporary discussion of imperialism. In contrast, recent studies have unearthed histories that enrich the term, and which may prove pertinent to an analysis of postcolonial studies. The early use of the term appears in Hopi cosmogony to signify a metaphysical world. In this respect, the Fourth World is predicated by an articulation of hemispheric coherence and continuity that is corroborated politically and through a rigorous methodology that allows for the reading and understanding of indigenous sources. As theoretical and historical arguments regarding the Fourth World to find a basis in studies that privilege these sources, a more complex horizon of understanding and praxis has been ascertained. A corpus of recent works on Native American literature has posed theoretical and practical challenge to different fields of study.

Steven Conn, in his *History’s Shadow: Native Americans and Historical Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century* (2004), demonstrates that the exclusion of Native histories from human history has impressed the consciousness of societies and an imaginary of static peoples who exist “with a past, but without a history” (21). Conn continues to discuss how this imagination has affected European and Euro-American scientific and social scientific methodologies. What Conn and others demonstrate is that postcolonial studies, to the possible extent are concerned with the subjective and objective formations of structural and imaginary constructs of colonialism and empire must inquire into the construction of an Amerindian imagination. For Latin American

postcolonialities, this inquiry demands an expanded list of sources within its horizon of study, particularly Native American ones, as well as an expansion of methodological frameworks for understanding genre, reading practices, and modes of recording memory and chronology. Brotherston's suggestion is that Native American texts contain a "self-definition or ontology [which] corroborates political self-determination," facilitates a discussion on transcultural phenomena (4). This new horizon of investigation provides another venue in which to challenge the implied ownership by dominant societies over fundamental historical formations, such as modernity.

The Fourth World provides a contribution to the understanding of structures of subjectivity pertaining to thinking and feeling that allow for deeper and more thorough excavations central to the analyses of postcolonial studies. In the context of global formations as they relate to Latin America, the United States has inherited a privileged position as a new steward over the ownership of intellectual production, particularly the legacy of protectorate of specific economic and cultural structures that are not always congruent with the formative experiences that shape the coalesced modernities that are lived. One of Anthony Hall's salient features in *The American Empire and the Fourth World: The Bowl with One Spoon* (2005), illustrates how histories of contact between Indigenous and Euro-American communities contributed to the formation of one of capitalism's critical documents, in many ways are also a foundational document for postcolonial societies. To a certain extent, Euro-America's inability to confront many of the questions posed by Native Americans is symptomatic of the impoverishment of imagination and methodology that coloniality affected, and may signify a certain level of understanding that European empires have always possessed regarding radical tendencies and manifestations of the politics and epistemologies that the Fourth World asserts.

A recent publication, *Exploring Fourth World Literatures: Tribals, Adivasis and Dalits* (2011), edited by Raja SekharPatteti, asserted to incorporate Dalits and Tribals of India to be a part of Fourth World social and literary identity, in order to make the Fourth World concept a broader and complete phenomenon.

Though multiple definitions of the Fourth World exist, the term offers to Amerindian context. The definition of the Fourth World as a signifier for the Native Americas, one of many, is established through arguments that affirm a geographical locus of enunciation, a political coherence, a historical continuity, and most importantly an authoritative source of literature that corroborates each of those aspects.

N. Scott Momaday, who has been regarded as chief of Native American literature, has been promoting the spirit of the Fourth World conception by his substantial and indisputable literary contribution for the past fifty years. Though, Forth World is not a new socio and literary conception, Momaday tried to consolidate and popularize the term with his Native and universal outlook. Unrecognized literatures need breakthrough events to gain attention and legitimacy. For American Indian literatures, the key event occurred in 1969 when a young, unknown Kiowa painter, poet, and scholar won a Pulitzer Prize for his first novel, *House Made of Dawn* (1968). It was the first major recognition for a work of Native American literature and a landmark for those seeking to understand indigenous identities in the light of Fourth World viewpoint. This event is filled with ironies, two of which offer revealing insights about the way Native American literatures have gained acceptance, about the nature of N. Scott Momaday's writing, and about the

significance of contemporary Native American literature. The publication of *House Made of Dawn*, beyond doubt initiated what scholars call the Native American Renaissance and opened the way for other Native American writers to publish works which deal with Native life in the United States. This Renaissance has continued to this day.

