CONCLUSION
The present study has tried to interrogate the politics of gender construction in canonical texts in Canadian literature not as a fixed sign, but open to variation and transformation. Feminist literary theories as a research methodology have interpreted the construction of gender as paradoxical challenging androcentric closures. Interrogation of gender in the narratives located in different literary genres representing different voices in different socio-cultural locations spanning a period of almost four decades manifesting different literary trends beginning with realism and moving towards postmodernism reflect the discursive construction of gender and results in the creation of genders, thereby challenging the prevalence of what Judith Butler had described as ‘intelligent gender’. Intelligent gender refers to the construction of gendered identity along established heterosexual grid. Analysis of gender with reference to larger social and ideological structures results in readings which provide an alternative to institutional reading, over homogenous reading, as has been postulated in the introductory chapter.

Investigation of gender politics in the narratives confirm that neither masculinity nor femininity as identities and ideological locations in the dominant culture are monolithic nor homogenous but represent alignments of various power structures which are also in conflict with one another. As Raymond Williams has pointed out "contradictions in dominant ideologies are potentially unstable and never totally effective, hence they may provide the chance for radical intervention and change" (Quoted in Loomba 1985:5).
The spaces created are the ‘in between’ spaces where multiple voices; both masculine and feminine are heard. The texts become an ‘arena of struggle and the gender ideology inscribed in the narratives become “multi-accentual” (Loomba 6). Feminist literary theories as a reading strategy frame “successive new encounters” (Loomba 5).

While locating, the instability of dominant ideology of gender construction, the power of preferred reading is undermined and the text is rendered potentially volatile and it becomes a space which can subvert and question institutional readings. The ‘other’ represents “forces of heterogeneity, contradiction, fragmentation and difference.” (Loomba 65) and challenges the dominant Anglo-American critical traditions, which also represent institutional reading, in terms of its preoccupation with an unified metaphysical presence and universal Truth. Catherine Belsey in her essay ‘Literature, history, politics’ describes this reading practice as:

The reading practice implied by this enterprise – the production of a political history from the raw material of literary texts – is a result of all that post-structuralism has urged about meaning: its often marginal location, its disunity and discontinuity, as well as its plurality. In this way the text reappears, but not as is ‘really is’ or ‘really was’. On the contrary, this is the text as it never was, though it was never anything else – dispersed, fragmented, produced, politicized.

(Belsey 1988:408)
Interrogation of gender politics employing feminist literary theories have deconstructed the essentialism, regarding gender ideologies prevailing in the narratives and the texts are not tales of individual histories, but a site for power struggle and the research has tried to bring out multiplicity, diversity of meanings, contradictions and above all absences.

II

Gender as a category of literary analysis in this study has been located within the Anglo-American feminist discourse, where the term ‘gender’ which refers to the “social, cultural, and psychological meaning imposed upon biological sexual identity” (Showalter 1989:2) has been problematized and hence a nuanced conception of gender emerges with multiple feminities, and masculinities and cross-gendered identities and within French feminist theories, where as Alice Jardine has pointed out ‘woman’ is not a person but a ‘writing-effect’ which involves a “reincorporation and reconceptualization of that which has been the master narratives own ‘non knowledge’. what has eluded them, what has engulfed them. This other-than-themselves is almost always a ‘space’ of some kind (over which the narrative has lost control), and this space has been coded as feminine, as woman…” (Alice Jardine quoted in Eagleton 1991:9)

Feminist critical theories in relation to questions of race have challenged the absence/silence in Anglo-American feminist discourse. Black feminists have “interrogated and explored the ways in which the culturally constructed experience of
gender, specifically of womanhood, affects the experience of race” (Smith 1989:57). The Rez Sisters by Tomson Highway in the study is located within this paradigm.

III

Gender politics in ‘As For Me and My House’, Albertine in Five Times, Edward and Patricia has been located within the Anglo-American feminist discourse, where investigation of gender politics implied a reading process where the text is read against itself. This in turn implies an understanding of the nature of choices proffered by the text in terms of gendered identities along with other forms of social determination like prevailing economic and cultural structures. Understanding of gendered identities becomes a dialectical process, where the reader instead of submitting to the power of the text, takes control of the reading experience without allowing the ideological closures of the text to prevail.

The construction of intelligent genders with fixed subject positions in ‘As For Me and My House’ has been deconstructed and space for specters of discontinuity and incoherence have been created. The protagonists will operate within the spectrum of possible gender identities, ranging from marginalized masculinity to femininity as a masquerade. Gender is not a site of containment in the novel, rather Philip Bentley and Mrs Bentley are both inside and outside dominant gender ideology. Hegemonic construction of masculinity and femininity have been re-visited and the unity of gendered in the traditional identity has been disturbed. Realist novel defined in terms
of a single unified gaze will also be deconstructed allowing for multiple voices to emerge.

