CHAPTER III

THE WHITE/ASSIMILATIONIST VOICE: THE CIVILIZING ARGUMENT

Probably everyone would agree that an English man would be right in considering his way of looking at the world and at life better than that of a Maori or a Hottentot, and no one will object in the abstract to England doing her best to impose her better and higher views on those savages. Can there be any doubt that the white man must and will impose his superior civilization on the coloured races? The rivalry of the principal European countries in extending their influence over other continents should lead naturally to the evolution of the highest attainable type of government of the subject races by the superior qualities of their rulers (Lord Grey, cited in Pennycock 1998 52)

The colonizer attempts to 'create the Native' in the Biblical paradigm of God's creation of man 'in his own image and likeness'. The Natives are perceived to be of inferior clay - the colour of their skin epitomizing for the colonizer, the taxonomy of inferior birth and status in whiteman's hierarchy of creation, thus necessitating a process of 'civilization'. The colonizer's narrative repeatedly attempts to justify its own existence in terms of bringing light and truth to the savages who need to be moulded in white values/prejudices in order to be 'civilized'

The white/colonizer's views in the colonial narratives often had its echo in the assimilationist voices in the Native narratives. The assimilationist voices which counter the ancient wisdom of Native world view argue for the perpetration of white values especially individualism, industrialisation and capital market economy while denouncing the notions of community which form the essence of Native spirituality. The Native women writers attempt to polarize and polemicize the narrative voices in their texts/stories by incorporating the assimilationist /white voices which echo 'the civilizing argument' present in the white narratives. An attempt is being made in the present chapter to trace the trajectory of colonial discourse, its presence as assimilationist voices in the Native
The white world view and the genesis of civilizing argument through missionary narratives the colonizer's attempts to negate/erase Native culture/identities, through control of Natives by way of stereotypification and the white education system which fostered and reiterated colonial binaries, and the role and presence of 'the civilizing argument' as assimilationist voices in the Native women's texts also form the purview of this chapter.

The notions of Eurocentrism and the white man's right and avowed mission to bring order, light and culture to the savage minds in the colonies find constant justification in imperialist narratives. The racial/cultural superiority of the European emphasized by Lord Grey finds echo in the other white narratives/histories. Implied in Grey's words cited at the beginning of this chapter, is the binary logic of imperialism that is inherent in colonial narratives as explicated by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin.

The binary logic of imperialism is a development of that tendency of Western thought in general to see the world in terms of binary oppositions that establish a relation of dominance. A simple distinction between centre/margin; colonizer/colonized; metropolis/empire, civilized/primitive represents very efficiently the hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates. The binary constructs a scandalous category between the two terms that will be the domain of taboo, but equally importantly the structure can be read downwards as well as across, so that colonizer, white, human and beautiful are collectively opposed to colonized, black, bestial and ugly. Clearly, the binary is very important in constructing ideological meanings in general and extremely useful in imperialist ideology. The binary structure with its articulations of the underlying binary, accommodates such fundamental binary impulses within imperialism as the impulse to 'exploit' and the impulse to 'civilize'(Ashcrofts, Griffiths & Tiffin (1998: 24-25).

The imperialist binaries thus serve to 'create' and 'sustain' a myth of dependency which leads the colonized races to re-articulate their realities in terms of the binaries internalized.
Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) attempts to explicate, through the example of the Negro, how the juxtaposition of White and Black (Non-white or coloured) races has created a 'massive psychoexistential complex' amongst the coloured races. The White man is sealed in his whiteness. The Black man in his blackness.

There is a fact whitemen consider themselves to be superior to black men. There is another fact Black men want to prove to White men at all costs, the richness of their thoughts, the equal value of their intellect. However, painful it may be for me to accept this conclusion, I am obliged to state it for the black man there is one destiny And it is White (Fanon 1967 9-10)

Fanon's analysis of the colonial situation disturbing, though it might be, can however be perceived to a certain extent in the texts of Native women writers. In all the Native women's texts analyzed, although the intended audience/readership is Native and there is an attempt to deny the white presence (especially in the case of Lee Maracle), the overwhelming presence of whiteness cannot be ignored or over-looked. But an attempt is being made by Native women to subvert the white presence as a polemical voice in their narratives thereby contributing to the polyphony of history in their texts. In the Native American texts of Silko, Allen and Erdrich, the white voices are subverted through conscious mediation, (though the texts are in English and thereby reiterate the inescapable presence of the colonizer) to enunciate the Native ethos. In the Canadian texts of Armstrong, Culleton and Maracle, the white presence (absence in Maracle) as assimilationist voices serves to reiterate the importance of Indian values and world view. This aspect of presence and subversion of whiteness in narratives will be discussed at length later in this chapter.

**Civilizing Mission : Genesis and Colonial Constructs:**

Frantz Fanon's analysis of the colonial situation highlights the position of inferiority- social, cultural, political, economic and psychological that was forced on the Natives and which in turn leads to a sense of alienation. Fanon attempts to explicate
alienation in terms of 'inferiority complex etiological of the economic condition of the Natives: "If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process primarily economic, subsequently, the internalization or better the epidermalization of this inferiority" (Fanon 1967: 10-11) It is this epidermalization of inferiority that in turn, serves to sustain the imperialist binaries, inducing the Natives to parrot 'the civilizing argument' put forth by the colonizer.

The genesis of the "civilizing argument" can be traced as The Native American Almanac. A Portrait of Native America (1993) explicates, to the Papal Edict of Pope Nicolas issued in 1455, where religious blessings given for the conquest of the Holy Land were extended to include the Americas and the Catholic Kings and princes were obliged to

Invade, search out, capture, vanguish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans: whatsoever, and the other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them, and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors, the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit. (Hirschfelder & de Montana 1993 93)

To the European, thus, conquest and conversion came to be synonymous with the expropriation of the Native’s land and possessions The Missionaries and the education system merely served to legitimize this take over and the colonial discourse constructed texts to support its logic and every construct, in turn, demanded yet another to sustain it.

