NATIVE WOMEN, THEORY AND RESEARCH: CONTEXTS AND CONTESTATIONS

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By

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Abstract

In this thesis I outline a critical approach to interpreting the considerable academic literature on Aboriginal women in North America. I locate the scholarship concerning Native women within an understanding of three developments related to a philosophy of science: (1) paradigmatic shifts concerning the philosophy of science, (2) materialist-idealist debates and (3) transitions in feminist theory characterized by what is termed the shift from second to third wave feminism. My exploration of emergent themes suggests that the elements indicated above provide overlapping frameworks within which most scholarship about Indigenous women is positioned.

I illustrate my finding that employing critical discourse analysis and postcolonial feminism as both method and theory provides a useful approach in attending to intersecting experiences of ‘race, class, and gender.’ I view these intersecting experiences as central to the socio-political positioning of Indigenous women within contemporary feminist theorizing. I conclude my thesis by reflecting on the conceptual struggles I experienced in formulating and organizing the thesis and the significance of my underlying epistemological position and value-orientation as both a feminist and Native woman.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements and Dedication iii

Chapter One
   Introduction 1
      Overview of thesis 3
      Method 4
      Defining discourse 6
      Theoretical context 7
      Philosophy of science 8
      Materialist versus Idealist debates 9
      Second to third wave feminism 11
      Moving Forward 12

Chapter Two
   Indigenous Peoples and the Context of Scholarship 13
      Contemporary scholarship concerning Indigenous peoples 14
         Representation in scholarship 16
         Authenticity and legitimacy 22
      Gendered perspective: Native women 26
         Absences and erasures 27
         Polarity in representation 28
         Colonialism and gender roles 29
      Further debates over representation and authenticity 31
         Summary and Conclusion 34

Chapter Three
   Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) 36
      A detailed overview of CDA 37
      Discourse and politics 40
      Critiques of CDA and responses 43
      Research and the use of CDA 47
      Approach to CDA in thesis 49
         Summary and Conclusion 53

Chapter Four
   Postcolonial Feminism 54
      Postcolonial thought: Historical and contextual development 54
      Development of postcolonial feminist theorizing 63
      Warranting Criteria 73
Table of Contents

Chapter Four (cont’d)

Coherence 74
Participant’s Orientation 74
Summary and Conclusion 75

Chapter Five
Postcolonial feminism, Critical discourse and Native women:
Summary, Conclusion and Final Reflections

Summary 77
Conclusions 78
Final Reflections 82
Values and Epistemology 83

Appendix A 86
Appendix B 87

References 88
Dedication

To Lonnie, my dear "Indian lady" — it has been 4 years since you succumbed to cancer — I know you are at peace with the Creator — still, I miss you every day.

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I gratefully acknowledge the patience and support of my husband Dennis through this very challenging work. You and our four-legged 'babies' make this all possible.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In this thesis I am using the parameters of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to argue that postcolonial feminist theorizing provides an important avenue for furthering the development of the scholarship concerning Aboriginal women in North America. I am employing the term theorizing to express my understanding of the multidimensional perspectives different theorists have brought to 'postcolonialism.' Further, I suggest that the notion of 'theorizing' captures the intersections of identity and experience as suggested within contemporary scholarship concerning Indigenous women.

A postcolonial feminist approach offers a crucial 'lens' for understanding the predominant themes in scholarship concerning Native women. From this perspective, postcolonial feminism provides (a) a focus on the gendered nature of historical relations of colonization in shaping the 'lived realities' of Native women; (b) a challenge to multiple historical and hegemonic views and (c) 'voice' to Native women scholars specifically and to Native women more generally. Additionally, postcolonial feminist theorizing combined with critical discourse approaches offers potential advances in research perspectives that will support the diverse goals of Indigenous women. Finally, examining postcolonial feminist theorizing as a critical discourse within contemporary scholarship about Aboriginal women contributes to the scholarly discussion concerning the need for theoretical frameworks that address the 'trinity' of interests in critical social theory: race, class and gender. Postcolonial feminist theorizing addresses each of these issues through its attention to the contemporary experiences and material circumstances faced by Indigenous women as consequences of a history of colonialism.
Studying the discursive representation of Aboriginal women in scholarly texts is relevant for two significant reasons. The first concerns the potential for material consequences through the influences of scholarship in shaping social policy. The second and broader influence of these discourses is through the ways in which the representations of Indigenous women in academic texts can serve to uphold or challenge historically negative characterizations.

Examining the social and historical context of scholarly discourse appears to be a relatively neglected area in contemporary scholarship concerning Aboriginal women in North America. Specifically, there is a paucity of published works that discuss the paradigmatic and theoretical context of recent scholarship concerning Aboriginal women in North America. My thesis addresses this gap by using postcolonial feminist theorizing as a critical discursive perspective for interpretations of existing research, and by suggesting the efficacy of a conjoined approach—postcolonial feminism and critical discourse analysis—for future research.

The goals for my thesis are both exploratory and interpretive. In considering the parameters of critical discourse analysis it is not my intention to do a full interpretive study. Rather, I provide the explanatory basis for using a critical discursive methodology as a way of interpreting contemporary scholarship concerning Native women in North America. Similarly, my consideration of postcolonial feminist theorizing as an interpretative framework is also exploratory. Rather than offering a definitive account, I provide an entry point for discussion. This introductory work suggests a means of bridging contemporary feminist scholarship and the multiple oppressions facing Indigenous women: oppressions that are rooted within a colonial history.
Overview of thesis

In the remainder of Chapter One, I introduce the method of data collection for my thesis and situate it in a methodological context. As well, I outline the contextual, theoretical frameworks for the thesis within which, arguably, contemporary scholarship about Native women occurs.

In Chapter Two “Contemporary scholarship and Indigenous peoples,” I provide a general overview of the predominant issues and politics in scholarship concerning Native peoples within North America. Discussion of this more general scholarship is used to frame a gendered perspective on Native women and leads into more specific aspects pertaining to Indigenous women and feminism.

In Chapter Three, “Critical discourse analysis,” I discuss the ways in which critical discourse is used within this thesis as a combination of theory, method and methodology on two levels. First, discourse is conceptualized as an active process of relationships between broader social-structural factors and relations of ruling. These factors work simultaneously to shape knowledge and behaviour and provide a rationale for social practices. Second, a critical discursive perspective can be used as a method for reading and analyzing texts.

Chapter Four “Postcolonial feminism” begins with a history of postcolonial thought, and its current and contested status among Indigenous peoples in North America. This introduction to postcolonial thought and the various contestations leads to the latter half of the chapter in which I examine the contextual development of postcolonial feminist theorizing and its current debates.
In Chapter Five "Conclusion and Reflections: Postcolonial feminism, critical discourse and Native women" after providing an overview of the thesis, I discuss the integration of a critical discursive methodology with postcolonial feminist theorizing to consider their specific relevance—both interpretively and practically—for research concerning Indigenous women in North America. I conclude with a discussion of the value-orientation of my research and the epistemological challenges I faced.

Method

The impetus for my initial research was an interest in contemporary academic publications concerning the socio-political identity of Indigenous women. My specific focus was on academic publications over the last decade: that is, publications between 1993 and 2004. In order to obtain a rich survey, I first employed keyword searches of online, multidisciplinary social science databases for journal articles. Second, I used the same limiters to search for scholarly books. As ‘limiters’ for my search, I specified that the key terms "Indigenous women", "First Nations women", "Aboriginal women", "Native women" and "Native American women" be located within the title of (a) full text articles, and (b) scholarly books. I selected these search terms as exemplary of the most contemporary identity labels used by various scholars.¹ I concentrated my search in the following materials: (a) peer-reviewed articles and books, (b) works dealing with Native women in a North American context, (c) works that were not expressly concerned with

¹ Preference in descriptive labels is itself a contested area. Based on scholarly literature (e.g. Ouellette, 2002; Mihesuah, 2003) and the author's personal experience (within a Canadian context) many Aboriginal peoples prefer to be called by their tribal affinity, many refer to themselves as 'Native' and interestingly, in spite of the scholarly arguments, some still refer to themselves as 'Indian' peoples. The author's own preference for self-designation is Native. This designation has also been the most frequently encountered for other self-referents. Based on the existing literature, throughout this thesis all terms except 'Indian' will be used.
mass media or historical or anthropological analysis\(^2\) of Indigenous women, and (d) works that focused on any one or more of related contemporary topics such as issues of identity, politics, scholarship and health.

The specific online databases I searched are listed in Appendix A. The quantity of multidisciplinary social science journals available through these databases, and the additional search of scholarly books, offered a comprehensive sample of current published materials. Appendix B lists the academic publications that I incorporated into my thesis after performing multiple surveys of the broader findings indicated in Appendix A.

Through multiple surveys of the broader literature concerning Indigenous women, I focused my attention on the narrower selection proposed in Appendix B. Specifically, through the process of multiple surveys of the databases indicated in Appendix A, I eliminated duplicate works and those works not expressly concerned with the socio-political issues of Indigenous women in North American. For my purposes, the remaining works listed in Appendix B are proposed as the most representative 'sample' of the contemporary scholarship concerning the socio-political identity of Aboriginal women in North America.

I have used the works in Appendix B in several ways. First, these works are used to provide a gendered perspective on Indigenous scholarship—that is, works both by and/or about Indigenous peoples—and the contemporary areas of foci and predominant themes. Second, the works in Appendix B are used to provide the contextual basis for which I suggest the critical discursive theme of postcolonial feminism is evident.

\(^2\) By historical or anthropological, I am referring to studies that provide analyses of life during particular historical periods and in particular contexts (e.g. on the prairies in the 1800s or life in residential schools in the 1940s).
Defining discourse

Within this thesis I am employing the term ‘discourse’ according to the framework suggested by discourse analysts such as Stefan Titscher et al. (2000) and Linda Wood and Rolf Kroger (2000). According to these scholars, discourse analysis may be viewed as both a theoretical framework (implying a particular understanding of the location of knowledge) and analytical method (implying an approach to the study of that knowledge) for considering texts as reflecting broader social realities. Similarly, Catriona MacLeod (2002) provides examples of the various ways in which discourse has been conceptualized. Among the works MacLeod cites (p. 18), Burman (1994) and Widdicombe (1995) most closely reflect my rationale for proposing that postcolonial feminism is a discursive theme within scholarly texts concerning Native women. Burman and Widdicombe’s particular conceptualizations of discourse capture the ways in which meanings may be concretely articulated—as well as reproduced—through diverse social interactions.

My thesis has been developed through a reflexive practice associated with feminist research, by attending to the conceptualization of discursive representations through texts. Through using a reflexive approach, I acknowledge that my considerations for discursive interpretations are shaped by particular values as well as within a particular ‘moment’ in social theorizing. Providing this contextualization is relevant given that all

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3 Each of these authors draws on earlier works in which discourse is conceptualized as (a) occurring in multiple forms, such as written texts and oral presentations, and (b) social interaction that either implicitly or explicitly reflects cultural norms, values and power relations (see for example, Potter & Wetherell, 1987; van Dijk, 1997).

4 “Socially organized frameworks of meaning that define categories and specify domains of what can be said and done” (Burman, 1994, p.2); “products and reflections of social, economic, and political factors, and power relations” (Widdicombe, 1995, p. 107).

5 In this approach, researchers acknowledge their subjectivity in making interpretations and “engage(s) in self-critique” concerning these interpretations (Pillow, 2002, p. 17).
academic publications are located within on-going dialogues in specific cultural and social milieus.

Additionally, I recognize that other scholars are also subject to similar theoretical influences. As such, academic publications reflect these particular contextual elements at two levels. The first level is in the conceptualization of topics and production of text. The second level occurs in the reception or interpretation of the publication (Lehtonen, 2000; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

**Theoretical Context**

In this thesis I categorize the key contextual elements within my sample of literature on Aboriginal women as follows: (1) paradigmatic shifts concerning the philosophy of science, (2) materialist-idealist debates and (3) transitions in feminist theory characterized by what is termed the shift from second to third wave feminism. My exploration of emergent themes suggests that the elements indicated above provide overlapping frameworks within which most scholarship about Indigenous women is positioned. Notable then is the recognition that any scholarship may be situated within a particular social moment shaped by historical and cultural influences that ‘construct’ views within a particular context (Lehtonen, 2000).

Within my thesis I argue that the concept of ‘discourses’ provides a coherent way of conceptualizing the content of scholarly texts about Native women. Specifically, I am referring to the use of discourses as organizing and presenting particular ‘meanings.’ In this manner, discourses serve as recognized and indeed ‘concretized’ forms of knowledge. Furthermore, as discourses may be viewed as both multi-level and circulating, they simultaneously reflect and respond to dominant concerns within

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contemporary critical theory. In particular, socio-political issues and power relations are, arguably, central features within critical theoretical perspectives. Through being shaped within broader paradigms, discourses constitute the content and form of any given ‘topic’ or ‘issue’ (Lehtonen, 2000; Titscher et al., 2000). Of course, discourses are subject to contestations and change (Boutain, 1999) within particular epistemological contexts, such as the paradigmatic shift from positivism to post-positivism and the development of critical theory.

*a) Paradigmatic shifts in the philosophy of science*

Logical positivism perpetuates the notion of ‘objective’ scholarship. From this intellectual tradition, scholarly research seeks to represent the ‘truth’ of particular peoples and historical phenomena. However, critical scholars have long argued that ‘objective’ scholarship is a myth and that all academic enterprises are fundamentally interwoven with cultural biases but stop short of a completely relativist position (Anderson, 2000; Ouellette, 2002; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Exploring epistemological issues concerned with the social basis of knowledge and its fundamental embedding within particular relations of power have been central themes in critical social theory.

Scholars typically associate the growth of critical theory with the Frankfurt School (Hammersley, 1997). According to Martyn Hammersley, the theoretical position of the Frankfurt School was fundamentally Marxist in orientation. Due to the cultural and political American context in which “the term Marxism was taboo” scholars affiliated with the Frankfurt school started to use the term ‘critical’ as a euphemism for ‘Marxist’ (p.240). Within this cultural and political context, Frankfurt scholars also began to attend
to a critique of ideology and its role in social change.\textsuperscript{7} In his summary of the Frankfurt school and its transitions in theorizing, Hammersley links the basic growth of critical theoretical perspectives to the work of “the French poststructuralists, post-modernists, and [...] ‘new philosophers’ of the 1970s and 1980s” (p. 242).

Regarding contemporary approaches, Hammersley (1997) suggests that the term ‘critical’ may be used to characterize particular varieties of research that consider issues such as an understanding of behaviour within a “wider social context,” “revealing what is obscured by ideology” and the production of knowledge with a view toward social change (p.238). Notably then, although critical scholars are typically concerned with issues of inequality, power differentials and oppression, they differ in the emphases placed on forms and content of explanation. Nonetheless, there remain many unifying characteristics among forms of critical research.

b) From Materialist versus Idealist debates to Post-modern/Post-structural versus Marxist

Although many variations of theory fall under the broad rubric of ‘critical’, there continue to be heated debates among proponents of various ‘schools’ of thought. A central debate concerns the primacy granted to structural bases of oppression and consequent means of social change. I have termed this debate “materialist versus idealist,”\textsuperscript{8} and the points of contention may be located in terms of positions taken by Marxist and postmodernist theorists.

