INTRODUCTION
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The subalternized voices of the First Nations people are beginning to be proliferated around the world as an iconoclastic clarion call against the reinforcement of the hegemonic cultural imprints. These submerged, subjugated, and subordinated voices merge to question the established canons of the authority and to assert their presence, identity, and quest for recognition. The important First Nations people are Indians, Metis, Inuits, and Beothuks in Canada, Aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, Blacks in South Africa, the Welsh in Commonwealth of Independent States and New Guinea, the Ainu in Japan, Basques in Spain, Lapps or the Saami in Scandinavia and Norway, and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland.

Though the First Nations people are geographically separated, they are politically, socially, culturally and psychologically united. Their identities are localized, but their suffering and the discrimination against them are globalized. They are, by and large, politically weak, territorially isolated, economically marginal, culturally stigmatized, and socially subalternized. Mythopoeic energy, native orature, primitive beliefs, the idea of community, folk elements, cultural roots, and an affinity with nature provide a rich resonance to the literary production of the Natives. How to classify the native writings of all postcolonial countries in the world is a serious question worth pondering. The term “postcolonialism” has been used in many ways by critics and theorists of literature, history, political science, economics, feminism, women
studies, etc. It has also been used to describe the process of decolonisation of the erstwhile colonies under European domination and control. Some people have used the term to describe the internal colonisation of the African Americans and Aboriginals of USA, Canada, Australia, etc. The term postcolonialism has also been used metaphorically to describe the conditions of women and other marginalized groups like the Dalits, lesbians, homosexuals, etc.

The Native writers in Canada who have been submerged in the course of history now begin to voice their unheard melodies. They have been neglected for various reasons. As Penny Petrone portrays there are primarily five reasons for this neglect, first European cultural arrogance and attitudes of cultural imperialism and paternalism that initiated and fostered patronising stereotypes of the Indian; European antipathy and prejudice towards the oral literatures of so-called primitive peoples; the European belief that the Indian was a vanishing race; the purist attitude of western literary critics towards literature that does not conform totally to their aesthetic criteria; and finally, the difficult problems of translating native literature (Petrone 1990: X). The works of the Natives have an aesthetic dimension and sensibility. Their sufferings, protests, aspirations, and visions become universalities that have been particularised within a native consciousness.

The recent emergence of Canadian Native writing poses a zoom point in the global literary arena. It has vitalised the creative literary urge of the
Native writers in Canada with its amazing orality of whether the 'Indian' was truly a member of the human species has been rethought after the literary output of the Canadian Native Indians. The Native writers of Canada and the United States receive serious attention throughout the world. Some of the Native poets of Canada and the United States have had their works translated into more than a dozen European languages. Native writing, quite different from much of European literature, has its own roots. For example, the idea that literature is only the province of a select few are now directly antithetical to deeply held understanding in Native cultures.

The unheard, and the silenced, Canadian Native women writers increasingly correct the misdefinitions in their writings. They write their own stories and personal experiences in which as Lee Maracle pointed out that pain be their way of life. With the publication of Maria Campbell's *Half-breed* in (1973), the voices of Beatrice Culleton in *In Search of April Raintree* (1984), Jeannette Armstrong in *Slash* (1988), Lee Maracle in *I Am Woman*, (1988) Bobbi Lee, *Indian Rebel* (1990), *Sundogs* (1992) and *Ravensong* (1993) started echoing the emerging identity of the Native people. They provide an indication of potential directions towards a world in which oppression on the basis of sex, race and class have become subjects of prime discussion. These writers locate the roots of their oppression on the basis of race, sex and class in Canada's colonial history. They also begin to find the means of changing the system which perpetuates that oppression.
It is now very much evident that the struggle of the Native writers lies not only in their life but also in the literary form. They try to achieve a new form of writing by blending Native orature with the current literary development. In this process, they are not conventional in their form and language, instead the titles of their works become a larger identity in forms as one may see in Slash, I Am Woman and Half-breed. They find materials from their own Native history, autobiographical experiences and oral tradition. In narrativising these materials they find a new metafictional narrative mode to express their life experience. In articulating the social and cultural struggles, the form gets a vital energy to record their protest and anger. There is also a new merger in the binarism of oral/written, and women/body. If the lives of Canadian Native women writers are characterized by double colonization and double dispossession, their writings show the process of decolonisation and rewriting with an amazing energy from the subaltern position through the recovery of myth, oral tradition and language by decanonizing the master narratives. In subverting the mainstream, concepts of genres, history, culture and race, the Native women writers create a new mode of hybridized counter discourse, a third literary and cultural level of opposition, comprising postmodern in their challenges to history, historiography and in their investigations of auto-referentiality, intertextuality, rewriting, playful self-reflexivity, irony, allegory, parody and mimicry, postcolonial in the centre/margin debate, place and displacement, language, oral/written history and multiple challenges to eurocentric world views and poststructural in their
creation of counter discourse, language reality dichotomy and textual variations strategies.

In transforming their truth based experiences into art form, their selves become, synecdochic and they evolve with 'a new genre with realism' in their 'life-writing' and 'self-writing' modes of expression. In this context, the Native writers come closer to the Afro-American and the Native American writers. 'Autography', 'autogynography', 'communo-biography', 'autoethnography', 'bio-oratory', 'biomythography' and 'fictionalysis' are the important terms which may be used to refer to their personal storytelling/storylayering methods in the closer vein of Afro-American and Native American theories/writings of autobiographies.

The scope of the study is restricted to seven novels of four Canadian Native women writers. They are Maria Campbell's Half-breed (1973), Beatrice Culleton's In Search of April Raintree (1984), Jeannette Armstrong's Slash (1988), Lee Maracle's I Am Woman (1988), Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel (1990), Sundogs (1992) and Ravensong (1993).

