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FACULTY OF LETTERS, LANGUAGES AND ARTS
Department of English



**Indigenous Women Literature Between Cultural Genocide and
Resistance in Jeannette Armstrong's *Whispering in Shadows***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
For the Degree of Magister in Post-Colonial Women Literature**

Written in English

**Submitted by: Maachou KADDOUR Supervised by: Prof. Mohamed Yamin
BOULENOUAR**

Board of Examiners:

- **President:** Prof. Fewzia BEDJAOUI University of Sidi Bel Abbes
- **Supervisor:** Prof. Mohamed Yamin BOULENOUAR University of Sidi Bel Abbes-
- **Examiner:** Dr. Mohamed GRAZIB University of Saida-
- **Examiner:** Dr. Djamel BENADLA University of Saida

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this modest work to the soul of my father who passed away two years ago.

..... to my darling mother who taught me how to be patient in hard moments .

..... to all the people around me with whom I share respect, love and hope.

.....to my wife, my brothers, sisters, and my nephews.

....to my supervisor Prof. Boulenouar Mohamed Yamin for his help and patience, in spite the hard moments he faces owing to his son's health problems. I hope from Allah a quick recovery for him.

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ABSTRACT

The following work deals with the existing combination between various factors that constitute the modern life from one hand and the cultural genocide that the indigenous peoples from all over the world are subjected to especially those living in North America. *Whispering in Shadows* by Jeanette Armstrong is considered as a masterpiece from a native writer. It represents how Okanagan and other indigenous peoples of North America experience contemporary forms of slow genocide as a result of the alien cultures imposed upon them by force by the white settlers, and the impact of pollution and displacement from ancestral lands. This novel treats the real sense of life from an Okanagan writer's point of view and details the perspectives of the indigenous peoples to reconstruct what was destroyed by non-native settlers and put an end to the abusive exploitation of the indigenous peoples regarded as inferior people as well as the preservation of the natural recourses that represent a sacred heritage since the destruction of the environment and the permanent exploitation of the existing recourses lead to the destruction of every single aspect of life that the indigenous consider as part of them. The focus on human and non human aspects reflects the strong connection between Okanagan and their ancestors' lands. These aspects are not considered as opposing subjects but interrelated parts of one identity. The reconsideration of indigenous peoples identity and culture by the reconnection to the lands of ancestors and the preservation of the indigenous cultural heritage could be a healing process for these devastated communities, that tend to resist in countless and sustainable ways the various forms of destabilization and a real cultural genocide by trying to rebuild their personal identity since they are exposed to both physical and moral torture every single day. *Whispering in Shadows* is an opportunity to shed light on hidden aspects of indigenous life to attain equality, respect, spiritual and cultural stability for Native communities.

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Acronyms

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

WCTU: Woman's Christian Temperance Union

**GENERAL
INTRODUCTION**

General introduction

It has been noticed that the indigenous people all over the world suffer from severe physical and mental ailments in some of the richest as well as the poorest countries of the world. The answer lies in the political history of these people as centuries of political, economic, social and cultural repression and subjugation have taken a toll. Modern human beings suffer from psychological traumas in all the cultures, but the native people all over the world, who have been dispossessed by the invaders, are perennial victims of psychological diseases. The worst sufferers among them are the *Inuit* of Canada, *Maoris* of New Zealand, *Indians* of Americas, *Amazonian* tribes in Brazil and *Aborigines* of Australia. In the other societies where the masters have gone away after gleaning the wealth, situation is improving, but natives in countries like Australia, The United States, New Zealand, and Canada still remain under the rule of the whites. The situation in these settled colonies has been exacerbated further because the natives have been rendered landless and remain powerless in their own countries. They are governed by others who are putting their cultures in jeopardy. This has resulted in serious degradation of mental health of the indigenous people all over the world.

According to this modest coverage of the subject, indigenous cultural genocide has hardly been explored by a wide number of researchers, but many sides of the indigenous lives still remain ambiguous. This study contributes to shed light on some indigenous voices which had been historically silenced and excluded from the public discourse through the lens of a Native woman poet,

novelist and artist who has experienced racism, omnipresent oppression and assimilation in imperialist reserves.

Through the analysis of Jeannette Armstrong's *Whispering in Shadows* this study seeks to depict to certain extent the real ailment that the indigenous peoples and specifically women who are not only ill-treated but are also abused and exploited and looked down upon like a repugnant foul smelling object.

Jeannette Armstrong's perspectives offer a specific vision to the way indigenous communities should be regarded; it is a vision of a native female writer whose attachment to her ancestors' roots and culture is so deep since the indigenous concerns represent a part of her existence. But the questions that may be raised in this context are: To what extent can this writer depict indigenous ailment accurately especially on the cultural level? And more importantly, what devices and strategies does she focus on in her portrayal of indigenous communities in general and woman in particular to resist the sexual and racial subjugation? How does the European patriarchal society affect Indigenous identity in general and women in particular? How can the Indigenous peoples resist the forces arrayed against the earth and still maintain a life that is connected to the land?

This magister dissertation consists of three major hypotheses which are:

- a- *Whispering in Shadows* can offer an encounter with Indigenous life in all its diverse aspects and evoke the inner ailment of Indigenous communities.
- b- The devastating consequences of colonialism have eroded the traditional family system that has put women under the double burden of oppression.
- c- The connection to the earth symbolizes the reconstruction of the self considered as the marginalized 'other'.

As a result, this study is by no means an attempt to analyze the novel's characters so as to understand the hidden message the writer wants to convey and

then provide more details about the daily life of indigenous peoples as oppressed minorities living under painful cultural genocide in even so called the advanced world so as to preserve the world's diversity and keep working towards certain universal homogeneity.

The assumption of the supremacy and the cultural arrogance of the Europeans have contributed in the process of silencing Native voices whose identities were kept away from the international scene, since they were regarded as communities without written history on official documents or savage and ignorant without any idea of God and thanks to the white colonizer who belonged to literate societies that these peoples were able to write their contemporary history and be in touch with the church through its missionaries to convert them to Christianity. That's why, it is believed that the Canadian history emerged by the arrival of the first white man on the territories of the so called the new world.

Thanks to God and his Church, you are civilized people You must ask for God's pardon every day for the sins of your ancestors, thank him for introducing you to the catholic faith, for snatching you from the hands of the Devil who kept your ancestors in a life of idolatry, theft, lying and cannibalism.

(Sioui 1995: 9)

Postcolonial era was an opportunity for them to show their ambitions and try to denounce the Eurocentric prejudices and come again to limelight by exposing proofs of their rich cultures in spite the fact it was generally based on storytelling. The Native communities whose struggle still continue for a real emancipation from the colonizer's captivity are viewed as the most govern nations in the globe owing to the permanent rule of the settlers who had become a bitter reality that they cannot overcome.

Native writers from all walks of life entered the struggle by recreating their past by registering it in literary works relying on their elders' stories so as to safeguard their own identity and cultures for the next generations who most of

the time find themselves in critical situations in their quest for the identity of origin ,because the governmental educational policy had tremendous impact on the Natives' cultures since the residential schools tried to teach the young Natives some alien norms and brush the Natives' ones inherited from their ancestors and implement in their minds that their past was meaningless since it was inspired from a world based on savage norms.

Hegemonic colonization is a more dangerous form of subjugation because it lasts forever and remains as a part the colonized peoples whose integration with the colonial life became an obvious process in which they adopted the colonizer's culture, his system of values, attitudes, morality, institutions and also his mode of production that resulted in losing everything native. In one of her famous poems about the devastating consequences of residential school, Rita Joe states:

I lost My Talk

*I lost my talk
The talk you took away
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie School
You snatched it away
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world
Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful
So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me*

This poem reflects the colonizers policy to change the Natives' realities although these devastated communities tend defend their identity in a pacific way. Through the permanent subjugation associated with torture, marginalization and many other measures, the white colonizer tend to weaken the Natives by making them insignificant and in low position but not to destroy them fully. Such behaviors have resulted in devastating results on the Native cultures and history by creating a new and disfigured and undesirable history completely opposite to the true version. Therefore, getting rid of such dishonoring past constitutes an urgent claim for the new generations who were systematically deprived from their true identity in residential schools. Most of them internalized an inferior image. So, they feel themselves uncomfortable shameful and in weak position that's why too many of them tend to hide their true identity. This imperial educational system was a tool in the hand of the colonizer to exploit the colonized communities psychologically by controlling their minds and marginalize their cultures and languages as well.

“In school, I was taught that we were retarded. I believed that I was dumb, in comparison to white students, and that I was low class, crude and dirty. Hostility and violence emerged with self hatred .The fact that I could not play on the village baseball team and hockey team because I was not white stung me deeply. Teenagers were invited into white homes for games and parties, but the door closed when I was about to enter There were reasons, I told myself, why I should be treated differently I lived in a low class colony. I did not speak the ‘Standard English’ I was socially ‘awkward’ in a middle class house with polished furniture in a decorated room. I felt ashamed and guilty that I was a half breed.”

(Howard, 1999: 97)

Many Native scholars claim that North America when invaded by the Europeans was a continent that included hundreds of tribes with various and rich cultures and languages in contrast to what the colonizers announced. These tribes and regardless their differences were grouped under one umbrella by the European oppressor, i.e., they all take the name of Indians and logically be the same so as to bury the rich past of the colonies. This negligence to the people's diverse cultural backgrounds had enormously affected the Native identity and culture especially those belonging to the new generations.

This dissertation is composed of three main chapters containing theoretical and practical considerations, starting with generalities related the subject of study and reaching details by the end, to a particular extent.

The opening chapter entitled Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives is divided into two parts, the first one tackles postcolonial studies as a new sphere of research, whereas the second deals with feminist theories and literature that have contributed in enriching the international library. It constitutes an attempt to shed some light on postcolonial theories and studies relevant to the subject matter of this modest research with a particular focus on the Canadian context.

The second chapter, "Towards Emancipated Indigenous Communities" is devoted to the contribution of contemporary women indigenous literature to unveil some ambiguous sides of indigenous traditional lives as well as their suffering under the colonizer's rule and the alien perceptions imposed on them by force. The intention is to show the importance of literature as a modern way of resistance generated by Native word warriors who definitely believe in their nativity that make them others.

However, the third chapter, labeled "The Quest for a Myth of Origins" aims at providing obvious answers to some extent to the present research questions and hypotheses through the analysis of the novel, *Whispering in Shadows* that evokes the deep ailment the indigenous communities all over the

world and especially those living in Canada experience from one day to another. The writer tries to constructs the myth of origins, the Natives seek to realize by combating the new realities the white settlers implemented by force and resulted in devastating consequences on the Native communities in general and the indigenous women in particular.

The following research dissertation would pave the way to explore some prominent issues in the field of Native Canadian studies that represent an appropriate opportunity towards the portrayal of Native peoples' grim realities that made them vulnerable to Western domination.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL AND

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The world history is full of events that had affected the existence of nations either positively or negatively but the most predominant element is the attempts of some imperial powers to dominate the weak or uncivilized peoples so as to plunder natural resources and gain more economic strength. As a result there were rebellion movements, armed or cultural in order to oppose the injustice and maltreatment imposed on them by force. The Indigenous communities were the most affected by the oppression of the west; therefore the emergence of cultural movements became a necessity and a claim for decolonization in order to depict some ailments of these oppressed nations.

Chapter one, is an attempt to provide simple and clear definitions to some extent to crucial concepts that have a close relation to the present research work and provide details about the historical events that constitute a cornerstone in the life of indigenous communities as well as talking about the role of literature in people's lives as a means of opposition to transgression and subjugation and an element towards minds liberation.

1.2. Postcolonial Studies

The emergence of a new space of writing during the last four decades has contributed in creating a body of writing in different genres of literary works that try to depict the contemporary realities of independent nations that were under alien control for a very long period. More importantly, rejecting Eurocentricism that dehumanizes the Native communities through arrogant assumptions that regard the other as inferior becomes a necessity.

As a new field of research, post colonialism and owing to the wide range of subjects that reflect diverse issues such as values, norms and cultural ethos that still continue to be an uphill task for independent societies, endeavors to examine the relations between the colonizer and the colonized, as well as the position of women that has emerged as a major concern in the modern world through intense social actions and intellectual exercises on gender equality.

1.2.1. Colonialism

Colonialism is the establishment of a colony in one territory by a political power from another territory, and the subsequent maintenance, expansion, and exploitation of that colony. The term is also used to describe a set of unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and often between the colonists and the indigenous peoples. The 2006 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* "uses the term 'colonialism' to describe the process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia. It discusses the distinction between colonialism and imperialism and states that:

"given the difficulty of consistently distinguishing between the two terms, this entry will use colonialism as a broad concept that refers to the project of European political domination from the sixteenth

to the twentieth century that ended with the national liberation movements of the 1960s." (2006)

In his preface to Jürgen Osterhammel's *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, Roger Tignor says, "*For Osterhammel, the essence of colonialism is the existence of colonies, which are by definition governed differently from other territories such as protectorates or informal spheres of influence.*" (Tignor, 2005)

Colonialism refers also to the imperialist extension of European powers to many parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East etc and dominating the Native nations so as to exploit all the possible resources that exist by military force and adopting a policy to extend this expansion to the social, ecological, economic, political and broadly culturally exchanges, *Collins English Dictionary* defines colonialism as "*the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker people or areas.*"(2014), it is then a practice of domination which involves the subjugation of one people to another with the will to expand and establish a colonial rule. However, the term colonialism is covered with a certain ambiguity since it cannot be distinguished from imperialism. Most people consider the two concepts as synonyms because they involve the political and economic control over an alien nation from different territories. Colonies is the Latin word of colony meaning farmer. It refers to the transfer of population to a new territory as permanent settlers without wasting their status towards their countries of origin, whereas the term imperialism means that a dominating power exercises control over another nation whether through settlement or indirect mechanisms of control.

Colonialism is not modern, it is global and transnational phenomenon since the world's history is full of concrete examples in which imperial powers extended to other territories and settle there, so as to dominate the natural resources and spread religious beliefs, as in the case of ancient Greek colonies or

the Americas to name just a few of the most famous examples. The phenomenon of colonialism is not restricted to a particular place or a specific time. Nevertheless, the giant leap in technological advance of the sixteenth century allowed the colonial powers to expand in more remote places and to transport great numbers of their populations to the colonized territories to settle there, which represents the largest colonial projects at that time. Thus, the European powers could control great parts of the world including Americas. So, Spanish and Portuguese explorers conquered “new” lands in these territories. This conquest continued over 400 years until the beginning of the First World War. By that time, great competition began among the supreme powers so as to dominate other territories for the goal of gaining more benefits through the wealth existing there to develop their countries. Ever though, they generally declared that these colonial projects were for the sake of civilizing the Native communities who were considered integral parts of the colonial countries which shared the common perception of the “other” on the basis of the presumed superiority of the “self”.

The period of acquiring territories outside Europe became so unique in European history, since the intervention of the colonial powers especially in the African continent, was marked by the broad participation of the European communities in the political, economic and cultural fields which had deep-reaching effects on the historical progress of these European societies themselves.

Intractable conflicts are found in many colonies that were once ruled by imperialist European powers. Any historian specialized in the modern history must confront one of the fundamental paradoxes of the last century; the acquisition and rule by force of colonies by the advanced democracies. Whatever the official claims, western colonization during this period was in large part an act of state sanctioned violence. One of the crudest levels, liberal regimes forcibly pacified Native peoples who resisted colonization. On a more subtle level, their rule rested on a set of coercive practices that violated their own

democratic values. Colonized persons were designated as subject, not citizens; they had duties but few rights.

Colonialism had disastrous effects on the social systems of the colonized peoples, for the indigenous communities the drastic change in the social norms by the introduction of patriarchal systems had led to a shift in indigenous women's rights who shared a significant position in her Native communities because the European invaders realized that the domination of the land and people should be proceeded by disempowering indigenous women since the indigenous social system was regarded as incompatible with the colonial dynamics. Women were placed in precarious positions and their roles were offered to men, consequently women started to live in a new cycle of life running the risks of poverty and violence as well.

European economic and cultural expansion was especially destructive. The values of Native peoples were undermined completely since indigenous students were taught to devalue all what belongs to their ancestors and value anything Euro-Canadian. This situation had contributed in the degradation of the indigenous communities particularly on the cultural level.

One of the most predominant forms of colonialism is settler colonialism which is a global and transnational phenomenon, and as much a thing of the past as a thing of the present. There is no such thing as neo-settler colonialism or post-settler colonialism because settler colonialism is a resilient formation that rarely ends. Not all migrants are settlers; as Patrick Wolfe has noted, settlers come to stay. They are founders of political orders who carry with them a distinct sovereign capacity. And settler colonialism is not colonialism: settlers want Indigenous people to vanish (but can make use of their labor before they are made to disappear). Sometimes settler colonial forms operate within colonial ones, sometimes they subvert them, and sometimes they replace them. But even

if colonialism and settler colonialism interpenetrate and overlap, they remain separate as they co-define each other.

Edward Said, and after studying colonialism and its effects on peoples throughout the world, states that opposition and resistance to colonialism is articulated first and foremost by culture, before they are through politics, economics, and military history.

1.2.2. Post colonialism

Post colonialism is a concept which is far from being definitional, despite the problems and limitations in terminology. This notion may be defined with issues attached to it for more complete understanding. Such a term which may have its roots in western language, is used to apply to a recent phenomenon that has now passed (post) to a period that usually supposes colonial departure from former colonies.

Post-colonialism emerges as a result of colonialism. It refers to the discourse which deals with “*the effects of colonization on culture and societies*” (Ashcroft, et al, 2007: 168). It concerns with the culture after the period of colonialism until the present days or, in other words, the post-independence period. “*During and, sometimes, after the colonial period, the colonizer’s thoughts, particularly Western thoughts, have dominated world’s culture and marginalized the colonized’s culture.*” (Selden and Widdowson, 1993: 189) The colonizer’s culture is seen as the higher and superior one, above the colonized’s culture that is seen as the “Other”.

Post-colonialism refers to the era that follows the period of European conquest to the third world countries which ended roughly in the mid 20th century. IT is an intellectual movement that precisely deals with self

determination and how the colonized nations incorporate or reject the western or alien norms. It is therefore, the study of the legacy of domination of imperialist powers that aims mainly to focus on the liberation of peoples' minds from the imperial political, socio-economic, and psychological effects and then enabling them to deconstruct all what was inherited from the former-colonizer.

“Post colonialism is the study of the ideological and cultural impact of western colonialism and in particular of its aftermath whether as a continuing influence (neocolonialism) or in the emergence of newly articulated independent national and individual identities.”

(Brooker, 1999:193)

Nowadays, various aspects can be identified in history, literature, culture and more importantly in identity that remains the most attractive element. According to Fidel Fajardo-Acosta post colonialism refers to:

“a cultural, intellectual, political, and literary movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries characterized by the representation and analysis of the historical experiences and subjectivities of the victims, individuals and nations, of colonial power. Post colonialism is marked by its resistance to colonialism and by the attempt to understand the historical and other conditions of its emergence as well as its lasting consequences.”

(Acosta, <http://essaytoday.biz/essays/a-Study-Of-Cinema-And-Post-Colonial>)

Post-colonialism as a body of a theory and a study of cultural and political change continues to function relying on three fundamental bases; an initial awareness of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority enforced by being in a colonized state, and the struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy and a growing awareness of cultural overlap and hybridity. Owing to its

fundamental role in the modern literary scene post colonialism has been the subject of numerous researches and studies of famous American and European universities and institutes since the last six decades. It evokes a total different perception when dealing with the relation between both the colonizer and the colonized. It questions the validity of the assumptions that states the superiority of the colonizer's culture than the colonized's one.

The term postcolonial implies all the ambiguity and complexity of the various cultural experiences and addresses all the aspects of the colonial process. It focuses on the impact and consequences of colonialism and imperialism after a devastating exploitation of the native people and their land.

Colonialism is still having devastating impact on the colonized communities thus; the process of decolonization became a necessity through an endless resistance and reconstruction of all the norms altered by the invaders whose dominance led to the evaporation of a complete independence especially on political and cultural levels.

Postcolonial era is considered as a vital opportunity towards more creativity and resistance and representation of subjugated majority because various means of opposition became available especially on the cultural, social and political plan. Thus, issues like aboriginal people, cultural nomadism and western feminism had become relevant subjects accessible to a wider audience.

1.2.2.1. The main Issues of post colonialism

Post colonialism has increasingly become a matter of scientific examination since many aspects of it can directly be found in history literature and politics but also in approach to culture and identity of the oppressed people as well as the imperialist powers.

1.2.2.2. Displacement

One of the most common issues of postcolonial study is displacement which basically means homelessness. According to Bill Ashcroft, et al displacement is “*a state in which someone is ‘out of place ‘or not belonging to a certain place.’*” (Ashcroft, et al, 1989: 9) Therefore, a crisis of identity may occur owing to displacement since it is related to two main elements; self and place.

