Within my skin Grandmother goes on laughing and her eyes turn into distant black moons. Her cells, handed down as surely as songs, weave shapes as if tracing arroyos only to color them with the airborne scent of sage. I believe in them, these hard-lined flat people who are given life under my hand. They are finished as they direct the nervous spirit on whose narrow back I ride.

Wendy Rose, *Chasing the Paper Shamans*: 200

These tangled strands... Wait for me To untangled To comb through To weave together the split fibres and make a material strong enough to encompass our lives

Beth Brant, *For All My Grandmothers*: 62-63.

The Native women writers weave the polyphonic voices in tune with their narrative intentions and the Native worldview. The characters and voices are weaved together by the narrative threads of the text in a circular or cyclical fashion. Weaving is a motif that constantly recurs in Women’s fiction, and is especially pertinent to the Native context. The Native women writers, as Beth Brant aptly points out, weave the split fibres
of their lives/narratives into coherent wholes which lend meaning, structure, significance and above all strength to their constructions of identity/voice. From the tangled threads of their existence, they create new narratives which encompass their lives.

In the previous chapters, the voices in the texts were identified and analyzed. The present chapter reiterates the presence of various voices and how they are threaded into the authorial/textual voice which encompasses/subsumes all the voices. A review of the preceding chapters will be followed by a recapitulation of the emergence of Native writing as a genre, the cyclical world view which structures the Native narratives and the rationale behind the present study. The chapter will conclude with suggestions about areas in Native writing that require in-depth interrogation/research and the nature of critical interventions desirable in such cases.

Trinh – T Minh-ha in *Woman, Native, Other. Writing Post Coloniality and Feminism* (1989) explains the significance of the analogy of weaving to speech in action, or in other words, Women’s writing:

> Every manifestation of a force in any form whatever is to be regarded as its speech . . . everything in the universe speaks . . . If speech is strength, that is because it creates a bond of coming and going which generates ‘movement and rhythm, and therefore, ‘life and action.’ This movement to and fro is symbolized by the weaver’s feet going up and down . . . (the symbolism of the loom is entirely based on creative speech in action) Making material spinning and weaving is a euphonious heritage of womankind handed on from generation to generation of weavers within the clapping of the shuttle and the creaking of the block – which the Dogon call “the creaking of the Word.” “The cloth was the word,” the same term, so is used among the Dogon to signify both the woven material and the spoken word. Life is a perpetual to and fro, a dis/continuous releasing and absorbing of the self. Let her weave her stories within their stories, her life amidst their lives. And while she weaves, let her whip, spur and set them on fire. Thus making them sing again Very softly a – new a – gain. (Minh-ha 1989 127 – 128)
Minh-ha's words cited above seem especially pertinent to the Native women's texts analyzed in the present study where writing can often be perceived as speech-in-action, a process of weaving where the Native woman writer weaves the material of her life/narrative/voice within the grand narrative of the tribal oral tradition. Significantly, all the texts, as has already been pointed out, indicate the presence of a communal voice that is both within and outside the contemporary writers' narrative/voice, but which sustains it and is in turn sustained by it. A review of the preceding chapters given in the ensuing paragraphs will highlight the nuances/differences that punctuate the process of weaving as well as the present study.

Chapter I Introduction, Mapping the Voice traced the trajectory of Native voice from the told-to-the-person narratives or works of Indian – white collaborations to told-to-the page narratives or narratives written by the Natives. The chapter while historically contextualizing the objectification/othering of Natives in white narratives argued that the history of American literature began with the migration of Native peoples to North America over twenty eight thousand years ago and not with the advent of the Europeans to the continent as has been conventionally pointed out by Western historians. The earliest presence of recorded literature is traced to the tribes like Ojibwa, the Quiche Maya of Guatemala highlands and others and the earliest instance of collection of Oral literatures in Native America is traced to Mesoamerica in the books of the Maya by the missionaries and anthropologists. In distinguishing the two types of narratives, told-to-the-person and told-to-the page, the chapter argues that the narratives belonging to the former category often suffer from the problems of white editorship caused by an incorrect apprehension of Native world view and ways of life, lack of proper information about the tribes, prejudices of white editors/collaborators and their inability to comprehend the nuances of Native language, imposition of western perspective/worldview on Native texts and so on. Despite these problems the told-to-page narratives especially those of Native women definitely provide, it was argued, information about Native culture, customs, practices, status of women and their roles within their tribal communities. The transition from the told to-person narratives to told-to-the page was seen to mark a significant change in the process of the dissemination of the Native voice. The chapter tracing the