Though Sundogs and Ravensong are not purely autobiographical texts of Lee Maracle the personal references would be incorporated in the chapter on Lee Maracle. The first part of the title of the study is extracted from Lee Maracle's I Am Woman (1988) in page number one.
The general aim of the study is to analyse the Native autobiography and to locate the genre as a new mode of Native discourse with the help of the five autobiographies cited above. The study also attempts to argue that the Canadian Native women writing is a new, hybridized mode of counter discourse against the mainstream concepts of genre, orality, history and culture comprising some common subversive strategies of postmodern, postcolonial and Poststructural literature. The chapter on comparison and synthesis of the study is attempted here largely on the basis of thematic resemblances. While making use of the current theories of narration in analysing the texts, it is hoped that the analysis will also give insight to extend these theories in the light of the experience as well as the unique experience of Canadian Native women writers and their attempt to express in relation to their own cultural traditions and contemporary realities.

Any attempt to locate the Canadian Native women writings and especially their autobiographies in a literary theory or era will be a futile effort. Their writings must be interpreted in their cultural and racial background. Julia Emberley observes:

The classification ‘Native women’s literature’ is, on the one hand, a product of the text’s aberrant disclosures that can not be tailored to fit the criteria of the literary industry; on the other hand, the texts written by Native women contain an argument, implicity, for their constitution as Native Women’s Literature.
Each narrative has its own form. Novels are to evolve from one stage to another depending on its socio-cultural and politico-racial background. As Fredric Jameson once observed all texts can be read as having an "ideology of form" (Jameson 1981: 76). The texts of the Native Women autobiographers have their own form and ideologies associated with Native orature and myth. Though the texts are not monuments of the Canadian mainstream culture, they seem to be the documents of the Native women writers. The autobiographies, in subverting the earlier master narratives also undergo a kind of Bakhtinian "novelisation" as the Afro-American slave narratives underwent. Bakhtin finds "revolution" in literature at every stage of its development. Talking about the poetics of Afro-American Autobiography, William L. Andrews observes that:

If we take Bakhtin's version of literary history seriously, we should see that all narrative forms since the rise of the novel have been undergoing repeated revolutions, or "novelisation". The novel is not only an inherently revolutionary genre but also one that ceaselessly novelizes i.e., revolutionizes, the form and content of other narrative types - such as, autobiography closely allied to it (85).

In the Canadian context, the rise of the Native autobiographies can be considered as a "novelization" or revolution since the Native writers make use of the Native wisdom and prevent the literary piracy of the White writers. While transforming the day-to-day experiences into art form, the narratives rewrite the forms
or uniquely blend the traditional forms of expression with their own way of telling.

Andrews continues:

Under the influence of "novelization", traditions and generic standards of narrative form undergo constant revision. Nothing from the past remains wholly privileged; the novel forces all narrative forms into 'a' living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the open ended present) (85).

The process of "novelization" along with cultural influence form the slave narratives and the Canadian Native autobiographies. These slave narratives and autobiographies of the Canadian subalterns have four important features: free oral storytelling, self-expressiveness, truth based narration and memory recalling. The history of Afro-American autobiography is of free storytelling often at variance with literary conventions and established discourses.

Some of the words of Bakhtin used in this study are transgredient (exotopy) and dialogism (comic gothicism). Bakhtin's word transgredient is intended to suggest that there are elements of consciousness external to it that, as Tzvetan Todorov notes, "are absolutely necessary for its completion, for its achievement of totalization," (95). Based on Bakhtin's transgredient, Todorov coins the term 'exotopy' to designate this sense one acquires only through the consciousness of "finding oneself outside" (106). The concept of exotopy operates in the characters such as Cheryl C.
realises her Metis self only after her experience outside her home. Maracle finds totality in her journey towards the non-Native men and women.

Bakhtin’s most popular term is ‘Carnivalesque’ or ‘dialogism’. His *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* provides the fullest account of his sense of language as ‘dialogic—“Carnivalesque”. It is also called a ‘comic gothicism’.

Carnival during the Middle Ages was a unique time of licence from repressive authority. Its most typical form was parody: Parody of all forms of official language—there were parodic masses and sermons for example, official figures are parodied in the public performances, Carnival masks and comic effigies. Bakhtin’s analysis of parody provides us with a further sense of intertextuality, or, as he calls it, “dialogism”. Dialogism breaks open in the character of April in *In Search of April Raintree*. The chapter on this text explains and relates the concept further.

Free oral storytelling, self expressiveness, truthtelling and recalling memory are closely linked with one another. While storylayering, the Native writers use first person narrative “I” which is self expressive and represents a collective ethos (collective singular says Hernandez 42). In telling the stories, the writers narrate the facts of their experience masked in a fictional vein. Orature and memory vitalise their narration. Since Native writers find affinity with the Blacks as Maracle says “I have more in common with an African ex-slave” (IAW, 150),
Henry Louis Gates Jr., while differentiating the White and the Black culture, bases three "fundamental qualitative differences". They are:

First, that black American culture was developed orally or musically for many years; second, that black American culture was characterised by a "collective ethos"; and finally, that "one of (black American) the most salient characteristics is an index of repudiation (36).

The 'oral', 'collectivist' and 'repudiative' natures are closely allied with Canadian Native women autobiographies. Native orature vitalises the autobiography, collective ethos represents the individual experience and vice versa and the ethno autobiographies are repudiative in nature. The oral element includes free oral storytelling, medicine ways, elders hailing the younger Native generation, herbs and plants finding and hunting with accuracy. In an article on "The uncertain margin between biography, autobiography and fictional narrative", S.P. Paquet Sandra responds about truth telling:

It is a central issue in a genre that is supposed to make more ostensible truth claims. But forced to adopt itself to a perverse social system and communication situation set by White culture, Afro-American autobiography fictionalized itself: the narrators who want to tell the truth but not the whole truth
that could not easily be believed, fictionalize the true story (103).