Among the most widely read and studied Native American authors, Momaday manifests, in his writings, a keen awareness of the importance of self-definition in literature and life. From 1936 onward, his family moved from place to place in the Southwest, eventually settling in Albuquerque, where Momaday attended high school. He entered the University of New Mexico in 1954 and later studied poetry at Stanford University. In 1963, he received his doctorate in English and since then has held teaching jobs at various Southwestern universities.

Momaday's background certainly fostered multicultural perspectives. His autobiographical books, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969) and *The Names* (1976) emphasize the importance of the Kiowa landscape and his father's tribal heritage. Momaday's fiction and poetry make abundant use of his multicultural background. Momaday almost inevitably became spokesman for American Indian literary concerns. Repeatedly and emphatically in essays, interviews, and addresses, Momaday has held that what distinguishes American Indian from Euroamerican moral and spiritual vision is a deep-rooted identity with, and sense of responsibility to, the natural environment.

Momaday has established himself as one of the great Native American writers of the century. His writing spans a wide range of genres including poetry, novels, plays, folk tales, memoirs, and essays. As is natural with any other Native American writer, Momaday is constantly looking into his beliefs in respect to his heritage. He has looked at how it has been expressed through language passed down through the centuries. He realizes and admits to the heavy burden of trying to take those stories and lessons that have been passed down orally for years beyond him and trying to place them down on paper in a manner that respects and allows the traditional heritage and history to be respected.

Across all of Momaday's writing is the universal theme of the value of the land that surrounds and sustains us. Momaday's embracement and advocacy of the concept of Forth World connects him and in turn connects indigenous people as readers to the ancient traditions respecting home land.

While rejecting the label "spokesman," Momaday has always been generous and supportive of initiatives for American Indian education and recognition in the arts. One of his earliest publications was an essay in *Ramparts* magazine titled "The Morality of Indian Hating", published at the height of the civil rights struggle. The article brought to the attention of readers the unexplored riches of Indian heritage. He is a compelling speaker and has lectured in prestigious forums. He also makes himself available to chat with a student who wishes to interview him or to make a personal appearance in classes of young students entering university from the reservation. He has supported the work of many young American Indian authors, writing introductions and reviews in order to be known to the reading public. Momaday is one of the most interviewed of contemporary authors, and tapes and transcripts of these interviews provide much in the way of personal insight into his work. He continues a life dedicated to the arts — poetry, prose,

visual arts, and storytelling. Momaday, noted for several influential works, widely credited as leading the way for the breakthrough of Native American literature into the mainstream.

The cultural diversity of his childhood, destabilizing effects of American legislation on native cultures, environmental destruction of native lands, and political precedents of the 1960s encouraged the development of Momaday's convictions in the environmental responsibility of mankind, power of language, and need for identity, all of which are presented in his novels and poetry. While initially dismissed by some critics, his literary merit and impact upon the twentieth century cannot be ignored, for it shattered traditional Native American stereotypes, triggered a renewed interest in Native American cultures, advocated the fusion of Native and European American policies, and sparked what Kenneth Lincoln termed the "Native American Renaissance."

While advocating Native American values, Momaday pursued a subtle yet vital goal of demolishing longstanding stereotypes bestowed upon the red race by the "Great White Father" (used for the U.S. president by American Indians in the 19th century). For centuries, Native Americans were portrayed as "primitive, violent, superstitious, backward, and inarticulate" (Velie, *Four American* 59). However, Momaday's literary talent, placid demeanor and optimistic outlook convinced many to reevaluate that stereotype. Momaday's writing provided realistic characters that were neither "frozen in the nineteenth century" nor completely detached from their Native cultures (Allen, "N. Scott Momaday" 208). Education was a major element of Momaday's campaign for the successful renovation of the Native American persona. A critic once said: "American Indians do not write novels and poetry as a rule or teach English at top ranking universities either, but we can not be patronizing" (Bonetti 135). Momaday's exceptional mastery of the language must have surprised or even possibly intimidated a great number of non-Native writers. Regardless of the social standards, Momaday argued that education was each individual's right and that it should not be restricted to the "realm of the white man" (Trimble 5). However, Momaday has since extended the concept of education to encompass non-Indians by establishing a course solely dedicated to the study of American Indian oral tradition at several prominent universities.