\textsuperscript{7} See Hammersley for a detailed account.

\textsuperscript{8} Although terming postmodernism as ‘idealist’ actually reflects a Marxist perspective, within this thesis I use the contrasting terms "Materialist versus Idealist" as a heuristic tool. In using these terms heuristically I am attending to the fundamental arguments concerning the distinction between a ‘symbolic’ or discursive realm and a ‘real’ or material world. Within my thesis I position myself in the intersection of these debates and consider ways of bridging concepts that I propose are central to the contemporary milieu of Indigenous-centred politics.
As discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” Marxist explanations are predicated on the ‘totality’ of global capitalist striving for dominance as the primary marker of oppression. Consequently, most Marxian-based theorists argue for a fundamentally class-based, historical materialist approach to understanding oppression and the need for socialist revolution as the fundamental means through which social change will occur.

The positions adopted by postmodernist and poststructuralist scholars are often as a rejection of the structural explanation offered by Marxist theorists. Many postmodernist theorists view the primacy granted to capitalism or ‘mode of production’ as deterministic and simplistic. Here, I discuss postmodernism in terms of its emphasis on particular types of aesthetic and discursive practices that occur in conjunction with a poststructuralist call for alternatives to totalizing narratives (Arneil, 1999; Mattingly and Falconer, 1995). Each of these theoretical perspectives—postmodernism and poststructuralism—is indicative of shifts toward a post-positivist paradigm. Such shifts have allowed for a greater diversity in interpretive and critical scholarship.

As a scholar who is interested in both symbolic and material implications of textual representations, I am positioning myself at the ‘intersection’ of the scholarly debate concerning theoretical variations of Marxist and postmodernist critical theory regarding the function of discourse. These debates largely concerning the positions of Marxist scholars who challenge the emphasis placed by postmodernist scholars on the role of discourse as a form of politics and social change.

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9 The term “shifts” is used to signify that although there has been a tremendous growth in post-positivist approaches, a positivist paradigm is still very much a part of academic discourses.
c) Second to third wave feminism and intersectional theorizing

It is within the context of post-positivist shifts that feminist theory and methodology have continued to develop. Although there are many varieties of feminist theory (Arneil, 1999; Harding, 1987) there are, debatably, distinctive elements of feminist research. One primary element has been attending to the recognition of researchers as 'subjective' individuals, in contrast to the positivist view of the 'remote' value-free scientist. Generally, feminist researchers identify themselves as part of a particular social context. This social context encompasses experiences within a particular culture and based on a diversity of traits such as 'race, class, and gender' along with age, ability and education. These multiple characteristics function as 'lenses' for scholarship (Arneil, 1999).

Debates over forms of oppression were the overarching concern of second wave feminist theory, leading some to label it as the era of 'hyphenated feminist thought' (Arneil, 1999, p. 155). An important debate within second wave feminist thought concerned the emphasis placed on primary 'structures' of oppression. Within second wave feminism, attention shifted from a theory premised on a capitalist to a patriarchal 'totality'—albeit with interconnections between the two (Stabile, 1997). Although as Barbara Arneil points out, there is no clear definitive period in which transitions between varieties of feminism occurred, the movement from second to third wave feminism may be characterized in terms of questions concerning the roots of oppression. Consistent with this view is the comment by McLaughlin (1999)

Political-economic approaches have too often provided no more than nominal recognition that the experience of inequality varies not only by class but also by virtue of one’s location along dimensions that include gender, race, ethnicity, nation, and sexuality... (p. 342).
Beginning in the late 1980s, the third wave of feminism has emerged as concerned with variations in women's experiences of oppression and inequality, while also celebrating women's differences and multiple identities (Arneil, 1999). These developments, in turn, lead to further questioning of epistemological assumptions and working to establish frameworks for ethical, socially-just methodology and practice (Schutte, 1998; Zalewski, 2000). Notably, the works of a variety of critical scholars have been identified in this thesis as both 'sketching out' issues for debate and developing more diverse theoretical critiques.

In considering the manner in which my interpretations are influenced by current (and certainly on-going) theoretical perspectives in conjunction with a values-based approach to research,\textsuperscript{10} the underlying rationale for my thesis is based on a commitment to social justice for First Nations women and an epistemology and methodology rooted within a critical feminist perspective. In this thesis I develop a perspective on 'theorizing' about Aboriginal women, as opposed to articulating one definitive and static theory. This theorizing process reflects my perspective on both theory and methodology as founded in a commitment to social justice. My commitment to social justice represents an intertwining of issues related to both First Nations peoples and feminist politics.

\textit{Moving Forward}

Having identified the main elements of my thesis, I now move to Chapter Two, "Indigenous Peoples and the Context of Scholarship." In this next chapter I describe the contemporary academic milieu with respect to central issues and politics concerning Aboriginal peoples in North American. This initial discussion is used to situate the more specific ways in which I view the scholarship concerning Native women.

\textsuperscript{10} This definition of values is described on p. 84
Chapter Two

Indigenous Peoples and the Context of Scholarship

To contextualize the specific scholarship pertaining to Aboriginal women, it is necessary to consider its relation to more general works concerning Aboriginal peoples. The first section of this chapter identifies predominant areas of emphasis in academic publications regarding Aboriginal peoples in North America in the past ten years. In order to establish areas of focus I utilized primarily recent 'survey' texts and edited books. To provide a thematic framework I divided this broader scholarship into the subsections of 'representation' and 'authenticity and legitimacy.' These particular subsections were selected based on their recurrent use, both specifically and generally, within the publications surveyed (e.g., Churchill, 2003; DeLoria, 1998; Smith, 1999).

In the second section of this chapter, I consider this broader scholarship from a gendered perspective. In using a gendered perspective, I draw attention to substantive issues for which Indigenous women offer additional or alternative views. In the final section of the chapter I focus on some key issues concerning Indigenous women and their responses to feminist scholarship.

In attending to the particular issues of Native women as part of a larger social collective, my conceptual and theoretical framework is based on the view of socio-political experiences that is complementary with the transition from second to third wave feminism, and the development of postcolonial feminist theorizing. In keeping with the contextual orientation of my thesis, this initial chapter provides what I consider as the most significant perspective in which scholarship about Native women in North America
occurs: locating the identity and concerns of women in relation to the experiences of a broader collective of Indigenous peoples as based within a history of colonialism.

Contemporary scholarship concerning Indigenous peoples

For many decades, Indigenous peoples have worked to improve their socio-economic and socio-political circumstances (Carroll, 1997; Gaard, 2001; Kassam & Wuttunee, 1995). One significant aspect of these efforts has been the growth of Indigenous-led scholarship focused specifically on the issues and concerns of Indigenous people. This Indigenous-centred scholarship has emerged through the development of separate Native Studies departments as well as interdisciplinary programs within North American universities (Champagne & Stauss, 2002). The varieties of literature emerging through these developments reflect both the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and emphasize concerns about authority and legitimacy in addressing Indigenous peoples’ experiences.

Within the Canadian context, most works concerning First Nations peoples frame their discussions within a history of colonialism (Stevenson, 1999; Waldram, 1994; Warry, 1998). The on-going effects of colonialism are most often discussed in the context of racist ideology and social practices (Henry et al., 1998; Ponting, 1998 Satzewich, 1998a, 1998b). According to Frances Henry, et al. (1998), the history and on-going relationships between Aboriginal peoples and ‘White Canadian society’ can be approached in terms of the discourses of nationality, paternalism, ‘blame the victim,’ multiculturalism and a monolithic ‘other’ (pp. 139-140). These particular discourses are

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11 It is well established in the relevant literature that Indigenous peoples in North American do not constitute a homogenous group. As I am establishing a conceptual model based in newer, multi and trans-disciplinary perspectives, I have attempted to utilize primarily works from North American scholars, however, there is much relevant scholarship from more extensive global locations.

12 In this thesis I am employing the concept of ideology as expressed on pg. 45
generally addressed in terms of how the power relationships between the Canadian state and Aboriginal peoples functioned in particular ways during specific historical periods. Further, these relationships are typically characterized by: (1) the ability of the State to structure the lives of Indigenous peoples culturally, socially and economically, and (2) the reflection of State policies within the wider societal discourses.

Attending to the relationship of the broader social and political environment—particularly with respect to State policies and circulating discourses—provides a crucial way of contextualizing scholarship. On this basis, scholarship concerning Indigenous peoples may be located in relation to broader State policies. As well, the focus and significance of works by Aboriginal scholars may then be viewed as responses to a variety of discourses circulating throughout Canadian society. For example, as a professor and scholar in a Native Studies program, Emma LaRocque (2001) provides the interesting example of cultural comparison charts used by both Native and non-Native academics. LaRocque's critique is based on the way in which traditional knowledge and culture is, in her view, positioned as static over a 500-year period. Somewhat paradoxically then, while these charts are intended to foster inclusiveness and respect, they serve to reify the stereotypes of a "progressive" Western culture in contrast to traditions which are "condemned to die" (p.65).

Notably, LaRocque's critique suggests several significant processes. First, her example demonstrates the way in which Indigenous cultures are positioned within the authority of representation by the 'dominant, Western' culture. Second, it suggests the actual negation of a contemporary Indigenous culture. Finally, and more subtly, it places the 'receivers' of such charts—both Native and non-Native—in a dissonant position in
which they are forced to reconcile their existing knowledge and experience within a setting in which the authority of academia—in particular, established content of courses—is necessarily legitimized.

Commensurate with the above example, the history of colonialism and the myriad losses experienced by Indigenous peoples, necessitates that a substantial component of contemporary scholarship concerns challenging and re-dressing previous works; not only correcting but also creating 'history'. In light of these concerns—within the same Native Studies program as Emma LaRocque—Joyce Green (2001), describes her commitments for teaching and scholarship to interrogate history, politics and cultural materials in a critical fashion, the same topics which most of our students initially learned from the dominant perspective and are challenged to re-think (p.41).

Challenge and strategies for change in the academic literature are presented on a variety of issues and place varying degrees of emphasis on political and economic redress and cultural-symbolic representation (Warry, 1998). Importantly, however, whatever the area of emphases, the scholarship concerning Native peoples reflects their substantive and multidimensional concerns.

**Representation in scholarship**

Increased recognition of the power relations involved in knowledge construction has resulted in a greater insistence on control of representation as part of the social and political goals of Indigenous peoples (Cook-Lyn, 1998; Deloria, 1998; Smith, 1999; Warry, 1998; McKenzie, 2002). Notably, as extensively documented, the sources through which knowledge of Aboriginal peoples is gained are filtered through a variety of
historical, cultural and gender biases. Contemporary scholars, whether critical, feminist or otherwise, are of course, not ‘immune’ from such biases (Lynes, 2002; Ouellette, 2002; Shoemaker, 1995; Simpson, 2000).

The filtering of knowledge are significant elements in both historical and contemporary scholarship concerning Indigenous peoples, including the epistemological positions in which research is formulated and carried out. Within this context, a significant component of the scholarly research in North America concerns the connections made between past scholarship and present works. Consequently, it is argued that past scholarship has been grounded within a colonialist discourse. Importantly, however, although contemporary works may still reflect colonial ideology (as suggested by LaRocque for example) there is an increased focus on academic publications attending to diverse contemporary political goals and cultural strengths of Native peoples. Indeed, in his discussion of representation and authorship, Vine Deloria Jr., points out “it really is [about the] political context in which the struggle for authority and control of definitions is primary” (p.68). As noted previously, Joyce Green’s description also reflects a commitment to socio-political implications of representation.

Rooted in a colonialist history, the representations made by non-Indigenous scholars have generally been considered most credible (Coates, 1999; Deloria, 1998). For example, in his discussion concerning the legitimacy granted to scholarship about Indigenous peoples, Deloria provides numerous illustrations of the socio-political milieu and the topical concerns. The following quote by Deloria encapsulates the content of his various critiques

13 Deloria’s chapter (pp. 65-83) is entitled “Comfortable fictions and the struggle for turf: An essay review of The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies.”
These authors are defending their entrenched advantage of being the people who “really know.” Thus (Elisabeth) Tooker expects to be heard in lieu of the traditional Six Nations chiefs because, after all, she has studied the Six Nations and therefore is entitled to represent them before the public and any other interested parties (p. 68).

As Vine Deloria (1998) discusses, over a period of five centuries, Indigenous peoples have lacked the means for self-representation. Within this context, many negative stereotypes of Native peoples such as ‘savages’, ‘pagans,’ ‘squaws’ and ‘drunks’ have long appeared in various mediums (for example, movies and popular literature). Indeed, the manner in which these stereotypes impact on the collective identity and self-concept for Native peoples has become a central topic in much scholarly literature concerning Indigenous people in North America (Hill, 1995; Ponting, 1998).

That predominantly negative representations of Indigenous peoples have prevailed through the systemic categorization of peoples according to the dominant ideology concerning ‘racial’ or ‘cultural’ traits is well recognized among a variety of critical scholars (Davies & Guppy, 1998; Minh-ha, 1989; Ponting, 1998; Sefa Dei, 1998). Western hegemony has also been perpetuated throughout various levels of the educational system through pedagogical practices shaped by a Eurocentric epistemology and ontology, again, providing either marginal or stereotypic attention to First Nations peoples (Graveline, 1998; Walker, 2003). For example, in positioning herself as an Indigenous teacher and scholar, Fyre Jean Graveline notes “this text is an effort to resist hegemonic discourse, both by critiquing Western Eurocentric practices and by offering a revitalized version of Traditional Aboriginality” (p.35).
A more recent development in scholarly writing on Indigenous peoples concerns the implications of the growth of more positive representations. These positive stereotypes refer to the attributes of Native peoples as 'natural' environmentalists, hunters, healers or some variation on these roles, offering what some scholars deem as 'overly romanticized' images (Deloria, 1998; Warry, 1998). Although some scholars argue that contemporary representations by Indigenous activists and scholars have been "overly romanticized," such works need to be seen as part of the fundamental shift in scholarship toward the generation of a more balanced 'space' or 'voice' by indigenous peoples (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Coates, 1999).

More specifically, scholars such as Linda Tuhawai Smith (1999) and Patricia Monture-Angus (1999) are also sceptical of those discourses that posit an essentialist or 'mythical' relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land. Indeed, both scholars consider the implications of continuing to represent Indigenous peoples as 'artifacts.' As well, each discusses the significance of a 'material' emphasis on strategies for survival.