This is true in the case of the Canadian Native women writers too. Campbell, Culleton, Armstrong and Maracle mask the truth telling narratives with cultural, psychological, political and racial vein respectively. All these writers in their 'self-writing' process, fictionalise the facts of their real experiences. In a certain sense or in a certain degree, each writer's experience is very thinly disguised in a fictional form of narrative.

The relevance of Frantz Fanon to Canadian Native women writing is to be focussed in a serious vein. His theories of colonisation and oppression are useful to the marginalized people/writings of all over the world. In the late fifties and early sixties the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon developed one of the most thoroughgoing analyses of the psychological and sociological consequences of colonization (Fanon 1959: 61, 67). His twin contributions Black Skin White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth turned the attention of the global literary artists. In America, Negritudinist ideas and the work of Fanon and his followers were instrumental in the development of theories of Black writing and Black identity across the diaspora.

Fanon emphasized on the common political, social and psychological terrains of the colonized people. The phrases 'cultural schizophrenia', 'cultural catharsis' and 'Manichean binarism' are more relevant in the Canadian Native women writings. In essence, Fanon's analysis derived the racist stereotyping of
the heart of colonial practice and asserted the need to recognize the economic and political realities which underly these assertions of racial ‘difference’, and which were the material base for the common and cultural features of colonized peoples.

Fanon’s analysis was always firmly anchored in a political opposition. His theory brought together the concepts of alienation and psychological marginalization from phenomenological and existential theory.

From this position Fanon was able to characterise the colonial dichotomy (colonizer - colonized) as the product of a ‘Manichean delerium’ (Fanon 1967), the result of which condition is a radical division into paired oppositions such as good-evil; true - false; white - black, in which the primary sign is axiomatically privileged in the discourse of the colonial relationship. Fanon’s work is a radical development which takes on board the celebratory and positive element in the Negritude movement whilst asserting not only the fictionality but also the historically determined nature of all racist stereotypes.

Fredric Jameson’s (81) account on binary oppositionality is useful to postcolonial narrative fictions as well as to Native narrative discourses. He simultaneously articulates and deconstructs the ‘manichean aesthetic’ of postcolonial societies. Jameson provides a ground for Fanon’s analysis of Manichean duality with the necessary model of a reflexive process and text. It is a model which emphasizes the text’s relationship with ‘the historical subtext’. Here, text refers to the imperial colonialism and the subtext stands for the subjugated condition of
Fanon tries to hybridize the text and the subtext through the pattern of coloniser and colonized.

Both Fanon and Jameson try to evolve a kind of binary world where oppositionalities meet one another. The meeting happens both in the form of writing and in the social life. Even Frederick Douglas reflects this sentiment of binarism. His rhetorical strategy is an earlier attempt to the later use of what rhetoricians have called 'antithesis' and of what the Structuralists have come to call the 'binary opposition'. (Qtd in Gates Jr 1989: 87). The binary antagonism operates in the autobiographies of Armstrong in Slash, which focuses more on the colonization. "We are all affected by colonization" (Slash 222) and "we are slowly learning decolonization" (Slash 223) says Slash. The following binary oppositionalities are deeply operative in Canadian Native women autobiographies:

- master/slave
- centre/margin
- fact/fiction
- self/other
- oral/written
- good/evil
- linear/cyclical
- white/black
- thinking/feeling
spiritual/material
rational/irrational
aristocratic/base
chivalry/cowardice
civilised/barbaric
graceful/brutish
sterile/fertile
pure/cursed
enterprise/sloth
human/beastly
force/principle
sacred/profane

which Fanon, Jameson and Douglas argue is the characteristic feature of the postcolonial marginal societies and their art.

The characteristic of any ethnic autobiography is to fuse memory, ancestry and personal history. Autobiographies of the Black Chicano Caribbean / African American and the Canadian Native women writers link memory in their narration. H.L. Gates Jr. speaks of the memory of the Blacks:

Slavery's time was delineated by memory and memory alone.

One's sense of one's existence, therefore, depended upon memory.
It was memory above all else, that gave a shape ... the slave had no past beyond memory; the slave had lived at no time past the point of recollection (100-101).

It is true that Canadian Native women writers like Culleton, Campbell, Maracle and Armstrong rely more on the memory. Culleton opens her novel with “Memories” (9). Other writers extensively use memories to trace their development as an individual. Memory links the writers to the Native community and the present to the past.

MARGINALITY AND AN ‘OTHERING’

Marginality and an ‘Othering’ are directed by the imperial authority on the Native people. They have been constructed on these submerged class to subjugate them both socially and politically. Now, Marginality has become a source of creative energy. The idea of Negritude was the earliest attempt to create a consistent theory of modern African writing. In the Canadian context, one can coin ‘Metitude’ (The attitude of the Metis) as the source of energy to the Metis writers for creative energy. Negritude is the decisive force which brings out the Black African nature and psychology of modern Black consciousness. It was the assertion of those Black cultures which colonization sought to suppress and deny. The same parameter is applicable to the Native writers in Canada. Known for her feminist and Marxist perspectives Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has been instrumental in extracting issues like marginality, double dispossession of Native
women and subalternity in Native perspective. Racial discrimination shows that both the Native male and the Native female are clearly inferior to the European female. Spivak talks about autobiographical self in “Imperialism and Sexual Difference”:

If we are interested in a third-worldist criticism, however, we might want to acknowledge that access to autobiography, for whole groups of people, has only been possible through the dominant mediation of an investigator or field-worker. The “autobiographies” of such people have not entered the Post-Enlightenment European “subjective” tradition of Autobiography (521).