190
trajectory of told-to-the page narratives contextualized the contemporary Native texts under study. The major themes in Native literature were also foregrounded and the chapter argued that the Native narratives do not conform to Western notions of genre and the narratives which often intermingled genres were often 'cyclical' in structure, in tune with the Native world view of the universe and Native aesthetics which emphasized kinship ties with all phenomena in the universe. The chapter identified the major thrust of the study as the construction of history through fiction in the postmodern milieu. It also enunciated the theoretical framework as well as the criteria involved in the selection of texts and the rationale behind chapterization which reflects an attempt to model the present study on the narrative patterns in traditional oral narratives. The chapter also provided a brief appraisal of the mainstream representations of the Natives in white narratives and movies through textual instances and argued that the Native has often functioned as fetish for the settler. The concluding part of the chapter provided the resume of the succeeding chapters.

An attempt was made to identify tradition as a presence/voice in the Native women's texts in the second chapter entitled Voice of Tradition: Grandmother's/Grandfather's Lineage. The chapter which employed the Oral tradition approach (which was privileged over the Oral History approach recommended by historians like James B. Lagrand) foregrounded the relevance of Oral tradition as the grand narrative for the contemporary Native women's stories. In tracing the presence of the tradition in the Native texts, it was found that grandmother/grandfather figures had significant roles to play as source of stories in transmitting orality as remembered history. Traditionalism as a Native perspective was also seen to polemicize the process of (hi)story telling. Tradition as a presence/voice was perceived in the structuring of the contemporary narratives, in its narrative pattern as well as echoed through certain characters in the texts. In analyzing the American and Canadian Native texts, it became clear that the Native American authors Silko, Erdrich and Allen employ myths, legends and lores from their respective Oral Native traditions to punctuate their contemporary stories and the Grandmother/grandfather figures often had mythical dimensions provided by the creation stories and legends. The myths and legends and their relevance to
contemporary Native American texts were analyzed and it was found that the texts employ the Trickster or Culture Hero motif. In *Tracks*, which employs a grandfather figure as the voice of tradition, the androgynous nature of grandfather figure was found to be highlighted by the author. In the Canadian texts, on the other hand, though grandmother figure as voice of tradition is present in the structuring of narrative as well as in characterization, it was perceived that there were no overt references to specific myths, legends or lores, as in case of the American texts In one text, Culliton's text, tradition is evoked as a voiced silent presence of a grandmother figure who initiates the protagonist The chapter concludes with an enunciation of theme of “Homing In” which was perceived as the common motif in all the texts which reflected the traditional view of the Native individual's return to the androgynous/gynecentric world of the respective tribal community after experiencing separation/alienation Tradition as was thus identified as a significant presence evoked through the grandfather/grandmother figures – mythical and real – to provide the context and thread of continuity to contemporary texts, as well as lend meaning and shape, while positing them within the essentially gynecentric/androgynous world of the North American Indian Communities.

The third chapter entitled *The White/Assimilationist Voice. The Civilizing Argument* mapped the trajectory of colonial discourse, its presence as white/assimilationist voice in Native women's texts. The white world view and the genesis of civilizing argument through missionary narratives; the creation and presence of colonial binaries in the colonizer's attempts to negate/erase Native identities/cultures through stereotypification and white education system and the role and presence of the civilizing argument as assimilationist voices in the Native women's texts were charted/analysed in this chapter. The binary logic of imperialism inherent in colonial narratives, significant in constructing ideological meanings in general, and particularly so in the case imperialist ideology, has been enunciated This binarism was necessary, the chapter argued, to create and sustain a myth of dependency on the part of the colonized races who have internalized it. It is also elucidated that the massive psychoexistential complex identified by Frantz Fanon in his analysis of the colonial situation, disturbing though it is, could be perceived to a certain extent, in the texts of Native women writers.
The chapter also provided an outline of Manifest Destiny and Hamlet rationalisation that ideologically characterised imperialist narratives, educational and administrative policies which resulted in the establishment of Residential schools. The chapter also analyzed the assimilationist/white voices that polarize and polemicize the texts. In the Native American texts, the assimilationist voice was seen to be echoed through certain characters. Tracks has a bipolar narrative, and Pauline's voice/narrative puts forth the white perspective. In Ceremony and The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, the assimilationist/white perspective is echoed through certain characters and is internalized, passivized in the narrative of the text. Both these writers deny a direct white voice/presence in their texts. The assimilationist voices in various texts have been identified as separate, interventional, internalized or suppressed. In the Native Canadian texts, the chapter argued, the white presence/voice emerges as interpolative narrative/voice or as the interiorized absent negative presence as in the case of Maracle's text. The chapter further elucidated the stereotypes enunciated through the texts that convey the ambivalence of colonial discourse, reiterated the paranoid identification in the colonizer's psyche/narrative as identified by Homi Bhabha, in its processes of racial stereotypification.