Mudrooroo enunciates the cultural/racial constructs of colonialism "The Native, the indigenous person, the Aboriginal, is, I believe, as much a construction of the Master text of the European as is the Master himself". (Mudrooroo, cited in Pennycook 1998 33). The cultural constructs of the 'civilizing colonizers' and the 'savage natives' are supported by the imperialist binaries which perpetuate notions of cultural/racial superiority and
inferiority respectively. Fanon remarks. "The feeling of the inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright It is the racist who creates his inferior" (Fanon 1967 93).

The colonial exploitation is justified by the presence of the Missionaries and the notion of the divine right on the part of the European to conquer, dominate and exploit Manifest Destiny and the Hamlrite rationalization were employed to justify the European attitudes with respect to the people in the colonies Edward Said enunciates the process of imperialism and the ideological formations behind it:

Neither imperialism, nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people 'require' and beseech domination as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination (Said, cited in Pennycook 1998: 37).

It is imperative then that the primary task of the colonizer involved the creation of Native in his own image and likeness sufficiently enough to justify his presence and existence in the Native's land and the education system is often employed as the tool to serve this end.

Racism is undeniably the underlying ideology as James S. Frieders points out in the Native white relations in Canada as indicated in the patronizing tone adopted by the Government documents which indeed put forth the civilizing argument

Let us have Christianity and civilization to leaven the masses of heathenism and paganism among the Indian tribes, let us have a wise and paternal government

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1 James Frieders points out:
Manifest Destiny, though, it varied considerably, was the belief that whites should control the world or at least large parts of its (sic). The Hamlrite rationalization was the belief taken from the Bible, that Ham was cursed by God and turned into a Non-white person so that "he and his descendants should remain cursed and be subservient to whites from then on". To the British, the Indians were clearly descendants of Ham. (Frieders 1993:23)
faithfully carrying out the provisions of our treaties; they (Native people) are the 
wards of Canada, let us do our duty to them (cited in Frideres 1993: 10).

The 'sense of duty' formulated on paternalist lines of European notions of goodness and 
cultural advancement permeated the early imperialist documents. A firm conviction of the 
superiority of the white knowledge systems and their right to determine what is good for 
the Native 'Other' is apparent in the Government attitudes to the Natives and the 
documents on Native/White relations A statement by the Minister of Interior in Canada in 
a Debate of the House of Commons, 1902 elucidates this:

Our position with reference to the Indian is this: We have them with us We have 
to deal with them as wards of the country There is no question that the methods 
we have adopted (will bring) these people to an improved state. there is a 
"difference" between the savage and a person who has become "civilized" though 
perhaps not of a high type (cited in Frideres 1993: 10)

The key words here 'difference' 'civilized' and 'not of a high type,' though employed in a 
specific Canadian context, is however, true of the Native-White relations in the United 
States² too In order to articulate the civilizing argument, it became imperative to construct 
a demand for the white narratives from the Natives. The colonial stereotypes that pervade 
the white documents testify to the colonizer's attempts to create the Native as the other and 
justify the need and demand on the part of the Native for the white narratives.

In the United States, Indian Treaties made provision for the education³ 
As The Native American Almanac: A Portrait of Native America Today (1993) points out, 
the schooling system seemed to offer a better choice to the colonizers as far as the Indian

² Here, the differences in the colonial situations in both the countries are not being ignored. The point to be 
noted here is that the paradigms remained the same. Despite the apparent differences in the manner and 
matter of articulation, the basic ideology that characterized the colonial education system and government in 
both the countries remained the same i.e. racism and the subsequent ideologies of systemic oppression.

³ In Canada too, the Crown had made provision for the education of the Indians in their treaties. But the 
Metis and their rights to education are over looked in the Federal Government Policies and documents.
There seemed to be two choices, as the House Committee on appropriations put it in 1818, "In the present state of our country, one of the two things seem to be necessary. Either the sons of the forests be moralized or exterminated". (Hirschfelder & de Montano 1993:94). Hirschfelder and de Montano point out how the practise of "Outing" started by Richard Henry Pratt necessitated that the Native students were placed as servants with white families and not allowed to go home for vacations. The Act passed in 1893, authorized the withholding of food rations from parents who kept their children from school. The passing of the Indian Civilization fund in 1819 by the American Congress is significant. The intentions behind the legislations for Indian education and civilizing was made clear by Atkins in 1887: "The first step to be taken towards teaching the Indian the mischief and folly of continuing their barbarous practices is to teach them the English language" (cited in Hirschfelder & de Montano 1993. 95).

The Indian Education policy as articulated by the various Indian Acts emphasize assimilationist virtues/values and instigated the disintegration of the Indian tribes. Residential schools were established all over the United States and Canada for this purpose. The Indian children were taken away from the reservations to schools located in far away places. Lulu, Nector and Nanapush in Tracks; Rocky, Betonie in Ceremony, Sylvia/Shimana in The Woman who Owned Shadows, Rusty and the grandmother's

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4 Sylvia/Shimana, Ephanie's grandmother in The Woman who Owned the Shadows is a victim to this policy of Outing as a student in the Residential school away from the Pueblo reservation, she was forced to work as servant/helper in white homes and not allowed to go home for vacations. This furthers her alienation, as Ephanie's narrative points out, from the Pueblo community.

5 In the Annual report for 1889, the Indian Affairs commissioner Thomas Morgan explained the government's Indian Education Policy: Education should seek the disintegration of the tribes and not their segregation. They should be educated not as Indians but as Americans. In short, the public school should do for them what it is doing so successfully for all the other races in this country, assimilate them...In all proper ways, teachers in the Indian schools should endeavour to appeal to the highest elements of manhood and womanhood in their pupils, exciting in them an ambition after excellence in character and dignity of surroundings, and they should carefully avoid any unnecessary reference to the fact that they are Indians. (cited in Herschfelder & de Montano 1993-95)

6 The infamous Carlyle Indian Industrial school was established in a closed army installation in Pennsylvania in 1878. This became the precedent for the other Residential Schools which sprang up in the United States and Canada. Residential Schools were meant to separate the Native children from their tribal roots and force them to assimilate white man's culture, customs and language. In the Residential schools, Indian Children were forbidden to speak their language.
children in *I Am Woman*; Jimmy in *Slash* are all victims of the white education system. April in *April Raintree* too, initially is influenced by white education.