Though the third world writers’ autobiographies have not attained the stature of European autobiographical overtones, they have paved the way to express their selves. The autobiographical discourses of the Native writers in Third World countries are much more a medium or the only literary form to voice their experiences or the experiences of the whole community. Spivak also hints at this saying:

The curious “Objectified” subject-position of this other is what, following the language of anthropology and linguistic, I call the position of the “Native informant”... The other must always be constituted by way of consolidating the self. This method will
atleast-make the problems visible, and the efforts at hedging the problems provisionally accessible to the reader (521).

The problems of the Others could only be expressed in the other could only be expressed in the form of autobiography which is the apt medium to transmit the inner and the outer experience of the Native writer.

Howard Adams, a Metis author, activist and professor provides a unique Aboriginal socio-political perspective on the effects of colonialism on his people in his A Tortured people : The Politics of Colonization. He argues that Indian, Metis and Inuit communities constitute internal colonies in Canada ... based on four major components of colonization”. The first component of this colonization is the invasion of the indigenous territory by military force, while the second is the destruction of the political organisation, culture and economy of the Aboriginal people and its eventual replacement with “a racist colonization process that transforms the culture, values and customs of the Native society”. The third element is the creation of an administrative and legal system so as to subjugate the Aboriginals. The fourth “component is racism whereby the indigenous population is considered inferior due to biological characteristics”. These internal colonies, Adams states, are “parallel to external Third World colonies” (158). He therefore advises that we should view their political and economic situation from a Third World perspective as they have been forced to “live in colonial territories under the domination of the colonized” (173).
Elaborating this further, Adams asserts that Canada has developed a "quasi-apartheid system" with reference to its natives. Howard Adams' valuable statement that these internal colonies (Canada, Australia etc) are "parallel to external Third World colonies" (158) takes us to view the Canadian Native writing from a Third World perspective. Works such as Barbara Harlow's Resistance Literature (1987) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms may help to highlight the compelling issues that are inherent in Native Canadian Women writing. The resistance movements started in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East for national liberation resulted in a genre of resistance literature. Resistance literature continues to wage a struggle for liberation on many levels and in many arenas. Literature is the vital platform for struggle. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in his Detained: A Writers Prison Diary (1981) points out that there have been two opposing aesthetics: The aesthetic of oppression and exploitation and that of struggle for total liberation (87). This dual aesthetic of Ngugi is also applicable to Native women autobiographers since autobiography is a form of resistance literature. Like the prison memories of the African leaders, their autobiographies too, "are to be distinguished from conventional autobiography in as much as the narratives are actively engaged in a re-defining of the self and the individual in terms of a collective enterprise and struggle" (Harlow 1987: 120). This view is also expressed by Roger Rosenblatt. He states:
All autobiography is minority autobiography. Minority autobiography and minority fiction deserve that minority status not because of comparative numbers, but because of the presence of a special reality, one provided for the minority by the majority, within which each member of the minority tries to reach an understanding both of himself and the reality into which he has been placed (168 - 171).

Harlow expands the role ascribed by Resenblatt to autobiography in black literature and to women’s writings (here we can take it for Native women autobiographies), (Harlow 1987: 121). Whereas Harlow finds the political detainees write autobiographies to resist their imprisonment, Canadian Native women writers, we can say, write autobiographies out of their cultural racial or colonial imprisonment of their mind. They are the internally imprisoned writers of autobiographies. In a certain sense, Jeannette Armstrong’s Slash has the vein of the political prison memoir (61, 114, 144) narratives. Tommy, the hero of the autobiography comes across various struggles and imprisonments. He says “I knew I was some risks; the worst being prison” (114). Again he remarks “we spent about two weeks in jail being questioned “ (144). This autobiography might be interpreted in the angle of the prison memoirs of the black literature and other Third World women autobiographies. As Massimo Pavarini maintained in his analysis, “The penitentiary as a model for the ideal society”, “prison” assumes the dimension of an organized project for the subaltern social world” (149).
Michel Foucault too discussed the techniques and social control of prison system in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, where he examined the connections through modern European history between prison, monastic cell, workshop and hospital.

The literature of the First Nations people (Not Fourth World People) has to cross many boundaries and suppress many pressures ahead. What George M. Gugelberger finds in the Third World literature and its canonnic consciousness would be relevant in the Canadian Native context. They are as follows:

1. The political and economic pressure
2. The colonial past
3. Response to Europe or Western Civilization, rejecting the West including the canonized literary models
4. Language issues
5. Formation of the canon and subversion of the present canon and emphasis on canonnic review.

These features suggested by Gugelberger would be adopted to all the marginalized literatures and their literary genres. Canadian Native literature has all the above features. Canadian Native people are both politically and economically oppressed and the neo-colonial masters exploit them socially. While writing their selfhood, the writers search for an alternate form of expression and blend the genres, as Maracle fuses autobiography, story and poetry in *I Am Woman*.
(1988). The writers not only reject the Western canonized literary models but also invent new forms of expression by using their orature and traditional wisdom. Language is also an issue for Native people. They mix Native languages such as Cree, Ojibway and Okanagan with English. While mixing the tongues, they subvert the master language and try to create a new genre of literature with truth as a base.