Dislocation results from migration, enslavement or the deprivation of once territories such as the case of the indigenous people of North America and especially those belonging to what is now Canada. While denigration refers to the subjugation of the indigenous culture by the culture of the dominant power which is regarded superior and as a model.

Displacement is by no means an imposed policy by the colonizers on Native communities which make them feel alienated and live a real trauma and psychic stress.

‘Dislocation is the result of migration, enslavement, transportation, or removal for indentured labor, while cultural denigration is the oppression of the indigenous culture by a superior culture. Therefore, displacement might happen to people who experience either colonization or just simply migration. The sense of displacement makes the colonized people or migrants to feel alienated and have crisis in self-image. Their experience in a new place or with a new culture make them feel the sense of ‘otherness’, since the different condition in a new place demands them to change and adapt to the new condition.’

(Ashcroft et al, 1989: 9-11)

Leading a new and modern life in accordance with the western norms in cities far from the original culture and original traditions make the indigenous people feel different from their old self and different from the other people with whom they share the same new place. This difference creates a sort of cultural gaps between the original culture and the new place’s culture owing to their different norms in spite the fact that it allows them to become bicultural.

1.2.2.3. Hybrid Identity

A hybrid identity results from a cross or a blend of two or more identities owing to some circumstances generally linked to historical events that take its toll on human beings especially those who are under control of other nations.

The formation of the hybrid identity is basically linked to the factors of displacement that implemented the indigenous communities in a new cultural context. This identity is often subjugated to progress; it is therefore a matter of becoming as well as being.

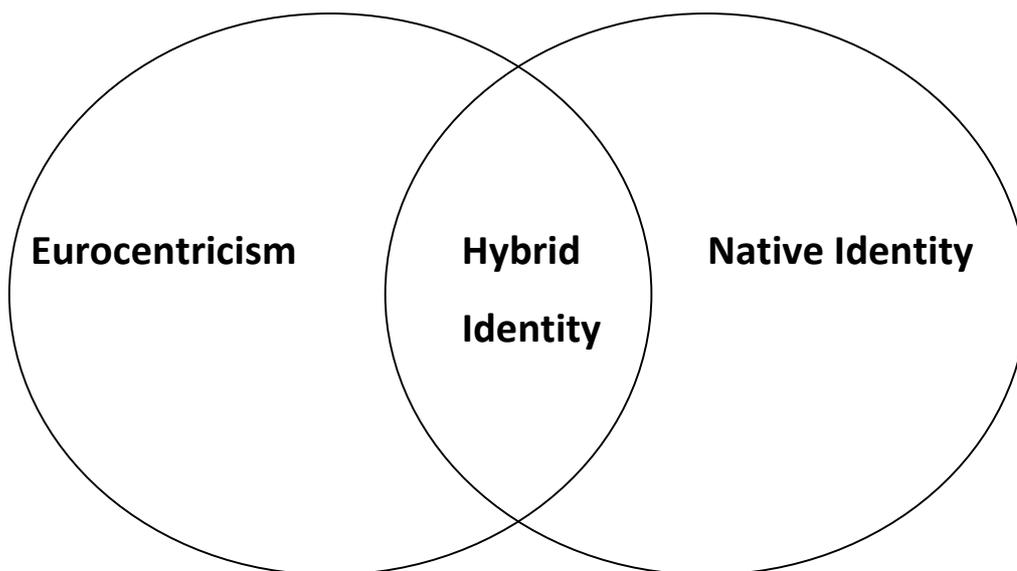


Figure 1.1: Hybrid Identity formation

For the indigenous people, some local cultural elements were totally or partly eroded as a result of the colonizer's assumptions that put their culture in jeopardy and regard Native communities as second class or inferior citizens who are supposed to develop themselves to reach superiority represented in the western norms.

The new place can be a factor of hybrid identity creation through the adaptation of the colonizer's culture. As generations had become part of the dominated nations living under the rule of colonial powers, they had more or less adopted the western tradition and culture so; they turn to bicultural since they got access to two cultures; the original and the one imposed by the invaders which becomes the most dominant owing to governmental policies. These generations could not from one hand overcome the colonial disease, i.e, the western way of life and from the other hand; they could not manage to create a completely new one either.

Hybrid identity is often evoked in literary texts by writers from native origins so as to depict their nations' experiences through English as the colonizer's language and their mother tongue as well.

1.2.2.4. Cultural Clash

The world's cultural space constitutes an interesting field of study especially with cultures that are considered as opposed to each other or full of misunderstanding since what binds these cultures is fewer in comparison to the wide gap that separates them. Cultural clash is defined by Rogers Steinfatt as follows: "*The conflict that occurs between two or more cultures when they disagree about a certain value.*"(Steinfatt, 1999: 96)

In the indigenous case unbuffered contact or cultural clash as an inevitable consequence of former colonial time occurred by the arrival of the invaders who brought with them alien norms based on patriarchy that oppose the local norms. But when the colonized nations got their independence, the colonial relicts were still omnipresent and deeply integrated in the Natives minds and were supposed to be removed by some sort of decolonization or destruction of the oppressors' values and regain power. Thus, the long dwelling of the colonizer and the endless attempts for the sake of eroding the Native identity and the complicated

relationship mainly developed from the Eurocentric perspectives, resulted in the emergence of native cultural voices and movements that appeal to the preservation of the native norms, therefore the loss of power of the colonial countries over the former colonies, has contributed in violent cultural clash between both the original cultures and the western one which is basically reflected in literature that prospered during the postcolonial era.

1.2.3. Postcolonial literature

Recent decades have witnessed a wide and deep intention to postcolonial literature that has pushed itself to the front of the literary scene through a barrage of texts on silenced people dealing with ethnicity, gender roles, identity, political and personal relations and so forth. This kind of literature demonstrates clearly that there is another kind of literature that emerged during the colonial era which was written in English before the colonized countries got their independence from the British Empire. Australia, New Zealand, India, Sub-Saharan countries and some Caribbean Countries inherited the customs and the language of the colonizer that enabled them to produce a different realistic literature named “*The local color*” or postcolonial literature that talks about customs, attitudes, religion and legends. ‘In a broad sense, postcolonial literature is writing which has been “*affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day.*” (Ashcroft et al, 1995: 2)

Postcolonial literature is any work produced by intellectuals expressing opposition to colonialism at the same time that many colonies were fighting their way to independence or even after the presence of colonial powers in several places in the globe through several classic texts that were published between the 1950’s and 1990’s reflecting the problems and consequences of decolonization of a nation on the cultural and political levels.

“It points the way towards possible study of the effects of colonization and between writing in English and writing in indigenous languages....as well as writing in other language Diasporas.”

(Ashcroft et al, 1989: 23)

Postcolonial literature seeks to assert the richness and validity of indigenous cultures in an effort to restore pride in practices and traditions that were systematically degraded under colonialism. It covers literary critiques of and about literature. This literature also seeks at restoring a certain connection between indigenous people and places through description, narration, and dramatization, besides making the necessary efforts to preserve indigenous cultures and traditions and then resist the stereotypes in accuracies and generalizations which the colonizer circulated in educational , political and social texts and settings attempting to reshape dominant meanings.

Postcolonial writers who are considered as anti-colonial freedom fighters, generally deal through their literary works deeply with matters of subordination and exclusion by recording segregation, or a history of genocide, including slavery, apartheid and the mass extinction of peoples such as the indigenous communities all over the world in order to empower the dominated peoples so as to gain certain place in a modern world which is marked by globalization. This represents a healing process that reveals the total difference of the Natives from the English community and then a distinctive identity.

Through postcolonial literature Native writers tend to analyze the colonial period with their new perspectives and a profound and independent identity. During the colonial period, English language was used as an instrument that enables the colonizer to spread their culture and customs, by teaching English language which constitutes the only way of communication for the Natives to deal with the settler community or gain a certain privilege, to have a place in the society otherwise, they were considered inferior and even slaves. This behavior

led to the emergence of a new era that witnessed the rejection of all the new norms imposed on them, starting by the abrogation of English in favor of their own language. So, writers decided to rely on their own language so as to oppose the colonizers malpractices and the imposition of their cultures by force but, the movement of abrogation was inefficient at all since it couldn't help them to communicate with a large number of settlers. So, Appropriation, was needed since it refers to the use of English in a conscious way without being imposed on them. The Native communities started to use English in their own way by introducing elements from their cultures, words or even accent that makes them different from the English community which resulted in the rise of a great number of writers and subjects related to all the fields of life of different ex-colonies. Most writers such as Gina Wiskers, Deepika Bahri and many others recognize that the influence of the colonizer still resists, represented in the values and behaviors of these ex-colonized societies. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *culture and imperialism* (1993) explained that cultural representations were central first for the process of colonization of other lands and then of obtaining independence from the colonizer. "To assume control over a territory or a nation was not only to exert political or economic power, it was also to have imaginative command." (Boehmer, 2005: 48)

Women writers of the previous colonies often find a wide spread space for them to express themselves in patriarchal societies through literature which represents a means of empowerment since postcolonial literature emergence was for the purpose of opposing domination by the colonizer and even if it is produced during the colonial period it is considered postcolonial owing to its nature that expresses opposition. It generally bears different themes related to current things such as slavery, migration, suppression and resistance, race, gender, place, and the responses to the discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, anthropology and linguistics so as to depict the real oppression that minorities suffer from, for the sake of maintaining their identities, combating segregation and marginalization. It is regarded as a

literature of 'otherness' and resistance written out of the specific local experience.

Simon During argues a more inclusive definition, calling it "*the need, in, nation or groups which have been victims of imperialism to achieve an identity uncontaminated by Universalist or Eurocentric concepts or images*" (During, 1990:113). Works of literature that are defined postcolonial often record racism or a history of genocide, including slavery, apartheid, and the mass extinction of peoples in different regions in the world.

"Have you ever been the only person of your own color or ethnicity in a large group or gathering? It has been said that there are two kinds of white people: those who have never found themselves in a situation where the majority of people around them are not white, and those who have been the only white person in the room. At that moment, for the first time perhaps, they discover what it is really like for the other people in their society, and, metaphorically, for the rest of the world outside the west: to be from a minority, to live as the person who is always in the margins, to be the person who never qualifies as the norm, the person is not authorized to speak.

(Young, 2001:109)

Postcolonial literature then is a vital opportunity towards a powerful and promising response to a more valid assumption of the subjugated communities; it reveals the ways in which native authors attempt to build balanced relationships and conversation across cultures.

"Postcolonial literature is a body of literary writings that reacts to the discourse of colonization. Post-colonial literature often involves writings that deal with issues of de-colonization or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. It is also a literary critique to texts that carry racist or colonial undertones. Postcolonial literature, finally in its most recent form, also attempts to critique the contemporary postcolonial discourse that

has been shaped over recent times. It attempts to re-read this very emergence of Postcolonialism."

(Nasser Vaezy, 2014)

1.3. Postcolonial Literary Criticism

Post-colonialism emerges as a result of colonialism that has various effects on culture and societies of the dominated nations. It evoked the impact on culture of Natives in the postcolonial era until the present days, since the colonizers' thoughts have dominated world's culture and marginalized the native cultures by considering them inferior to the colonizer 's one, that represent perfection. Post-colonialism then, provides another perception of dealing with crucial matters related to the way native culture is regarded and express realities of the colonized peoples.

Literary criticism emerged distinctly in 1990's in some important literary works such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and began to be used by other well known writers' books such as Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1987), Ashcroft's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Bhabha's *Nation and Narration*(1990), and Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

"Postcolonial criticism is also used as a literary criticism. It draws attention to cultural difference issues in literary texts. One purpose of postcolonial literary criticism is to challenge the claims of universalism constructed by western norms disregard cultural, social, regional and national difference presented in literature."

(Barry, 1995:191)

Postcolonialism then attempts to oppose the unfair judgment that puts the Natives or the « others » standards in jeopardy or in the margin, while the western standards are considered as the only valid norms that everything is based around them. Fanon in (Barry, 1995:192) states that the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past.

Natives have to defend their own identity and preserve their cultural heritage which is supposed to depict realities of Native nations 'standards and values. Edward Said who is considered as one of the most predominant writers in the field of rejection of universalism criticized it for considering the East as the projection of the bad aspects of the west.

Literary criticism tends to defend the literary texts written by Natives and encourages writers to produce texts that oppose the assumptions that all what is western is valid and all what comes from the others is not and perceive cultural difference, diversity, hybridity, plurality as vital elements that should be dealt with in literary texts that constitute a crucial site of engaging in the female liberation struggle, mapping resistance and contributing to the attainment of female self and collective liberation.

1.4. Postcolonial Novel between Resistance and Co-Existence

Bill Ashcroft in *The Empire Writes Back* argues that the literature offers one of the most important ways in which the postcolonial period's perceptions are expressed and the day to day realities experienced by colonized peoples have been powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential.

“ I find, in all great novels, a human project, call it passion, love, liberty ,justice, inviting us to actualize it to make it real, even if we know that it is doomed to fail.” (Fuentes, 2005)

Postcolonial novel as a very crucial literary genre used by a wide range of Native writers for the sake of opposing the systematic malpractice of the imperialist powers for excluding and silencing voices tempting to represent the subjugated communities and depict their sufferings in an accurate way, to some extent. This kind of work generally deals with the most relevant subjects such as place and displacement that led to the crisis of identity and put the Native communities in jeopardy. It gives an importance to cultural specificities that differentiate the local people from the invaders as a sort of resistance to

inaccuracies and generalization that circulated in educational, social and even political texts and settings.

Too many Native novelists combated the assumptions that exclude the native culture and identity through literary works that evoke the past and construct a clear present that depicts a world of the Natives for their own.

“Those of us who have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths, all certainties, [...] are thus released to describe our worlds in the way in which all of us, whether writers or not, perceive it from day to day.”

(Bates, 2008:120)

Writers from all walks of life who belong to Native communities such as Conrad Heart, Salman Rochdi, Chnua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, J.M Coetzee, Jean Rhys, Kiran Desai and Ben Okri produced numerous novels relying either on the colonizer’s language, i .e, English or their mother tongue so as to defend their existence as ‘others’ within their modern communities and admit a certain co-existence with the settlers. Their novels respond not only to written histories in terms of content and narrative form, but to concepts of history.

The shift of postcolonial novel from British literature generated by writers from British descent to world literatures in English was inevitable. It moved from traditional novel styles and themes to issues such as resistance, nationalism, diaspora and identity construction. It also engaged with depicting the problematic of the immigrants state in the aftermaths of postcolonial world.

Identity in postcolonial novel is a focal point in the struggle for self-identification from the heavy burden inherited from the colonizer and the native heritage. So, postcolonial novelists portray in their literary works the trauma the

colonial communities were exposed to, as an attempt to rebuilt independent minds after being liberated.

1.5. Concept of Feminism

Feminism is a group of political movements broadly representing women's interests. Feminist identity has been a popular research topic in Women's Studies and social psychology and a variety of different frameworks and instruments have been developed trying to organize what it means to be a feminist.

The word 'Feminism' is directly related to the claim of women rights and more specifically to an intense awareness of identity as women and the great interest in feminine problems. The marginalization and the oppression of women become the main concern of feminist movements owing to the devastating impact on the psychological level.

“The essence of Feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex, the proposition is to be regarded as constituting feminism”. (Richards, 1980: 01)

Margaret Homans has rightly pointed out that the concept of feminism raises fundamental queries about reading, writing and the teaching of literature. It operates as an interdisciplinary tool for social and cultural analysis and as a political practice that has transformed the precision of life and literature.

1.5.1. Defining Feminism

Feminism is a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position.

It is a collection of movements and ideologies that share a common stated aim to define establish and defend equal political, economic, cultural and social rights for women. Feminist identity has been a popular research topic in women's studies and social psychology and a variety of different frameworks and instruments have been developed trying to organize what it means to be feminist. Deborah Rhode states that:

“At the substantive level, it implies a commitment to equality between the sexes. At the methodological level, it implies a commitment to gender as a focus of concern and to analytic approaches that reflect women's concrete experiences. Underlying these commitments are certain core values of broader scope. Any ethical framework adequate to challenge gender subordination must similarly condemn the other patterns of injustice with which it intersects.”

(Rhode, 1991: 736)

Feminism has no single definition-it is a collective term, which has various critical perspectives and historical backgrounds: *“It has been determined differently to symbolize people's variety of thoughts and beliefs beside behaviors from divers socio-cultural contexts“*. (Bedjaoui, 2012: 31)

Literally, the term 'Feminism' has French origins, it is derived from the French word 'feminisme' that emerged during the nineteen century, and took a great space in the literary scene in the early 20th century.

“ The term 'feminist' seems to have first been used in 1871 in a French medical text to describe a cessation in development of the sexual organs and characteristics in male patients, who were perceived as thus suffering from 'feminization' of their bodies“.

(Ban, 2002: 87)

Many of the literary writers advocate activism as a part of their writing, since they believe that writing has a social objective. It represents an opportunity for radical change through literature as a new space for activism.

“I define feminism as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is dependence syndrome whether it is husband, father, the community or a religious group. When women will free themselves of the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes”.

(Nahal, 1990: 14-21)

Feminism in its broad sense is considered as the permanent struggle against all forms of patriarchal and sexist abuse and a necessary resistance for women’s identity and a status inside the communities. According to Fewzia Bedjaoui feminism is:

“An active political stance since it criticized the dominating patriarchal culture from a specific position and viewpoint, notably taking into account power, sex and gender relationships between people ,institutions and language towards the eradication of women’s oppression would it be in Europe, the Indian continent or elsewhere.”

(Bedjaoui, 2005: 91)

1.5.2. History of Canadian Feminism

Throughout the long Western history, women were marginalized and regarded inferior in Western societies on the basis of patriarchal principles that denied all women rights since they were viewed as incapable of taking decisions or participating in the public life that was exclusively reserved to male domination. Furthermore, women could not attend schools for some unjust social

perceptions that led to the restriction of women's role in their societies for a very long time; the Canadian women did not constitute an exception. The long and gradual struggle for women's rights resulted in the emergence of feminist movements that has gone through three waves each describing a period of intense activism and social change. The first wave that appeared during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by middle class white women to address the political inequality and the right to vote so as to increase the women's role in public life. The Canadian feminism was largely based in maternal feminism in which women should be regarded as an essential element in the society.

Religion constituted a vital factor in the deep history of the Canadian women's movement since it participated in the awakening of women activism owing to the rejection of the church of women as missionaries. So, they started collecting funds so as to send their missionaries abroad for religious purposes, while others contributed in training women to get a status in their societies as mainly teachers, doctors and nurses. The religious matters helped women to advocate social change towards a different vision to women. The WCTU was one of the first organizations calling for the women right for suffrage.

Hence, the second wave emerged for the sake of demanding social and economic equality and fighting patriarchal norms. It was a period of feminist activity in which various issues were put on the activists agendas. The engagement of women in the workforce during the second world war as well as their contribution to the war effort by volunteering or joining the army participated in the process of consciousness raising among women who started demanding women status and then equal rights especially after the oppressive regulations that emerged from the Canadian government after the end of the war and that incite women to come back to their traditional roles inside their homes.

This second wave of Canadian feminism focused on women's role in the workforce, the need for equal pay for equal work, a desire to address violence against women, and concerns about women's reproductive rights. The emergence

of Postcolonialism paved the way to the rise of the third wave of feminism in the mid 1990 which was mainly the same but represented with different colours, ethnicities, nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds, it is closely tied to notions of anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and anti-capitalism. It critiqued the second wave notion of sisterhood that did not take into consideration women's diverse experiences. However, the use of “waves,” has been critiqued for its failure to include feminist activism of, for example, Aboriginal and Québécois women who organized for changes in their own communities as well as for larger social change.

Waves	Period	Reason Why?
1 st wave	Late 19 th and 20 th century	- To address political inequality and the right to vote. - To increase women’s role in public life.
2 nd wave	20th century	- To focus on equality and patriarchal norms
3 rd wave	Mid 1990	- To deal with anti-racism and anti-colonialism

Table. 1.1 : Canadian Waves

1.5.3. Feminist Theory

It is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse. It examines women’s social roles, experience, interests and feminist politics in a variety of fields, such as anthropology and sociology, communication, psychoanalysis, economic education, philosophy and literature.

Feminist theory which establish from feminist movement aims at understanding and analyzing gender inequality and the socio-cultural role of women. Hence the existence of profusion in Feminism paved the way for various distinctive theories and movements. Such among them are Psychoanalytical feminism, Postcolonial feminism, Marxist-feminism, Black feminism. Feminists fight so as to allow women throughout the world to share society's opportunity with men and demanding amelioration in their social status.

1.5.4. Postcolonial Feminism

IT is a form of feminism emerged to represent the non white women since feminism has focused only on western cultures. It aims to depict the deep effects of colonialism on non white women due to racism. According to Chris Weedon (of Cardiff University) Postcolonial feminism seeks to account for the ways that racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-western woman in the postcolonial world.