Lee Maracle significantly observes the role of education in effecting the cultural genocide of the Indians: "Educators are the primary thrust of racism, the frontline soldiers in the battle to eradicate all that is not anglo saxon and protestant" (*IAW*: 112) The influence of these front line soldiers-white teachers and Christian missionaries-is made apparent in the assimilationist voices, voiced/echoed by some Native characters in the texts analyzed

The anguish of the tribal elders in losing their young ones to white schools and death is apparent in Nanapush's words to Lulu in *Tracks* “We lose our children in different ways. They turn their faces to the white towns like Nector as he grew, or they become so full of what they see in the mirror there is no reasoning with them any more like you. Worst of all is true loss unbearable yet it must be borne” (*T* 170) It is indeed natural that the cultural genocide fostered by white education system would ultimately lead to loss of hope and interest in living as far as the Native products of the white schooling system are concerned. The grandmother's narrative in Maracle’s *I Am Woman* elucidates the pain of the grandmother at the loss of her children to white schools, alcoholism and death:

She said that Pierre has said a lot of nice things to ease her pain, but he sent them (to white schools) "Of what use were his nice words. Was he standing at the precipice of our son's grave-my son-alcohol crazed, screaming insane words at a room with deaf halls, in a dirty hotel while alcohol ate the life from his body. No Black robe’s disease had already denied him life and it was I that had to bury my son. All mothers ever ask of life is to die before their children. I have buried four of mine. Worse, now I must bury my tiny little grandchildren" (*IAW*:85).

The tribal elders and grandmothers, however, could not do anything to prevent their children from being taken forcibly to white schools.
The Native children who were educated in white schools began to parrot the notions of Manifest Destiny and civilizing argument. The narrator in Maracle's text points out:

The educators in my life led me
to my own desertion
The color of betrayal is grey
There are no flowers
in a traitor’s life
no violet, red, sun
Just rain
grey concrete and cloudy days (IAW 111)

Assimilationist Voices: Presence and Textual Mappings:

In the Native American texts of Erdrich, Silko and Allen, the white voices are apparent in the assimilationist voices/narratives that counter the dominant authorial voice/narrative and they polarize and polemicize the text. In Ceremony, Auntie Thelma, her son Rocky who dies in the Phillipine jungles during the World War I, the War Veterans Emo, Harley and Pinky expound the assimilationist arguments. In The Woman who Owned the Shadows, Ephanie’s white friend Teresa who has a professed interest in Indian history and culture and Teresa’s eastern friends with their bookish knowledge of Native cultures conversely echo the colonial paradigms and stereotypes of Natives as "Noble Savages" "vanishing race", the "exotic other" and so on. In Tracks, Pauline Puyat's narrative provides the white/Christian perspective. Pauline's narrative, though constantly challenged by that of Nanapush in Erdrich's text, provides the mainstream culture's perception of Native culture and history. It also corroborates the events mentioned in Nanapush's narrative, though the perspective is totally white/assimilationist.

In the Native Canadian texts analyzed, the white presence/voice emerges as interpolative narrative voice or as the interiorized absent negative presence as in the case of
Maracle's text. In Slash, Slash's friend Jimmy, the white teachers, leaders, bureaucrats, the Vancouver educated young Indian who gives a talk on opening the land for development etc parrot the civilizing argument thus contributing to the white presence/voice that polarizes Armstrong's text. In April Raintree, the assimilationist perspective is articulated initially through April, the protagonist herself, through her foster family De Rosiers, her teachers, Bob's mother, Mrs. Semple, the social worker and others. Lee Maracle in her narrative, through her attempts to deny white presence and voice in her text, however, emphasizes the overwhelming presence in absence of the white Other. The assimilationist voices though passive are made apparent in the Native men's attempts at negation of Native womanhood in Rusty's story, in the words of heartless teachers and the grandmother's narrative of her and her tribe's encounter with the white robes. The trajectory of the assimilationist argument - its presence as a distinctive voice-as separate, interpolative, suppressed, the colonial stereotypes fostered by the white education system and their role in contributing to the assimilationist presence/voice in the Native texts will be analyzed at length below.

In Tracks, Pauline Puyat, the mixed blood narrator through her narrative gives the white perception of the Chippewa history and culture during the period 1912-1924. Pauline's narrative in the graphic linear mode is very close to the language and manner of the white narratives/fictions. Pauline Puyat is a mixed blood narrator who has inherited the legacy of shame and internalized guilt resultant of colonialism and inculcation of white values. Erdrich, through Pauline, has evoked the presence and the trajectory of the civilizing argument and the Manifest Destiny and the resultant aberrations caused by them in Native lives.

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7 Cheryl Walker in Indian Nation, Native American Literature and Nineteenth Century Nationalisms (1997) points out how the ideology of Manifest Destiny (a term coined by the influential Democrat John O'Sullivan brings together the elements of nationalist rhetoric most abhorrent to Native Americans.

In O'Sullivan's 1845 editorial laying out the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, he argues that "providence has given us" the breadth of the continent "for the great experiment of liberty and federative self government entrusted to us" (Weinberg, 145). Americans are God's chosen people or as Richard Frothingham would put it, in The Rise of the Republic of the United States (1890): "The vast region which the flag of the United States protects, was two centuries and a half ago, the roaming ground of tribes of Indians ... It was virtually a waste awaiting, in the order of Providence, the magic influence of an incoming race, imbued with the spirit of new civilization" (Montgomery 1). Euro-American's belief that the Christian God marked out the North American continent to be the domain of white people, consigning its native population to an inferior status or
Pauline's narrative constantly refers to the Chippewa as the Other in tune with the assimilationist paradigm. Pauline obviously identifies herself with white culture, denouncing her Chippewa relatives and connections as the deployment of the words 'We' and 'they' respectively in her narrative indicates Noel Elizabeth Currie points out how through the education system colonizers put their definition of the colonized ("homogenized into a collective they" (Pratt 139)) into the heads of the colonized (Currie 1990 140) This is apparent in the case of Pauline Pauline in her assumed whiteness perceives herself as a savior for the Indians who were the disciples of the Lake Monster Mssipeshu (Satan in Pauline’s newly acquired Christian terminology) and subsequently the Indians were regarded the enemy Other Pauline is a curious mixture of white "beliefs" and Chippewa "superstitions", even her conversion to Christianity could not help change her confused paradigms of perception and her missionary zeal goes on increasing.

