A POSTCOLONIAL CONCEPTION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL
MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE CURRICULUM

by

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ABSTRACT

Currently, in many high schools throughout Canada and the United States, English teachers have been developing literature curricula to meet the needs of their culturally diverse students. However, because in most cases these educators have not had at their disposal the interpretative techniques of such postcolonial literary theorists as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, they have been relying, instead, for their reading strategies upon traditional literary theories.

Unfortunately, when teachers employ New Critical, archetypal, feminist, or reader-response methods of literary analysis in their reading of multicultural literature, they are often unaware of the Eurocentric biases contained within these perspectives. This lack of understanding of their theoretical frame of reference can then lead teachers to encourage their students to accept uncritically problematic representations of various cultural groups as they encounter these representations in their literary texts. Postcolonial literary theory, on the other hand, encourages students to problematize Eurocentric representations of imperialism's Others.
The advantage to students who use postcolonial reading strategies in order to become aware of the different ways in which people at the margins and centres of empire view each other is that they can thus attain higher levels of multicultural literacy by performing more sophisticated and complex interpretations of their texts than they might have done using traditional interpretative approaches. At the same time, the students' use of postcolonial reading strategies can help them to become more effective intercultural communicators as they cross cultural borders by carrying out collaborative responses to literary texts with students whose heritage differs from their own.

This project, therefore, involves a critique of existing conceptions of the high school multicultural literature curriculum by comparing their key features with those of the postcolonial conception. The principal focus of the investigation is upon how the postcolonial approach can help students to understand, more effectively than can traditional conceptions, the necessarily dynamic and heterogeneous textual representations of dominant and subaltern cultures to be found in both Eurocentric and postcolonial literary texts.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with love to my parents, Eveline and Lyle, my children, Emily and Colin, and my wife, Ruth, for their kind support and patience during the past four years while I followed my dream, and to my friends, Lang Wang Kai and Liang Qian Yi, in the People's Republic of China, for teaching me the value of intercultural communication.
Chapter 1
The Postcolonial Conception
and Border Pedagogy

In the postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum, narratives are thought to be contested terrains in which the discourses of imperialism and its Others struggle for control over how people and places are to be represented. Edward Said, the leading postcolonial theorist of the past two decades, has recently emphasized just how important to the study of literature is a theory which accounts, on the one hand, for the ways cultural representations are affected by imperialism and, on the other, for the ways imperialist nations depend upon narratives of empire for much of their control over colonial lands and subjects.¹ In Said's Culture and Imperialism, the sequel to his foundational work of postcolonial theory, Orientalism (1978), he explains how the literary texts of empire and its Others are "rich cultural documents" (1993, p. 20) in which the literary student as ethnographer can find evidence of the imperial interaction as it is experienced by members of both metropolitan and marginal communities.

Of central importance to postcolonial theory, as Said elucidates it, is the notion that imperial hegemony,
subaltern resistance, and the production of narratives are inextricably linked both in the centres of empire such as London, Paris, and New York, and at its periphery in places such as India, Algeria, and Panama:

Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future - these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection; in the process many Europeans and Americans were also stirred by these stories and their protagonists, and they too fought for new narratives of equality and human community. (pp. xii-xiii)

Where, in the past, empire's Others were routinely defined in dominant culture discourse as primitive, lazy, mysterious, or exotic, once these individuals seized the opportunities to produce their own oppositional discourses in a variety of resistance literatures, the old stereotypes were replaced with complex representations of self and place. For the postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum, then, culture is seen as an important vehicle for identity formation. But,
because from the postcolonial perspective culture itself is viewed as a highly fluid and heterogeneous formation, constructed out of the discourses of its dominant and subaltern groups, the fashioning of such identities was never a one-sided affair. Rather, it involves for imperialism's oppressed Other the subverting and opposing of imperialist discourse at the same time as those useful features of dominant culture narratives are appropriated by the oppressed as strategic weapons in their decolonizing struggles: "We begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism" (pp. xxiv-xxv).

The teacher of multicultural literature in the high school, therefore, must be aware of the ways in which students are engaged in complex and dynamic identity formation and exploration as they position themselves in relation to the dominant and subaltern discourses which they encounter in their literary texts. Said terms his postcolonial approach to the deconstruction of static cultural identities a comparative literature of
imperialism. Rather than simply accepting either the discourses of imperialism or those of its different subject groups as the ultimate truths about Western and Third World identities, therefore, postcolonial theorists such as Said employ their methods of comparative analysis in order to search for the points at which these discourses overlap and intertwine. When, for example, Joseph Conrad condemns the atrocities of the European ivory trade in *Heart of Darkness* (1900) this British imperialist writer who has been justifiably accused by Chinua Achebe of being a "thoroughgoing racist" (Achebe, 1988, p. 11) is at the same time actually portraying Kurtz and Marlow in a manner which in many respects runs parallel to Achebe's vision of imperialism in his novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958). In interpreting these two narratives, therefore, it becomes the job of the student of multicultural literature to deconstruct images of Africans and their oppressors by comparing (or as Said terms it, by "counterpointing") the representations of each group in both of these works. Said's method, then, involves expanding "the overlapping community between metropolitan and formerly colonized societies. By looking at the different experiences contrapuntally, as making up a set of what [he calls] intertwined and overlapping histories [Said formulates] an
alternative both to a politics of blame and to the even more
destructive politics of confrontation and hostility" (1993, p. 18).

As he considers the ways in which schooling helps to
perpetuate the static notion of identity, Said observes that
students need to spend less time learning to pursue
nationalistic interests and more time studying how states,
groups, and individuals interact productively:

We are all taught to venerate our nations and admire
our traditions: we are taught to pursue their interests
with toughness and in disregard for other societies. A
new and in [Said's] opinion appalling tribalism is
fracturing societies, separating peoples, promoting
greed, bloody conflict and uninteresting assertions of
minor ethnic or group particularity. Little time is
spent not so much in 'learning about other cultures' -
the phrase has an inane vagueness to it - but in
studying the map of interactions, the actual and often
productive traffic occurring on a day-by-day, and even
minute-by-minute basis among states, societies, groups,
identities. (p. 20)

Because most high school multicultural literature
programs to date have not taken into account the
relationship between cultural representations and
imperialism, teachers of such courses have not developed the
necessary pedagogical strategies to enable their students to
examine the many problems of cultural difference and
identity which they encounter during their textual
investigations. Instead, when English teachers of
multicultural literature courses in the past have been
confronted with what they believed to be the "essential and universal truths" about the people and places depicted in their books, they have relied for their interpretations of cultures and of multicultural literature upon such pedagogical approaches as New Criticism, archetypalism, feminism, reader response, and antiracism. Thus, high school teachers and students of Indian (Talti, 1980), Native (Grant, 1986a), Chinese (Olds, 1990), Japanese (Lightfoot, 1991), and African (Stanford, 1978) literatures, for example, have not sufficiently problematized the nature of literary representation in their written and oral responses to multicultural literature. My thesis, therefore, is that the postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum can help students to understand, more effectively than can traditional conceptions, how to interpret/deconstruct the necessarily dynamic and heterogeneous textual representations of dominant and subaltern cultures. And it is thus my task in the following chapters to contrast the postcolonial approach to the teaching of multicultural literature in high schools with each of the major traditional approaches which are presently practised in Canada and the United States.

Fortunately, several major postcolonial literary theorists (Edward Said, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Gayatri
Spivak, Lisa Lowe, Rey Chow, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Arnold Krupat) have developed theories which take into account the heterogeneous nature of contemporary cultural identities as these have formed during centuries of interaction among dominant and subaltern cultures. From the works of these and other theorists, then, I have derived my postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum. Virtually none of these theorists, however, has given much attention to how postcolonial theory might be used in the high school classroom, so it is one of the tasks of this thesis to establish to what extent a curriculum conception normally associated with undergraduate and graduate Commonwealth and Comparative Literature courses can be adapted for use by teachers of adolescents.

This postcolonial conception is not like many prescriptive multicultural and antiracist projects which set out to produce in students measurable increases in multicultural harmony and decreases in racial bigotry. Instead, the moral imperative behind postcolonial pedagogy is that teachers should conscientiously show students how to deconstruct racist (mis)representations of the Other as these are found in the political, social, and cultural discourses which are inscribed within the literary texts, films, music videos, magazines, newspapers, television
shows, and computer forums through which students attempt to interpret their world. If students are taught the postcolonial, deconstructive reading strategies which they need in order to examine critically how literary representations are constructed out of multiple and conflicting discourses, then at the end of a course in multicultural literature, even if they have not become better, more tolerant citizens, they will at least have been given the opportunity to learn how and why racist stereotypical (mis)representations are produced and resisted. Students who become skilled at deconstructing literary works to discover how they are traversed by imperialist and oppositional discursive practices can be said to be multiculturally literate. To provide reading and writing strategies with which students can attain increased levels of multicultural literacy is, therefore, the principal goal of the postcolonial conception.

In order to understand how postcolonial literary theory can enable students' to respond to the complexities of multicultural literature it may be helpful to begin by explaining the relationship between postcolonial and multicultural literatures. Although the terms "postcolonial literature" and "multicultural literature" bear a family resemblance, they are not exactly synonymous. For John
Borovilos, an Ontario high school English teacher (whose program I analyse in Chapter 7 of this thesis), multicultural literature comprises world literature (either translated into or written in English), immigrant literature, ethnic (or minority) literature, and Native literature (1987, pp. 4-5). In other words, almost all literature qualifies as multicultural literature under this broad definition.

Postcolonial literature, on the other hand, has been defined more narrowly by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their very important study of postcolonial literary theory, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). For these theorists, postcolonial literature is "writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain, though much of what it deals with is of interest and relevance to countries colonized by other European powers, such as France, Portugal, and Spain" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 1). However, the term, "postcolonial," does not only refer to an historical period following colonial rule in places such as India, Africa, Australia, and Canada. It has also recently come to refer to a method of literary analysis which is known as "the new cross-cultural criticism" (p. 2).

The multicultural literature course which I developed and taught to OAC English (grade 13) students in Ontario
contains works by Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Native, and African writers and by writers from the diasporas of these cultural groups. I detail my reasons for selecting these writers' works in subsequent chapters as I compare how the postcolonial conception differs from traditional methods of reading multicultural literature. Given the definition above of postcolonial literature, my choice of African, Indian, and Native literary works for the course can be explained simply. For instance, the discourse of black writers in Africa and in Canada has obviously been affected by European imperialism, and so any study of their works will be enhanced by the students' use of postcolonial reading techniques.

My decision, on the other hand, to employ postcolonial reading strategies to help my students to understand Chinese and Japanese literature requires justification. The lessons learned about the relationships between imperialism and culture in the study of postcolonial literature can be applied to the interpretation of most world literatures of the past two centuries with equally fruitful results. Postcolonial critical terms identified by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, such as intercultural conflict, displacement, syncreticity, ethnographic detail, intertextuality, authenticity, cultural heterogeneity, and
linguistic variance, can form the basis for analyses of Japanese or Chinese writing in English just as effectively as these critical tools can be used to analyse postcolonial literature. Thus, although works written in Japan or China do not technically belong to the category of postcolonial literature, postcolonial theory has much to say about how such books can be interpreted. Issues of East-West cultural exchange and conflict which arise in these works can be discussed very effectively in postcolonial terms as can matters of Japanese and American imperialism, and of the foreign influences, both past and present, upon Chinese history, politics, economy, and culture. Also, how these works are perceived by Canadian high school students, whether or not they are of European, Chinese, or Japanese descent, has much to do with the way British and American representations have shaped their perceptions of Japan and China through, for example, such movies as The Karate Kid, Taipan, The Last Emperor, and The Joy Luck Club.

If students are encouraged to compare the cultural perspectives presented in books such as Joy Kogawa's Japanese-Canadian novel, Obasan (1981), with the viewpoints of Japanese writers such as Yukio Mishima and Kobo Abe, then they will be better able to investigate the similarities and differences between these perspectives and they will also
have a better chance to question their own assumptions about Japanese and Japanese-Canadian people. Just as there are differences or gaps between the ways Japanese and Japanese-Canadian writers describe their worlds, so within the discourse of Japanese-Canadian writers their multicultural experiences open up spaces where their views as members of the Japanese diaspora come into conflict with their perspectives as Canadians. And in literature written in Japan the struggle between, for example, traditional and modern discourse, or between "Eastern" and "Western" perspectives and values, opens further gaps which can provide sites for students' investigations into intercultural influences and conflicts.

When discussing the themes of a particular multicultural novel or short story, students can relate the various conflicts which arise between the discourses within a text to the parallel conflicts in other relevant fiction, newspapers, history texts, etc.. Thus, the text under discussion is no longer viewed as a unified and closed work of art to be appreciated only in aesthetic terms, but as a collection of opposing discourses which are connected to conflicts that extend well beyond the borders of the text. At the same time, the gaps created within literary works by the omission or silencing of certain relevant discourses can
be filled by students using appropriate supplementary materials so that they can extend their discussions of themes and conflicts in the directions which they deem to be important. 8

One important theme of much multicultural literature is, obviously, racism. And, because this theme is of central significance to the postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum, it is, therefore, necessary that students be given the opportunity early in such a program to problematize the notion of race if they are to learn how to deconstruct racist discourse as they encounter it in their texts. For instance, sociologist, Robert Miles, has argued in his book, Racism (1989), that, while the concept of "race" has been used for centuries (with contextual variations) to privilege one group of people over another on the basis of racial difference, no empirically nor philosophically justifiable claim can be made that races are essentially different from one another.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., in his article, "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes" (1985), while sharing Miles' view that racial differences are social and political constructions, also argues that the term 'race' has traditionally been used to exclude non-European literature
from the canon of great literary works worthy of study in the English curriculum.⁹

The question of the place of texts written by the Other (be that odd metaphorical negation of the European defined as African, Arabic, Chinese, Latin American, Yiddish, or female authors) in the proper study of "literature," "Western literature," or "comparative literature" has, until recently, remained an unasked question, suspended or silenced by a discourse in which the canonical and the noncanonical stand as the ultimate opposition. In much of the thinking about the proper study of literature in this century, race has been an invisible quantity, a persistent yet implicit presence. (p. 2)

As Henry Giroux sees the problem of racism in education from his perspective as a curriculum theorist, he believes that it is necessary for teachers to "demonstrate that the views we hold about race have different historical and ideological weight, forged in asymmetrical relations of power, and that they always embody interests that shape social practices in particular ways" (1992a, p. 138).

Postcolonial deconstructive reading strategies offer teachers and students a means of opposing racist discourse by helping them to question ethical beliefs and ethnocentric biases in their texts, in their class discussions, and in their interactions with the world outside the classroom. Aronowitz and Giroux argue that such reading strategies can help both majority and minority students to learn to
deconstruct the discourse of race through their reading of multicultural texts:

Let's assume that a large number of students in an English class are minority students. Central to affirming the voices of these students is the use of texts that come out of an experience that they can relate to and engage critically. Such texts allow these particular students to connect with them in the contexts of their own histories and traditions. Such texts also provide another language and voice by which other students can understand how differences are constructed, for better or worse, within the dominant curriculum. Similarly, different texts offer all students forms of counter-memory that make visible what is often unrepresentable in many English classrooms. (1991, pp. 101-102)

In his attempts to develop a pedagogical theory which would address among other things the problematic quality of multicultural literary representations, Henry Giroux has coined the phrase "border pedagogy" to focus attention on "the situated nature of knowledge, the partiality of all knowledge claims, the indeterminacy of history and the shifting, multiple and often contradictory nature of identity" (1992a, p. 26). Giroux believes that if students are encouraged to cross over the many borders which are constructed within discourses of race, gender, class, and nation, for instance, they can eventually learn to use diverse cultural resources to fashion "new identities within existing configurations of power" (p. 28).
By moving back and forth across the borders which delimit "Occidental" and "Oriental" representations of the Chinese, for instance, students can gain a new power to construct in their own writing more complex representations of Chinese people and places. If they are given the opportunity to perform comparative analyses of works by Chinese and non-Chinese writers, then they will be able to question the assumptions underlying the differences in depiction which they encounter. For Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American students, the study of writing by authors from the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and North American-Chinese communities can enable them to reconsider their cultural identities on the basis of the richly heterogeneous representations of their cultural heritage which these various writers offer.

Again, using Giroux's notion of border pedagogy, it becomes clear that knowledge forms produced at the margins of the dominant culture, such as world literatures and North American minority literatures, "can be used to redefine the complex, multiple, heterogeneous realities that constitute those relations of difference that make up the experiences of students who often find it impossible to define their identities through the cultural and political codes that characterize the dominant culture" (p. 32). Border pedagogy
enables these students "to engage in cultural remapping as a form of resistance" (p. 33) by causing them to then examine how the dominant culture uses the borders of difference it constructs to exclude and silence its Other.

The heterogeneous representations of cultural identity which multicultural literature provides students and teachers, therefore, can help them to break down essentialist notions of self and community. Postcolonial interpretations of such texts enable students to question stereotypical and monocultural definitions of people and to play deconstructively with notions of personal and cultural identity. These investigations, however, are not intended to be psychological exercises in the development of self-esteem, but are rather intended to help students to see how imperial hegemony has affected the ways in which they have come to see themselves and others.

In order to perform interrogations of literary representations of self, Other, and place, students need to understand "how subjectivities are produced within configurations of knowledge and power that exist outside of the immediacy of one's experience but are central to forms of self and social determination" (p. 34). The postcolonial conception of the multicultural curriculum is therefore intended to develop students' abilities to understand how
their identities are significantly affected by the ways in which they see themselves defined, for example, within the political, legal, social, and religious discourses which traverse their literary texts:

There are no unified subjects here, only students whose multilayered and often contradictory voices and experiences intermingle with the weight of particular histories that will not fit easily into the master narrative of a monolithic culture. Such borderlands should be seen as sites for both critical analysis and as a potential source of experimentation, creativity, and possibility. Moreover, these pedagogical borderlands where blacks, whites, latinos, and others meet demonstrate the importance of a multicentric perspective that allows students to recognize and analyze how the differences within and between various groups can expand the potential of human life and democratic possibilities. (p. 34)

At the same time as their students are learning to make use of multicentric perspectives to interpret and fashion complex representations of self and place and to resist reductionist and essentialist stereotypes of the Other, teachers of multicultural literature can be using the postcolonial perspective to develop their own deepening awareness "of the discourse of others in order to effect a more dialectical self-critical understanding of the limits, partiality, and particularity of their own politics, values, and pedagogies" (p. 34). As border-crossers, themselves, between the overlapping terrains of knowledge and power, teachers must be willing to "legitimate difference as a
basic condition for understanding the limits of one's own knowledge. What border pedagogy makes undeniable is the relational, constructed, and situated nature of one's own politics and personal investment" (pp. 34-35).

Thus, if they hope to engage their students in meaningful cultural criticism and self-reflection, if they wish to make their students conscious of the need to take a stand as agents of social and political change, if they wish to problematize their students' partiality as consumers and producers of knowledge, then it is necessary for teachers as well to make a concerted effort to situate themselves with the Other at the margins of the dominant culture. Giroux notes that teachers need to do this in order to acquire "a sense of how the self is implicated in the construction of Otherness" and "in order to analyze critically the political, social, and cultural lineaments of their own values and voices as viewed from different ideological and cultural spaces" (p. 141).

A first step toward enabling students and teachers to situate themselves within textual terrains so that they can view dominant and subaltern cultures from both the center and the margins is to exercise what Robert Scholes calls "textual power" (1985). Scholes divides textual activities into reading, interpretation, and criticism:
In reading we produce text within text; in interpreting we produce text upon text; and in criticizing we produce text against text. As teachers of literary texts we have two major responsibilities. One is to devise ways for our students to perform these productive activities as fruitfully as possible: to produce oral and written texts themselves in all three of these modes of textualization: within, upon, and against. Our other responsibility is to assist students in perceiving the potent aura of codification that surrounds every verbal text. Our job is not to produce "readings" for our students but to give them the tools for producing their own. (p. 24)

An echo of this orientation toward textual boundaries developed by Scholes can be heard in Giroux's discussion of how students can interact with dominant and subordinate texts from different perspectives:

In addition to reading different texts and refiguring the grounds on which knowledge is produced, border pedagogy takes up the important tasks of establishing conditions for dominant and subordinate texts to be read differently. Texts must be decentered and understood as historical and social constructions marked by the weight of a range of inherited and specified readings. Hence texts can be read by focussing on how different audiences might respond to them, thus highlighting the possibilities of reading against, within, and outside their established boundaries. (1992a, p. 30)

Under these circumstances, there can be no ultimately authoritative interpretation of a text, but many contradictory and conflicting readings of it which depend, in part, upon the subject positions adopted by its readers. Within the reading paradigms of Scholes and Giroux students experience pleasure in the activities of identifying with,
playing with, and fighting with the discourses which inform particular works of literature.

The degree of students' engagement with issues such as racism will also be determined, of course, by their teacher's ideological orientation toward multicultural education policies and practices. As Giroux has observed, the discourse of multicultural education has generally failed to connect discussions of race with "the wider discourse of power and powerlessness":

Missing here is any attempt to either critique forms of European and American culture that situate difference in structures of domination or reconstruct a discourse of race and ethnicity in a theory of difference that highlights questions of equality, justice, and liberty as part of an ongoing democratic struggle. Multiculturalism is generally about Otherness, but is written in ways in which the dominating aspects of white culture are not called into question and the oppositional potential of difference as a cite of struggle is muted. (p. 117)

If, for instance, a Chinese-Canadian student were to perform a postcolonial interpretation of works such as Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* (1990) (set in Vancouver's Chinese community) and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) (which takes place both in China and in San Francisco's Chinatown), she might ask the question, "How are the people and places described in these books related to my own life?" Although she would probably have been encouraged to ask this same question had her teacher been a multiculturalist using
a traditional reader-response pedagogy, as the student writes her postcolonial response she can learn that it is possible to play deconstructively with the notions of self and place which she discovers in these texts instead of attempting to respond as a unified subject appreciating universal truths about an essential Chinese culture. To a certain extent she might feel that the writers' constructions of the Chinese immigrant experience are "true" representations of her own experience. At the same time, however, her teacher could encourage her to consider that, as cultural texts, the books she is reading have been fashioned in relation to other inscriptions of the Chinese experience by, for example, British, Taiwanese, and Hong Kongese writers. Thus, Sky Lee's and Amy Tan's artistic production would be seen to contain a variety of political, economic, historical, and social values which are in some ways reactions against and in other ways reproductions of the values underlying other textual inscriptions of the "Chinese experience." By using literary texts from the Chinese diaspora to help her to determine her cultural identity, this Chinese-Canadian student can construct her own working definition of herself, while, at the same time, she can recognize some of the intertextual and institutional
forces which must necessarily enrich and complicate this definition. 10

As I shall be explaining in detail in Chapter 2, the postcolonial theory of literary representation has appropriated many of its strategies from the poststructural discourse theories of Foucault and Derrida. However, while deconstructive reading strategies are proving useful to contemporary postcolonial theorists, the desire to privilege the margins over the centre, to question claims of authenticity, and to resist essentialism were all part of the postcolonial approach to abrogating monolithic representations of Europe and its Others and to appropriating the English language for local oppositional uses long before poststructuralism became part of mainstream literary theory. So, in the following examples of applications of the postcolonial theory of representation, while poststructuralism has obviously played a part in the formulation of some of these interpretive strategies, the impetus to problematize literary representations of self, Other, and place originates in the subalterns' desire to resist the dominant culture's (mis)representations of the Other. And, while the postcolonial oppositional stance against an imperialist oppressor is similar to neo-Marxist struggles against racism and to feminist resistance to
patriarchal domination, because postcolonialism sees subjects, cultures, and literary works as heterogeneous and multivocal constructions, as I argue in Chapters 5 and 7, the interpretations of multicultural texts which the postcolonial theory of representation can produce are richer and more complex than those of traditional feminist and antiracist literary criticism.

As Cornel West describes the social text within which the black diaspora "struggles for identity, dignity (self-confidence, self-respect, self-esteem) and material resources" it is one in which blacks experience a relative lack of power "to represent themselves to themselves and others as complex human beings, and thereby to contest the bombardment of negative degrading stereotypes put forward by white supremacist ideologies" (1990, p. 27).

But West then argues that the solution to this problem is not simply "access to representation in order to produce positive images of homogeneous communities" nor merely the contestation of stereotypes. Rather, "Black cultural workers must constitute and sustain discursive and institutional networks that deconstruct earlier modern Black strategies of identity formation, demystify power relations... and construct more multi-valent and multi-dimensional responses that articulate the complexity and
diversity of Black practices in the modern and postmodern world" (p. 29).

In agreement with West, then, the postcolonial approach to the multicultural literature curriculum would encourage students to think of themselves as "cultural workers" whose task it is to deconstruct and reconstruct the "social text" within which we are all caught. At the same time they would be helped to recognize that the cultural politics of difference in which they are engaged "affirms the perennial quest for the precious ideals of individuality and democracy by digging deep in the depths of human particularities and social specificities in order to construct new kinds of connections, affinities and communities across empire, nation, region, race, gender, age, and sexual orientation" (p. 35).

This conception validates the rights and experiences of individual students while helping them to see that they are not alone in their struggles against racial oppression and in their desire to be valued members of both the local and global communities. For the Chinese Canadian student who is trying to find a part of her identity in such works as Disappearing Moon Cafe and The Joy Luck Club, by critically reading the works of Lee and Tan, for instance, she is also reading her world and working to determine her rights within
it. In other words, postcolonial critical strategies can help her to enjoy the exploration of the complex web of binary oppositions within and between texts, while, at the same time, they can provide her with some of the tools which she can use to deconstruct and reconstruct her personal and communal identities. When dominant or minority cultural representations of Chinese Canadians do not accord with her own developing view of this community, she should be given the opportunity to fight back through her postcolonial investigations into the various literary representations, both positive and negative, of Chinese people and of the places where they live.

The postcolonial theory of representation is used differently by various theorists, but a common feature of their analyses of Western portrayals of people of colour is to deconstruct the stereotypes which occur in these works. They accomplish these deconstructions by showing how many Western writers employ stereotypes to satisfy the dominant culture's need to define its Others as inferior to whites. To illustrate how a sampling of postcolonial critics employ the theory of representation, I now offer an introductory glimpse at a few of their deconstructions of Western depictions of the Other.
Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) was one of the first postcolonial studies to reveal how Western discourse has created the idea of the "Oriental" as inferior. For centuries European and North American scholars have written government and newspaper reports, novels and short stories, translations of Oriental fiction, linguistic, historical, religious, philosophical, anthropological and geographical studies about Middle and Far Eastern cultures. But, when the values underlying this vast body of scholarship are deconstructed by Said, he reveals that these Orientalist "texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author is really responsible for the texts produced out of it" (p. 94). The Orientalist attitude in general shares "with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter" (p. 70).

Out of the Orientalists’ quest to discover the essential Chinese, or Egyptian, or Indian mentality came a
plethora of stereotypes to which Westerners subsequently expected these peoples to conform. Jonathan Spence, in his analysis of twentieth-century Western fictional depictions of China and the Chinese, has observed that Westerners "do not understand China and so we constantly invent it; and what we think we know is constantly disproved" (1990, p. 100). One example analysed by Spence is James Clavell's Taipan (1966). He claims that Western readers prefer to read novels in which the protagonist, the narrator and some of the other characters as well are Western, so that they can use the dialogue and observations of the individuals in order to get their bearings. Eurasian characters also often play useful roles in such fiction as intermediaries between East and West.

Spence identifies specific genres which, he feels, help to "illuminate our own history" more than they enable Westerners to understand the Chinese. "Six [such genres] are apparent: first, fictions which deal with the Chinese within China; secondly, those in which Westerners within China are the focus; thirdly, the world of overseas Chinese; fourthly, the uses made of China as a focus for political statements; fifthly, the fictional value of scholars in China; and finally, the possibilities of what might be called 'internal' Chinas, in which the country itself begins
to fade into another mode of discourse" (pp. 100-101). If students become aware of how each of these genres (mis)represent the Chinese from Eurocentric perspectives, then they will be better able to deconstruct such texts as they supplement them with various Chinese representations of their culture and people.

Much as Spence has done with his analysis of novels about China by the British, Renee E. Tajima points out in her article, "Lotus Blossoms Don't Bleed" (1989), that the American movie industry has also perpetuated stereotypical (mis)representations of Asians.

[Images of Asian women] have remained consistently simplistic and inaccurate during the sixty years of largely forgettable screen appearances. There are two basic types: the Lotus Blossom Baby (a.k.a. China Doll, Geisha Girl, shy Polynesian beauty), and the Dragon Lady (Fu Manchu's various female relations, prostitutes, devious madames). There is little in between, although experts may differ as to whether Suzie Wong belongs to the race-blind "hooker with a heart of gold" category, or deserves one all of her own.11 (p. 309)

By deconstructing such Orientalist stereotypes, therefore, high school students can come to see how literary representations of the Other have provided Western writers with endless opportunities to (mis)represent the majority of the world's population as devious, dangerous, and sub-human.

Marianna Torgovnick has described many stereotypical (mis)representations of the Other in her book, Gone
Primitive (1990). Whether dominant culture depictions of "primitive" societies are in the form of ethnographies by Mead and Malinowski or of novels by Conrad and Burroughs, these attempts to capture the Other on celluloid or on the printed page often tell us more about the Westerners' need to subjugate an exotic and savage Other than they tell us about the "essential" qualities of the people they claim to portray. Torgovnick contends that "the word primitive - with its aura of unchangeability, voicelessness, mystery, and difference from the West - has come to be understood as problematic" (p. 20). "For Euro-Americans, then, to study the primitive brings us always back to ourselves, which we reveal in the act of defining the Other" (p. 11).

Torgovnick clearly formulates an important aspect of the problem which is central to my own thesis when she remarks that "our attitudes shape representations of the primitive; those representations shape us and our children" (p. 14).

Torgovnick argues that the Western interest in the primitive is based upon "the archaic and evolutionist meanings of the word as the 'original' or 'natural' state of things" (p. 46). Explorations of representations of the primitive are therefore thought to produce explanations of the origins of human nature and social organization:
The belief that primitive societies reveal origins or natural order depends on an ethnocentric sense of existing primitive societies as outside of linear time, and on a corresponding assumption that primitive societies exist in an eternal present which mirrors the past of Western civilization. This temporal illusion has been among the most persistent aspects of primitivism in the West - both in high culture and in popular culture, like the Tarzan novels (p. 46).

Christopher Miller (1990) makes the point when he examines French African literature, whether written by whites or blacks, that it is inscribed in the language of the dominant culture for consumption primarily back in France, and that its content relies in part on observations by white anthropologists in the region. Thus, in order to make their books attractive to European and North American readers, black writers sometimes find themselves dealing in the same commodities and stereotypes that white writers have used to represent Africans in literature.

One reason for this seeming paradox can be found in Trinh T. Minh-ha's analysis of the predicament of ethnographers. Trinh observes that anthropologists often find themselves attempting to be both insiders and outsiders of a culture at the same time, and, thus, she inadvertently highlights the dilemma which is faced as well by writers and students of multicultural literature:

The injunction to see things from the native's point of view speaks for a definite ideology of truth and authenticity; it lies at the center of every polemical discussion on 'reality' in its relation to 'beauty' and
'truth.' To raise the question of representing the Other is, therefore, to reopen endlessly the fundamental issue of science and art; documentary and fiction; objectivity and subjectivity; universal and personal; masculine and feminine; outsider and insider. (1991, p. 65)

It follows from Trinh's insights, then, that the selves which writers of multicultural literature wish to fashion in their fiction cannot be seen from the inside and the outside simultaneously. Thus students and teachers need to find new ways of understanding what Trinh terms the "hyphenated self," or the self caught between worlds.

Salman Rushdie discusses the problems of being a hyphenated self in his article, "Imaginary Homelands":

England’s Indian writers are by no means all the same type of animal. Some of us, for instance, are Pakistani. Others Bangladeshi. Others West, or East, or even South African. And V.S. Naipaul, by now, is something else entirely. This word Indian is getting to be a pretty scattered concept...To be an Indian writer in this society is to face, every day, problems of definition. What does it mean to be 'Indian' outside India? How can culture be preserved without becoming ossified? How should we discuss the need for change within ourselves and our community without seeming to play into the hands of our racial enemies? What are the consequences, both spiritual and practical, of refusing to make any concessions to Western ideas and practices? What are the consequences of embracing those ideas and practices and turning away from the ones that came here with us? (1991, p. 16-18)

Professional writers of multicultural literature such as Rushdie, who live and work in the cultural space between worlds, can provide useful models for students' attempts to define self and place. Like Rushdie, many Canadian students
are hyphenated selves. For instance, those who have arrived in Canada recently from countries such as Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, and India are already grappling with the problems of the hyphenated self and of racial tension even before they enter an English classroom. Like Rushdie's expatriate Indian writers, these students are caught between languages, homelands, and cultures. Thus, they can perhaps appreciate to a limited extent the complex dilemma that writers of multicultural literature face when attempting to communicate the features of one world to the inhabitants of another.

In deconstructing literary representations of place, one of the most pervasive gaps which students can look for within the discourses of multicultural texts is "that which opens between the experience of a place and the language available to describe it" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 9). In postcolonial texts this gap is associated with the crisis of identity which develops between self and place as a result of the conditions of imperial oppression. For instance, because slaves were separated from their families and from others who spoke their language, and then forced, instead, to speak English in order to survive, the new Englishes such as Creole which they developed did not adequately connect them with their African past or with the strange new land
which they came to inhabit. When slaves were taken across the Atlantic to work on plantations, required to practice Christianity, and denied opportunities to enjoy the power and status that could only be achieved by those with full membership within the dominant white society, they lost their feelings of connectedness to their homeland and could only express their relationship to their masters' world through their masters' language.