TOWARDS A PAN-NATIVE INTERFUSIONAL LITERATURE - ORALITY AND NARRATIVE:

Thomas King, a Canadian Native critic and writer, proposes a Pan-Native oral and print interfusional Native literature in Canada. King shows that Native literature is a blend of oral storytelling and rich traditional wisdom. His famous titular phrase "All My Relations" is the English equivalent of a phrase familiar to most Native people in North America. The phrase reminds of a Native's relationship with the human, the flora and the fauna. The twentieth-century strategy of Native storytelling in a common language has helped to reinforce many of the systems of Native and tribal beliefs. He suggests that Native writers should utilize the advent of written Native literature for common structures, themes and characters. King observes the general corpus of Native literature as :

It should be said at this point that when we talk about contemporary Native literature, we talk as though we already have a definition for this body of literature when, in fact, we do not. And,
when we talk about Native writers, we talk as though we have a process for determining who is a Native writer and who is not, when, in fact, we don’t. What we do have is a collection of literary works by individual authors who are Native by ancestry, and our hope, as writers and critics, is that if we wait long enough, the sheer bulk of this collection, when it reaches some sort of critical mass, will present us with a matrix within which a variety of patterns can be discerned.

Writers such as Arnold Krupat and Gordon Brotherston have taken Jacques Derrida’s poststructural critique of the speech/writing binary antagonism in European logocentric philosophy in relation to Levi Strauss as a critical site to investigate the values accorded to Native oral tradition. Though this attempt is to be encouraged, one should accept that the writings of Native people are an outcome of their purely personal experiences. The main notion is that their orality vitalises their literary output. As Beth Cuthand (a Native Woman writer) says:

We come from a tradition of storytelling, and as storytellers we have a responsibility to be honest, to transmit our understanding of the world to other people... our values, and our system of beliefs are transmitted orally... there is energy, there’s strength...
being transmitted ... and we transmit our identity and strength from one generation to another (54).

*Slash* also is of the view that young Natives should learn from the elders. He observes: "one of the most exciting things that happened was the learning by the young people from the old people" (*Slash* 173). Oral tradition enriches an individual in a Native society. *Slash* says, "I learned that, being an Indian, I could never be a person only to myself. I was part of all the rest of the people. I was responsible to that" (*Slash*, 203). This is the peculiar solidarity of Native literature. Native oral culture finds the solidarity of traditional elders or ancestors, oral literature, and the idea of community and family. A sense of group, family and landscape occupy the minds of the Native writers/storytellers. Orature remains a tradition to influence the writers. Orature links the humans and the lands, and the reality and imagination. Thomas King has remarked:

Written Native literature has opened up new worlds of imagination for a non-Native audience ... there is a misconception that Native oral literature is an artifact, something that vanished as an art form in the last century. Though virtually invisible outside a tribal setting, oral literature remains a strong tradition and is one of the major influences on many Native writers (Xii).

The idea of humans sharing with each other is the predominant factor in Native oral literature. It is well-known that the colonial intervention brought
the graphic mode to oral culture, which is traditional and this advent has affected the other genres of verbal art, such as lyric, descriptive discourse, oratory etc. Analysing the role that narratives play in oral cultures, Walter J. Ong remarks:

In a writing or print culture, the text physically bonds whatever it contains and makes it possible to retrieve any kind of organization of thought as a whole. In primary oral cultures, where there is no text, the narrative serves to bond thought more massively and permanently than other genres (141).

This type of narratives enrich orality and constitute truth as the primary source for fictionalization. They also challenge histories. As Linda Warley describes:

Aboriginal life stories challenge official histories, which have tended to ignore, denigrate, or distort the perspectives and experiences of Aboriginal people. They are a valuable cultural archive in that these narratives present a different source for, and representation of, “truth”... Their writings are also barred from entering the field of discursive debate over what constitutes “truth” (65).
The truth telling is the predominant factor for Native autobiographers. For instance, Maracle in *I Am Woman* says “My voice is for those who need to hear some truth” (11). Though the concept of truth is discussed in a multifarious way in the postmodern and poststructural era, Native writers attribute a new dimension to the idea of truth since truth is the prime base for all the autobiographies in the Canadian Native women writings.

**NON-NATIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE NATIVE INDIAN:**

White Canadian writers’ interest in depicting the Native people like the Metis and their culture has been abundant. Canadian literary history placed Native Indians under the White perspective. Writers from Major John Richardson in the early nineteenth century to Rudy Wiebe in the recent era have used Native myths and legends. They discover new meanings and idioms and enrich their writings. The White’s concept about the Native people has remained an outsider’s vision of the red world. Native peoples have been subjected only to be seen as noble savage or uncultured brute. His figure has been submerged and dehumanized. Canada’s plural setup and dominant White culture have marginalized the Native people.

Some of the mainstream writers such as, Margaret Laurence and Rudy Wiebe have portrayed the realistic picture of Native community in Canada. Laurence’s interest in exploring the experience of these ethnic cultures is evident in all of her Canadian-set works. She draws characters from various cultures of
Native Canadian prairie: the Anglo-Scots, the Ukrainians and the French-Indian Metis.

The binary opposition of U. S. - Canada and the bilingual nature of the English-French division in Canada contribute only to the 'mainstream' writing neglecting the 'minority' or 'ethnic' group of writers. The 'othered' voice from the subjugated section of the writers now begin to be heard. The division such as, Jewish Canadian, Italian Canadian and Native Indian qualifies the mainstream brand of literature as 'Canadian Literature'. Though Northrop Frye, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence and Rudy Wiebe adorn the Canadian Literature, it is predominantly White in colour.

Formal narrative, informal storytelling, political discourses, songs and prayers are the important genres in the Native oral literature of Canada. The uniqueness of this literature is that each linguistic group has its own religious and philosophical beliefs. Cultural specificity and oral narrativity are blended to form a new genre of hybridized discourse.