He has important plan for which I must prepare, that I should find out the habits and hiding places of his enemy: It was only very slowly that this idea was revealed. Over time, as winter cut down more people and I was called from the convent to house after house where I prepared the newly dead, the details of His great need were given. I should not turn my back on the Indians. I should go out among them, be still, and listen. There was a devil in the land, a shadow in the water. There was no room for Him to dwell in so much as a crevice of their minds. (T:137).

Pauline's narrative elucidates the white missionary perception of Natives and the evangelical zeal which highlights their notion of their own superiority of being the chosen people.

extinction, is well illustrated in a book edited by Joseph Allen Montgomery and published by the American Christian Constitution Press called The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America (1960). The preface by its compiler, Verna Hall, concludes with a quotation from I Peter 2: 9: "Ye are a chosen generation, a people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (Walker 1997 192)
Pauline Puyat, even before her ordaining as a Nun and assuming the name of Leopolda, hated her Indian heritage and her own liminality; her constant attempts at becoming white indicates the rootedness of internalized oppression in her.

In the spring before the winter that took so many Chippewas, I bothered my father into sending me south to the white town. I had decided to learn the lace making trade from the nuns. I wanted to be like my mother, who showed her half-white. I wanted to be like my grandfather, pure Canadian. That was because even as a child I saw that to hang back was to perish. I saw through the eyes of the world outside of us. I would not speak our language. In English, I told my father we should build an outhouse with a door that swung open and shut (T: 14).

Pauline’s obsession with whiteness forces her to leave the reservation to the town of Argus where while staying with her Aunt Regina she witnesses the rape of Fleur Pillager by the three men Dutch, Tor and Lily. Pauline’s narrative also mentions Fleur’s return to the Chippewa reservation, her giving birth to Lulu and the effects of the lumber company and the government policy of parcelling the land on the Chippewas. Pauline’s narrative, thus, serves to polemicize Erdinch’s narrative, contributing to the historical voices in the text. This aspect will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

Pauline, however, is conscious of being on the fringes of both the communities-Chippewa and white Nanapush. Margaret and Fleur always treat her as an outsider: “They treated me as they would a white. I was ignored most of the time. when they did address me they usually spoke English. They also shared the oldman’s jokes” (T: 146). Pauline is, for most part, ignored by Nanapush, Fleur and others and this only serves to heighten Pauline’s missionary zeal. Pauline is also unable “to make sense of the beginnings of sexual desire and her alienation from both the tribe and Anglo Society” (Paterson 1994: 988). Pauline attributes her sexual desires-first towards Eli Kashpaw who rejects her advances, and then towards Napoleon Morrissey, whom she seduces and later kills in her frenzy of guilt and Catholicism - to the machinations of Satan in the manner of the typical Catholic who tends to view the follies and foibles of human flesh as sinful. Pauline in her
attempts to resolve her psychic tension starts doing penances which are extremely masochistic, to appease the Lord. Pauline's penances convince her of her own redemption and acceptance by Christ, the vision she conjures after delivering her illegitimate child by Napoleon whom she rejects ultimately as spawn of Satan.

Skins were stripped from my eyes. Everyday I saw more clearly and marvelled at what he showed me. For instance, exactly where I was from. He said that I was not whom I had supposed. I was an orphan and my parents had died in grace, and so despite my deceptive features I was not one speck Indian but wholly white. I wept. He pressed the tears away and told me I was chosen to serve (T: 137).

Pauline renounces her Indian ancestry and becomes a nun "Sister Leopolda" in order to become wholly white but her frenzy to become a "white" (pure, white-skinned, accepted) only leads her to further mental derangement. This phenomenon can be witnessed in other colored women too as Bell Hooks points out.

Bell Hooks, the black writer, explicates the internalized oppression which, in turn, causes the colored people to assimilate to the white cultures. "Too many red and black people live in a state of forgetfulness, embracing a colonized mind so that they can better assimilate into the white world" (cited in Paterson 1994: 988). Pauline in her narrative attempts to forget her Indian ancestry, her sexual desires, her affair with Napoleon, and the illegitimate child she had borne him, and ultimately, her sexual attack on and murder of Napoleon. White narratives/histories conveniently forget to mention unpleasant colonial realities. The assimilationist voices in the texts also attempt to do the same.

In *Ceremony*, Tayo's Auntie, Thelma, is a devout Catholic who prefers to forget the sin and shame brought on her family by Tayo's illegitimate/half-breed birth. Her

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8 "Accept this, I asked him when night after night cold grpped me in tight claws and I shook so hard I could not sleep. "And this", every time I sat to eat and halved my bread. When my stomach pinched, "Thus also my Lord". When the blood rushed back into my frozen hands after taking sheets of the line. "This too. This And This" (T:136-137). Pauline's penances like wearing her shoes on the wrong feet and decision not to urinate till sun down evoke the laughter of her Indian relatives like Nanapush, Margaret and Fleur. Erdrich through Pauline's penances mocks at the Christian habits of doing penances for atonement of sins committed.
refusal to accept Tayo and her attempts to deny him presence/voice in their household convinces Tayo that she would prefer to forget the fact of his very existence. The War Veterans Emo, Harley and Pinky, in their drunken narration of war stories would talk only about the pleasant experiences they have had as soldiers, conveniently choosing to forget the Indian realities of poverty and internalized oppression after the war. Auntie, Emo, Harley, Pinky and Tayo’s cousin Rocky who dies in the War, contribute to the assimilationist voices in Silko’s text. All these characters have internalized notions of American/Christian identity, world view and notions of success and would like to be accepted as mainstream citizens, who would deny or liminalize their own Indian heritage/heredity.