Similarly, when Native children in Canada were taken away from their parents at a young age and forced to live in residential schools where they were required to speak only English, their identities, their connections to their homeland, and their understanding of the culture of their ancestors were shattered as they were punished for using the Native language with which they might have been able to maintain these connections. The feelings of dislocation or displacement which slaves, indigenous peoples, indentured workers, and immigrants have felt is often reflected in their use of language (Ashcroft, p. 9). And the attempts of writers of multicultural literature to depict place must necessarily reflect the struggles between the Standard English usage of the imperial centre and the various marginal forms of English such as Creole in the Carribean through which the subaltern attempts to speak by
appropriating and changing the masters' language to better express their views of themselves and their world.

A number of critical models have been employed by postcolonial theorists in order to categorize and explain the connections between literary works and the places which they are attempting to represent. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin have identified four such models:

First, 'national' or regional models, which emphasize the distinctive features of the particular national or regional culture; second, race-based models which identify certain shared characteristics across various national literatures, such as the common racial inheritance in literatures of the African diaspora addressed by the 'Black writing' model; third, comparative models of varying complexity which seek to account for particular linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more postcolonial literatures; fourth, more comprehensive comparative models which argue for features such as hybridity and syncreticity as constitutive elements of postcolonial literatures (syncretism is the process by which previously distinct linguistic categories, and, by extension, cultural formations, merge into a single new form). (1989, p. 15)

Regardless of which of these models the students employ in their analyses, the postcolonial theory of representation requires students to interrogate the various values systems that have informed the constructions of people and places to be found in their texts:

[Representations] are always produced within cultural limits and theoretical borders, and as such are necessarily implicated in particular economies of truth, value, and power. In relation to these larger axes of power in which all representations are
embedded, it is necessary to remind the student: Whose
interests are being served by the representations in
question? Within a given set of representations, who
speaks, for whom, and under what conditions? Where can
we situate such representations ethically and
politically with respect to questions of social justice
and human freedom? What moral, ethical, and
ideological principles structure our reactions to such
representations? (Giroux, 1992a, p. 219)

Postcolonial deconstructions of literary
representations of place can help students to open up the
borders of their imaginations and to confront the
stereotypical simplifications and exaggerations which
writers sometimes employ in the construction of fictive
worlds. Stephen Gray, in his "Sense of Place in the New
Literatures in English" (1986), observes that setting or
place is perhaps the most important distinguishing feature
of multicultural literature. Gray describes four models of
a "sense of place" in world literature:

1) verbal safariing - this type of writing provides the
armchair traveller with the flavor, the adventures, and the
exotic novelty of "other" places, often reinforcing rather
than overcoming racist stereotypes,

2) the foreign land as home - writers who have lived in a
"foreign land" long enough to consider it home often reject
the phase one depictions of their place and wish to see the
landscape as do their indigenous peers,
3) indigenous writers fight back - these descriptions of the ancestral landscape deal with the issues and effects of oppression and the contingent problems of recovering dignity and human values,

4) multicultural representation - the coexistence of two or more cultures in the same place is reflected in the influences of these cultures on the writers' representations of their land.

These models of the types of postcolonial literature and of various senses of place can help students and teachers to problematize the representation of place in their responses to multicultural literature. As students compare representations of the same place by different writers, they will learn how to avoid thinking about people and their worlds in stereotypical terms. They will also learn that we can only know a place from our biased perspectives. The students' notions of a particular place are not, therefore, the unmediated depictions of a real land, but are composite fictive constructions based, in part, upon their readings of various writers' images of that place.

When I claim that multicultural literature can give students a sense of place for the countries from which their texts derive, then, I am not suggesting that authors could
ever simply (re)present to us in words a place’s underlying presence or reality. In other words, their writing cannot be a clear reflection of their world. Writers of multicultural fiction are obviously aware that their works exist in relation to religious and national mythologies, generic conventions, political tropes, etc. Therefore, they can use the rhetorical tools of their trade to fortify dominant culture discourse or to dismantle it. James Snead seems to be in accord with this point as he considers the ending of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958):

*Things Fall Apart* expropriates and pre-empts (albeit only in fiction) the written form in which the English language has assaulted an unwritten Ibo reality. The ironic ending, in which the district commissioner decides to capture the entire tale in ‘the book which he planned to write [The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger]’ recapitulates the ongoing process of cultural interpretation and redefinition which typically worked to the detriment of blacks... Yet it is Achebe who, through writing *Things Fall Apart*, pre-empts an attempted white usurpation of his story and his culture, trapping the ‘official version’ within a more sympathetic history. (1990, p. 242)

Thus, Achebe uses the English language to insert his Ibo view of the world into the dominant white colonial discourse in order to cause a disruption of its historical metanarrative with his oppositional supplement. Whether a writer is consciously subverting the dominant culture’s discourse through oppositional supplementation (as does Achebe) or, conversely, is representing the subaltern
negatively to validate the dominant group's authority, the act of (re)presentation is problematic for postcolonial critics and, therefore, a potentially useful starting point for students' critical analyses of multicultural literature. W.J.T. Mitchell describes the problem of the gap between literary depictions and the reality which they are intended to reflect in this way. "Every representation exacts some cost, in the form of lost immediacy, presence, or truth, in the form of a gap between intention and realization, original and copy" (1990, p. 21). Therefore, writers who claim to be holding the mirror up to nature, to be capturing the essence of a place and its people, can be shown by the high school literature student to be constructors of cultural products which are no more transparently reflective of a supposed reality outside the text than are such purposely self-deconstructing meta-fictions as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980).

It is not the place in itself which should be the object of study when students attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct a sense of place, but the problematic attempts of the writer to capture that place in the web of intertextuality that should be of interest in the multicultural literature class. This web of intertextuality is not merely a literary invention. Rather, it involves all
types of texts, including the political, religious, economic, and social. As Gayatri Spivak reminds us, effective postcolonial teaching of multicultural literature "should slide without a sense of rupture into an active and involved reading of the social text within which the student and teacher of literature are caught" (1985a, p. 34). For Spivak the social text comprises not only the social constraints within a classroom which tend to silence marginalized students, but it is to be found as well in the societal discourses which extend well beyond the walls of the classroom and which shape both literary and pedagogical discursive practices.

This discussion of representations of place brings us back to the point which I made at the beginning of the chapter that imperialism at its most fundamental level concerns the struggle over land. At the cultural level, however, imperialism involves a battle over whose places are being represented by whom and for what political purposes. It is impossible, therefore, to discuss how traces of the imperialist enterprise can be deconstructed within the various discourses of multicultural literature without acknowledging the political problematics of such literary investigations. Thus, I turn now to a discussion of the political dimensions of the postcolonial curriculum
conception, by first attempting to explain some of the key
terms of deconstructive reading strategy, and then, in
particular, discussing the central controversy in my
postcolonial conception which is how deconstruction is to be
appropriated for ethnocritical purposes.

Notes

1. "Imperialism," for Said, "is the practice, the theory,
and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling
a distant territory; 'colonialism,' which is almost always a
consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements
on distant territory" (1993, p. 9).

2. For the term, "culture," Said designates two definitions
in particular. First, culture "means all those practices,
like the arts of description, communication, and
representation, that have relative autonomy from the
economic, social, and political realms" (1993, p. xii). He
points out, for example, that novels such as Robinson Crusoe
while valued principally as aesthetic objects which produce
pleasure in their readers, are also very "important in the
formation of imperial attitudes, references, and
experiences." Said's second definition of culture is
derived from Matthew Arnold's. It is "a concept that
includes a refining and elevating element, each society's
reservoir of the best that has been known and thought" (p.
xii).

3. Said's notion of a comparative literature of imperialism
is not to be confused with traditional Western comparative
literary critical approaches. As he points out about
traditional comparative criticism, "Academic work in
comparative literature carried with it the notion that
Europe and the United States together were the center of the
world, not simply by virtue of their political positions,
but also because their literatures were the ones most worth
studying" (1993, p. 46). In chapter 3 of this thesis I
explain in more detail the difference between a new
comparative literature of imperialism, and traditional
Eurocentric comparative literary criticism.
4. As Said points out, while Conrad was intent upon exposing the evils of the imperialist ivory trade, at the same time, he firmly believed that Africans were inferior to their imperialist masters and therefore incapable of achieving independence (1993, p. 25). But at the same time Said argues that "by accentuating the discrepancy between the official 'idea' of empire and the remarkably disorienting actuality of Africa, Marlow unsettles the reader's sense not only of the very idea of empire, but of something more basic, reality itself" (p. 29). The narratives of empire can thus be deconstructed by inserting into gaps like these the Other's counternarratives.

5. Said describes the contrapuntal method of analysis as follows: "As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally, but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism'' (1993, p. 51).


7. The problem with encouraging students to interpret literature as though it could provide them with clear reflections of the essence of the Chinese mind or of the universal features of primitiveness in various tribes of the Southern Hemisphere is that literary depictions of Oriental or primitive cultures and peoples are not at all transparent portrayals of underlying, essential or universal truths. Instead, postcolonial theorists see texts as containing opaque representations which have been constructed within complex networks of power and knowledge. Thus, to view
literary depictions as revelations of static, monologic cultural identities is to perpetuate both imperialist and nationalist, racist stereotypes.

8. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin have identified some of the themes which emerge from postcolonial interpretations of literature as: a) the celebration of the struggle towards independence, b) the dominating influence of a foreign culture on the life of contemporary postcolonial societies, c) the problematic of postcolonial identity, d) the journey of the European interloper through an unfamiliar landscape with a native guide, and e) exile and displacement (1989, pp. 27-29).

9. More recently Anthony Appiah has also used this notion of race to explain why Western educational institutions have defended the traditional English literary canon: "Differences among peoples, like differences among communities within a single society, play a central role in our thinking about who 'we' are, in structuring our values, and in determining the identities through which we live. In the last century and a half racialism and nationalism, often so bound up together that one can hardly tell them apart, have played a central role in our thinking about these differences, and since one of the contributions of modern nationalism has been to see literature as central to national life, race has been central to literature and to thought about literature throughout this period" (1990a, p. 287).

10. Alice Chen, a social worker in Vancouver's Chinatown, models the kind of awareness and self-respect which students could be encouraged to seek as they learn to reject racist discourse in society at large by deconstructing the assumptions underlying stereotypical representations of people of colour: "I do not know kungfu. Sweet and sour pork is not my favourite dish. My family does not operate a grocery store or laundromat. I do not drive a Mercedes; nor do I own a cellular phone. Furthermore, I do not know how to please men. All the above are true, despite the fact that I am Chinese and I come from Hong Kong... I dream of a society where people can be recognized for who they are and not which group they belong to. I dream of a society where friends and acquaintances will take time to know me, instead of making assumptions about me" (Vancouver Sun, Saturday, May 25, 1991).
11. Among the examples of stereotypes of Asian women deconstructed by Tajima is the following: "In 1985 director Michael Cimino cloned Suzie Wong to TV news anchor Connie Chung and created another anchor, Tracy Tzu (Arianne), in the disastrous exploitation film Year of the Dragon. In it Tzu is ostensibly the only positive Asian American character in a film that villifies the people of New York’s Chinatown. The Tzu character is a success in spite of her ethnicity. Just as she would rather eat Italian than Chinese, she’d rather sleep with white men than Chinese men. (She is ultimately raped by three "Chinese boys.") Neither does she bat an eye at the barrage of racial slurs fired off by her lover, lead Stanley White, the Vietnam vet and New York City cop played by Mickey Rourke" (1989, 313).

12. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) make the following distinctions between English and the varieties of Other Englishes: "In order to focus on the complex ways in which the English language has been used in these societies, and to indicate their own sense of difference, we distinguish in this account between the 'standard' British English inherited from the empire and the english which the language has become in postcolonial countries. Though British Imperialism resulted in the spread of a language, English, across the globe, the english of Jamaicans is not the english of Canadians, Maoris, or Kenyans. We need to distinguish between what is proposed as a standard code, English (the language of the erstwhile imperial centre), and the linguistic code, english, which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world" (p. 8).
Chapter 2
Postcolonialism and Deconstruction

Deconstruction has enabled postcolonial theorists to perform some very interesting and important critiques of the traditional English literary canon by drawing the reader's attention to the traces of imperialism that form fissures or discursive inconsistencies within such texts as *Heart of Darkness* (1900) and *A Passage to India* (1924). Thus, when postcolonial critics wish to dismantle imperialist discourse, deconstruction proves to be a powerful method of analysis. Deconstruction finds its most practical application and assumes its most readily digestible shape for students when they can compare the works of imperialist and postcolonial writers to see how representations of empire and its Others differ when dominant and subaltern discourses traverse the novels of a Joseph Conrad on the one hand and a Chinua Achebe on the other. I hasten to add, however, that it is neither necessary, nor desirable, to burden high school students with a thorough knowledge of deconstructive theory and terminology in order for them to perform effective postcolonial readings. Nor, it should be recognized, have high school teachers ever required their students to wade through the terminology of Richards's
Practical Criticism (1929) or Frye's Anatomy of Criticism (1957) in order to perform a basic New Critical or archetypal analysis. Nevertheless, some deconstructive terms require explanation in this chapter if teachers are to appreciate the ways in which postcolonial theory has appropriated deconstructive reading strategies. And, at the same time, some cautions about the problematic union of deconstruction and postcolonialism must be mentioned because not all postcolonial theorists are happy with the marriage between these two approaches to cultural and literary criticism.

It is necessary, therefore, to begin by clarifying some of the broader theoretical ramifications of my remark in Chapter 1 that the student using postcolonial reading strategies should be encouraged to "play deconstructively with the notions of self and place" which she discovers in her texts. In that case, for instance, I was using the term, deconstruction, as it has been appropriated by postcolonial theorists from the work of poststructural philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Although I demonstrate throughout the rest of this thesis how deconstructive terminology has come to be employed by postcolonial theorists, because this appropriation is perhaps the most controversial feature of my conception, and
because I plan in this chapter to deal with the controversy in some detail, I think it is necessary to discuss some meanings of a few key deconstructive terms at this point and to explain how they are being used by border pedagogues and postcolonial theorists. The works of Foucault and Derrida employ many technical philosophical terms and phrases such as "differance," "binary opposition," "reversal," "supplementation," and "intertextuality." I begin, therefore, by attempting to show how these terms function within the context of postcolonial theory.

Perhaps the most important of the deconstructive terms to be appropriated by postcolonial theorists has been Jacques Derrida's notion of differance.¹ In his text, Margins of Philosophy (1982), Derrida devotes an entire chapter to analysing this term. He purposely chooses to problematize, rather than to define differance, because he does not want the term to be considered a word at all but rather a spatial/temporal marker which readers might usually identify with words such as difference and deferral. The letter, a, in differance, is intended to remind the reader that "differance is literally neither a word nor a concept" (p. 3). Differance sounds like the French word, différence, but the addition of the letter, a, disqualifies it from serving as a "real" word, and, therefore, enables it to
illustrate instead how all words gain their meaning in relation to other words rather than in reference to a metaphysical presence outside of language such as one of Plato's ideal forms, for example.

Derrida credits Ferdinand de Saussure, in his Course in General Linguistics (1959), with first drawing the attention of linguists and semiologists to the fact that in language there are only differences:

Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it. (Saussure, p. 120)

From Saussure's starting point Derrida then proceeds to argue that "essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences" (1982, p. 11), but that "differences, thus, are 'produced' - deferred - by differance" (p. 14). Differance, therefore, sensitizes the deconstructive reader/writer to the tendency of words to disseminate their meanings throughout the chain of signification. The polysemic nature of language is revealed through the play of
differance, in which a word gains its constantly shifting meanings in relation to other words, rather than through reference to some tangible substance beyond itself, or to some transcendental signified for which it is considered to be the transparent signifier.

When Derrida, therefore, performs one of his deconstructions of a word as it is used within its discursive terrain, he employs the differentiation and deferral of the word's meanings to call into question its referential status. One such use of differance by Derrida should be of particular interest to teachers of Native and African literatures, for instance, because of the interpretations of oral traditions which it enables students of multicultural literature to attempt. In both Of Grammatology (1974, pp. 97-140) and Writing and Difference (1978, pp. 278-293), when Derrida observes that anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, like Rousseau and Plato before him, has privileged spoken over written language, he is deconstructing the claim that spoken language is more natural than written language. In his study of the Nambikwara, for instance, Levi-Strauss argues that these Natives, who did not have a written language before contact with Western civilization, were, therefore, more directly in touch with their natural origins than are Westerners.
Derrida deconstructs this phonocentric perspective by arguing that all language, whether written or spoken, is a kind of writing or inscription, and that the attempt to differentiate between societies which do and do not have the technical ability to put pen to parchment has in the case of Levi-Strauss served as a false foundation for his attempts to label the Nambikwara as innocent and natural while he sees Westerners as corrupt and cultured.

At the same time, however, Rousseau, Levi-Strauss, and Derrida are in agreement that writing is inherently violent, as it accentuates differences between people and thereby provides opportunities for prejudice and exclusion. However, where Rousseau and Levi-Strauss see the violence as originating in the writing of Western civilization, Derrida points out that all people write (in his broader definition of the term as arche-écriture) and that Levi-Strauss is being ethnocentric by claiming that the Nambikwara are necessarily different from Westerners simply because they have not become writers of books.2

Thus, as Derrida argues, the assumption that fundamental differences exist between oral and written language (a belief which has served as a cornerstone for the edifices of many anthropological, historical, and literary investigations into cultural differences) can now be called
into question by students of multicultural literature as they play deconstructively with the texts of various oral traditions and mythologies, and with the traces of these traditional forms of inscription in contemporary texts.

Closely related to Derrida's term, *differance*, is the deconstructive notion of *binary opposition*. As I shall argue in more detail in Chapters 3 and 7, binary oppositions are not mere dichotomies of the type which New Critics would analyse to reveal the ambiguities and ironies in *Heart of Darkness* as they search for the ultimate aesthetic harmonizing or balancing, for example, of such opposites as darkness and light or good and evil. Instead, the deconstruction of binary oppositions involves a number of strategies such as placing under erasure the supposed differences between Conrad's Africans and Europeans, or reversing the hierarchy of Europe/Africa to take apart the foundations of the novel's discursive practices and assumptions.

Such deconstructions of binary oppositions can prove an invaluable strategy for students readings of multicultural literature. In the European discourses of Orientalism, for example, the privileging of the first term, Occidental, in the opposition, Occidental/Oriental, established a theoretical foundation upon which was built an elaborate
structure of contrasts between the familiar, industrious, scientific, rational West and its exotic, lazy, mysterious, irrational, Oriental Others. The discourses of primitivism were similarly grounded upon the opposition, civilized/primitive, those of patriarchy upon the opposition, masculine/feminine, and so on.

To deconstruct any of these discourses, one strategy is to perform a "reversal" in which the second term in each opposition now becomes the privileged one. As Foucault says of the process of reversal which he carries out in his own analyses of the discourses of psychiatric and penal institutions, for instance: "Where, according to tradition, we think we recognise the source of discourse, the principles behind its flourishing and continuity in those factors which seem to play a positive role, such as the author discipline, will to truth, we must rather recognize the negative activity of the cutting-out and rarefaction of discourse" (Foucault, 1972, p. 229). Thus Foucault takes great pains, in his text, *Madness and Civilization* (1965), for instance, to show how dominant culture discourse of the medical establishment in the Age of Reason silenced the discourses of its irrational Others. By highlighting, instead, the discourses of the "insane" such as Sade, Goya, Nietzsche, and Van Gogh, for example, and by showing us the
negative features of the institution of psychiatry during various historical periods, Foucault questions the positivist assumptions of its master narrative.

Reversals help us to recognize, then, how, in the discourses of psychiatry, Orientalism, primitivism, and patriarchy, the formerly valorized terms, sane, Occidental, civilized, and masculine, gained their referential status. The belief that white culture is "more civilized" than black culture, for example, can be deconstructed by encouraging students to study how the Western discourses of primitivism have systematically "occulted" or, in other words, ignored the traditions of mythology, art, music, religion, etc. that have existed for thousands of years in countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia. As students read multicultural literature, therefore, they can use their knowledge of the binary oppositions within Orientalism, primitivism, and patriarchy to help them establish how and why imperialism's discourses have attempted to silence the Other and how subaltern cultures have then fought back with their own oppositional discursive practices.

For American postmodern literary theorist, Barbara Johnson, deconstruction is described as "the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text" (1980, p. 5). Like Johnson, Jonathan Culler (1982) points
out that, in order to perform deconstructive reversals, readers of literature, therefore, should be looking for different sorts of conflict in the text. Concerning those textual conflicts which result from the "assymetrical opposition of value-laden hierarchy, in which one term is promoted at the expense of the other," Culler says that the critic should consider whether or not the second term which is treated as the negative or supplementary version of the first is not in fact the "condition of possibility of the first" (p. 213).

In the binary opposition, nature/culture, for example, students could consider how the word, "nature," has depended for much of its meaning upon its supposed differences from the word, "culture." Many distinctions made in the literature of the British Empire, for instance, between a "cultured" Prospero or Robinson Crusoe on the one hand, and a "natural" Caliban or Friday on the other, require that we accept the basic premise that the two terms, nature and culture, are in fact polar opposites of each other. If, instead, we were to view the word, "culture," as a supplement to the word, "nature," then we could deconstruct the opposition by examining how our notions of culture serve as the enabling conditions for our view of nature.
Vincent Leitch offers the following example of the deconstructive strategy of "supplementation." Leitch argues that, according to the traditional accounts of many writers and philosophers, archaic man developed a need for community when life's dangers and insufficiencies removed him from his blissful and innocent state of nature.

In the evolution of man from nature into society, the latter stage of existence is pictured as an addition to the original happy state of nature. In other words, culture supplements nature. Before too long culture comes to take the place of nature. Culture, then, functions as a supplement in two ways: it adds on and it substitutes. At the same time it is both detrimental and beneficial. (Leitch, 1983, pp. 170)

In Stephen Greenblatt's article, "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century" (1990), he observes how European accounts of New World Natives tended either to represent them as speaking gibberish, as though they were in a state of natural ignorance, or these narratives portrayed the Natives as being able to converse fluently during their initial contact with the Europeans' languages. As Greenblatt explains, "this illusion that the inhabitants of the New World are essentially without culture of their own is both early and remarkably persistent, even in the face of overwhelming evidence" (p. 17). Thus, in the relationship between Prospero, "a European whose entire source of power is his
library and [Caliban] a savage who had no speech at all before the European's arrival" (p. 23), even when Caliban is given the "gift of language, his nature is so debased that he can only learn to curse" (p. 25). Culture's supplement in the colonizers account, therefore, simultaneously proves both beneficial and detrimental to the colonized. Students wishing to explore the interactions between British imperialism and culture in canonical works such as The Tempest or Robinson Crusoe, therefore, could be encouraged to examine what were the assumptions and purposes behind Prospero's and Crusoe's attempts to bring the English language and manners to these "natural" people. They could also consider in these books how the supplementary discourses of "culture," when they are expanded to make room for the play of differance, cause the reader to ask what language, values, and history Friday and Caliban were denied in order to conform to the cultural dictates of their English captors. This recognition by students of the inequalities which the supplementary discourses of "culture" have historically imposed upon the colonized can then serve as a starting point for class discussions about similar attempts by the contemporary dominant culture to silence and oppress the "uncultured" immigrants and visible minority members within their own communities.5
For poststructuralists, the deconstructive reading strategies of differance, reversal, and supplementation show how unstable the meanings of words can be when they are considered within a variety of discursive practices. Similarly, the meanings of books, for border pedagogues, can no longer be established as though texts were hermetically sealed, aesthetic objects, separated from the rest of the world's text by their covers, but, instead, interpretations of literary works must take into account the ways in which texts and their interpretations are traversed by a variety of discourses. By supplementing the negated or muted aspects of a narrative with alternative versions of its previously silenced discourses, therefore, the student can appreciate more fully the inconsistencies and gaps which are produced within the text's dominant discourses. According to deconstructive discourse analysis, then, books are not viewed as independent entities, but, instead, they are thought to be portions of a larger textual network. In effect, all text is, thus, intertextual in its construction.

The idea that texts are inextricably interconnected with other texts through overlapping networks of conflicting and coalescing discourses, however, did not actually originate with poststructural theory. Jing Wang (1992)
explains, in her analysis of intertextuality among classical Chinese works such as *The Journey to the West* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, how intertextuality has been a feature of Chinese literary aesthetics for centuries:

Although the concept of intertextuality emerges as a post-structuralist idiom in the West, it is a universal phenomenon that defines the communicative relationships between one text and another, and, particularly in the case of age-old writing traditions, between a text and its context... For the ancient Chinese literati, the autonomy of text is indeed an alien concept. That no text escapes the confinement of its age-old literary tradition is a truism so familiar to traditional critics that a notion such as "intertextual relationship" has long been taken for granted and needs little justification. (pp. 2-3)\(^8\)

In his article, "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community" (1986), James Porter recommends that teachers of English composition should adopt a "pedagogy of intertextuality" (p. 41):

Writing assignments should be explicitly intertextual. If we regard each written product as a stage in a larger process - the dialectic process within a discourse community - then the individual writer's work is part of a web, part of a community search for truth and meaning. Writing assignments might take the form of dialogue with other writers: Writing letters in response to articles is one kind of dialectic.... Research assignments might be more community oriented rather than topic oriented; students might be asked to become involved in communities of researchers (Porter, 1986, p. 43).

In this view of intertextual analysis, therefore, what high school students of multicultural literature choose to write about their texts could be shared and modified within
a discourse community comprised of teachers, community 
resource people, and fellow students. Such an intertextual 
reading/writing strategy would help the students to 
understand that they are not reading a single literary work 
in isolation from its intertextual and cultural contexts. 
While the idea of involving students in collaborative 
responses to literature is certainly not new, the 
postcolonial alternative enables students and teachers to 
recognize during their collaborations the heterogeneity of 
the literary works under discussion. It also helps them to 
recognize the plurality of the cultures from which these 
works have been constructed, and the multiculturally 
constituted subjectivity of the students who are attempting 
the responses. Intertextual reading strategies, then, help 
students and teachers to see their texts and themselves from 
intercultural rather than from essentialist perspectives.

In Chapters 4 and 6 I describe, for example, how the 
high school English students whom I have studied during the 
past two years formed intercultural discourse communities. 
These students, who were living in a British Columbian 
Native reserve, in a small town in rural Ontario, in Kyoto, 
Japan, and in the Chinese-Canadian community of Vancouver, 
produced collaborative intercultural responses to 
multicultural literature via e-mail on the Internet.
Concerning the methods of their reading and writing activities, my argument is that the many electronic messages which the students wrote to each other afforded them practical opportunities and strong motivations to work with each other to respond intertextually to multicultural texts. However, while much of their writing was focused upon sharing interpretations of Chinese, Japanese, and Native short stories and poems, the rest of their correspondence had little to do with the task of collaboratively criticizing multicultural literature. Nevertheless, all of their intercultural communications were useful to the students' attempts at deconstructing and reconstructing representations of cultures. When, for instance, the Chinese-Canadian and bilingual Japanese adolescent girls and boys whom I studied discussed issues of sexual discrimination in the Japanese family and workplace, or when the Native students in British Columbia's Coldwater Reservation chose to discuss with their key-pals in Ontario issues of racism and cultural heritage, their messages clearly illustrated how they came to represent intertextually, within the intercultural discursive networks which they forged together, their views of each other's personal and communal identities.
In his article, "The Political Responsibility of the Teaching of Literatures" (1990), Paul Smith observes that the teaching of literature is a political act:

It is an activity which, like any other teaching, takes place in the arena of political and social relations. Evidently the function of universities, colleges, and schools within the cultures we inhabit is crucial for the production and reproduction of social relations and power, and thus is already highly politicized even before one considers the action of the state upon the processes of education. Equally, it is an activity which takes as its object of study particular discourses that are and have chronically been of considerable moment in the realms of ideology and culture. (p. 81)

But, as Smith points out in his book, Discerning the Subject (1988), Derrida's brand of deconstruction makes it difficult for students and teachers to be moral and political agents in their study of literature because it places so much emphasis upon "the crucial role of representation and the mediation of discourses in constructing the social and in the formation of subjectivity" (p. 43). As Smith sees the problem, "Derrida's view of interpretation tries to establish a kind of subjectless process which is in all essential ways given over to the force or forces of language. Such an attempt must be accompanied by a thoroughgoing criticism of theories of the subject" (p. 49). Derrida's view of human agency cannot be straightforwardly adapted for the purposes of any
oppositional political agenda. This is because, as Smith argues, "deconstruction requires that subjectivity be construed in such a manner that it cannot take responsibility for its interpretations, much less for the history of the species" (pp. 50-51):

The project of a 'decentered' resistance must always take account of the not insignificant task of relating 'plural strategies' to plural 'subjects.' That is to say, the task for both the theory and the practice of resistance is — as it has always been — to locate and work with the interests that both produce and delimit the human agent's actions. Such a project would have no grounds on which to interrogate and understand those interests if it were to adopt the Derridean ambivalence around the question of subjectivity. (p. 51)

But it is not only the controversial view of subjectivity which makes the appropriation of deconstructive strategies difficult for some postcolonial critics to accept. In the following analysis, for instance, as I refer to the differences and similarities between postcolonialism and postmodernism, it will become clear that the fact that deconstruction and postmodernism were originally European theories which were subsequently championed in the United States has caused some postcolonial theorists to identify certain aspects of these theories as imperialist and, therefore, unacceptable. The postmodern movement obviously extends well beyond the realm of literary theory, and involves adherents not only from the world of philosophy
such as Jean-François Lyotard with his desire to overthrow the domination of totalizing structures and his "incredulity toward metanarratives" (1984, p. xxiv), but it also involves the work of a wide assortment of visual artists, architects, film makers, etc. So while I am particularly concerned in this chapter with the uncomfortable fit between deconstruction and postcolonialism, I am also discussing here the extent to which deconstruction's project as it has extended into the realms of the postmodern is in conflict with postcolonial theory.

Helen Tiffin, in her introduction to Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism (1990), argues that "post-colonialism is more overtly concerned with politics than is post-modernism; and...[that] the post-modern (in conjunction with post-structuralism) has exercised and is still exercising a cultural and intellectual hegemony in relation to the post-colonial world and over postcolonial cultural productions" (p. x):

Discontinuity, polyphony, parodic form, and in particular the problematization of representation and the fetishisation/retrieval of "difference," take on radically different shape and direction within the two discourses. While post-modernism has increasingly fetishised "difference" and "the Other," those "Othered" by a history of European representation can only retrieve and reconstitute a post-colonized "self" against that history wherein an awareness of "referential slippage" was inherent in colonial being. While the disappearance of "grand narratives" and the
"crisis of representation" characterise the Euro-American post-modernist mood, such expressions of "breakdown" and "crisis" instead signal promise and decolonisational potential within post-colonial discourse. Pastiche and parody are not simply the new games Europeans play, nor the most recent intellectual self-indulgence of a Europe habituated to periodic fits of languid despair, but offer a key to destabilisation and deconstruction of a repressive European archive. Far from endlessly deferring or denying meaning, these same tropes function as potential decolonizing strategies which invest (or reinvest) devalued "peripheries" with meaning. (p. x)

For Tiffin, postmodernism, while it claims to be subversive of the textual "author/ity" of grand narratives has also managed to gain the reputation for being "internationalist" in orientation, thus rejecting narrow and "essentialist" nationalisms. Yet, as Tiffin notes, "the cultural and institutional authorization so apparently derived, is demonstrably grounded in European ontologies and epistemologies, and its power intimately bound up with imperialist relations - both old and new - between nations and cultures. The post-modernist project as it operates within the world, thus apparently runs counter to its own ideology" (p. xi).

As Stephen Slemon argues, concerning the positive role which postmodernism can play for postcolonial theory, "if the question of representation really is grounded in a 'crisis' within post-modern Western society under late capitalism, in post-colonial critical discourse it
necessarily bifurcates under a dual agenda: which is to continue the resistance to (neo)colonialism through a deconstructive reading of its rhetoric and to retrieve and reinscribe those post-colonial social traditions that in literature issue forth on a thematic level, and within a realist problematic, as principles of cultural identity and survival" (1990, p. 5). However, like Tiffin, Slemon is also aware that there is a sense in which the totalizing effect of European deconstructive theory tends to dominate and silence the specific insights generated by many postcolonial theorists, who, while living at the margins of empire, are well situated to comment upon postcolonial textuality. Slemon therefore believes that the "universalizing and assimilative" impulses of postmodernism, like the same impulses in modernism, tend, however ironically, to continue "a politics of colonialis control" (p. 9):

By excluding [the] post-colonial theoretical work from the debate, and by overlooking the cultural specificity of so many of the literary texts it has otherwise read with reasonable accuracy, the "post-modernist" phenomenon - for all its decentering rhetoric - has paradoxically become a centralizing institution, a Western problematic whose project in the cross cultural sphere has become the translation of differential literary and social "texts" into philosophical questions and cultural attitudes whose grounding in Western culture is too rarely admitted, let alone significantly addressed. (p. 8)
Noticing, just as Tiffin and Slemon have done, that postmodernism tends to be universal and international in its control over contemporary literary theory, Kwame Anthony Appiah in his article, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" (1991), says that, "because contemporary culture is... transnational, postmodern culture is global - though that emphatically does not mean that it is the culture of every person in the world" (pp. 342-343). Appiah, then provides the following distinctions between postmodernism and postcolonialism:

Postmodernism can be seen... as a retheorization of the proliferation of distinctions that reflects the underlying dynamic of cultural modernity, the need to clear oneself a space. Modernism saw the economization of the world as the triumph of reason; postmodernism rejects that claim, allowing in the realm of theory the same proliferation of distinctions that modernity had begun. (p. 346)

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa.