A greater material emphasis is suggested as a necessary focus as opposed to the primary attention granted social-psychological (including spiritual) consequences of colonialism. For example, the losses of roles as caretakers of land, the negation of traditional gender roles and the significance of these changes to the consequent breakdowns in many family relationships have been emphasized in cultural healing movements. However, these experiences of loss have also had substantive material consequences that require political and legal attention. The following quote by Indigenous scholar, Marcia Crosby (1994) provides a striking example of the implications for conflicting material and symbolic perspectives
Yet the myths of an “empty land,” a “dying people” contaminated by European culture and the Indian as Nature (and all its corollaries) reflect and shape present-day attitudes towards First Nations people. These notions are not just abstract theories […] but a dynamic in the courts of this country. In 1989, government lawyers, in disputing Gitksan-Wet’suwet’en land claims, attempted to establish that Indians who eat pizza, drive cars and watch television—that is, who no longer live as “traditional” Indians residing in some timeless place—did not meet Eurocentrically established criteria for authenticity under which, the courts assert, Indian “rights” were established (p. 99).

Crosby’s example illustrates the context in which representation continues to be very much a part of the political and economic concerns for Native peoples. It is not surprising that, given the ‘charged’ relationship between cultural and symbolic identities and the political-legal environment, debates concerning academic representation of culture and spirituality remain a substantive concern for many Indigenous scholars.

Until very recently, the overwhelming tendency in scholarship has been for non-Indigenous researchers to claim legitimacy in their interpretation of Native American cosmologies and life stories with minimal input from Native persons (Deloria, 1998; McKenzie, 2000). As well, some scholars are critical of the ways in which Indigenous persons have been involved in collaboration in particular projects. For example, scholars such as Elizabeth Cook-Lyn (1998) argue that the tendency is for information pertaining to culture and spirituality—subsuming cosmology—to be ‘diluted’ or trivialized into a form that renders it in many ways akin to a form of fetishistic entertainment.

The increased participation of Indigenous peoples in academia, in conjunction with a continuing cultural as well as political consciousness, has led to much Indigenous scholarship concerned with the strengths Native peoples draw through their cultural traditions. These strengths are particularly relevant in discussions of goals for re-building
and restructuring Indigenous communities and social institutions. Within this form of scholarship, the focus is on aspects of 'revitalization' movements in which cultural tradition is presented as offering a viable alternative to existing social practices (Warry, 1998). As part of this process, much Indigenous literature focuses on the social, political and legal implications of Aboriginal identity. Working from both an individual and collectivist perspective, the goal is to reconstruct identities imposed within a colonial and racist history (Behiels, 1999).

As an important component of this newer scholarship, some scholars have proposed a particularly 'Indigenous' approach to the education system given the significant role of education as a primary socializing institution. An Indigenous (or sometimes termed 'Indigenist') approach to education is concerned with offering an alternative philosophy and political framework in both scholarship and pedagogical approaches (Graveline, 1998). This alternative framework derives from a 'grounding' epistemology based on what are identified as common goals and beliefs of Indigenous peoples (Hester & Cheney, 2001; Walker, 2003).

As Polly Walker, (2003) discusses, the notion of a 'universality' in science research, has limited the work of Indigenous scholars who have sought to incorporate their own culturally-based epistemological perspectives:

All modes of scientific thought are culturally based, including Western science, yet many Western researchers continue to conduct research as though the cultural foundations of their paradigms and methodologies were universal. Because the cultural biases of the dominant Western society often remain at the implicit level, many Western researchers unwittingly impose their worldview, forcing research on and by Indigenous people to fit within Western paradigms (p. 37).
Walker reflects the views expressed by John Hoffman (2001) who asserts that, “it is an empiricist fallacy to assume that facts are isolated [and] value free. On the contrary, facts are coherent as an expression of relationships that [provide] explanatory power” (p. 196).

While not all Indigenous scholars focus on the goals of identifying Indigenous epistemology, many are involved in the politics surrounding newer scholarship and lending alternative voices to academic milieus.

**Authenticity and Legitimacy**

Over the past few decades, Indigenous scholars have made increasing contributions to a variety of academic publications. However, these contributions have frequently stimulated debate concerning legitimate sources of Indigenous knowledge (Kulchyski, 1997; Lynes, 2002; Mihesuah, 2003). In recent decades, even greater numbers of Indigenous peoples have entered the academy. As a result of their increasing contributions to scholarly debate, the entrenched positions offered by many former (and arguably still) scholars who have been considered ‘experts’ about Indigenous peoples are being challenged on a variety of levels.

Specific examples of these challenges are discussed in the works of Vine Deloria (1998), Ward Churchill (2003), Devon Mihesuah (1998; 2003) and Angela Wilson (1998). These Indigenous scholars refer to past errors and omissions in the works of historians and anthropologists, as well as flawed representations of Native peoples in contemporary social science works. Further, these scholars have articulated specific challenges in academic conferences, in classrooms, and in on-going debates in
publications and in broader social forums.\textsuperscript{14} Within each of these contexts, the central debate concerned ‘factual’ knowledge about tribal practices or particular historical events, challenges to negative stereotypes or erroneous representations and finally questions about the legitimacy of claiming particular tribal affiliations to position one’s work.

The issue of authority and scholarship within contemporary academia, has been particularly evident in ongoing conflicts and criticisms over incorporating indigenous perspectives in “colonial academic institutions” and the “major struggles over what counts as knowledge” along with the intimate intertwining of Indigenous scholars experiencing ‘racializing’ and ‘othering’ (Davies & Guppy, 1998; Satchewich, 1998; Small, 1998; Sefa Dei, 1998; Smith 1999 p. 65; Walker, 2003). For example, in contemporary academia, the debates over ‘acceptance’ (or lack) of newer forms of Aboriginal discourse (such as the use of tribal histories and Indigenous epistemologies in mainstream academics) are argued to be telling illustrations that speak to the power relations shaping the production of scholarly writing and its ideological bases (Lynes, 2003; Mihesuah, 2003; Vizenor, 1997). As a concrete example encompassing both forms and authority of knowledge, Angela Wilson (1998) discusses the debate over the legitimacy of oral history as either an alternative, or certainly as an adjunct, to the long-standing use of outside archival information as the only source of credible and legitimate information for academic works.

The debate over legitimacy involves several different facets embedded in the concept ‘authenticity’. The contestations over authenticity have evoked responses from

\textsuperscript{14}For example, Churchill (2003) provides a comprehensive overview of the stereotypical and racist representations of Indigenous peoples in North American media and includes the practices of clubs and sports groups. Deloria discusses some responses by non-Indigenous scholars to his critique of their interpretations regarding tribal identity.
both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. For many Indigenous scholars, the authenticity controversy involves the legitimacy granted to their work concerning Native peoples based on their expression of Native heritage and tribal affiliation, and conversely, the legitimacy granted to scholars who claim a questionable tribal affiliation or Indigenous heritage in order to gain academic appointments and research funds (Mihesuah, 1998).

Most recently, the issue of authenticity has become an increasingly important source of struggle within the context of cultural appropriation (Kulchyski, 1997). Substantial contributors to these contestations have been the activities of those identified as the ‘white shamans’ of ‘New Age’ based spirituality movements (Whitt, 1998). Indigenous scholars argue that these individuals perpetuate the use of Aboriginal traditions as ‘commodities’ in which the ‘teachers’ or ‘leaders’ are able to gain materially through various forms of cultural appropriation or outright deceit (Churchill, 2003; Mihesuah, 2003).

However, an ‘essentialist’ version of legitimacy has also been questioned by a number of scholars (the notion that there is a fundamental Native perspective based on genetic or ‘blood’ quantum) (Churchill, 2003; Mihesuah, 2003). These challenges by Indigenous peoples share important similarities with the works of critical scholars in that they focus on issues of power, academic freedom and hegemony within the context of privileges deriving from social location, including (but most certainly not limited to) ‘race, class and gender’. Of significance in considering the context of contemporary Indigenous scholarship, Graveline (1998) highlights the current ‘mix’ of theory and politics, noting that:
The questioning of fixed categories of gender, class, race, and culture comes at a time when groups need to consolidate the fragments of their identities in order to challenge the hegemony of Western metanarratives. It also comes at a time when "Whiteness" is being unveiled as hegemonic by post-colonialists and others (p. 224).

Interestingly, in Graveline’s work on incorporating Indigenous epistemology into pedagogical practices, she provides an illustration of the manner in which contemporary theoretical issues are contested within materialist and idealist perspectives. Other Native writers have also provided links between Indigenous issues and contemporary Western scholarship. These links are suggested through the manner in which Indigenous issues are specifically positioned. For example, concerning cultural-historical change, writers such as Calvin Morrisseau (1998) address what is viewed as a fundamental shift in meaning structures for Aboriginal peoples and consequent changes in the meaning of traditional roles (p.5).

In describing such qualities as “the growth of individuality,” and the “desire for “power and control” Morrisseau (1998, p.5) reflects broader forms of critical scholarship. In particular, attention to various forms of oppressive relationships has been a dominant theme within the context of emergent critical theory (Apple, 1996). Notably, these themes reflect the concerns in much Indigenous-centred scholarship. As discussed previously, this scholarship has a substantive focus on issues such as the defining of Aboriginal identity, the “development of Aboriginal discourse and the ownership of stories, including the way they are presented” (McKenzie, 2000 p.24). Further, each of these issues may be considered as “intersecting” (McKenzie, 2000) within a substantive ‘call’ for justice in redressing a history of colonialism.
In further consideration of the political climate of academia, more collaborative practices with non-Indigenous researchers have occurred in a variety of projects. Although such ‘collaborative’ processes address concerns regarding social justice and ethics, changes in research practices and demands for inclusion in all stages of the research process have very much occurred in conjunction with the rise in political consciousness within many Aboriginal communities (Kassam & Wuttunee, 1995; McKenzie, 2000). Notably however, changes in research practice have certainly been reflected through the proliferation of issues in academic research (e.g. increases in institutionalized requirements for research ethics). Furthermore, these changes have frequently been directed by specific recommendations from various Native groups (Mihesuah, 1998; Smith, 1999).

As indicated, political concerns are a central feature of critical scholarship. Additionally, research and publication regarding the issues of Aboriginal peoples are an integral part of the contemporary political climate. In the first section of this chapter I have discussed the broad concerns and challenges to hegemonic scholarship raised by Indigenous scholars. In the section half of this chapter I will address some of the primary challenges put forth in representative works that focus on the issues and perspectives of Native women.

A Gendered perspective: Native women and the context of contemporary scholarship

As Nancy Shoemaker commented in 1995 “scholarly research concerning Aboriginal women is still in an early stage” and this initial stage will allow for further developments and new directions (p. 1). The potential for growth in scholarship
concerning Aboriginal women is particularly apparent when compared with the prodigious development of black women’s scholarship (Anderson, 2002; Stacey, 1993).

It has been almost ten years since Nancy Shoemaker’s comment was made and since that time a survey of social science literature provides evidence of an increase in scholarly works both written by Native scholars and specifically concerning Native women’s issues (Fiske, 2000). Within this burgeoning literature, questions concerning the credibility or validity of particular forms of knowledge are interwoven with the critique of the power relations embedded in the construction of knowledge (Fiske, 2000; Ouellette, 2002). Such questions have been posed concerning a) what particular ‘forms’ of knowledge are accepted and b) what/whose broader interests are served by granting ‘authority’ to certain individuals (Logan and Huntley, 2001; Mihesuah, 1998).

Notably, similar concerns are raised among the varieties of feminist scholarship within works defined as anti-colonial, postcolonial, decolonisation, critical race theory, anti-racist and cross-cultural feminist. As well, critical scholarship continues to reflect increased contributions by Indigenous scholars. Common themes among these diverse publications have provided an entry point for a contextual understanding of how Indigenous women are discursively constituted in academic literature.

Absences and Erasures

Until recently, writings by Indigenous women or by writers who provided the perspectives of Native women were lacking. The particularly gendered nature of these absences may be viewed as another dimension or ‘layer’ to the colonial experience (Shoemaker, 1995; McKenzie, 2000). Historical records were also clearly lacking in
perspectives by Aboriginal men. The purposes of the writers, and their views as primarily European men concerned with goals of conquest and settlement, suggest that most available ‘archives’ are biased toward European political/economic goals. Additionally, the views expressed were based in an extremely foreign cultural understanding of all facets of what would currently be deemed ‘social institutions.’

The gender biases of patriarchal European culture served as a further filter for obliterating the realities of Indigenous peoples’ lives (Stevenson, 1999; Graveline, 1998). Based on the particular gender and cultural biases of early European writers, texts represented Native women according to the existing cultural frameworks of European women. For example, according to authors such as Anne McGillivray & Brenda Comaskey (1999) and Winona Stevenson (1999, p.56) the representation of Native American women was historically constructed on the ‘model’ of European womanhood within the confines of “the severe standard of Victorian morality” expected in all manner of appearance and behaviour.”

**Polarity in Representation**

Like European women, Aboriginal women were considered within an essentialist framework (although under more rigid, racially based standards) incorporating the virgin-whore dichotomy (Fiske, 1996; Stevenson, 1999). The imbalance in representation of Aboriginal women in historical documents was primarily due to the colonialist and patriarchal views held by missionaries and government policy makers who were “responsible for the production of historical records” (Shoemaker, 1995, p.2).”

These imbalances in the perspectives offered have not only resulted in a long-standing ‘erasure’ from historical accounts but also in a relatively enduring polarity in the
representation of Aboriginal women as either “squaw (drudges)” or “Indian (Pocahontas-type) princesses” (Jaimes-Guerrero, 1999; Valaskakakis, 1999). Unfortunately however, the most negative characterizations of Native women as ‘drunks,’ dirty, lazy, promiscuous and conversely, sexless, ‘squaws’ have been the predominant expressions in a broad variety of media (Fiske, 1996; McGillivray & Comaskey, 1999; Shoemaker, 1995; Stevenson, 1999). Indeed as Fiske points out, there has been an enduring quality to these mythical images that “reveals the power of these images to affect contemporary understandings of morality and gender” (p.663).

Commensurate with Fiske’s quote is the recognition that the myths concerning Native women appear to be very much age-related. Consequently, younger Indigenous women have often been viewed as ‘open territory women,’ creating increased susceptibility to sexual abuse. Conversely, the view of older Native women as ‘sexless’ squaws—objectified but not as desirable—has characterized the other side of dichotomous myths (Portman & Herring, 2001).

**Colonialism and gender roles**

Gender roles are a substantive issue for many Native women. In many traditional societies women were honoured and valued as cultural ‘caretakers’ and for their social and economic contributions to their families and to wider communities. The recognition of historical and symbolic roles is embodied within a culturally embedded understanding of the gender identity of Aboriginal women (Graveline, 1998; Kassam & Wuttunee, 1995; Ouellette, 2002; McKenzie, 2000).

Colonialism directly influenced the rise of hierarchal and patriarchal forms of leadership that shaped the structure and style of band governments and Aboriginal
organizations (Ouellette, 2002). These forms of structure and leadership have fostered division and conflict between men and women, as well as between community members. Additionally, these divisions and conflicts take on even more significance based on the enhanced need for solidarity in the continued struggle for Aboriginal self-government. As well, relationships between men and women, and indeed, between all community members require negotiation within the context of continued cultural renewal.