Post-colonial feminism originated from the assumption that non western women are misrepresented since feminist theories in developed countries have defined women by their gender and not by social class, race, ethnicity or sexual preference. For this purpose postcolonial feminists combat this misrepresentation of the oppressed women that ignore their particularities and universalize them with western women or any group which does not share the same societal cultures and values. Post-colonial feminism as a movement was criticized by many feminists; they think it contributed in weakening the feminist movement by dividing it into many forms. Postcolonial Feminists combat misperception by telling their own stories, validating their existence, and being their own people, regardless of what other feminists claim they must or must not do.

Chilla Bulbeck in her article, "*Reorienting Western Feminism,*" challenges western women to "*Learn about the other woman, not as the stereotype we see in*

the popular media, either oppressed by foreign customs or as the exotic other, clad in colorful difference.”(Bulbeck, 1998: 20)

The arrival of a new generation of talented female writers created a literary phenomenon and a sort of rebellion influencing the contemporary literary landscape in postcolonial era to overcome the brutality of everyday life, to keep their hopes alive as distinct race that should be respected and not devaluated through prejudices that make their living worse.

1.5.5. Indigenous Feminism

It is a cultural movement and theory that seeks equality for indigenous communities. It focuses on issues related to colonialism and cultural discrimination. It is a branch of feminist theory that aims at the decolonization of both men and women and rejects the colonizer’s prejudices. Indigenous Feminism which has a different trajectory came out of a counterinsurgency against applying western feminism equally and effectively to all women without taking into consideration their very diverse experiences, this universal sisterhood was viewed as an attempt to colonization owing to the erasure of differences. For the indigenous women, both gender and race are interrelated subjects that can be addressed in different cultural spaces as they experience them therefore, they should work together towards women emancipation.

The Indian act made in 1951 had its toll on Native women, it contributed in the degrading of women status inside their societies, for instance, a Native man always passed on his status to his wife and children regardless to her race, while a Native woman who married a non-native lost her own status and could not pass on her status to her children. These conditions for qualifying for status caused many women to be displaced from their communities and constituted a platform for indigenous activism for achieving equality not only as women but as indigenous as well.

Andrea Smith has noted that many indigenous women believe “*that feminism is actually an indigenous concept that has been co-opted by white women.*” this argument reflects the high and respective status that the indigenous women had in a total different social system based on mutual respect and equality between the two sexes. Thus, the indigenous peoples are traditionally feminist. “*What we now call feminism Webster’s online dictionary defines as ‘the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes’-was simply a way of life to our ancestors.*” (Anderson, 2010: 82)

The recognition of the feminist roots of indigenous peoples would then empower and contribute in the process of their decolonization.

1.5.6. Indigenous Feminism Strategy

Indigenous literature also adopts strategies of deliberate silence over certain issues, almost as a means of holding power in hand. It is interesting to look at various arguments about Indigenous literature being the outcome of Indigenous suffering. For instance, in a cautionary tone, Stephen Muecke says, in “*Aboriginal Literature and the Repressive Hypothesis*”,

“That the “repressive hypothesis” is one such framing which I have rejected because it is burdened by a Romantic legacy of the expressive self. It would say that Aboriginal literature is the psychological outcome of social oppression.... Authenticity, problematic as it is for many reasons, is a necessary part of the formula which produces the repressive hypothesis.”

(Kurtzer, 2003: 181-188)

But it is also important to see the variety of opinions Aboriginal creative writers themselves have held about their writings, for they have held and expressed diverse views about themes, intention and inspiration of their works. For instance, Melissa Lucashenko does not see Aboriginal writing as a distinct body of work, but more as an issue of content: “*Aboriginal writing to me at the*

moment is a protest literature I suppose and it's centered around land and social justice and legal stuff."

Lee Maracle asserts that Indigenous writing is not only a strategy of decolonization that seeks to protest against dispossession, assimilation, and marginalization, but it is also a potent opportunity of "writing home" instead of simply "writing back".

1.5.7. Indigenous women and feminism

For several decades the caution that "*women should not position themselves 'on the same side' without any regard for the differences in power and privilege among women has circulated*" (Grande, 2003: 342).

Yet feminism continues to espouse a ubiquitous 'sisterhood' based on common female experiences, perceptions, values and goals. Unfortunately, feminists have neither sufficiently examined differences between and among women, nor adequately considered the historical and material specificity of Native identity. In light of this, the claim that "feminism is for everybody" seems more politically useful, or optimistic, than accurate. Feminists have been rightly accused of ignoring or eliding differences between and among women since feminism does not reflect the real Aboriginal women's ambitions because they are unique in their perception and articulation of oppression, having much more in common than with non-Native women, that's why Aboriginal women increasingly engage with feminist theory and forms of activism and lay for an Aboriginal feminism. Jackie Huggins writes that, "*Despite the general diversity of opinions in Aboriginal society, the strong stance that Aboriginal women take against the white women's movement remains universal.*" (Huggins, 1994:76)

This explains, in part, why so few Native women self-identify as feminist, and why alternative names for Native women's movements abound. Some writers employ variations on Patricia Hill Collins' term 'mother work,' which seeks to soften the feminist dichotomies of home/work.

1.6. Conclusion

This introductory chapter entitled historical and conceptual background is an attempt to shed some light on crucial concepts and theories of Postcolonialism, feminism and indignity in relation to the Canadian context in general and the indigenous one in particular. The different definitions of concepts and points of views about theories represent an important element to get a broad idea about the Native communities that struggle for surviving and maintaining their identities and cultures in a Eurocentric modern societies based on alien norms.

Highlighting issues such as identity, cultures, gender equality, patriotism and racism in postcolonial era remains one of the predominant challenges that merit more attention so as to get an obvious idea about oppressed Native communities living in modern Canada. Yet, indigenous literature serves as a space for reflecting the ailment of indigenous peoples who still suffer from segregation and inequality inside the so called modern society that regards human rights as sacred. The following chapter constitutes a vital opportunity towards an obvious idea about Indigenous literature that participate in the healing process of those oppressed communities in general and women in particular.

CHAPTER TWO

**TOWARDS EMANCIPATED
INDIGENOUS
COMMUNITIES**

Chapter Two

Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives :Towards Emancipated Indigenous Communities

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Chapter Two

Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives: Towards

Emancipated Communities

2.1. Introduction

North America in general and Canada in particular has been for a long time a peaceful land for primitive communities who lived in harmony with nature and felt themselves part of it, until the European invaders put feet on their territories as a sign of the beginning of a new cycle of sufferings. Therefore, it is said that the indigenous people throughout the colonial history have been subject to an extraordinary degree of regulation and perhaps are “the most governed people on the earth”. In fact, the Aborigines have been the victims of “individual and institutional racism the first one is more visible, while the second one is more subtle and operates covertly.

Struggles against injustice racism and oppression never ceased, relying on different strategies for the goal of pushing the European dominion back and gain some space of freedom. Literature then, is one of these strategies that entitle the indigenous intellectuals in general and women in particular regarded as word warriors to act on behalf of their silenced communities.

Women literature that emerged as a powerful and innovative force focuses on realism and the local North American context. Yet, it is a potential tool for the process of decolonization enforced by social memories of people that remain lodged in their minds and encoded in their daily practices that the colonizer tended to eliminate.

Moreover, a general overview about the contemporary Canadian literature especially the indigenous one is provided in this second chapter for the sake of highlighting the role of indigenous women literature in challenging the strategy of silencing Native communities.

2.2. Definitions of the Term Indigenous

The term indigenous is well defined as the original inhabitants to a particular place, practicing unique traditions. They retain social, cultural, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. They are called tribal peoples, first peoples and Native peoples. The indigenous peoples belong to different groups in different countries of the world and according to some statistics, their number is approximately 370 million, 70% of them live in Asia. There is no universally accepted definition for indigenous, though there are characteristics that tend to be common among indigenous peoples; they tend to have small populations relative to the dominant culture of their country. They have also distinctive cultural traditions that are still practiced and have their own land territory to which they are linked.

“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.”

(Cobo, 1986: 379)

Good Land stated that the indigenous communities are:

“A social group comprising families, clans, or generations, having its own customs, occupying a specific geographic territory and being independent of or having little contact with the dominant national society of the country in which they live”

(Goodland, 1982)

The indigenous peoples represent a minority in comparison with the whole number of population; and being inferior doesn't prevent them from preserve their identity in the flux of societies regarded as aliens for them.

“A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of state, in a non-dominant position, whose members being nationals of the state possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language”

(Capotorti, 1977)

2.3. Asserting Women's traditional roles and power

“Women were respected for their spiritual and mental strength and men were respected for their spiritual and physical strength. Women were given the responsibility in bearing children and were given the strength and power to carry that responsibility through. Men had always respected that spiritual and mental strength and women respected the men's physical strength. There was always a balance between men and women as each had their own responsibilities as a man and as a woman.”

(Jacobs, 2000: 35).

Traditional indigenous communities experienced very little breakdown, respect and honor were shared between men and women in the Mohawk tribes which were matriarchal societies; women were honored for their wisdom and vision. Both men and women were respected and considered equal in power and each one of them had his own autonomy within his personal life. To the Ojibway, the earth is woman, the mother of people. For the Anishnaabe, it was a woman who came to earth through a hole in the sky to care for the earth, it was a woman who taught the Original man about the medicines of the earth, and it was a woman who brought the pipe to the people that is used in the most sacred.

The imposition of new European values and cultural standards led to tremendous and destructive effects on the Native communities, for instance, the value of complementarity between men and women as equal partners in tribal society was undermined completely. Dr Sally Longstaffe of the child protection center declared:

“The razing of Indian societies and their traditions is well-documented. Symptoms of this dislocation are evident in high rates of unemployment, suicide, alcoholism, domestic violence, and other social problems. This loss of tradition has seriously damaged the oral means of preserving cultural norms, and the values which prohibit deviant behaviors have been obscured and often forgotten. Native peoples often appear reluctant to adopt “white” solutions to problems that stem from the latter’s apparent destruction of their societies.”

(Longstaffe, 1987: 3)

Indigenous women’s status inside their traditional communities was highly considered and since they possessed great capacities, they were able to hold positions of power and leadership; they traditionally played a prominent role in the consensual decision-making process of their communities.

Historians and other experts also emphasize that women across many First Nations were responsible for land holdings and allocation of resources—they controlled access to certain areas as well as distribution of its products. And, as scholars Shari M. Huhndorf et al, point out,

“Although Indigenous women do not share a single culture, they do have a common colonial history. The imposition of patriarchy has transformed Indigenous societies by diminishing Indigenous women’s power, status and material circumstances.”

(Huhndorf et al, 2010: 3)

European settlers imposed their own frameworks of understanding onto Aboriginal social systems, which had particular ramifications for Aboriginal women who were stripped of any formal involvement in the political process.

Many settlers held onto Victorian beliefs that women were delicate and ill-equipped for hard labor, and thus viewed Aboriginal women who worked the land as proof that Aboriginal men treated women as inferior, for they were doing the men’s work. The power and agency of Aboriginal women were invisible to them.

“Over the years more and more women were being thrown out of their homes by husbands. While the men then moved their girlfriends—often [non-status]—into the family home, the Indian women and children had to move into condemned houses or in with relatives who already were overcrowded. Since the Indian Act gave men sole ownership of property through certificates of possession, women had no housing rights or recourse to help through the law.”

(Silman, 1987: 11)

However, the indigenous cultures mainly based on oral tradition and the constant indigenous teachings of Native norms and values have served enormously the indigenous communities to gain certain strength today and preserve their identity. Thus, too many indigenous young people turn their gaze towards the traditional values of their ancestors so as to find answers to the confusing questions they face each day. Indigenous author Paula Gunn Allen points out:

“Since the coming of the Anglo-Europeans beginning in the fifteenth century, the fragile web of identity that long held tribal people secure has gradually been weakened and torn. But the oral tradition has prevented the complete destruction of the web, the ultimate disruption of tribal ways. The oral tradition is vital: it heals itself and the tribal web by adapting to the flow of the present while never relinquishing its connection to the past.”

(Allen, 1987: 45)

The introduction of the concept of enfranchisement in 1869 had tremendous and devastating impact in degrading indigenous women status through the legislations based on racist and sexist discrimination. Therefore, Western governments and especially the Canadian one had largely contributed in worsening the conditions of life of the Indian communities in general and women in particular. According to that legislation the Indians would lose their status and be treated exactly as the other Canadians. This new reality has affected directly the status of women who were assigned roles inferior to that of men, contrary to the one assigned to them inside their traditional spaces.

2.4. Women Struggle VS Women Emancipation

Violence against women constitutes a real problem on both the national and the international levels since they are permanently exposed to abuse and exploitation. It is a pervasive problem that crosses every social boundary that remains a significant barrier to women's equality and has devastating impacts on the lives of women.

“Violence against women has been recognized, at both the national and international levels, as a serious and ongoing impediment to gender equality and women's human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

(United Nations, 1993)

“Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

(Ibid)

Indigenous women rights constitute a real challenge for the Canadian authorities owing to the bad conditions as well as the severe treatment they experience in their daily life, in spite of the dire attempts to reduce the tension and then implement a convenient system that enables both Natives and non natives to live in harmony with each other. Recent statistics state that indigenous women in general are subjected to more violent incidents due to racist and sexist stereotypes that deny their dignity and allow men to act violently against them in almost all the Canadian territories especially in big cities, which urged some rising voices to demand serious and immediate actions to protect them. *“Research reveals that indigenous women experience dramatically higher rates*

of violent victimization than non-Aboriginal women do.” (Proulx and Perrault 2000; Hylton 2002; Brzozowski et al. 2006)

Violence within the domestic context is the most pervasive form of victimization experienced by Aboriginal women. *“Nearly one-quarter (24%) of Aboriginal women in Canada reported having been assaulted by a current or former spouse, compared to 7% of non-Aboriginal women.”* (Brzozowski et al. 2006). Results from other studies suggest that this figure may be as high as 90% in some Aboriginal communities. (Ontario Native Women’s Association 2007).

According to the RCMP report released in May 2014, indigenous women are more likely victims to domestic violence and sexual assaults, the same report states that 1,017 indigenous women and girls were murdered from 1980 to 2012. The number of disappearance of women and girls in suspicious circumstances in the Native communities remains the highest although they represent a minority from the non native women and girls ; Native women ‘s Association of Canada was able to document 582 cases of missing or murdered indigenous women and girls mostly from the last two decades, this later shows obviously the alarming rate of crimes that is becoming a national human right crisis that threatens both women and girls from all walks of life. So, violence against women in Canada continues to be persistent and ongoing problem.

Governmental policies for the past decades had led to precarious situations for indigenous communities in general and indigenous women in particular leaving them vulnerable to the risk of exploitation and attack, and these criminal acts are motivated by racism. Bernadette Smith, whose sister Claudette Osborne-Tyo has been missing since 2008, said: *“Families were excluded, lawyers got rich, pockets got lined, lots of recommendations were made, [but] how many of them were actually implemented? Not very many. There are still women dying out there.”*

Indigenous women have articulated an agenda and developed new strategies to combat the numerous forms of violence that have been perpetrated by nation-states against indigenous women and peoples alike.

Recent consecutive Canadian governments have tried and still to tackle the phenomenon of violence at root causes- domestic violence, human trafficking, prostitution, poverty, limited access to health and social services, racism and the after-effects of the residential school system- through laws passed in the parliament as well as various security measures after national and international organizations had demanded urgent actions and concrete initiatives. These measures were concretized by making plans to deal with the problem relying on scientific research, support initiatives from communities themselves and start a deep inquiry into the missing women and girls with the collaboration all authorities and local committees.

2.5. Canadian Literature: An Overview

Canadian literature is the body of different literary pieces elaborated by Canadian intellectuals for specific goals related to the cultural, social, economic and religious matters of people. It also deals with some crucial things related to the origins of the country and its bilingualism that reflects the Canadian French and Canadian English literature.

It is historically obvious that the Canadian literature marked its beginning since the first travelers put feet on the Canadian territories and started recording their impressions about North America in different letters, charts, diaries and journals. These documents were written in plain language that explains in details all what happens with Inuit and other native peoples named First Nations in Canada. The explorer Samuel Hearne, wrote *A journey from Prince of Wales Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean* 1795, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, an explorer and fur trader, described his travels in voyages from Montreal....Through the continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific

Oceans(1801). Simon Frazer recorded details of his 1808 trip west to Frazer Canyon (The letters and journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808). Captain John Franklin's published account of British naval expedition to the Arctic, Narrative of a journey to the shores of the Polar Sea (1823). His disappearance during a subsequent journey reemerged in the 20th century in the writing of Margaret Atwood and Rudy Wiele.

Halifax, in the colony of Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick's Fredericton were the scenes of the earliest literary flowering in Canada. The first literary journal, the *Nova-Scotia Magazine*, was published in Halifax in 1789.

The subjects dealt with in different genres of literature were related to contemporary realities at the time of reaching the new world such as Native peoples matters, the fierce climate, the physical and cultural deprivation as well as the unfamiliar wildlife. The different experiences and points of view about the new world contributed in the emergence of so many literary works, some encourage the European communities to share the beauty of dream land that is presented in a more favorable picture, whereas other presents it as life in hell.

The flurry of patriotic and literary activity was precipitated owing to the dominion of Canada created in 1867 by the confederation of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper Canada, and Lower Canada (now Quebec). The so-called Confederation poets turned to the landscape in their search for a truly native verse. Unlike their predecessors, they no longer merely described or moralized nature but attempted to capture what the Ottawa poet Archibald Lampman called the "*answering harmony between the soul of the poet and the spirit and mystery of nature*".

During the early 20th century, well known poets responding to the interest in local colour started refuting the French Canadian customs and cultures in their works, that new direction marked the emergence of modernism in poetry that witnessed a strong reaction to the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, and World War II dominated the poems of the 1930s and '40s. inspite the fact that

many other poets remained fully interested in local context such as condemning the exploitation of workers in day and night.

By 1900, novels of local colour were beginning to overshadow historical romances. Lucy Maud Montgomery's beloved children's book *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and its sequels were set in *Prince Edward Island*. Ontario towns and their "Garrison Mentality" provided the setting for Sara Jeannette Duncan's portrayal of political life in *The Imperialist* (1904), Ralph Connor's *The Man from Glengarry* (1901), Frederick Philip Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925) and *Fruits of the Earth* (1933),

Many writers publishing in the 1960s and '70s subverted the traditional conventions of fiction, shifting from realist to surrealist, self-reflexive, feminist, or parodic modes. Although historical events and the investigation of place as an imaginative source that remained the most common subject matters, the narrative forms were experimental and playful. During the 1980s and '90s, writers also renegotiated ideas of self and nation and of belonging and loss while breaking down traditional boundaries of both gender and genre.

Robert Kroetsch's trilogy *The Words of My Roaring* (1966), *The Studhorse Man* (1969), and *Gone Indian* (1973) transformed the realism of Prairie fiction into postmodern parodies of the quest journey. In *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973), *The Scorched-Wood People* (1977), and *A Discovery of Strangers* (1994), Rudy Wiebe constructed fictional and spiritual epics based on historical events in the west and the precarious relations between, First Nations and European explorers and settlers. Carol Shields's novels, stories, and plays present the lives of ordinary women and men in a luminous, often gently satiric style such as *The Stone Diaries* (1993).

Although the subject of history exerts a powerful influence on all forms of Canadian writing, the tradition of regional fiction has not lost its momentum. David Adams Richards's novels depict the bleakness of New Brunswick

communities (*Lives of Short Duration*, 1981; *Nights Below Station Street*, 1988; *Mercy Among the Children*, 2000)

During the 1980s and '90s, increasing attention was also paid to the plurality and diversity of voices across the country. This period saw the emergence of numerous First Nations, Métis, and Inuit writers. Resisting the imposition of Western concepts of history, land, nation, society, and narrative, many of these writers explored their oral traditions, myths, and cultural practices.

A recurring theme is the individual's painful trajectory as that individual negotiates between cultures, combats racial prejudice, and copes with shattered families and kinship groups; these concerns are also rendered in playful or parodic modes, as protest literature, or as alternatives to frenetic urban consumer cultures. Works that engage these concerns include novels and stories by Jeannette Armstrong (*Slash*, 1985, rev. ed. 1988; *Whispering in Shadows*, 2000), Beatrice Culleton (*In Search of April Raintree*, 1983), Tomson Highway (*Kiss of the Fur Queen*, 1998), Thomas King (*Medicine River*, 1990; *Green Grass, Running Water*, 1993), and Eden Robinson (*Monkey Beach*, 1999; *Blood Sports*, 2006). Autobiography and memoir—Maria Campbell's *Half-Breed* (1973) and Lee Maracle's *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel* (1975, rev. ed. 1990),

Other perspectives tackle the experiences of immigrants—their interrogation of the meaning of home and belonging, their feelings of cultural assimilation and estrangement, and their intergenerational struggles.