All aspects of contemporary African cultural life - including music and some sculpture and painting, even some writings with which the West is largely not familiar - have been influenced, often powerfully, by the transition of African societies through colonialism, but they are not all in the relevant sense postcolonial. For the post- in postcolonial, like the post- in postmodern, is the post- of the space-clearing gesture I characterized earlier, and many areas of
contemporary African cultural life — what has come to be theorized as popular culture, in particular — are not in this way concerned with transcending, with going beyond, coloniality. Indeed it might be said to be a mark of popular culture that its borrowings from international cultural forms are remarkably insensitive to, not so much dismissive of as blind to, the issue of neocolonialism or cultural imperialism. (p. 348)

Linda Hutcheon argues that, like feminism, postcolonialism has many strong links with postmodernism. However, both postcolonialism and feminism strive to go beyond postmodernism's deconstruction of existing orthodoxies by establishing theories of agency which allow them to attempt social and political action. Picking up where Paul Smith left us earlier with deconstruction's view of subjectivity, Hutcheon explains that "the current post-structuralist/post-modern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and post-colonialist discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical post-modern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it securely possesses" (1990b, p. 168).

So, while I wish to make it clear that, although, in its use of deconstructive reading strategies, the postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum differs from the traditional methods of literary interpretation which I analyse in subsequent chapters, it is
also important to note that postcolonial theorists in general (e.g., Tiffin, Slemon, Appiah, Hutcheon) do not incorporate postmodern theory wholesale into their interpretations, but, instead, use those strategies which suit their local needs and their particular ethical and political projects. These distinctions are especially important to the postcolonial curriculum conception because the efforts of immigrant students, visible minority students, and Native students to understand the effects of imperialism upon their cultural identities and histories can be seriously undermined if they do not have the opportunity to experience their heritage from local rather than dominant culture, Eurocentric deconstructive perspectives. And for all high school students the opportunity to interpret a novel such as *A Passage to India* with the help of Indian as well as British critics is as important a postcolonial reading strategy as is deconstructing the discourses in the manner of Derrida or Foucault.

Throughout the dissertation I attempt to question the existing theories which inform current practices in the teaching of multicultural literature in high schools by deconstructing the theoretical foundations of the New Critics, archetypalists, feminists, reader-response theorists, and antiracists who have, until now, provided
teachers with the pedagogical strategies they required in order to develop their multicultural literature curricula. My own theoretical foundations as a researcher are similar to those of curriculum theorist, Henry Giroux, and postcolonial literary theorist, Edward Said. Just as these two researchers have spent much of their careers examining the discursive practices of cultures, so I have been performing my analyses of texts in order to discover how the discourses of theorists, teachers, multicultural writers, and students represent their various cultural positions. What I have done, then, is to compare critically common conceptions of the multicultural literature curriculum with my postcolonial conception in order to show how the postcolonial approach can enable students to accomplish more interesting and effective responses to textual representations of cultures than can the curriculum approaches which are presently practised in high schools.

In my attempt to develop and justify a postcolonial conception I analysed not only literary texts, philosophical works, and curriculum documents, but also a variety of student discourses. More specifically, the texts which I analyzed included teachers' multicultural literature curricula, literary theorists' interpretations of cultures and literary texts, multicultural writers works of fiction,
curriculum theorists' analyses of issues in the area of multicultural and antiracist education policy and practice, and, finally, high school students' interpretations of cultures and literary texts.

During the 1991-92 school year I worked as a research assistant with a class of grade 10 English students in Vancouver, British Columbia. Approximately 40% of these students were Chinese-Canadians, and they were involved in intercultural computer-mediated communications with bilingual students of the same age in Kyoto, Japan. Then, in the 1992-93 school year, I designed a multicultural literature course which I taught to two classes of OAC (grade 13) English students in a rural Ontario high school. Also during the 1992-93 academic year I taught one class of grade 12 students who corresponded via e-mail with Native students at the Coldwater Reserve near Merritt, British Columbia. Although I carried on many class discussions with students about their views concerning multicultural literature, my main sources of data were the various forms of writing which the students produced. For instance, my observations about students' intercultural collaborative responses to Native and Japanese literature in Chapters 4 and 6 of this thesis were based principally upon the copies which I retained of their e-mail communications. And my
observations about the responses of the OAC students to the multicultural novels and short stories which they studied were based primarily upon the essays, response journals, and tests which they wrote during the course.

I have attempted to view the discourses of students, teachers, and curriculum theorists from the multiple perspectives provided by postcolonial theory. While every literary theory contains rifts among its key advocates, the profound differences which exist within the field of postcolonial theory are a function of the great variety of cultural and theoretical perspectives which its advocates bring to their readings, as I believe I have made clear through my discussion earlier in this chapter about the complicated marriage between postcolonialism and postmodernism. My postcolonial conception, therefore, like the cultural texts which it attempts to explain, is necessarily heterogeneous in form and content. Nevertheless, I contend that it is this heterogeneity which makes the postcolonial conception more effective than other approaches to the teaching of multicultural literature.

If I am correct in arguing that the postcolonial conception is better than other approaches at helping students and teachers to respond effectively to multicultural texts, then it should be possible to establish
a set of criteria by which the relative merits of each conception can be clearly demonstrated. Thus I have developed a list of three criteria for comparing the postcolonial conception with other conceptions of the multicultural literature curriculum which I analyse in this thesis. I state the criteria in the form of questions so that I can then ask them repeatedly throughout the dissertation as I judge the effectiveness of each conception in turn.

1. Critical Complexity and Sophistication - To what extent does a given curriculum conception enable students to develop complexity and sophistication in their interpretations of multicultural texts? Specifically, how well does a curricular approach help students and teachers to problematize the representations of self, place, and Other which they encounter in their texts?

2. Intercultural Communication - How effectively does a conception enable students and teachers to cross back and forth over the imaginary borders constructed between worlds in order to interpret multicultural texts from both insider and outsider perspectives? Also, how well are the students able to communicate with peers from other cultures in their attempts to understand the issues raised by their multicultural texts?

3. Multicultural Literacy - How well does a conception help students and teachers to perceive the effects of imperialism upon the cultures and literary texts which they are studying and to assess their own roles in the ongoing conflicts between dominant and subaltern cultural groups? As well, to what degree does a curricular approach develop the kind of literacy in students which enables them to negotiate meanings within various intertextual terrains and to acknowledge the heterogeneous and multivalent constitutions of the
subjects and cultures represented within their multicultural texts?

The degree of complexity and sophistication which the students are able to achieve in their critical thinking about multicultural literature is the first criterion for judging the effectiveness of the postcolonial conception in comparison with other curriculum conceptions. Of course, all literary theories claim to be able to bring about rich and sensitive readings in their competent practitioners' analyses of texts. Nevertheless, the questions I raise about complexity and sophistication of analysis in connection with the postcolonial curriculum conception are intended to highlight its particularly suitable strategies for investigating aspects of culture which are overlooked by the reading strategies of other curricular approaches.

James Clifford has described these overlooked aspects of culture in his book, The Predicament of Culture (1988). For Clifford, the "predicament of culture" is its "off-centeredness in a world of distinct meaning systems...[amid] the twentieth century's unprecedented overlay of traditions." Cultural criticism is, thus, "perpetually displaced, both regionally focused and broadly comparative, a form both of dwelling and of travel in a world where the two experiences are less and less distinct" (p. 9). I will be arguing in each chapter, for instance, that, because the
postcolonial theory of representation takes into account the problematic nature of the representations of self, place, and Other which students find in multicultural texts, the responses which they write are necessarily going to be more sophisticated than the interpretations produced by the practitioners of other literary theories.

The second criterion for comparison is intercultural communication. I argue at several points in this thesis that the ability to read the texts of other cultures involves the development of communications skills of a type which have previously received little attention in high school English courses. While English teachers in North America have been well aware of the need to develop clarity of expression in their students compositions, for example, and to encourage students to provide well-substantiated positions when they take part in classroom discussions about texts and issues, the idea that collaborative responses to literature can be enhanced by intercultural communication, is still rare in high school literature classes. And the additional notion that these collaborations can take place with students who happen to be thousands of miles away is rarer still. What I argue, then, is that we need to rethink our model of the student as communicator so that it takes into account the special challenges and rewards that can be
associated with intercultural communication and interpretation. The postcolonial conception, therefore, unlike other conceptions, encourages students whose classmates share similar cultural backgrounds to extend their abilities to communicate with their peers about the meanings of texts and about the nature of cultures by enabling them to share their responses with students who have different cultural backgrounds in distant places through the use of electronic mail on international computer communications networks.

The third and most important criterion for comparing the postcolonial conception with other conceptions of the multicultural literature curriculum is multicultural literacy. Unlike the type of literacy which is advocated by E. D. Hirsch in his book, Cultural Literacy (1987), the multicultural literacy which is the goal of the postcolonial conception involves the students' developing their knowledge of various literatures and cultures rather than concentrating upon learning only classics of the Western literary tradition.

In contrast to postcolonialism's view that all cultures are heterogeneous and that we therefore need to develop multicultural literacy in our students if they are to learn how to read the text of their world, Edward Said
characterizes the return to Hirsch's type of monocultural literacy as an attempt "to see yourself, your people, society, and tradition in their best lights" (1993, xiii):

In time, culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates "us" from "them," almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent "returns" to culture and tradition. These "returns" accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behaviour that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity. In the formerly colonized world, these "returns" have produced varieties of religious and nationalist fundamentalism. (xiii)

Henry Giroux points out that central to Hirsch's concept of literacy "is a view of culture removed from the dynamics of struggle and power" (1992a, p. 94):

Hirsch's view of culture expresses a single durable history and vision, one at odds with a critical notion of democracy and difference. Such a position maintains an ideological silence, a political amnesia of sorts, regarding either how domination works in the cultural sphere or how the dialectic of cultural struggle between different groups over competing orders of meaning, experience, and history emerges within unequal relations of power and struggle. By depoliticizing the issue of culture, Hirsch ends up with a view of literacy cleansed of its own complicity in producing social forms that create devalued others. (p. 94)

Brenda Greene in her article, "A Cross-Cultural Approach to Literacy" (1988), argues that the list, which Hirsch appends to his book, of what culturally literate people should know "is problematic because it does not
address itself to the point that many students in our schools come from cultures which are not represented in the canon" (p. 45). Then she asks, "Does this list imply that it is not valid for individuals to study values and knowledge representative of their own culture?" (p.45)

In the collection of essays, Multicultural Literacy: Opening the American Mind (1988), compiled by Rick Simonson and Scott Walker, the editors point out that, unlike E.D. Hirsch, most Americans have become "accustomed to the notion that culture, like language, changes, and that we ought to be sensitive to those changes" (p. xi). The following passage by Simonson and Walker eloquently speaks to the need for multicultural literacy initiatives in the United States. I would simply add that most of their remarks about readers in the United States are equally applicable to students in Canada as well:

The twentieth-century revolution in communications, the rise and pervasiveness of mass media, and dramatic changes in the world economy have led to a softening of political and cultural boundaries. As the world is "made smaller" and cultures become more uniform (imperialism taking on cultural as well as political forms), we are simultaneously brought closer together and suffer the destruction of individual languages, imagination, and cultural meaning. As we learn more about ecology and of ways to preserve nature, we should also learn the great value of diversity and seek to preserve a diverse cultural heritage. Economic development has historically led the way to cultural expansion. As the world becomes more of a single economic entity, there is a corresponding need for all
citizens to have not only a fundamental understanding of their own culture (in part to conserve it), but also a knowledge of the cultures of the rest of the world. However, the citizens of the United States are profoundly ignorant of world literatures, histories, mythologies, and politics. For the United States to continue to have cultural and economic relevance, this inadequacy must be addressed. (p. xi-xii)

In the following chapters I compare the postcolonial conception with a variety of New Critical, archetypal, feminist, reader-response, and antiracist approaches to the teaching of multicultural literature in order to suggest how educators can improve students' critical complexity and sophistication, intercultural communication abilities, and multicultural literacy.

In Chapter 3, after explaining some of the significant differences between New Criticism and deconstruction by examining New Critical theories and curricula, I discuss how the postcolonial discourse theory of Orientalism, first developed by Edward Said and then critiqued and adapted by James Clifford, Lisa Lowe, Jane Miller, and Madan Sarup, can be used to provide alternatives to New Critical readings of such texts as E. M. Forster's novel, *A Passage to India*. I also explain what Said's comparative literary approach to imperialism means by discussing his analysis of Forster's text. Then I conclude the chapter with an examination of some Ontario senior high school students' responses to the writing of Bharati Mukherjee and Mahasweta Devi.
In Chapter 4 I contrast archetypal literary analyses with postcolonial critiques of the mythological elements in Native literature. Next, I consider the relationship between the Native oral tradition and contemporary Native story telling. Then I conclude the chapter by providing examples of some grade 12 Ontario students' attempts to share their perspectives on Native poetry and culture via email communications on the Kids from Kanata Computer Network with Native students at a Reserve in British Columbia.

Chapter 5 is devoted to examining the contrast between mainstream and postcolonial feminist approaches to the reading and writing of such autobiographical works as Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior* (1976). A group of OAC students' efforts to respond to Kingston's autobiographical fiction are discussed in connection with feminist and postcolonial theories about inscriptions of self. As well, their analyses of other novels by and about Chinese women provide opportunities to illustrate how high school students postcolonial feminist readings can differ from traditional feminist readings.

In Chapter 6 I deconstruct the notions of unified self and essential culture which Louise Rosenblatt posits in her reader-response paradigm: reader + text = poem. By
analysing how Chinese-Canadian students in Vancouver and bilingual Japanese students in Kyoto have collaborated via e-mail in order to produce their interpretations of a Japanese short story in translation, I attempt to show that Trinh Minh-ha's postcolonial theory of the hyphenated self better explains students' responses to multicultural literature than do traditional reader-response theories. The "Network Theory" of Barker & Kemp (1990) is also briefly examined to explain how Giroux's desire to extend students' imaginative reach beyond the walls of the classroom can be achieved in part through the use of computer communications.

In Chapter 7, after establishing the differences between antiracism and other approaches to dealing with racism in education, I attempt to illustrate how the postcolonial theory of representation provides a more subtle and complex method of reading multicultural literature than does the antiracist approach which is presently advocated in Ontario high schools. I then critique the antiracist, multicultural literature textbook and program of studies devised by John Borovilos for the Ontario Ministry of Education by contrasting his conception of the curriculum with my postcolonial conception. At the conclusion of this chapter, in order to illustrate how the postcolonial theory of representation can be used by students to deconstruct
multicultural literature, I provide examples of OAC English students' postcolonial interpretations of short stories and novels written by African and African-American writers. These examples are taken from the students response journals and independent study research projects.

In the concluding chapter I argue that the principal goal of the postcolonial curriculum conception is to develop multicultural literacy in students. I therefore explain in more detail the differences between cultural and multicultural literacy which I have briefly begun to address in the present chapter. Then my brief reconsideration of each of the traditional conceptions discussed in previous chapters involves contrasting the ways in which the postcolonial conception is more effective than these other conceptions at enabling students to become multiculturally literate. Finally, I conclude Chapter 8 by offering recommendations for future theoretical and practical research and curriculum projects which could extend the work begun in this dissertation.

In the process of deconstructing from a postcolonial perspective several different literary critical approaches I have also selected for analysis a few works from the following bodies of literature: Indian, Native, Chinese, Japanese, and African. A caveat is therefore necessary at
this stage. I do not pretend to be offering a comprehensive survey of world and immigrant literatures in this study. I chose to discuss a few works from a variety of literatures because I wanted to emphasize the point that teachers and students should not make blanket generalizations about all multicultural literature as if Japanese and Chinese works, for instance, were essentially identical. Had I been concerned to provide an exhaustive survey of world literatures, I would have been remiss in neglecting to discuss postcolonial approaches to Latin American writers such as Isabel Allende, Jorge Luis Borges, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Luisa Valenzuela, for instance. But such a comprehensive survey was never a part of my project.

Instead, what I offer in the pages which follow is a sampling of texts and approaches to illustrate my central claim that representations of self, Other, and place must be radically reconsidered by students and teachers from postcolonial perspectives, rather than from traditional literary critical viewpoints, if students are imaginatively to cross the cultural, political, sexual, economic, and geographic borders which normally limit their understanding of texts and of the world.
Notes

1. Sharon Crowley, in her very helpful book, *A Teacher's Guide to Deconstruction* (1989), defines differance as follows: "A pun in French, combining the meanings of the English terms 'difference' and 'deferring.' Differance then alludes to (1) the tendency of meaning to inhere in items which differ from one another, and (2) the tendency of language to always put off, or preclude, the discovery of any final or authoritative interpretation of itself. In a larger sense, differance characterizes the movement of human consciousness and knowledge" (p. 55).

And Timothy Yates (1990) provides another useful account of this deconstructive strategy of differance in "Jacques Derrida: There is nothing outside of the text" (1990), as he points out that "the notion of structure is a totalizing device, within which the play of differences is controlled...Within the discovery of differance, however, the centre cannot escape play. It is no more than a new mark within a chain, referring necessarily to the marks from which it is different. Structure, which cannot come about without a centre, is overrun from the inside of the text it functioned to contain in so far as it no longer escapes its effects and governs from the outside" (p. 215).

2. Derrida's deconstruction of Levi-Strauss raises a crucial point which Christopher Norris addresses in the following passage: "The 'nature' which Rousseau identifies with a pure, unmediated speech, and Levi-Strauss with the dawn of tribal awareness, betrays a nostalgic mystique of presence which ignores the self-alienating character of all social existence. Writing again becomes the pivotal term in an argument that extends its implications to the whole prehistory and founding institutions of society" (1982, p. 40).

3. The technique of "reversal," as Foucault practices it, has been explained by David Shumway as meaning "just what one might expect. When tradition gives us a particular interpretation of an event or an historical development, Foucault's strategy is to work out the implications of the reverse or opposite interpretation. The strategy of reversal tells Foucault what to look for by pointing to the simple existence of the other side of things. In 'The Discourse on Language,' Foucault says reversal seeks the
negative activity of discourse where traditional philosophers and historians have been preoccupied with its positive role. The strategy of reversal in its broadest usage leads us to discard the assumption that human thought — which Foucault calls discourse because thought is always expressed in a particular linguistic form — is at root rational and positive, that when it fails to be rational and positive it is merely an aberration, a departure from its true nature. Foucault assumes, for example, that those elements that seem to hold a discourse together, that guarantee its connection to some non-discursive reality, cannot perform these functions without also performing negative ones that limit the discourse or rarefy it" (1989, pp. 15-16).

4. Because Western society has been so willing to accept the truth of the nature/culture opposition, this perceived fundamental difference between nature and culture then seems to legitimize other parallel binary oppositions such as health/disease, purity/contamination, good/evil, object/representation, animality/humanity, and speech/writing. As the structure of the nature/culture opposition repeats itself in these other oppositions, Leitch points out that a temporal priority acts to distinguish "the first term in each pair; the second entity comes as a supplement to the first" (Leitch, 1983, p. 171).

5. Sharon Crowley's concise definition of Derrida's notion of "supplementation" is interesting for the way in which she relates this term to his notion of differance: "Substitution' is not a synonym for supplementation, since the latter term also signifies a dual process of filling up a space which was not completely occupied, as well as expanding that space to make room for new supplements. Supplementation thus names one movement of difference. The notions of supplementation and differance, in fact, problematize the assumption that synonyms — names which exactly substitute for other names — can be found in language at all. Roget's Thesaurus provides a splendid example of the supplementary movement of language, insofar as its lists of supposedly similar terms actually demonstrate how words differ from one another, proliferating new shades of meaning in the process" (1989, p. 56).

6. David Shumway has described Foucauldian discourse analysis: "Foucault moves definitively beyond the structuralism that would define discourse solely as a matter of the relations of key terms and the possible statements
that may be derived from them. That kind of structure is now seen as part of a larger practice that is not merely linguistic or intellectual, but social" (1989, p. 103).

7. According to Leitch, "the text is not an autonomous or unified object, but a set of relations with other texts. Its system of language, its grammar, its lexicon, drag along numerous bits and pieces - traces - of history so that the text resembles a Cultural Salvation Army Outlet with unaccountable collections of incompatible ideas, beliefs, and sources" (1983, p. 59).

8. In George Landow's book, Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology (1992), he points out that one way to encourage students to perform computer-mediated intertextual investigations is to set up hypertext databanks which contain various contexts for the literature in the core curriculum. For instance, he suggests that in order to teach classical Chinese Tang Dynasty poems within their cultural contexts students should use "Paul D. Kahn's Chinese Literature web, which offers different versions of the poetry of Tu Fu (712-770), ranging from the Chinese text, Pin-yin transcriptions, and literal translations to much freer ones by Kenneth Rexroth and others. Chinese Literature also includes abundant secondary materials that support interpreting Tu Fu's poetry" (p. 36).

9. As James Clifford points out in "Traveling Cultures" (1992), concerning the ability to interpret cultures, "every focus excludes; there is no politically innocent methodology for intercultural interpretation. Some strategy of localization is inevitable if significantly different ways of life are to be represented. But local in whose terms? How is significant difference politically articulated, and challenged? Who determines where (and when) a community draws its lines, names its insiders and outsiders?" (p. 97)
Chapter 3
The New Critical Conception

The theoretical foundations and pedagogical techniques of New Criticism were well established in the 1920s and 1930s by literary critics and English educators such as I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks. By the 1950s the majority of university English departments were encouraging their students to perform New Critical close readings of texts. We might, therefore, expect that the influence of New Criticism upon the teaching of high school English would be waning by the 1990s with the subsequent rise of archetypalism, feminism, reader-response, and deconstruction in university English programs. Nevertheless, even though these alternatives to New Critical pedagogy have now become well established in university literature courses, many high school teachers in North America continue to rely primarily upon the traditional close reading strategies of Richards and Brooks when they teach literature to their students. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to begin my postcolonial critique of major approaches to the multicultural literature curriculum with an analysis of the New Critical conception.

In Terence Hawkes's attempt to explain the ways in which Derrida's deconstruction has superceded its
predecessor, New Criticism, to become what some have referred to as the New 'New Criticism,' he points out that "New Criticism was itself conceived in opposition to an 'older' criticism which, in Britain and America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had largely concerned itself with material extraneous to the work under discussion: with the biography and psychology of its author, or with the work's relationship to 'literary history'" (1977, p. 151-152).

The New "New Criticism," however, while one could argue that it still requires the students to attempt close readings of a text's ambiguities, figurative language, and ironies, does not attempt to deal with the literary work in isolation from history, economics, etc., but, instead, deconstruction requires students to recognize a work's intertextual connections with other cultural works in order for them to understand how its discourses are to be interpreted.

For New Critics a literary work is an autonomous art object, and thus it "should not be judged by reference to criteria or considerations beyond itself. It warrants nothing less than careful examination in and on its own terms" (p. 152). A literary text, therefore, is not viewed as having any referential connection to a real world beyond
it, but, rather, is perceived as "the presentation and sophisticated organization of a set of complex experiences in a verbal form. The critic's quarry is that complexity" (p. 152):

From I.A. Richards's notion of a psychological 'complexity' at work in poem and experience, whereby a fruitful tension between opposing impulses organizes and refines them, and thus enables the reader to abstain from reductive action in either direction, to Cleanth Brooks's and William Empson's notion of a multiplicity of meaning available in words and their poetic usage, whereby fruitful ambiguity maintains a 'balance', enabling the reader to avoid a reductive opting for single meaning, this ideological commitment to equipoise found itself transformed into a range of unquestioned critical presuppositions. The poem seen thus becomes self-maintaining; a 'closed' area, a verbal icon. (p. 153)

At the beginning of the New Critical movement, when I.A. Richards was teaching at Cambridge during the 1920s, he gave his English students copies of various unidentified poems and had them write responses to them which he termed "protocols." These poems and the students protocols then became the material for his lectures and for his text, Practical Criticism (1929). In the years following its publication Richards's book became an important resource for teachers of English literature in universities and high schools throughout North America and Britain. The students' attempts to analyse various lyric poems were studied by Richards to reveal the various errors in interpretation
which the students had committed. For example, he would point out where they had experienced too sentimental or too inhibited an emotional reaction to the poems, or where they had restricted their interpretations of the poetry's meaning by offering stock responses to it such as, "I don't like Shakespearean sonnets, I mean that form, as a rule"

(Richards, 1929, p. 41):

The interpretations of good readers will vary appreciably with their varied minds. No one can say, "There is only this and this in the poem and nothing more." There is everything there which a reader who starts right and keeps in a balanced contact with reality can find. But minds too much subjugated to their own fixed stock responses will find nothing new, will only enact once more pieces from their existing repertory. (p. 239-240)

As David Lodge points out, Richards's contribution to the study of literature is that he obliged students and teachers to read the text carefully and closely and to substantiate their interpretations with evidence from the text. "Though sometimes attacked as an artificial and anti-historical exercise, Practical Criticism in one form or another has since become a staple method of teaching students of literature to read attentively and with discrimination" (1972, p. 105).

While this emphasis upon attending closely to the details of the text, instead of concentrating upon its place in literary history or its author's biography, did help
students and teachers to grapple with the text's formal features, as Terry Eagleton points out, this emphasis upon aesthetic form to the exclusion of other aspects of textuality caused New Critics such as Richards to produce politically inert readings which submitted to the status quo:

The same impulse which stirred them to insist on the 'objective' status of the work also led them to promote a strictly 'objective' way of analysing it. A typical New Critical account of a poem offers a stringent investigation of its various 'tensions', 'paradoxes' and 'ambivalences', showing how these are resolved and integrated by its solid structure.... There were, naturally, limits to this benign pluralism: the poem, in Cleanth Brooks's words, was a 'unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude'. Pluralism was all very well, provided that it did not violate hierarchical order; the varied contingencies of the poem's texture could be pleasurably savoured, so long as its ruling structure remained intact. Oppositions were to be tolerated, as long as they could finally be fused into harmony. (1983, p. 49-50)

This harmonious unity or wholeness which New Critics believed to be at the centre of the author's enterprise and, therefore, the object of study for close readings of the text, since the 1950s has been questioned not only by neo-Marxist critics such as Eagleton, but also by feminists and postcolonialists who likewise feel that the text's unity is open to challenge from many directions.

In their attempts to extend Richards's efforts to help his students avoid inaccuracies in their poetry analyses, W.
K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley identified two more excesses in the interpretative process which they encourage their students of English to guard against and which they termed "the intentional fallacy" and "the affective fallacy" (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1972, pp. 333-358). When students take too seriously what the author is thought to have intended a text to mean, they run the risk of committing "the intentional fallacy," and when students allow their emotions to distort their readings the undisciplined interpretations which result suffer from "the affective fallacy." On the other hand Wimsatt and Beardsley argued "that a work, properly read, will always be unified by a set of preconceived tensions, as expressed in paradox and irony. In short, the New Critics assumed total coherence in a work" (Con Davis and Schleifer, 1989, p. 21). Failure to appreciate this coherence was a function of the reader's lack of objectivity, rather than of the text's lack of unity.

Perhaps because it was easier for students to discover the unity of lyric poems, which are highly structured and compact, than it was for them to appreciate the formal unity of a novel, for instance, the important early analyses by Richards and Brooks concentrated on the reading of poetry. Two decades after Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren
wrote the highly influential text, *Understanding Poetry* (1938), however, which demonstrated how to perform New Critical close readings on a number of canonical poems, they eventually produced the text, *Understanding Fiction* (1959), which provided teachers and students with New Critical techniques for their analyses of short stories. This anthology illustrated how the elements of plot, character, setting, narrative point of view, and theme worked together to produce a harmonious union of form within short stories and novels. Brooks and Warren said of the relationship between character and plot, for example, that one important way the reader can come to understand the changes taking place in the minds of characters is to observe what they do in response to the various crises in the story's rising action:

The reader wants to see character realized concretely through action. Analysis of motive, psychological portraiture, physical description are also important means of presenting character but they are always subsidiary because their true function is to point to the moment when character and action are one, when we can realize that character is action. (p. 656)

Set-piece descriptive passages can be ignored in pulp fiction, Brooks and Warren argued, because these passages serve no integrated purpose in the story. But, in good fiction, setting can serve a number of purposes. A setting which is "rendered vividly and memorably, tends to increase
the credibility of character and action," and it increases "the general susceptibility of the reader" (p. 648). And a particular character's description of a scene can tell us details about her frame of mind or relationship to the world around her.

As Brooks and Warren point out, not all of a story's facts are presented in the plot and those which the author has selected have often had their chronological order altered. Thus the action of most stories is presented indirectly to the reader. As a result, the meaning of good fiction is not always easy to grasp. Because writers prefer to suggest or imply details of the action rather than to state directly every significant occurrence, their readers are left to puzzle over the few key pieces of a mosaic meant to stimulate their imagination so that they will fill in the rest of the picture for themselves. New Critics, therefore, believe that, like good modern lyric poems, many short stories and novels are aesthetically pleasing because they have been crafted to be purposely ambiguous; unreliable narrators, complex plot structures, and unusual cultural contexts are just a few of the features which make the messages of the better works of fiction so beautifully obscure.
One of the literary disciples of Brooks and Warren, Laurence Perrine, as recently as 1983 compiled an anthology of short stories which follows the same basic format as Understanding Fiction. It provides students and teachers with notes about how the elements of fiction are used by the writers of the stories in his anthology, Story and Structure: The Canadian Edition. At one point in the text some generic questions are offered:

Does the plot have unity? Are all of the episodes relevant to the total meaning or effect of the story? Does each incident grow logically out of the preceding incident and lead naturally to the next?

What means does the author use to reveal character? Are the characters sufficiently dramatized? What use is made of character contrasts?

If the [narrative] point of view is that of one of the characters, does this character have any limitations which affect his interpretation of events or persons? (pp. 323-324).

While these types of questions encourage students to consider the elements of fiction in combination, and so are more productive than those which consider plot or character as though they were isolated features of the text (e.g., What is the plot of the story?), they do not take into account the political, social, economic, historical, religious, racial, or patriarchal discourses which traverse the text, nor do they require the students to situate the
text and their arguments about it within the debates which are of central importance to postcolonial theory.¹

In response, then, to the question, to what extent does a given curriculum conception enable students to develop complexity and sophistication in their interpretations of multicultural literature, the answer would have to be that New Criticism undoubtedly has enabled students to achieve complex and sophisticated readings of literary works, and the skills of close reading are certainly worthy of continued use in the postcolonial curriculum. The appreciation of ambiguity and irony in multicultural texts is a goal which both New Critical and postcolonial teachers strive to develop in their students. However, postcolonial reading strategies, because they allow the student to consider not only the formal features of a particular text, but also to analyse the intertextual and intercultural relationships among texts, can result in even more complex and sophisticated readings than can New Critical reading strategies. At the same time, postcolonial binary oppositions and differance provide more powerful tools for the students' interpretation of cultural difference than do New Criticism's dichotomies and irony.

Consider, for instance, the New Critical analysis which Roy Felsher encourages grade 12 students to conduct upon
Hermann Hesse's novel, *Siddhartha*. In his article, "Teaching *Siddhartha*" (1968), Felsher begins the description of his unit by pointing out that, like the works of Kipling and Conrad, Hesse's novel is set in "the exotic East" and that, as in Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* and Forster's *A Passage to India*, in *Siddhartha* we see at least one of the characters in the book functioning "as a spokesman for Western civilization" (p. 317). Thus, Felsher believes that the story serves as a critique of both the East and the West:

There are no Europeans in the novel, but the main character, Siddhartha, is essentially a Western personality. He upholds the values and freedom of speech and thought that we like to think of as basic to modern Western civilization. Where the other characters are submissive, Siddhartha is domineering; where the others are passive, Siddhartha is active, even aggressive, in his role as spiritual explorer. By contrasting these character types, the author can criticize both East and West. (pp. 318-319)

Thus Felsher sees the novel's structure as unified on the basis of the principle "that the values of the West must be balanced by the virtues of the East" (p. 321), and the study questions which he provides for the students reflect this interpretation of the work as a unity of balanced opposites. He asks them, for example, to "Comment on the Buddha's distinction between the 'thirst for knowledge' and the 'goal of salvation.'" Would this correspond to a
contemporary thinker's distinction between science and
religion? Why?" (p. 322).

The problem with Felsher's New Critical analysis and
pedagogical strategy, from the point of view of postcolonial
theory, is that it does not give the students the
opportunity to critique Hesse's Orientalist discourse with
its assumption, for instance, that India is "exotic" and
mystical, while the West, as it is symbolized by the
character of Siddhartha, is "independent," "scientific," and
"freethinking." The text might lose some of its apparent
unity for the students if they were to see just how
consistently biased is the Orientalist discourse which Hesse
employs in his Eurocentric narrative. 2

Hesse's attempt to write a novel about the essential
differences between East and West by creating an Indian holy
man who exemplifies Western values is obviously open to
deconstructive analyses which Felsher's students in 1968
could not have attempted during their New Critical
investigations. This is because Felsher's New Critical view
of Siddhartha does not consider the text within the
discursive terrains of Orientalism and imperialism. The New
Critical argument is that the work's themes are primarily
religious and that the book takes place in pre-colonial
times, so political considerations are extraneous to the
formal appreciation of the text's well-wrought unity of theme and character. For Felsher's New Critical interpretation, therefore, the novel's Indian setting is only significant to the extent that it reveals features of theme and character. An added interpretative dimension which the postcolonial approach would encourage students to explore is the fact that the setting is also a problematically Eurocentric representation of India as the West's exotic Other.

Because the postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum is intended to help high school students to recognize the ways in which discourses such as Orientalism affect our view of Indian holy men, for example, it is necessary to provide them with alternative discourses so that they can deconstruct European imperialism's Orientalist language by supplementing it with the literary representations and interpretations of, in this case, Indians themselves. New Critics believe that the role of literary criticism is to enhance the reader's appreciation of the literary work as an aesthetic unity. If two novels about India, such as Hesse's *Siddhartha* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1940), for example, are compared using New Critical standards of interpretation, then the focus of the reader's attention will be upon the
similarities and differences between the works' various formal features (such as narrative technique, symbolism, plot development, etc.). Postcolonial critics, on the other hand, move beyond considerations of aesthetic value to contextualize literary works in historical, political, economic, and social terms, thus calling into question how the texts' various discourses represent cultures.