As discussed earlier, discourse is not only shaped by, but is also subject to, broader societal influences. For example, particular works and perspectives have been deemed as "authentic" based on their creation by "a Native person" (McKenzie, p. 40). However, the critique of selected expressions as representative of "the Native discourse" is consistent with a feminist perspective on challenging the gendered nature of social struggles and the dominance of particular voices.

In pursuit of the political goals of tribalism and nationalism among many Indigenous peoples, women have criticized the overemphasis on a "masculine perspective" and the relative "downplaying" of the particular concerns of women (Gaard, 2001 p. 16). Notably, these forms of gendered struggles have also been relatively common occurrences within other social movements (Hartmann, 1981; Ng, 1993; McKenzie, 2002, p. 41). Issues of gendered struggles and power relations suggest a common link between diverse groups of women. From a feminist perspective, this link is relevant based on the fact that many Aboriginal women are sceptical about what they see as interests and goals of a 'mainstream' feminism (Anderson, 2000; Mihesuah, 1998; Ouellette, 2002; Shoemaker, 1995). Notably, there appears to be a complex contradiction

\[\text{\footnotesize{16 I employ this term in a comparable fashion to Ouellette (2002) who suggests three primary variations of feminism as liberal, socialist and radical.}}\]
in terms of Native women challenging patriarchy in Indigenous politics, while simultaneously rejecting feminism as an expression of colonial control (Miheesuah, 2003; Udel, 2001).

On a wider scale, there is a common link between groups of women related to issues of representation and gender struggles within the history of academia. Many works guided by feminist epistemology and methodology have drawn attention to the manner in which Western scholarship has been shaped by and embedded in the power relations of both patriarchy and imperialism (Bannerji, 1994, 1995; Chanda, 2000; Duran, 2001; Grande, 2003; Graveline, 1998). The issue of power relations and context is relevant to the way Aboriginal women have been historically discussed in scholarly literature concerning gender identity, roles and other socio-political interests (Ouellette, 2000; Shoemaker, 1995; Wilson, 1998). In particular, Native women have not, until relatively recently, been sufficiently able to access the communicative resources to draw attention to their own perspectives regarding the myriad issues confronting them (Fiske, 2000).

**Further debates over representation and authenticity**

In the previous section I drew attention to common struggles among women in social movements, as well as divisions amongst women. I also explored the potential connection between the concerns of Indigenous women and those of ‘mainstream’ academic feminism. However, in spite of certain commonalities, relations have long been mired in controversy between varieties of feminism and the representation of ‘self’ for Indigenous women.
Many Indigenous women accept a historically and culturally based worldview as fundamentally structuring the meaning of their identity. This identity as Indigenous women is defined through particular roles and within the broader cultural meaning brought to these roles as *Indigenous* or *Native women* (Kassam and Wuttunee, 1995; Ouellette, 2002). In such a view then, some scholars argue feminist epistemologies that critically question the 'natural' role of women as mothers and caregivers are either offensive or simply irrelevant (Shoemaker, 1995; Udel, 2001).

The way in which feminist scholars have questioned the 'naturalness' of women's role as mother is based on the important struggle over the notion of 'essentialist' views of women. Within feminist theory, essentialism refers to the characterization of women's traits and roles as being based on a natural, biologically-based 'essence' that is fundamental to women (Arneil, 1999). The alternative view to essentialism that was developed within second-wave feminist theorizing was that women's traits and roles are not 'natural' and are, in fact, socially constructed. The additional element in the social constructivist perspective is the notion that women's roles were embedded within a structure of capitalism and/or patriarchy and thereby serve to uphold relations of dominance.

The growth of activism and theorizing within 'mainstream'\(^\text{17}\) feminist theory has led to debates amongst women (as well as men) outside the academy. Indigenous women, both in North America and in a global context, have in many ways challenged the assumptions and perspectives of academic feminism. One major criticism concerns the standpoint from which academic feminist researchers approach issues germane to Indigenous women. Critical scholars argue that the perspectives and experiences framing

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.}\)
feminist research are fundamentally embedded in an imperialist history and ideology. This entails, for example, Eurocentrism, ‘white middle-class bias’ and the privileged vantage point within the academy (Gaard; 2001; Grande, 2003; Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Hawkesworth, 1999).

Contestations over scholarship continue even within the ‘progressive’ domain of critical social theory. For example, some feminist theorists suggest that post-modern theorizing and subsequent claims for ‘decentred subjects’ and ‘multiple truths’ (as opposed to monolithic) is yet one more ‘clever’ way of disguising not only patriarchal but very much Eurocentric hegemony over scholarship (Graveline, 1999; Lynes, 2002; Moss, 2003). These contestations over theory draw attention to the politics of academia—the issue of discourse—as reflecting and perpetuating historical relations of colonial dominance. Notably then, a past history of Euro-biased perspectives has had significant consequences for Indigenous women as “clearly developed ideologies and methods for constructing social and political discourse” and, in turn, reinforcing practices based in colonialist and imperialist history (Bannerji, 1995 p.45).

In considering injustices perpetuated against Aboriginal women, Carolyn Kenny (2001) and Lisa Udel (2001) describe experiences imposed on Native women through government social policy. Two substantive consequences for Indigenous women in North America have included the practices of coercive or uninformed sterilization (Kidwell, 1996; Mihesuah, 2003; Udell, 2001) and the loss and subsequent reinstatement of ‘Indian Status’\(^\text{18}\) (Kenny, 2001; Anderson, 2000; Ouellette, 2002). Each of these examples

\^\text{18}This refers to the 1985 Canadian Bill C-31 amending previous legislation in which Indigenous women ‘lost’ their legal status and consequent treaty rights as ‘Indian’ persons if they married a non-Native man (as defined by the Indian Act). There is a substantive literature regarding the history of Bill C-31 and its impact. However, it is beyond the scope of my thesis to address this topic.
represents a particularly gendered context of colonialist—and indeed racist—ideology. Further, these examples serve as compelling connections between discourses and material practices.

Within the context of government policy such as the Indian Act, Native women have faced negative and discriminatory experiences within all social institutions. In spite of an ethical-legal environment in which overt expressions of racism are more negatively sanctioned, many Aboriginal women still report experiences of discrimination. Such experiences persist in the form of racial slurs or treatment based on negative stereotypes in both employment and educational sectors (Kenny, 2001; Graveline, 1998). The recounting of Native women’s experiences reflects Weber’s (1998) assertion that issues of self-identity and socio-political relationships are not only intertwined but “simultaneously operate at both the macro (societal) and micro (individual) levels” (p.15). Subsequently, it is possible to connect experiences within group, community and individual settings and recognize their ‘location’ within broader socio-political, legal and health domains.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a contextual framework in which academic publications about Native women in North America may be viewed. The first component of this framework concerned Native women as positioned within a broader collective of Indigenous nations. As discussed, this general scholarship concerning contemporarily substantive issues to Native peoples reflects specific issues and themes based in a colonial history.
These predominant topics identified are related to the representation of Indigenous peoples and the legitimacy granted to certain forms of scholarship. In light of the negative experiences wrought through a colonial history and the consequent struggles over land and resources, as well as myriad health and social issues, the significance of authenticity requires a tacit understanding within a conjoined ‘symbolic’ and ‘material’ framework.

The second component of this chapter concerned a gendered perspective. Specifically, I considered how Native women, being objectified as ‘less than,’ have faced particular forms of discrimination within a colonialist North American history. As well, I introduced the generally tenuous relationship between Indigenous women and feminist scholarship and highlighted some primary points of contention between the two groups.
Chapter Three

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In this chapter I discuss first the methodology and theoretical underpinnings of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and secondly, the basic approach I employed for my examination of the selected texts. As discussed previously, I opted for this analytical approach based on its fundamental concern with social relations and its conception of discourse as a form of action in challenging hegemonic relations of ruling that have been concretized and legitimated through some forms of previous scholarship. The ‘critical’ element in discourse analysis (as defined in Chapter One) makes it a useful tool for considering scholarship about Native women from a postcolonial feminist perspective.

According to the framework provided by Titscher et al., (p. 32-36) there are a series of decisions concerning the conceptualization of CDA, and the resultant research strategies that will be employed. Regarding conceptualization, the researcher is first required to make a decision concerning how the selected texts will be used. As Titscher suggests, the interest may be in the actual texts without necessarily making a link to “the extralinguistic reality” (p.33). Conversely, the interest may be in features of the text as representative of broader social realities. In light of these uses of text, the basis of the decision is necessarily related to one’s initial research question or goals. As well, the idea of ‘problematicizing’ the location of the ‘neutral’ scientist has been one of the important trends within the paradigmatic shift toward ‘post-positivist’ approaches.

With respect to linking social relations and hegemonic discourse it is useful to recognize that although all academic publications require that specific criteria be met, all scholars are “persons who occupy multiple membership categories, any one of which
might be relevant to discourse production” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 78). Relevant areas of ‘situatedness’ for researchers may include cultural affiliation, class and gender. In addition to challenging the notion of objective scientists, post-positivist approaches frequently argue for the importance of identifying the explicit political position of the researcher (Joseph, 1998; Lehtonen, 2002). In drawing attention to the issue of ‘situatedness’ and researcher politics, hegemonic ideology may be seen as a ‘catalyst’ in shaping textual productions that either reflect or expressly challenge prevailing discourses (Joseph, 1998; Graveline, 1998).

Commensurate with identifying political positions, the perspective of ‘critical’ discourse analysis reflects the influence of critical social theory advanced by the Frankfurt School of Philosophy (Boutain, 1999; Hammersley, 1997). More recent theoretical developments (e.g. postmodernist) retain the link among critical perspectives through incorporation of central themes and issues such as ideology, power and oppression. These thematic areas are consistent with examination and critique of existing social relations (Apple, 1996; Joseph, 1998).

A detailed overview of CDA

Post-positivist scholarship has led to the continuing evolution of epistemological and methodological challenges within the social sciences (Joseph, 1998). An emphasis throughout the 1980s has been termed “the turn to language, or to discourse” (Apple, 1996; Jackson, 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2000 p. x.). Discourse Analysis originated within diverse disciplines including sociology, linguistics and literary theory as well as in diverse theoretical perspectives such as feminism and postmodernism. As a result of its multiple origins, there are conflicting views concerning the parameters and methods of
CDA (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Titscher et al., 2000; Wood & Kroger, 2000, p.xiv; p.18).

Foremost, the multiplicity of approaches to CDA reflect more generally, the variable characteristics of discourse analysis and its theoretical and methodological grounding based in such diverse fields as critical linguistics, psychoanalytic theory and critical social theory (MacLeod, 2002). Consequently, as MacLeod further notes, greater or lesser attention is granted to features such as the ‘constructive versus deconstructive elements of discourse’ and further, elements of analysis such as the ‘discursive and extra-discursive.’ Stefan Titscher et al., (2000) describes a similar ‘positioning’ of CDA and points to debates concerning whether CDA as opposed to being a method is merely ideological. The implication behind these debates suggests the criticism concerning what some would argue is a lack of substantive rigour behind any interpretations. Further, Wood & Kroger (2000) note that rather than being any particular ‘method,’ CDA refers to a set of perspectives that emphasizes the relations between language and power and the role of discourse analysis in social and cultural critique. CDA can be defined in part by its focus on social issues and social problems (e.g., racism, sexism, nuclear disarmament), although these topics are also addressed by discourse analysts who work in other traditions (p. 205)

Additionally, the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of CDA can be understood within the context of the two interpretative repertoires of science representative of the paradigmatic shift from positivism to post-positivism. As discussed by Potter & Wetherell, (1987, p. 150) these two repertoires are the “Empiricist Repertoire” and the “Contingent Repertoire. The Empiricist repertoire has been the classical, conventional model of scientific thought and practice. This model privileges
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findings based on experimental data, while viewing them as ‘objective’ and ‘value-free’ or value neutral.

In contrast, the “Contingent” repertoire emphasizes the speculative insight of practitioners, and values (though not exclusively) political and personal interests and social relationships. The characterization of these two repertoires suggests dichotomous thinking similar to the debates existing between postmodernism and Marxism. As noted previously, contestations over areas of emphasis are common within critical theory and are also a significant feature of the evolution of Indigenous-centred scholarship.

The CDA notion of ‘interpretative repertoires’ provides a useful way of understanding the context for research by attending to the way in which some knowledge is viewed as legitimately created and indeed categorized as being ‘knowledge.’ Within this context then, rather than viewing social texts (such as academic publications for example) as simply a reflection of categories or a particular state of affairs, discourse analysts take the view that versions are actively constructed and that texts are not just describing things but actually doing or accomplishing versions of social reality (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.6). Given the constructive nature of social texts, critical readers can attend to the ways in which different perspectives serve different purposes, and more importantly, how textual descriptions embody some form of evaluative function that may then serve a political purpose (Green & McClelland, 1999; MacLeod, 2002; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

With respect to the above description of social texts, acknowledging that, ‘often events and people are experienced only in terms of discourse’ bears significant recognition given the consequential and constructive nature of discourse. The implication
is that CDA can be argued to be a “form of intervention in social practice and social relationships” as well as a form of political engagement (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). For example, as Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak suggest, researchers can effectively draw attention to discourses that are indicative of racist or sexist ideology. By challenging negative or erroneous representations of marginalized groups and drawing attention to relations of power, critical discourse analysts are engaging in a political process through intervening in social relations.

**Discourse and politics: debates and contesting views**

Criticisms of a discursive approach are reminiscent of the disputes between competing versions of critical theory, in particular, the long-standing issue of materialism versus idealism, as discussed in Chapter One. Today the debates persist in the oppositions between Marxian versus postmodernist theory. Given the opposing positions taken by critical theorists, some have made the critique “that social justice issues inevitably translate into firmly entrenched binary oppositions” concerning which perspectives offer the most useful framework (Gunew, 1993, p.1). One important development within the domain of critical theory has concerned the emphasis on identity, often termed as ‘identity politics,’ as opposed to a focus on solidarity based primarily or strictly on class interests (Stabile, 1997).

With respect to the issue of identity politics, although Marxist theorists acknowledge, ‘difference’ and diversity,’ they do not consider it as an area of study or analysis in its own right within Marxism. Rather, in historical materialist work Marxists frequently discuss identity and difference issues as offering an unsatisfactory critique of structural analyses. Marxists view these critiques as unsatisfactory based on the premise...
that culture is fundamentally embedded in material life and as such, it is ultimately materiality that requires theoretical primacy (Ahmad 1997, p. 108). In general, Marxian theorists argue that postmodernist thought negates "the historical centrality of capitalism" and that a class-based, historical materialist approach fundamentally subsumes all variations of contemporarily expressed oppressions (i.e. "issues like language, culture, nationality, race, gender, the environment") (Foster, 1997, p.192).

Some theorists (e.g. Ahmad, 1997; Eagleton, 1997) suggest that Marxist and postmodernist approaches are diametrically opposed, or at the very least, that it is not possible to reconcile the differing emphases placed on language/discourse, politics, materiality and social practice. Subsequently, a central debate amongst Marxist and postmodernist critical theorists concerns the way in which the term 'discourse' is positioned regarding the politics of language and text and its significance in relation to 'real' material conditions and social relations (Mukherjee, 1998).