Many of the 53 indigenous languages of Canada are spoken in a number of dialects. The major dialects spoken are Cree, Blackfoot, Ojibway, Odawa, Woods, Swampy, Northern, Dakota, Beaver, Sekani, Slave, Bella Coola, Nootka and Stoney.
In Native Literature in Canada Penny Petrone argues that Western epistemology is unable to properly comprehend Native Literature for various reasons, including its relation to the oral and the precise cultural values of mythology. As she says:

Canada's Native writers have borrowed from Western traditions the forms of autobiography, fiction, drama and the essay. Their uses, however, judged by Western literary criteria of structure style and aesthetics, do not always conform. They are different because form is only the expression of the fabric of experience, and the experience of Native writers has been different (183 - 184).

The personal experience of the Native writers could not be borrowed and hence they make use of the forms especially autobiography to express their feelings and problems. The genre of autobiography undergoes a blend of orature and written form. These writers employ a form of neo-autobiography against the conventional form of this genre. Petrone also discusses the multiplicity of styles:

Like the archetypal figure, the trickster, Native writers easily adopt a multiplicity of styles and forms to suit their purposes, and in so doing they are giving birth to a new literature: a written literature that is finally and gratefully being given to us by the first peoples of our country enabling us to hear voices most of us have not heard
before, bringing to life people, places, experiences and problems that are uniquely Canadian, yet universal too (184).

This subversive practice of the Native writers question the master narratives. They undermine the mainstream writers to develop cultural individuality and identity. The experiences of these writers are authentic and realistic. The revolt of these writers in this kind of output is both literary and ideological to subvert the master narratives.

The pure feminist theories of Elaine Showalter and Barbara Johnson may not be relevant in the context of the Native Women's writings. The recent theories and views of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Barbara Smith and in particular the views of Barbara Godard are more relevant to the Canadian Native Women's writings. Godard says about Lee Maracle and Jeannette Armstrong in her article “The Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women writers”

It is through such strategies of displacement and decentering of available subject-positions that these two Native writers have challenged established canons of address and representation. Through their re-presentation of their political agenda as feminists and Natives, framed and staged as provisional narrative truths, Maracle and Armstrong have signified their otherness in the very act of refusing the probe of subordination (218).
Godard brings out the problem of displacement in the narrative discourses of Native Women writers. In subordinating the established canonical works, Godard refers to the self/other binarism in the works of Maracle and Armstrong. She also talks about the hybridity and the creative process:

By locating interlocutors both within and without the Native community, by writing hybrid texts that address both audiences as “you”, they have constructed a complex subject-position for themselves, frequently contradictory, as ‘Slash’ and Maracle’s narrator knows well, but one that allows the creation of the third position, a transformative practice, one of analysis and critique of the dominant binary discourses on the indigene (219).

What the Black feminist critic, Barbara Smith perceived the black women writers would also be of some help to understand the Native Women writings. Smith calls on the black woman writer ‘to think and write out of her own identity and not to try to graft the ideas or methodology of White/male literary thought upon the precious materials of Black Women’s art’ (Belsey 17). This view is entirely applicable in the Canadian Native Women context too.

“A FEMINISM OF DECOLONIZATION”

Native Women’s writings currently represent an important site of cultural intervention to examine both the ideological formations...
various subjugated modes of resistance and alterity that emerge to combat patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial oppression. Julia Emberley in her valuable book *Thresholds of Difference: Feminist Critique, Native Women's writings, Postcolonial Theory* (1993) suggests a current way of reading the works of the Canadian Native Women writings. According to her, reversing the phrase 'imperial feminism' of Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, Emberley posits a 'double session' of writing which advances towards both 'a decolonization of feminism' based upon the critical writings of Native Women in Canada and predicated upon an understanding of the significance of this literature, 'a feminism of decolonization' elaborated through a deconstructive materialist feminist critique of gender relations in the discourses of decolonization (XVI).

**POSTSTRUCTURAL AND NATIVE DISCOURSES:**

Discourse has two levels of meaning, linguistic and poststructural. A linguistic definition for a discourse is that it is a larger unit of an utterance which is marked by cohesion (invisible connector) and coherence (visible connector). Writers like Shakespeare violate the rules of discourse in order to give more/new meaning to literature. Desdemona's replies to Othello about the missing of the handkerchief would be the best example for violation of rules in a discourse. A poststructural discourse is based on the linguistic model and critics like Bakhtin and Foucault give isolation in the text to bring out the other voices in literature. A Feminist discourse is a stylistic model which creates a new way of giving meaning.
Searth, Widdoson and Austin interpret the various levels of meaning of a discourse. Poststructural discourse is not confined to conversational passages but, designates all verbal structures. It implies the superficiality of the boundaries between literary and non-literary modes of signification. Poststructuralists conceive discourse as social parlance or language in use and consider it to be both the product and manifestation not of a timeless linguistic system, but of particular social conditions, class, structures, and power relationships that alter in the course of history. ‘Discursive criticism’ and the ‘dialogic criticism’ inaugurated by the Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin deals with literary discourse as voices of characters in a work which engage in a dynamic interchange of beliefs, attitudes, sentiments and other expressions of states of consciousness.

The discourse of the Native writers could be interpreted as counter-discourses. Writers like Maria Campbell, Beatrice Culleton, Jeannette Armstrong and Lee Maracle problematize master narratives. They decolonize the master discourses / narratives by decolonizing their modes of expression and forms of writing. The genre of Native autobiography is a form of counter discourse. The question now is whether Native writers can use Western instruments of knowledge in non-Western contexts. In response of the criticism that Native writers use Western literary forms like autobiography and the English language as medium. Though Native writers claim that they want to reclaim their own culture, it was pointed out that this is not wholly true. Many Native languages have become extinct, so writers are compelled to use English. But Native writers do not only
use Western forms; they are trying to rediscover and recover their own culture. In this process, they rewrite their Native culture and heritage in the form of counter discourses to assert their spiritual and deep cultural roots.