Traditional comparative literary analyses, based on New Critical reading strategies, have not sufficiently accomplished this type of contextualization, and therefore they fail to take into account the relationship between imperialism and culture which Edward Said investigates in his "comparative literature of imperialism."³

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, I must stress the point that I am not recommending that students should carry out the types of New Critical analyses which are traditionally associated with comparative literature courses.⁴ Rather, in order to employ the strategies of a comparative literature of imperialism, when students and teachers read multicultural literature in the high schools, they need to look, for instance, to Third World comparative literature scholars, rather than to rely entirely upon dominant culture scholars, for guidance.⁵ However, before I discuss postcolonial comparative reading strategies in more detail,
it is necessary to examine how the tradition of New Criticism can cause difficulties for teachers who are attempting to guide their students through postcolonial readings of literary texts. In her collection of essays titled, *Towards an Aesthetic of Opposition* (1988), for instance, Indian-Canadian critic and teacher, Arun Mukherjee, describes how, when she attempted to elicit from her students written responses to Margaret Laurence's short story, "The Perfume Sea," she was "thoroughly disappointed by [their] total disregard for local realities treated in the short story" (p. 24). The story takes place in "Ghana on the eve of independence from British rule" (p. 24), and, as Mukherjee points out, "it underplays the lives of individuals in order to emphasize these larger issues: the nature of colonialism as well as its aftermath when the native elite takes over without really changing the colonial institutions except for their names" (p. 25).

In the students' essays, instead of continuing the analyses which they had begun in class of the story's symbols of imperial rule, they based their arguments "on how 'believable' or 'likeable' the two major characters in the story were" (p. 26). As Mukherjee considered the generalizations that her students had written about
"change," "people," "values," and "reality," she realized that these generalizations were ideological:

They enabled [her] students to efface the differences between British bureaucrats and British traders, between colonizing whites and colonized blacks, and between rich blacks and poor blacks. It enabled them to believe that all human beings faced dilemmas similar to the ones faced by the two main characters in the story. (p. 26)

Part of the problem, Mukherjee felt, was that the questions raised in the anthology from which Laurence's story was studied, were not about power, class, culture, and social order, but, instead, were about the story's universal truths which are supposed to speak "to all times and all people" (p. 26). Thus, she argues, the editor-critic's role is to make "sure that the young minds will not get any understanding of how our society actually functions and how literature plays a role in it" (p. 28). This is the logical result of New Criticism's emphasis upon apolitical, "objective," aesthetic readings of texts. Mukherjee's preference for an "aesthetics of opposition," therefore, highlights the differences between New Critical and postcolonial conceptions of the multicultural literature curriculum.

How, then, are teachers such as Mukherjee to interject discussions of political, social, and economic hegemony into the literature classroom when New Criticism has
traditionally taught students to avoid such modes of analysis? The postcolonial theory of representation provides one possible answer to this question. When comparing how Indian culture has been represented in Eurocentric and postcolonial literatures, for example, students must necessarily move beyond the confines of the literary work under examination to see how the various discourses which traverse the text have been constructed. Thus their analyses cannot remain purely aesthetic in nature. Felsher's students had no theory of representation with which to perform their New Critical readings of Hesse's *Siddhartha*, and so they could not question the assumptions underlying the text's Orientalist, Eurocentric discourses.

In order, therefore, to perform postcolonial readings which take into account the ways in which the discourses of Orientalism (mis)represent Indians in such texts as Hesse's *Siddhartha* and Forster's *A Passage to India*, students using postcolonial reading strategies will obviously need at least a rudimentary knowledge of how Orientalist discourse essentializes India as Europe's Other.

Edward Said's first major contribution to the field of postcolonial literary theory, *Orientalism* (1978), has served as an important guide for teachers and students who wish to examine the ways in which Asian cultures and people have
been (mis)represented by Western writers. Said's analysis of Orientalist discursive practices has been criticized and modified by theorists during the years since it was first written, but much of what Said discovered in his groundbreaking study still remains an invaluable resource for teachers and students of multicultural literature today. Said's basic argument is that Western writing about the Orient, during the centuries since European imperialism first began to take hold there, has produced a tradition, or, in Foucault's terminology, a discourse about Arab, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese cultures, and that this discourse has eventually come to assume a reality of its own. When politicians in the West have made strategic decisions about international relations with a country such as India, their views, according to Said, have been shaped in most cases as much by the West's monologic representations of this country as they have been arrived at through any first-hand knowledge of the actual heterogeneity of the peoples and cultures to be found there. A simpler way of stating this is that Orientalist discourses lead those who employ them to construct stereotypical views of Indians. But the common notion of stereotype is that Western writers' racist (mis)representations of the Orient are merely the result of the writers' personal psychological
biases. Postcolonial deconstructions of literary representations, on the other hand, involve much more than simply recognizing and dealing with psychological prejudices.

When Karl Marx, for example, in his 1853 analysis of British rule in India, argues for the destruction of India's traditional society in order to lay the foundations for economic development, his observations about the lives of Indian villagers are, as Said argues, influenced by Goethe's Romantic redemptive project. "Marx's economic analyses are perfectly fitted thus to a standard Orientalist undertaking, even though Marx's humanity, his sympathy for the misery of people, are clearly engaged" (p. 154). Marx, therefore, is not misreading Indian society because he lacks the psychological predisposition to avoid stereotyping India, but because his Eurocentric perspective and his economic vision have caused him to (mis)represent Indians. He remarks, for instance, that "village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies" (Cited in Said, p. 153).
The point is that not even a well-intentioned Karl Marx was immune to the effects of Orientalist discursive practices. Orientalism's manner of portraying Indians had such a hold upon the minds of Europeans by the mid-nineteenth century that it was difficult for anyone who chose to write about the Orient to avoid falling into dogmatic, stereotypical formulas. Said identifies four principal dogmas of Orientalism which Madan Sarup, in his analysis of *Education and the Ideologies of Racism* (1991) has summarized as follows:

First, there is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient which is aberrant, underdeveloped, inferior. The second dogma is that abstractions about the Orient are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself. A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom to be either feared or controlled. (p. 72)

If students attempt to read texts about India with an awareness that they can deconstruct representations of Indians which are based upon these Orientalist dogmas, then they will automatically find themselves performing more sophisticated and complex analyses than they might have accomplished before they understood how Orientalist discursive practices affected their texts and their interpretations.6
In Salman Rushdie's critique of various British films set in India, such as Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* and David Lean's *A Passage to India*, he says that "the creation of a false Orient of cruel-lipped princes and dusky slim-hipped maidens, of ungodliness, fire and the sword, has been brilliantly described by Edward Said in his classic study *Orientalism*, in which he makes clear that the purpose of such false portraits was to provide moral, cultural and artistic justification for imperialism and for its underpinning ideology, that of the racial superiority of the Caucasian over the Asiatic" (1991, pp. 88-89). Rushdie then proceeds to argue that "stereotypes are easier to shrug off if yours is not the culture being stereotyped" (p. 89).

Arun Mukherjee seems to concur with Rushdie as she finds in David Lean's *A Passage to India* a film which "sweetens the imperialistic relations of the British and the Indians to mere social misunderstanding" (Mukherjee, 1988, p. 102):

One of the major final let downs of the film comes when we see Fielding and Stella projected against the Himalayas with loud background music and a submissive Aziz bidding them goodbye. The novel admitted that power relations cannot be transformed into friendships. The film papers over this profound statement in a most awkward and disturbing manner. (p. 103)7

In Said's recent analysis of the novel, *A Passage to*
India, he observes that Forster had discovered how to use the novel form to represent the already existing British imperialist "structure of attitude" without needing to change it. "This structure permitted one to feel affection for and even intimacy with some Indians and India generally, but made one see Indian politics as the charge of the British, and culturally refused a privilege to Indian nationalism (which, by the way, it gave willingly to Greeks and Italians)" (1993, p. 205). Postcolonial theorists such as Rushdie, Mukherjee, Srivastava, and Said, therefore, can provide students with interpretations of A Passage to India which show them how British imperialism's Orientalist perspective of the 1920s and the legacy of this perspective in the 1980s have affected the artistic and political visions even of talented writers and film directors such as Forster and Lean. Said's explanation of the novel's inability to deal adequately with the realities of the Indian nationalist movement, for instance, can help students to venture into a study of the subaltern discourses which Forster's narrative has distorted or silenced:

The novel's helplessness neither goes all the way and condemns (or defends) British colonialism, nor condemns or defends Indian nationalism. True, Forster's ironies undercut everyone from the blimpish Turtons and Burtons to the posturing, comic Indians, but one cannot help feeling that in view of the political realities of the 1910s and 1920s even such a remarkable novel as A
Passage to India nevertheless founders on the undodgeable facts of Indian nationalism. Forster identifies the course of the narrative with a Britisher, Fielding, who can understand only that India is too vast and baffling, and that a Muslim like Aziz can be befriended only up to a point, since his antagonism to colonialism is so unacceptably silly. The sense that India and Britain are opposed nations (though their positions overlap), is played down, muffled, frittered away. (pp. 203-204)

In Lisa Lowe's analysis of Anglo-American and Indian Forster criticism she makes a modification to Said's notion of Orientalism. Lowe argues that Orientalist discourse concerning Forster's novel is heterogeneous in that Indian criticism has both resisted and been implicated in Anglocentric readings of A Passage to India. Citing Foucault, upon whose discourse theory Said's Orientalism is based, Lowe points out that "neither the conditions of discursive formation nor the objects of knowledge are identical, static, or continuous through time" (1991, p. 6). Thus, the various perspectives of British, American, and Indian critics over the seventy years since A Passage to India was first published can provide high school students with a variety of perspectives on "Indianness" as "a means of articulating a position that is at once essential and eccentric to the English literary tradition" (p. 103):

Heterogeneous, rather than homogeneous, orientalism includes a variety of positions, not only articulations of orientalist formations, but critiques of these formations as well. If the field includes that set of British texts in which the Indian is constituted as the
ruled Other of the British ruler, it also includes the
Indian textual responses provoked by and implicated in
these texts. The discussion by Indian critics of
Forster's controversial novel, and indeed all Indian
criticism in English, must be considered as bearing a
significant, if not paradoxical, relationship to the
British dominated institution of English literary
study. Although some of the Indian work may be
interpreted as reproducing traditional English ideas
about literary aesthetics and genre, a significant
portion of this scholarship cannot be dismissed as
merely a quiescent colonial counterpart to the British
literary tradition; rather it is one of the possible
locations of significant challenges to the colonial
hegemony that characterizes that tradition. (p. 105)

If the novel or film version of *A Passage to India* is
presented to high school students for comparison with
literary texts by Indian writers, then they can begin the
process by themselves of contrasting Eurocentric and
postcolonial representations of Indian cultures and peoples.
If these students are additionally given the opportunity to
read some sample interpretations of Forster's text by both
British and Indian scholars, then, hopefully, they can begin
to appreciate some of the complexities of Forster's project
and of the various responses to it, including their own.

When, for instance, Vicky, one of my OAC students, for
her independent study project chose to compare how Indian
women were represented in Forster's *A Passage to
India* (1924) and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989), she
discovered that Forster only occasionally provided her with
glimpses of the lives of Indian women. For instance, when
Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore, the two main white British women in Forster's novel, met a group of timid "Indian ladies" at the Club, the narrator comically depicts these women as standing in a corner of the garden with "their faces pressed into a bank of shrubs" (p. 61). Jasmine, on the other hand, as the first person narrator of Mukherjee's tale, revealed to Vicky in great depth what it means to be a widowed Indian woman who suffers both in her homeland, because without her husband she has little status or security in her society, and in the United States, because she is such a vulnerable target for those who wish to take advantage of her circumstances as a new and destitute immigrant. The graphic, first person narrative of Jasmine's sometimes horrifying experiences, therefore, struck Vicky as more convincing representations of what it means to be an oppressed Indian woman than did Forster's depictions of them.

To help her develop her argument I provided Vicky with interpretations of *A Passage to India* by the New Critic Lionel Trilling, who examined the theme of "separateness" in the novel, and by postcolonial critic Benita Parry, who discussed the politics of representation in Forster's text. At the same time Vicky received useful input from her classmates' discussions about the short stories, "The
Management of Grief," by Bharati Mukherjee, and "Dhowli," by Mahasweta Devi. Vicky's classmates observed, for example, that, just as Jasmine had difficulty coping with the loss of her husband, so Shaila in "The Management of Grief" was haunted by the spirits of her husband and sons who had been killed in the Air India bombing. Both Shaila and Jasmine were caught between their traditional Indian beliefs and their need to build a new life for themselves in North America. Thus the class discussions about Shaila helped Vicky to understand some of the problems of racism and dislocation which were experienced by each woman. And the failure, in "The Management of Grief," of the Toronto social worker, Judith Templeton, to understand the problems of the Indian-Canadian community which she was employed to serve provided some interesting parallels for Vicky's discussions of racism against Indians as she studied it both in Forster's India and in Mukherjee's North America.

While Vicky was unable to learn very much about the lives of Indian women from Forster's representations of them, her classmates' interpretations of Mahasweta Devi's story helped her to appreciate how the young woman, Dhowli, was so terribly oppressed by the patriarchal and economic power structures of her village. Devi frequently writes about the oppression of rural tribal and outcaste
I have always believed that the real history is made by ordinary people. I constantly come across the reappearance, in various forms, of folklore, ballads, myths and legends, carried by ordinary people across generations. The reason and inspiration for my writing are those people who are exploited and used, and yet do not accept defeat (Cited in Solomon, 1992, p. 229).

Not surprisingly, then, for one of Vicky's classmates, Jill, what makes Dhowli's experiences such a compelling study is her ability to survive the abuse which she encounters at the hands of the wealthy men in her village:

"Dhowli" is the story of a Dusad [lower caste] girl who endured many hardships because she had been widowed as a child. Later she was impregnated by Misralal, a Brahman boy. Dhowli at first did not like the Brahman boy, but he persisted in chasing her. After Dhowli discovered that she was with child she would wait by the bus stop hoping that Misralal would return and support her. Dhowli, her mother, and her baby son were all being starved by the Brahmans, so Dhowli was forced into prostitution. This way she made enough money to pay for food and for her mother. When Misralal and Dhowli finally met again he asked her why she did not kill herself. This part of the story angered me. It was upsetting to see how dispensible lower caste women are in Indian society and how cruelly men treat Indian women.

Using responses such as Jill's for a starting point, the students then proceeded to discuss not only the usual features of plot, character, setting, theme, and narrative perspective which are the elements of fiction addressed by New Criticism, but also postcolonial issues of class and
gender equity. Although the students' discussions obviously did not achieve the level of sophistication which would be possible for experienced postcolonial critics, nevertheless, just as their interpretations of "The Management of Grief" moved beyond the immediate parameters of the story into broader discussions, for example, about institutional racism against the Indian community in Canada, so when the students attempted to interpret Devi's story, their New Critical analyses of character relationships soon gave way to postcolonial questions about how caste and gender inequalities are represented in the text.9

Just as Arun Mukherjee found, however, that her students had been habituated to New Critical methods of interpretation, I found it difficult to change my students' habits of aesthetic analysis and to turn their attention, instead, to a consideration of how imperialism's legacy was influencing not only the discourses of texts written by E.M. Forester and Bharati Mukherjee, but also how it was affecting their own written and oral responses to British and Indian depictions of India. The problem was not that the students were consciously resisting postcolonial comparative reading approaches, or objecting to a method which required them to think in political, economic, and sociological terms about literature, but rather that they
simply had never talked in these ways about novels and short stories in their previous English courses. For that matter, most of them had never read literature outside of the British and North American mainstream before, and they were actually rather enthusiastic about studying texts which took them so far from their usual reading experiences. Nevertheless, I concluded that the level of multicultural literacy achieved by my students when reading these texts was superior to that which they would have attained had they not performed their postcolonial comparative analyses. When I considered, for example, how well Vicky and Jill would have perceived the effects of imperialism upon the lives of Indian women had they only examined their texts' themes, characters, and settings using New Critical methods of analysis, it was clear to me that they would not have developed as strong an awareness of the similarities and differences between majority, white Canadians and minority, Indian-Canadians, nor would they have developed as strong an understanding of the fact that India contains such a wide variety of peoples and cultures.

My OAC students' postcolonial investigations into the racial, sexual, and economic oppression experienced by the three Indian widows, Jasmine, Shaila, and Dhowli, sensitized them, for example, to the injustices of the American
immigration system, the Canadian social welfare system, and the Indian caste system. Their study of the discourses of Brahmins and untouchables, and of Hindus and Sikhs, also enabled them to recognize, for instance, that discussions of the seemingly universal theme of love take on much more complicated meanings when set within the contexts of postcolonial notions of racial, social, religious, and economic difference.

Once my students became aware of some basic postcolonial reading strategies, such as deconstructing Orientalist misrepresentations of the "inferior" and "irrational" Asian, although they obviously required guidance during the early stages of their studies in order to change from New Critical to postcolonial modes of analysis, they performed more complex and sophisticated interpretations both of European imperialist texts such as A Passage to India and of postcolonial text such as "Dhowli," Jasmine, and Midnight's Children, than they would have produced using New Critical reading strategies. This is because the New Critical conception of the multicultural literature curriculum has as its foundation a view of literary analysis which lacks an adequate theory of representation or of intertextuality upon which students can base their attempts to contextualize their reading. Also,
New Criticism’s avoidance of overtly political interpretations makes it difficult for students to respond to the discourses of imperialism and subaltern resistance which they encounter in their multicultural texts. But, while the postcolonial conception is better suited to fostering student understanding of the political and cultural textual terrains within which they can situate both their multicultural texts and their readings of those texts, postcolonial theoretical perspectives are not easily conveyed to high school students, in part, because they are so radically different from the New Critical perspectives which most of them have been taught in the past. Thus, I recommend, as students make the transition from New Critical to postcolonial reading strategies, that they should be taught these techniques indirectly (just as they were previously taught the techniques of close reading), by enabling them, for instance, to compare representations of the Other in Eurocentric and postcolonial literary texts.

The contrasts between subaltern and dominant culture discourses which become evident through such a comparative strategy, in most cases, can lead students to perform differential and supplementary analyses long before they are able to understand why this process works for them. The important outcome is not that students become precocious
literary theorists but that they begin to develop complexity of critical thought and multicultural literacy through studying the comparative literature of imperialism.

Notes

1. Thus, if there are traces of the struggle between colonizer and colonized in one of the anthology's stories such as Joseph Conrad's "Youth," or if there is evidence that patriarchal and imperial domination are interconnected in another of the stories, Alice Munro's "Boys and Girls," the New Critical formula for discovering the essential unity of a literary work is not likely to reveal or explain the existence of these aspects of the story.

2. Such a comparative analysis would show them, for example, that, in the words of Ashis Nandy, "India is not non-West; it is India" (1983, p. 73). Nandy argues, in The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism, that "outside the small section of Indians who were once exposed to the full thrust of colonialism and are now heirs to the colonial memory, the ordinary Indian has no reason to see himself as a counterplayer or an antithesis of the Western man" (p. 73).

3. Said's postcolonial approach to comparative literature, for instance, could raise the following types of questions for consideration in the high school multicultural literature classroom:
   a) Why and how should students compare the dominant Eurocentric discourse in the works of the canonical writers (eg., Kipling, Forster, Hesse) with the "talking back" of subaltern writers and critics (eg., Rushdie, Devi, and Spivak)?
   b) What can students learn by comparing ancient and modern literature within and between various cultures? For instance, passages from Journey to the West, the ancient Chinese epic about the mythological hero, the Monkey King, could be compared with a contemporary Chinese-American version of the tale by Maxine Hong Kingston called Tripmaster Monkey, or Mahasweta Devi's contemporary short story, "Draupadi," could be compared with excerpts from the ancient Indian classic upon which it is based, The
Mahabharata.
c) How can the postcolonial goals of decentering and disseminating discourse be achieved by examining the contexts of the literature with the help of perspectives from history, visual art, music, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, media studies, film, drama, politics, geography, and comparative religion?

4. Readers of such journals as Comparative Literature and Comparative Literature Studies might conclude that no literature worth reading has ever been written outside of Europe and North America. On the other hand, World Literature Written in English and World Literature Today are journals which in recent years have been discovering and comparing the works of fascinating new writers from all over the world.

5. The argument that comparatists should study works from a variety of the world's literatures rather than from the Eurocentric canon alone is also shared by a number of Indian critics, among others (Alphonso-Karkakala, 1974, Pathak, 1987, and Spivak, 1990).

6. Nevertheless, Said's approach to interpreting Orientalist discourse should not be adopted uncritically by students and teachers. Jane Miller, for instance, criticizes Said's theory from her feminist perspective as she argues that "in accepting the power and the usefulness of an analysis like Said's there is an essential proviso...to be made. If women are ambiguously present within the discourses of Orientalism, they are just as ambiguously present within the discourses developed to expose and to oppose Orientalism. Their presence in both is as forms of coinage, exchange value offered or stolen or forbidden, tokens of men's power and wealth or lack of them. The sexual use and productiveness of women are allowed to seem equivalent to their actual presence and their consciousness. They are finally, 'Orientalised' within Said's terms into the perceptions and the language which express, but also elaborate on, the uses men have for women within exploitive societies" (1990, p. 122).

Another problem which some critics have observed in Said's theory of Orientalism is that his attack upon essences and oppositional distinctions gives the reader the impression that collectively constituted difference is "necessarily static and positionally dichotomous" (Clifford, 1988, p. 274). As James Clifford points out, "there is no need to discard theoretically all conceptions of 'cultural'
difference, especially once this is seen as not simply received from tradition, language, or environment but also as made in new political-cultural conditions of global reality" (p. 274).

7. Aruna Srivastava observes that "David Lean's film version, which takes several liberties with the text, also caricatures Aziz and Godbole painfully, while the equally satiric portraits of Anglo-Indians in the novel are softened in the film. Compared to the Indian characters, English characters, in particular Fielding, Mrs. Moore, and Adela (to a lesser extent) are comparatively well-rounded characters" (1989, P. 85).

8. Said, himself, has recently acknowledged the significance of Lowe's changes to his theory: "Revisionist scholarship of this sort has varied, if it has not altogether broken up the geography of the Middle East and India as homogeneous, reductively understood domains. Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments made across borders, types, nations, and essences are rapidly coming into view, and it is those new alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism" (Said, 1993, pp. xxiv-xxv).

9. As Gayatri Spivak points out about the disenfranchised women of India represented in Devi's texts, their problems "are not immediately locatable as women's problems.... The women's problems that can be isolated [are] the bride-burning problem, for example, which is very much the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh working class, or the problem of organized labour...or all the so-called semi-feudal problems related to the marriage structure" (1990, p. 80). Although Spivak has not interpreted "Dhowli," she has performed a deconstruction of another short story by Devi which has many parallels to "Dhowli." Teachers wishing to examine Spivak's various postcolonial, poststructural approaches to interpreting Devi's writing should, therefore, read Spivak's article, "A Literary Representation of The Subaltern: A Woman's Text From the Third World" (1987).

10. I realize that most senior high school students would have difficulty reading Salman Rushdie's Midnight's
Children, and I am not suggesting that this novel should be taught as a core text for the entire class. However, I have found that some of my more talented students were able to read the novel for their independent study project with the help of suggestions for analysis from the work of the following postcolonial theorists: John Thieme (1983), Maria Couto (1983), Ron Shepherd (1985), John Stephens (1985), Aruna Srivastava (1990), and, of course, Salman Rushdie, himself (1991).
Chapter 4
The Archetypal Conception

Agnes Grant is one of Canada's leading advocates for the teaching of high school and university Native Literature courses. Her most notable contribution to the field has been the monograph, *Native Literature In The Curriculum* (1986a), which was derived from her interdisciplinary doctoral thesis at the University of Manitoba. In Brandon University's Native Studies program Grant teaches courses entitled Oral Narratives, on mythology and traditional poetry, and Native Literature, on contemporary writing. Although Grant is not a Native herself, she explains that she feels a strong empathy with the Native community having raised two adopted Native children, and having spent many years working with student teachers at Brandon University's Faculty of Education to develop strategies for the teaching of Native literature in Manitoba's high schools. Nevertheless, Grant's decision to rely heavily upon the archetypal theories of Carl Jung and Paula Gunn Allen in her Native literature curriculum conception has caused her to make claims about the nature of Native culture and mythology which, from a postcolonial perspective, appear essentialist.
Like her mentor, the Native American writer, critic, and literature professor, Paula Gunn Allen (whose theories I shall be discussing later in this chapter), Grant believes strongly in the importance of studying the archetypal patterns which she feels are necessary to an understanding of North American Native Indian mythology. An awareness of these archetypes, she argues, is needed in order for students to study effectively works both of the oral tradition and of contemporary Native literature. Myths, Grant believes, "can be seen as histories of the first people, [and these] primitive people were naturally poetic" (1986a, p. 18). Postcolonial theorists such as Marianna Torgovnick (1990) would caution, however, that words such as "primitive" and "natural," when attributed in this way to cultural groups, often indicate that the writer wishes to ascribe essential differences between civilized cultures and their exotic Others. It is Grant's tendency in her curriculum theory to essentialize Native culture in this manner which I must therefore deconstruct at the outset of this chapter.

For her archetypal approach Grant believes that one useful key to unlocking the mysteries of Native mythology is Carl Jung's theory of archetypes:
The theory of archetypes is very important to the study of Indian mythology, particularly if the mythology is to be seen as having depth and profundity equal to that of other world mythologies. Indian mythology has frequently been discredited because scholars of Western literature have not recognized its depth and scope. An archetypal examination of Indian myths proves this attitude invalid. Though the form and events of Indian mythology may be quite different, it can be of some comfort to uninitiated readers that the themes and motifs are quite often familiar. (p. 20)²

Jung has attempted to defend his theory of archetypes against his critics by arguing that they are wrong to assume he is dealing with "inherited representations," and that, because they have misunderstood his notion of archetypes, they have dismissed it as "mere superstition":

They have failed to take into account the fact that if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or were acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves in our consciousness. They are, indeed, an instinctive trend, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies. (1964, pp. 57-58)³

So, for both Jung and Grant, the power of archetypes lies in their universality and in their metaphysical origins in the subconscious. Grant, in fact, uses her belief in the powerful metaphysical presence of Native mythological archetypes as one of her main justifications for considering these myths to be as worthy of study as are the myths of other world cultures. While the appropriation of Jung's theory of archetypes for use in literary analysis is not a new notion, the idea that archetypal criticism can have as
one of its goals the discovery in Native literature of profound, subconscious, essential truths about "primitive" history and religion is an innovation peculiar to the theories of Agnes Grant and Paula Gunn Allen. Their notion of archetypal criticism, however, is significantly different in several key respects from that of archetypalism's most noteworthy practitioner, Northrop Frye. And it is important to note that, while their approaches differ, neither Frye's use of the theory of archetypal patterns nor Grant's and Allen's are free of difficulties when they are applied to the teaching of Native literature.

In Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism (1957) he acknowledges the importance to his own archetypal critical investigations of Jung's psychological studies and of Sir James Frazer's immense anthropological catalogue of cross-cultural archetypal patterns, The Golden Bough (1922). But, unlike Jung, Grant, and Allen, Frye does not invest the archetypal patterns which he finds across the world's literatures with any necessarily historical or metaphysical origins. For Frye, the idea that the communicability of archetypes needs to be accounted for with Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is "an unnecessary hypothesis in literary criticism" (pp. 111-112). Frye argues, in fact, that literary criticism requires no external, deterministic
theory such as Marxism, Freudianism, or existentialism, upon which to ground its interpretations. That is, he believes, like the New Critics, that literature and literary theory should be able to stand on their own as unities which are self-explanatory and not dependent upon the discoveries of psychologists, anthropologists, historians, or biographers, even though the contributions which these disciplines can bring to literary criticism, Frye feels, are obviously of some value. Thus, although literary critics share with anthropologists an interest in rituals and with psychologists an interest in dreams, Frye's brand of archetypal criticism is concerned with the form of dreams and rituals rather than with their origins. He is careful to separate himself from any notion in Jungian psychology that the purpose of interpretation is to read the subconscious mind of humanity rather than to recognize how the formal features of one piece of literature compare with patterns which can be found within other works from the body of literature as a whole:

To the literary critic, ritual is the content of dramatic action, not the source or origin of it. The Golden Bough is, from the point of view of literary criticism, an essay on the ritual content of naive drama: that is, it reconstructs an archetypal ritual from which the structural and generic principles of drama may be logically, not chronologically, derived. It does not matter two pins to the literary critic
whether such a ritual had any historical existence or not. (p. 109)

As I have already remarked, in Frye's and Grant's curriculum theories we actually have two significantly different views of archetypal criticism. And yet, it appears that Grant and Allen want their archetypal approach to be related to Frye's to the extent that archetypalism, as he has established it, can lend to Native literature the same status as say that held by ancient Greek or Roman literature. But, if it is true that Grant and Allen wish their archetypal approach to be seen as a key to unlocking essential truths about the origins of Native culture, any association with Frye's theory could prove a serious detriment to their claims.

To see how these theoretical differences and similarities work themselves out in practice, I now examine one example each of Frye's and Grant's theories applied to the teaching of Native literature in high schools. In the high school textbook, Wish and Nightmare (1972), which bears Northrop Frye's name as its supervisory editor, we see an attempt on the part of its editors, Hope and Alvin Lee, to incorporate a number of Native works into Frye's archetypal critical framework. Although there is a clear effort on the part of the editors to contextualize these works by providing background information about the cultures from
which the stories derive, a sampling of the contents of the teacher's guide to the textbook indicates that the central concern of the Frye program is to provide cross-cultural analysis of the archetypes within each tale. In the explanation of Longfellow's epic poem about Hiawatha, for instance, instead of encouraging students, as would the postcolonial approach, to interrogate the assumptions behind the poem's nineteenth-century discourse of the "noble savage" by asking them to examine how it differs from Native representations of their heroes, the editors, in their Teacher's Manual: Wish and Nightmare (1972), provide the following explanation of the poem's archetypal significance:

Hiawatha is one of the archetypal "saviour" figures of literature. He risks death in order to give a gift to his people. The god Mondamin, too, dies in order to rise again in the form of the gift of grain. In the Bible, Jacob refused to let the mysterious visitor go until he had blessed him. Jacob's single match lasted until dawn, and the result was the blessing of Jacob and the change of his name to Israel.

You could ask your students how Hiawatha is Moses. (See "Go Down, Moses" in Chapter One.) How is Mondamin Johnny Appleseed? (They are both reborn each year as a result of the memorials they left for earth.) (Hope Lee, 1972, p. 124)

This type of intertextual comparison, while it offers the students some interesting opportunities to appreciate common themes and character types among disparate mythologies, does little to lead them any closer to the
essential Native beliefs which are of such importance in Grant's curriculum. Nor does it enable the students to focus on any of the stories' other features such as their oral tradition narrative techniques, plot structures, and religious significance, but instead it reduces their value to those aspects only which they have in common with stories from other cultures. Richard Hardin (1989) has clearly identified the difficulty with Frye's non-contextual, cross-cultural, comparative approach to reading works such as Longfellow's poem:

> The outward movement of the archetypal approach is at once its chief attraction and its principal deficiency as an aesthetic instrument. We may be impressed by the wide range of correspondences or analogues that can be found in the images and characters of widely divergent texts but may soon find that such associative efforts have drawn us completely away from the text itself. (pp. 45-46)

The postcolonial approach to reading Native literature, therefore, should ensure that, if students at some point need to compare archetypal patterns of Native myths, for example, with those of myths from other cultures, then they should be aware that they are not to abstract and privilege the texts' aesthetic forms while ignoring the religious, historical, and political values which these works contain for the Native community which produced them.
The second high school Native literature unit which I wish to analyse here has been directly influenced by the theories of Paula Gunn Allen, and, thus, shares with Allen's and Grant's archetypal approaches a curricular focus upon the metaphysical foundations of Native mythology and the oral tradition. In Diane Long Hoeveler's article, "Text and Context: Teaching Native American Literature" (1988), she observes that Native Americans have only recently begun to produce a significant number of their own literary works written in English for the non-Native American public:

Until the publication of Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968), the general population had not heard actual Native Americans speak in their own voices—the white culture had been speaking for them. During the past twenty years, however, there has been a veritable explosion of texts coming from the Native American community, and we now have a substantial corpus to use in teaching contemporary Native American literature" (p. 20).

Hoeveler identifies three major themes arising out of the six-week unit on Native literature which she teaches to high school students. The first theme which is revealed through the students' study of poetry and essays is the Native's "overwhelming respect for nature as divine." By reading Frank Waters' essay, "Two Views of Nature: White and Indian," Hoeveler's students "begin to understand how these two views set the stage for the disaster that was played out throughout the nineteenth century across the western plains"
A second theme which Hoeveler's students explore in the unit is "survival," as the "corruption of traditional values and the assault on the Indian family are explored" (p. 20). And the third theme of her course is "the power of Indian traditions," as Hoeveler examines with her students "the value of the old 'ways,' and the relevance of Indian tribal practices and religious beliefs for the Native American today" (pp. 20-21).

She then lists many interesting resources and classroom activities. For instance, she invites guest speakers from the local Indian Cultural Center to talk to her students in order to contrast the museum displays of Indians with Native Americans who "are alive and struggling to preserve their culture and values in the midst of an urban environment" (p. 24). Hoeveler concludes the description of her program with the observation that she and her students are "humbled and shamed by the story [Native writers] tell of their history, but [they] are also inspired by the vision of nature [which Indians] still possess" (p. 24).