The crux of this debate concerns the criticism made primarily by Marxist-oriented scholars that postmodernist works lack the potential for contributing to meaningful social change. Further, they argue that an emphasis on identity, language and discourse produces works incapable of contributing to tangible political projects (Ahmad, 1997; Eagleton, 1997). A more polemical approach, taken by some Marxian theorists, argues that emphases on 'text' do not constitute political action and that such emphases are actually an illusion in contributing to social change (Ahmad, 1997; Eagleton; 1997).

Instead of focusing on capitalism, postmodernists often argue for attention to the multiple and complex social relations involved in oppression (Eagleton, 1997; Mattingly

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19These authors are included in the edited book by Wood & Foster (1997) In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern agenda.
& Falconer, 1995; Stabile, 1997). Conversely, in response to a general postmodernist critique, Marxist scholars such as Stabile (1997), argue that using a historical materialist approach to understand structures of oppression, does not mean a simplistic explanation based in reductionism.

Although postmodern and poststructural approaches are recognized as linked concepts, each term has a distinctive focus. According to Mattingly and Falconer (1995), postmodernism generally refers to “aesthetic and discursive practices and poststructuralism to the decline of totalizing narratives” (p. 433). Another useful distinction is offered by Stabile (1997) who comments “where poststructuralism refers to the theory, postmodernism is the practice” (p. 136).

Consistent with the emphasis of ‘post’ approaches on language and theory, related arguments concerning what acts are construed to actually constitute political action are taken up by Ahmad and Eagleton as well as Bannerji, (1995) and Hawkesworth (1999). In various ways, these scholars argue that theorizing itself does not qualify as a form of ‘politics.’ Similarly, Amira Nanda, (1997) makes the interesting observation, that unlike postmodernist approaches that consider science as purely a ‘social construction’ existing fundamentally in a discursive realm, a Marxist approach to science “…holds the view that knowledge is socially mediated and that science is a social practice” (p. 78). In spite of seemingly disparate goals, Nanda’s observation serves as a useful example of the manner in which apparently oppositional approaches, in fact, share similar premises, which are based on the recognition of the fundamentally social and political component of science (Wallerstein, 2004).
...
Notably, the similarity between postmodernist and Marxist approaches concerning the social mediation of theoretical arguments is based on the reality that theoretical arguments and explanations are important ‘tools’ of science used by critical social theorists. As such, rather than needing to sustain arguments for separate approaches, I suggest that the false dichotomy becomes apparent when the underlying ideology concerning the relationship between knowledge, power and social relations is recognized. Indeed, Mulhern (1997) points out the role of “politics [in] determining the character of social relations” (p. 49).

**Critiques of CDA and responses**

Nonetheless, related to the differing positions among Marxists and postmodernist theorists, discourse analysis is often criticized as “faddish” and that its practitioners negate ‘real’ or ‘material concerns through an over-emphasis on language (Boutain, 1999; Macleod, 2002; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Additionally, discourse analysis is considered by some to be a ‘loose’ or ‘undisciplined’ method of research given that (a) interpretations of language are contested and (b) there are multiple ways to undertake CDA (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 91). Concerning this latter criticism, possible responses suggested by Wood & Kroger, as well as Potter & Wetherell, point out that discourse analysis is a newer method and, as such, receives more probing for potential weaknesses versus consideration of strengths.
Further, they suggest that “examining text as ‘data’” contrasts to the more conventional methods in social science. For example, in more established methods, scholarly texts are more generally used as part of the literature review for theorizing the meaning of the data; the actual data being interview scripts. Consequently, the conceptual and methodological ‘novelty’ of CDA necessitates the express emphasis its proponents place on detailed analysis and explanation (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Other responses to criticisms of CDA methodology are positioned either implicitly or explicitly within the context of the materialist/idealist debate. In very broad terms, researchers point out the fundamental connection between “discursive constructions and representations as social practices” with “material consequences or ‘counterparts’” (Macleod, 2002, p. 18; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wood & Kroger, 2000). As a specific example of this connection, Potter and Wetherell, (1987, p. 180-181; see also Wood and Kroger (2000, p. 166-167 and 206-207) examine the connection between discourse and representation suggesting, that often the only knowledge people have about marginalized groups, or in fact any particular groups or events, are through their discursive representation by various media rather than by direct experience.

For example, Wayne Warry (1998) discusses the ways racism is expressed through popular media, citing an article published in MacLean’s magazine entitled ‘Time to get Tough with the Natives’ in which the crux of the article dealt with unfair privileges Native people receive through “giveaways” from the Canadian government (p. 29). As Warry suggests, although the arguments may be “simplistic” they “may reflect widely

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20CDA is distinguished from Content Analysis (CA) through CDA’s greater attention to extra-textual features related to social relations. As well, CDA focuses more on the nature and kind of social relationships reflected in text versus the significance granted to any particular number of examples. The more conventional use of CA directs attention to frequency and quantity of themes as indicative of significance. For more detailed discussion on the differences between CDA and CA see Potter & Wetherell (1987), Titscher et al. (2000) and Wood and Kroger (2000).
held attitudes" (p. 29). Warry’s example suggests that discourses are reflected in—and also inform—particular social practices including discussions in both scholarly and popular writings. Consequently, discourse is concretized and given implicit validity through its publication in a respectable national magazine. Notably, this publication creates a particular ‘model’ for debate: one that could be framed in dramatically different ways (e.g. ‘Natives continue to be denied fair deal’). A relevant conclusion drawn from these two comparisons is that throughout the broader society, particular attitudes and behaviours may often derive only from discursive representations. The consequences of such representations may, moreover, be expressed not only through every day social interaction, but also through far-reaching discretionary acts such as policy-making.

This connection between discourse and social practice is also addressed by Durrheim & Dixon (2000) who argue that

Rather than being only a theoretical or abstract concern within academia racist discourse [is a] feature of ‘everyday’ discussion about racial groups, and may now be expressed not as abstract explanations by intellectual elites, but as features of ordinary peoples’ arguing and thinking about race, often contemporarily discussed or characterized as ‘culture’ but frequently within a milieu in which criticisms at all the ‘special privileges’ granted to ‘minority’ groups are levelled (p. 96).

Recognizing discourse as a form of social practice also requires attention to the underlying ideology in which a discourse is structured. Concerning this relationship between circulating discourses and ideology, Frances Henry, Carol Tator, Winston Mattis & Tim Rees (1998), using elements of the explanation provided by Hall (1983), offer a useful definition of ideology pertaining to racism in Canada

Ideology is a set of beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and values that provide members of a group with an understanding and an explanation of their world. Ideology influences the ways in which people interpret social,
cultural, political, and economic systems and structures, and it is linked to their perceived needs, hopes and fears (p. 15).

In drawing attention to the relationship between discourse and hegemonic ideology, the role of power relations provides an important key to understanding the pervasiveness of particular discourses. For example, according to Boutain (1996) "discourses can be theoretically viewed as contingent, meaning flexible and alterable" (p. 6). However, in spite of the potential for alterations in discourses, some have historically been concretized in particular relations of power. This power relationship has influenced prevailing perspectives thus ensuring their perpetuation within popular consciousness. Specifically, in considering the relationship between discourse and power, it is the prevailing relations of power that both inform and strengthen hegemonic discourses. At the same time each of these—power relations and hegemonic discourses—are shaped and legitimated by hegemonic ideology.

An important example demonstrating the interconnection among power, ideology and discourse has been the racist discourse promoting belief in biological and genetic differences among 'races' of people (Boutain, 1999, p. 6). Although the historical definition of 'race' as a legitimate biological category within academia has been rejected and replaced by 'culture' or 'ethnicity', some argue that the notion of cultural difference reflects a prevailing ideology of racism. In this view, the term 'culture' functions in some ways, as merely a substitution for the ideology of racism and continues to allow for the 'pathologizing of 'racial' groups in terms of their cultural tendencies" (Durrheim & Dixon, 2000 p. 94). Additionally, critics point out that practices of categorization allow

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21 Advances in the fields of biology and genetics were largely responsible for this shift, although the social categorical meanings arguably remain.
those in power to "divide people into discrete, reified social categories so as to justify extant patterns of domination, exclusion and entitlement" (Duncan, 2003, p. 139).

Notably then, as the previous quote by Norman Duncan suggests, particular ideologies provide the rationale for social practices. Further, as suggested by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) discourses can be seen as a function of ideology in that "any part of any language text, spoken or written, is simultaneously constituting representations, relations, and identities" (p. 275). Similarly, in their discussion of the ways in which "discourse does ideological work," (p. 275) Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that it is necessary "to consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have (p. 275)." Subsequently in viewing discourse as serving ideological interests, the link between these two elements and power relations appears more plausible.

Conversely, however, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) also provide an alternative view of discourse; rather than being used to serve dominant ideology, discourse can be used as a tool for "transforming society and culture" (p. 273). As an illustration of the different 'services' of discourse, I refer back to the earlier example of Warry (1998) and the alternative way in which First Nations issues could have been presented in MacLean's magazine.

Research and the use of CDA

As discussed previously, certain ideologies have been legitimated or privileged within particular historical-cultural contexts, racist ideology being one primary example. Commensurate with this recognition, as suggested in Chapter One, locating contemporary scholarship concerning Indigenous peoples requires attention to the broader paradigms within which scholarly discourse is created (Apple, 1996; Milliken, 2001; Walker, 2003;
Wallerstein, 2004). More importantly, the most privileged views have material effects which are not only more extensive but also subtler. These effects occur, for example, through the influence of discourse on policy makers. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) note, this relationship between discourse and policy has been discussed, for example, in Michel Foucault’s work on power.22 In addition to the influence of discourse on policy makers, particular views permeate through all forms of social institutions, including legal and educational. The consequence of such a ‘flow’ throughout society is that typically one version or one loose set of versions (and variations thereof) becomes the official or taken-for-granted common sense ‘story’ reflected in discursive formulations as concretized “knowledge” (Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 1998).

In drawing attention to the ‘flow through’ of discourse, there has been an increasing awareness of the historical inequities in scholarship concerning marginalized groups. One such inequity has been a consistent absence of marginalized groups’ perspectives from relevant academic literature. Other portrayals, which have been published, have been negative and stereotypical. As North American Indigenous peoples have experienced both inequities, there is room for a critical discursive perspective that highlights the political component of representation—upheld by the ideology of racial difference—reflecting what some scholars still argue is the prevailing discourse of (negative) racial traits. Conversely, however, as noted earlier, many Indigenous peoples also positively identify themselves in racially-culturally synonymous way, drawing pride from their collectivist ethnic identity.

In attending to the politics of discourse, a critical discursive perspective as discussed by Wood & Kroger (2000), uses the concept of ‘reflexivity’ and its

22 See footnote on page 55 regarding Foucault’s work on discourse
“methodological and conceptual elements” (p. xv). With respect to research addressing the political implications of representations about Indigenous peoples, reflexivity offers a useful tool. For example, a reflexive approach could be used by researchers to fulfill a political (and social justice) commitment to First Nations peoples through (a) seeking to identify the issues that are identified as most significant in the writings of Indigenous scholars and activists and (b) using various strategic examples and communicative resources to sufficiently address the various issues identified by First Nations peoples.

Indeed, as Apple (1996) suggests, all varieties of critical research share in some form a common goal of “generating agency.” One means of facilitating the pursuit of agency within discursive research would be through a deeper critique of texts. In this approach to research, greater attention is paid to the representations within texts, the subsequent social and political implications of such representations and finally, the power relations involved in the production and perpetuation of certain representations (MacLeod, 2002; Milliken, 2001).

Commensurate with the methodology of reflexivity as noted above, the awareness generated through deeper critique suggests the potential for increased political activism by attending to the links between theory and practice and working toward social change. For example, connecting theory to practice in the interest of social justice (however one’s interests are defined) is a step toward social change in everyday practices as reflected in published works (Apple, 1996; Green & McClelland, 1999).

**Approach to CDA used in thesis**

As outlined in Chapter One, my goals here are both exploratory and interpretative. The thesis seeks to establish the usefulness of two theoretical and methodological
approaches—postcolonial feminist theory and critical discourse analysis—both of which have been relatively neglected in the literature pertaining to Indigenous women in North America. As Chandra Mohanty (2003) suggests, using research in examining “forms of colonialism and racism” serves as an important way of “making connections and asking better questions” (p. 57). Notably, then as Mohanty further indicates, it is the process of conceptualizing research that is as important as trying to “find a complete theory.” Her proposal for research goals is particularly salient in light of the multiple methods and theoretical positions currently available to social science researchers.

Although, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987), Titscher et al., (2000) and Wood and Kroger (2000), both the methodology and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis are multiple and contested, there is a rich resource in terms of opening epistemological issues. In light of my goals, the method and methodological processes provided by Titscher et al. (2000) provided a useful framework that allowed me to integrate my combined interest in exploring both a theoretical framework and analytical method.

Using a reflexive approach, that is, questioning my assumptions and interests within my overarching commitment to feminism and social justice, I worked within the broad conceptual framework provided by Titscher, et al. (2000), Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Wood and Kroger (2000), to consider how the materials from my sample represented a critical discourse. After working through the selection process within my larger sample obtained through the initial criteria as provided in Chapter One (see

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23 As discussed earlier, postcolonial feminism and critical discourse analysis each contain elements of theory and method.
Appendix B), I then considered how much of the remaining materials to analyze and what particular ‘units of analysis’ were relevant to my interests.

To qualify as critical discourses the use of the themes within the literature concerning Native women were to reflect the context of current social practices and link these in some manner to issues of theory, politics, social problems and social change (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Titschener et al., 2000; Wood & Kroger, 2000). As posited earlier, the paradigm shift toward post-positivism and the on-going development of approaches to the long-standing materialist-idealist debate within feminist theory provide a contextual framework for identifying critical discourses. Additionally, as addressed in Chapter Two, the relationship between politics and social relations, materiality and idealism were important issues of contention tied into transitional thinking from second to third wave feminism and continue to be expressed in the more recent works dealing with feminist intersectional theorizing.

The perceived dichotomies between language and action, and the history of colonialist domination, are significant components of the politics surrounding research about Native women. These components reflect the general observation that academic discourse concerning Indigenous peoples remains a contested, politically-laden subject for debate (Deloria, 1998; Mihesuah, 1998). A recurring issue concerns the perceived dichotomy between ‘action’ politics versus addressing the “the weight of the politics of representation squarely on the side of discursive intervention...”(McLaughlin, 1999 p.344). My perspective reflects the arguments made by scholars such as Lisa McLaughlin (1999) and Snjea Gunew (1998), who argue that language, text and
Summary and conclusion

At this juncture, I have now introduced one of the conceptual perspectives—that of Critical Discourse Analysis—informing my thesis. As mentioned previously, I am employing the parameters of CDA rather than doing a full interpretive study. In this chapter I have discussed the broad methodological approach of CDA and provided the basic method through which I have used this approach for considering how postcolonial feminism constitutes a discursive perspective in a selected sample of literature. I have also discussed why I consider this as a useful and socially just approach for integrating politics, theory, method and methodology.
Chapter Four

Postcolonial Feminism

In this chapter I begin with a more general overview of the development of postcolonial theorizing. This initial discussion is used to provide the context within which postcolonial feminist theorizing has developed. In the latter half of the chapter I consider the particular areas of focus for postcolonial feminist approaches, offering a contextual look at how these perspectives are more broadly related to feminist intersectional theorizing.