The words, such as 'irony', 'parody', 'humour', 'metafiction', 'self', 'voice', 'tone', 'intertextuality', 'polyphony' and 'historiography' could be interpreted in the postmodern, postcolonial and poststructural perspective. Though, the writings of the Native women writers need not be classified in a particular theory, the contemporary literary era forces to view the above words or figures of speech in a critical perspective with Native’s experience. Like postmodernism, Native writers also overthrow the elitism of the modernist: high art “and blend literary genres, cultural stylistic levels and the serious and the playful. Native writers resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics and subvert the foundations of the accepted mode of thought and experience. Poststructuralists undertake to subvert the foundations of language in order to show that its seeming meaningfulness dissipates. Native writers in bridging the oral written gap, happen to subvert the established boundaries in language. The salient features of poststructural school are the primacy of theory, challenging, destabilizing, undermining and subverting the traditional modes of discourse in Western civilization, decentering of the subject, reading text and writing as a chain of signifiers and viewing discourse as a social parlance or language-in-use. Magic realism, metafiction, fabulation and bildungsroman operate in the postmodern writings.
THE CONCEPT OF TWONESS

The concept of twoness is a warring ideal, which distorts the mind and the literary output of the Canadian Native women writers. The twoness situation begins from the schizophrenic existence of the Natives and exists at various level. Binary antagonism (colonizer/colonised), binary oppositionality in writings (oral/graphic or print), colonial dichotomy (master/slave), double consciousness (split personalities), double marginalization (as Native/as Woman) and self/other Manichean aesthetic are all related to this craft. The concept of twoness is generally indebted to W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Mikhail Bakhtin, Frederic Jameson, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. The table appended below may throw some light on this concept of twoness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITIC</th>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois</td>
<td><em>The Souls of Black Folk</em> (1953)</td>
<td>twoness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frantz Fanon</td>
<td><em>The Wretched of the Earth</em> (1963)</td>
<td>Manichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikhail Bakhtin</td>
<td><em>The Dialogic Imagination</em></td>
<td>dialogism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederic Jameson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oppositionality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fanon observes that the colonial world is a 'compartmentalized' world. He says: "It is in fact the organisation of a Manichean world, a world divided up into compartments (84)".

In the Native Indian context, it is double colonial and in the realm of Canadian Native women position, colonialism operates on triple level or a triple
colonisation subjugates the life and the works of the Canadian Native women autobiographers. These writers develop a colonial consciousness, which is similar to the concept of "double consciousness" developed by Homi K. Bhabha in his essay, "The Other Question" as it is "double duty bound at once a civilizing mission and a violent subjugating force" in the case of the coloniser and has a "twoness" of constituting one's self through the eyes of the others in the case of the colonized. Elaborating his concept of twoness, W.E.B. Du Bois, the African American ideologue in his now famous 1903 statement remarks:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in an amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness- an American- a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals on one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps from being torn asunder (1).

For Du Bois living in the slavery era in the U.S.A., the twoness was a warring ideal which tore him asunder. This double consciousness of being a Native and a Canadian in the Sixties and the Seventies, in fact, is the source of creativity for a Native writer asserts Emma La Roque, herself a Native when she remarks:
Native writers have a dialectical relationship to the English (or French) language. Not only we have to learn English, we must then deal with its ideology. To a Native woman English is like an ideological onion whose stinging layers of racism and sexism must be peeled away before it can fully enjoyed (18).

This is so because Native writers do not look at English the way others do, because they "have a certain association with them" as colonized.

It is this consciousness of being a Native writer of the English Language, which forms this double consciousness being used so very creatively by these writers that makes their works "narratives of colonial consciousness", (Juneja 1995 : 6), particularly by capturing the energy emitted through the struggle between the oral and the written.

THE NATIVE AS THE “OTHER”

Since Fanon’s publication of Black Skin White Masks (1952), the words, ‘other’ and “not-self” have been used to refer to the White view of the Blacks or Natives. This assertion objectifies the Black as Other. The terms are similarly applicable to the Indian, the Maori and the Aborigine. As Spivak explains in “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” (1985 : 253) : “The project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolute other into a domesticated other that consolidated the
imperialist self". Tzvetan Todorov in "The Conquest of America: The Question of the other" (1982) also notes how the group as Other can function:

This group in turn can be interior to society: Women for men, the rich for the poor, the mad for the normal; or it can be exterior to society, i.e., another society which will be near or far away, depending on the case: beings whom everything links to me on the cultural, moral, historical plane; or else unknown quantities, I do not understand, so foreign that in extreme instances I am reluctant to admit they belong to the same species as my own (3).

This type of socially stigmatized, culturally discriminated and economically marginalized group of people are referred to 'Other-ed' people. Canadian Natives or indigenes have been victimized brutally and othered in their own land.

Canadian Indians and Metis are 'Other' because the White perceives them as such and also because their own perception is so clearly that of Other. The Native characters have been used to highlight characters. Spivak has commented on the "soul making" enterprise which was the agenda for imperialist missionaries ("Three"). As Terry Goldie portrays:
They intended to take indigenous peoples whose lives teetered between the absolute material and the false anti-phenomenal and make new creations who would possess the reality of the Christian noumenal. But in so many of the texts in this study, the white needs not to instill spirit in the other but to gain it from the other. Through the indigene the white character gains soul and the potential to become of the land. A quite appropriate pun is that it is only by going Native that the European arrivant can become Native. Often in such narratives the Otherness of the indigene is first heightened, by the use of an indigenous, by the use of an indigenous language or by the defamiliarization of common aspects of white culture (16).