The fourth chapter entitled Polemics of Voices: Historical/Narrative Tones mapped the Native women writers' attempts to construct their histories through stories in the postmodern milieu. The chapter enunciating the problematic of history, identified the complexity involved in the construction of history due to the absence of historical narratives from the Native perspective and the traps of the language game. The Native writers' awareness of the postmodern milieu is reflected in the polarized voices that polemicize their narratives, the chapter argued. Bakhtinian term Polyphony when employed to indicate the presence of voices, covert or overt that polarize the Native texts, foregrounded the presence of two dialogically poised consciousnesses/histories, Native and White. An analysis of the similarities that inform the historical and fictional narratives served to indicate the overlapping concerns, erode the disciplinary boundaries, and, the fictionality of historical narratives was established. The chapter traced the presence of history in fiction and the referentiality of the texts to academic historical records that
punctuate them while reiterating the post modern position which does not renounce historical representation as such, but only questions its status. The presence of a double-voiced discourse mapped indicated the dialogic position in the construction of historical truth, the presence of two consciousness/histories, Native and white that are contrapuntally placed and which Polarize and polemicize the texts from within and outside. The double voiced discourse that polemicize the texts were identified as stylised skaz, mimicry, parallax, parody, irony, imitation with a difference' textual words hostilely directed at the white other's words outside the text etc. The role of mediation in arriving at historical/narrative truth and meaning has also been elucidated. The concluding part of the chapter in enunciating the Native women’s attempts to inscribe themselves as selves/subjects of history argued that this is made possible through a specific female terrain of iteration, Her Story, as opposed to hi(s)story. The female terrain of iteration, the chapter identified was characterised by the perception of writing as an act of historical solidarity; the presence of the grandmother figure as the source of stories, the enunciation of a collective/communal voice and the articulation of the material realities of systemic oppression in the Native Women’s texts.