Unlike the attempt in the textbook Wish and Nightmare (1972) to place the Native works within Frye's broad scheme of literary archetypes, Hoeveler tries to introduce her students to the Native's vision of the divinity within nature and to traditional Native beliefs, by enabling them
to hear Natives speaking in their own voices through translations from the oral tradition and through the works of contemporary writers such as Scott Momaday. However, as was the case with Grant's view of literary representation, Hoeveler's does not take into account the opacity of language. Because, like all texts, myths are socially constructed, their discourses cannot contain clearly reflective signifiers of some underlying vision of nature or of religious beliefs. To claim that students can be shown a vision of nature, as though Native discourse on nature were unproblematic, fails to recognize that myths are systems of signification crafted in history for various purposes. As Roland Barthes points out in *Mythologies* (1973), in order for myths, both ancient and modern, to be revered as possessing an authentic presence, it is necessary to forget that at some historical moment they were constructed by people:

> The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences. A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature. (p. 155)

A good example of the complexities involved in discussing the essential or authentic Native vision as it speaks to us through mythological archetypes can be seen in
one of the twentieth century's most popular Native texts, *Black Elk Speaks* (Neihart, 1932). Where Hoeveler and Grant wish to make use of Native mythology as a key to the origins of the Native view of divinity in nature, the student, whether non-Native or Native, who attempts a postcolonial interpretation of Black Elk's rhetorical strategies can discover much, not only about his visionary account of nature, but also about how he defended that vision within the treacherous textual terrain of the dominant white culture as he attempted, with his translator, John G. Neihart, to convey his meaning to a non-Native readership.

From Grant's archetypal perspective, however, she sees Black Elk's endeavour as the transmission of his visionary experience through the telling of a modern day myth:

> The seeking of visions is a practice central to most North American Indian societies; ritual and myth are natural outcomes of visionary experience. Paula Gunn Allen believes it is because of the importance of the vision to the life of the people that the religious life of the tribe endures, even under the most adverse circumstances. But a vision can only be experienced by one person, and it must be shared; thus myths originate. *Black Elk Speaks* is a rare example of a modern day myth though it must be recognized that knowledge of Black Elk's vision is available only though the translation of John G. Neihart. (1986a, p. 20-21)

Grant is acknowledging here the fact that translation is at least one obstacle in the path of the Native text's ability to serve as a transparent and transcendental
signifier of the visionary experience, but, as David Murray points out in his book, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts*, (1991) there are other factors which need to be considered as well if Black Elk's intercultural struggles are to be seen within the various political and religious discursive fields which aided and blocked the production and reception of his cultural inscription:

The popularity of *Black Elk Speaks* in the 1960s has... to be seen in the context of what the Indian came to represent in the period. First published in 1932 and largely ignored, the book only became popular after its paperback reissue in 1961, when the growing countercultural predilection for the irrational, supernatural and primitive led to an increasing interest in, and idealization of, Indian culture. *Black Elk Speaks* seemed to offer ecological awareness, mind-expanding visions and an indictment of white American civilization, and its success encouraged publication of many other works of variable quality that presented Indians in this light. (p. 71)

Murray goes on to recount Alice Beck Kehoe's observation that Nick Black Elk's position as narrator of a modern Lakota "myth" was somewhat complicated because of his other role as a strong member of the Catholic church who never talked about the old ways with members of his community but often talked about the Bible and Christ. As Kehoe remarks, "Black Elk's genius lay in organizing Lakota religion according to a Christian framework, emphasizing characteristics amenable to expression in symbols
reminiscent of Christian symbols, yet keeping a Lakota essence" (Murray, p. 72).

Myth-makers of both dominant and subaltern cultures, therefore, must consciously work simultaneously within and against each other's discursive practices in order to produce imperialist and anti-imperialist myths. To quote Barbara Godard on the politics of representation in Native Canadian writing, "'Heterogeneity,' fractured genres, 'polymorphous' subjects, 'borderland' sites - these are the marks of 'resistance writing' especially as practised by Native North Americans under 'metissage' in their within/without relation to the dominant social formations" (1990, p. 198). Thus, as the 1990s literary offspring of Nick Black Elk, such as Daniel David Moses, Tomson Highway, Thomas King, Emma Lee Warrior, Lee Maracle, and Jeanette Armstrong, try to fashion new myths in contemporary contexts, they want their Native and non-Native audiences to recognize that they are playing with, and often subverting, Western story-telling conventions by infusing them with Native story-telling techniques from the oral tradition. To assume that anyone can read their tales in English and then straightforwardly achieve a union with the mystic Native vision is to undervalue the tremendous skill and effort that these cross-cultural workers put into appropriating the
English language and literary techniques to fashion their own oppositional texts within the margins of the dominant culture.

High school teachers and students of Native literature cannot fully appreciate the intercultural conflicts which take place within Native texts if they think that these stories transparently reveal essential Native truths even though they make use of many of the conventions of the dominant culture's English literary tradition. Students and teachers are also going to fail to appreciate these works if they think that the decoding of narrative techniques which are derived from the Native oral tradition is simply a matter of reading texts aesthetically (in the manner of Frye) for their archetypal significance without recognizing how story-telling techniques can bring traditional culture to life for Native readers. The conventions of the oral tradition are just as sophisticated as those of the Western writing tradition and cannot be adequately appreciated when decontextualized by archetypal readings.

Walter Ong in his study of *Orality and Literacy* (1990) makes the point that the oral tradition is woefully undervalued as naive by Western critics and therefore by many uninformed dominant culture teachers as well. People who have interiorized writing tend to organize their oral
expression and thought patterns the same way that they write and so they do not recognize and appreciate the complexities of organization involved in Native oral narration. Ong describes, for example, the way "narrators of Navaho folkloric animal stories can provide elaborate explanations of the various implications of the stories for an understanding of complex matters in human life from the physiological to the psychological and moral" (p. 57). If students are to achieve a more sophisticated interpretation of Native story-telling techniques, therefore, they cannot judge tales from the oral tradition by using Eurocentric categories of aesthetic judgement such as those advocated by the archetypal critics.

George L. Cornell, in his powerfully moving argument titled, "The Imposition of Western Definitions of Literature on Indian Oral Traditions" (1987), lists three reasons why it is wrong to attempt Eurocentric literary aesthetic interpretations of Native oral histories, songs, and prayers. First of all, because Indian oral traditions "are the respective histories of diverse Native peoples" they must not be appropriated by "literary imperialism" but must be preserved and nurtured by Native people. Otherwise, if they allow their tradition to be interpreted out of context by dominant culture scholars, then they will lose control of
their history. Cornell's second point is that "interpretations of oral traditions that are not based on detailed familiarity with a specific culture are fabrications which create new stereotypes and disseminate false information." Finally, and most importantly, he argues that oral narratives "carry with them messages and meanings which must not be misconstrued." These tales teach Native people lessons about how to conduct themselves according to ancient beliefs, and they explain to them the reasons why they "do things and make things, the ways in which they relate to other beings, the terms by which they explain their existence, and the vehicles by which they choose to express these concerns" (pp. 176-177). These things, Cornell believes, are of more importance than are the aesthetic features which white critics may wish to identify in stories from the Native oral tradition.

Of course, it is not only the interpretations of dominant culture literary critics which have produced dangerous (mis)representations of First Nations' people and their cultures. Indigenous peoples of North America have also been portrayed by countless Western writers from the days of James Fenimore Cooper to the present as European civilization's savage Other. If students become aware of Native fiction's relationship to dominant culture discourse,
then they can better appreciate how its writers use and/or resist this discourse and its stereotypes in their own complex efforts to represent Native cultures. Terry Goldie (1989), for example, has studied Eurocentric attempts to represent the indigene in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Goldie relies upon Said's use of the word "representation" to indicate that literary works cannot deliver to their readers the underlying presence or reality of the indigene, but can only (re)present the "image" of aborigines, Maoris, or Hurons as this image has been constructed in countless works of fiction. When students view films such as Dances with Wolves and Black Robe, for example, Goldie would argue that they can learn from their postcolonial analyses that the movies' images of First Nations people are intended primarily to appeal to consumers of historical romance rather than to portray accurately the essence of Lakota or Huron Native cultures (p. 149). Goldie observes that most viewers and readers are interested in fictional representations of the indigene because these images terrify or enchant them, and not because they are "realistic." The difficulty arises, therefore, when students believe that conventional representations of fictional characters are actually realistic portrayals of Native people, and that all Maoris, Lakotas, and Hurons must
be either violent warriors or mystical environmentalists. While the first step in literary response usually involves allowing the text to stimulate one's imagination, and I am not suggesting that high school students should be denied this initial pleasure when reading Eurocentric depictions of Native people, during subsequent readings of the story students should be encouraged to question the validity of stereotypical representations of Native people.

It is also important to note that the problem of how to represent the indigene is not restricted only to white novelists and film makers. As Gerald Vizenor (1989), a Chippewa author and postcolonial theorist, has pointed out, "Monologic realism and representation in tribal literatures, in this sense, is a 'bureaucratic solution' to neocolonialism and the consumption of narratives and cultures" (p. 6). It is not surprising, then, that, as Karl Kroeber (1989) observes, when N. Scott Momaday wrote his Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *House Made of Dawn*, (1966) his style was influenced by Lawrence, Conrad, and Hemingway, and his content was drawn largely from research conducted by white ethnographers:

Momaday's personal displacements thus echo those of his people, and one is tempted to read the protagonist of his novel as echoing Momaday's own difficulties in establishing his Indian identity. Yet that protagonist appears in a novel in English; Momaday uses a non-
Native language and generic form to evoke and articulate possibilities of being Indian. The culture which alienated Momaday from his people authorizes the language and form of his art...Momaday invents imaginatively to evoke an 'Indianness' for his readers (a majority of whom presumably would not be Indians) through an Anglo-American literary structure that must prohibit any authentically Indian imaginative form. (p. 17-18)

The traces of traditional Native culture that are woven throughout Momaday's text, therefore, are neither pure nor authentic representations of an archetypal Native mythos or ethos, but are comprised instead of opaque, intercultural discourses which require postcolonial deconstructive reading strategies if they are to be interpreted effectively. If we, therefore, compare the archetypal and postcolonial conceptions of the Native literature curriculum, then it should be clear that students can achieve a more complex and sophisticated reading of texts constructed by both Native and non-Native writers when they are shown how to problematize representations of Native culture in order to recognize the conflicting discourses at work in these texts. Nevertheless, the process of interpreting texts to determine how Native people and places have been represented, because it involves both appreciating and criticizing the literature's conceptualizations of mythological authenticity and its vision of nature, cannot be approached by teachers and students as though there were no sensitive political or
spiritual issues at stake. Before I turn to an analysis of some of my OAC students' postcolonial interpretations of Native Canadian literature, therefore, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the differences between the archetypal and postcolonial views of Native spirituality as these two perspectives are expressed by Paula Gunn Allen and Arnold Krupat.

Consider, for instance, the political and spiritual values which are cherished by Paula Gunn Allen, a Sioux novelist, poet, literary critic, and professor of Native American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Allen describes her connection to the archetypal conception of the Native literature curriculum in her very important book, *Studies in American Indian Literature: Critical Essays and Course Designs* (1983), where she argues that reality for traditional American Indians is metaphysical. The psychic experiences which Western observers such as Jung have discussed in connection with the concept of the "collective unconscious," Allen points out are not considered by many Natives to be imaginary or hallucinatory, but are a natural part of their spiritual union with the world:

American Indians encounter and verify metaphysical reality. No one's experience is idiosyncratic. The singer who tells of journeying to the west and climbing under the sky speaks of a journey that many have taken in the past and will take in the future. Every
traveller will describe the same sights and sounds and will enter and return in like fashion. (p. 17)

Of central importance to Allen's view of Native literature is the archetype of the "sacred hoop." She believes, in other words, that the American Indian treats "space as spherical and time as cyclical, whereas the non-Indian tends to view space as linear and time as sequential":

The circular concept requires all "points" that make up the sphere of being to have a significant identity and function, while the linear model assumes that some "points" are more significant than others. In the one, significance is a necessary factor of being in itself, whereas in the other, significance is a function of placement on an absolute scale that is fixed in time and space. (p. 7)

But as an advocate of "ethnocriticism," Arnold Krupat (1992) argues that by insisting upon establishing these metaphors of the Native circle and the Western ladder, Allen makes it difficult for Native and non-Native writers and critics to break out of the dangerous manichean logic of civilized/savage or lettered/unlettered binary oppositions which have served to subjugate Native culture for centuries:

By imposing totalized stereotypes that insist not merely upon the difference but the opposition of the images invoked, such a reliance threatens to doom Native Americans and Euramericans to repeat the past. If lines and circles can meet only tangentially, a figural or geometric imperative acting, as it were, in the place of fate, then frontier encounters between the peoples submitted to that fate must continue to be marked by misunderstanding and conflict. (p. 42)
Instead of Allen's reliance upon the archetype of the sacred hoop to enable her to identify the significant differences between Native and non-Native literary perspectives, Krupat, in developing his alternative ethnocritical approach to interpreting literary representations of Native culture, has borrowed James Clifford's strategy of situating the reader on the borders between cultures in a position which cannot claim to base its authority on a grand narrative of the essential archetypes of Native literature, but which can act in a border crossing capacity to mediate understanding between divergent cultures:

With Clifford, I believe, of course, that between cultures is where critics must situate themselves, but I see that position as not off center, but, instead, on the borders. The difference is that the border intellectual, or, in my specific terminology, the ethnocritic, ideally, and I trust, in actual material practice, is not engaged in writing or in acting out a tragic or a comic destiny or identity but, rather, with recognizing, accommodating, mediating, or, indeed, even bowing under the weight of sheer difference. (pp. 123-124)

In contrast to Krupat's ethnocritical view of literary criticism as a space in which cultural difference can be explored to the advantage of both Native and non-Native border intellectuals, Paula Gunn Allen accentuates the absolute differences between Native and non-Native cultures in order to protect the interests and values of the Native
community. She believes, for example, that in the English world view the universe is divided "into two parts: the natural and the supernatural" (p. 8). And in the dominant white society people are thought to be separate from both of these worlds. American Indians, on the other hand do not experience such alienation from the natural and spiritual realms, but instead, "every story, every song, every ceremony tells the Indian that each creature is part of a living whole and that all parts of that whole are related to one another by virtue of their participation in the whole of being" (p. 8).

Allen also believes that Native thought is "essentially mystical and psychic in nature" (p. 15). This, therefore, enables Native people to live in harmony with the universe:

Underlying all their complexity, traditional American Indian literatures possess a unity and harmony of symbol, structure and articulation that is peculiar to the American Indian world. This harmony is based on the perceived harmony of the universe and on thousands of years of refinement. This essential sense of unity among all things flows like a clear stream through the songs and stories of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. (p. 21)

As a general description of cultural difference Allen’s argument is very compelling, and, as Cornell (1987) warns readers of Native literature, to fail to take seriously the beliefs and values which First Nations writers wish to convey in their texts, and which Native and non-Native
students need to learn to respect, is to move away from Krupat’s border position and to side once again with European imperialism’s centuries’ old attempt to silence, if it cannot destroy, Native culture. Thus, by offering Krupat’s ethnocritical variation of postcolonial theory as an alternative to the archetypal approaches of Paula Gunn Allen and Agnes Grant, I am not suggesting an opposing methodology so much as a modification to their conception, one which gives the students strategies for deconstructing opposing discourses within literatures by and about Native culture, while it also encourages them to use their imaginations to understand and appreciate to the best of their ability the beliefs and values of Native people. To illustrate how postcolonial readings can move beyond disputes over essences and into ethnocritical interrogations of representations of Native culture, I turn now to some excerpts from my OAC students’ response journal entries about Emma Lee Warrior’s short story, "Compatriots" (1990).

Warrior’s story takes place on a Blackfoot reservation in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and concerns a visit made to the reserve by a German tourist named Hilda. Hilda is shown around the community by a young Native mother, Lucy, who is suffering both from the hardships of poverty and from her husband’s alcohol abuse. Hilda is
anxious to meet her compatriot, Helmut Walking Eagle, who is the German author of the book, *Indian Medicines: A Revival of Ancient Cures and Ceremonies*, and who lives on the reserve with his Blackfoot wife, Elsie, in a "big tepee with a Winnebago beside it" (p. 57). The story is full of wonderful ironies one of the more significant of which is that Hilda is so anxious to experience an authentic Native sun dance, and to meet Helmut, that she completely fails to notice the realities of Native life which are staring her in the face.

One of my OAC students, Erica, had two personal reasons for being particularly interested in the issues raised by Warrior's story. The first is that for many years her parents had run a summer Drama Workshop for Native actors, so, ever since Erica was a small child, she had spent her summer holidays living and playing with Native artists at her home. The second reason for Erica's special interest in Native literature is that her older sister was an adopted Native. It was therefore interesting to see the ways in which Erica's special perspective on colonialism and Native issues helped her to carry out her ethnocritical analysis of Warrior's story. Here is what Erica observed, then, about "Compatriots" by Emma Lee Warrior:
As an outsider, Hilda expected the Natives to be still extremely involved in their religion and she finds it strange that Lucy has never been to a sun dance. She also can't wait to meet Helmut Walking Eagle because, for her, he seems to epitomize what an Indian should be, even though he is not really Native. I think Hilda represents the members of white society who want to keep the Natives whooping, hollering, savages.

Lucy represents a typical Native woman, in a typical Native situation. She does not have all the amenities that we are used to, no running water or washing machine; instead, she has a husband who drinks and stays out all night. And yet Lucy is a very strong, independent person who has her own ideas on religion that she's not afraid to show.

The other thing I noticed is how much of a community everyone is. Family ties are observed, no matter how distant they are, and everyone wants to help everyone, in some small way; this is encouraging, although there is still some in-fighting which is true in every family.

But perhaps the most interesting part of the story is Helmut Walking Eagle, the German turned "Native." To me he epitomizes everything Natives are not. Not only does he practice a mixture of Indian religions he was not raised with, but also, he wrote a book about it for a white audience. Religion is, and always has been, something sacred and special to the Indians, not something they would write such a book about. And to top it all off, Helmut Walking Eagle is very rude to Hilda and to Lucy. This is just the opposite of what all the other Natives have demonstrated in this story which proves you cannot become Native just because you want to be. It's something you're born and raised with, something special.

If we consider to what extent Erica's postcolonial interpretation of the story reveals the level of multicultural literacy which her reading has attained I think it is clear that, had she only been examining the story from an archetypal perspective in an attempt, for example, to understand the significance of Warrior's
references to the sun dance, then she would probably have lost sight of the many important postcolonial issues raised by Warrior. Instead, Erica appreciated the fact, for instance, that Lucy was not interested in the sun dance because she did not have the freedom Helmut Walking Eagle enjoyed to dabble in various Native religious rituals for personal profit. Lucy was too busy experiencing the realities of contemporary Native life by taking care of her relatives and doing favours for her friends to have the time to play at being a Native the way Helmut and Hilda tried to do. Partially because Erica had spent her life growing up with a Native sister and Native friends, but also, I think, because she was sensitized by her reading of the fiction of postcolonial writers such as Chinua Achebe and Alice Walker, she was made aware of the problematic nature of the representations of Native people and culture which Warrior brought together in the conflicting discourses of the interloping compatriots, Helmut and Hilda, on the one hand, and of the oppressed Lucy on the other.

Another student, Sara Jean, like Erica, was also predisposed to perform a very interesting postcolonial interpretation of Warrior's story. Sara Jean's mother is Native and her father is white, so she found herself examining the story's characters from both Native and non-
Native perspectives. Unlike Erica, however, notice that Sara Jean does not fall into the trap of referring to "typical Natives" in "typical Native situations." Instead, Sara Jean claims that, although there are differences between the Native and non-Native perspectives, she realizes that these differences are too complicated to be explained in the stereotypical terms to which Erica resorts:

I really liked this story. From my own experience, it's really true. There is something about whites trying to be Indian which is totally hilarious. It doesn't matter how hard a Native tries, he or she will always be considered a Native first. I don't know if I've really explained this adequately. Because I am half Native and half white, I fit into both worlds. However, I seem to have a deeper affinity with my Native side. A Native perspective is different. Again, I don't think my explanation is very good. I can't explain the difference.

A sun dance, wow. I don't think that Hilda would be able to grasp the spiritual implications of this ceremony. I thought it was interesting that the author did not explain exactly what a sun dance is.

I found the character, Helmut Walking Eagle, to be ridiculous. I found in his character something so arrogant and obnoxious; he made himself an Indian. What a freak! Ha.

I thought the story was admirable in that there was not an attempt to hide the poverty of Indian reserves. Alcoholism, no running water, substance abuse - it's all real life. I am so angered at the way Native people have been treated. I personally think that the treatment of the Natives of Canada is cause for national shame. While all other ethnic groups are benefitting from an all-embracing multicultural policy, Native peoples continue to live in horrible conditions. Davis Inlet is only one example of this. It just makes me sick.
From Sara Jean's perspective it was fitting that the mysteries of the sun dance should not be explained to an outsider such as Hilda. As George Cornell pointed out earlier in this chapter, the oral tradition carries with it "messages and meanings which must not be misconstrued" (1987, p. 177). One of the important indications that students have achieved a degree of multicultural literacy is that they can recognize when an author like Warrior has shown them values and beliefs which are worthy of respect. And they can also recognize harmful effects of the discourses of imperialism exhibited in this case in both their foolishly naive manifestation in the words spoken by Hilda, and in their more oppressive and malignant form in the spoken and written words of Helmut.

Finally, Claire, whose independent study project involved a comparison of representations of Native spirituality in Brian Moore's *Black Robe* (1985) and Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* (1988), examines some of the barriers to intercultural communication which exist between the Native and German characters in "Compatriots":

This story shows the attitudes that whites hold against Natives. However, I feel that all of the characters in the story are unsure of who they are or who they want to be. For example, Hilda wants to gain knowledge about the Indian culture and feels an affinity with Helmut Walking Eagle because they are both German. Sonny, Lucy's uncle, claims, however,
that he could "never turn into a white man." It is obvious that the Germans (and all whites) take Natives for granted. We only want to partake in their culture to experience its enjoyable aspects, but fail to take responsibility for its downfalls. This is indeed our responsibility because we are denying the Natives equal opportunities and the right to unconditionally respect their own culture. Although Sonny claims that he could never become a white man, white culture has been forced upon Natives and forces them to compromise themselves to attempt to be a part of our white, Western world.

It is ironic that Hilda maintains that Helmut Walking Eagle would have something to share with her because this story implies that between cultures, nothing can be guaranteed.

What each of these interpretations of the story illustrates about ethnocritical interpretations as opposed to archetypal criticisms of such Native literature is that the students learned more from interrogating the conflicting discourses within the story than they would have understood from simply identifying the significance of the sun dance, for example, as an essential, archetypal feature of Native society. By recognizing the hypocrisy in Helmut Walking Eagle's appropriation of Native culture, all three students have situated themselves within the story's textual terrain. They do not want to be like Hilda, foolishly looking for some essential mystical communion with the Natives, because they empathize with the realities of Lucy's existence. Both the students' willingness to question their own cultural assumptions while they attempted their ethnocritical border crossings and Emma Lee Warrior's wonderfully instructive
juxtapositions of real and stereotypical representations of Native culture, enabled Erica, Sara Jean, and Claire to perform postcolonial interpretations notable for far more than their aesthetic insights.

If, as the above analyses by my OAC students seem to illustrate, the most important feature of ethnocriticism is the attempts which its practitioners make to move back and forth between the world views of Native and non-Native societies in order to play with the notions of difference held by each group about self and Other, then I would argue that it is necessary for border pedagogues to find ways not only to introduce non-Native students to Native issues through their exposure to First Nations literature but also through contact with Native communities. This, therefore, is what I attempted to accomplish with a grade 12 class of English students in Ontario in March of 1993 when I connected them via computer with the students of Coldwater School at a Reservation near Merritt, British Columbia.

In the February 22, 1993 Maclean's magazine article titled, "Pride and Prejudice: A School Boosts Native Esteem," Hal Quinn reported on the changes that have been taking place in the lives of students on a Salish Native Reserve in British Columbia since the Coldwater Band of the Nkl’kumpx nation opened its school in 1985. As one of the
teachers, Joseph Kalfics, told Quinn, during the school's first year of operation the students' self-esteem was dangerously low:

The intermediate class, the 13- to 15-year-olds, were quiet - there was no expression on their faces. [The students had a] negative image of themselves.... Just five years ago, of 10 students, I might have four or five that could be called 'high risk suicides.' One did commit suicide in 1987.... Now, of 10 students, I might have one, maybe two, that are 'high risk.' Now the students are alive, vibrant - and curious. (p. 45)

There were many reasons why the students were depressed before the school opened. One of the major problems that the children were forced to deal with before the four-portable school was established on the Reserve was that they were attending school in Merritt where white and East Indian adolescents treated them with disdain. And it was not only the teenagers of Merritt who made life difficult for the children of the Coldwater Reserve. As Quinn describes one episode:

Dianne was working behind the counter of the local Dixie Lee restaurant when a middle-aged man and woman entered. They looked at the young waitress disparagingly, then ordered ice-cream cones. Dianne took two cones from the dispenser and wrapped tissue around their stems. The couple told Dianne that they did not want the cones - because she had touched them. Instead, they asked that she serve their ice cream in bowls. Dianne picked up a bowl by its base. The couple insisted that they would select their own bowls - and hold them while she scooped in the ice cream. "I was so mad," [recalled] Dianne. "I walked straight back to the boss’s office and told her that if those
people had something against the color of my skin, I was not going to serve them." (p. 44)

While the above description of the relationship between the students from the Coldwater Reserve and the people of the Merritt community may have been sensationalized for publication in a nationally distributed magazine, it is still clearly the case that the elders of the Coldwater reserve were sufficiently disturbed by the reports of racial discrimination which they had heard from their children to decide to remove them from the Merritt school system. They then constructed their own school on the reserve in order to be able to raise their children in a less hostile environment. The result of this change has been that the students are gaining pride in themselves and in their community. The most recent venture to develop the students esteem, for example, involved their drawing a blueprint for a new school to replace the four portables in which their present school is housed. This new school is to be built in the shape of a siʻstkin which is "a circular, sunken structure with a log base and domed roof, through which extends a ceremonial notched pole....The Coldwater band is committed to constructing a new school, and the students hope that elements of their design will be incorporated into the final structure" (p. 45).
In early March of 1993, just shortly after the *Macleans* article was published, I was fortunate to be able to connect my Ontario grade 12 English students with the Coldwater students through a computer network called Kids from Kanata. The coordinator of the network, Jonn Ord, introduced me to Daryll Vermiere, a computer teacher at the Coldwater school, and arranged for the two of us to be able to send e-mail messages back and forth between our students as frequently as we wished during the months of March, April, May, and June, 1993. Jonn Ord proved to be a very efficient and helpful coordinator and Daryll Vermiere a willing and sensitive teacher so that we were able to accomplish much during the months when our students worked together on various projects which were intended to encourage them to share information on cultural heritage, Native literature, and community life. I had been aware of the benefits for Native and non-Native students of computer-mediated intercultural communications, however, because of an article I had read by Jeffrey Schwartz (1990) even before I began this cooperative venture with Daryll Vermiere.

When Schwartz enabled his Pennsylvanian high school students to take part in computer-mediated communication with the students of Little Wound High School at the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota, he was
interested in "the interactive possibilities of telecommunications for creating a real writing context" (p. 18) in which students from two different cultures could share personal opinions and create emotional bonds. The students were thus encouraged to "express and analyze their stereotypes" (p. 20) and to "see themselves differently in relation to their world" (p. 24). And he found that they, therefore, became highly motivated to question their own stereotypical cultural assumptions in response to the new insights which they received from their e-mail partners.

One of my goals in connecting my grade 12 English class with the Coldwater students, then, was to give my students the opportunity to understand Native literature and culture with the help of the insights of their Native key pals. But there was another dimension to this particular intercultural collaborative effort and that was to teach my students to be considerate of the feelings and educational needs of the Coldwater students. Because, as Joseph Kalfics pointed out, his students had been "at risk" before they moved out of the Merritt school system and had undergone some disturbing experiences at the hands of the white community in Merritt, I wanted their attempts now at reaching out to the white community in Ontario to be both educationally and emotionally rewarding for them.
As Daryll Vermiere's students discussed Native poetry with us, for instance, I wanted them not only to enjoy the poetry for its own sake but also to learn something about themselves in the process. In the early days of the project, therefore, as I thought about my goals for the Coldwater students, I had in mind, for example, the work of Kurt Lucas who attempted to empower his Navajo students by exposing them to postcolonial literature. When Kurt Lucas set out to find a way to provide his Navajo high school students, in Rock Point, Arizona, with reading materials and activities which would enable them to discuss issues such as "racial misunderstandings, inequities of power, and shifts in traditional values and beliefs" (1990, p. 54), he found that postcolonial texts from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific served their needs well. For example, as they read Chinua Achebe's novel, Things Fall Apart (1959), Lucas's students learned how "the arrival of the British in the late 1800s, with their new religion and educational system" (p. 55), altered the lives of the protagonist, Okonkwo, and his people. Lucas observed that this "novel's theme of traditions falling apart and giving way to cultural anarchy holds great appeal for modern students who grow up in a world much different from the one their parents knew as children" (p. 55).
Similarly, when they read together Andre Brink's novel about South African apartheid, *A Dry White Season* (1979), Lucas's Navajo students were "outraged by the novel's theme of human dignity torn asunder, a theme which [stimulated] lengthy discussions about race, human injustice, and collective responsibility for social wrongs" (p. 56). And when they studied James Ngugi's novel, *Weep Not Child* (1964), Lucas's students could easily understand the problems of the main character, Njoroge, as he is forced to choose between "the traditions of his family and the lure of the colonialists' education system" (p. 56). As Lucas pointed out, "the students relate well to [Ngugi's] work, realizing that they too are searching for a balance between their Navajo traditions and the promises of Anglo education" (p. 56).

When my students and I began working with Daryll Vermiere and his students, I realized that if this project was to meet the needs of the Coldwater students and their parents, then, just as Lucas's Navajo students had found opportunities for personal growth through their reading of postcolonial literature, so the Native community had a right to expect this project to be relevant to their interests and concerns. The first step in the collaborative process between my students and the Coldwater students, therefore,
was to find out what they could about each other through the sharing of information about themselves, their schools and their communities. My students had some concerns about the relationship that they were entering into with the Coldwater students as is evident from the following remarks by Ethan:

I will be honest with you, I don't really have much contact with Native people or Native culture. My area is about 99% non-Native. I feel I'm a pretty open-minded person, but I am still a bit nervous. Please understand that all my life I have lived in an area where the rednecks run the government and it seems like the Klu Klux Klan could be just around the corner. I have had experience with other cultures, and I have always accepted people as people, nothing else.

Another one of my students, Karen, in her introductory message broached the topic of race relations in this way:

If you want to know, I like Pepsi more than Coke, but I like Sprite more than 7-UP. I like Pizza Hut pizza, and I also like potatoes. Unfortunately, my family is of an oriental descent, so my parents make me eat white rice a lot.

Being a minority in this area is quite frustrating. There are very few families of a different ethnic origin other than whites in the area that I live in. I have a feeling that some of you who are going to read this are in a similar situation.

From Dianne, the Coldwater student who had been featured in the *Maclean's* article, we received the following introductory message:

Hello. My name is Dianne. I am a grade 12 student. I have lived in Merritt on the Coldwater Reserve all my life. My Mom and Dad are separated. I live with my Mom. I have two sisters, one older and one younger. The older sister is a half sister on my Dad's side. I also have one older brother. I have a nephew and a
niece, and another will be born in July of 93. I am nineteen years old and my birthday is on July 23. I am a Native Indian and I come from the Thompson tribe. I enjoy the outdoors and like taking risks and challenges. For the coming school year I hope to go to college in Kamloops B.C. My dream is to become a lawyer. I'm not exactly sure yet. I think I'll just keep on continuing my education and then decide later what I want to do with myself. I think this is a great way to meet people and get to know their backgrounds.

All my relations,
Dianne

After the initial introductions were finished the students shared information with each other about their schools and communities. In this following passage, for instance, Candice provided us with some information about the Coldwater community:

On the reserve, there are a few big families. A family household usually consists of 2 to 8 children, the parents, and sometimes the grandparents or aunts & uncles. The adults usually all help with the rent.

Families usually hunt and fish during the seasons, and when the salmon come through the Fraser river, the men and some of the girls & ladies go down with dip nets, and gill nets to stock up for the winter. Game is hunted, trout are caught, so that if people get tight for money, they don't have to worry about not eating well. (Not that they don't like their beef and pork!)

The families here all enjoy basically the same things, having fun and spending time with relatives, and most of all, knowing when to separate work from play.

In W.H. New's introduction to his text, Native Writers and Canadian Writing (1990), he discusses the need for non-Native Canadians to "learn to listen" to the words of Native writers such as Daniel David Moses:
Growing up, [Moses] understood that [his family's Mohawk] language constructed reality in one way; as an adult, he came to know that the language surrounding him was asking him to live in another way. Could he reconcile the two sets of expectations? Should he have to? Could he live with both? Would the division between the two make living with both unbearable? This is, [Moses] writes, "a world where Native people, Native traditions assume the existence of a spirit world as a given, a gift, and where non-Native people scoff or keep secrets." Such a division both displays and constructs a hierarchy of power. Scoffing is a refusal to listen, sometimes in case the alternative should prove to be more compelling than the convention accepted as normality. Sometimes people are willing to listen only to the voices that confirm the conventions they already know. The unfamiliar makes them fear. Or makes them condescend. Neither fear nor condescension encourages listening. And no one who does not listen learns to hear. (p. 4)

In the messages which the Coldwater students wrote to us about their community life, cultural values, and educational goals, they were telling my students about a way of life that was difficult to understand from the Anglocentric perspective held by the majority of the class. Thus, my students had to "learn to listen" with respect and open minds to the Coldwater students discussions of ideas and experiences which were difficult for us fully to appreciate and accept. Consider, for example, Mike's description of his grandmother:

My grandma lives just a couple of houses away. I try to visit her as much as I can. Every time I visit her she tells me a bunch of stories about the past. Her stories can go on and on. She has a story about gold being on one of these mountains around here. She hasn't told anyone except me and my mom. She won't tell us which mountain it is though. My mom used to be
the special one to my grandma. My grandma used to take my mom everywhere with her. Once she even took my mom on a mountain and showed her a sacred rock with drawings all over it. It was told that if anyone was to take this rock that they were going to have bad luck for the rest of their lives. I also heard that a couple of guys found an old burial ground and took something from it. As they were going down the mountain they ran off the road and were both killed. My mom also found an old cave with an old bowl with drawings in it. Those were the stories I was told by my grandmother.