After considering the relevance for interpreting postcolonial feminist perspectives as emergent discourses in contemporary scholarship about First Nations women, I conclude the chapter with a basic ‘critique’ of my interpretations using a model of ‘warranting criteria.’ Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest this ‘model’ as a way of examining the utility of discourse analytic approaches. I employ Potter & Wetherell’s basic approach to consider the efficacy of a conjoined use of CDA and postcolonial feminist theorizing.

Postcolonial thought: Historical and contextual development

The work of Edward Said, particularly his “Orientalism” (1978) and “Culture and Imperialism” (1993), has been pivotal in the advancement of postcolonial scholarship. Indeed, Said is cited extensively in a variety of scholarly literature that addresses both the uses and implications of a postcolonial perspective (Anderson, 2002; Emberly, 1993; Smith, 1999). According to Said (1978), Orientalism has functioned as a set of social practices that has shaped the manner of scholarship about the Orient and

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24 Wood and Kroger (2000) also discuss the use of warranting criteria, building on the earlier work by Potter and Wetherell (1987). I found Potter and Wetherell’s description more suitable.
legitimated only a narrow set of views. Further, Said proposes that these practices actually constitute a “discourse” of Orientalism, as modeled after the work of Michel Foucault.\textsuperscript{25} The following assertion by Said captures the ‘essence’ of the relations of domination expressed in Foucault’s work

[O]rientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient [...] Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (p. 3).

What is notable about Said’s description of Orientalism is the all-encompassing nature of the power relationship between the ‘West’ and the ‘Orient’. As Said asserts, this power relationship functioned both symbolically (e.g. ideologically) and materially (e.g. militarily). Further, as Said suggests, it is through “examining Orientalism as a discourse” (p.3) that the understanding of how elements of control function in a seamless manner, producing and re-producing authority becomes apparent.

Various theorists have utilized Said’s framework to address the historical link between the ideology of colonialism and both ‘popular’ and scholarly work concerning the representation of ‘the Orient’ and its peoples.\textsuperscript{26} As well, his description of relationships has been extended in works concerning the socio-political circumstances of diverse colonized peoples, influencing a broad range of academic disciplines (Bolton and

\footnote{\textsuperscript{25}Michel Foucault’s work on discourse has been widely cited by both discourse analysts and postcolonial theorists. Although it is beyond the scope of my thesis to deal with Foucault’s work directly, readers are referred to the works noted by Said, for example, (p.3) “The Archaeology of Knowledge” and “Discipline and Punish”.
\footnote{\textsuperscript{26}I reflect the perspectives of scholars who have built upon the work of several influential postcolonial critics (e.g. Moore-Gilbert, 2000; Anderson, 2002; Anderson, 2003; Browne & Smye, 2002; etc.) who recognize the work of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak as being the most influential in developing postcolonial scholarship. However, within my thesis I am more interested in how these original works have been utilized rather than providing a comprehensive overview of the original scholarship.}}

‘Imperialism’ means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism,’ which is almost a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory (Said 1993: 9)

The work of diverse critical scholars has contributed to the development of postcolonial thought (Anderson, 2002; Anderson, 2003). Notably, as Graham Huggan (2002) points out, development of postcolonial approaches has involved an increasingly interdisciplinary body of scholarship that while providing useful conceptual bridges is also fraught with conflict over boundaries and definitions. In light of the evolution of postcolonial theorizing and subsequent contestations, some scholars draw attention to the ‘roots’ of postcolonial thought. For example, according to Arif Dirlik (1999), the key terms—‘postcoloniality’ and ‘postcolonial scholarship’—require qualification given their many contested uses in academia. As Dirlik notes

Any effort to confront these questions must begin with a consideration of what we understand by ‘postcolonial’, as well as of the historical circumstances of its emergence and reception. As Aijaz Ahmad has pointed out, the idea of the postcolonial itself has a history. In its initial, more or less literal, temporal sense, it referred to newly liberated colonies, and was quite radical in its social, economic and political implications: breaking with the colonial past to create new societies economically, politically and culturally. Integral to the postcolonial vision of this early period (peaking in the 1960s) were ideologies of national liberation that sought national autonomy in all realms from the colonial past as well as the neo-colonial present (p. 150).

Dirlik is quoted at length in order to illustrate the context for much contemporary postcolonial scholarship. Although the ‘state’ of postcoloniality refers to historical and material circumstances, its use has been extended within diverse theoretical perspectives
and more frequently emphasizes elements of ‘agency,’ ‘subjectivity’ and ‘voice’ (Anderson, 2002; Diaz, 1999; Donnelly, 2002). Notably then, not only is there debate over the politics of the term ‘postcolonial,’ but this debate draws attention to the connection between issues of definition, materiality and history.

Debates over the use of the term ‘postcolonialism’ have not only included the disciplinary underpinnings (and hence uses) of the term, but also the social and political implications of ‘theorizing’ historical events in light of the on-going, contemporary relations of domination and resistance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin; 1998; Loomba, 1998; Moss, 1993). With respect to the contemporary milieu, Said’s description of Orientalism provided at the beginning of this chapter provides a substantive parallel to the relationships existing between North American Indigenous peoples and the State.

In keeping with an ideological view of postcolonialism, many scholars argue that it accurately reflects the contemporary implications of colonization for Indigenous peoples. For example, such implications would include the long-term effects of centuries of colonization for self-understanding and self-definition amongst individuals and amongst nations contained by a colonizing society. Consideration of the ways in which both self and collective identity reflect a history of colonial relations is illustrated through the selection of identity labels as discussed by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffins (1998).

Terms such as ‘Indian’ and later ‘Amerindian’, which, like Aboriginal in Australia, accrued derogatory connotations, were employed by settler-invaders (and their descendants). In the twentieth century, terms generated by indigenous peoples themselves, such as ‘First Nations’, and ‘Native Americans’ have replaced the older settler-invader nomenclatures (p. 5).

As suggested above, one way in which unbalanced and dominating relations are signified is through the use of imposed labels by colonizing groups. Conversely, within a
postcolonial perspective the selected identity terms by Indigenous peoples are indicative of resistance to historical relations of domination.

Nonetheless, Indigenous scholars do not necessarily welcome the term ‘postcolonial’ (Smith, 1999). Several have outlined their understandings of the implications of this postcolonial distinction for Indigenous peoples. In a particularly telling example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes an Indigenous activist (Bobbi Sykes) who commented at an academic conference “What? Post-colonialism? Have they left?” (p.24).

Clearly any implication that the colonial relationship has ended or to effects muted by time will be of significance for many Indigenous peoples. Further, the ideology framing the contested uses of the term has challenged important social and political implications. For example, scholars such as Ward Churchill (2003) challenge ‘generic’ characterizations of imperialism and colonialism. He argues that terms such as “settlement,” are actually “disguising” “the actualities of invasion and conquest” (p. 140). The description of historical events provides an example of the stark contrast among social perspectives and highlights a substantive reason why debates and contestations over the term ‘postcolonial’ persist.

Contestations over postcolonial scholarship may also be understood within the context of the materialist-idealist debate. This context is suggested through the attention granted in publications to polarities of emphasis, and identified by the use of ‘markers’ such as “class” and “materiality” versus “identity” and “representation” (Dutton, Ghandi & Seth, 1999; Dirlik, 1999). Other scholars, however, focus on the need for identifying mutually constitutive practices of colonialism and the various ways in which these
features have been manifested (Loomba, 1998; Moss, 2003). By mutually constitutive practices of colonialism, I am referring to my earlier discussion of the relations of domination—the seamless interconnection of both symbolic and material practices—as proposed by Said (1978, p. 3).

Nevertheless, in spite of the on-going academic debates, it is the combined focus on historical relations of colonization and the myriad contemporary outcomes of these relations that are pivotal to postcolonial studies. For example, Robert Young (1999) provides an informative summary of the multiple areas of concern in postcolonial studies:

[Postcolonial studies focus on] the colonial past; the postcolonial present; exile and diaspora; and the politics of multiculturalism; histories of imperialism and colonialism; the role of culture (academic, literary, and popular) in the operation of imperialism and in the formation of national resistance [...] the contemporary politics of identity; race and ethnicity; gender and sexuality; the economics of neo-colonialism; diaspora and migrancy; indigenous fourth-world cultures; the connections between colonialism and modernity, postcolonialism and postmodernism (p.32).

These multiple areas of focus differentiate postcolonialism from other critical perspectives, suggesting the significance of a postcolonial framework within the rubric of other post-positivist paradigmatic advancements, not the least of which is critical theory concerning ‘race’, culture and feminism (Seth et al., 1998). For example, critical scholars such as Joan Anderson (2002, p. 8-9), who use a model of postcolonial scholarship in their work, identify the key foci as follows: (a) critical analyses within the areas of knowledge development, (b) both symbolic and material ‘race’ relations and identity politics (c) issues of authenticity and representation, and (d) the historical underpinnings of various relations of domination and resistance.

Further, Anderson (2002) also suggests that postcolonial theory addresses the construction of inferior, non-Western, ‘Others’ based within the historical context of
colonialism and offers a scholarship that considers knowledge production and legitimacy from the perspective of the ‘colonized.’ Similarly, according to Smith (1999), ‘the Other’ has been historically constructed within a series of “master discourses” (p. 67). The implication of this practice is that academia has long been enveloped in a colonialist framework that not only has dictated how ‘the Other’ is portrayed and discussed, but more importantly, limits and/or denies the perspectives of the ‘subjects’ of discourse—perpetuating relations of domination. For example, Ivison, Patton and Sanders (2000) provide a useful way of understanding the ideological foundation for a postcolonial perspective, asserting that

Disavowing colonialism [must be] grasped within practical and interpretive frameworks that are partly held in place by historically patterned beliefs and practices. A postcolonial political theory needs to focus on these processes [understanding that] public discourse is always characterized by relations of power as much as it is by reason (p.18-20).

Within postcolonial scholarship histories of colonization as well as the contemporary experiences and socio-political location of various peoples is explored in both local and global contexts (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998; Grewal and Kaplan, 2003; Loomba, 1998; Mukherjee, 1998). The contextual basis of postcolonialism is relevant for recognizing that while different groups may have experienced what is called ‘colonialism’ in its definitional sense (as noted earlier), each group will have significant similarities and differences both between and among them (Moss, 2003; Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis, 1995). Consequently, one of the important highlights of the postcolonial perspective has been the ‘call’ to address this diversity among the varieties of experiences (Frink, Shepard & Reinhardt, 2002; Grewal and Kaplan, 2003).
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Concerning how this issue of diversity is ‘framed,’ one area that has been problematic has been the tendency of writers to present a ‘postcolonial’ individual that glosses over the ‘multifaceted’ reality of the experiences of women (and men) based on various social locations and the processes involved in the social construction of these locations (Dua, 1999; Mukherjee, 1998). For example, as Ipshita Chanda (2000) discusses, identity and access to resources within postcolonial societies is shaped by multiple factors such as caste, class, religion, geographical location and gender.

Many debates concerning whose voice is ‘authentic’ or representative of particular colonized groups have occupied a central place within postcolonialism (Lynes, 2003). These debates occur not only ‘internally’ amongst various groups of Indigenous peoples, but are also framed in external discussions and literature about these same groups. Within either context, both theorists and activists address diverse issues concerning authenticity. These issues range from the credibility of certain ‘cultural spokespersons’ to the political implication(s) of caste and class differences within groups (Mohanty, 2003; Mukherjee, 1998), to contestations regarding the existence of an ‘essential’ identity (Ezzaher, 2003; Donnelly, 2002; Dua, 1999).

As discussed previously, Chanda (2000) provides a useful example of the multiple locations that factor into the politics of authenticity. Gloria Davies (1998) provides another example of the authenticity debate through her discussion of “cultural legitimation” in postcolonial scholarship. Davies reflects the implications of an essential identity noting, “my supposed authority to pronounce on postcolonial issues is thus sadly grounded in nothing other than my appearance as ‘a person of colour’” (p. 174).
Not only does Davies's example highlight the politics of authenticity in academia but it also serves as an example of the explicit way in which appearance symbolizes the 'Other.'

The issue of how 'authenticity' is defined and the controversies surrounding notions of racial or cultural 'essentialism' continue to inform discussions concerning identity and the facets of identity politics (Behiels, 1999; Coates, 1999). Postcolonial scholarship through acknowledging the significance of identity politics—as embedded within a history of colonialism—offers a contribution toward contemporary issues of justice for marginalized groups such as First Nations peoples (Bannerji, 1995; Mukherjee, 1998).

As mentioned previously, postcolonial theorists are expressly interested in critiquing the social construction of 'Others.' Such critiques are particularly concerned with the ways in which 'Othering' serves to "naturalize and reproduce unequal social relations" (Donnelly, 1998 p. 57). In light of this goal, postcolonialism accomplishes several broad but equally important tasks. First, this perspective allows for a critique of the relations of domination within colonialist history (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Loomba, 1998; Said, 1978). Second, it allows for alternative, critical analyses to be made by those previously considered 'subjects'. Finally, postcolonial theory provides a basis from which more diverse and inclusive forms of scholarship may be developed and offers a viable complementary for issues concerning the politicization of representation and the relevant link to material conditions (Gunew, 1998).
My desire for exploring socially just theoretical perspectives stimulated an interest in the multidimensionality offered through postcolonial approaches. A particular quote by Robert Young (1999) captures this essence.

If there has been one major argument that has dominated postcolonial studies since Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, it is that academic work, whether it claims scholarly detachment or not, always forms part of a larger social and political nexus: the only question is towards which ends it own interventions are directed. Our responsibility as academics, writers and intellectuals, for which we are accountable, is to link our work to the many issues of injustice and inequality operating in the world today and to direct our work towards the righting of such wrongs and the transformation of the systems that produce them (p.30).

Young’s assertion of the link between scholarship and social justice suggests the rationale for engagement of postcolonial scholars with socio-political issues. Further, this rationale provides for a critical feminist component through attending to the ways in which particular perspectives and realities of women have frequently been negated. In keeping with this view, postcolonial feminist theorizing focuses on the ways in which colonialism fostered particularly gendered experiences.