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Period	Description
Late 17 th century	- Recording impressions and contemporary realities about the local context.
Early 20 th century	- Patriotism - The emergence of modernism in poetry
1960's and 1970's	- Traditional conventions of fiction (Shift from realist to surrealist)
1980's and 1980's	- Self; nation and belonging concerns - Attention to plurality and diversity of voices (The appearance of Native Writers) - Immigrants' concerns (home and belonging, cultural assimilation)

Table 1.2: Canadian Literature through History

2.5.1. Positioning Jeannette Armstrong in Canadian Literary Scene

As a native Okanagan intellectual, Jeannette Armstrong participated in the development of her community by establishing the En' Owkin centre in 1978 for creative arts based in Pentinction, British Columbia. This cultural and educational center operated exclusively by Okanagan intellectuals represents a focal point for aboriginal writing throughout North America. The centre includes an Indigenous-run press, Theytus and an International School of Writing. It offers Canada's only creative writing program created and run by Indigenous people. Lally Grauer remarks that:

“Indigenous scholars and writers from all over Canada and the US came to the Okanagan to teach and study. Throughout the 1990s, this institution played an important role in encouraging many authors to get into print and in furthering the development of a national network of Indigenous writers in Canada”.

(Grauer, 2001: 234)

Since she is a so dynamic intellectual, activist and a tireless activist, Armstrong is also, as Grauer states,

“A novelist, poet, and spokesperson for Indigenous peoples' rights to land and justice, to education and language, and to a healthy environment. In her novels and poetry, Armstrong experiments using language and form”.

(Ibid: 234)

Although she uses English to articulate Okanagan language and concepts, Armstrong, portrays the Okanagan conception of the interrelatedness of community as comprising not only people but also the land and spirits that inhabit it. And In order to eradicate the wrong stereotypes, she teaches people about the truths of her Okanagan tribe that reflects the realities of indigenous communities as a whole. Armstrong aims at changing indigenous life in the positive way through the rejection of prejudices and then promoting indigenous lives starting by implementing the Okanagan Curriculum project that contributes in teaching dislocated and even non indigenous young generation learn about Okanagan culture and history that remains marginalized and even ignored by European settlers through promoting false version about it. Armstrong strongly states, *“The only correct version has got to be from our people! Nobody else can give the correct version, but our people. And we’re going to stick to that!”*

(Armstrong, 1993: 14)

One of the main strategies of empowering Native nations is through teaching them writing skills. In 1989, Armstrong became the director of the En’owkin School of International Writing where she teaches writing classes, so as to allow the Natives to express themselves by writing rather than relying exclusively on storytelling that embodies both the body and the voice, in spite, the fact that Okanagan ontology considers the body as indispensable element that

can never be compensated. Armstrong asks, “*When you remove the body and put a piece of paper in its place, what happens? How do you compensate for that loss of the body?*”(1998) Armstrong believes that the skills an intellectual is gifted with do not belong to him but to the community as a whole so as to elevate it.

Armstrong's outstanding contributions as a writer, educator, and advocate for First Nations culture have paved the way for many generations of writers and storytellers to show their talents and contribute in enriching the international library by well known literary works. Armstrong remains strongly rooted in the Okanagan and is currently an assistant professor of indigenous studies at the University of B.C.'s Okanagan campus. She is also the Canada research chair in Okanagan indigenous philosophy –a prestigious appointment to research, document, categorize and analyze Okanagan Syilx oral language literature.

2.5.2. Contemporary Women Literature

One of the most exciting features of English literature nowadays is the emergence of a wide range of post colonial literatures written in English in former colonies in general and indigenous societies in particular. This later resulted in the rise of various ideas and debates that have been addressed in different essays, and books. The Aboriginal women writers have stressed the importance of literary texts as a site of cultural and highly effective means of determination of their own identity since literature is a medium of expression of individuals and groups that plays a vital role in shaping as well as understanding the ambitions of Aboriginal women and comments on their social, political and economic problems. It functions through its analysis as a link to identity by reflecting traditions, customs and cultures of their communities.

The engagement of Indigenous women’s shared experience of the collusions between colonialism and patriarchy has laid the foundation for the conceptualization of Indigenous women literature. For Indigenous women, colonization has involved their removal from positions of power, the replacement

of traditional gender roles with Western patriarchal practices, the exertion of colonial control over Indigenous communities through the management of women's bodies, and sexual violence. Developments in feminist theory and practice have contributed to recognize how nationality, race, and ethnicity are so important for indigenous women identity. Despite the attempts of the analysis of the specificity of Indigenous communities, Indigenous women and feminist issues remain under examined in contemporary feminist theory.

Being subject of oppression and abuse the Aboriginal women are confronting a dual marginalization first as a women within their own nation and the broader society, as well as marginalized as indigenous people “*Women have been a footnote in a male- defined system –And if women are the foot notes, then Aboriginal women are the footnote to the footnote*” Patricia Monture. Literature contributes in helping them cope with the challenges in a world that operates on hierarchical system in which they are permanently subjected to oppression and abuse because the sexual oppression that the aboriginal women currently face on day to day basis cannot be separated from the twins legacies of colonialism and racism that continue to regard them as a second class women. It functions as a mirror that reflects the history beliefs and philosophies of the subjugated nations.

“[...]Indigenous literature, if you want to use that label for convenience’s sake, holds many if not all of the beliefs, philosophies, worldviews of Indigenous people; it holds a history. So I would think that Aboriginal literature really is the heart of Aboriginal being.”

(McLeod, 2001)

Aboriginal women intellectuals started a counter of attempts to defend their communities and then their own identity through academic literature owing to the negative impact of colonialism that has led to the fragmentation of their cultures, beliefs and values and has made their traditions vulnerable to horizontal oppression.

Famous Aboriginal writers have elaborated well known pieces of literature that feature strong female characters and ability issues; they have also been engaged with the crucial issues of cultural identity, nationalism and decolonization. These word warriors have shown in their writings the qualities that leaders possess, including visionary skills, the ability to articulate goals, integrity, honesty and faith. So, over the past generations, more and more female voices have arisen from all walks of life and great novels and other literary genres were generated by so talented writers whose work deserves to be read and reread for years to come for the sake to challenge patriarchal colonialism and oppression that aim to silence and exclude Aboriginal women from sovereignty and leadership spheres. These writers try to depict the aspect that reconstruction of traditional, social structures should be based on native cultures. Kay Mc Gowan says that female power was weakened through the imposition of European culture; Devon Abbott Mihesual's Contemporary Indigenous Issues Series explained women native suffering by being victims of colonial policies to deprive them from their own cultures and identities. Joy Harjo writes about a boarding school experience, Cynthia Leitch Smith shows an example of the everyday struggles Native people have with the stereotypes, and the pain it causes on all sides. One of the most predominant strategies used by the colonizer to destroy the Aboriginal cultures is through the exclusion of women:

"In order to break down and destroy a culture, you have to get to the root of it. The heart of Aboriginal cultures is women. So, it makes sense to start making policies that would banish the women, the givers of the language and the culture and the life. The ones who brought in the Native children and made them native."

(Anderson, 2000: 26)

2.5.3. Fiction

Storytelling has been a cultural corn stone to indigenous peoples in North America, Australia and New Zealand because orality has always been and continues to be a source of power and means of establishing individual and group identity.

“The story and its telling are integral to the process of self-definition, a respiratory for cultural practices and social memory, challenging the biases and strategic silences of Anglo-European history.”

(Van Toorn, 1998: 42)

These traditional practices were not recognized as parts of the literary genres belonging to fiction, a category that generally refers to novels and short stories. But the direct and permanent contacts between indigenous communities and people from all over the world especially the Europeans has obviously contributed in shaping a new way of addressing the indigenous concerns by so talented writers by adapting a literary genre of their own, i.e., the indigenous fiction that is used as a weapon against the oppressive forces and their alien cultures that threaten the local communities. Therefore, Indigenous life writing has filled in the gaps in Indigenous history which frequently lacks textualized accounts and has to rely on oral history only.

The Mohawk poet E. Pauline Juhnson, was one of the word warriors trying to defend the indigenous rights, while other writers were rejected from the cultural scene through various racist acts until the emergence of theytus Books which represents the first stone towards the recognition of well known writers such as Jeannette Armstrong who is regarded as the first native writer and intellectual to produce her first novel *Slash* in 1985, in which she dealt with an indigenous man's experience of both social and political turmoil of 1960's and 1970's. This step towards cultural freedom has seriously participated in the emergence of a wide range of writers such as the Metis writer Beatrice Culleton

who wrote in the *Shadow of Evil*, *Ruby Sliperjack* and so many others. These writers have obviously enriched the national and international libraries by brilliant novels, short stories and poems etc... in which most of them consider themselves representatives of their communities to express their particularities and struggle for the survival of their nactiveness.

The twentieth century witnessed another range of writers who continue to show how good native writers can perform through the masterpieces they have elaborated in the sake of paving the way to their peoples to gain more confidence in themselves and more space in their societies. Among these writers Thomas King (Cherokee) who published *Medicine River* 1989, Lee Mara (Coast Salish) released *Sundogs* 1992, Richard Van Camp (Dogrib) published *The lesser Blessed* 1996 and *Kiss of fur Queen* 1998 by Thomson Highway, *Monkey Beach* 2000 by Eden Robinson these literary works reflect the deep suffering and severe marginalization that the indigenous peoples are subjected to such as the legacy of residential schools and the physical and mental torture the imperial regimes applied on native communities so as to erase their language, traditions and rights. Literary texts serve the native communities as a civilized means of defense.

In Australia, Indigenous literature has also aimed at resisting the oppressing forces for the sake of liberating their societies and preserving their own language, identity, rights and ancestral territories through a fiction of their own. Alexis Wright explores land rights and environment destruction in *Small town* Queensland. Wright's *Plains of promise* 1997, Doris Garimara Pilkington's *Caprise: A Stockman's Daughter* 2002, Kim scott's *True Country* 1993, *Benang* 1999 and Lisa Behrendt's *Home* 2004, most of all these literary texts focused on the impact of the different policies of depriving indigenous peoples from various rights by imperial government and the fragmentation of the indigenous identity through real cultural genocide.

Short fiction collections have also contributed in fighting against the abusive exploitation of indigenous communities as well as paving the way towards shaping a universal kind of literature that has gained more space in the international scene by reflecting a new way of analyzing things and observing the other in total different point of view.

In New Zealand the battle for preserving the Maori language, traditions and culture continues. Thus, well known pieces of work came to existence like Grace's *Potiki* 1986, and Ihimaera's *The Matriarch* 1986. By 1990's some of the well known novels written in Maori fiction were used as a subject matter for producing universal films this later enhanced the Indigenous literature in New Zealand towards perfection to certain extent.

Recently, indigenous fiction especially in Canada, Australia and New Zealand has witnessed an obvious progress and unprecedented expansion owing to many factors such as cultural contacts, the availability of modern means and technology. This literary genre evokes a different way of seeing the reality and expressing the feelings of women inside their communities and how crucial matters should be regarded within the complexities of life.

“If, then, one should try to sum up the character of women’s fiction at the present moment, one would say that it is courageous; it is sincere, it keeps closely to what women feel . . . It does not insist upon its femininity but at the same time, a woman’s book is not written as a man would write it.

(V. Woolf, 1966: 137)

In spite the obvious differences in cultures and history of hundreds of indigenous peoples living throughout the world, some common points are shared between them and used as a platform in their struggle against the colonizer’s dominance especially by contemporary intellectuals.

“The writers come from diverse cultures and histories, from the far north of Canada to the South Pacific islands of Aotearoa. Despite these difference, what all of the writers share is our connections to our homelands, our histories of colonization, genocide ,and displacement and our will to survive and pass the treasures of our cultures to future generations.”

(Schacht, 2008: 6)

2.5.4. Indigenous Women Writers

Women writers have started questioning the very concepts of womanhood and wifehood that concern both mainstream and Aboriginal societies. In the same way, the stereotypical glorification of childhood gets dismantled in Australian women's writing. Indeed, it is almost an essential part of these works for very good reasons: a girl child's world of loneliness, frustration and abuse, for instance, are exposed and explored in these writings as a particularly significant subject in the light of colonial history of treatment of children. This applies more to autobiographies of women.

In his book *Living Black*, Kevin Gilbert says, "*White people's devaluation of Aboriginal life, religion, culture and personality caused the thinking about self and race that I believe is the key to modern Aboriginal thinking*" (Gilbert 1978: 2). Similarly, Adam Shoemaker says that a fundamental relationship exists between the sociopolitical milieu and Aboriginal creative writing in English. He reasserts his view by further saying that black creative writing cannot be studied in isolation and that it must be examined and evaluated in terms of the social environment which surrounds it and the historical events which precede it (Shoemaker, 1989:6). Both Gilbert and Shoemaker construct a context to meet, understand and interpret Aboriginal literature. These statements implicitly suggest the rise of Aboriginal literature from Aboriginal suffering and Aboriginal activism. Aboriginal literature springs from such depths of experience that without an introduction to history and culture it becomes impossible to interpret it.

Childhood is an important aspect of Aboriginal women's writing and their lives for reasons beyond a white girl child's experience. Aboriginal childhood, especially for a girl child, is all the more traumatic as we have seen in the reference to dormitory existence and the stolen children scenario.

Although men have published works with Aboriginal issues at the centre, women's works had linked black and female oppression and perceive similarities in the oppression experienced by blacks and had dealt with the devastating oppression of black women.

2.5.5. White Women Writers Vs Aboriginal Women

It is true that white women writers have, indeed, dealt with Aboriginal themes and characters. But their treatment of these issues has always been limited, if not also controversial. One of the major allegations against such writing is that Aboriginal people have remained stereotypes in it. It is believed that it fails to explore the pathetic tales of Aboriginal massacres and has been written from a white colonizer's perspective. Hence, Aborigines, specifically Aboriginal women, resist identification with the national type.

Most Aboriginal societies are supposed to be matriarchal societies and every family has a strong mother figure, unlike the white societies. This contributes to a lot of difference between the concerns and problems of Aboriginal women and white women. For instance, in her article "Aboriginal women, politics and land" Peggy Brock says:

"Unlike western societies, where gender has been a marker of empowerment (male) and subordination (female), gender in Aboriginal societies defines different fields of influence and empowerment. This gender-specific authority is protected by maintaining a separation between male and female spheres."

(Brock, 2001: 9)

White women writers may have written about Aboriginal women. But, one wonders if they identified themselves with Aboriginal women at all. We must also wonder whether Aboriginal women accept the portrayal of their characters in white women's writing. Do they identify themselves with white women? Can some of the issues that the white feminists consider or analyze concern Aboriginal women at all? Do Aboriginal women accept these as their issues? How much has the bias of gender contributed or failed to contribute to colonization, subjugation and discrimination? It seems, also, in part, that Aboriginal women write in protest against the image of Black women in white writings.

It is also apparent that Aboriginal women are viewed as the "other" based on a menial or sexual image: as more sensual but less cerebral, more interesting perhaps but less intellectual, more passive but less critical, more emotional but less analytical, more exotic but less articulate, more withdrawn but less direct, more cultured but less stimulating, more oppressed but less political."

(Huggins, 1994: 36)

2.5.6. Potential Alliances, as a Means of Strength

The task of forming alliances would certainly bridge the gaps between Natives and non natives alike. It can simply start by the recognition of the bicultural indigenous reality that paves the way to a good understanding of the dominant society. It is said that in spite the subjugation that the Native communities suffer from, they possessed two cultural worlds, whereas the colonizers occupy only one: "*White people occupy only one.*" (Haunani-Kay Trask, 1996: 911). Hence the bicultural space contributes in preserving the local culture and to adopt a common strategy with the non native feminists to resist a white male-dominated culture. "*When we leave our traditional world and step into the Western world, feminism becomes an issue, and we must confront and deal with the same issues that affect all women.*" (Tohe, 2000: 109)

A good willing for a positive change from non- native feminists and especially those belonging to the dominant societies would start by understanding and feeling the ailments, the Natives are exposed to and then try to propose concrete solutions and position themselves as allies of Native women and address themes such as racism, sexism everywhere they exist.

'In so far as we presume to take feminism into post-colonial areas, we should at best consider our work reparations for the damage Euro men did. Our goals could best be honored, both for us and for the women whose heritage was wiped out or badly damaged by colonialism, within a cooperative attempt to help them to reconstruct the pre-colonial structure, insofar as they might wish to. We need to do so respectfully and non-judgmentally and without projection of the biases of our Euro American historical stream'.

(Hardman, 2004: 80)

Feminist sisterhood seems to be an appropriate space to attend women's liberation from Eurocentrism, in spite the disharmony between both Feminism and Indigenous women's struggles that lies in the opposite visions and perspectives on the source of women's oppression. Feminism posits male dominance through the patriarchy as a source of women's oppression whereas the indigenous women think that the ultimate source of oppression is colonialism that brought western norms based on patriarchal social codes and beliefs that had destructive effects on the native communities.

2.5.7. Self-Determination

Self-determination should be understood as an aspect of respect for cultural diversity within nation-states. Therefore, any governmental project to develop and promote citizenship should take into consideration the cultural, linguistic and historical characteristics of people. Gender justice for indigenous women must be

rooted in indigenous self-determination and reflected in indigenous self-management.

“We do not reject our Indigenous identity or disregard our role in the cultural, social, economic and political development of our Peoples. The collective development of our Peoples will strengthen the participation of Indigenous women in Indigenous societies and in our countries. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of both collective and individual human rights from our own socio-cultural and linguistic vantage point. “

(Cunningham, 2006: 55-59)

Cultural cohesion of indigenous people within their societies with respect to their own identity and their social status of their communities will certainly enhance towards a great leap in their status and constitute a point of empowerment. In contrast to what the settlers claim, Indigenous cultures do not constitute a source of gender oppression but a culture based on the notion of complementarily between both men and women who are the source of preservation of indigenous social and cultural heritage . Therefore, the struggle should not be with indigenous men but against the patriarchal systems, that grew out of colonialism.

Highlighting individual and collective human rights will contribute in the development of societies in general and indigenous women in particular especially when feminist movements and indigenous women’s organizations have achieved significant advances in realizing most of the goals they struggled for, for decades of years. Thus, international conferences about indigenous women like the one held in Beijing in 1995, had resulted in the appearance of the declaration of Indigenous women with 40 points that urged governments and non-state actors to adopt concrete measures to promote and reinforce new policies and programs in favor of indigenous women. This realization contributed in the emergence of new spaces such as The International Indigenous Women’s

Forum and The Continental Network of Indigenous Women that paved the way towards the emergence of other spaces.

2.6. Intersections of Race and Gender

The indigenous people throughout the colonial history have been subject of an extraordinary degree of regulation and perhaps are the most governed people on the earth since they have been victims of individual and institutional racism, the first one is more visible, while the second one is more subtle and operates covertly. This situation mentioned the beginning of a cycle of physical and mental ailments of the First Nations who were deprived from their wealth and lands and exposed to alien modes of life that led to tremendous effects on them and paved the way to a wide cultural mobility in the postcolonial era through the emergence of a wide range of postcolonial literatures particularly women literatures that evoke crucial issues such as race, ethnicity racism ,sexual and gender oppression.

Being subject of oppression and abuse the indigenous women are confronting a dual marginalization, as women within their own nation and the broader society, and as indigenous people. The Aboriginal writers in general and women writers in particular have stressed the importance of literary texts as a site of cultural and highly effective means of opposition to different malpractices inside their societies as well as a fertile land of shaping and understanding their ambitions as oppressed category. Literature then, contributes in helping them cope with the challenges in a world that operates on hierarchical system in which they are permanently subjected to oppression and abuse because the sexual oppression that the aboriginal women currently face on day to day basis cannot be separated from the twins legacies of colonialism and racism that continue to regard them as a second class women. *“The circumstances in which the aboriginal women currently find themselves began in ethno-genocide, colonization and forced land deportation.”* (Quinn, 2007: 364)

Academic literature served Aboriginal women intellectuals to start a counter of attempts to fight both gender and racial oppression imposed by the colonizer who has contributed in the fragmentation of their cultures, beliefs and values and has made their traditions vulnerable to horizontal oppression by bringing particular social codes, and trying to make sense to Aboriginal society through a patriarchal lens so as to assimilate and civilize them. One of the most predominant strategies used by the colonizer to destroy the Aboriginal cultures is through the exclusion of women who were highly respected in their communities for their spiritual and mental strength.

These policies had profound effects on the Aboriginal society as a whole and on Aboriginal women in particular.