Even though some of my grade 12 students may have found it difficult to understand how Mike could believe his grandmother's tales of sacred rocks and haunted burial grounds, by comparing their admiration for their own grandparents' wisdom to Mike's high regard for his grandmother's mystical knowledge, they were better able to acknowledge the value of the Coldwater community's world view. Mike had shared these stories about his grandmother with us as part of an activity involving the reading of a poem by Daniel David Moses titled "Blue Moon" about the death of his grandfather, and another by Louise Bernice Halfe called "Grandmother" (See Appendix A). The students in both schools read these two poems and then used them as starting points for discussing with each other their relationships with their grandparents. We soon discovered interesting similarities and differences between the two communities. While we were in the middle of this poetry
unit, for instance, we received the following message from Daryll Vermiere:

In this project, our students are expressing their thoughts on the poem Grandmother, but most of them are thinking about Grandfather right now. This past Sunday an elder, Sandy Aijam, passed away. Sandy was grandfather or related in some way to many of our students who are participating in this project.

In respect for Mr. Aijam, many of our students have been away from school, and are comforting, or being comforted by other family members. The Coldwater School will close this afternoon so all who choose may attend services.

As an outsider looking in, I have consistently seen this community close shop and stop everything they are doing and pull together in times of sadness or crisis.

My students in Ontario were very moved by the strong feelings of respect which the Coldwater students showed for their elders, and for the stories which they would tell, so they responded, in turn, with carefully considered thoughts about the poems and about their own grandparents. Natalie, for instance, had this to say:

To me the poem, "Grandmother," seems to show the aging of people. It reveals the problems that they encounter physically, and reveals how they spend a great deal of time alone. Regardless of their age, and physical limitations, they still work hard and vigorously.

The poem, "Blue Moon," also reveals the physical limitations that elderly people experience, and the problems that they develop physically. When it is stated, "Perhaps we should keep away from the way the moon's also losing its colour," this shows how many people today are tempted to reject their parents when they are ailing. They view them as a hindrance and a nuisance. I believe it also shows how the objects of nature make us remember elderly people. Various
characteristics that they have come alive when we see these characteristics as well in nature.

Near the end of the three months of our communications with each other we decided to take part in what is termed a "real-time-chat." A third school, in Springdale, Newfoundland, which had recently begun communicating with us, joined in on the chat session as well. Computer chats work rather like telephone conference calls. We selected a time when all three groups of students could be at their computers (which turned out to be 1:00 pm, Ontario time) and then each teacher dialed into the Kids from Kanata electronic bulletin board system to join the chat. In my computer room and in the Newfoundland classroom students viewed the conversation as it was shown on a large screen using a liquid crystal diode display with an overhead projector, while in Coldwater the students did not have this luxury and, instead, gathered around a normal computer screen. During the week leading up to the chat Candice and Dianne, in Coldwater, suggested guidelines for the discussion in which they listed a number of questions which we might consider about racism, jobs, education, culture, and the standard of living. Concerning racism they asked us, "Is racism an issue in your school or community? Between which cultures is there the most conflict? How do you respond when you see racism?"
While the chat which took place, in itself, was not very interesting, the discussions about racism which subsequently developed in my classroom as a result of the chat session proved to be most worthwhile (To read a transcript of an excerpt from the chat, please see Appendix B). After the session Daryll and I wrote several messages to each in which we came to the conclusion that one of the most significant effects for the students of having communicated with each other in this session and over the previous three months was that they not only "learned to listen" carefully to the voices of their distant keypals, but, especially in the case of my students, they also learned to listen carefully for the first time to people in their own class whom they thought they had "known" for years.

At a point late in the session the Coldwater students asked us specifically whether or not racism was a problem in our school. While most of the white students in the class said amongst themselves that it was not a problem, Philana, who was at the keyboard (and who is half-African-Canadian) claimed that racism definitely was a problem for her. Then Karen and Sam (who are Chinese), and Pete (who is Inuit) agreed with Philana, and, suddenly, nobody was looking at the screen because a debate about racism in our school was
in full flight. Some of the more vocal members of the class argued that Karen and Philana were exaggerating the extent of the problem, but they refused to back down from their position. Because the period was drawing to a close I suggested that we pick up the discussion at the beginning of the next class and we left the room wondering just what had happened to us all.

After school that day, Karen and I talked about the situation for almost an hour. Then she and Philana spent that evening preparing to lead a class discussion the next day about the issue. When they arrived for class they said that they were ready to speak their minds with the help of some of their friends who had already agreed with them that racism is a problem in our community. We began by discussing the situations of the Jamaican and Mexican migrant labourers who worked in the apple orchards of our community each autumn. Then we moved on to discuss racial problems within the school itself. Once the intense, hour-long discussion was well underway, Karen decided to described for her peers the time in grade 9 when a group of football players threw stones at her. Then she told them that when some of the elementary school children, where she works as a teaching assistant, made racist remarks their teacher said nothing to them and told Karen to ignore the
racist slurs. After hearing what the people of colour in the class had to say, the white students were, I think, genuinely moved and surprised by what they had heard about racism in the school and community. After the discussion many students sought out Philana to discuss the issue with her, and she said that she was pleased to see that people really did seem to care.

What I think these experiences in "learning to listen" illustrate is that students from Ontario and Coldwater did have valuable information to share with each other, information which helped members of both groups to think about who they are and to be proud of how they have learned to cope with their problems. Whether the task was investigating the home and school situations of teenagers in a distant community, understanding how members of another culture relate to their elders and their heritage, or questioning their personal views of racial difference, the students seemed to develop new and richer understandings of their key pals as a result of the border crossings attempted by both groups. From my perspective, in hoping to use literature and collaborative writing projects to spark student awareness of such postcolonial matters as racism and the oral tradition, the role that I saw the poetry by Daniel David Moses and Louise Bernice Halfe serving was not so much
to develop the students' skills as literary aesthetes as it was to encourage them to consider how they felt about their cultural beliefs and about their relationships to their elders. While the students did discuss the symbolic significance of relating the Native grandparents to images of the moon and the bear, the acquisition of knowledge about archetypal patterns in the poetry was not as important in this case as was the students' increased understanding of each other's cultures and communities through their collaborative intercultural responses to the literature and through the discussions which they carried on together about issues of importance to them. Thus, I conclude that postcolonialism's border crossing strategies for reading both literary and socio-cultural texts is superior to the archetypal conception at enabling students to understand each other's cultural similarities and differences and at helping the students to learn to listen to one another with care and respect.

In this chapter, then, I have deconstructed both aesthetic universalist (Frye) and metaphysical essentialist (Grant and Allen) notions of the archetypal conception of the multicultural literature curriculum by contrasting them with such postcolonial conceptions as Arnold Krupat's ethnocritical approach to the study of Native literature.
As well, I have applied the postcolonial notions of "learning to listen" and "border crossing" to my own teaching of Native short stories and poems in senior high school English classes. And I have concluded that the most important challenge in the teaching of Native cultures' sacred archetypal tales is not to determine how such myths rank in terms of aesthetic value when compared with the tales of other cultures, but to find methods, such as the questioning of dominant culture, racist stereotypes and the intercultural communication of community values, to develop students' respect for the beliefs which are contained within Native cultural texts, both oral and written.8

Notes

1. Since 1985 Agnes Grant has also published articles on "Content in Native Literature Programs" (1986b), "Stereotyping of Native People in Literature" (1988), "Contemporary Native Women's Voices in Literature" (1990a), and "Voices of Native People in Classroom Literature" (1991), while at the same time she has edited a very useful textbook, Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Native Canadian Literature (1990b).

2. Grant describes Jung's theory of archetypes as follows: "Archetypes are referred to as psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same types, experiences which have happened, not to the individual but to his ancestors. The results of his experiences form the basis of structural brain patterns which are passed on as inherited memory. These stories are deeply imbedded in the memory of a people; they help identify and clarify cultural patterns. This holds true for all cultures. Primordial archetypes are those manifested in the early stages of human consciousness; that is, those that are created when society is in a
'primitive' state. The way in which these archetypes are interpreted into symbols and are understood form the various cultures (1986a, p. 19).

3. Jung goes on to say that archetypes "are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world - even where transmission by direct descent or 'cross fertilization' through migration must be ruled out" (1964, p. 58). They occupy in his system of thought, therefore, the same place as ideal forms occupy in Plato's. We cannot know the essence of archetypes or ideal forms directly, but we can only infer their presence through (re)presentations of them in myths, dreams, and rituals.

4. The following selections by and about Natives are included in the Wish and Nightmare anthology: "Lullaby of the Iroquois" (p. 16), "Manerathiaik's Song" (p. 30), "Old Man and the Beginning of the World" (p. 65), "The Bear Man" (p. 82), "Dance Mad" (p. 153), "Training in Bravery" (p. 358). Stories in the anthology which are about Natives but written by white authors include "Hiawatha's Fasting" (p. 173) and "A Question of Blood" (p. 246).

5. John Willinsky has noted that there are other problems with the textbook, Wish and Nightmare, and that Frye is not entirely to blame for an anthology which employs a rather more reductive form of archetypal criticism than Frye, himself, ever practised. "The textbook's presentation of archetypal criticism as the exclusive and necessary perspective in understanding literature's revelation is best set within Frye's own scholarship/teaching perspective. In the Anatomy of Criticism (1957), he aligns himself with the principle of what he terms polysemous meaning, which is generated by a variety of critical lenses; it is 'the way of scholarship,' he points out, as opposed to the pursuit of one critical method to the exclusion of the others, which is 'the way of pedantry' (p. 72)" (Willinsky, 1991, p. 162).

6. I am indebted to Sheryl Little for sharing with me her grade 11 Native Literature Curriculum Outline for a course which she plans to begin teaching to a mixture of Six Nations Native students and non-Native students in February of 1994. Of particular interest in Little's course is the way in which she plans to handle the difficult problem of teaching the oral tradition. Little says in her outline that, besides having the students perform works from the oral tradition which she has found in anthologies by Daniel David Moses and Penny Petrone, her students will also "be
encouraged to research their own oral stories from elders and relatives. [As well] guest speakers will be invited in from the neighbouring reserve communities." She plans, for instance, to invite Native writer Richard Greene to work with her students while they research, write, and dramatize their own oral stories. Another indication of the strong link which her course provides between the Native community and the school system is that before Little will be allowed to teach the course a Community Advisory Panel comprised of Native parents has been granted the power to approve or reject Little's proposed course.

7. Some of the other questions raised by Candice and Dianne were contained in the following message to us:

   Issues of Concern
   We have listed a few issues and some questions. We also will be asking more questions on these and more topics during our chat on June 1. We brought together a short document on them.

1) Jobs/Education
   Are there enough jobs available for students?
   Do you feel that your school system is properly educating you to go out into the work force?

2) Culture
   Are there things about your culture you are still learning?
   What is your culture?
   What kinds of things do you do in everyday life that are part of your culture?

3) Standard of Living
   Do you expect to get a job once you graduate?
   What do you consider to be an acceptable standard living?
   Is individual housing a problem?
   How many graduates tend to go on your own, or do you stay at home?
   The issues you brought up about teenage problems are also a concern to us: drinking, drop outs, pregnancy, drug abuse, suicide, and aids.

8. For teachers who wish to develop their own intercultural sensitivity to Native issues by communicating with Native people across North America, I highly recommend that they join the Internet computer conference known as "soc.culture.native" which is moderated by Michael Wilson at Cornell University. Although many teachers do not yet have access to Internet communications, this, I believe, will soon change. For instance, in Ontario there are more than
2,000 teachers connected to the Internet through an organization called the Electronic Village. This organization is funded in part by the Ontario Teachers Federation, so high school teachers like myself have become involved in international computer communications at no cost to themselves or to their schools.

Michael Wilson's Internet address is idoy@crux1.cit.cornell.edu, and teachers who wish to join the conference need simply contact him to find out how to become participants in this fascinating and very active forum. Some of the topics for discussion on soc.culture.native, for example, are "Spirituality and the World," "What Indian Activism Means to Me," and "Rationalism and Racism."
Chapter 5
The Feminist Conception

Despite the fact that the international feminist movement during the past thirty years, through its powerful indictment of patriarchal oppression within governments and judicial systems, has made steady, if often small, gains in bringing about improved living circumstances for women around the world, mainstream feminist theory and pedagogy in North America and Europe has tended to consider the "universal" (i.e., Eurocentric) features of women's experiences as the ones most worthy of discussion in literary criticism and in high school English courses on international women's literature. Thus, feminist interpretations of multicultural literature have often overlooked the differences which exist between the lives of white women and women of colour. And local, cultural differences in women's experiences have usually been ignored in favour of discovering how literary works reflect the "universal" problems faced by a global sisterhood. Focussing upon autobiographical fiction by Chinese and Chinese-American women, therefore, I illustrate in this chapter how postcolonial interpretations of representations of the women in these works can provide high school students with more complex and heterogeneous constructions
of Chinese women than are available in traditional feminist interpretations of them.

I concentrate upon autobiographical fiction here because it affords, as well, a good opportunity to discuss how notions of self, Other, and place are fashioned within autobiographical texts and how students can learn to use their deconstructions of professional autobiography to teach themselves more about their own attempts to write about themselves and about their relationships to other people and cultures. Where mainstream feminists such as literary theorist, Sidonie Smith (1987), recognize that autobiography can serve as an important vehicle for deconstructing and reconstructing definitions of the gendered self, postcolonial critics such as Lisa Lowe (1991) attempt, as well, to play with representations of racial and cultural difference in their analyses of the autobiographical fiction of a Maxine Hong Kingston or an Amy Tan.

Feminism is obviously not a monolithic and unified theory. Many feminists, in fact, believe their theoretical stance to be pluralistic and to embrace multiple perspectives. My purpose in designating the feminist conception of the multicultural literature curriculum, then, is not so much to force closure upon the definition
of feminism as it is to look for some of the more pervasive concerns of feminist approaches to literary study which would differentiate this conception from the others I am analysing in this dissertation.

Later in the chapter I provide two examples of high school teachers' feminist conceptions of their multicultural literature curricula so that I may ground my remarks in a workable set of examples, but before doing that I wish to preface this analysis with some general discussion about what I believe feminism to mean for my purposes here. Cheryl Torsney's metaphor of "the quilt" provides a useful image for the way in which various schools fit together to form a general feminist approach to the study of literature. Torsney describes the feminist critical quilt as follows:

Behind the top is the batting, that which gives the quilt its utilitarian substance, the insulating material that each piece of the top shares in common with each other piece: the conviction that one can read, write, and interpret as a woman. The pieced top, however, is that which presents the alternatives. The blocks may vary as to pattern or fabric, in structure and in texture. Not every block need be stitched by a woman, nor are contiguous blocks necessarily complementary. Yet even in its theoretical difference, each block is stitched to sister blocks. They share and make a space, creating the feminist critical quilt, offering myriad alternatives to androcentric criticism. So, instead of the metaphor, for example, of the well-wrought urn in which each element reinforces the value of the single artifact, feminist criticism offers us a
critical quilt of plurality, strong and varied, pieced in community. (1989, p. 180)

Even Elaine Showalter (1990), who according to Sydney Janet Kaplan (1985) has been a major advocate for a monolithic theory of feminism, has provided her own brief classification of some of the major patches of this quilt as she distinguishes, for instance, between the feminisms of the United States, England, France, and West Germany. Showalter has argued that each of these countries have worked out the following distinct versions of feminism. In the United States African-American criticism, poststructuralism and gender theory have all become part of mainstream feminist theory so that, for example, black feminist theory has developed in parallel with other modes of feminist inquiry. In England feminist reading groups of the 1970s were being influenced by the work of European Marxist theorists such as Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, and Walter Benjamin. However, Showalter reports that "work on race and gender [was] only beginning to appear in the late 1980s" (1990, p. 184). In France, the writings of Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva, though "different in their orientation and styles" (p. 185), were devoted to employing psychoanalysis, semiotics, and deconstruction to critique western phallocentric thinking in an attempt to show how Western culture is fundamentally
phallogocentric and how therefore its symbolic discourse is oppressive to women. Curiously though, while feminist studies in the United States have led to many challenges and changes to the traditional canon of literary works, in France, there has been very little work produced on woman writers. German feminist criticism has been particularly influenced by the German hermeneutics, the Frankfurt School and reader-response theory. And its political concerns have been primarily with the economics of housework and motherhood as well as with ecology and peace (p. 186).

Despite these variations in the feminist quilt which Showalter has highlighted, she does observe the following common concerns which transcend national boundaries. Throughout Europe and the United States feminists have argued that there was a discernible female aesthetic:

Women's writing expressed a distinct female consciousness, and constituted a coherent literary tradition; and argued that feminist critics should reject the misogynistic formulas of patriarchal literary thought to forge a criticism of their own. The female aesthetic proposed the empowerment of the common woman reader, and the celebration of an intuitive female critical consciousness in the interpretation of women's texts, a consciousness often seen as literally or metaphorically lesbian. (p. 187)

The female aesthetic provided women with a utopian vision and it generated a great deal of autobiographical and confessional feminist literature, especially in
Germany, but as Showalter observes, it suffered from some serious weaknesses as well:

In so far as the female aesthetic suggested that only women were qualified to read women's texts, feminist criticism ran the risk of ghettoization. Moreover, the hypothesis of the female imagination was open to charges of essentialism and racism; the female imagination seemed also to be white. (p. 188)

In order to avoid some of the weaknesses of the female aesthetic movement Showalter contributed to the formation of the gynocriticism movement in the 1980s. Two important assumptions of this approach to feminist literary criticism are: 1) that all literature is marked by gender and 2) that women's writing is always 'bitextual' and therefore in dialogue with both masculine and feminine literary traditions. An important feature of gynocriticism is that "it does not prescribe a particular mode of textual analysis, and has made extensive use of poststructuralist insights, especially those having to do with the signification of the feminine" (p. 191).

One of poststructuralisms critical strategies is to question how subjectivity is constructed. Thus gynocritics are forced to deal with the following kinds of questions: "If 'woman' is an essentialist concept, are there still women? How can we speak about 'women' without ignoring the differences between them? And if there are no women to
speak for, why do we need feminist criticism?" (Showalter, pp. 195-196). But, as Showalter observes, such questions need not be paralysing. For strategic reasons it is necessary to retain a notion of female subjective agency, and so she argues that we should consider the female subject to possess a necessarily heterogeneous and often self-contradictory identity made up of representations of gender, race, and class. An example of such strategic female subjectivity is suggested by bell hooks in her observations about radical black subjectivity:

The ground we stand on is shifting, fragile and unstable. We are avant-garde only to the extent that we eschew essentialist notions of identity, and fashion selves that emerge from the meeting of diverse epistemologies, habits of being, concrete class locations, and radical political commitments. (1990, p. 19)

However, even though, as hooks shows us, postcolonial feminism has the potential to provide students of multicultural literature with a more heterogeneous notion of subjectivity than does mainstream feminism, the danger in privileging the former over the latter, as I do in the remainder of this chapter, is that it then becomes quite easy to fall into the trap of "authenticity" in which "only a black woman can speak for a black; only a postcolonial subcontinental feminist can adequately represent the lived experience of that culture" (Suleri, 1992, p. 760).1 It is
certainly not the goal of the postcolonial curriculum conception to limit the interpretations of multicultural literature to those produced by a few "authentic" women of colour, nor simplistically to elevate the racially female voice so that it becomes a metaphor for "the good."

Rather, two important goals of the postcolonial alternative to mainstream feminist literary critical approaches are to include many voices in the discourse community and to encourage students to strive for complex interpretations. These goals cannot be achieved simply by asking students to think like women of colour. Nor can they be achieved by directing students to apply white poststructural feminist moves to the reading of Other cultures. Instead, students need to be shown how postcolonial feminists make special uses of poststructural reading strategies, and they need, as well, to see how these interpretive strategies can differ markedly from mainstream feminists' attempts to understand the situations of woman of colour. As Gayatri Spivak succinctly states her solution to the problems of mainstream feminist, Eurocentric (mis)interpretations of the "Other," "in order to learn enough about Third World women and to develop a different readership, the immense heterogeneity of the field must be appreciated, and the
First World feminist must learn to stop feeling privileged as a woman" (1988a, p. 136).

Several interesting differences between Eurocentric and postcolonial feminist interpretations of Asian culture can be seen in the reactions by postcolonial theorists, Lisa Lowe (1991a), Gayatri Spivak (1988), and Rey Chow (1991), to Julia Kristeva's French feminist interpretation of the Chinese in her text, About Chinese Women (1977). As Lisa Lowe points out, Kristeva's narrative attempt to prove that Chinese matriarchy is an antecedent of twentieth-century revolutionary society "leaps quickly and simply across two thousand years of Chinese history to propose that, because of China's matriarchal heritage, the communist politics of the People's Republic hold powerful lessons for the French Left in the 1970s" (1991a, p. 147). The result, according to Lowe, of Kristeva's grand, and poorly substantiated, historical generalizations is that she "erases the situations of women in contemporary China, the complex interrelation of certain qualified freedoms with remnants of centuries of sexual discrimination and oppression in family, professional, and political life" (1991a, p. 152).

One of Gayatri Spivak's concerns with the analyses in About Chinese Women is that, in Kristeva's interpretations
of manuals on the "Art of the Bedchamber" which date from the first century A.D., and in her reading of The Dream of the Red Pavilion, a novel of the Qing Dynasty, she makes "no attempt at textual analysis, not even in translation" (1988, p. 139).

Rey Chow identifies yet another problem with Kristeva's interpretation of Chinese women:

Even though Kristeva sees China in an interesting and, indeed, 'sympathetic' way, there is nothing in her arguments as such that cannot be said without 'China.' What she proposes is not so much learning a lesson from a different culture as a different method of reading from within the West. For, what is claimed to be 'unique' to China is simply understood as the 'negative' or 'repressed' side of Western discourse. (1991, p. 7)

Chow believes that one way in which Kristeva and other feminists can avoid this Orientalist mistake of reading China as an absolute "other" of the West is to take seriously Kristeva's self-deprecating acknowledgement that she is involved in a speculative and culture-bound project, and, thus, to ask "whether the notion that China is absolutely 'other' and unknowable is not itself problematic" (p. 8).

Kristeva's Orientalist move, in stereotyping all Chinese women as revolutionary in order to show their special connection with a matriarchal past, requires that she systematically ignore any evidence of heterogeneity
within Chinese culture. Thus, in the opening pages of her text we find her representing the Chinese metonymically as a collection of "calm...piercing...unaggressive...eyes...on the far side of the abyss of time and space" (1977, p. 11). She then says that she wants "to put into relief...one single aspect of that which creates the abyss between [her] and the villagers of Huxian: Chinese women, the Chinese family, their tradition, their present revolution" (p. 13). But, of course, not all women in 1970s China were quite as revolutionary as Kristeva wished to represent them. In fact, as has become painfully clear since the activities of the Red Guard were published in the early 1980s in such books as Liang Heng's Son of the Revolution (1983), during the Cultural Revolution many Chinese women were not at all good Maoists.2

Rey Chow identifies many other examples in Kristeva's text which illustrate how she views Chinese women stereotypically because her Eurocentric feminist theory refuses to acknowledge that there are many different strands of "otherness" in China besides her revolutionary version:

In glorifying the "subversive" and "liberating" impact Taoism has on Chinese society, Kristeva, like many Westerners who turn to the "East" for spiritual guidance, must leave aside the consideration that perhaps it is exactly Taoism's equation of the female
principle with "silence" and "negativity" that traditionally allows its coexistence and collaboration with Confusianism's misogyny. In a culture constructed upon the complicity between these master systems, Chinese women not only are oppressed but also would support their own oppression through the feelings of spiritual resignation that are dispersed throughout Chinese society on a mundane basis. Kristeva is told this bitter truth by a Chinese woman whom she interviews, but, intent on her own "materialist" reading of China, she does not want to believe it.... About Chinese Women repeats, in spite of itself, the historical tradition in which China has been thought of in terms of an "eternal standstill" since the eighteenth century. By giving the tradition a new reading, Kristeva espouses it again, this time from a feminized, negativized perspective. (1991, p. 9)

Kristeva's analysis, therefore, tends to essentialize and stereotype women in the service of a Eurocentric international feminism. As I proceed now to analyse how teachers have attempted to employ the feminist conception of the multicultural literature curriculum, I will be arguing that the postcolonial conception can help teachers and students to avoid Kristeva's international feminist tendency to stereotype Chinese women.

In her article, "Feminizing the English Curriculum: An International Perspective" (1989), Dr. Bonnie M. Davis describes a course which she teaches to senior high school students in St. Louis, Missouri, that is centred around a unit comprised of works written by women from "non-Western" countries. Three of these writers, for instance, are Nadine Gordimer of South Africa, Kamala Markandaya of
India, and Yuan-tsung Chen of China. One of the goals of her course is to "inundate [her] students with writings by and about women" (p. 45). In another unit of the same course her students read works of fiction by "African-American authors as well as Hispanic, Asian, and Native-American women authors" (p.48) while at the same time they study critical works such as Barbara Christian's Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers (1985). The course ends with the presentation of position papers on such contemporary issues as date-rape, pornography, and the African-American's role in society.

It is clear from Davis's description of her course that she wants the young men and women in her classes to recognize, not only that there are many fine contemporary women writers around the world, but also that by reading their works students can come to see women's issues from an international perspective thus causing them to reconsider both patriarchal values and American ethnocentrism.

Davis's students are required to make several presentations to the class during the course about the literary works which they are studying. To prepare for these presentations they also read background information on demographics and women's status in society from a wide variety of sources such as Robin Morgan's Sisterhood Is
Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology (1984). Davis finds that the student-centred pedagogy which she employs throughout the course and the feminist theory which her students are encouraged to use in their analyses help both to empower the young women (by convincing them that they are part of a sisterhood which is global in its dimensions) and to inform the young men (by presenting them with a body of literature which they had previously tended to overlook as uninteresting and unimportant to them).

At the heart of Davis's course is her strong belief that students should reconsider the significance of their roles both as members of a Western country and as men or women. Although other issues such as racial and colonial oppression are also definitely a part of Davis's course, her main priority is to raise the feminist consciousness of her students. Davis's feminist conception of the multicultural literature curriculum is certainly noteworthy for the way in which it reconstructs the high school literary canon and for the methods it employs to give her students opportunities to see the world through women's eyes. However, her second goal of overcoming the students' American ethnocentrism could prove to be problematic if the feminist "visors" (p. 45) which she encourages her students
to wear are not sufficiently modified to allow for the variations in theory which women of colour such as Barbara Christian have brought to feminist discourse especially where definitions of self and Other are concerned.

In the teaching of multicultural literature how students define themselves and how they respond to the writing of women from other cultures will be determined, in part, by how teachers choose to explain the notion of autobiography. Davis encourages her students, as part of their independent research, to read autobiographical materials by the women writers they are studying. But just how they are to make use of these materials she does not explain. This omission is an important one to consider because the question of how women use autobiography and autobiographical fiction to define themselves in the struggle against patriarchal domination has been answered differently by different feminists. If students are to deconstruct and reconstruct their notions of who women are and how women should resist patriarchal oppression, then, I argue, they should be made aware of the different ways in which novelists and theorists have chosen to represent women. Students need this awareness in order to become more adept at producing their own self-inscriptions and feminist interpretations. And if, at the center of both
traditional feminist definitions of women and recent modifications to these definitions offered by women of colour, there are various, sometimes conflicting, notions of how to represent women in fiction and criticism, then it is necessary to expose students to discrepancies among these notions so that they can choose for themselves the methods of representation which they wish to employ in their responses to multicultural texts by and about women.

For example, one of Davis's students, Jennifer, found the novel, The Dragon's Village (1985), by Yuan-tsung Chen to be particularly interesting because of its treatment of the theme of a Chinese woman's quest for the self. "The main character, advancing to adulthood, left her financially and emotionally secure family to help peasants readjust to the effects of communism. In the process she answered profound questions such as 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?" (p. 47). At this stage, if Davis were then to ask Jennifer to report on how Chen's character was fashioned out of the various political, cultural, social, economic, and feminist discourses which intersect to produce the text, The Dragon's Village, it is not likely that her student would possess the necessary knowledge to write an interesting and complex interpretation. Yet how Chen's main character answered her questions of identity
and what effect the character's answers then had upon Jennifer's view of Chinese women cannot be adequately discussed if the writer's and student's methods of self-construction are not considered within the appropriate intertextual terrain. In other words, although there is a time, during an initial reading of the novel, when Jennifer should experience the pleasure of meeting, woman-to-woman, with Chen's character as if that fictive construct were a living human being, Jennifer's subsequent readings of the text should enable her to see how this character has been crafted out of a range of tropes, myths, and conventions. The purpose would not be to write an aesthetic appreciation of Chen's style (although there is no reason why the student should avoid evaluating the novel's stylistic beauty if she so wished) but to search for indications in the text of its ideological underpinnings.

If we apply here the first criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of multicultural literature curriculum conceptions, it should become clear just how Davis's feminist approach could be improved through some postcolonial modifications. To determine, for instance, the extent to which Jennifer's critique of the novel has achieved complexity and sophistication we should ask: how well does Davis's feminist curricular approach help her
student to problematize the representations of self, place, and Other which she encounters in her text?

Clearly, from a postcolonial feminist perspective Jennifer would have many more questions to consider about the Chinese woman in *The Dragon's Village* than international feminism's Eurocentric perspective provides. Consider the following postcolonial questions which Jennifer might have asked, over and above those which she has already employed while using Davis's mainstream feminist approach. If Chen's character achieved a certain freedom by leaving her family, what clues are there in the way her family is described, and in the way its members talk to each other, that Chen is choosing one definition of family relations over others? Are the values and rhetorical patterns associated with the family members indicative of capitalist, Confucian, patriarchal, or Christian ideologies? Is Chen actively rejecting any of these ideologies or simply showing a preference for others to which her character is attracted? Does Jennifer share Chen's ideological position? If not, then where does she feel that the novel's assumptions need to be critiqued? To what extent are the differences between Jennifer and Chen attributable to differences in their cultural or political identities? Should Jennifer's cultural and political
assumptions be reassessed by her in attempting her interpretation of the novel?

What these questions illustrate, then, is that, when feminist re-writing of the self takes place in the context of the multicultural literature classroom, women's issues become complicated by other factors. In the autobiographical fiction of some Chinese-American writers, for example, feminists are discovering some interesting conflicts and interconnections between issues of sexual and racial difference which call into question traditional feminist notions of essential and universal experiences, characteristics, and problems shared by women throughout the world.

I have briefly analysed Bonnie Davis's feminist multicultural literature curriculum with the intention of establishing that at the centre of her conception is the issue of how works written by and about women could serve as the starting point for students investigations into women's roles around the world. I have then argued that notions of self and Other are constructed out of a variety of intersecting discourses, and that traditional, Eurocentric feminist ideology by itself does not take into account modifications to our notions of women's issues that arise when, for instance, questions of racial difference
are added to the discussion. To explain further how traditional feminist approaches to teaching multicultural literature tend to miss opportunities to recognize some of the other important features of these texts I now briefly discuss another high school teacher's attempt to introduce her students to feminist readings of multicultural literature.

Dr. Nancy Traubitz (1991), who teaches a contemporary multicultural literature course to senior high school English students in Silver Spring, Maryland, has developed a unit around Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiographical novel, *The Woman Warrior* (1976), in which she invites her students to consider the novel from several different perspectives. First of all she wishes them to use it as a starting point for their discussions of such women's issues as: 1) how women are systematically handicapped by society's requirement that they be less assertive than men, 2) how women's work is less valued in our society than is men's, and 3) how older women and unattractive women are less valued in society, than are young, beautiful women. Second, she provides her students with questions on each chapter which are intended to guide them in their writing of literary response journals. For example, these questions carefully draw her students' attention to
important connections between two of Maxine's aunts who appear in different and otherwise apparently unrelated chapters. These questions also encourage students to play with some of the conventions of the Chinese story-telling tradition by first focusing their attention upon Kingston's uses of the talk-story techniques in her writing and then by asking the students to think about how they might create a talk-story about two or three experiences from their own lives. Third, she attempts, through a series of lectures on Chinese history, art, poetry, mythology, and geography, to provide a cultural context for Kingston's novel. Fourth, she requires her students to read popular contemporary novels written by and about a woman, and then to write an essay in which they consider to what extent the protagonists of their novels are "woman warriors."

Like Bonnie Davis, Nancy Traubitz is primarily interested in using this literary work as a source for interesting perspectives on women's issues. She also wants to engage her students on a personal level through the writing of response journals and through the independent reading assignment. And she sees potential for the autobiographical form as an entry point for her students to consider the significance of women's issues and experiences to their own lives. But, at the same time, Traubitz's
concentration upon feminist interpretive strategies raises for me two questions: 1) How should autobiography be employed in the feminist multicultural literature curriculum? and 2) How are contemporary women of colour making adjustments to the "visors" with which the feminist multicultural literature curriculum requires students to read both literary works and the world?