**Development of postcolonial feminist theorizing**

Postcolonial feminist perspectives appear as emergent discourses in contemporary scholarship about First Nations women in North America. As a critical perspective, postcolonial feminism provides a useful, and arguably, a socially-just way of theorizing the experiences of First Nations women, addressing what some scholars have argued is an implicit masculine bias within hegemonic practices of scholarly thought and tradition (Diaz, 2003; Graveline, 1998). Consequently, these beliefs have served to perpetuate binaries concerning ‘male and female’; ‘Us versus Them’; and an entrenched view of legitimate versus illegitimate ontological frameworks (Minh-ha, 1989). Such binaries and rigidity in academic boundaries, in conjunction with the central place granted to the
‘voices’ and ‘perspectives’ of historically privileged groups, have become increasingly viewed as problematic within postcolonial feminist scholarship (Anderson, 2002). Further, some scholars argue that the various biases and hegemonic relations perpetuated in scholarship merely reflect its fundamentally rooting in an intertwining structure of patriarchy and colonialism (Bannerji, 1995; Graveline, 1998).

Notably, while postcolonial feminist theorizing has been fundamentally concerned with multiple issues of identity, it is simultaneously positioned among the responses to various critiques concerning ‘totalizing’ explanations of oppression. In particular, postcolonial feminism offers a theoretical perspective that explicitly draws attention to the interconnections between identity and social location while also highlighting ways in which political goals may be variously conceived, as well as multiply expressed (Aitchison, 2000; Newton, 1994).

Postcolonial feminist theorizing has not been well developed concerning Aboriginal women in North America. This theoretical framework suggests a cogent way of ‘positioning’ the diverse experiences of women within historical contexts of colonialism. As well, it meets the criteria proposed by third-wave feminist theoretical approaches concerning the necessity of standpoint analysis (Hawkesworth, 1999) and the mutually constitutive or “intersecting” influence of “various dimensions of being: gender, race, ethnicity, nation, [and] sexuality” (Anderson, 2003; McLaughlin, 1999 p. 342).

Postcolonial feminist analysis is situated within a larger historical trend within the social sciences and humanities toward the growth of both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives (Rajan and Park, 2000; Weber, 1998). These newer perspectives pay increasing attention to epistemological issues concerning the social and
political bases of knowledge production (Aitchinson, 2000; Anderson, 2002; Newton; 1994). The historical positioning of postcolonial feminist thinking may also be linked to changes that continue to occur within other social movements and ideological debates surrounding feminism and racism.

Significant examples include the growth and political consciousness-raising of the ‘mainstream’ feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Civil Rights and the more radical Black Power and Red Power (AIM) movements (Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Kidwell, 2003). Additionally, within the same period a growing black feminist movement is now recognized as being a part of the conceptual transition from second to third wave feminism, and contributing to the development of various forms of postcolonial feminist theory (Anderson, 2003).

Both feminist theorists and activists expressed a growing interest in racial, as opposed to primarily class oppression, into the 1980s (Dhruvarajan, 2002; Weber, 1998). Additionally, a growing body of literature addressing “the interconnections between race and gender” became a central element concerning issues of difference, particularly in the rise of more globally-focused feminist theorizing (Dua, 1999 p. 13-14; Flew et al., 1999; Grewal and Kaplan, 2003; Gunew, 1998 p. 323-324). Finally, the increasing ideological debates among more classical social theorists and the various ‘post’ theorists, especially poststructuralist and postmodernist, have helped frame the development of postcolonial perspectives (Gunew, 1998; McEwan, 2001; Pillow, 2002).

It is the relationship between postmodernist feminist theoretical positions concerning language, text and discourse and those Marxist positions that primarily uphold material and class-based explanations that are particularly relevant when
examining the politics of representation for Indigenous women. As numerous theorists have asserted, there is a fundamental intersection among social and material relations concerning race, class and gender (Anthias, 2001; Bannerji, 1995; Flew et al., 1999; Hawkesworth, 1999; Ng, 1993).

With respect to the materialist-idealist debate, rather than upholding the expressed dichotomies, I agree with the feminist perspectives of scholars such as Aitchison (2000), Anthias (2001) and Weber (1998) that these positions are mutually constitutive in understanding the realities of women's lives. Commensurate with the view of realities as mutually constituted, I support a conception of scholarly discourse as a political and 'active' means of working for social justice. Notably, in feminist scholarship within the broad rubric of critical theory there has been increasing emphasis on theorizing which focuses on the 'intersections' of oppression (Anthias, 2002).

For example, the recognition that scholarship is embedded in particular relations of power allowing certain members to claim authority in knowledge production has been well recognized among a diversity of critical scholars (Bannerji, 1995; Gilmore, 2002; Maracle, 1994; McHardy, 1995). Additionally, a common assertion in critical theory is that an underlying philosophy and politics rooted in patriarchy, classism and racism has excluded particular groups, persons and perspectives from central roles in academia, while privileging both the epistemology and politics of representatives of 'dominant' groups (Bannerji, 1995; McLaughlin, 1999; Simpson, 2000; Walker, 2003). Notably then, issues such as power and social justice and the concerns advanced by varieties of feminist theory have been used in the development of critical approaches (Boutain, 1999).
Contemporary feminist scholarship and activism are keenly associated with issues concerning "the politics of representation" both in terms of theoretical positions and in critical response to the work done by other scholars (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 343). As a result, feminist analyses offer substantive "insights regarding the politics of representing the other" while attending to the adequate representation of individuals who have been marginalized through having their experiences and voices ignored (Bannerji, 1995, p. 9).

Many feminist scholars have addressed the need for a stronger consciousness concerning the manner in which power differentials based on a 'colonialist' history continue to be expressed in subtle and systematic ways (Chanda, 2000; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Miles, 1996). For example, this heightened consciousness may be acknowledged through a reflexive approach to scholarship by attending to the particularly privileged position of the (often) 'White, Western' researcher (Diaz, 2003; Duran, 2001). By acknowledging the historically imbalanced relationships that continue to exist through a global hierarchy, interaction between researchers and 'researched' (i.e. textually or face to face) can be structured to mitigate this imbalance. Such interactions can be facilitated through providing space for alternative or dissenting views toward "dominant, hegemonic discourse" (Donnelly, 2002, p. 66). The provision of alternative views is an important component of standpoint feminism (Hawkesworth, 1999). As a way of recognizing issues of agency and subjectivity, standpoint is relevant in terms of the issue of "who speaks for whom" or in "giving voice" to the previously marginalized, (Minh-ha, 1989; Mohanty, 2003; Monture-Angus, 1999). Commensurate with issues of agency, postcolonial feminism attempts to consider knowledge production and legitimacy from the perspective of the "marginalized [or] muted perspective of the
postcolonial female subject” (Anderson, 2002, p.9-10; McEwan, 2001). Conversely, standpoint is also a contested concept concerning the manner in which some feminists have used identity and experience as an exclusive basis for making theoretical claims (Brush, 2001; Suleri, 1999).

For example, Sara Suleri (1999) offers a critical perspective on the work done by both bell hooks and Trinh T. Minh-ha, both of whom she suggests focus too heavily on the recounting of lived experiences within the context of a racialized identity. Suleri argues that such forms of scholarship do little to extend discussions on the “intersection of gender and race” but serve as rhetorical devices that foster further divisiveness (p. 765). As well, Suleri points out that identity is not only based on racially distinguishing features such as skin colour but is also derived from one’s social location and occupation, for example, as a scholar within the privileged western academy. Catriona MacLeod (2002), however, offers a useful view for melding identity positioning and politics in research.

Firstly, I believe, a researcher’s reflection of self in the research process needs to be explicitly linked to political practice. Secondly, researcher reflexivity should address the interactional, relational and power dynamics of the research at hand, rather than focussing on a confession of emotional or discursive positionings of the individual researcher. The former may, of course, invoke the latter, but the latter should not be the primary focus of attention (p. 20).

Notably, theorists from different feminist perspectives (e.g. cultural versus political economy) have often critiqued one another for ‘fragmenting’ or “abstracting” women’s experiences rather than considering the mutually constitutive or “intersecting” influence of various social locations or ‘dimensions of being’ (Anthias, 2001; Mattingly & Falconer, 1995; McLaughlin, 1999). Indeed, social movement theorists such as
William Carroll (1997) draw attention to the significant ‘complementary weaknesses’ in differing approaches to social movements, highlighting the lack of structural attention on one hand and the perceived inattention to “the politics of everyday life” on the other hand (p.22). For example, recognition of the recurring patterns of class and race-based exploitation and oppression among women has been a substantive impediment to views of ‘sisterhood’ (Anthias, 2002; Bannerji, 1995; Ouellette, 2002). Further, as indicated by Julia Emberley (1993) only by deconstructing and decolonising relationships between Native women and Anglo-American feminism is a feminist perspective on Indigenous women achievable. Notably, examination of the complexity of social relations arising from a history of colonial dominance lends itself to increasingly sophisticated approaches and new directions (Shoemaker, 1995).

As indicated earlier, there continue to be many debates within feminist circles. However, in spite of these varying perspectives, important connections may be drawn concerning how various feminisms frame political issues concerning women and the kinds of questions and answers each is concerned with (Flew et al., 1999; Pillow, 2002; Zalewski, 2000). For example, Floya Anthias (2002) raises the issue of addressing commonalities among social locations and experiences as a way of bridging contested interests between feminism and multiculturalism. She suggests that a useful way of addressing commonalities is within the context of “translocational positionality.”

In her contextual formulation, Anthias proposes that one’s identity and experience can be situated within a variety of social locations that aid in understanding and negotiating relationships with others (p. 276-277). Further, in conceptualizing “translocational positionality” Anthias attends to the way in which relationships both
within and between groups are subject to multiple contexts of social relations. Such a view of multiple situations lends particular salience to Stevi Jackson’s (2001 p. 286) proposition that more small “t” theorizing is required to adequately address both the complementary and competing forms of social inequality faced by women along the race, class and gender strata. Like Anthias, Jackson’s conceptualization, also attends to “social contexts, institutions and relationships” that shape women’s experiences.

Notably then, Jackson’s formulation

suggests a more open, eclectic approach rather than an insistence on theoretical purity, making use of conceptual tools that seem useful for a particular purpose rather than being guided by a dogmatic allegiance to a particular set of concepts. Hence, we can analyze women’s everyday existence and the meanings women give to their lives without losing sight of structural patterns of dominance and subordination (p. 286).

As discussed above, these current theoretical discussions are indicative of much contemporary feminist scholarship concerned with addressing the multiple contexts of women’s lives.

Such theorizing reflects important critiques made by many postcolonial feminist scholars concerning the portrayal of ‘third world women.’ These critiques centre on homogenous or united identity, struggles and socio-political interests (Aitchison, 2000; Charusheela & Zein-Elabdin, 2003; Díaz, 2003, Dube, 1999). A further critique concerns the tendency for scholars to portray diverse groups of women through a “blurring of categories” that serve as a binary opposite to the ‘first world’ or ‘western woman’ who is “educated and free of oppression” (Donnelly, 2002; Ezzaher, 2003; Ramirez-Valles, 1998, p. 1755).
Commensurate with the critiques of postcolonial feminist theorists is their substantive recognition of the intersectional influence of one's various social locations. These various positions or locations are a crucial element in structuring multiple social relations within historical as well as neo-colonial contexts, and involve multiple forms including 'race', class, gender, age (among others), as well as cultural context, (Anderson, 2003; Anthias, 2001; Dhruvarajan, 2002; Ramirez-Valles, 1998). The following quote provides the backdrop of postcolonial feminist theorizing through reflecting

the importance of location [and the] intimate connection between feminist studies and feminist politics” through exploration of intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women’s lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality and rights (Rajan and Park, 2000 p.53)

The relationship between representations, politics, discourse and action are related to the critique made by postcolonial feminist theorists concerning the manner in which “white feminist discourse and practice” is situated within “a legacy of colonial domination” (McLaughlin, 1999, p.348-349). This critique made by postcolonial feminist theorists highlights the way in which historical relationships exert a continuing influence—shaping ideology and social practices—on a global basis. As well, the legacy of colonial domination is reflected in and shaped by all social spheres. For example, accessibility (and in particular, lack of) to political, economic, cultural and communicative resources is noted by McLaughlin (1999) as an example of the perpetuation of colonialism.

In light of a history of colonialism and the parallels among the contemporary goals of various Aboriginal-centred scholars, there is a two-fold contribution offered by a
postcolonial perspective. The first contribution is through the continuing development of a body of scholarship for the myriad expressions of peoples who have experienced diverse consequences deriving from a history of colonization. As such, the production of alternative theoretical analyses and projects concerning models for self-determination among diverse Indigenous groups are significant forms of postcolonial expression (Gunew, 1998; Smith, 1999).

A key issue for Indigenous women is the scholarly debates regarding claims for an authoritative or legitimate ‘Native’ voice (Mihesuah, 2003; Minh-ha, 1989; Mohanty, 2003). This concern can be meaningfully situated within postcolonial feminist dialogues. Within the Canadian as well as the broader North American context, any claims for positioning one’s self as an official ‘spokesperson’ are considered controversial. These considerations are informed by an entrenched colonial history and the current political climate of on-going negotiations toward self-government and treaty rights (Ponting, 1998; Simpson, 2000; Warry, 1998). Indeed, many Indigenous scholars while still offering very definitive positions on social justice issues, address the diverse perspectives of Indigenous groups—and notably—focus on the broad range of socio-political concerns for Native women.

Three very recent critical works written by Indigenous women scholars about Indigenous women are indicative of my ‘case’ for the conjoined perspective of postcolonial feminism and critical discourse as emergent elements in the current context of scholarship about Native women. Although none of these scholars explicitly expresses postcolonial feminist ‘goals,’ the publications by Karen Anderson (2000), Devon Mihesuah (2003) and Grace Josephine Mildred Wuttunee Ouellette (2002) may be
viewed as exemplars illustrating the critical discourse of postcolonial feminism. Specifically, the particular issues these women draw attention to and the manner in which they do so resonates with postcolonial feminist approaches.

While contemporarily addressing social-political issues facing Indigenous women in North America, each above-noted scholar ‘positions’ herself in relation to broader contexts influencing scholarship. Specifically, each author draws attention to the critical theoretical perspectives proposed by various ‘mainstream’\textsuperscript{27} feminist scholars. In attending to the theoretical discourses surrounding and indeed constituting women’s experiences, these three Indigenous scholars offer both additional and alternative positions concerning the relationship of feminist theory and its ability to represent the experiences of Indigenous women in North America. In particular, each scholar focuses on issues of agency and subjectivity as Indigenous women working within a milieu that has been structured by the earliest practices of colonialism. As well, each scholar also considers the experiences of other Indigenous women and notes the gendered nature of social practices and on-going power relations within a history of colonialism.

\textit{Warranting Criteria}

Jonathon Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1987) suggest a useful process of validation or ‘warranting’ for discourse analytic work that focuses on “identifying significant patterns of consistency and variation” (p. 169). In keeping with the exploratory goals of my thesis, I consider two possibilities for a warranting process that focus on patterns of consistency: coherence and participant’s orientation.

\textsuperscript{27} Refer to footnoted description in Chapter One.
Coherence

As suggested by Potter and Wetherell "a set of analytic claims should give coherence to a body of discourse," providing clarity in "how the discourse fits together and how discursive structure produces effects and functions" (p.170).