”Attitudes that maintain the oppression of Aboriginal women arose from western ideologies about racial inferiority and suitable roles for women, the process of colonization upset Aboriginal women’s traditional place in society, where they had control over resource distribution and political matters”
(Jamieson, 1978)

Aboriginal women are accused of being passive and submissive subjects, bound to inevitable patriarchal oppression, moreover they are not afforded the same rights and privileges as the non native women and are socially denied and more importantly they are far more likely than non-native women to experience violence that threatens them. In the Canadian case; statistics in 2014 show that Indigenous women are four times more likely to be murdered than non native women due to decades of governmental policy that have left them extremely vulnerable to exploitation and attack.

“Aboriginal Women have been, and continue to be the most victimized group in Canadian society. From birth, the Aboriginal woman must confront all forms of discrimination –gender, race and class. She is frequently the victim of systematic emotional, sexual and physical abuse, perpetuated since childhood by fathers, foster and adoptive parents, husbands, teachers, priests, social workers and police”.

(Frances, 2006)

Over the past generations, more and more female voices have arisen from all walks of life and great literary works were generated by so talented writers whose works deserve to be read and reread for years to come for the sake to challenge patriarchal colonialism and oppression that aim to silence and exclude Aboriginal women from sovereignty and leadership spheres. These writers try to depict the aspect that reconstruction of traditional, social structures should be based on native cultures. Kay Mc Gowan says that female power was weakened through the imposition of European culture; Devon Abbott Mihesuah’s Contemporary Indigenous Issues Series explained women native suffering by being victims of colonial policies to deprive them from their own cultures and identities.

The literature of indigenous people passed from generation to another serves as a convenient way for preserving the indigenous contemporary consciousness through literary works that enable them to record the details of their cultures. Thus, Aboriginal women writers have contributed enormously in giving more strength to their own communities through their success in transfiguring the women as a liberated and self-sufficient person.

2.7. Conclusion

It is always interesting to study the voices of women and the marginalized sections of any society, for they have been silenced violently or otherwise effectively for ages in most cultures; their oral composition and writings echo their cries of agony and voice their otherwise silent protest. When it is women belonging to the marginalized sections, more violence may be used to silence them, and a double burden of oppression is thrust on them. Hence their cries are much more heartrending. The innumerable cases of exploitation and subjugation of disadvantaged groups especially Aboriginal women on the basis of race, colour, and gender in the past and in the present that may extend into the future constituted a platform for them to make some space to speak for themselves using their own literature that emerged as a powerful and innovative force which is a direct reflection of their concerns to denounce the colonizer's bad treatment and adapting the convenient strategies to reach the healing process from practices that remain lodged in their minds owing to the long and permanent dwelling of the settler. Therefore, taking up the challenge to manipulate the literary space in which they find themselves, Aboriginal women seek to communicate the truth of their native values and traditions using the colonizer's language.

The analysis of the novel *Whispering in shadows* in chapter three will serve as a convenient space to highlight the importance of literature in expressing the deep ailment of the oppressed communities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- Neal McLeod, Assistant Professor, Department of Indian Studies at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.
- In this dissertation, the terms *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *First Nations*, *Native* and *Indian* are used interchangeably because they are all meant to address people of Native ancestry.

CHAPTER THREE

THE QUEST FOR A MYTH

OF ORIGINS

Chapter Three

The Quest for a Myth of Origins

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Chapter Three

The Quest for a Myth of Origins

My great grandmother told my mother: Never forget you are Indian. And my mother told me the same thing. This, then, is how I have gone about remembering, so that my children will remember too.

(Quoted in CLC, Vol. 84). Paula Gunn Allen

3.1. Introduction

The contemporary novel has obviously contributed in the literary renaissance in the world as a whole and in Canada in particular in the last decades through outstanding novels that depict the contemporary problems of human beings. The indigenous literature produced in the postcolonial era has participated to the common pool writings of the world by the emergence of significant literary works that deal with the daily experience of the Native communities. The French literary historian, M. Taine said that literature is a mirror of all major divisions of human kind and their environment and social surrounding of which deliberates every brief portion of time. The long dwelling of colonial powers and their settlement has affected the indigenous peoples enormously on all the levels of life.

Jeannette Armstrong's literary work, as well as her activism and social commitments, are socio-cultural works that actively seek to deconstruct the seemingly progressive systems of petro-culture and economic globalization that perpetuate spiritual, cultural and economic dislocation of Indigenous peoples of Canada. The novel respectively represent the history and colonial experiences of Okanagan peoples in ways that critique the extremely politicized and debilitating overt and covert violence affecting Indigenous peoples globally.

3.2. Jeannette Armstrong's Life and Writing Career

Jeannette Christine Armstrong is an international Okanagan recognized writer, language teacher, visual artist, sculptor, educator and activist for Indigenous rights from the Nsilx tribe of the Okanagan valley of British Columbia .She was born in 1948 and grew up in the Pentinction Indian Reserve in British Columbia where she passed most of her life and where she has raised her children. Her mother belonged to the Kettle River tribe whose members traditionally mainly subsisted on fishing, while her father was Okanagan, traditionally a hunting people. Her Okanagan Syilx name means something like the image of light, rippling off moving water.

Armstrong inherited the talent in writing from her great aunt, Mourning Dove /Christine Quintaske (Hum-Ishu-Ma) 1888-1936, the first Native American women novelist who wrote *Cogewea*, *The Half-Blood* (1927) and *Coyote Stories* (1933). At the age of fifteen Armstrong discovered her talent in writing when the local newspaper published her first novel about John F. Kennedy. She received a traditional education as well as the Okanagan language from Okanagan Elders and family. She is one of the first Native intellectuals to write a novel in Canada. Actually she is a fluent speaker of her Okanagan language. In 1978, she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Victoria. The same year, she received a Diploma of Fine Arts from Okanagan College. Her education was a precursor to many remarkable career achievements. Her talent in writing helped her to reveal truths about herself and her people. She says, "*The process of writing as a Native person has been a healing one for me because I've uncovered the fact that I'm not a savage, not dirty and ugly and not less because I have brown skin, or a Native philosophy.*"(1998).

Living in a modern society with alien cultures has led to a psychological trauma for indigenous peoples especially the young generation that received an education in public schools based on some European ideals that delineate all what is indigenous and show all what is European as perfect She says,

“The suicide rates and problems our people are having are a result of being told you’re stupid, ignorant, a drunk, you’ll never amount to anything -- just because you’re Indian. To me, that’s the biggest lie of all that needs to be dispelled.”

(Armstrong, 2010)

She became internationally known through her commitment to human rights and environmental initiatives as well as the anti-globalization movement.

As a passionate writer Armstrong deals with issues that the indigenous peoples experience each day inside their societies. Therefore, she writes for both adults and young people. She aims at interfering the young in contemporary issues so as to teach them about Native culture and history.

Armstrong's outstanding contributions as a writer, educator, and advocate for First Nations culture have paved the way for many generations of writers and storytellers. In 1989, she worked with Theytus Books, En'owkin Centre, Okanagan College and the University of Victoria to create the En'owkin International School of Writing for Native Students – a focal point for aboriginal writing throughout North America.

Born on the Penticton Indian Reserve, Armstrong remains strongly rooted in the Okanagan and is currently an assistant professor of indigenous studies at the University of B.C.'s Okanagan campus. She is also the Canada research chair in Okanagan indigenous philosophy – a prestigious appointment to research, document, categorize and analyze Okanagan Syilx oral language literature.

3.3. *Whispering in Shadows: An Overview*

Jeannette Armstrong's novel *whispering in shadows* traces the life journey of an Okanagan painter, poet and activist and single mother of three named Penny who has contracted cancer after her exposure to pesticides while working as a fruit picker in the Okanagan valley. *Whispering in Shadows* provides a glimpse into the complexities of the contemporary life and psyche of Aboriginal peoples. The novel conveys an important environmental theme and insights into the future as well.

As a public speaker this native intellectual attempts to combat the cultural genocide that the indigenous communities are confronted to and tries to depict the ailment of these oppressed peoples. The obstacles represent different sorts of challenges for indigenous peoples, while being on the margins of the world has dire consequences on them. Being incorporated within the marketplace that has different implications and in turn requires the mounting of new forms of resistance. *Whispering in Shadows* represents a golden opportunity to show some resistance to cultural invasion by non native settlers whose traditions and cultures started to threaten the local identity. Penny Jackson as native Canadian belonging to the Okanagan tribe tries to find her way through national and international voyage in which she experienced slow cultural genocide and obvious injustice. Exactly like Jeannette Armstrong and through her activism and art, Penny reacts against the real danger that threatens the Native communities by effacing their identity through the domination of the whiteness to the detriment of nativeness. Resisting the white oppression and supporting the devastated communities is one of the most important motives for Jeannette Armstrong to produce " *Whispering in Shadows*" since literature is an art form of resistance and a means of decolonization.

The story of penny is one of the most beautiful stories written in a different new style from the traditional novels in which the reader is directly involved in discovering the complex system that governs the modern society and the complex traditions that ultimately return us to our own humanity and mother earth. The writer has incorporated poems, letters, and entries from Penny's own diary to tell the story as a new technique that made the novel enjoyable the notion of time has also its place in the beauty of the novel. *"Time is almost intangible in the novel. The further the readers engage with the novel the more they notice that events jump around, and that years go by in a few sentences."* (Eaton, 2000: 1)

As a native intellectual and activist Penny engages in resistance against the invaders who have brought with them a deep ailment due to human greed to the detriment of Native communities. Through her life experiences after a long trip around the world Penny discovered plenty of life secrets and was able to understand herself and her relation to those around her as well as understanding her role in this life and how she will be returned to the earth after her death.

3.3.1. Characterization

The novel includes several characters who play predominant role in making it enjoyable.

3.3.1.1 Penny

The protagonist, who grows up on a reservation with some traditional experience and love of colour and painting. A single mom of three who becomes an international successful artist interested in environmental and Indigenous concerns, then becomes an internationalist visiting other indigenous peoples and relating their situation to her own, becomes ill from taking on so much of the

pain of the world, and finally returns to help preserve and renew the traditions and solidarity of her own tribe.

3.3.1.2 Tupa

Penny's grandmother who possesses wisdom through her deep knowledge of the Okanagan philosophy. Tupa functions as the embodiment of the values and practices of Okanagan cultural collaboration; she largely contributed in shaping the protagonist's attitude and has provided her with guidance and spiritual nourishment.

3.3.1.3 Penny's Children

Shanna, Merilee and Dustin; who feel lost and wounded by the emotional void resulting from their mother's constant absence and their dislocation from the land owing to her focus on resisting the phenomenon of globalization and the preoccupation by lectures contributed in the fragmentation of her family, Shanna turns to drugs while Merilee escapes to an imaginary world of music.

3.3.1.4 Lena

The elder sister of Penny who engaged in prostitution in order to face the hard moments to survive in Vancouver. Her addiction to drugs constitutes an attempt to fill the void created by her disconnection from her community and from the traditional ways related to the land. She confides in her younger sister Penny : *"I got this need. I don't quite know what it is. It's like I can't live alone. I don't know how. Like I'm not a full person. Like my arms and legs are missing. Like I needed somebody to be there, even if he's shit. And all of them were"* (Armstrong, 2000: 271-272).

She was exposed to systematic and domestic violence owing to her need to companionship and her addiction to drugs. The hard moments she lived because of her poverty made her physically abused by her partner Harry.

3.3.1.4 Toby

Lena's son, a dislocated person who does not feel the beauty of life because of the oppression made on him by Harry, the boyfriend of his mother.

3.3.1.5 Garry

Lena's boyfriend, a furious Native man against the Western system imposed on his society that makes him powerless and vulnerable, a man who does not feel any pleasure of life since he became dislocated from his original values based on mutual respect with woman.

3.3.2. Book Cover

The book cover is featured by three main elements: A black mountain, a rainbow and a blue sky.

The black Mountain has special significance to First Nations culture. The syilx/Okanagan word Sntsk'il'ntən (sinch-KEEL-en-tin) in the park's name translates to "The place where arrowheads/flint rock is found." The mountain provided a gathering place for ancestors to make survival tools and scope out the valley for wildlife and intruders. A variety of traditional plants and medicines can be found there as well.

Not only is the mountain home to ancient culture, it is also home to a rich, diverse wildlife and plant population. Many species found in its rare dry grassland ecosystem are considered endangered or threatened. Numerous sightings of animals such as black bears, cougars, coyotes and raptors have occurred here.

The blue colour symbolizes wisdom and confidence, and the blue sky refers to purity and an unpolluted environment.

Whereas, the rainbow represents sacred natural element that speaks directly to both the heart and soul and fills the human body with awe and energy. It

promises that the troubles of today will surely come to pass .It tells people to hold onto hope to believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that sacred blessings open to people when they are following their heart's desire.

3.3.3. Psychic Trauma

Whispering in Shadows by Jeannette Armstrong refutes how indigenous peoples and particularly those belonging to the Okanagan community experience contemporary forms of slow genocide as a result of environmental degradation and various forms of displacement from ancestral spaces because the human relationships with the land is an interconnected familial dependence since it carries meaning and identity that encompasses culture, social, personal and communal existence.

Hence a reconnection to land constitutes a strong base of healing from devastating globalization for cultural preservation, and then identity maintaining.

The direct connection between Indigenous communities and their land that bears historical, cultural and economic meaning to such peoples suggest that the loss of traditional land that represents part of them under devastating systems of globalization is a traumatizing and harming experience for traditional peoples. Such cultural and physical dislocation normalizes a trend of infighting and social instability, which becomes a self-reproducing violence that exacerbates the process of slow genocide: “*The emotional and physical harm done to survivors of violence over time that leads to extreme hardship and premature death for many.*” (Cottam, Huseby, and Lutze, 1994: 2).

The environmental representations of Armstrong portray Indigenous perspectives that link environmentalism to the cultural, economic and social facets of sustainability to which some issues represented in the novel *whispering in shadows* such as justice, equity, cultural, environmental and spiritual stability

are related. The long lasting of the phenomenon of colonialism and the subjugation for more than 500 years coupled with the total denying of political, economic and cultural liberation resulted in the poisoning of Native communities through polluting their ancestral lands and then causing genocide. The significant weapons used to dominate and suppress the indigenous communities are the politics of displacement and the environmental devastation.

According to Native cultures that conceived the self as an integral part of the whole that comprises the land, the local communities attached to such cultures are directly and deeply affected by the degradation of their land, as well as the discrimination and injustice related to the lack of respect to sacred traditional practices.

Rob Nixon conceptualizes the impact of environmental destruction on marginalized peoples in terms of slow violence:

“By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space.... We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales.”

(Nixon, 2011: 2)

Nixon’s conceptualizing of environmental degradation, as well as the displacements that it creates in terms of lethal violence similar to acts of war, is grounded upon his assessment of the devastating social, cultural, spiritual, and economic effects of such acts upon Indigenous peoples whose definition of self, family, and whose sustenance, as I argue further, are grounded upon their connectedness to and relations with the land.

Whispering in shadows refutes the close familial connections that traditional communities share with the environment, and characterize to what extent the environmental destruction or ecocide reflects a concrete genocide for traditional indigenous populations.

The Okanagan world-view of the Earth-as-kin, portrayed by the protagonist Penny in *Whispering in Shadows*, demonstrates how, as Simon Ortiz argues, “*land and people are interdependent [and] are one and the same essential matter of Existence*”

Penny’s understandings of her interrelatedness to the land, the deepening of bonds between them and their families, and even the passing down of traditional customs, history and philosophy are also intertwined in the self-sustaining culture of farming that is, of course, practiced on the land.

The notion of interrelatedness does not attempt to provide a global interpretation of how all Indigenous minorities in Canada conceive of themselves in relations with the land and community.

Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen argue that:

“Urban Indigenous peoples have resisted expectations of assimilation by building communities in and beyond urban areas and by reformulating Western institutions and practices to support their particular Indigenous identities.”

(Peters and Anderson, 2013: 2)

Lee Maracle states:

“Every time Native people form a circle they turn around. They move forward, not backward into history. We don’t have to ‘go back to the land.’ We never left it. We are not reptiles or amphibians that lived in the sea and now wish to go back to the land.”

(Maracle, 1996: 384)

In spite the fact that the identity of indigenous peoples living in their new communities are not regarded as authentic to indiginity, these peoples tend to conserve their own identities that are spiritually and culturally connected to their indigenous self-identity

Armstrong's novel contrasts the pure traditional and simple vision of life of communities grounded in a holistic perception of shared traditions on ancestral land with the non traditional exploitation of land and the subjugation of indigenous communities by the dominant socio-economic realities controlled by the forces of globalization that contributed in the fragmentation of indigenous identity and traumatizing and devastating experience for them after the loss of land that has close familial ties with the Native communities.

Such cultural dislocation normalizes a trend of domestic violence and social instability that perpetrates a process of slow genocide, which is the emotional and physical harm done to survivors of violence over time that leads to extreme hardship and premature death for many.

Whispering in Shadows portrays a North American neo-liberal economy that tries to submerge the traditional subsistence economy of traditional Indigenous communities through unsafe industrial activities that participate in their dislocation from their relations with their traditional lands that are appropriated for industrial purposes or through socio-economic policies and legislations

Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara and André Le Dressay historicize the processes that displaced Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada from the North American economy:

“We had been prosperous even after contact as an integral part of the fur trade. But in the 1800s [the governments in Canada and in the US] began to destroy our economic institutions, which had always supported our trade. And then

they prohibited us from participating in the new economy and new trading relationships that they established. And finally they saddled us with a property-rights system that prevented trade and created a 100-year credit crisis from which we have yet to recover.“

(Flanagan et al, 2010:10)

According to Sarah Maddison the permanent destabilization of indigenous populations on the economical and social levels is a real genocide. She argues that the concept of genocide is “*much wider than the popular understanding of the practice as one of mass extermination*” (Madison, 2011: 18).

She also states that:

“The concept of genocide extends to the destruction of the foundations of life of the national group, including the destruction of language, culture, religious and social institutions, with the intended aim of annihilating the group.”

(Ibid)

Maddison argues that “*we may think of practices intended to absorb or assimilate a minority group into a dominant group as being genocidal in intent*” (Ibid).

Whispering in Shadows mentions that the dispossession of the Okanagan tribe of their land doesn't occur by means of institutionalized enslavement or any other way, but through the exposition to new realities imposed by neoliberalism of the white settlers which contributed directly in changing their social and economic realities, these peoples depended on land for their survival a land which becomes no longer viable or sustainable. So, in spite the fact that the land is not dispossessed physically the impact of the environmental degradation gradually and continually reduces the value and sustainability of indigenous subsistence agriculture. Thus, whether peoples' lands are forcibly taken from them or they leave because land can no longer assure subsistence, displacement in all its forms produces a spiritual, cultural, historic and material loss of land or

of identification with the land and beyond the despair, frustration, dispossession and victimization that are commonplace in the daily experiences of most minorities represented by Armstrong, these marginalized people unyieldingly struggle for survival and save themselves from silent genocide.

The degradation of life conditions after the loss of land, led female characters in the novel to practice sexual labor and engage in prostitution as the only means for their survival and a source of resistance, this fact is illustrated in “*Whispering in Shadows*” through the engagement of Lena in prostitution to meet her financial needs after being disconnected from her community and traditions after the dispossession of their land the only means for living. The individual and collective struggle refutes the deep trauma to face the social and economic changes imposed on local communities. Penny’s struggle against the dominant socio-economic realities of North America, the source of her trauma, disease, and death.

Louisa Sorflaten argues that“:

“In Whispering in Shadows ,Penny’s commitment to fighting globalization through her art and activist work [is] a call for a return to Aboriginal localism as a model for recovering and maintaining the particularities of Indigenous difference in a global era.”

(Sorflaten, 2006: 384)

Sorflaten explains that:

“With the advent of global mass culture, there is rejuvenated scholarly interest in small scale movements rooted in ‘place’ such as regionalisms and localisms as sites of resistance to the homogenizing meta-narratives of globalization.”

(Ibid: 385)

The slow genocide and dislocation served the imperial powers to control the Native populations on all the levels to reinforce their dominance. Significantly, the environmental degradation and the devastation of the traditional systems of subsistence caused by globalization constitute systems that new social and economic space that needs new social and economic adaptations. The urgency and hopelessness of the situation is symptomized by cancer that Penny is dying from at the end of the novel, which also demonstrates the impossibility of remaining untouched by and aloof from world-wide processes and the destruction of Mother Earth.

3.3.4. Land and Self as Integral Parts

Whispering in Shadows is a novel that refutes Okanagan people's views of self, community and land which define and regulate their socio-economic practices of hunting, fishing as well as farming. These communal cultures based on traditional behaviors are totally opposite to the capitalist and individualist economic practices of western countries inherited from colonial era that become dominant in Native communities. The novel poignantly traces the struggles, pain and alienation of Indigenous peoples to maintain both communal and self-identity under social, economic realities imposed by western dominant forces.

