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Centre for Canadian Studies
H.P. University, Shimla

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Project Associate
Centre for Australian & New Zealand Studies
H.P. University, Shimla
Contact: 78761 62577

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H.P. University, Shimla

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Assistant Professor,
Deptt. of English
H.P. University, Shimla

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National Seminar on Indigenous Epistemologies and Postcolonial Resistance: Literary Traditions from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India (Hybrid Mode)

29th September, 2026

Organized by
**Centre for Australian &
New Zealand Studies**
Himachal Pradesh University
Shimla

in collaboration with
Centre for Canadian Studies
and
Department of English
Himachal Pradesh University
Shimla

Venue:
Vice-Chancellor's Committee Room
Himachal Pradesh University
Shimla

About the Centre

'Centre for Australian and New Zealand Studies' was set up in 2007 as a Major Project under Area Study Programme of UGC and is now being run by Himachal Pradesh University as an integral part of the University. The Centre has organized multiple Conferences, Seminars (National and International), Symposiums, Creative Writing Workshops, Visual Artist Workshops, Extension Activities, Special Lectures, Online Lecture, Panel Discussion and hosted Writer-in Residents and Visiting Fellows. Besides this, the Centre has hosted six Asia link Residents. The Centre has the distinction of being one of the six universities in India to hold Asia-link-Residency Programme which is totally funded by the Australian government. The Centre also publishes a peer reviewed journal Indian Journal of Australian Studies since 2008. The Centre has emerged as a multi-disciplinary resource Centre on Australian and New Zealand studies to provide information to students, researchers and teachers alike and has achieved the status of nodal Centre for not only North India but also for researchers throughout country working in these particular areas. The Centre has its own contributory library for research. At the research level, 12 Ph.D. and 20 M.Phil.research scholars from the Department of English have been awarded Ph.D. and M.Phil. degrees on topics of Australian & New Zealand literature. Through these activities of the Centre has created greater visibility for itself as well as for the University.

Concept Note

Indigenous literatures from Australia, New Zealand, India and Canada constitute some of the most significant and transformative contributions to contemporary world literature. Rooted in centuries of colonial subjugation, cultural marginalization, and historical trauma, these works transcend the boundaries of artistic expression to become acts of survival, resistance, and reclamation of identity. Through diverse literary forms—ranging from oral traditions and poetry to fiction and autobiographical narratives—Indigenous authors have reasserted their cultural presence within both national and global literary frameworks. Theirs is a literature that challenges dominant colonial discourses and advocates for justice, reconciliation, and decolonization of epistemological and literary paradigms.

In Australia, Aboriginal writers such as Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Kim Scott, and Alexis Wright, Jack Davis, Kevin Gilbert and Anita Heiss have employed literature as a critical medium to interrogate the legacies of colonial displacement while simultaneously preserving cultural memory and Indigenous epistemologies. In New Zealand, Māori authors including Witi Ihimaera, Patricia

Grace, and Keri Hulme and Robert Sullivan have articulated Indigenous world views and cosmologies, emphasizing the struggle for autonomy, cultural continuity, and self-determination. Likewise, in Canada, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit writers such as Lee Maracle, Thomas King, and Eden Robinson, Michelle Good and Jeannette Armstrong have foregrounded questions of identity, land, and cultural restoration, using narrative as a means to reconstruct historical consciousness and communal belonging.

In the Indian context, Indigenous Literature reflected in the writings by Jaipal Singh Munda, Mahasweta Devi, Easterine Kire, Nirmala Putul, Jacinta Kerketta, Oraon, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, Temsula Ao and Mamang Dai has used storytelling, poetry, and fiction to resist dominant narratives of marginalization and reclaim tribal identities silenced by colonial and postcolonial hierarchies. Similarly, Himachal Pradesh also has a rich tradition of oral narratives, folklore, tribal literature, and contemporary Indigenous writing emerging from communities such as the Gaddi, Kinnaura, Lahaula, Spitian, Gujjar, Pangwal, and Bhoti-speaking peoples. Through their works, writers and scholars including Gautam Sharma Vyathit, Mohan Singh Gaddi, Thakur Sen Negi, Lobzang Shastri, Tashi Raptan, Molu Ram Thakur, and Ajey, along with the research contributions of Lal Chand Prarthi, and many others have played a vital role in documenting and preserving tribal identities, Indigenous knowledge systems, folklore, oral traditions, and the socio-cultural heritage of the Himalayan region.

The seminar seeks to engage critically with these diverse yet interconnected literary traditions, examining how Indigenous writings from these three nations contribute to ongoing discourses of reconciliation, cultural preservation, and identity formation. By adopting a comparative perspective, the seminar aims to interrogate the shared postcolonial experiences of Indigenous communities and highlight the ways in which literature functions as a site of resistance, revival, and decolonial transformation.

Objectives

1. To explore thematic and stylistic diversity in Indigenous writings of Australia, New Zealand, India and Canada.
2. To understand the role of Indigenous literature in resisting colonial and neo-colonial ideologies.
3. To examine intersections of language, land, identity, and spirituality in Indigenous narratives.
4. To foster academic dialogue on the global significance of Indigenous voices.

Sub-Themes

1. Reclaiming Identity and Voice: Representation and self-determination.
2. Land, Memory, and Belonging: Ecocritical and cultural perspectives.
3. Orality and Storytelling: Preserving traditions through narrative forms.
4. Gender and Indigenous Feminisms: Women's roles in Indigenous discourse.
5. Language and Translation: The politics of linguistic survival.
6. Trauma, Healing, and Reconciliation: Literature as a site of healing.
7. Comparative Indigenous Literatures: Cross-cultural dialogues and solidarities.
8. Laws pertaining to protection of Indigenous rights.
9. Indigenous Representation in Media and Cinema: Narratives, Resistance and Decolonial Perspectives

Important Dates:

- Abstract Submission Deadline: 20th September, 2026
 - Notification of Acceptance: 22nd September, 2026
 - Registration: 23rd-24th September, 2026
- Faculty/Academicians: Rs. 1000/-
Research Scholars and Masters' students: Rs. 500/-
QR payment



Registration Link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJEskTuifVUx5FyfFyB3GS9RNfP-ITV_QINCLyH7FBXRSkyg/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=105786473114202632150

Submission Guidelines:

1. Abstracts (250–300 words) should clearly indicate the title, objectives, key words and main arguments.
2. Include author's name, designation, institutional affiliation, email, and contact number.
3. Email the abstracts and papers to directorcanz.hpu@gmail.com