Based on Potter & Wetherell’s concept of coherence, critical discourse analysis may be used to demonstrate the connection of colonial relations with power relations. This connection provides the historical context in which both theory, method and methodology in scholarship concerning Indigenous women demonstrates an interconnecting idealist perspective with historical concreteness. By this proposition, I mean that it is possible to consider colonialist practices as consisting of a broad range of actions encompassing discursive practices, acts of physical violence and appropriation of material resources.

By using a critical discursive approach to link theory and methodology, I suggest that within this interpretive context there is evidence for the themes identified in postcolonial feminist theorizing. That is, the representative themes demonstrate a level of 'validity' as suggested through the construct of coherence. The connections among critical theoretical perspectives can be linked with what are suggested as exemplars in contemporary scholarly discourse concerning Aboriginal women.

Participant's Orientation

The validity check described by Potter and Wetherell concerned the analysis of conversations or dialogues, and as such was not of the same relevance to my thesis as the other criterion. Nonetheless, I mention it given that the premises suggest the possibility of modifying it to serve as another useful feature of warranting in similar works.

28Including, of course, assumption of the underlying epistemology and ontology that structure these frameworks.
Specifically, the first form of this validation concerns the argument that discourses are consequential.

In their use of 'participant’s orientation,' Potter and Wetherell are actually referring to an interview context in which the resultant scripts serve as data. Within my use of the parameters of CDA however, it is actually scholars who are 'research participants' because their texts serve as my data. Notably, however, Potter and Wetherell draw attention to the fundamental influence of discourse in shaping both the interpretations of data and the orientation of the participants to the contextual material informing their discussion. In attending to these facets of critical discourse analytic work, a significant possibility exists for future research focusing on responses of Indigenous women to the arguments presented by researchers attempting to represent and interpret their lives.

**Summary and conclusion**

In the first section of the chapter I provided the basic historical context for postcolonial thought and then drew attention to the currently contested use of the term 'postcolonial.' In the second section of the chapter I focused on the particular perspectives developed within postcolonial feminist theorizing, referring to the ‘intersecting’ relationships among race, class and gender as discussed in Chapter Two. Although intersectional frameworks are useful for understanding contemporary scholarship concerning Native women in North America, postcolonial feminist theorizing offers a perspective that captures the complexities of addressing the issues of Indigenous women.
In particular, while attending to the intersections of identity, postcolonial feminist theorizing focuses explicitly on gendered realities within the historical context of colonialism. This perspective is nicely summarized in the work of Weber (1998, p. 13) who addresses “themes in [the] literature theorizing interconnecting relations of oppression.” According to Weber, not only are these themes at the macro and micro levels but also they are characterized by their simultaneous expression in systemic power relations.\(^2^9\) These intersections of identity are discussed by various theorists as the fundamental intertwining of ‘race, class and gender’ within the context of historical relations of power (Anthias, 2002; Bannerji, 1995; Weber, 1998).

Given the exploratory goals of my thesis I have been interested in providing a conceptual and methodological framework suggesting evidence for 1) identifying postcolonial feminism as a critical discourse within the specific texts about Native women in North America and 2) indicating the efficacy of future research using a conjoined approach of postcolonial feminist theorizing and critical discourse analysis. In this chapter I considered the ways in which postcolonial approaches, although being considered controversial by many Indigenous peoples, offers a useful framework for addressing fundamental political issues in scholarship.

Postcolonial feminist theorizing offers a way to present the complexities of agency and authenticity in both individual and collective identity, serving as a critique of works offering one-dimensional perspectives. At the same time, as both a theoretical and methodological approach, postcolonial feminist theorizing allows for positioning Indigenous women’s scholarship as both opposing and responding to multi-faceted experiences of colonialism.

Chapter Five

Postcolonial feminism, Critical discourse and Native women: Summary, Conclusions and Final reflections

Summary

In this thesis I have proposed that scholarship concerning Native women when viewed through a critical discursive perspective incorporates fundamental themes of postcolonial feminist theorizing. Two primary themes of agency and subjectivity addressed the ways in which present circumstances and identities have been broadly shaped by a colonial past within a gendered context. Further, I have contextualized postcolonial feminist perspectives within the historical moment in critical theorizing, arguing that a post-positivist paradigm exerts a continuing influence on scholarly publications that reflect earlier themes related to materialist-idealist debates.

The additional component I used to approach the scholarship concerning Aboriginal women addressed the contemporary context of third wave and feminist theorizing. The positions taken by many contemporary feminist theorists concern the fundamental role of ‘intersecting’ or mutually constitutive oppressions in shaping experiences (Anthias, 2001; Bannerji, 1995). Theorizing in this form has made a significant contribution to the scholarship concerning the relationships among ‘race, class, and gender’ and the primacy (if any) granted to each social location vis-à-vis the experiences of oppression (Duran, 2001; Newton, 1994; Stacy, 1993).

Indeed, the complex and contentious development of feminist theory may be viewed as a critical impetus for the development of newer theoretical and methodological perspectives that continue to extend earlier materialist-idealist debates. Now, within the broad frameworks of Marxism, post-modernism and post-structuralism, on-going debates
and developments in feminist theory focus on the ways in which women’s experiences and identity require recognition within multiple life contexts and intersecting oppressions of ‘race, class and gender.’ Developments in theorizing continue to reflect critical perspectives and methodological practices in which both general and specific interests in social justice are expressed in diverse ways.

Acknowledging discourse as a form of political, social interaction highlights the relevance of understanding the theoretical and methodological underpinnings in both interpreting and creating scholarly publications. As proposed, research and ‘knowledge production’ is an inherently political endeavour. Research politics are interwoven with issues concerning epistemology, ontology and methodology. Within this political framework, all facets of the research process bear critical emphases. Further, these emphases concern questions of legitimacy and authority and definitions of ‘knowledge’ from varying perspectives (Wallerstein, 2004).

These intersecting issues in research and their embedding within concerns for social justice are recognized as important considerations for researchers approaching Aboriginal issues today. As discussed in this thesis, postcolonial feminism and critical discourse analysis as theoretical and methodological perspectives have particular strengths in addressing the multi-faceted realities of Aboriginal women.

Conclusions

Although there has been minimal scholarship utilizing either postcolonial feminist or critical discursive approaches in addressing the contemporary socio-political situation of Indigenous women, I have proposed the relevance of these perspectives. Specifically, I have highlighted the manner in which postcolonial feminism and critical discourse
analysis can be used as either complementary or conjoint 'tools' for evaluating the scholarship concerning Aboriginal women. Further, my exploration of these—postcolonial feminism and critical discourse analysis—as theoretical and methodological perspectives, suggests a significant framework for future research concerning the experiences of Aboriginal women within numerous social institutions.

Critical discourse analysis as an element of postcolonial feminist theorizing provides a way to facilitate links between theory, methodology, politics and practice (Green & McClelland, 1999; Milliken, 2001, p.36). Notably, one of the goals of such a critical approach is to create new spaces for generating agency among diverse, and more importantly, marginalized groups (Apple, 1996; Duncan, 2003; MacLeod, 2002; Milliken, 2001). Within a scholarly context, one form of agency may be through attending to the perspectives offered in works by First Nations peoples. Given that generation of agency and attention to 'voice' are significant facets of postcolonial scholarship, attention to the political goals expressed by Indigenous scholars and activists suggests a substantive ideological basis from which continuing dialogue—certainly through scholarly work—may occur between postcolonial-oriented theorists and Aboriginal peoples.

A reflexive approach (as discussed earlier) by researchers can consciously acknowledge past forms of exploitative research. In light of this acknowledgement, the setting of research goals may be framed within the context of a mutual interest for social justice between researchers and participants (DeVault, 1996; Logan & Huntley, 2002; Weber, 1998). Further, this 'mutuality' of interests and goals can be extended toward the
ways in which textual and discourse analysis is performed through, again, the consistent use of critical and reflexive approaches.

With respect to critical developments in theory and methodology—as discussed throughout my thesis—research concerning the issues of Indigenous women (both practically and interpretively) warrants continuing attention to developing multiple, diverse and collaborative perspectives. As proposed, postcolonial feminist theorizing and critical discourse analysis offer particularly efficacious approaches to addressing multidimensionality in melding theory, method, methodology and practice. Further, these approaches can be both generally and specifically targeted toward goals for social justice. Within this context, scholarship can be positioned as a significant way of working for social change for Native women in North America, and more broadly, for addressing the political concerns related to social justice for Indigenous peoples.

By incorporating the conjoint methodological and theoretical perspective of postcolonial feminism as a critical discourse into research analysis concerning North American Indigenous women, scholars access an additional ‘tool’ for critiquing relevant publications. Such an analytical tool is useful in attending to the ways in which broader, on-going dialogues across social science disciplines shape the works on Indigenous women in North America. Further, such an analysis could be used to inform research concerning both general and specific goals for social justice from a diversity of perspectives.

Using the concept of “fruitfulness” as defined by Potter and Wetherell (1987) to consider the “scope of an analytic scheme [...] to generate novel explanations” (p.171), suggests that postcolonial feminist theorizing—through its attention to issues of
representation and power—is well-suited for facilitating critical research practices that link discourse with action and social change.

For example, as most Indigenous women have faced both marginalization and erasure of experiences, their treatment within mainstream health care provides a concrete illustration of the compelling and continuing need for forms of critical research that will provide a relevant groundwork for change in policy and practice. Concerning Native women’s experiences, Browne and Smye (2002) note

[H]ow decontextualized discourses addressing aboriginal women’s risks for cervical cancer can perpetuate negative stereotypical images of aboriginal women while downplaying or ignoring the historical, social and economic context of women’s health risks (p. 28).

As indicated above, there is substantive place for research that attends to the ways in which discourses link apparently symbolic concerns (such as selective representations of Indigenous women in academic literature) with material consequences (that is, how Indigenous women are treated within mainstream health care).

Again, drawing on scholarship from within the field of health care, there are several notable examples of these interconnected research concerns. Specifically, Joan Anderson, et al., (2003); Joan Anderson (2002) and Tam Truong Donnelly (2002) provide exemplary works in nursing research that demonstrate the on-going potential of contributions from postcolonial and postcolonial feminist approaches. In particular, the above-noted nursing scholarship contains interconnecting elements that ‘link’ theory, method, methodology and epistemology. More importantly, these elements are applied to research that is directed toward various ways of facilitating change in practice. For example, while Anderson (2002) and Donnelly (2002) focus more on theory and
methodology in research, they expressly link their concerns to unequal power relations and how critical research can contribute to positive social change.

Certainly, the integration of postcolonial feminist and critical discursive perspectives allow potential advances in scholarship concerning Aboriginal women’s experiences. Specifically, these perspectives provide a substantive basis from which to formulate questions concerning Aboriginal women’s experiences as shaped by a gendered, colonial history. Notably, recent publications highlighting the link between the discursive representations of Aboriginal women and their treatment within institutionalized health-care facilities suggest important directions for future research, and further, a contextual basis for developing more effective practices.

**Final Reflections**

Focusing my approaches to the literature was a process of struggle. Indeed, as suggested throughout my thesis, prominent themes and issues overlapped and interrelated. This almost organic intertwining of topics presented a challenge in establishing not only how to capture the complexity of issues, but more importantly, how to present these issues in a meaningful way. Notably, although I present the thesis in a linear fashion, the inclusion of topics and the forms of categorization utilized throughout each chapter is not intended to suggest that each topic is mutually exclusive; nor is it representative of how the thesis actually evolved.

As a Native woman, I struggled with the politics and production of scholarly publications from newer ‘Indigenist’ perspectives. These perspectives are positioned in contrast to ‘mainstream’ constructions of Indigenous peoples and in particular, to work done by non-Indigenous scholars. For example, although scholars such as Sandy Grande
(2003) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) actually advocate for a decolonising methodology and what is a relatively new term, an ‘Indigenist’ approach, I see their concerns as paralleling the ideology embodied in postcolonial theory. Specifically, these concerns deal with fundamental issues of addressing historical power imbalances wrought through a colonialist history of socio-political and economic domination.

I am not convinced that there necessarily needs to be just one solution to my struggle. Rather, in drawing particular attention to my interpretation of publications both by and about Native woman as reflecting postcolonial feminist thought, I recognize and acknowledge the goals of other Indigenous scholars who have engaged in (and continue) challenges to academic hegemony. By attending to the issue of interpretation, I offer the caveat that I am not suggesting that my interpretations in any way ‘override’ the original intent of the authors.

Indeed, in my view, all critically-oriented contributions addressing the imbalances faced by Indigenous peoples remain on-going priorities for mitigating—and certainly redressing—the insidious effects of imperialism and colonialism. In light of these priorities, the varieties of scholarship supporting the politics and goals expressed by First Nations peoples are fundamentally relevant for social justice oriented research and activism.

**Values and Epistemology**

Concerns regarding representation and power are particularly significant for me. Like other feminist researchers I ground myself in a value-based conception of scholarship. Through a continuing process of reflexivity, I consider the ways in which my social identity and location shape the research process. Commensurate with my
reflections, although express definitions of social justice are an area contested by Native peoples and all variety of scholars, Carolyn Kagan and Mark Burton (2001) offer a useful definition within the context of a values-based approach to connecting the goals of theory, methodology and practice:

Values are a way of stating, measuring, or assessing the worth of something [...] whether these are connected to teaching, social action and/or researching [...] Justice as a value leads to the articulation of the following rights: right to have more equal and equitable distribution of resources; right to live in peace and in freedom from constraints; right to equality and fair treatment; right to self-determination. Each of these rights can be pursued in our praxis, underpinned by the value of justice (p.6).

As an Aboriginal, feminist scholar I desire ways to pursue my values for social justice within integrated forms of research. Commensurate with the process of more established feminist scholarship, value-based connections inform both the initial interests and subsequent formulation of research goals. Further, these justice-oriented connections are reflected in research practices, in the analysis of supporting literature and in one’s own findings and conclusions (DeVault, 1996; Harding, 1987; Logan & Huntley; 2002).

In conjunction with a values-based approach to research, my epistemological orientation functions as a guide for questioning assumptions, providing a critical ‘lens’ through which to evaluate claims. Again, in seeking integrated forms of research—both as ‘tools’ and resources—the diversity within feminist scholarship resonates with my own experiences and perspectives. For example, according to Kum Kum Bhavnani (1993)

[It is] not enough to value or privilege experience. Individual experience is created because it is in an active relationship with objectivity. Each creates and informs the other. For example, my version of feminism leads me to experience anger about human poverty, and this experience is informed by my ‘objective’ knowledge that there is institutionalized injustice against poor people. My
Appendix A

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<th>List of databases searched with limiters applied</th>
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<tr>
<td>2) CPI.Q. (via InfoTrac) # of combined hits =</td>
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<td>3) CBCA Complete (via ProQuest) # of combined hits =</td>
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<td>4) Academic Press (via scholarsportal) # of combined hits =</td>
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<td>6) Library Catalogue – Books only - # of combined hits =</td>
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Appendix B

Sample of articles and books generated from database searches


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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