The direct forces of globalization in *Whispering in Shadows* are impersonal, invisible, untouchable and even unidentifiable, but they define, negotiate, drive and recycle cultural, economic and social practices into hegemonic patterns that normalize the violence of dislocation and environmental devastation.

Being a victim of slow violence, the protagonist Penny who has lost her traditional ways of life as a result of different experiences of displacement from ancestral lands after devastating pollution considers her migration to Vancouver as a foreign space so as to attend college is an escape from poverty and economic dislocation in her traditional communities so that she will never “*pick apples*,

stamp boxes or clean motels again.” (Armstrong, 2000: 41) The traditional agronomy of the Okanagan has lost its value and can no longer sustain the Native communities.

According to Jeannette Armstrong, although migration is economically empowering, it is regarded as violence that entails different forms of spiritual, cultural and social dislocation. This slow violence embodies significant influence on both human beings and the environment.

“Attritional catastrophes that overspill clear boundaries in time and space are marked above all by displacements – temporal, geographical, rhetorical, and technological displacements that simplify violence and underestimate, in advance and in retrospect, the human and environmental costs.”

(Nixon, 2011: 7)

Environmental degradation does not only cause the pollution and destruction of eco-systems but leads to traumatic cultural, social, and spiritual disturbance of the indigenous communities that puts them at the margins of survival.

Whispering in Shadows portrays how the historic subjugation of Indigenous peoples, in North America, are maintained through their traumatic positioning in conditions where death is always felt close by, in spaces away from their ancestral lands. There is certain interdependence between the body and the land according to Penny’s perception of her body which is expended in similar ways such as the land for the profits interests of imperial powers.

The engagement of Lena in sexual labour as a means of survival makes the indigenous body an instrument in the hands of global economic powers since female bodies are exploited, raped and used.

Whispering in Shadows, place is perceived as an interconnected realm of spiritual, physical, and socio-cultural space. Nixon argues that the injustice of displacement and environmental dispossession be conceptualized beyond the material disempowerment of the loss of physical land:

Change is constant, but the pace of change is not. Hence the temporal contests over how to sustain, regenerate, exhaust, or obliterate the landscape as resource become critical. More than material wealth is here at stake: imposed official landscapes typically discount spiritualized vernacular landscapes, severing webs of accumulated cultural meaning and treating the landscape as if it were uninhabited by the living, the unborn, and the animate deceased.

(Nixon, 2011: 17)

The land constitutes a part from the body, both of them are interdependent; they are conceived to be inseparable and a whole that cannot be delineated. According to Native cultural philosophy life cannot exist without land; the mother of nations.

Joy Porter, in her “*Historical and Cultural Contexts to Native American Literature*,” argues that in most traditional Indigenous cultures, there is a “*sense of the interconnectedness and relationship between all things, between animals, lands, peoples and their language, and a requirement to seek individual, communal, and environmental balance.*” (Porter, 1995:24)

The sense of life of Penny in *Whispering in Shadows* is bound to things around her such as trees, birds since they are interconnected with the land.

She slowly lets herself down next to the tent, closes her eyes and draws in a deep breath. For the first time in long months, she can feel her whole body relax as a familiar lethargy takes over Look up! It's the tree moving! She leans so far backward, looking up at the swaying tops of the trees above her, she almost falls backward. She watches them nod toward each other, whispering. They're talking! An overwhelming emotion washes over her. She can feel her throat tighten and her chest hurt.... She leans close to the tree, her cheek pressed sideways against the trunk and closes her eyes. Her words are barely audible in the still air. The sounds of her language mixing with the soft movement of ferns, the whispering of branches and the sound of birds overhead.

Armstrong, 2000: 97-98)

The sense of wholeness that Penny feels when she enters the forest refutes the Okanagan philosophy about the spiritual connection between the land and the humans. Although she is far away from her tribe and territories she feels being welcomed by the trees when she understands their language and greetings through the movements they produce.

The deep connection and the senility of Penny towards her ancestral land evoke indigenous cultures that regard nature elements from a spiritual point of view. They inhabit a cosmology of interrelatedness between the four elements of nature: earth, air, fire, and water. The Okanagan First Peoples' traditions refuse to allow a fragmentation of nature into four distinct parts. In *Syilx Nation: Okanagan First Peoples*, Okanagan elders assert:

Our Knowledge of the way the physical world 'appears' is founded on how these elements are 'related' or 'bound' together to be the living 'earth' which makes life possible. The Earth is not just the land that we live on. We as living things are 'earth' in that we are made up of the very same

foundational elements.... 'Earth,' to the Okanagan people, isn't just dirt to walk on here, or piles of rock there. Air is more than just being there and keeping us alive, Fire does more than keep us warm and water isn't just something to drink or swim in. (Sylx)

These natural elements bound together lead to a spiritual understanding between the Okanagan people and the land, and even if they are outside their sacred traditional lands they generally feel spiritual familial warmth to the land. This connection is refuted in *Whispering in Shadows* when Penny enters the forest of Vancouver Island: “*It feels the same as a relative holding me. Soothing me.... The tree. It's alive. Aware. It touched me.*” (Armstrong, 2000: 99)

To the Okanagan culture represented in Armstrong's novel, the land is identified through its provision of parental care, sustenance and protection. In accordance with traditional Okanagan and pan-Indigenous belief, *Whispering in Shadows* portrays how every 'life' that makes up the land has a spirit, and is interrelated with humans. Humans are therefore not superior to the land, but rather the land nourishes and provides for humans in a family-based relationship that is dependent upon mutual interests. This pan-Indigenous world-view is expressed in the novel during a meeting attended by Penny at the friendship centre.

The relation between people and the land is equal to that of relatives and community members since the farming and fishing activities foster the familial and communal collaborations. Armstrong explains how the activity of farming creates a sort of collaboration between Penny's family, where Juliana, Penny's mother, speaks with her own mother:

I wonder how many years our people have gathered, right here, and dug roots. Thousands? Look at Gramma, she's almost ninety and look at you. You're

over sixty. Every year, she has come here and so has her mother and grandmother and so have you, and now me and I'm almost forty. But what about Penny, my last baby? (Ibid: 133)

Indigenous philosophy, wisdom, cultural knowledge, and history inherited from past generations by Tupa are passed down to the younger generations during collaborative work on the land.

Penny reminisces on what Tupa told her as a child after climbing up the hill to see the sunrise one morning: *“The world is new. Today we are here, but the shadows follow us in the bright of day. Take care to wrap the light around you. To let it keep you warm. To greet it and give thanks each new day.”*

(Armstrong, 2000: 18)

The inheritance of indigenous traditional moral values as well as spiritual education from old generations constitute a crucial element in challenging the perception of European perfection that delineates all what is indigenous and elevates all what is western. In whispering in shadows Tupa's teachings remain reference points for cultural reorientation for the dislocated young generations so as to preserve the Native cultural and spiritual values. The cultural and spiritual dislocation of Lena, Penny's elder sister after moving to Vancouver that represents modernity far away from her traditional environment expresses the inner painful moments that young generations experience even if equipped with modern means of life. However Tupa's teachings guide her to the right path that allowed her to safeguard her original identity.

“[Tupa] used to say to wrap the light from the rising sun around you because the shadows from the dream world followed you everywhere.... Somewhere along the line, the shadows took over. I forgot how to wrap the light of each new day around me.”

(Armstrong, 2000: 275)

The connection to the Okanagan spiritual philosophy based on reciprocity between human beings and nature constitutes a healing process for Lena. Being far from her family, puts her in a critical status, she feels totally cut from her roots that mark her difference from the Europeans. *“It was family that I was really missing, I guess. The warmth of it. Like arms holding you. Being part of it”* (Ibid: 272). But she further points out: *“Maybe it’s more than family. Maybe it’s our community together in a certain way on land which makes us a full person”* (Ibid: 273).

Lena’s return to the Okanagan and to what she recognizes as *“the warmth of family”* and community underscores Okanagan cosmology, which considers the self to be an integral part of the whole of the community and land (in their material and spiritual dimensions). Apart from the spiritual significance of the land, its ability to unite families and to maintain cultural values remains central to pan-Indigenous sustainability.

The displacement from the Native milieu caused by governmental economic policies had affected the Okanagan communities through breaking their agro-economic value without any consideration to Native specificities. Penny asserts:

What I’ve come to understand is: if you don’t have “capital” to start with or borrowing power or business education or a few generations of merchants in your background, you just can’t start anything. I’m no different. But no welfare for me. My family always worked or made do with a little farming and trapping. I resist welfare like my mom does. She always makes things to sell for extra cash. And we grew what we ate. She still does, even after she lost my dad. But it’s just too hard that way.

(Armstrong, 2000: 58)

Modernity reflected in presenting the city of Vancouver with its attractive and sophisticated means of life does not really impress Penny. On the contrary, she couldn't integrate owing to the complexities she faced there; therefore she turns to drugs and prostitution after becoming homeless when her boyfriend loses his occupation shortly after their entrance in Vancouver. Lena becomes dislocated from the spiritual wholeness she receives from the symbolic ritual of watching the sunrise, and of wrapping herself with its light.

Penny's description of the land's resources as her own blood symbolizes the depth of Indigenous familial relationship with the land. Analogously, after Penny is interviewed by a US immigration agent, she broods with rage over the agents' racist questioning of her right to cross the Canadian-American border. Asked "how much [Indigenous] blood" she has, Penny retorts:

I'm full of blood. Just cut me and see. I'll spill out onto the floor. Maybe spatter some on your smirking face! I am full of the blood that moves up from the ground you stand on. The very minerals your house sits on travels through my veins and will be in the veins of all my relatives for generations to come! I have lots of blood in me. A red line that moves like a river roaring over the falls at my grandparents home, harnessed to feed the power lighting your office. A river you will not stop no matter how many dams you build, no matter where you divert it. I have a lot of blood. Who took yours?

(Armstrong, 2000: 194)

Penny sees the solid and liquid minerals of the earth in terms of the Okanagan blood that marks her identity, as well as those of future generations. Just like blood, the minerals carry her identity; she relates to them, she feels them like she feels the blood running through her veins.

Characters of the novel are often left without any words so as to indicate their inner psychological trauma owing to the process of silencing the indigenous

peoples .Penny expresses her confusion after meeting a Nitnat chief whose tribe was totally dispossessed of its ancestral space. She nods:

“Feeling his rage. His grief for what lies ahead. His frustration. Something moves inside her. The anger wells up inside her. She wants to smash something. She can’t even speak. She just looks at him.”

(Armstrong, 2000: 120)

The mixed reactions show how deep is her psychological trauma when becoming powerless to stop the irretrievable loss of the cultural heritage of the Nitnat. Nothing can function as a response to trauma than silence for the powerless victims of violence *“silence can often communicate traumatic messages as powerfully as words”* (Ancharoff, 263).

The indigenous family fragmentation, drug addiction and other social phenomena are generally due to long term impact of slow violence.

The Mayan people of Mexico has been subjected to extraordinary violence after being dispossessed from their territories which were ravaged by war and exposed to unfair regulations that restricted their economic and political activities so as to force them to sell their ancestral lands for oil exploitation by the supreme European powers. The devastating consequences that led to further dislocation of the Mayan community which remain under the mercy of the tourists and corporations resulted in turning them into used up and even exploited through producing handmade articles that they often sell at very low prices or as poor laborers with low salaries ready to sell their organs to survive. Penny exposes them as *“displaced, sick and starving bodies”* (Armstrong,2000: 166). Lena and her child are victims of double oppression; dislocation and Harry’s rage against the unjust alien system that makes him powerless and vulnerable.

Natural elements such as the sun and the moon that represent Indigenous symbols are used in *Whispering in Shadows* to reflect light in terms of illumination, revelation, protection, and preservation. Penny, for instance, notices that the moonlight streaming through her living room window “*whispers urgently to her*” (Armstrong, 2000: 82).

The gleaming lights of the city of Vancouver that blind, reflect the capitalist culture that contrasts the Okanagan cosmology that regard the light of the sun as healing since nature reconnect the dislocated characters from their traditional cultural knowledge. “*Maybe the big city lights are blinding you.... Maybe what you are looking for isn’t in the bright lights of the city or that silver cloud you shoot up.... Maybe it’s in the rising sun of each new day.*”

(Armstrong, 2000: 39)

Tupa’s teaching remain grasped in the memory of Lena when she comes back to her ancestral lands: “*She used to say to wrap the light from the rising sun around you because the shadows from the dream world followed you everywhere*” (Ibid: 275) Tupa’s perception of the sun is equivalent to protection from monstrous shadows that may destroy her personal universe, therefore its light becomes indispensable for indigenous survival. When talking about her life in the city of Vancouver, Lena says: “*I forgot how to wrap the light of each new day around me*” (Ibid: 275).

The reconnection to the land is produced by the association of natural elements with memories. The industrial activities that destroy the natural indigenous environment by European powers function as a monster that cause deep scars in both the indigenous soul and body:

"The machines are now directly across the road. [Penny] can see at least three of them. They look like huge alien insects, crawling steadily along with huge pinchers in front. The sound coming from them almost drowns out the voices of the people chanting and shouting.... They look so tiny next to the machines. 'Stop. Stop. Stop the slaughter. Stop the Monsters. Stop the killing of trees.... The chanting grows louder but so does the angry sound of the machines."

(Armstrong, 2000: 113)

3.3.5. Colouring the Invisible

As an intellectual and artist, Penny's resistance to the direct forces of globalization through art, permitted her to put her finger on the wounds as a primary step towards the healing process of her oppressed indigenous communities in general and the Okanagan nation in particular. Her personal experience and spiritual vision inherited from her ancestors serve her as a space of inspiration in her artistic production that contributes in informing others about the issue she defends. She allocates most of her art that functions as her vision and her voice to perpetuate the environmental degradation that serves the alien nations who desire economic power to the detriment of Natives who live in jeopardy. Using colors is spiritually fundamental to Penny since they reflect her connection to nature. Tupa encouraged her when saying: *"You and the colors can talk, I see. They tell you things. Listen to them. They never lie."* (Armstrong, 2000: 46)

Colours are used as a potent weapon and a force that enable Penny to resist the hard moments that the indigenous communities experience:

"Maybe color only speaks power! Maybe it is power itself! That's why they painted up for wars or ceremony! And we still give colors at ceremonies. Holey, even the way it's used by

*women, now, in the whose-conquering-who game! Power!
Lipstick, eye-shadow, a red dress! An unseen force.”*

(Armstrong, 2000: 10)

Her art of painting refutes the tremendous injustice that had a toll on Native communities. The use of expressions evoking violence serves her as a diagnosis to the situation. Among them we can state “*bloody limbs and coffee cans,*” “*camouflaged figures and bloodied bodies in corn patches,*” and “*bombed mud huts and trinket shops*” (Armstrong, 2000: 202). Penny’s paintings that tend to speak to the target audience through conveying hidden messages portray the silenced peoples who suffer from both human and environmental violence without concrete reactions after depriving them from their traditional power.

For Penny, the most dominant element in producing paintings is not the financial profit, but the spiritual significance that constitutes part of her as well as the aesthetics and politics of art itself. One of the predominant events that harmed Penny is the reaction of the curator of her gallery who refused to exhibit her paintings stating that they lack of market value and profitability. But her vision to things is absolutely different “*Sell? I’m not worried about that*” (Ibid: 202). However the curator calls her attention to the undeniable financial needs of the gallery: “*Unfortunately we do have to worry about such things. The costs to maintain this lovely gallery are outrageous*” (Ibid). He explains:

“Don’t misunderstand me. I utterly love your work. But my dear, have you thought of the collectors? They want something that can hang well... That’s right. It’s reality. Art is something only the wealthy can afford. They set the parameters of what is defined as art.”

(Ibid: 203-204)

The clash of interests between Penny's political dimensions and the gallery's interests results in removing most of her paintings from exhibition. Being frustrated and even shocked by his reaction, Penny destroyed her work since it cannot attend its target by conveying the message she wants to pass to those who are in favor of the oppressive capitalist system. The silencing trauma of her artistic vision declares the symbolic death of Penny's identity as an artist and the engagement in destroying critique as one of the most powerful means of resistance to the hegemony of the capitalist system by which she is constantly entangled owing to her activism and permanent research that led her to be separated from her lovely children; Shanna, Merilee and Dustin who feel lost and wounded by the emotional void resulting from her constant absence and their dislocation from the land. Her focus on resisting the phenomenon of globalization and the preoccupation by lectures contributed in the fragmentation of her family, Shanna turns to drugs while Merilee escapes to an imaginary world of music. Her activism in creating a fair, just and ethical society had a toll on all her small family, that's why she wishes to be home that signifies affection and protection: "*I don't know why you have to be a speaker and I wish you and me and Dustin and Merilee were home with Nana*" (Armstrong, 2000: 129).

Moving back to her Okanagan milieu Penny tries to reconnect to her origins as a healing process from the wounds she suffered from during her long journey in Vancouver. Unfortunately, she was unable to save her two daughters from succumbing to a capitalist culture since they think that scientific and technological progress will bring to people satisfying news in the future. When Shanna comes home to see her dying mother and reassures her. "*There is lots of good medicine those doctors are researching and they'll cure you.... The world is getting a lot better with more and more new medicines; pretty soon there won't be any more sickness.*" (Armstrong, 2000: 259)

Contrary to Shanna's discourse on scientific progress, Penny has learnt from her own research that medical research often discovers cure for diseases through the use of other human's body tissues, including Indigenous peoples' genes. Penny is convinced that "*something's gonna backfire*" (Ibid: 238). Penny is alarmed over a nightmare she has that entails a catastrophe as a result of a scientific resurrection of pan-Indigenous ancestors: "*That ancestor granpa with the gun, maybe their spirits are mad.... That whole thing about collecting DNA from our long dead ancestors. Now that's creepy*" (Ibid: 238). Considering various activities of medical research including "*putting human genes into pigs and tobacco plants*" and "*cloning,*" Penny concludes that "*it's like the world is gone crazy*" (Ibid: 239) Penny does not believe that progress in the medical sciences, which puts spiritual and cosmological order in peril, will lead to the progress her daughter believes in. On the contrary, Penny predicts a future produced by science in terms of an apocalyptic "*Doomsday*" (Ibid: 238). Penny is extremely disappointed by the mentality that Shanna has adopted. Penny considers her parenting to be the most unsuccessful part of her life because Shanna, her first daughter, who is supposed to offer leadership and direction to her younger siblings in line with Okanagan traditions, is blinded by the myth of human progress through economic and technological evolution.

The factor of female education plays a vital role in resisting globalization, patriarchal marginalization and exploitation. It constitutes an opportunity for social mobility against dispossession and poverty that devastate Native nations. Penny's education allows her to be considered inside her community as a dynamic intellectual. The engagement in manual labor puts her in precarious position since she will be exploited under inhuman conditions: "*what the hell am I doing up an apple tree? An apple knocker! That's what I am. Just what my dad always told me not to be*" (Armstrong, 2000: 21). This moment of prise de conscience reminds her of her father's advice that encouraged her to join the university that paves her way to escape exploitative labor "*I'm never gonna pick apples, stamp boxes or clean motels again*" (Ibid: 41).

As a strong and recognized indigenous intellectual social and political leader concerned with her community's issues Penny is: "*Well versed in traditional Okanagan teachings, conceptions and experiences, as she is in anti-colonial, anti-globalization, Marxist, and feminist intellectual frameworks.*" (Sorfaten, 2006: 388)

Her strong personality and inner connection to her ancestors' roots allowed her family to re-unite her elder's sister Lena and her son Toby. The constant activism of Penny in unveiling the violence and oppression against her community reflects the invisible harm that globalization causes. She tries to demonstrate how the individual militates to restrict globalization is often interpreted as a whisper against the invisible, empty and powerful shadows of globalization. "*A consciousness and activism that is rooted in one's most immediate local and simultaneously cognizant of the local conditions and concerns of other local communities on a global scale*" (Ibid: 391).

Whispering in Shadows restores the spiritual and emotional wellness of indigenous communities as a consequence of reconnection to traditional spaces with effective collaboration between community members so as to resist the slow genocide that devastates Native peoples. The reconnection to the land and to traditional environment is crucial for cultural reorientation, economic sustainability and self determination for dislocated nations. Lena's reconnection to the Okanagan space represents a healing process from violence imposed on her inside imperial cities based on material profit far from spiritual matters.

Indigenous economic collaboration grounded in traditions of communality and spirituality would be one of the major solutions and a salvation from imperial violence implemented as a system to force the indigenous communities to sell their lands as a result of marginalization that turns them into poor. Indigenous association based on common spiritual benefits would strengthen these oppressed

peoples. Sorflaten describes this association as “A *transnational solidarity of trade which privileges Indigenous rights and harnesses control of ‘transnational flows and globally dispersed work chains’*” (Sorfatén,2006:391).