Tayo’s aunt Thelma, like Pauline, has internalized the sense of shame and sin, resultant of the white influence/colonialism. She is a devout Church going Catholic who takes her sister’s bastard son as her responsibility, in order to fulfill this overwhelming need to prove herself as a martyr and a good Christian:

Those who measured life by counting crosses would not count her sacrifice for Rocky the way they counted her crosses for her dead sister’s half-breed child. When Rocky died he become unassailable forever in his frame on top of her bureau, his death gave her new advantages with people, she had given so much. But advantages wear out; she needed a new struggle, another unfortunate burden which proved that, above all else, she was a Christian Woman (C.30).

Auntie, like Pauline, needs the constant recognition and acceptance by the Church; she too, though silently, denounces the ways of her own people and tries to fit into the role of saviour/martyr. She is also, at the same time, a firm believer in individual salvation as Tayo’s narrative points out.

She had gone to church alone for as long as Tayo could remember, although she told him that she prayed they would be baptized, she never asked anyone, not even Rocky to go with her. Later on, Tayo wondered if she liked it that way, going to
church by herself, where she could show the people that she was a devout Christian and not immoral or pagan like rest of the family. When it came to saving her own soul, she wanted to be careful that there were no mistakes (C. 77)

The assimilationist voices in Silko’s text are internalized in Tayo’s narrative unlike in Tracks, where Pauline’s narrative is completely separated from that of Nanapush. Pauline has a distinct narrative voice in Erdrich’s text. The assimilationist voices in Ceremony can be further traced in Tayo’s narrative on Rocky, his dead cousin, the War Veteran’s stories of themselves and white women during the war and in Emo’s disrespect/disregard for the earth which is revered by the Pueblos.

Tayo’s cousin Rocky had internalized, like his mother, the notions of being successful American and constantly attempted to become one before he is killed in the War.

He was an A-student and all-state in football and track. He had to win, he said he was always going to win. So he listened to his teachers, and he listened to the coach. They were proud of him. They told him “Nothing can stop you except one thing: don’t let people at home hold you back”. Rocky understood what he had to do to win in the white outside world. After their first year at boarding school in Albuquerque, Tayo saw how Rocky deliberately avoided the old time ways. Old Grandma shook her head at him, but he called it superstition and he opened his text books to show her. But Auntie never scolded him. ... she wanted him to be a success. She could see what white people wanted in an Indian, and she believed this way was his only chance (C: 51)

Rocky appears, as Edith Swan points out, the converse of Tayo and “believes in the word some day the white people do” (Swan 1991:44) Rocky in Tayo’s narrative echoes the internalized white civilizing voice that often negates the tribal values Emo, Harley and Pinky—the War Veterans too, have internalized the shame of being Indian and constantly try to overcome this sense of inferiority by recounting stories of adventures with white women.
during the war in the Beer Parlours, and their acts of bravery against the Japanese in the War

Here they were, trying to bring back that old feeling, that feeling that they belonged to America the way they felt during the war ... Belonging was drinking and laughing with the platoon, dancing with blond women, buying drinks for buddies born in Cleveland, Ohio... They repeated stories about good times in Oakland and San Diego, they repeated them like long medicine chants with the beer bottles pouting on counter tops like drums. Another round and Harley tells his story about the blondes in bed with him (C 43).

The Indian soldiers could pass off as Americans during the war and this gave them a sense of belonging, of assumed whiteness and even after the war was over, they refuse to relinquish this sense of Americanness.

The White contempt for the earth and the life on it is further enunciated through Emo, the War Veteran, the product of witchery. “Emo liked to say, “Look what is here for us. Look there’s the Indian’s mother earth! Old dried up thing” (C:25). Harley, another veteran, who later falls victim to the internalized violence of white witchery too contemptuously parrots white views on Indian stereotypes “Hey, come on. We can set some kind of world’s record—you know, longest donkey ride ever made for a cold bear or something like that. An Indian’s world record” (C:24). The assimilationist voices interiorized in Tayo’s narrative in Silko’s text thus serve to emphasize the presence of white culture, its world view and stereotypes while polemicizing the narrative voices in the text. It is significant to note that direct white voices in the active mode do not occur in Silko’s text, or when they do—as in the case of the recruitment officer, the white doctors who treat Tayo and the white women who went with Indian soldiers during the war-these voices are interpolative in nature.

In The Woman who Owned the Shadows, the assimilationist/white perspective is echoed through Ephanie’s friend Teresa’s friends.
The women were political types Wilderness buffs They believed in a lot of things..they organized things. They sneered a lot. At women who wore pantyhose and aprons. At universities, students and professors At doctors, lawyers and Indian chiefs. No, they drew the line at Indian chiefs May be out of deference to her They talked a lot about Indians About massacres and victims and Sand Creek and Wounded Knee They snorted and shrugged, railed and analyzed They treated her like she was the wooden Indian outside the trader's store (WOS 136)

Teresa’s white friends were women who believed that they had semiotic control over the Indians and they constantly try to fit them into the stereotypes of Noble Savage and drunken Indian, in a patronizing manner Their show of concern for Indians and their welfare lead Ephanie to conclude that “The people who use Indians to demonstrate their own nobleness are just as dangerous to us as the ones who rip us off in more direct ways. More dangerous, may be” (WOS: 143)

The white culture always attempted to appropriate Indian values and world view and many of them tried to go Native by seeming to be more aware of Indian culture than Indians themselves. Teresa’s white friends are no exception; they talk about “Old Indian ways, Medicine Men, Power, Black Elk... About tribal ways... , They spoke glowingly about the famous medicine man who had spoken so powerfully, so movingly at the survival gathering they had attended, spoken about the sacredness of mother earth, how the white man had desecrated it” (WOS: 137) Ephanie finds the valorizing of Indian culture to be stereotypical and patronizing. In Allen’s text, the white/assimilationist voices occur in the passive and are interiorized in Ephanie’s narrative, as in the case of Tayo’s narrative in Silko’s text. Both these Pueblo writers deny a direct white voice/presence in their texts Allen’s text concentrates on the process of stereotypification and image control enunciated through the white/assimilationist voices interiorized in the third person narrative of Ephanie Atenaico, the protagonist. Teresa’s friends perceive Indians as “Noble denizens of a long lost wilderness”, “romantic left over of some past age”, as “downtrodden savages
with boots on\(^9\) (WOS. 140), in typical manner of white narratives that often portrayed them as such. Teresa’s friends prefer to perceive Indians in bookish terms overlooking the realities, and Ephanie understands too well the dangers of internalizing such negative stereotypes of/for the Indians.