**Albertine in Five Times** has been interrogated as a narrative where Albertine emerges a sign with no fixed signification. The research has explored the wide range of feminine positions occupied by Albertine in the play, which in turn defies essentialism. Albertine, as the study has proposed, will participate in emancipatory discourse with *oppositional* consciousness and simultaneously choose to be ensconced within specifically feminine discourse of submission and negativity. The research has tried to usher in a gynocritic point of view to unmask the patriarchal construction of meaning and signal the production of new meaning. This female voice hidden in the unconscious level of the text contradicts the apparent androcentric intention of the author as the research has tried to project the tension between author and his female creations is not resolved and Albertine destabilises the “supposed fixity of patriarchal notions” (Loomba 94).

Gender construction in **Edward and Patricia** has brought out the construction of gendered identities in relation to the ideology of abstract masculinity. Abstract masculinity reassures itself by engulfing the other is also based on the control and fetishizing and objectification of the body along with repudiation of femininity. The poem which is auto-referential has no fixed frame of reference and the text appears to be narcissistic, another feature of abstract masculinity. Therefore the protagonists in the narrative are not engaged in a process of negotiation and resistance with their gendered identities, rather their gendered identities are static and fixed.
The Rez Sisters representing the Native voice at one level brings out the violent juxtaposition of the cultural values of the Native and Non-Native Canadians and at another level addresses the interlocking of various structures of oppression in terms of class, race and gender. The study has analysed the construction of the gendered subject of resistance in the context of colonialism in Canada. There is no fixed, monolithic subject position offered by the text, rather there are different positions of the resisting subject. The Rex Sisters occupy a range of subject positions, which defy binary structures. Therefore, on one hand all the sisters point to the impact of white capitalist culture and therefore the need for change. However their active participation in ‘The Biggest Bingo in the World’ representing white, patriarchal culture reflect that margin, represented by the sisters is not monolithic in nature. The study has explored the complexity of their situation in terms of the notion of ‘cultural complexity’.

Running in the Family, Beautiful Losers, The Ledger and Seed Catalogue from Field Notes and Kerrisdale Elegies have been interrogated as gendered texts. The texts located within the post modern paradigm assert and then deliberately undermine concepts like “value, order, meaning, control, and identity that have been the basic premises of bourgeois liberalism” (Hutcheon 1988: 13) in different ways causing ruptures. The three texts will also move from the usual notion of history to a new one of archaeology, which “allows for fragmentary nature of story, against the coerced unity of traditional history” (Hutcheon 1988: 16). In the process the homogenizing impulse of grand narratives has been decentred and the ‘other’ has been inscribed in the narratives. Beautiful Losers defies the search for a universal signifier and universal
acceptance translated in the novel as the failure of the historian to write the ‘History’ of Catherine Tekakwitha. Ecriture feminine is a subversive activity, which deconstructs and destabilizes phallocentric assumptions. The study has read the narrative as a ‘feminine text’ since it does not rush into a single unified meaning and challenges prevailing dualisms in thought process. Running in the Family is a narrative marked by blurring of forms, inscriptions of masculine and feminine voices, no fixed subject position and intertextuality. In the process of writing the history/histories of his family a feminine endeavour, the search for his father, a masculine activity is present. The text, as the research has tried to read, does not privilege any particular paradigm, rather there is an on-going process where by the centre and the margin are re-constituted over and over again in the text, with Ondaatje occupying both the positions at different points in the narrative. Writing in the feminine in the novel emerges as a position which as Julia Kriesteva has defined represents the marginalized by the patriarchal Symbolic Order and in the novel Ondaatje occupies this position. The Ledger and Seed Catalogue embodies the ‘feminine’ by challenging the metaphysics of presence translated in the poems as “monologic, functional, referential unity of the historical account”. (Jones 1993: 61). The poems have been interpreted as sites of heterogenous meanings, which defy masculine order and this has been achieved by “bringing forth from the world of femininity reflections, hypothesis which are ruinous for the bastion which still holds the authority.” (Cixous 1988: 289). The poems bring out the tension between creativity and restraint, story confirming the metaphysics of presence and anti-story which represents writing as a process rather than a product remain unresolved.
Kerrisdale Elegies has been interrogated as a narrative where there is the inscription of the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ modes of viewing giving rise to pluralism and multiplicity of visions. The text reflects a “condition of writing and reading … opening up unknown and unspoken dimensions of reality” (Carriere 2002:54) by not upholding any fixed truth. Central to the research is the interrogation of masculine subject, who is simultaneously under threat and attracted to the relational form of identity associated with the feminine. While there is rejection of conservative political male establishment, there is rejection of conservative political male establishment, there is also a refusal to inscribe the female in the symbolic order, and the research has analysed this ambivalence in the narrative in terms of a passionate and painful search for meaning.

The research has tried to initiate a process of re-signification in terms of offering alternative readings, where the act of reading is an act of political intervention. In an inter-disciplinary academic environment, a critical examination of these ‘new narratives’ to borrow Fredric Jameson’s term is required, if literary criticism has to become a site of political intervention and change. The academic groups which come into being on basis of these alternative readings should be able to provide a critique of a ‘single sense of critique’ and hence the need to research and understand the topography of these emerging sites, which the research has tried to evolve.