In answer to the first question I argue that, while Traubitz's unit on *The Woman Warrior* provides a valuable and impressive starting point for enabling her students to see themselves and Chinese women in new ways, she needs to give them a more sophisticated notion of how autobiography works if they are to understand the complex nature of Kingston's rhetorical strategies and if they are to write talk-stories about their own lives which consciously play with the conventions of autobiography in productive ways. In answer to the second question I argue that, as well as exposing her students to a broad body of writing about China and the Chinese, if Traubitz were to introduce them to interpretations of the novel by Chinese-American women critics, then her admirable attempt to contextualize the reading of *The Woman Warrior* could have the added advantage of enabling her students to understand how the feminist theories which they are using to interpret the novel can
themselves be criticized from the perspective of the Chinese-woman-as-Other.

To prepare my own OAC students for their discussions about Chapter 1 of The Woman Warrior, therefore, I provided them with a variety of interpretations by mainstream and Chinese-American feminist critics. To introduce them to a complex notion of Kingston's autobiographical writing technique, for instance, I discussed with them Sidonie Smith's views on autobiography which she develops in the chapter, "Maxine Hong Kingston's Woman Warrior" from her book, A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation (1987). Smith argues, for example, that all autobiographies are fictive in that the writer "constantly tells 'a' story rather than 'the' story, and tells it 'this' way rather than 'that' way" (Smith, 1987, p. 46). Because every life contains many different discourses, Smith notes, the autobiographer's task is problematic. "The very language she uses to name herself is simultaneously empowering and vitiating since words cannot capture the full sense of being and narratives explode in multiple directions" (p. 46). The "truthfulness" of autobiography, then, is found "not so much in the correspondence between word and past, but in the imbrication of various autobiographical intentions into
form - memoir, apology, confession" (p. 46). The forms and discourses at her disposal, however, tend to reproduce "patrilineage and its ideologies of gender" (p. 44) unless the woman autobiographer consciously chooses to break with the traditional myths, metaphors, cultural expectations, and systems of interpretation which constitute the tradition of fictive stories of selfhood.

As Smith observes, Maxine Hong Kingston effects such a break with traditional autobiographical technique in her writing of The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1976):

Recognizing the inextricable relationship between an individual's sense of 'self' and the community's stories of selfhood, Kingston self-consciously reads herself into existence through the stories her culture tells about women. Using autobiography to create identity, she breaks down the hegemony of formal 'autobiography' and breaks out of the silence that has bound her culturally to discover a resonant voice of her own. (p. 151)

Smith then proceeds to perform her mainstream feminist interpretation of Chapter 1, "No Name Woman," by pointing out that Kingston's mother's story about the suicide of Maxine's aunt back in China serves to contextualize the girl's transition into womanhood. Maxine's aunt is supposed to have given birth to a bastard daughter and then thrown the daughter and herself down the family well. On one level, then, the story is a cautionary tale to convince
the young Maxine that she should refrain from sexual intercourse outside of marriage to avoid bringing shame and tragedy to herself and her family. In Smith's feminist interpretation she sees the aunt's body while alive as a "potential source of disruption and disintegration in the community...[because] it may entertain strangers and thus introduce illegitimate children and an alternative geneology into the order" (Smith, 1987, 153). One of my students, Chad, had no difficulty in elaborating the details of this mainstream feminist interpretation of the chapter as the following excerpt from his response journals illustrates:

Depending on whether you consider Maxine's "aunt" as a woman guilty of adultery or a victim of rape she can be viewed as either a martyr or a tragic victim. In either case most readers would find the treatment of the aunt to be appalling. Kingston states in regard to her aunt's baby that it must have been a girl because if it was born a male the mother probably would not have killed it because it would be treated better than would a girl. This is also shown in the fact that the aunt would not disclose the name of the father of her baby. The Chinese male-dominated society directly relates to the great sense of family honour in China.

In a society where male babies are prized over female babies, so that the family name can be continued, the males dominate the family and family pride is linked to having a male baby. Family pride is shown at the very beginning of the story when Kingston's mother is telling her about how the father's family all stand together in the house while it is being destroyed around them by the villagers.
But, while both Smith and Chad have made astute feminist critiques of Kingston's autobiographical narrative technique (as when Chad recognizes, for instance, that there are at least two possible interpretations of what happened to the aunt which the story's unusual method of narration yields), and while they both have clearly identified Kingston's subversive representations of the evils of patriarchal oppression in China, like Kristeva, Smith and Chad have also interpreted Chinese culture stereotypically, as if the story were written only to condemn the global patriarchal oppression of women. In order to appreciate the particular Chinese-American problems raised by Chapter 1 of *Woman Warrior*, therefore, it was necessary for my students, as well, after having enjoyed the opportunity to develop their own first impressions of the story, to encounter, upon a second reading of it, some interpretations of Kingston's tale by Chinese-American critics. These interpretations were given to the students in manageable paragraph excerpts. They then discussed amongst themselves their reactions to these professional critics' interpretations, relying upon the teacher only occasionally for clarification of the critics' technical terminology.
As Lisa Lowe has observed about interpretations of the novel by Chinese-Americans there have been some interesting differences of opinion concerning Kingston's goals and skill in crafting her tale. Because Kingston's book is, according to Lowe, "virtually the only 'canonized' piece of Asian American literature" (Lowe, 1991b, p. 33) it is considered by many critics such as Frank Chin and Benjamin Tong to carry the burden of representing Chinese culture to American readers. In that capacity these men argue that The Woman Warrior is assimilationist and, therefore, untrue to the essence of the Chinese people. Sau-ling Cynthia Wong describes Benjamin Tong's position in this way:

Tong accuses Kingston of being purposeful in mistranslating Chinese terms to suit white tastes so that her book would sell better. "She has the sensibility but no conscious, organic connection with [Cantonese] history and psychology...If she and I were ever to meet, she would know that I know she knows she's been catching pigs [tricking whites out of their money by giving them what they think is Chinese] at too high a price - the selling out of her own people." (Wong, 1988, p. 3)

In Shirley Geok-lin Lim's interpretation of Woman Warrior she points out that "Kingston's books are marked by intertextuality - that is, by layers of interpretations of earlier literatures and, consequently, by a stylistic inventiveness" (1990, p. 245). Thus Maxine finds herself
as audience, agent, and participant in stories that are based on both the mythic and historic China.

In Veronica Wang's interpretation of *Woman Warrior* she asserts that Maxine has to reconcile the "reality or fiction of Chinese heritage that reaches her through her mother's mythical yet authoritative 'talk-stories'" (1985, p. 23) and the equally confusing messages that she encounters through her American experiences and education:

Both heritages impose external limitations and demand prescribed behaviours even though she is constantly aware of the remoteness of ancestral China and her essential separation from it, as well as her marginal status of exclusion and alienation in the American society. As a Chinese-American woman, Maxine must come to terms with her past and present, with China and America, with woman-as-slave and woman-as-warrior, and thus find her own identity and voice, one that is not externally imposed but self-expressive, born painfully out of the experience of alienation and suffering. (p. 23)

In all of these Chinese-American interpretations the students were given the chance to consider some of the "intertextual" and intercultural influences at work in Kingston's tale, and this then caused them to move beyond discussions of patriarchal oppression and autobiographical narrative technique in order to ask themselves questions about cultural representation. Tom, for instance, offers the following interpretation of the traits which Maxine and her ghostly aunt have in common:

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I found Kingston to be much like her aunt in that both are being pursued by their Chinese culture. It is threatening to consume both of them. The aunt lost her life to it and Kingston's personality is being shaped by it even though she is attempting to shape herself on her own. She is also like her parents in that they too are haunted by a past that they are trying to forget but cannot.

Melinda saw the relationship between Maxine and her mother in cross-cultural terms:

The author expresses her embarrassment over her Chinese mother's behaviour after coming to America to live. She says that she has not been able to stop her mother's loud voice used even in quiet libraries in the States. She says, "I have tried to turn myself American-feminine." It seems often that children of Chinese immigrants are more eager to become like those around them than their parents are.

The class discussions about this chapter at times became very heated. Some students, in reaction to Veronica Wang's remarks about the unreliable quality of the narrator's tale, argued that it was difficult and disturbing to read because they could not decide which version of the aunt was the "real" one. Other students then argued that the aunt's actual identity was beside the point, and that she may not even have existed at all but that she was simply constructed by Maxine's mother to warn her about the dangers of extra-marital sex. While some young women in the class said that the story tells us as much about the evils of patriarchy in North America as it does about Chinese culture, others listed many details in
the story which they believed were peculiar to Chinese
culture and which they wanted help from their classmates in
order to interpret. Thus, much time was devoted to
examining the story's animal imagery as students discussed
what the connections might be between the pigs and the aunt
on the one hand and between her husband and the rooster on
the other hand. And from the students in the class who
were doing independent study projects on Chinese novels
they wanted to know more about social upheavals such as the
Cultural Revolution in which neighbours and family members
attacked one another in a manner similar to the attack upon
the aunt depicted by Kingston.

Among the other Chinese works studied by the OAC
students was a movie directed by Peter Wang called *A Great
Wall* (1985). I showed this movie to the whole class
because it introduces, within a Chinese context, many
postcolonial themes such as displacement, intercultural
communication and conflict, and American cultural
domination. Just as the students' responses to *Woman
Warrior* were widely divergent, so I found were their
reactions to *A Great Wall*, and this great variety of
reactions to the film made the task of exploring the
heterogeneity of its Chinese and Chinese American
characters as well as the multiple and conflicting
discourses in the film a relatively pleasurable experience for the students. Rey Chow's analysis of the movie's reception amongst her friends helps to explain the variety of opinions about it:

The responses to this film among my friends were fascinatingly dissimilar. A Chinese person thought this film pandered to the taste of the kweilo (Cantonese for "foreign devils"). A European couple, who completely missed the fact that the Chinese youth won the ping-pong match, found the film aesthetically offensive because it polarizes America and China in terms of technological supremacy and backwardness. An American liked the film because it showed people living on the fault line between cultures and trying to hold them together - "Real people are hyphenated people," he said. What interests me about these responses is the strong if lopsided conviction with which each view is expressed. It soon became clear that this was one of those texts which is thought-provoking not so much because of intrinsic merit as because of the way it triggers divergent and even opposed views from its audiences. Those views, heavy with historical resonances, turn a rather stereotypical story into the battleground for contending - perhaps mutually uncomprehending - claims as to how an Asian-American "homecoming" experience should be aesthetically produced. (1990, p. 31)

In my student, Chad's, response to the film he observed that A Great Wall shows the great cultural differences between Americans and Chinese:

Paul takes school lightly whereas his Chinese cousin, Lili, and her friend, Liu, take it much more seriously, knowing that if they don't pass the college entrance exams they will disgrace their family and have a very hard time finding work. When Paul asks Lili what she "does for fun at school" Lili responds that she goes to school to work, not to play.

This quote also shows the difference toward the idea of the work ethic between the two cultures. As
the Fangs stay with the Chaos Lili begins to do less and less work as she begins to act more and more like Paul (i.e. sitting around playing arcade games, etc.). In comparison with the work ethic trying to be established in her by her elders (e.g., Liu's father telling her to memorize the English dictionary) the American work ethic seems to be based on less work and more play.

The title, A Great Wall, has a very important symbolic meaning. The Great Wall is the Great Wall of China, built to keep out invaders. This is symbolic of the differences between the two families, the Fangs and the Chaos. The Fangs are like the invaders bringing foreign ideas with them into China. But the Great Wall built by the people around their culture allows them to ward off most of the outside influences that they are presented with. This is why it is very important that it is Liu who wins the final ping pong match against Paul. This represents the repulsion of the rebellious foreign attitudes from the Chinese culture.⁶

Chad's response is noteworthy for its strong analysis of the symbolic border-crossings which take place in the film and for his recognition of its ironic, socially constructed barriers to intercultural communication. An important feature of the multicultural literacy which is the principal goal of the postcolonial conception is that students come to recognize that differences between cultures, such as the work ethic identified by Chad, are fluid rather than unchangeable, and socially constructed rather than essential attributes. Chad's awareness as well of the ping pong competition's symbolic value indicates that he has begun to develop a sophisticated ability to identify the complex connections between imperialism and
culture. His analysis, in fact, bears some promising similarities to Lisa Lowes interpretation:

[Rather] than privileging either a nativist or assimilationist view, or even espousing a 'Chinese-American' resolution of differences, A Great Wall performs a filmic 'migration' by shuttling between the various cultural spaces; we are left by the end of the film, with a sense of culture as dynamic and open, the result of a continual process of visiting and revisiting a plurality of cultural sites" (Lowe, 1991b, p. 39).

Lowe extrapolates from her reading of the film the notion that "we might conceive of the making and practice of Asian American culture as nomadic, unsettled, taking place in the travel between cultural sites and in the multivocality of heterogeneous and conflicting positions" (p. 39). She finds just such a heterogeneous view of Chinese-American culture, for example, in Amy Tan's novel, The Joy Luck Club (1989):

By contrasting different examples of mother-daughter discord and concord, Joy Luck allegorizes the heterogeneous culture in which the desire for identity and sameness (represented by Jing-mei's story) is inscribed within the context of Asian American differences and disjunctions (exemplified by the other three pairs of mothers and daughters). The novel formally illustrates that the articulation of one, the desire for identity, depends upon the existence of the others, or the fundamental horizon of differences.

Further, although Joy Luck has been heralded and marketed as a novel about mother-daughter relations in the Chinese-American family (one cover review characterizes it as a "story that shows us China, Chinese-American women and their families, and the mystery of the mother-daughter bond in ways that we have not experienced before"), I would suggest that
the novel also represents antagonisms that are not exclusively generational but are due to different conceptions of class and gender among Chinese-Americans. (Lowe, 1991b, p. 36)

Several of my OAC students decided to analyse Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club (1989) for their independent study projects and to relate it to colonial texts by writers such as Pearl S. Buck. As I worked with these students individually during the extended period of time which they were given to develop their ideas about the texts, I pointed out to them that, like Kingston, Tan was attempting to analyse mother-daughter relationships in the context of the intercultural differences between China and the United States. I also told the students that Tan's autobiographical fiction was similar to Kingston's in that it contained ingenious experiments with narrative technique. For example, in their analyses of Tan's four interconnected sets of mother-daughter relationships, I encouraged them to consider the reasons for her use of exemplary tales told by mothers to daughters, confessional tales told by mothers to the reader and by daughters to the reader, overlapping mother and daughter stories, overlapping daughter narratives, symbolic and thematic connections between the tales, and a frame narrative in which Jing-mei Woo and her sisters are finally united in the last chapter of the book. I also tried to encourage
the students to play deconstructively with the novel's many binary oppositions such as natural/supernatural, yin/yang, madness/reason, China/U.S.A., invisible strength/foolish pride, drowning/surfacing, white husbands/Chinese husbands, sweetness/bitterness, and mother/daughter which were each established by Tan to enable the reader to question the supposed differences they represented at the same time as many of these differences were skilfully deconstructed by Tan during the course of the novel.

When my student, Shannon, for instance, had completed her comparison of patriarchal domination in the traditional Chinese marriages depicted in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth* and Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* she discovered that the text's white husband/Chinese husband opposition did not contain nearly so pronounced a difference as Tan's characters had expected when they first married:

*The Joy Luck Club* offers some insight into the modern day mixed marriages in which two of the Chinese daughters in the novel are involved. Both of these marriages are experiencing difficulty.

The first involves Rose Jordan who is getting divorced after fifteen years of marriage to an American man named Ted. Rose describes her initial attraction to Ted as follows: "I have to admit that what I initially found attractive in Ted were precisely the things that made him different from my brothers and the Chinese boys I had dated: his brashness; the assuredness in which he asked for things and expected to get them; his opinionated manner; his angular face and lanky body; the thickness of his arms; the fact that his parents immigrated from
Tarrytown, New York, not Teinsin, China" (Tan, p. 123). However, despite what she thought was an escape from her culture, over the years Ted proved to be the leader in their marriage, much the same as was Wang Lung in Buck's depiction of a traditional Chinese relationship.

The essay of another student, Michelle, combined her study of the China/U.S.A. opposition with her investigations into the mother/daughter opposition in Tan's book and in Pearl S. Buck's Pavilion of Women to develop her postcolonial feminist reading of the two texts:

The Joy Luck Club, by Amy Tan and Pavilion of Women, by Pearl S. Buck both present Chinese women who struggle against foreign influences to keep their culture alive in their families.

The Joy Luck Club reveals the strengths of four Chinese women who immigrated to America in 1949 to escape the suffering brought on by the Communist Revolution. Once in America, they were expected to learn a new language and to forget their treasured customs and traditions, giving in to the American ways. The Joy Luck Club was created by these women. "They ate, they laughed, they played games and they told the best stories. And each week they would hope to be lucky. That hope was their only joy" (Tan, 1989, p. 12).

Unfortunately, the daughters of these women did not share the same pride in their Chinese culture as their mothers. One of the daughters, June Woo, imagined Joy Luck as a "shameful Chinese custom like the gatherings of the Ku Klux Klan, or the tom-tom dances of the TV Indians preparing for war" (p. 16). The mothers wanted to instill in their daughters their Chinese heritage in the hope that they would remember that they were Chinese before they were American. To accomplish this, they told their daughters stories about themselves and taught them about the ways of the Chinese. However, to the closed American-born minds of the daughters, the stories ceased to have any meaning. They were "ignorant and unmindful of all the truths and hopes their mothers brought to America. They grew impatient when their mothers talked in
Chinese and thought their mothers stupid when they explained things in fractured English" (Tan, p. 31). They took pleasures for granted without concerning themselves with what their mothers had to give up in order to make them happy.

Madame Wu of *Pavilion of Women* and the mothers of *The Joy Luck Club* felt, as many Chinese do today, that Europe and America were spreading too much of their influence in other countries. The only way they saw to combat this was to remember who they were and to remember the things that made them unique.

A mainstream feminist interpretation of these novels would not have identified the important connections between imperialism and culture which Michelle recognizes as so important to the relationships between these Chinese mothers and daughters. The postcolonial reading strategies which she has employed, therefore, have helped her to explain the cultural conflicts which exist between the discourses of the Chinese mothers and their Chinese-American daughters. At the same time, these reading strategies have enabled her in other parts of her essay to identify the variety of political, social, and religious forces acting upon these relationships which make Michelle's feminist interpretation of the texts more complex than it would have been had she focused exclusively upon the universal problems of women which she encountered in these novels.

While some students were carrying out their interpretations of Chinese-American texts others were
reading fiction by Chinese women from the People's Republic and bringing very different reports back to the class about their findings. In Tom's postcolonial analysis of *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1986), for instance, it is not the imperialism of the West which he wishes to investigate but the domination of the Chinese Communist government over the victims of the Cultural Revolution that he sets out to critique:

In today's world, where international commerce is a way of life for many people, there are numerous daily cultural interactions. Nien Cheng, the author of *Life and Death in Shanghai*, was schooled in England and in China. She lived in China, moved to England, moved back to China, then lived in Australia for a while before returning to China once again prior to the Communist Revolution in 1949. All of this Western influence on her came out in her style of living. Even in Communist China, she lived in a huge house with a large garden and a few servants. This lifestyle, however, was not only Western but traditional Chinese. She really enjoyed Western composers but she also collected Chinese works of art such as vases, paintings, and poetry. She also indulged herself in painting landscapes and writing poems. Another interesting aspect of Nien's life is that she was employed by Shell Petroleum in Shanghai. This was a British company. So even in China, she still had her European friends influencing her. It was because of her very close contact with the West that she was singled out and attacked during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution was started in order to "cleanse" the working class of all intellectuals, capitalists, and rightists and according to their criteria, Nien was just about the worst example of their "enemy." But she was actually one of the most devoted Chinese people. She could have left China at just about any time through Shell, but she did not.
The Western aspects of her life caused her great grief, but during her six and a half years of solitary confinement it was her poems and her strong belief that she did nothing wrong that kept her alive and sane.

After Tom presented his argument to the class, other students who had read about the Cultural Revolution in texts such as Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro's *Son of the Revolution* (1984) agreed with him that the treatment of intellectuals was horrifying during that period of Chinese history, and, of course, parallels were drawn with the plight of student dissidents following the Tienanmen Incident. However, none of my students thought to question Nien Cheng's capitalist assertions that she had done nothing wrong. Having lived in China for a year, myself, in 1985-86, as an English instructor with the Foreign Language Department of Changsha University, in the same city where Liang Heng and Chairman Mao had grown up, I certainly had heard many horrifying tales from my students about the atrocities perpetrated by Mao's Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution, and I could sympathize with my Canadian students' angry reaction as Tom told them about Nien's experiences. Nevertheless, the postcolonial approach requires them to analyse not only the discourse of the Chinese Communists in Cheng's text, but to critique as well the unquestioned assumptions of this Chinese employee
of Shell Petroleum in Shanghai. So I pointed out to the students a few facts about the Japanese, British, American, Russian, French, and German imperialist activities in Shanghai before 1949 to help them to understand why members of the Red Guard could so easily be convinced that a wealthy servant of a foreign oil company might deserve to be attacked for her "capitalist roader" activities. Thus, although Tom was able to understand Cheng's obvious courage as she resisted the intimidation tactics of the Communists during her years of imprisonment, he was also able to appreciate the significance of some of the differences and similarities between Cheng's Chinese and Western values. And, although I felt compelled as Tom's teacher to encourage him to take his analysis a step further by analysing, as well, the Eurocentric discourse which enabled Cheng to accept without question her right to a privileged status in China, I was, nevertheless, pleased with the intercultural awareness that he developed on his own by reading Cheng's autobiography with an eye for its multicultural structure.

In the students' postcolonial interpretations of the works of Maxine Hong Kingston, Peter Wang, Amy Tan, and Nien Cheng, then, besides their analyses of feminist issues, they paid attention, as well, to a wide range of
issues from racism, to imperialism, to class struggles, to intercultural conflict. Thus, I have concluded that the postcolonial approach to teaching students about literary representations of Chinese women is definitely preferable to the mainstream, Eurocentric feminist approach. When we consider, for instance, to what degree the postcolonial curricular conception develops the kind of literacy in students (making some allowance, of course, for different levels of student engagement and ability) which enables them to negotiate meanings within various intertextual terrains and to acknowledge the heterogeneous and multivalent constitutions of the subjects and cultures represented within their texts, the answer is clearly that this conception is superior to the kind of international feminist analyses which Davis and Kristeva advocate. Through the process of traveling back and forth in their imaginations between the cultures of China and North America the students were able to see that, for Chinese women, feminist issues cannot be isolated and universalized, but that they are necessarily interconnected with problems of race, class, and culture.
Notes

1. Concerning the combination of the marginal discourses of postcolonialism and feminism, Sara Suleri argues that "even though the marriage of two margins should not necessarily lead to the construction of that contradiction in terms, a 'feminist center,' the embarrassed privilege granted to racially encoded feminism does indeed suggest a rectitude that could be its own theoretical undoing. The concept of the postcolonial itself is too frequently robbed of historical specificity in order to function as a preapproved allegory for any mode of discursive contestation. The coupling of postcolonial with woman, however, almost inevitably leads to the simplicities that underlie unthinking celebrations of oppression, elevating the racially female voice into a metaphor for 'the good'" (1992, pp. 758-759).

2. Nien Cheng, the author of Life and Death in Shanghai (1986), for instance, like millions of other dissidents, spent years in prison during China's Cultural Revolution precisely because she was not a Chinese revolutionary. It is true that many of the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution were not known outside of the People's Republic until after the writing of Kristeva's book, and I am not criticizing her for failing to recognize this historical inaccuracy in her account. Nevertheless, given her decidedly Marxist agenda at the time as a member of France's Tel Quel group, it would have been difficult for Kristeva to see Mao's China as anything but an encouraging antidote to the failed communist movement in early 1970s France.

3. Like Smith, another mainstream feminist critic, Linda Hunt, in offering the following interpretation of Chapter 1, also focusses upon Kingston's narrative technique instead of attempting to deal with the more complicated intercultural issues raised by the book. After describing how Maxine first sides with her aunt and then with the villagers in her narration, Linda Hunt points out that: "While the remainder of the tale emphasizes the events which befell the persecuted woman, her thoughts and feelings, the narrative remains riddled with ambivalence. Kingston's recounting of her aunt's story has been a defiant act of recompense towards the forgotten relative, a desire not to participate in her punishment. Yet, one more
twist occurs in the last sentence of the chapter. 'My aunt haunts me...I alone devote pages of paper to her...I do not think she always means me well. I am telling on her, and she was a spite suicide, drowning herself in drinking water" (Hunt, 1985, p. 7).

4. Lisa Lowe, however, points out that Frank Chin accuses Kingston of having "exoticized Chinese-American culture; he argues that she has 'feminized' Asian American literature and undermined the power of Asian American men to combat the racist stereotypes of the dominant white culture. Kingston and other woman novelists such as Amy Tan, he says, misrepresent Chinese history in order to exaggerate its patriarchal structure; as a result, Chinese society is portrayed as being even more misogynistic than European society" (1991b, p. 33). Lowe, however, counters the attacks of Chin by arguing that from the perspective of Asian American feminists the attempts of nationalists to construct an essentialized native Asian-American subject only serve to obscure gender issues. From her postcolonial feminist position Lowe believes that the desire to essentialize Chinese-American identity fails to recognize the condition of heterogeneous differences which has been so effectively represented in Kingston's novel (1991b, p. 34).

5. Chow continues in her analysis of the movie to argue that, "Given the demolition of the traditional terms of reference and the de-legitimation of the grounds of criticism that such terms provide, and given the untenability of a return to traditional culture in any unadulterated form, the very instability of cultural identity itself becomes a combative critical base. This critical base engenders a new set of terms for the production of knowledge and for intervention that are no longer simply cognitive or ontological, but are informed by subjectivity and experience" (Chow, 1990, p. 46). It is this recognition of the "instability of cultural identity" which I try to make clear to my students not only through their viewing of A Great Wall, but in their study of all of the works on the course.

6. One of Chad's other interesting insights into the intercultural conflicts of the movie is expressed in his analysis of Wang's treatment of racism. "Leo Fang doesn't get the promotion he feels he deserves. Instead it goes to a much less qualified white male. Leo protests to his boss, finally quitting because of what he feels is racism.
Leo's son, Paul, also feels he is being treated differently because of racism. But in this instance it is his father who is being prejudiced against his choice of a white girlfriend over a Chinese one. Finally, Mr. Chao is shown as being racist towards Americans. He says that all Americans are promiscuous and does not want his daughter to travel to America where she will be with people who are not of her same culture. It is interesting that Paul says that his father's wish for him to have a Chinese girlfriend is racist and that he covers it up with culture and tradition. Are these actions racist or merely a way of preserving a cultural heritage? It is obvious that they are all forms of racism based in ignorance (i.e., Leo cannot do the job of the young white man and all Americans are promiscuous).

Chapter 6
The Reader-Response Conception

Since 1978 approximately 160,000 Chinese have left the People's Republic of China to study or work in the West. Some 300,000 Hong Kong citizens are expected to emigrate before 1997. And, during the past decade, many thousands of Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Koreans have also emigrated to North America. A consequence of this vast migration is that high school teachers in several major Canadian cities have found themselves teaching English to classes in which a large percentage of the student body is Asian-Canadian.

One such teacher, David Low, teaches English in Vancouver to grade 10 students of whom approximately 40% have moved to Canada recently from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. I first met David when I began working at his school as a researcher on a telecommunications project for the University of British Columbia. Because his students had access to a computer lab through which they could be connected to global telecommunications networks, David and I considered the possibility of finding them pen pals (or key pals) throughout the Asian Pacific with whom they might share their impressions of Asian literature and cultures.
Electronic mail (e-mail), we thought, would provide David's students with the opportunity to forge collaborative friendships in Asia by composing messages on their computer screens and then sending them to their distant partners through such computer networks as Internet and Bitnet.¹ Their key-pals would then receive these messages within a matter of minutes. Given this technological means of virtually obliterating the distance between Canada and Asia, what David and I were particularly interested in studying was how his students might use e-mail to respond collaboratively to Japanese and Chinese short stories in translation.

I therefore set out on an electronic voyage around the networks of the Pacific Rim to find key pals for David's students. I was eventually able, through such Internet computer forums as Japan Food and Culture and the South East Asian Network, to locate some university correspondents for them from India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, and the PRC. Although the students were pleased to be able to communicate with these thoughtful and enthusiastic university-aged e-mail key pals, they also expressed a desire to write to people their own age.²

They were quite excited, therefore, when I was able to make contact for them with the students of an international
high school near Kyoto, Japan. Hillel Weintraub, an English teacher at this school who is also a doctoral candidate at Harvard University's School of Education, was interested in ways of using computer communications to enhance the teaching of English. During a two-month period he and I carried on an extensive e-mail correspondence in order to work out the details of the connection which we wished to establish between the grade 10 students of Dave Brier (who also teaches English at Hillel's school near Kyoto) and the students of David Low in Vancouver. Hillel and I, for example, decided to provide the students with an anthology of Asian short stories called *Tapestries* (1991) which had been designed by its editors with Asian-Canadian high school readers in mind. Because we did not have a clear idea at the outset of what we really meant by "computer-mediated, intercultural, collaborative responses to literature," Hillel and I entered into our study with an open-minded and exploratory attitude about what we expected the students' responses to involve.

In the usual reader-response paradigm (text + reader = poem), theorists such as Louise Rosenblatt have long recognized how important the reader's cultural background is to the reading transaction. As Rosenblatt recently noted she has always "urged that students be made aware of the
implicit underlying cultural and social assumptions of any evoked work, and that they be helped to make these the basis for scrutinizing their own assumptions" (1990, p. 106). In our case, we wondered if the bicultural perspectives which our students brought to their reading of the stories would naturally cause them to reflect upon their own cultural assumptions and identities. Because, for instance, all of the Japanese students had lived in the United States for several years before moving back to Japan and most of the Asian-Canadians had only recently moved to Canada, we were interested in seeing how these readers would use their intercultural e-mail exchanges and personal bicultural memories to supplement their transactions with the literary text. And, at the same time, we wondered what personal insights would emerge out of the developing relationships between the students as a result of their working together with partners, who, like themselves, had lived on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Before I describe in detail what happened between the Vancouver and Kyoto students, however, it is necessary that I explain how the postcolonial conception, with its use of poststructuralist reading strategies, differs from the traditional reader-response conception of the multicultural literature curriculum. To clarify these differences, first
I need to examine the objections which Rosenblatt has raised to modifications which poststructural theorists have attempted to make to her reader-response theory, and, second, I need to explain the specific changes to the traditional reader-response approach which I have made with the help of some important concepts from the work of postcolonial theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha.

Louise Rosenblatt, the founder of the reader-response theory of literary criticism, has described in detail the transactional relationship which she sees among the reader, the text, and the poem. The text belongs to the author, but the poems, which are constructed in the minds of the various readers who encounter the text each differ according to the personal and cultural frameworks with which these readers interpret what they read. This view of the reading transaction is an important one to be adopted by the teachers and students of multicultural literature, because it shifts their focus away from searching for only one "true" meaning of the text. As Rosenblatt points out student readers are "living in the world of the work which [they] have created under guidance of the text and are entering into new potentialities of [their] own natures."

The reading of each text is therefore "a unique mode of experience, an expansion of the boundaries of their own
temperaments and worlds, lived through in their own persons" (1978, p. 68).

As John Willinsky (1990) has observed, Rosenblatt's earlier work in her book, *Literature as Exploration* (1938), was inspired by the democratic ideals of progressive educators such as John Dewey. Thus we find her remarking that books "are a means of getting outside the particular limited cultural group into which the individual was born" (1938, p. 228). Willinsky argues that Rosenblatt's lack of emphasis upon the political dimension of her theory in her more recent writing has left to other literary critics the task of accounting for the political dimension of the reader's response. He mentions, for instance, that the feminist critics are now the ones asking: "Whose texts, whose response?"

I have been attracted to the work of Louise Rosenblatt because she advocates the students' active role in constructing the fictional work through their transactions with the text. I disagree, however, with her belief that the students' participation in the reading process must necessarily be devalued by those of us who would encourage them to deconstruct their texts. According to Rosenblatt, like the New Critics, poststructuralists and deconstructionists overemphasize the text:
They are concerned with abstracting the underlying system of codes and conventions that the text possesses for a particular "interpretive community." Author and reader become mere carriers of cultural conventions, and both fade away under the extreme relativism of the deconstructionists and the "cultural" critics.... The critical processes and teaching procedures that serve this overemphasis on the text result in neglect of the personal aesthetic experience. The stress is placed on efferent analysis, whether of codes and conventions, logical self contradictions, or ideological assumptions. The advocates of these textually oriented theories find no problems in continuing the teaching practices of the traditionalists and the formalist New Critics. (1990, p. 105)

But if reader-response theorists such as Rosenblatt are willing to acknowledge the value of various individual students' interpretations of a text, then they should not object to a critical approach which encourages students to seek for themselves, according to their individual subject positions, an endless variety of interpretations of a work.

Rosenblatt's differentiation between efferent and aesthetic reading strategies must, of course, be discredited by poststructuralists because it attempts to separate "real life knowledge" from "aesthetic appreciation," a distinction which becomes blurred, for example, when deconstructionists examine propaganda.³ Is it fiction or non-fiction? Is the reading of history an efferent or an aesthetic experience? Are commercials objects of art? Deconstruction, by treating all texts as narratives related to other narratives, not
only expands our notion of fiction but it also undermines 
Rosenblatt's privileging of aesthetics.

She shows herself to be a serious social critic in 
*Literature as Exploration* (1938), so why then does she 
devalue the social and cultural experiences of minority 
students by denying them the chance to grapple with issues 
such as imperialism, racism, and sexism through their 
reading of literature? For instance, she says that her 
students should learn to "reject unjust assumptions" but 
"accept and build on what is sound in our culture" (1990, p. 
106). Without a method of differentiating and opposing 
dominant culture discourse, though, how do they decide what 
to reject? And when she says "our culture" whose culture 
does she have in mind? Rosenblatt's condemnation of 
deconstruction fails to recognize its potential power to 
confront stereotypes directly in ways which her traditional 
reader-response theory does not.