In the chapter entitled, “Promise Her Anything,” Ephanie lists the common stereotypes employed by the mainstream culture:

- Dumb Indian
- Stupid Indian
- Flesh slashing Indian
- Savage brutal drunken Indian
- Dirty Indian
- Dirty savage Indian
- Dirty vicious hostile savage drunken stupid Indian
- Injun

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\(^9\) Hayden White, in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978) explicates how the two stereotypes of ‘Wild Man’ and ‘Noble Savage’ function in the colonial/European narrative/psyche. He identifies the Noble Savage theme as a fetish. In his view the Noble Savage idea represents “not so much an elevation of the idea of the Native as a demotion of the idea of nobility” (p 191). White argues that the very notion of a “Wild humanity” constituted a contradiction in terms, and that, in turn this contradiction reflected an ambiguity about the nature of that “humanity” on which Europeans of the early modern age prided themselves:

The proximity of whole peoples who differed in external aspect and way of life from those which characterized the European settlers in the New world was enough to bring this ambiguity to the fore of consciousness. The original anomaly of the first characterizations of the Natives of the New world thus gave way to the opposed and ultimately contradictory, ways of concerning the relationship between the European and the Natives. On the one hand, the natives were conceived to be continuous with that humanity on which Europeans prided themselves, and it was this mode of relationship that underlay the policy of proselytization and conversion. On the other hand, the natives could be conceived as simply existing contiguously to the European as representing an inferior breed, but in any case as being essentially different from the European breed; and it was this mode of relationship which underlay and justified the policies of war and extermination which the Europeans followed throughout the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century. But whether the natives were conceived to be continuous with or simply contiguous to which the European laid claim as a unique possession, the mere ‘differentness’ of the native’s mode of life was enough to exacerbate the feelings of anxiety which the ambiguity the concept of humanity engendered (White 1979:193-194)
That was what they said. Those were the words The others were nice words Said with friendly warm sympathetic smiles. They worked as well Perhaps better.

Noble Indian
Earthloving Indian
Nice old Indian
Ugh Indian
Who guards the earth
Who waters it with blood
Good Indian Dead Indian
The First American
The Vanishing American
Our Indian
Exotic quaint Indian
Indian (WOS. 160-161)

Allen in her narrative ironically parodies the common stereotypes of Indians in white perception and narratives In Homi Bhabha’s view, stereotype is a discursive strategy, a form of identification that “vacillates between what is always in place, already known and something that must be anxiously repeated” (Bhabha 1994: 66) Allen’s enunciation of the colonial stereotypes in The Woman who Owned the Shadows serves to highlight the ambivalence of colonial/white discourse

Homi Bhabha in The Location of Culture (1994) enunciates the role of stereotypes and stereotypical signification in colonial discourse:

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10 Allen’s narrative is what Bakhtin would call a double voiced discourse with a hidden polemic of words intended to ironically parody and thus oppose the white Other’s hostile words on the same subject.

11 Bhabha’s reading of the stereotypes and the colonial discourse suggests that the point of intervention should shift from the ready recognition of images as negative or positive, to an understanding of the processes of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse. (Bhabha 1993: 67). Bhabha’s understanding of colonial discourse and stereotypical/racial discourse is of immense relevance here.
... the stereotype is at once a substitute and a shadow. By acceding to the wildest fantasies... of the colonizer, the stereotyped Other reveals something of the 'fantasy' (as desire, defense) of that position of mastery. The chain of stereotypical signification is curiously mixed and split, polymorphous and perverse, an articulation of multiple belief. In each case what is being dramatized is a separation—'between' races, cultures, histories within histories, a separation between before and after that repeats obsessively the mythical movement of disjunction (Bhabha 1994: 82)

Allen's/Ephanie's narrative substantiates Bhabha's views. The interiorized white voice in the text effectively conveys the ambivalence of the colonial discourse in its process of stereotypical signification. The white prejudices and interiorized stereotypes are made further evident in Ephanie's mother's narration of her experience of dining in a posh white restaurant where the waiter stared at her and probably assumed that she couldn't read the menu because she was an Indian; in Ephanie's remembrance of Grandma Campbell's stories of how she and her brothers would point to the dogs nearby when the whites who came to Guadalupe enquired what the Indians ate, in Ephanie's recollection of her daughter Agnes's narration of the racism that she encounters in school—how they were forced to read stories in which Indians were portrayed as savages.

In the American texts of Silko and Allen, the white/assimilationist voices form part of Tayo's and Ephanie's narratives respectively. The white presence/voice is interiorized in the narrative of the texts in the passive voice. The assimilationist voices of War Veterans, occur as interpolative voices in Silko's text. But in the case of Allen, the assimilationist voices too are in the passive referred to in Ephanie's narrative. In the case of Erdrich, Pauline's narrative provides the white perspective which is totally opposed to the perspective put forth by Nanapush in his narrative. Pauline's narrative is in the active voice and relates all the events and incidents referred to by Nanapush in his narrative. Erdrich has created a distinct white voice/narrative whereas Allen and Silko have tried to deny a direct white presence or to passivize the white/assimilationist voices in their texts.
In the Canadian texts of Maracle, Armstrong and Culleton, the white/assimilationist voices are mapped out in a slightly different manner. In *I Am Woman*, Maracle has attempted to suppress the assimilationist/white voice denying it a direct presence in her narrative. The white/assimilationist voice occurs as an interiorized passive/negative presence in Maracle’s text. There is no direct white/European voice in the text. Maracle makes her position clear at the outset: “Though I hold no animosity towards European in this land, I did not intend to write for them” (*IAW* 11) No fully-sketched white/European characters occur in Maracle’s text, and there is no direct assimilationist presence/voice. But the assimilationist perspective can be traced in Rusty’s story of the white boys’ craving for Native flesh, “dark meat.” “What white boys wanted in dark meat was not the coy, flirtatious routine of the white girls but the subtle mysticism they thought dark-skinned girls had a monopoly on. They wanted the self-effacing surrender of dark woman to white superiority” (*IAW* 61)