3.3.6. Raising Voices from the Margin

The emergence of new forms of discrimination and violence against indigenous women contributes enormously in the constant change of their realities. Therefore, attaining fair human rights and eliminating all forms of discrimination and oppression become fundamental principles towards women emancipation from domestic violence and sexual abuse since Indigenous women regularly suffer from violations of their human rights that do not represent a priority for the oppressive systems.

The indigenous women’s state inside the imperial societies is refuted in the novel *Whispering in Shadows* as victims of the oppressive system which is based on patriarchal principles that exposes them to permanent abuse that rendered them powerless, drug dealers and prostitute so as to survive, totally opposite to their original status that used to regard them as leaders. The bitter daily experiences inspired Lena that the salvation and the healing from her trauma consist in the reconnection to the tribe when she realized that sharing sex is less important for her than the spiritual reconnection to the land. The protagonist Penny and her sister Lena’s trauma expose clearly the scars that the long way battle generated in a capitalist society almost empty from spirituals.

“The novel records the different vision of woman to the sufferings of her people, If, then, one should try to sum up the character of women’s fiction at the present moment, one would say that it is courageous; it is sincere, it keeps closely to what women feel . . . It does not insist upon its femininity but at the same time, a woman’s book is not written as a man would write it“.

(Woolf, 1996)

3.4. Conclusion

Whispering in Shadows portrays the severe social and environmental violence that traumatized indigenous communities experience each day inside the so called modern societies. It focuses on the deep familial interconnection and interdependence between Indigenous communities and the land .The contemporary socio-economic realities slowly affect indigenous identity and cause the destabilization and the dislocation of indigenous generations in ways that maintain slow genocide.

Armstrong metaphorically represent how the human body and its functioning interact interdependently with the land and portray how the destruction and pollution of such Indigenous spaces as sacred forests and rivers entails a deep wounding of the Indigenous peoples who are connected to the land. Armstrong speaks about indigenusness as a balanced and mutually perceptive relationship with all of nature. In this book, she ends with a hopeful sense that it is not too late for peoples of the land to preserve and reinvigorate this tradition.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The indigenous communities and in spite their differences in history, culture, language, traditions and ancestry do not constitute the same indigenusness in Canada. These communities still suffer from the oppression of the settler state and the economic globalization that continuous to foster slow violence which endangers them and their traditions. Therefore, any reconciliation refers to some Aboriginals as an opportunity to improve their quality of life measured in education, housing, and incomes. However, for others it refers to assimilation and a loss of identity and culture.

Canada can surpass its colonial origins, strengthen its identity and moves towards a post-colonial order through a process of decolonization, this order refutes homogeneity between both the Natives and the settlers by a reconciliation of their differences and co-existence so as to attribute certain socio-economic stability, empowerment and cultural enrichment that reinforce the states' position on the international level.

The literature of color appears to be better, and more inclined, to promote a great variety of viewpoints that tackle the complex situation, Native communities experience in their daily life and the impact of colonialism that destructs people's lives along with a sense of responsibility, wrapped up in an understanding of the common, flawed humanity of both colonizer and colonized. It is precisely this commonality, the mimetic linking of colonized and colonizer that allows this literature to genuinely transcend to some extent binary construction.

According to different well known Native voices especially women writers; global healing from indigenous trauma and resistance to the whispering forces can be realized through education and meaningful collaboration on both the local and global levels between indigenous peoples and settler populations so as to pave the way towards new realities that concern everybody. Armstrong states that:

“The contemporary context requires ‘collaborations’ between settler populations and Indigenous peoples currently living their Indigeneity and those ‘re-indigenizing’ themselves in their customs, laws and languages in a contemporary context. (...)” and that it is necessary to “situate the tribal and the local in the global as the basis for an ethic of Indigeneity to emerge in the great paradigm shift that the earth requires”

(Armstrong 2013: 116)

Deep attention has been given to literature as a sphere that participates to the process of healing by talented Native word warriors who try to put their fingers on the wounds caused by devastating consequences after globalizing their concerns. Jeannette Armstrong does not only demonstrate the dire situation that Native Canadian communities experience daily, but regards it as a symptom of the attrition of spirit brought about by the Western civilization, capitalism and by simple human greed as well as environmental degradation of the contemporary world that take their toll on everyone, regardless culture and race.

The exploitation of natural resources inside the indigenous territories has contributed in worsening the situation and it is still having devastating consequences on Native peoples since the execution of widespread projects has not stopped. Joy Porter, referring to the American Indian experience, states that:

“The battles for Indian survival are far from over. Contemporary Indian communities face acute on-going threats to the sovereignty of their remaining land base and to the ecological balance of Indian environments from, amongst other things, nuclear testing, nuclear waste disposal, coal strip mining and oil, logging, and uranium extraction”
(Porter,2005: 40)

Since the role of Aboriginal women in Aboriginal society is not well understood in non-Aboriginal circles, a resumption of their traditional roles constitutes the key to putting an end to their mistreatment and permanent sufferings from decades of denigration and humiliation, owing to double discrimination; as women and as Aboriginals, therefore encouraging and assisting them to regain and occupy their rightful place as equal partners in Aboriginal society represents an immediate need. The resulting emotional anger, suicide, and violence that affect Indigenous peoples in general and the aboriginal women in particular create a slowly evolving genocide over time in Indigenous spaces.

Our original communities have disintegrated; the long-term condition of the human species, and other life forms, has become secondary to short-term profit for the few, allowing for poor choices that have altered the health and lives of millions. I have come to understand that unless change occurs in the ways in which communities use the land, the well being [sic] and survival of us all is at risk.

(Armstrong, 1999)

Through her work Jeannette Armstrong promotes an environmental ethics, a close connection of her community with their environment including the sense of common life of individuals as well as insisting on the importance of place and belonging to tribal identity. She tries to recreate and rebuild the traditional indigenous family system so as to enable her community to recover from its psychic trauma through her activism, art and literary works that construct the aboriginal local as a site of solidarity. It is through her construction of Penny Jackson as an ardent community supporter and tireless Indigenous activist, rooted in traditional ways of knowing and belonging, that Armstrong participates in the task of re-covering and re-imagining Aboriginal community. On the one hand,

Penny's story is a scathing indictment of global capitalism and continuing forms of colonization. On the other hand, Penny's journey demonstrates that globalization has many meanings, and that not all of them are negative as these increased possibilities of communication, global solidarity, and global cultural exchange demonstrates. Penny's journey also reveals how the oppressive aspects of global capitalism, such as fragmentation and marginalization, can, be turned into potentially liberating channels of Indigenous self-governance and trade. Penny's depictions of Indigenous communities as a places rooted in traditions of sustainability and interdependency tells a different story, a story that encourages us to imagine a world which does "not depend so much on oppositions as [it does] on co-operations" (King 2014: 110).

In spite the large rejection of the novel; *Whispering in Shadows* by most Canadian literary critics, reproaching the writer for abandoning the narrative and engaging in rigid lectures. Too many scholars have admired her way of bringing readers into the creative mind of her protagonist but query her for the focus on political issues rather than the dramatic form. Suzanne Methot criticizes the fact that Penny is an "explain-it-all narrative device" rather than a "nuanced character"(2000). However, it is important to point out that Armstrong's writing emphasizes the place of the Okanagan language and cosmology in her novel, and destabilizes dominant categories within Western constructs of artistic expression. Jane Haladay argues that "Armstrong asserts a form of Okanagan literary self-determination that privileges indigenous thought ways" (2006: 38).

Armstrong's purported lecture-style narrative technique consistently acts as an unapologetically incongruous resistance to dominant Western colonial and neo-colonial systems.

Everyone who struggles with the contradictions of contemporary life will feel grateful for Armstrong's insight and her contribution for being the voice for the Native communities and the intellectual who reflects the values, norms and cultural ethos of these subdued conquered societies to once again come back in the limelight through the preservation of their indigenous identity which is by no

means the single problem which occupied their minds but it is one that still draws particular attention.

Despite the significant achievements of the feminist movement and Indigenous women's organization, much remains to be accomplished since their victories were partial owing to the persisting patriarchal notions of gender that discriminate against women. Therefore, alliances between Indigenous and non Indigenous women's organization as an integrated front in the women's struggle and recovering a culture of sustainability become a necessity.

GLOSSARY

Glossary :

Ambivalence: *Amer.* |æm' bɪvələns| *Brit.* |am' bɪv(ə)l(ə)ns|

the ambiguous way in which colonizer and colonized regard one another. The colonizer often regards the colonized as both inferior yet exotically other, while the colonized regards the colonizer as both enviable yet corrupt. In a context of hybridity, this often produces a mixed sense of blessing and curse.

Alterity: /al'tɛrɪti/

"the state of being other or different"; the political, cultural, linguistic, or religious other. The study of the ways in which one group makes themselves different from others.

Colonial education: /kə'ləʊ.ni.əl / /,edʒu'keɪʃn/

the process by which a colonizing power assimilates either a subaltern native elite or a larger population to its way of thinking and seeing the world.

Diaspora: / daɪ'æs.pərə /

the voluntary or enforced migration of peoples from their native homelands. Diaspora literature is often concerned with questions of maintaining or altering identity, language, and culture while in another culture or country.

Essentialism: /ɪ'sɛnʃ(ə)lɪz(ə)m/

the essence or "whatness" of something. In the context of race, ethnicity, or culture, essentialism suggests the practice of various groups deciding what is and isn't a particular identity. As a practice, essentialism tends to overlook differences within groups often to maintain the status quo or obtain power. Essentialist claims can be used by a colonizing power but also by the colonized as a way of resisting what is claimed about them.

Ethnicity: /ɛθ'nɪsɪti/

a fusion of traits that belong to a group—shared values, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviors, experiences, memories, and loyalties. Often deeply related to a person's identity.

Exoticism: /ɪg'zɒtɪsɪz(ə)m/

the process by which a cultural practice is made stimulating and exciting in its difference from the colonializer's normal perspective. Ironically, as European groups educated local, indigenous cultures, schoolchildren often began to see their native life ways, plants, and animals as exotic and the European counterparts as "normal" or "typical."

Hegemony: /hɪ'dʒeməni/

the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all, often not only through means of economic and political control but more subtly through the control of education and media.

Hybridity: /hʌɪ'brɪdɪti/

new transcultural forms that arise from cross-cultural exchange. Hybridity can be social, political, linguistic, religious, etc. It is not necessarily a peaceful mixture, for it can be contentious and disruptive in its experience. Note the two related definitions:

Catalysis: /kə'talɪsɪs/

the (specifically New World) experience of several ethnic groups interacting and mixing with each other often in a contentious environment that gives way to new forms of identity and experience.

Creolization: /kri:ə(ɔ)lɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/

societies that arise from a mixture of ethnic and racial mixing to form a new material, psychological, and spiritual self-definition.

Identity: /ɪ'dentɪti/

the way in which an individual and/or group defines itself. Identity is important to self-concept, social mores, and national understanding. It often involves both essentialism and othering.

Ideology: /ˌaɪdɪ'ɒlədʒi/

"a system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true" (Bordwell & Thompson 494)

Language: /'læŋgwɪdʒ/

In the context of colonialism and post-colonialism, language has often become a site for both colonization and resistance. In particular, a return to the original

indigenous language is often advocated since the language was suppressed by colonizing forces. The use of European languages is a much debated issue among postcolonial authors.

Abrogation: /abrə'geɪʃ(ə)n/

a refusal to use the language of the colonizer in a correct or standard way.

Appropriation: /ə,prəʊpri'eɪʃ(ə)n/

"the process by which the language is made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience."

Magical realism: /'mædʒɪk(ə)l/ /'rɪəlɪz(ə)m/

the adaptation of Western realist methods of literature in describing the imaginary life of indigenous cultures who experience the mythical, magical, and supernatural in a decidedly different fashion from Western ones. A weaving together elements we tend to associate with European realism and elements we associate with the fabulous, where these two worlds undergo a "closeness or near merging."

Mapping: /'mæpɪŋ/

the mapping of global space in the context of colonialism was as much prescriptive as it was descriptive. Maps were used to assist in the process of aggression, and they were also used to establish claims. Maps claims the boundaries of a nation, for example.

Metanarrative: /'metənərətɪv/

("grand narratives," "master narratives.") a large cultural story that seeks to explain within its borders all the little, local narratives. A metanarrative claims to be a big truth concerning the world and the way it works. Some charge that all metanarratives are inherently oppressive because they decide whether other narratives are allowed or not.

Mimicry: /'mɪmɪkri/

the means by which the colonized adapt the culture (language, education, clothing, etc.) of the colonizer but always in the process changing it in important ways. Such an approach always contains it in the ambivalence of hybridity.

Nation/Nation-state: /'neɪʃ(ə)n/ /steɪt/

an aggregation of people organized under a single government. National interest is associated both with a struggle for independent ethnic and cultural identity, and ironically an opposite belief in universal rights, often multicultural, with a basis in geo-economic interests. Thus, the move for national independence is just as often associated with region as it is with ethnicity or culture, and the two are often at odds when new nations are formed.

Orientalism: /ɔːrɪ'ent(ə)lɪzəm/

the process (from the late eighteenth century to the present) by which "the Orient" was constructed as an exotic other by European studies and culture. Orientalism is not so much a true study of other cultures as it is broad Western generalization about Oriental, Islamic, and/or Asian cultures that tends to erode and ignore their substantial differences.

Other: /'ʌðə/

the social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalizes another group. By declaring someone "Other," persons tend to stress what makes them dissimilar from or opposite of another, and this carries over into the way they represent others, especially through stereotypical images.

Race: /reɪs/

the division and classification of human beings by physical and biological characteristics. Race often is used by various groups to either maintain power or to stress solidarity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was often used as a pretext by European colonial powers for slavery and/or the "white man's burden."

Semiotics: /,siːmi'ɒtɪks/

a system of signs which one knows what something is. Cultural semiotics often provide the means by which a group defines itself or by which a colonializing power attempts to control and assimilate another group.

Space/Place: /speɪs/ /pleɪs/

space represents a geographic locale, one empty in not being designated. Place, on the other hand, is what happens when a space is made or owned. Place involves landscape, language, environment, culture, etc.

Subaltern: /'sʌb(ə)lt(ə)n/

the lower or colonized classes who have little access to their own means of expression and are thus dependent upon the language and methods of the ruling class to express themselves.

Worlding: /'wɜːldɪŋ/ the process by which a person, family, culture, or people is brought into the dominant Eurocentric/Western global society

Genocide : /'dʒɛnəʃaɪd/

is a complicated social, political ,cultural and psychological phenomenon.

Okanagan : /,əʊkə'nɑːgən/

Anglicized version of Suqnaqinx and refers to the Indigenous people of the Okanagan territory, it translates as “takes to the head or mind“ „The ones who stand on a mountain and are seen and heard from far away.The Okanagan also known as the Okanagan Valley and sometimes as the Okanagan Country, is a region in the Canadian province of British Columbia defined by the basin of Okanagan Lake and the Canadian portion of the Okanagan River. The Okanagan Valley is home to the Syilx, commonly known as the Okanagan people

Sqilxw :/skilksə/

The Okanagan term for the Indigenous people also commonly called the Okanagan whose territory is located in the southern interior of BC and north central Washington, literally translates as the dream in a spiral. Syilxis also used and refers to the peoples who speak Nsyilxcen, the Okanagan language.

En'owkin : /enəwkin/

It is a conceptual metaphor that embodies Okanagan ideal of coming to consensus through collaborative group process. Armstrong explains that this term comes from the high language of the Okanagan people and has its origin in a philosophy to nurture voluntary cooperation, an essential foundation for everyday living.

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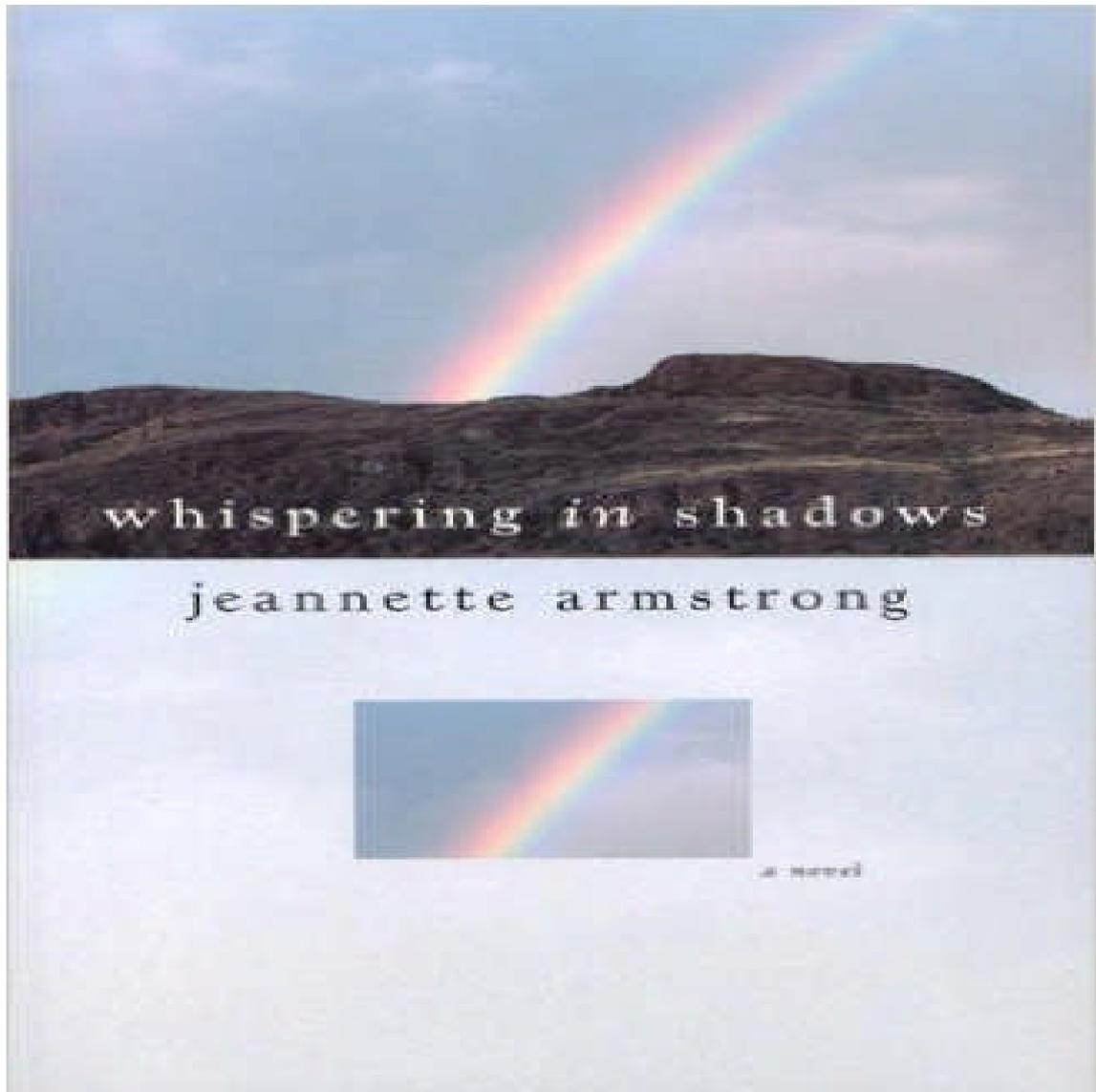
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APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Book Cover



***Whispering in shadows* by Jeannette Armstrong**

Appendix B:

Poems by Jeannette Armstrong:

Visions

By Jeannette C. Armstrong

We live in silences,
little bits of spaces,
slim fitted slivers,
wedged between bunches of sound.
Places where jewel fishes
Dart through dark green.
We speak in languages
whose speakers have no tongues.
We will come to you,
soft edged in the night
or mirror-image clear
in warm sun noon.
We breathe in the voices
of little children.
We play in the god-minds
of the great,
who capture us
only in silences.

The History Lesson,

by Jeannette C. Armstrong

Out of the belly of Christopher's ship

a mob bursts

Running in all directions

Pulling furs off animals

Shooting buffalo

Shooting each other left and right.

Father mean well waves his makeshift wand

forgives saucer-eyed Indians

Red coated knights

gallop across the prairie to get their men

and to build a new world

Pioneers and traders bring gifts

Smallpox, Seagrams and Rice Krispies

Civilization has reached the promised land.

Between the snap crackle pop of smoke stacks

and multi-coloured rivers

swelling with flower powered zee

are farmers sowing skulls and bones

and miners pulling from gaping holes
green paper faces
of smiling English lady
The colossi in which they trust
while burying
breathing forests and fields
beneath concrete and steel
stand shaking fists
waiting to mutilate
whole civilizations
ten generations at a blow.
Somewhere among the remains
of skinless animals
is the termination
to a long journey
and unholy search
for the power
glimpsed in a garden
forever closed
forever lost.