Momaday's literary achievements quickly garnered public recognition for the Native American community and provided an impetus for the renewal of the fragile bonds between generations. As the first Native American writer to ever win a national literary prize, Momaday was elevated to the position of a representative for all of Native Americans. Momaday's resonant yet lucid voice finally spoke for the millions that had once been silenced. Armed with the power of publicity, Momaday established the Buffalo Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the link between young Native Americans and the elders of the tribes. The Buffalo Trust continues to thrive today, ensuring the passage of cultural knowledge from generation to generation.

White society's recognition of Momaday's talents provided the rallying force necessary to launch the era of Red Power. Although Momaday was never an outspoken politician, he supported the integration of certain Native American ideas into American policies. The most relevant suggestion was the creation of an American land ethic. Momaday observed that the "Indian has always lived on the best of terms with the natural world. Western man and western European civilization has always been at odds with

nature” (Costo 4-5). Momaday argued that, through an exchange of ideas, both cultures could achieve their final goal of a sustainable Earth.

Critics and writers agree that Momaday’s works inspired an era of renewed interest in Native American literature, more commonly known as the Native American Renaissance. Kenneth Lincoln, who originally coined the term, defined the phenomenon as a “written renewal of oral traditions translated into Western literary forms” (Lincoln, *Native American* 8). The 1969 Pulitzer Prize forced the dominant culture to acknowledge that twentieth-century American Indians were capable of producing written literature that was intellectually demanding and “serious” (Allen, “N. Scott Momaday” 207). Between 1968 and 1977, there was an unprecedented increase in the printing of work by Native American writers (Ruppert, “Fiction: 1968 to the Present” 173). Momaday’s influence on the Native American community is reflected in the titles of perhaps the two best anthologies of American Indian writing, *Carriers of the Dream Wheel* (1975) and *The Remembered Earth* (1981); both draw their names from Momaday’s poetry. Many Native American writers, among them Simon Ortiz and Leslie Marmon Silko, have acknowledged their literary debt to Momaday. Paula Gunn Allen has even expressed that *House Made of Dawn* “made things possible for [her] that were never possible before.” (Bruchac, “The Magic of Words” 110)

Four essential books of Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (1968), *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), *The Ancient Child* (1989), and *In the Presence of the Sun: Stories and Poems, 1961-1991*(1992) have been taken for this study.

The thesis titled “Native American Literary Renaissance: A Fourth World Perspective of N. Scott Momaday’s Oeuvre”, presents the origin of Fourth World social and literary identity and its consolidation in the attempts of George Manuel in circumscribing the indigenous people across the globe. It further encompasses the cartography of the Native American literary history and its evolution as major part of Fourth World literatures. The aim of the thesis is to study and examine N. Scott Momaday’s literary contribution and campaign to educate non-Native Americans about their affluent culture. An attempt is made to elucidate the Native American history and their survival in spite of five hundred years of injustices and assaults on their cultures and lives. The issues of ethnicity, nativity, identity, oral traditions, culture, land, marginalization, displacement, language, cultural conflicts, history and representation are examined critically in the light of post-modern theories. It also examines the circumstances that paved the way for the emergence of Native literary identity. Through creating a paradigm for understanding Indigenous people as Fourth World and situating Native American literature as social protest writing, within that framework, joins the growing body of Indigenous literary analysis that seeks to further intellectual sovereignty. It further focuses on recent trends and scope of Native American literature as a distinct literary production.

The very first chapter titled “The Native Literary History” chronologically explores the progress of Native American literature from the nineteenth century to the present. It is an attempt at presenting the issues involved in the evolution of Native American subjectivity from the times of oral tradition to the present and more sophisticated forms of literary expression. The historical and cultural necessity for literary canon of Native Americans interrogated from the perspectives indigenous

ideology and intellectuality. It presents a brief history of how Native Americans came into conflict with European invaders. It examines the popular perceptions of Natives in the writing of White Americans and their misrepresentation. The chapter establishes how the portrayal of Native American subjectivity acted as antecedent for more enlightened views about Native Americans. The chapter particularly talks about the crucial contributions of nineteenth and first half of the twentieth- century writers such as John Rollin Ridge [Yellow Bird], Simon Pokagon, D'Arcy McNickle, Mourning Dove, etc., and their influence and impact on the subsequent generation of writers.