Maracle, through Rusty’s narrative, is pointing out the common white stereotypification of Native womanhood. This can be better understood through Terry Goldie’s enunciation of the white attempts at semiotic control:

Each representation of the indigene is a signifier for which there is no signified except the image. The referent has little purpose in the equation. In the context of the indigene, the unbreachable alterity between signifier and signified is never what many have claimed, an abstruse philosophical concept with nihilistic tendencies, but an important aspect of the “subjugated knowledges” to which Michael Foucault refers in *Power/Knowledge*. The valorization of the image is defined by a process in which the signified is signifier, in which representation is image (Goldie 1990: 110-111)

The occult sexuality that the white men crave in dark meat is thus conveyed to/by them through the image of the native woman in white narratives. Rusty’s story indicates how the native women are forced to conform to these images and the internalization of these
stereotypes by the Native men, which in turn, makes them incapable of cherishing Native femininity.

The white presence/voice is made further evident in the Grandmother's story of her people's encounter with the White robe. The words of the white robe are made apparent to the grandmother as a young girl through fathers' response in which he repeats the White robe's words as translated by Pierre, verbatim. Barbara Godard explains the various ways in which Bakhtinian dialogism works in the novel by her elaboration of a double voiced discourse which is oriented towards someone else's discourse.

... Sometimes, the other's word is not incorporated into the discourse, but remains outside though it is taken into account. This is a "hidden polemic" in which "a polemical blow is struck at the other's discourse on the same theme, at the other's statement about the same object" "The other's words are treated antagonistically, and this antagonism, no less than the very topic being discussed, is what determines the authors' discourse" (Godard 1990 197).

This is true in the case of Maracle's text. Though she attempts to deny a direct European voice in her text, she takes into account the presence of the European other at whose colonial/racial discourse, Maracle's statements are oppositionally directed. In the case of The Woman who Owned the Shadows too, one can find the double-voiced discourse working in a similar fashion as elucidated earlier where Ephanie's words are directed at the white other's words outside the text. 

Maracle, however, anticipates the white readership for her work, even though she has denied a direct voice to the European/colonizer in her text. "It is inevitable, European, that you should find yourself reading my work. If you do not find yourself spoken too, it is not because I intend rudeness-you just don't concern me now" (IAW: 11) Maracle's remarks, however, express her awareness of the white presence/narratives and her remarks

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12 Allen and Maracle employ essentialism and exclusionism as a strategy in their texts. This is a strategy often found in counter hegemonic, especially feminist discourses where attempts are made to overlook or deny the hegemonic other, presence or voice in narrative.
are a "polemical blow, struck" at the white discourses in its themes of racism, sexism, stereotypification and internal colonialism. The chapter entitled "Heartless Teachers", through Maracle's double edged response indicates the interiorized presence in her text, of the civilizing argument in the discourse of white teachers who lecture Native children on how all people should be equal.

In the interest of humanity, you ought to sound the death knell of your own decadent ways and the renaissance of my own. We were almost obliterated by your ancestors. I realize you hold no gun to my head, dear teacher, but it was your culture that spawned physical genocide and now you ask me to erase the shadow of my grandmother. Keep your offensive words locked in your narrow mind (IAW 105-106)

In "Heartless Teachers", Maracle enunciates the trajectory of white education system and its impact on Native lives. Interiorized in the narrative are the patronizing voices of white teachers who preach equality of all human beings in an attempt to negate Native identities/cultures while reiterating stereotypes of Natives as 'cannibals', 'vanishing race' and so on.

In Slash, too, the white/assimilationist voices are echoed through white teachers, films, histories/narratives woven into Slash's narrative. Kelasket enunciates the white presence/voice of teachers and educators that tends to fix the Native in oft-repeated racial stereotypes. "Most of the time, when I got into a new class, the teacher would automatically think I were dumb. Like one teacher who explained what she wanted in slow Hollywood talk. She said "You fix'um little story Tommy, about how you live." To other kids, she had asked "Please prepare a short biographical sketch of your self" (S:38). Implied in the teachers' words interpolated in Timmy/Slash's narrative are the common white stereotypes of Indian as primitive, dumb, son of forest and so on. Even the Principal had internalized the stereotype of Indian as liar and thief. "The man they called Principal said, "You Indians are lucky to be here. We'll get along just fine as long as you don't steal from the other kids" (S: 23).
In Armstrong’s text, unlike in the case of Maracle, white/assimilationist voices are echoed through certain characters who expound them in Slash’s narrative. White presence/voice occurs as interpolative voices in Armstrong’s text, though not as a distinct narrative voice itself, as in the case of Louise Erdrich’s Tracks. Armstrong, however, does not vehemently deny the presence of a direct white voice like Allen or Maracle.

The white teachers, bureaucrats, and politicians expound the white world view, its stereotypes and values in Slash. At school, Slash Kelasket encounters the racist stereotypes “You friggin Injuns are nothing but thieves full of lice, every body knows that” (S:4), They mostly thought we lived like the Indians in the movies with feathers and tomahawks and all that” (S 25) Slash’s friend Jimmy echoes the assimilationist perspective in the text, he like Rocky in Ceremony, has internalized the white models of success and denounces his Indian heritage:

I feel good white friends of mine talk and joke with me as if I were like them They only do that if I wear smart pants and shoes and have money to play pool with I don’t want to think I’m like the rest of the Indians I wish our people were like them ... I hate being an Indian I hate Indian ways (S 44)

Jimmy, like many Indians, has internalized the stereotype of the “drunken Indian” and he tries to get out of it by imitating the white way of life: “I like what I’m doing I’m going places, man. I’m going to be somebody, not just a drunken Indian” (S: 84). Jimmy’s ideas of a successful life include possessing a house, car, and other modern gadgets and procuring a white collared job in the city.