Theme and Image :an anthology of poetry by S.Fung, Q. Ho, S. Park,2003

Appendix C:

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Novels:

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Short stories :

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Recordings :

- "Mary Old Owl" on *Poetry is Not a Luxury: A Collection of Black and Native Poetry Set to Classical Guitar, Reggae, Dub, and African Drums*. Maya: CAPAC, 1987. Produced by The Fire This Time.

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Interviews :

- Interview with Hartmut Lutz. *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors*. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991. 13–32.
- Interview with Victoria Freeman. "The Body of Our People." *The Power to Bend Spoons: Interviews with Canadian Novelists*. Beverley Daurio, ed. Toronto: Mercury, 1998. 10–19.
- Armstrong, J. (Interviewee) & Hall, D. E. (Interviewer). (2007). Native Perspectives on Sustainability: Jeannette Armstrong (Sylx) [Interview transcript].

Awards and Honours :

- 1974: *Mungo Martin Award* for First Nations people in education for Native art.
- 1978: *Helen Pitt Memorial Award* support of emerging artists.
- 2000: Honorary Doctorate in Letters, St. Thomas University
- 2003: *Buffett Award for Aboriginal Leadership* in recognition of Armstrong's work as an educator, community leader and Indigenous rights activist.
- 2006 Honorary Doctorate of Laws, University of British Columbia.
- 2013-2018 :Canada Research Chair in Okanagan Indigenous Philosophy, 2013-2018.
- 2016: George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award.

Appendix D:

Native Perspectives on Sustainability:

Jeannette Armstrong (Syilx)

Interviewee: Jeanette Armstrong

Interviewer: David E. Hall

Date: 10/21/07

Transcribed: Brianna Finney

DH: Thank you for taking your time with us today. As you know from our other conversations this project is about sustainability from the perspective of indigenous leaders and our aim is to hear from you on the subject today.

JA: Okay

DH: To start can you just share a little bit about yourself in terms of your background, cultural heritage, and your work?

JA: My name is Jeannette Armstrong. My Okanagan Syilx name means something like the light, rippling off of moving water. It's an image name. I come from the Okanagan, but my mother is from Kettle Falls at the Columbia River. The Okanagan River is the most northern area that the salmon reach in their spawn. I come from a people that were people that respected and loved salmon on the way to the Columbia.

DH: So you mentioned some of the geography and the area that you are connected with. How would you define your community in terms of geography and people?

the Syilx people, which is the real name for the people of the Nation, covers a large area in Canada and a large area in Washington state. Originally our

people shared eight tribal districts that were very closely interconnected in terms of the different kinds of habitat that they resided in and the unique aspects that provided food and sustenance in those different areas of the Syilx territory. Most of it around the river systems: the Sanpoil River, and the Methow River, the Similkameen River, of course, the Okanagan River, the Kettle River, the Grandby River, and the Arrow Lakes system. Those are all parts of our territory. Our people practiced a kind of harvesting method, quite different than the rest of North America, and I don't think it is very well understood. The practice of sustainable harvesting was very deeply embedded because of the harshness of our climate. We're on the east side of the Cascades, and it's very dry in our area; dry grassland, we're the northern tip of the Sonoran Desert, and the sage and sand and cactus and rattlesnakes, are all in our territory. Consequently, food is a very important resource

in terms of social responsibility, and how culturally we might have found ways to make sure that it was sustainable. So the culture that we practice, I sometimes describe it as permaculturing. What is on the land, taking care of it, stewarding it, making sure that it was producing for us each year (...) and restoration of that culture is part of the work that I do (...)

DH: Great. Would you say anything else about your community and how that informs your work?

JA: In a lot of ways, the community, which is in the northern part, and the southern part, which is in Washington State, has undergone a severe, severe, we could say 'onslaught of violence' to them culturally. We haven't suffered the physical violence that many others have suffered in terms of relocation and war. We were encountered on a much later date, and by that time Smallpox has really taken its toll and decimated our population, down to almost extinction. There's only twenty-five hundred of us left on the Canadian side, so we're part of the *vanishing* cultures. It's very difficult (...) I don't think anyone really understands the effect that has on a people, on a community. People come from diasporic cultures that really don't have community, but have collections of

people who work at the same place, or make money at the same place, make a living at the same place, really do not understand community. Some of the communities of color understand what community means, and when there's a *loss* of community, it's a transgenerational loss. It's a loss of the soul and of the spirit, and when that's combined with the loss of connection to the land, the loss of the ability to find yourself within that, the community finds itself in serious, serious trouble (...) So, finding a way to bring that back in a natural way, in a good way, and to try to move away from the idea of being a victim. Bringing, really clearly through education, the idea that there's value in our knowledge, there's value in our culture, there's value in our ways as a community, and that really matters, that it does make a difference, and that we cannot put that responsibility aside.

DH: I'll return to some other questions about your community later. The term sustainability is one you've used a few times and a term that more and more people are using to speak to the environmental, social and economic challenges that we're facing today and I'm wondering how you define that term, how you explain it.

JA: With great difficulty, because I'm a fluent speaker of my language, and if I try to translate that, or even interpret that into my language, it's not a very good word. It's a very inadequate word (...) Sustainability on one level means to be able to maintain and sustain the fullness of health that needs to be there for us to thrive, and for everything else to thrive. In that context it sounds like it fits with the way I would think about sustainability in my language. But the way in my language that it translates is sustaining the human abuse to a certain level, and keeping it at a level that it doesn't quite destroy everything. So that's not an adequate definition. We need to be able to think about the definition that our people have which maybe translates to something like: a hundred-percent sustainability (laughter) with that built into it. What that means for the Okanagan is that, if you cannot practice that, if you do not know how to practice that, then you are a danger. You're endangering a whole community,

you're endangering generations of children that are coming. You have to be able to understand how to do that, and if you don't have the knowledge, and if you don't understand how to do that then you have to seek that knowledge, and you have to find a way to be able to. Otherwise, you're not living up to your human capacity. You're remaining ignorant and you're remaining uncivilized, if you cannot achieve one hundred percent sustainability of everything that you're using. So, you're lacking knowledge. You're lacking systems. You're lacking knowledge and philosophy about *yourself*. It's not just about the land, but it's about yourself.

DH: If you're talking with someone who's completely unfamiliar with the idea of sustainability, how might you help them to understand it? Like through a story or analogy or anything?

JA: I guess one of the things in our community is that it isn't something that is *theorized*. It is always something that is *practical*, and something that is understood in terms of what you do, and what you don't do. Some of those things are expressed in terms of our traditional laws, or our practices and ceremony. Some of it is conveyed through actual teachings, like taking your child out, and talking to them, and clearly giving them instructions about how to harvest, and what you should be doing and looking for, and what you shouldn't be doing, and what you should be aware of, and how you should be moving through the land to maintain that.

(...) If I were to try and explain sustainability to someone who didn't understand about it, I would say: "for this whole year, in order to be sustainable, you should try living without having to buy anything. You should try either growing everything that you're going to eat, or trading for everything that you're going to eat. If you can manage to do that, and if you can figure out a way to be able to do that in a given area, then you'll know something about sustainability. You will have learned something about sustainability."

DH: Would you be able to add more to your perspective on answering that question of what it means to be human and indigenous and connected to place?

JA: We have, what I today call, a methodology. I think it's an important perspective in terms of putting a perspective on what my role is as a human, and thinking about the Okanagan perspective of that, and looking at that question (...) The idea of the word that we use to describe ourselves, Syilx people, is a part of that. In a sense, if I were to translate that word for you, contained in that world is the foundational instruction, or paradigm, that expresses that idea of being so indigenous, and so a part of the natural world that our humanness is an expression of that natural world. Our language is really not like English. The language that we speak is an oral language. What I mean in talking about the oral language is that the knowledge of meaning of the words is carried in the oral structure of making meaning.

(...) our family members, all of our relatives on the land, and continuously maintain one unit. In other words, to be unified, to be in balance, and if we can do that, we can move forward, into the next generation as a whole. And we need to be able to accomplish that as human beings. When we unravel that, then we are in danger, because strands can break off. We can lose strands, so we have to maintain that unity and balance with all other living things. That's an imperative about people; you can say we're a one-commandment people. It's imperative to know that, to practice it, to live that and to celebrate that. So, all of our ceremonies talk about that, and all of our stories talk about that. We have different kinds of processes and that we utilize in our community to accomplish that and achieve that (...).

DH: Yeah, please. You also answered my very next question, about imagery, or any symbols that represent the idea of sustainability. If you'd be willing to draw that, make a little sketch of the twinning and what is invoked for you when you think of the name of your people. If you're in the mood for it. (laughter)

JA: Well, yeah, I don't know, it's just a rope. (laughter) It's twisting strands together.

DH: Right. So, yeah, please say more about what you were just speaking to.

JA: So, one of the ways that that can be accomplished and achieved, of course, is through how we interact with each other as a community, as family, and as a nation on the land. When I think about how we might maintain that balance, one of the things that I've come to understand and have utilized, and also analyzed, is a word we use in our traditional governance structure. It comes from one of our teaching stories, the first teaching that we, as a community, have is to understand what community is. To be able to sustain community, and to be able to transfer that knowledge, and that ethic to each succeeding generation, and to be able to bring the community continuously in balance with all of the other living life forms.

So *how* that is accomplished and *how* that is done really is an issue that maybe the external society needs to look at. One of the tools that we have--I would say it's a decision making tool, or a dialogue tool, or it's a tool that can be used for conflict resolution. It's also a tool or methodology that can be used for finding out what the best solution to any question might be. In our language we call that process or that tool, "*naw'qinwixw*," and it's thought about as a dialogue tool (...).

DH: In the time that we have remaining, you can speak to your vision for your community and what sustainability would look like. Or, we can talk more about the actual actions and strategies that we need to take to bring about a sustainable future?

JA: Well, I think it's both. I'm truly a believer in local action. You can't just do it in your own backyard, you have to practice it everywhere in the public

domain. If only your family, friends and neighbors buy into it then you're just talking. (laughter)

DH: Right.

JA: If you don't practice it yourself, especially, there's no use in you talking. (laughter)

DH: Jeannette, please tell us about the symbol embroidered on your Okanagan Nation vest.

JA: These are two of the symbols that I was talking about from the story. This one represents, the elder, the black bear in the story. Of course, I didn't tell the story, but in the story were those four principles, and the *naw'qinwixw* was given to us (...) This one is the salmon, which is the second eldest. Of course, they represent different aspects: the salmon represents action, and movement, and cycles; the elder represents tradition, and long-term understanding, and knowledge, wisdom.

DH: Great. So, can you talk more about what your vision is for your community, and how to get there?

JA: (1:40) Yeah. I think in a lot of ways, my hope is that the work that so many of our people are engaged in now to restore some of these practices, to incorporate our knowledge, and to recover the knowledge and philosophy and the ethics in a contemporary life-way that makes sense and restores the stewardship, restores the community, and restores the bonding that we have with our land, that have been severed for many years. My vision in terms of that happening is already unfolding, is already happening through the work we do at En'owkin Centre. , in our communities, so many of our young people are understanding that this is knowledge, and this is valuable, and these practices have worth and value far beyond economics, that our very lives depend on it, and the sustainability of our community, the health of our succeeding generations and our current generations depends on us being able to manifest them in terms of

priorities. So many of our young people and so many of our adult learners are coming back to that, because it's natural to them, and there's an understanding and a feeling that they know, that they are familiar with it.

DH: Can you say more about how you see other communities perhaps embracing this process, the *naw'qinwixw* process?

JA: We have worked with organizations like--and I'm very careful about choosing organization that I work with--the Bioneers organization here, because it has an out-reach and it has a vision for that kind of transformation. It's not just social justice and transformation but environmental justice and transformation. It's searching and seeking, it's like a huge *naw'qinwixw* happening at Bioneers. So, that's really exciting. If we can participate in that, and contribute to that, then on my own walking down the road with my little satchel trying to give out this information is going to carry a lot further. It's going to happen in a lot more places and so on. So connecting with those kinds of organizations, and connecting with an organization like the Center for Ecoliteracy. I've done fifteen years of work with them to look at how schools might be transformed in terms of education, and how children and learners within the education system might be brought back to what community really means, and how that inter-dependence, and connection back to land, and sustainability over a long -term, is something that's learned by practice and not something that's theoretical and in books, or legislated (...) Ecotrust, for instance, and their work in the indigenous leadership program that's supported by people like Howard and Peter Buffett, creates and develops the ability for indigenous people, like myself, who are working, and giving our lives to

that work, because we know it's something that we *have* to do. It's not something that you make money at or whatever; it's something you have to do.

DH: Are there other things that we haven't had an opportunity to talk about that you think are essentially relevant?

JA: One of the things that, maybe as an indigenous person, there are some misconceptions I think in sort of lumping all Native Americans together (laughter), into one sort of mono culture (...) One of the things I think about that I think is also important is that whole lumping together of Native Americans into one indigenous culture that we all think this way, or think that way (...) There is a commonness of being in terms of the land, and the long-term knowledge, and understanding of the land, but it's different from one area to another.

DH: In closing are there any thoughts from our conversation that you'd like to re-emphasize?

JA: No, I think that's quite a lot. (laughter)

DH: Yeah (laughter) . Well, thank you so much, Jeannette. I appreciate you taking the time with us today. It's been a pleasure, thank you.

JA: You're welcome.

Appendix E:



National Aboriginal Day - Adults in Celebratory Dress | by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada May 07,2012

< <https://www.flickr.com/photos/aandcanada/with/7345090766/> >

Appendix F:

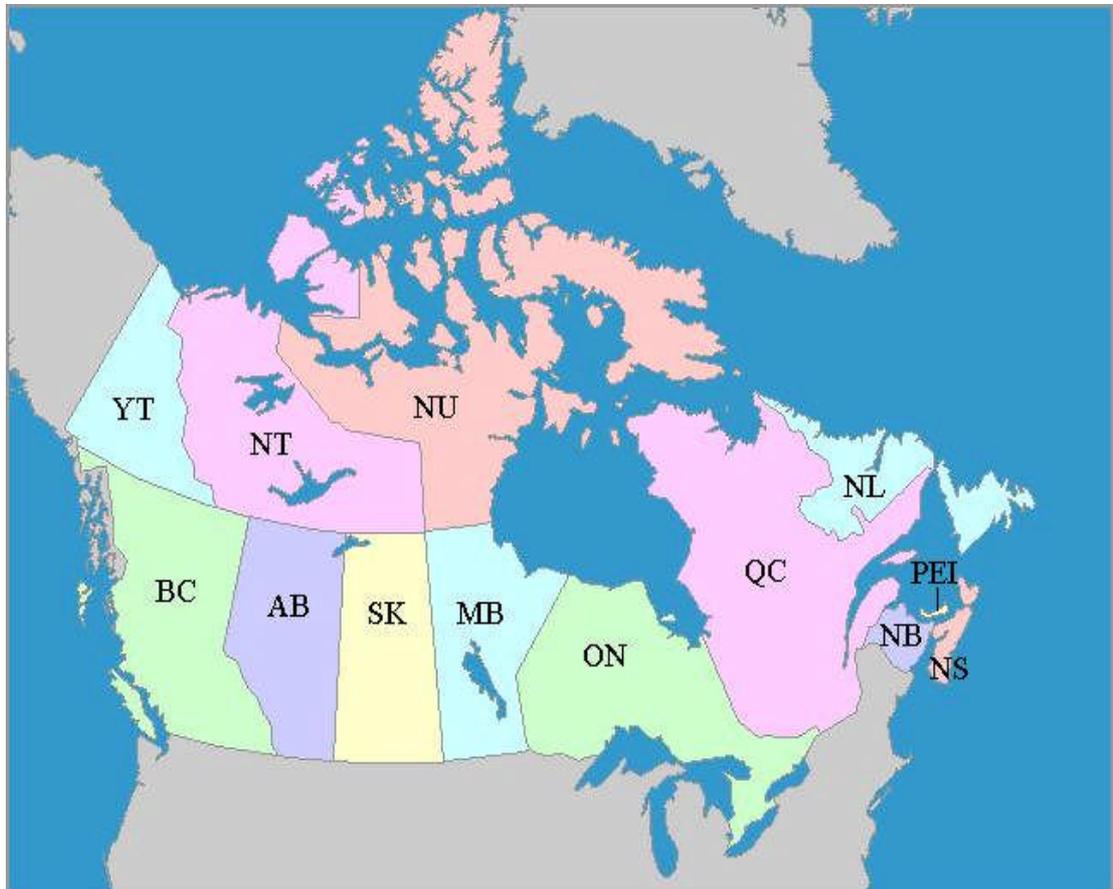


Jeannette Christine Armstrong, 2016. Photo by Laura Sawchuk

< <http://bcbooklook.com/2016/02/02/103-jeannette-armstrong/> >

Appendix G:

Canadian First Nations by Province



< <http://www.native-languages.org/canada.htm> >

- AB → Alberta First Nations
- NT → Northwest Territories First Nations
- QC → Quebec First Nations
- NL → Newfoundland and Labrador First Nations
- NB → New Brunswick First Nations
- ON → Ontario First Nations
- NU → Nunavut First Nations
- YT → Yukon First Nations
- SK → Saskatchewan First Nations
- BC → British Columbia First Nations
- MB → Manitoba First Nations
- NS → Nova Scotia First Nations
- PEI → Prince Edward Island First Nations

Summary

This dissertation attempts to provide some details about the cultural genocide that the indigenous peoples from all over the world are subjected to especially those living in North America. *Whispering in Shadows* by Jeanette Armstrong is considered as a masterpiece from a native writer that represents how Okanagan and other indigenous peoples of North America experience contemporary forms of slow genocide as a result of the alien cultures imposed upon them by force. This novel treats the real sense of life from an Okanagan writer's point of view and details the perspectives of the indigenous peoples to reconstruct what was destroyed by non-native settlers and put an end to the abusive exploitation of the indigenous peoples as well as the preservation of the natural resources that represent a sacred heritage, since the destruction of the environment and the permanent exploitation of the existing resources considered as part of them leads to the destruction of every single aspect of life .

Resumé

Cette thèse tente de fournir quelques détails sur le génocide culturel auquel sont soumis les peuples autochtones du monde entier, en particulier ceux qui vivent en Amérique du Nord. Les murmures dans l'ombre de Jeannette Armstrong est considéré comme un chef-d'œuvre d'une écrivaine indigène qui représente comment le peuple Okanagan et d'autres peuples autochtones de l'Amérique du Nord éprouvent des formes contemporaines de génocide lent comme conséquence des cultures étrangères qui leur sont imposées par la force. Ce roman traite le sens réel de la vie du point de vue d'une écrivaine okanagan et détaille les perspectives des peuples indigènes pour reconstruire ce qui a été détruit par les colons et mettre fin à l'exploitation abusive des peuples autochtones ainsi que la préservation des ressources naturelles qui représentent un patrimoine sacré puisque la destruction de l'environnement et l'exploitation permanente des ressources existantes conduisent à la destruction de chaque aspect de la vie que les autochtones considèrent comme faisant partie d'eux.

ملخص

- إن هذا البحث يسعى الى إعطاء بعض التفصيل حول الإبادة الثقافية التي تتعرض لها الشعوب الأصلية من جميع أنحاء العالم لاسيما تلك التي تعيش في أمريكا الشمالية . تعتبر الرواية المسماة "الهمس في الظلال"، و التي أصدرتها الكاتبة "جانيت أرمسترونغ" تحفة أدبية تشخص معاناة الشعوب الأصلية بشمال أمريكا جراء الإبادة الثقافية المستمرة في الوقت المعاصر من خلال الثقافات الغربية المفروضة عليهم بقوة. هذه الرواية تعالج المعنى الحقيقي للحياة و تطلعات الشعوب الأصلية لإعادة بناء ما حطمه المستوطن و وضع حد للإستغلال الوحشي لهذه الشعوب ، بالإضافة إلى التطرق إلى الحفاظ على الثروات الطبيعية و التي تمثل إرثا مقدسا بالنسبة لها باعتبار أن الوسط الطبيعي و الإستغلال المفرط للثروات الطبيعية يؤدي الى تحطيم كل مقومات الحياة .

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كلية الآداب ، اللغات و الفنون

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الأدب النسوي للشعوب الأصلية بين الإبادة الثقافية و المقاومة في: " الهمس في الظلال "

لـ : جـانـيت أرمـسترونـغ .

مذكرة تخرج لنيل شهادة الماجستير في الأدب النسوي للشعوب الأصلية المكتوب بالإنجليزية .

تحت إشراف الأستاذ

محمد يامين

إعداد الطالب :

الدكتور :

معاشو قدور
بولنوار

أعضاء لجنة المناقشة :

رئيسا	جامعة سيدي بلعباس	أ.د فوزية بجاوي
مشرفا و مقررا	جامعة سيدي بلعباس	أ.د محمد يامين بولنوار
عضوا مناقشا	جامعة سعيدية	د.محمد قـرازيب
عضوا مناقشا	جامعة سعيدية	د.جمال بن عدلة

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