The ability of the white self to participate in a standard commodity through the agency of the other is often a mark of "indigenization" (Terry 1989: 142). It is also to be remembered that in general terms it would be inaccurate to assume that the separation between self and other is a Manichean dualism that inevitably valorizes self as good and other as evil, but it is a dualism. This is because of the imperialism which has imposed this dichotomy. The self - Other division is an internal process of patriation, which brings out the colonial literary apparatus. Generally, women in many societal pattern have been 'Othered', 'Marginalized' or colonized. They share the experience of oppression and repression. While women in postcolonial country are double colonized, the position of women in Native soci-
etry is triple colonization since it is worser as they are Canadian (postcolonial), Native (double colonization) and women (triply subjugated).

Spivak, in her accounts of the double subjection of colonized women and her discussion of the silencing of the muted Native subject, in the form of 'subaltern' woman, has testified to the fact, that 'There is not space from where the subaltern (Sexed) subject can speak' (Spivak 1985 C: 122). By implication, the silencing of the subaltern woman extends to the whole of the colonial world, and to the silencing and muting of Natives, male or female.

NATIVES AND INTERNAL COLONIZATION:

It is Tennant who describes the Native people, as 'internally colonized' people. Native people under European colonialism are internally colonized. They are politically subjugated to the extreme condition. In this situation, the Natives are unable to make their voices hear to the global attention. Paul Tennant defines the notion of internal colonialism as:

The continued subjugation of an indigenous people in a post-colonial independent nation state. Subjugation will in every case involve restriction of land and resources as well as varying degrees of administrative supervision, social discrimination, suppression of culture and denial of political and other rights and freedoms (3-4).
Novels such as *Slash* explains in details how the Native Indians in Canada are internally colonized by the European imperialistic political structure. The whole story revolves around the land exploitation of the whites, the continual subjugation of political freedom and decimation of Native culture and tradition. Racial genocide and denial of rights pave the main way for the internal colonization of the Native people in Canada.

**NATIVE TEXTUAL MODELS:**

Hartwig Isernhagen provides four textual models after analysing a framework for Canadian Indian Literature. His framework for Canadian Indian Literature is a result of his conversation with many persons during research trips conducted in 1985 and 1989 (Isernhagen 1991:188). Some of the important persons he met during his trip, are Jeannette Armstrong, Beatrice Culleton, Barbara Godard, Terry Goldie, Linda Jones, Thomas King, Robin McGrath, Daniel David Moses and Viola Thomas. Among the various textual models of authorization and empowering available, the following ones appear to be of particular interest and relevance in the Canadian Native Indian context:

1. The "realistic" model - Literature "For Use".
   The "sacred" model - Turning Inward
   The "high art" model
   "Translation/transformation" models.
Isernhagen locates Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed* and Beatrice Culleton’s *In Search of April Raintree* in the “realistic” textual model. He also provides an additional submodel “literature for use”. He views that the autobiographical or semi-autobiographical Native texts are generally indebted to this model. He also lists three important sources to derive this textual model. They are:

a) Archaeological and ethnological evidence concerning the way of life of the early generations like that of Basil Johnston.

b) Early written sources, which would necessarily be (almost) exclusively white like that of Tomson Highway. It is to be noted that both Maria Campbell and Lee Maracle worked with two white writers Linda Griffiths and Donald Barnett respectively.

c) Above all, the oral tradition and the general knowledge of the elders, who have the status of advisers to the group, but are not its official leaders.

Maria Campbell and Lee Maracle extensively depend on the elders or Grannies for their traditional wisdom. (HB 9, 11 (stories) 12, 15, 18, 19, 44 (medicine), 91 (greatest storyteller), 159, 177, 183-184) IAW XI, 5, 43, 46, 49, 50, 86, 143, 145, 146 BL 199, 239)
The autobiographies of Lee Maracle, *I Am Woman* (1988) and, *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* (1994) can also be placed in the ‘Realistic’ textual framework since Isernhagen himself remarked that autobiographies are indebted to this textual model. For both Campbell and Maracle, Native memory, personal life and grandmothers’ wisdom of stories and medicine ways help them as a primary link with the past. Elders represent group identity, group value and traditional culture.

Isernhagen locates *Slash* in the fourth textual model, Translation / Transformation model. *Slash* gives more importance to the Okanagan vernacular prose while transforming the Native oral culture into the written culture. The other two textual models, the “sacred” and the “high art”, speaks of the insiderism and the universalism respectively of the Canadian Native Indian Literature. The works that are ‘spiritual’ in nature constitute the ‘sacred’ model. “The sacred is defined (hermetically) as the property of a group, rather than as belonging to everyone”, says Isernhagen (199). Native literature has many problematic sacred elements in the whole of literary output. Isernhagen suggests the following ways to solve them:

By selection according to the degree of sacredness, with holding the most sacred from the realm of writing; By a conscious and programmatic diffusion or democratization of the sacred (Both possibilities would seem to be used by Johnston) By an
essential denial of its sacredness, possibly via its transformation into the aesthetic, as it is for example, found in Bill Reid's *Raven* (189).

The "high art" model is fundamentally internationalist or universalist (199). It is closely associated with originality, innovativeness, self-realisation, presentation, creation and dissociated with commodification and clichéization of "nativeness" or indigenous cultures. The works of Lance Belanger and the poetry of Daniel David Moses, suggest Isernhagen, operate on this principle.