The assimilationist perspective is voiced also through the Vancouver educated young man who gives a talk on opening the land for development. His rhetoric is the rhetoric of the white culture that he has imbibed during his schooling in Vancouver. This character, however, is not fully sketched or given a direct presence, and his words are quoted in Slash’s narrative. The quotation marks employed by Armstrong (“He talked
about making changes to the Indian Act which "would reflect the changing conditions on
the reservation....". (S:43)) indicate the presence/narrative of the dominant mainstream
white discourse, the language of government documents and policies which the young man
merely reiterates. The use of quotation marks by Armstrong in Tommy's narrative is a
discursive strategy to indicate the presence of white narratives, and also a counter disursive
strategy against the white narratives which often quote Indian voices to substantiate their
policies/discourses. The polemics in the narrative strategy will be discussed in the next
chapter.

The assimilationist voices in Armstrong's text are interpolative, passive and also
sometimes distinctive narrative voices echoed through certain characters. In April Raintree,
too, the assimilationist/white voices emerge as in the case of Slash, through certain
characters like De Rosiers, April's foster family; Mrs. Semple, the social worker, April's
mother-in-law all of them reiterate the negative stereotypes of Natives as savage, liar,
primitive, immoral and so on. Initially, April the protagonist, herself, voices the
assimilationist perspective.

April has internalized the racism and sense of inferiority resultant of the colonial
situation and attempts to pass off as a white:

.... what I'd read and what I had heard indicated that Metis and Indians were
inclined to be alcoholics. I guess that was because they were a weak people. Oh,
they were put down more than anyone else, but then, didn't they deserve it?.
Anyways, I could pass for a pure white person. I could say I was part French and
part Irish. If I had to I could change the spelling of my name.... when I got free of
this place, when I got free from being a foster child, then I would live just like a
real white person (ART. 34).

April, like Jimmy, in Slash, initially fails to understand the fulility of trying to pass off as
white. It takes Cheryl, her sister's death, her own rape at the hands of some miscreants who
mistake her for Cheryl, and her divorce from her white husband Bob, to make April
comprehend the reality of her situation. In putting the civilizing arguments in the mouth of
her protagonist April, Culleton emphasizes the destruction/genocide caused by the white culture, especially the education system.

The De Rosier family, April’s foster parents, also contribute to the white presence/voice in the text. Mrs. De Rosier’s words emphasize the perception of the dominant culture. “I know you half-breeds, you love to wallow in filth. You step out of line, once, only once, that strap will do the rest of the talking. You don’t get any second chances” (ART 26) Mrs. De Rosier’s words emphasize the negative stereotype of the Indians. Unlike Maracle’s text, Culleton’s narrative has direct white voices/presences in Mrs. De Rosier and her children, Mrs. Semple, the social worker and Bob’s mother and other characters like the man who rapes April. Mrs. Semple’s lecture to April on the native girl syndrome highlights the white perception of Native girls:

you girls are headed in that direction. It starts out with the fighting, the running away, the lies. Next comes the accusation that every one in the world is against you. There are the sullen unco-operative silences, the feeling sorry for yourselves. And when you go on your own, you get pregnant right away or you can’t find or keep jobs. So you’ll start with alcohol and drugs. From there, you get into shoplifting and prostitution and in and out of jails.... If you don’t smarten up, you’ll end up in the same place, skidrow (ART: 48-49).

Implied in Mrs. Semple’s words is the destiny anticipated by the whites for the Metis and Indians. Ironically, Cheryl, who was a firm believer in Native/Metis culture and their rights, succumbs to the Native girls syndrome. Mrs. Radcliff (April’s mother-in-law), another white voice in the text, reiterates the racism inherent in white society contrary to its pretensions of humanism and tolerance: “That’s the trouble with mixed races. You never know how they are going to turn out. And I would simply dread being grandmother to a bunch of snivelling little half-breeds”. (ART: 100) The white voices are made further evident through Oliver Donolley, April’s rapist and his accomplices who reiterate in court the common argument that “the squaw” initiated or provoked rape. In Culleton’s text, the voice of the mainstream culture is expounded through certain characters whose narrative
voices, (though they are included in April’s narrative in the text) are distinct and direct. The white voices in the text serve to emphasize the presence of the civilizing argument and the binary logic of imperialism.

The white/assimilationist voices in the texts of Silko, Erdrich, Allen, Maracle, Armstrong and Culleton trace the trajectory and presence of the civilizing argument/colonial discourse in its processes of stereotypification and negation of Native peoples’ selves. The white/assimilationist voice - distinct, suppressed, expressed, interpolated, passivized - serve to polarize and polemicize the narrative.

The colonial system has dehumanized the Natives, who (as Fanon’s words quoted earlier in the chapter make clear) probably internalized the belief that the destiny for the colored races was nothing but white. Maracle’s enunciation of the situation is significant in understanding the ambivalent presence of whiteness in Native narratives and the psychoexistential complex elucidated by Fanon.

Each time I confronted white colonial society I had to convince them of my validity as a human being. It was the attempt to convince them that made me realize I was still a slave.

It was this enslavement that moved me to retrace my own desertion; the color of traitorism, and my decision to reconnect myself to remove the burden of a recent colonial history (IAW: 15).

Maracle, Armstrong, Culleton, Silko, Allen and Erdrich in enunciating the colonizer’s words/voices attempt to trace the oppressive presence of whiteness/colonial discourse in their own lives/narratives in order to effect decolonization and to construct alternate narratives/histories. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

To conclude the present chapter, it would be interesting to add yet another dimension to the civilizing argument as explicated by Homi Bhabha in The Location of Culture (1994): “In disavowing, the culturally differentiated condition of the colonial
world- in demanding 'Turn white or disappear- the colonizer is himself caught in the ambiguance of paranoic identification alternating between fantasies of megalomania and persecution’ (Bhabha 1994 61) In enunciating the civilizing argument by its presence/absent presence in their texts, Native women writers reiterate the ambivalence of the colonial situation, it also serves to hybridize their narratives In articulating the process of stereotypification through the white/assimilationist voices, the Native women writers offer the possibility of reading the stereotype as ‘fetish’ in the manner of White, Bhabha, Fanon and others, and reiterate the ambiguance of white/colonial discourse and its civilizing argument and its processes of racial stereotypification