The second chapter entitled “The Empowering Vision” discusses Momaday’s groundbreaking novel *House Made of Dawn* and its reverberation to consider its publication as the beginning of Native American Renaissance. It examines the influence and place of this work in the Native American literary history. Momaday as a poet, novelist and scholar dispelled the Native American perspectives in understanding the landscape and cultural legacies. Celebrating mysterious nature of Native world, he unfurled the colonial history of America and oriented the minds of Americans to accept the burden of guilt conscious for subjugating the Native Americans. He propagated the casualties of Natives under the policies of federal government in the name of restoration and rehabilitation camps lead them to more tragic helpless conditions. The cultural genocide that causes Native Americans to alienate from their ways of living constituted a serious problem as far as existence of Native Americans are concerned. Momaday’s engagement with Native issues is considered purely artistic and purposeful. The chapter addresses the core and common American Indian conditions by comprehending major characters in the novel. The characters are not created for the sake of characters but they are common objects representing whole of the Native communities. The tone and method in which Momaday addressed the issues of indigenous people is considered as ambiguous progression. Through this chapter an attempt is made to shatter the complexity and literary commotion of the novel prevailing since its publication by analyzing carefully the Native cultural, social and belief systems.

The third chapter entitled “Synchronizing Myth & History” examines Momaday’s folklore *The Way to Rainy Mountain* which is just around hundred pages yet recognized as Native American epic by its nature and grandeur. This work is considered as inventive autobiographical account of Momaday’s Journey to the Rainy Mountain. The chapter explores Momaday’s journey as an important event of Native practice of discovering the origin and roots of their existence. The motive behind the journey of Momaday is to find out his connections with his ancestors and to draw the tribal knowledge and to experience the journey of his elders once had. In this process he finds himself in the midst of his past culture and religious practices. It also depicts the importance of understanding myths and history and their role in circumscribing the very idea of cultural identity.

The fourth chapter entitled “A Proud Proclamation” provides a critical examination of Momaday’s *The Ancient Child*. The chapter discovers the stereotypes of cultural estrangement of the principal characters and difficulty in understanding and assimilating into their indigenous life. It further observes Momaday’s gifted power of imagination and genius in characterizing the crisis of Native American life as a result of mainstream ways of living. Momaday succeeds in portraying the agony and desiccation of Native American life by examining the cultural conflicts and dilemma. The issue of

alienation, return and reintegration in both theme and structure is a common plot in the popular works of D'Arcy McNickle, MormonSilko and James Welch, which demonstrate the homing plot and tell story of Indians, who have been away for some time from their homeland and culture, and comes home finally to find their identity. The chapter also studies the significance of the traditional motif of human-to-bear transformation. The bear in the motif of transformation created by Momaday reinforces the animal's role as mediator between man and other animals and interrogates the nature of animals in evolutionary thought. Transposing the bear from the position of being an "other" to human beings, Momaday re-aligns the bear with Native American identity in a palimpsest figure that stands in a place of resistance to assimilation and beyond reservation captivity. It is also examined that on how Momaday follows the bear of myth to a position of astral superiority in a cosmological order transcending earthbound histories and endangered cultural spaces.

The fifth and last chapter entitled "Native Natural Lyrical Science" examines meticulously the poetic aura of Momaday's verse and short stories which reflect the Native heritage, belief systems, art forms, and Plains culture of the past. His poetry is understood as an important means to realize the magnitude of nature and its vitality. The chapter appraises thirty years of selected poems and stories of Momaday, which provide the unadorned poetry, recount fables and rituals of the Kiowa nation and convey the deep sense of place of the Native American oral tradition. It also presents how Momaday's poetry constitutes the whole gamut of Native American art, literary legacies and vision. The chapter focuses on dream-songs about animals (bear, bison, terrapin) and life away from urban alienation, an imagined re-creation based on Billy the Kid, prose poems about Plains Shields. The chapter also throws light on Momaday's presentation and redefining of Native myths through his poems and short stories, as an important source of understanding and listening to the ancestral voice that gives instructions to find their connections with their prehistoric cultures. Momaday's concern about nature in his poetry is purely apolitical and artistic. His artistic assertion is deeply rooted in indigenous cultures and oral traditions.

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