The fifth chapter entitled Her/My Voice: Interstitial Space, Hybridity and Native Women’s Stories analysed the text/stories from a postcolonial theoretical perspective keeping in view their hybridity in occupying an interstitial space. It also discussed the role of story-telling in effecting decolonization, the problems of historical and identity constructions in the narratives of Native women and their attempts to negotiate the fluidity of occupying a discursive critical terrain. The chapter argued that postcolonial theory provides a suitable milieu/framework for analyzing the subjectivities/identities/histories in Native women’s texts by elucidating its relevance in articulating the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism, and its contribution to understanding the Native women’s texts as writings of resistance engendering new subjectivities/identities, as hybrid texts, that resist essentializing imperialist strategies, while at the same time, as sites of mediation too where the liminal space is transformed into a source of power/narrative. The text were perceived to be hybrid since they occupy an in-between-space between colonialism and decolonization;
Native and White worlds. Hybridity was identified in the writers themselves who were “breeds”, in their protagonists, and their narratives, which translate the oral ethos of Native traditions into the printed words of the English texts, by negotiating between the two cultures/worlds. All the texts, the chapter argued, occupy the Third Space of Enunciation identified by Homi Bhabha and the transformation of the liminal space into a site of power/mediation/narrative is affected through the recognition of the third space. The chapter also traced the perceptions of liminality/hybridity as lack of fullness in/through certain characters and as a site of transformation/transcendence/power in the case of others. The role of myths in transforming the hybrid narratives into sites of resistance, regeneration and reconstruction has also been mapped and the chapter argued that the myths and symbols of their respective oral traditions provide the Native American authors with frameworks for their contemporary stories, in which, the transformative possibilities of the interstices are explored by re-tracing the mythic patterns inherent in the tribal lores and adapted to suit the contemporary contexts. Paula Gunn Allen’s term Cosmogyny was employed to indicate the process of mediation through the deployment of myths in a specific female context in the texts under study. The term Metissage was used in enunciating the hybridity in the Canadian Native texts where myths or legends from specific Oral Tradition were not employed unlike in the case of the American texts. In the Canadian Native texts, hybridity was identified in the structure and manner of construction of narratives as well as in language. The very term Metis or Mestiza, the chapter argued, provides a fertile ground for the meaning and effects of assimilation, integration, hybridity and difference and this was substantiated through textual analysis. Metissage was identified both as a material reality as well as textual strategy in the authors' lives/narratives while highlighting the differences in the three texts. Metissage was also perceived as a site of mediation/translation/negotiation/narrative/identity constriction. The use of Rez English by Armstrong in her text as subversive strategy was also discussed while examining the Canadian texts. The concluding section of the chapter enunciated the presence of what Arnold Krupat calls the Synecdochic self in the Native women's texts. The self/voice in the Native Women’s stories, it was argued, was not individualistic but synecdochic or communal that emphasises the collective voice/ethos/experiences of Native women. It
was found that all the texts employ, oral techniques of writing grandmother as the site of mediation/negotiation and emphasise the solidarity of narratives/voices of native women and other oppressed coloured women in the world. The chapter which concluded with a reiteration of the power of words in effecting decolonization also emphasised the significance of story/narrative telling in print which indicate the process of mediation/translation and argued that stories, for Native women are narratives of resistance and weapons in their strategies of survival.

In the above pages an attempt has been made to explicate the various threads in chapterization that weave the narrative of the present study. The metaphor of weaving has been employed (once again it is being reiterated here) to emphasise the rationale behind the construction of the present narrative, which has been modelled on the Native narratives, which are often cyclical/non-linear in structure. The threads of various chapters are bound to twine and intertwine in the act of weaving, with differences in the processes of intertwining. Tribal worldview emphasizes this process of intertwining where all things are perceived to be filaments in the web of creation; Creation again, is a cyclical process indicating transformation, continuity and survival. It would be extremely enlightening then to look at the concept of time - historical and mythical/ceremonial, in the Native narratives. The present attempt has been to map the voices - historical/narrative in the texts and the emphasis has been on women's narratives.

The construction of history in the fiction by Native authors like N Scott Momady, James Welch, Thomas King, Gerald Vizenor and others would definitely prove to be an interesting area of study. It is an area that requires in-depth analysis. Another avenue of research in Native Studies to be explored critically is the Trickster/Culture Hero Motif as prevalent in the fictions of the North American Native Authors. In the present study, the role of trickster as source of creation/stories/mediation has been sketched especially in the three American women's texts. The Trickster/Culture Hero would then probably lead an interested researcher into the realm of creation stories amongst the various tribes in North America, which would prove, to be paradigmatic in analysing the creation stories amongst the other First Nation peoples in the world.
The Bakhtinian framework that has been employed in the present study could be suitably applied to have an understanding of textual/narrative polemics in Native authors, in their characterisation, construction of narrative and in analysing the nuances and subtleties of various textual voices. A Womanist approach to the Native lesbian texts of Paula Gunn Allen, Chrystos, Beth Brant and others is another area of study that needs further exploration. An investigation of this area would definitely bring to light the gynocentric ethos of tribal cultures and challenge notions of homophobia enunciated in/through patriarchal cultures.

The theoretical apparatus, in the case of any of the areas mentioned above, should be chosen with utmost care. Any critical intervention should emphasise the tribal ethos without effecting theoretical/epistemological violence on the texts/cultures. The theories of Native critics themselves, when applied to the texts are bound to produce interesting insights. Native studies is an area that has been marginalized, be it in literature, women's studies, or history. Native world view, which characterizes Native narratives will definitely inspire the researcher to think in terms of a global community based on kinship ties, mutual love, respect for all living phenomena, and will open the possibilities of a universe free from the evils of individualism, discrimination, technology and market economy.