Trinh Minh-ha (1991), on the other hand, has recently 
added to the collection of reader-response reading 
strategies a powerful poststructuralist tool by 
deconstructing the binary opposition of cultural 
insider/outsider. She accomplishes this by defining 
individuals like the Vancouver and Kyoto students, who have 
one foot firmly planted in each of two different cultures,
as "hyphenated selves." Her point is that the very existence of such hyphenated selves calls into question anthropologists' attempts to define essential differences between cultures. "Essential difference allows those who rely on it to rest reassuringly on its gamut of fixed notions. Any mutation in identity, in essence, in regularity, and even in physical place poses a problem, if not a threat, in terms of classification and control" (1991, p. 73):

The predicament of crossing boundaries cannot be merely rejected or accepted. It has to be confronted in its controversies. There is indeed little hope of speaking this simultaneously outside-inside actuality into existence in simple, polarizing black and white terms. The challenge of the hyphenated reality lies in the hyphen itself: the becoming Asian-American; the realm in-between where predetermined rules cannot fully apply. (p. 157)

If Trinh Minh-ha is correct, then our students were predisposed by their double perspectives as both insiders and outsiders of two different worlds to question, in ways Rosenblatt's theory has not taken into consideration, stereotypical and essentialist notions of their cultural identities. Thus, their collaborations might be expected to illustrate how essentialist notions of self and culture are called into question when hyphenated, or bicultural, readers are placed in the predicament of crossing boundaries.
by sharing with each other through e-mail correspondence their impressions of Asian literature.

In the end, our investigations seemed to indicate that, for contemporary students who have bicultural identities and who have the wonders of communication technology at their disposal, there no longer exists such a thing as a pure cultural insider. And, more importantly, our study seems to demonstrate that students reading across cultures can quickly circumvent the traditional insider-outsider bifurcation which has been used by essentialists to stereotype Asian people and their cultures.

Lilliann Noda, in her doctoral dissertation, Literature and Culture: Japanese and American Reader-Responses to Modern Japanese Short Stories (1980), has demonstrated that a Japanese reader whom she studied intensively possessed the cultural resources necessary to experience a more informed response to Japanese stories than did an American reader. She concluded, therefore, that teachers need to provide their students with the necessary cultural background information if they are to respond meaningfully to Asian literature. Teachers such as David Low, however, have recently been discovering that, because a large percentage of their students are bilingual and bicultural Asian-Canadians, these readers in many cases already possess
sufficient cultural background to engage meaningfully with Asian literature written in English. And so, some of these teachers have been deciding to use the background knowledge and bicultural perspectives of their students to enrich and problematize classroom discussions of Asian literature.

Where Noda wished to emphasize the essential features of Japanese literature which could only be appreciated by Japanese readers, David Low, Hillel Weintraub, Dave Brier, and I wished to discover how well the students could question stereotypical representations of Japanese and Chinese culture and people because of their bicultural perspectives. I should add, however, that Asian students do not necessarily appreciate being identified in front of their classmates as resident experts on Oriental culture, and I am certainly not suggesting that teachers should cast their Asian students in this role. Rather, if minority students are willing to accept responsibility for interpreting their own cultures, then, as Aronowitz and Giroux (1991, pp. 101-102) have argued, these students' voices can be affirmed through a variety of means.

Although there have recently been many attempts by English teachers to formulate methodologies for teaching Asian literature to high school students, the question of how to affirm Asian-American and Asian-Canadian voices in
these literature classrooms has not yet been adequately addressed. Tony Kane (1980), for example, notes that, because students lack the cultural background to appreciate the literature of Chinese civilization they may find their reading unsatisfying, but that, if this is the case, the fault lies partly with the students for being ignorant of the literature's worth. Thus, Kane's unit provides teachers with many suggestions about how to fill in the necessary cultural gaps with information about the nature of Chinese language and history. Judy Lightfoot's (1991) unit of Japanese literature is intended to help students define the difference between "quintessentially" American and Japanese cultural and literary features. Thus she encourages her students to try to establish differences between American and Japanese definitions of self and group, philosophical heritages, and literary aesthetics.

Alan Olds (1990) has advocated preparing students to read Chinese literature by providing them with the necessary cultural background information which he feels that students need in order to recognize the moral and aesthetic merits of Chinese poems and short stories. To accomplish the filling-in of the necessary cultural foundations Olds lectures to his students on Chinese history, language, philosophy, sociology, and politics. He hopes that students can come to
"think Eastern" (p. 25) if given sufficient background knowledge. Granted, Olds does not claim to be able to effect in his students a complete shift from a Western to an Eastern perceptual framework, but he, nevertheless, inadvertently perpetuates the Orientalist notion, which has been so effectively deconstructed by Edward Said (1978), that there is some tangible Eastern essence which can be defined by those with access to the appropriate cultural materials. Said argues "that 'the Orient' is itself a constituted entity, and that the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically 'different' inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture, or racial essence proper to that geographical space, is ... a highly debatable idea" (p. 322). The main drawback, therefore, to the otherwise very worthwhile programs of Kane, Lightfoot, and Olds is that, rather than affirming the voices of their Asian students by encouraging them to establish their own positions with regard to the literature, these teachers run the risk of silencing their students by imposing essentialist interpretations of Oriental culture before recognizing what the students themselves can contribute to the discussion.

Unlike Olds, we did not wish our students to learn "to 'think Eastern,' while reading the stories" (p. 32), but,
instead, we simply asked them to collaborate with their key pals in an effort to respond to the text. Instead of dominating the classroom with predetermined rules of discourse through lectures and other teacher-centered pedagogies, therefore, we wanted to give students the opportunity and the confidence to resist dominant culture misrepresentations of them and their cultures. We wanted to enable the students to write and speak from their own bicultural experiences. Collaborating with fellow students through computer-mediated communication proved to be a very enjoyable and highly motivating way for the students to resist dominant culture stereotypical representations.

As Barker and Kemp (1990) have noted in their description of network theory, the computer-based collaborative approach re-empowers text by emphasizing the students' rather than the instructor's evaluation of it:

Computers are used to facilitate the generation and distribution of both original writing and written student responses to that writing. As students grow aware of how they themselves respond to the words and phrases of their peers, they grow more aware of how their own words and phrases are being read. Accordingly, writing and revision become not simply a mandated exercise, but an opportunity to shape the opinions of one's readers, readers with whom the writer identifies. (p. 24)

After we had completed the two months of correspondence between the schools, Shingo, one of the male students in
Kyoto, observed that he did in fact feel the type of identity with and obligation toward his new friends in Vancouver which Barker and Kemp associate with the process of collaborative computer writing:

I thought it was different because, if we didn't read the story before, when the teacher assigned it to us, then we'd be letting the teacher down. But, this time, if we didn't read the story and we didn't have our own thoughts we'd be letting our pen pals abroad down. It means more to me to keep a good relationship with my pen pals. I was able to learn a lot from their opinions.

And Makiko, one of the female Kyoto students, seemed to agree with Shingo on this point:

[I liked] being able to learn other than from textbooks - to talk to other people and hear what they thought. You can tell what a person is like just from reading their interpretations of the stories. If you're in a class you don't really have to talk. You can just sit there and watch other people talking. But, in this case, you have to have your comments.

Computer-mediated intercultural communications, therefore, seem particularly well-suited to postcolonialism's denial of the centre/periphery opposition which has traditionally been perpetuated by imperialism's attempts to control cultural identities and national boundaries. Intercultural computer communication, instead, works against the students' tendency to situate themselves solely within a single culture from a native's "insider" perspective.

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The students' abilities to move freely back and forth between insider and outsider perspectives and to consider alternative views about Japanese culture and literature were based both in their bicultural identities and in their need to bridge the Pacific Ocean while they theorized in collaboration with their e-mail partners. During normal classroom discussions, on the other hand, the students would probably not have been so willing to engage in the types of open communications which developed across borders with the aid of the computer connection. In fact, some of David Low's transitional ESL students who were attempting to enter main-stream English programs after living in Canada for one or two years felt particularly reticent to contribute to regular classroom dialogues. We did not feel, however, that this was because, as Jeffrey Carroll would have it, there is an essential difference between the rhetorical stance of Asian students and Western students. Carroll believes that it is traditional and not at all wrong for Asian students to be quiet in the classroom:

Silence is a good thing in Asian rhetoric, but not in ours, where recent wisdom has pushed most of us into socially interactive learning situations. Silence was not a bad thing in classrooms before our discipline began to decenter the teacher and place student participation at a premium. For many Asian-Americans, to remain silent is the only right action, since what is being said is the teacher's unfolding of the truth.... This is of course not bad at all, but a
cultural trace that valorizes the social fabric over all, and the teacher's representing that fabric, that flow. (1991, p. 3-4)

However, when we gave our students the opportunity to carry on a computer-mediated dialogue with their partners, most were genuinely delighted to speak, via their computers, about their lives in Canada or Japan and about their impressions of the stories. One student claimed that she would rather write than talk. Thus she was more willing to share her feelings and ideas with her key pal than she was to enter into regular class discussions. Our decentered classroom, therefore, resulted in giving voice to students despite their supposed traditional predilection to remain respectfully silent in front of the teacher. The Chinese Canadian students may also have felt less reserved in their dialogues on the computer screen because, instead of being perceived as members of a racial minority by their non-Asian Vancouver classmates, they were now in the majority as they communicated with the Kyoto students in a partnership for which their racial heritage provided them with a definite advantage in carrying out their interpretations.

To begin the project the students were encouraged to become acquainted with each other through introductory messages. During these interchanges the students shared with each other information about their schools and
communities. For example, the Kyoto students pointed out that their school is located in the country, about 20 minutes from Kyoto Station, and that "Kyoto is one of the cities in Japan left with historical sites, such as famous temples and shrines that people from all over the world come to visit." They noted as well that they "enjoy shopping, talking with friends and other things" that their key pals would do in Vancouver. During this introduction period the students were a little surprised, in fact, to discover how much they had in common with their key pals. For example, in Vancouver, Jennifer, said that "I told [Masae] about my interests in acting and singing and it just happened that she was interested in the same things as me." While, in the early stages it was, I believe, beneficial for the students to establish a sense of common interests and concerns, as they came to know each other better their pleasure in discussing cultural differences also grew.

As individual partners established common ground and cultural differences with each other during the initial days of their correspondence, one of the Kyoto students, Sayoko, when asked what she and her friends did in their spare time, offered the following description of Karaoke bars. "The whole point of this Karaoke is that people pay to rent a room and sing their heart out. The special thing about
singing here is that they have something like a TV screen that writes out the words, the music fills up the room, and they get to sing on a microphone. My friends tell me that going there makes their stress go away."

As we read these introductory communications we wondered how the students would position themselves in relation to their key pals. We felt that the nature of their collaborative responses to the stories would be determined in part by this positioning process. For instance, in the case of Bin Na, a Korean student living in Vancouver, and Masae, in Kyoto, the collaborative partnership which emerged proved to be a mutually supportive one. After Masae discussed the years she had formerly spent living in New Jersey and Toronto, Bin Na responded by describing the four years during which she had lived in Bangladesh. Masae and Bin Na also commiserated over the difficulties each expected to encounter when, having lived abroad for so many years, they must eventually attempt to qualify for university in Japan and Korea. Because both the Kyoto and Vancouver students knew what it means to undergo dislocations of the type mentioned by Masae and Bin Na, they exhibited a genuine appreciation for each other's bicultural perspectives and experiences. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (1989) have observed, of course, dislocation and "the
crisis in self-image which this displacement produces" are key features of postcolonialism (p. 9). Whether the individuals are free settlers (as in the case of the Asian Canadians), Trinidadian-Indian indentured labourers, or forcibly colonized Nigerians and Bengalis, learning a second language, wrestling with at least two different sets of cultural values, and questioning the authenticity of ones cultural heritage, are problems faced by many people throughout the world in the 1990s. How these students view themselves and literature is, therefore, inextricably caught up in these issues of cultural difference and displacement.

At the same time as the students were becoming acquainted with each other through these personal exchanges they also gained some awareness of their partners' identities by studying their interpretations of the stories. Most of the students felt that the Japanese and Chinese stories which they read together provided a good starting point for their discussions about Asian and North American culture. However, the Japanese students recommended that, in future, stories should be chosen by the students, and that some of the classics might better serve to illustrate their feelings about Japanese culture than did the contemporary story, "Spring Storm," which the research team had chosen for them to discuss.

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"Spring Storm" was originally written in Japanese and then translated into English. Sharon Jeroski says of its author that "Mori Yoko is a self-professed fan of 'everything Western' and her writing contains frequent allusions to Western films, personalities, and books. Her stories are urban and contemporary, with themes that often probe the relationships between men and women" (1991, p. 206). The story concerns a critical moment in the relationship between the actress, Midori Natsuo, and her husband, the script writer, Asai Yusuke. On the day when Midori learns, much to her surprise, that she has been chosen to be the star of a musical, she also gradually comes to realize that her husband cannot accept her new career status because he feels it would diminish his own. As Mori Yoko's narrative unfolds, we see Midori's developing awareness of her predicament, first in her confused feelings of intense joy and suffocating pain while she approaches their apartment, then in her mistrust as she attempts to conceal the truth from Yusuke, and, finally, in her recognition of the choice that she must inevitably make between her marriage and her career.

We chose this particular story for the students to study because it required them to debate the validity of Mori Yoko's representation of the relationships between
Japanese men and women. As Yayori Matsui has made clear in her book, *Women's Asia* (1989), the structural inequities which are a part of Japanese society will take many years yet to overcome. But, while such inequities undeniably still pose severe problems for many Japanese women, how these inequities work themselves out in the relationships between individual married couples in Japan remains open to debate. We therefore chose for study a short story which clearly represents a Japanese man as the cause of his wife's career difficulties in order to see how the students would interpret Mori Yoko's representation of this conflict.

In the following interchange with Jennifer concerning "Spring Storm," Masae's explanation of the meaning of the storm and blossoms indicated that she possessed a strong grasp of the theme of gender inequity as it was revealed to her through the story's symbolism:

This story probably got its title from the part where Midori and Yusuke talk about the storm and the cherry blossoms. When I read this story, I interpreted that the cherry blossoms were intended to symbolize women trying to "blossom" out into what was known up until then as the "men's world." The storm shows the men's discriminatory ideas against women, standing in their way and not letting them blossom. You can tell from what Yusuke says, that once the storm "stops," more women will be involved in the world. Midori's reply of how there will be more storms explains, in a way, that there will be more obstacles for women before they can really blossom.
As an example of a traditional reader-response interpretation Masae's comments were quite impressive for a grade 10 student. Lilliann Noda would, I think, draw our attention to the fact that Masae's knowledge of Japanese symbols gave her an advantage over non-Japanese readers in identifying the symbolic significance of the story's central metaphors. But at this point in her developing understanding of the story Masae had not had the opportunity to discuss with her Vancouver key pals alternative perspectives on the story. As we shall see, she eventually developed a more complex, postcolonial interpretation based upon her intercultural interrogation of the story's conflicting Japanese and American discourses on gender equity.

At the end of the project the students in Kyoto and Vancouver each expressed their opinions on videotape about the process they had experienced. These tapes were then sent to their partners' school so that they could have the pleasure of seeing and hearing each other on television. In Vancouver, Jennifer offered the following concluding remarks about "Spring Storm." "Masae said that Japanese culture was very much like it was in 'Spring Storm.' The women are supposed to stay at home. They're not supposed to go out
into the business world because it's a man's world. She said that now they are starting to break away from that."

And, in Japan, Masae's remarks indicated that through her dialogue with Jennifer she had come to think about the story from an intercultural perspective which, therefore, yielded a postcolonial response:

In Japanese magazines for teens you read that guys hate girls who are smarter than them. In 'Spring Storm' Usuke couldn't stand Midori earning more money than him. It's up to the individual person. I think our society has been stereotyped. My Dad helps out in the house now more than he used to. I wouldn't want to marry a guy who says that I have to stay at home and do housework. I'd probably give up working if I had a child, but, if not, I'd want to keep on working.

Masae's initial insights, such as her analysis of the shower and blossom symbolism, lacked the complexity and personal engagement which these final observations contain. Had she not been given the opportunity, by explaining the story to Jennifer, to reflect upon the issue of gender equity in Japan from an intercultural perspective, perhaps she would not have been able to make this final, distanced assessment of the story's relationship to her life. Masae's response does not lack any of the personal commitment which Rosenblatt claimed poststructural approaches would endanger in students' textual transactions. Nor does Masae fall into the trap of "thinking Eastern" and essentializing the characteristics of Japanese men and women.
Throughout their correspondence Masae had gained the confidence to take strong positions in her interpretations of the story because she felt that she needed to answer Jennifer's questions directly and honestly. In response to a remark by Jennifer that the ending of the story was confusing to her, for instance, Masae replied that she rather liked the ending:

You said that the ending of the story was confusing, but I liked how it ended. By saying that their "eyes met," you can assume that they did end up breaking up. The last line leaves you pondering on the thought, and leaves the ending for your imagination. It just wouldn't be the same if the last line had stated-- 'They decided to end the relationship.'

Masae's motivation for performing her analysis of the ending of the story originated in Jennifer's confusion. And her conviction in attempting the explanation could in part be due to the role she established for herself as the partner who was better informed about Japanese culture and literature. Just as the non-Native students in Chapter 4 were able to understand the Native students' culture better through their intercultural e-mail communications, so the Chinese-Canadian students such as Jennifer came to understand Japanese culture better through the explanations offered by Masae, Sayoko, and Shingo. But more important than this, the intercultural sharing between the two groups of students caused them all to think in postcolonial terms
about the stereotypes which Mori Yoko had constructed in "Spring Storm."

Shingo, for example, clearly identified a link between the way he responded to the story and the fact that he was going through this process of analysing relationships between Japanese men and women in collaboration with Canadian key pals:

We didn't really think about the problem of male superiority in Japan until we started writing to them on the computer. My Dad's a firm believer that my Mom should do all of the house work. He'd get mad if the food wasn't on the table when he'd come home. I hope that if I was in the same situation as Usuke I wouldn't act the same way as him. It doesn't make any difference to me whether my wife is earning more or has more success. I hope that in a similar situation I would be able to be happy for her.

In general the students felt that they had produced some interesting interpretations of the story's themes and symbols. At times their correspondence revealed that the students' bicultural backgrounds had prepared them well for the task of analysing the stories. During one interchange, for example, Jennifer noted to Masae the practice by both Japanese and Chinese translators of reversing the first and last names of characters in stories:

What you said about the names of the characters and the author is really funny, partly because I can relate to it. I think I forgot to mention that I'm Chinese. If I didn't, well now you know. As I was saying, a lot of the time I read stories that have been translated from

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Chinese to English, and the names, most of the time are reversed.

They agreed that the translators must be conforming to the English convention of writing family names after given names, but that the effect of seeing Midori, for example, referred to as Natsuo seemed very strange to them indeed. Such insights were possible by Masae and Jennifer because both were bilingual. Very few English teachers in North America would be equipped to make such observations. And it is unlikely that a discussion of the story led by a teacher who could not read Japanese or Chinese would have elicited this particular response. From a postcolonial perspective, it was also encouraging to see Jennifer and Masae comfortably dealing with the distortions which translation causes in the naming process. Just as, by taking control over the construction and interpretation of their own bicultural identities, they reconciled themselves to being named both Asian and North American, so when Jennifer and Masae encountered the practice of name-reversal in English translations of short stories neither of them had any difficulty in arguing that Japanese and Chinese names are more recognizable for them when they are read in their original untranslated context.

Aronowitz and Giroux, in their analysis of "border pedagogy," point out that intercultural communications of
the type which our students carried out offer opportunities "to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences and languages" (1991, pp. 118-119):

Border pedagogy confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct social identities. This means it takes seriously the knowledge and experiences that constitute the individual and collective voices by which students identify and give meaning to themselves and others, and draws upon what they know about their own lives as a basis for criticizing the dominant culture. (pp. 128-129)

For students such as Masae and Jennifer, therefore, the opportunity during their dialogues to cross the borders between Japan and Canada in particular, and between Asia and North America in general, enabled them both to celebrate their common situations as hyphenated individuals and to interrogate Japanese and Chinese culture from bicultural perspectives as they considered the motivations of the stories' characters from insider and outsider vantage points simultaneously. Thus they were able, for example, to appreciate the truths of Mori Yoko's story on the one hand and to question the representation of Japanese men and women that it offers on the other.

Clearly, then, the postcolonial approach as I have described it in this chapter has added a dimension to the reading of Asian literature in English translation which
Noda and Rosenblatt simply have not taken into consideration in their reader-response theories. What has changed in the postcolonial conception is that border-crossing, bicultural students have brought to the reading of multicultural literature their ability to assume insider and outsider roles simultaneously. This not only has given these students the opportunity to decode the discourses and assumptions of their texts from multiple perspectives, but it also has helped them to deconstruct and reconstruct their sense of self and their cultural identities. Trinh Minh-ha's notion of the hyphenated self, therefore, has provided an additional level of complexity and sophistication to the students' postcolonial interpretations while Aronowitz and Giroux's notion of border pedagogy as we have seen it practiced here has helped students and teachers to problematize the representations of self, place, and Other which they encounter in their texts.

If we ask how effectively the postcolonial conception has enabled students and teachers to cross back and forth over the imaginary borders constructed between worlds in order to interpret multicultural texts from both insider and outsider perspectives, then the answer is that, through their computer-mediated, collaborative responses to Japanese literature, the students have definitely experienced a type
of intercultural communication which has enhanced both their understanding of the text and their understanding of their hyphenated subjectivity in ways which traditional reader-response curriculum approaches have yet to address. And, in answer to the question, to what degree does the postcolonial curricular approach discussed in this chapter develop the kind of literacy in students which enables them to negotiate meanings within various intertextual terrains and to acknowledge the heterogeneous and multivalent constitutions of the subjects and cultures represented within their multicultural texts, it is reasonable to conclude that the students' readings of "Spring Storm" very effectively identified the multiple and conflicting discourses both within the story and within Japanese society. It is not at all clear, however, that the same could be said of a traditional reader-response approach had we simply asked the students in Vancouver to discuss their views about the story with their classmates instead of sharing them with their Kyoto key pals.

To conclude, I should mention as well that although the students all wished that they could have had more time to come to know their key pals better, they felt that they had made some good friends during the exchange. When the Kyoto students were asked by Hillel Weintraub how they would like
to be marked for this activity, Shingo said, "I think it would be interesting to ask our partners in Canada to evaluate us about what they thought about our interpretations." Evidently the students had come to respect each others' opinions sufficiently to trust their partners with the responsibility of assessing their work. A bond of friendship among the students had been established, in part, I believe, because they felt that their partners understood the difficulties and pleasures of living between worlds.

At the end of the project, when David Low and Dave Brier were asked how they felt about the process, they both said that the next time the students should be given some guidance with their reading if they are to achieve a more informed understanding of the stories, and they offered several good suggestions about how to enrich and fine-tune the process in future without, they hoped, jeopardizing the students' autonomy as collaborative learners. For instance, Hillel Weintraub and Dave Brier suggested that, in order to provide the students with a visual frame of reference for their reading, they should be encouraged to view some Japanese and Chinese films. They would, of course, also encourage the students to be critical about the conventions
and biases to be found in the films' representations of Japanese and Chinese people and places.

My own final assessment of the project was that the students grappled with the issues of gender equity and cultural difference very effectively, while they also discovered many interesting examples of symbolism, foreshadowing, subtext, and irony during their exchanges. In the end, the desire to consider carefully their partners' interpretations also helped the students, in their reading of "Spring Storm," to avoid stereotypical thinking about the characters, Midori and Usuke. And I felt as well that their desire to speak personally to their key pals about the stories caused the students to revise their views in response to the questions and opinions of their partners. When discussing a Chinese short story, for instance, Irene, a Chinese-Canadian student in Vancouver, said to Sayoko in Kyoto that "When I read your point of view about the story I knew that I didn't see it from both sides. I understand how you think that it was not entirely Gu Pan's fault that he was the way he was."

Finally, I should acknowledge that we are still very much novices at the business of teaching students how to carry on computer-mediated, intercultural collaborative responses to literature, and I should also add that the
students were very fortunate to take part in an activity which most high school students at present do not have the opportunity to enjoy. However, I would argue that what is the privilege of a few at the moment will hopefully become a commonplace for a great many in the near future as more teachers find the ways and means to forge intercultural connections for their classes through such organizations as Internet and Fidonet. For example, there are already more than 100 North American school boards connected to each other on Fidonet through the organization called K-12Net. As more high school English teachers and their students attempt e-mail collaborations, I expect that they will find, just as we have, that the students are highly motivated to use this tool to come to know their distant partners, that they take their electronic key pals' opinions seriously, and, finally, that they start to question stereotypical views about themselves and their cultures as they look at literature from a postcolonial perspective. And for an increasing number of students who have moved from one world to another, perhaps their e-mail key pals will provide them with an additional, personal pleasure and comfort as they are able to share their feelings of dislocation with friends in a medium where the distance between worlds becomes immaterial.
Notes

1. An excellent resource for English teachers who can gain access to the Internet is *The Whole Internet User's Guide and Catalogue* (Krol, 1992). There are already many high school teachers around the world who have established Internet connections for their schools with organizations such as KIDSNET. For example, some 2,000 teachers have been funded by the Ontario Teachers Federation to join an electronic bulletin board called "The Village" which enables students and teachers to send electronic messages anywhere else in the world where high schools are also connected to the Internet. Unfortunately, this rules out countries such as Thailand and India at the moment, where, although university students have Internet accounts, high schools cannot afford to join the system. But schools in countries such as Taiwan and Japan are now easily accessible to North American students through the Internet. For instance, my Ontario students are presently connected with high school students in three different Japanese cities.

2. Before I began my research work at David Low's school in Vancouver I joined a computer forum on Fidonet known as Asian Link. On this forum students and adults primarily from Pacific Rim countries, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan, discuss issues of common interest to them. One of the students whom I met in this way was Timothy Chen at an international school in Taipei City, Taiwan. Timothy used the Asian Link connection to gather information about Pacific Rim issues for his school's Global Awareness Club. Timothy, whose parents were Taiwanese, had grown up in the United States and then moved to Taiwan as a teenager because his father had been recalled to Taiwan by his company. Although Timothy missed the friends and brother he had left behind in the United States, he used his e-mail connections to help him maintain contact with his home across the Pacific. It was Timothy Chen's example that first excited me about the prospect of using international e-mail as a bridge between cultures.

3. Because propaganda contains both efferent and aesthetic elements, it is pointless to read it either purely for its aesthetic value or simply as objective fact. For two good examples of the efficacy of deconstructive reading strategies in the critical interpretation of the discourse practices employed by propagandists see Derrida's
deconstruction of the term "apartheid" as it is used in South African juridical and religious discourses (Derrida, 1985b) and Hilary Janks's analyses of the uses of propaganda in South African journalism (Janks, 1989) and education (Janks, 1990).

4. I met Fred Kemp, the originator of poststructural computer network theory, at a conference where we were both presenting papers on Computers and Composition hosted by the New York Institute of Technology on Long Island. On that occasion Fred demonstrated how to do chat mode links between schools by connecting conference participants in New York with students at universities in Michigan and Florida for a real-time, three way chat via computer communications. I have described in Chapter 4 of this thesis how I then used the same procedure to link students in Newfoundland, Ontario, and British Columbia to carry out discussions about Native issues.

5. The following quotation from Matsui about the treatment of Japanese women in the work force powerfully illustrates her point. "The majority of female workers in Japan are young women who work till marriage or childbirth, and middle-aged part-time workers who come back to a job after the children grow up. Their average wage is about half that of male workers; they are merely expendables at the bottom of the employment ladder. In order to maintain a solid lifelong employment system, the major characteristic of Japanese companies, it is necessary to have such women workers who can easily be hired and fired, as a cushion" (Matsui, 1987, p. 41).

6. When I first began my investigations into international computer communications networks, besides exploring the Internet, which is a powerful, government-funded system for linking educators around the world, I also joined the amateur network known as Fidonet. For teachers who cannot afford to join the Internet, Fidonet is an inexpensive alternative method of carrying out international e-mail communications. Fidonet is also indirectly connected to Internet so that messages can be sent from the one system into the other through electronic gateways. However, while a message from Vancouver to Hong Kong on the Internet can travel to its destination in a matter of minutes, on Fidonet it could take two or three days to reach its destination.

7. A version of this chapter has been published in the Fall 1992 issue of the journal, Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented
Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy, under the title, "Reading Between Worlds: Computer-Mediated Intercultural Responses to Asian Literature." I was able to carry out this research work as a member of the Learning Connections Project, under the guidance of its directors, Dr. John Willinsky of the University of British Columbia's Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction and Dr. Lorri Neilsen of Nova Scotia's Mount St. Vincent University. The Learning Connections Project was funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
Chapter 7
The Antiracist Conception

During the past decade some school boards in Ontario have offered compelling arguments for shifting the focus of high school literature programs toward antiracist methodologies. And, with the completion of the Ontario Ministry of Education's new policy guidelines for Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards (1993) which stipulate that antiracist teaching practices must be implemented in all Ontario high schools and elementary schools by September of 1995, high school English teachers across the province are bound to be concerned about how they are to change their curricula as the deadline approaches to meet the goals of the Ministry of Education. The new policy document states quite clearly the goal of antiracist English education:

Antiracist curriculum provides a balance of perspectives. It enables all students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and provides each student with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to live in a complex and diverse world. It consciously examines and challenges the Eurocentric nature of curriculum and of the society in which young people are growing up. (p. 13)

Ontario high school teachers of English, however, have certainly not traditionally been concerned about challenging
the inherent Eurocentrism of their literature curricula and of Canadian society in general. Only recently have some Ontario English teachers become aware of the effects that British imperialism has had upon the cultural work which they do each day in their classrooms. Robert Morgan's historical survey of Ontario's English literature programs over the past 120 years, for example, has exposed the cultural hegemony which these programs have helped to perpetuate. "The predominance of 'English' authors in school literary anthologies and the referential universe they instantiated (English scenery, landmarks, heroes) was a clear message to the diverse peoples who settled here during the period I examine, an assimilationist signal that the terms 'Motherland' or 'home' really designated but one legitimate set of memories and identities" (1990, p. 221). Morgan calls this use of English studies to produce a unified Anglocentric identity among colonials "textual imperialism," and he points out that the study of English literature began first not in England but in places such as Ontario as an experiment to encourage Canadians to remain loyal to Britain. Morgan sees the Ontario Ministry of Education English Guidelines (1987) as a continuation of the tradition of textual domination despite their inclusion of multicultural literature. "In spite of the espoused
'multiculturalism' of recent Ontario government pronouncements on the teaching of English, the stress continues to fall upon a monochromatic and stable nationalism" (p. 198).

Like Morgan, Jim Cummins, in his analysis of programs and policies in Ontario entitled "From Multiculturalism to Antiracist Education" (1988), argues that "in most classrooms, the hidden curriculum still conforms largely to the ideology of 'Anglo-conformity'" (p. 127). Cummins exposes examples of institutionalized racism in the interactions between educators and minority students. He argues that the resulting systemic inequities can only be overcome by empowering minority students through antiracist education.

In 1983 the Ontario government published its Black Studies curriculum document. Here for the first time there was an admission that existing high school texts contained virtually no references to the African-Canadian experience with which students in Ontario could identify. This document also set out as a goal the development of a positive self concept in African-Canadian students.

In a proposed novel unit, the document recommends the study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) which "depicts life in an African society before the arrival of
European missionaries and reveals how the internal weaknesses in the traditional society and the European presence cause the society to fall apart" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1983, p. 70). It is interesting to note, as well, that one of the recommended activities of the Black Studies unit on Achebe's novel is for students in small groups to "discuss why they identify with certain characters and not with others and whether the figures in the novel have a universal appeal" (p. 69). However, in 1975 Chinua Achebe stated that he would "like to see the word universal banned altogether from discussions of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe" (Achebe, 1975, p. 13). Thus, even thought the Black Studies document was a positive step toward the realization of antiracist education in Ontario, it did not go far enough in its attempts to encourage students and teachers to examine their Eurocentric biases.

Efforts such as these at acknowledging the struggle of Africans against white domination were not sufficient to satisfy the calls for antiracist education coming from such organizations as The Urban Alliance on Race Relations which published Barb Thomas's article in 1984 entitled "Principles of Antiracist Education." Thomas argues, instead, for a
much more direct approach to confronting racism in education:

It is important to define, clearly, the oppositional nature of antiracist education before the uncomfortable edges are smoothed and we are left with yet another term for 'dealing with diversity'... Antiracist education posits that diversity per se is not the problem; nor necessarily is preservation of one's heritage. It is the significance that is attached to differences, and more importantly, the way that differences are used to justify unequal treatment that is the problem. (Thomas, 1984, pp. 20-21)

In 1987 the Scarborough Board of Education produced a 64-page policy statement (in response to the high ratio of visible minority families in the community) entitled Race Relations, Ethnic Relations, and Multicultural Policy. Among its policy statements were the following:

The Scarborough Board of Education will take an active role in the elimination of all racial and cultural discrimination, including those policies and practices which, while not intentionally discriminatory, have a discriminatory effect. (Scarborough Board of Education, 1987, p. 16)

The Scarborough Board of Education provides encouragement and opportunities for all staff and trustees to develop their knowledge, sensitivity, and skills in areas related to multiculturalism, race relations, and antiracist education. (p. 17)

In the North York Board of Education, the Coordinator of English Curriculum, Ellen Anderson, and the Head of English for A. Y. Jackson Secondary School, Robert Lebans, produced a 200-page curriculum document based upon a conference held for secondary, junior high, and middle
school English/Language Arts teachers, the title of which was *The Role of the Reader in the Curriculum: The Third Report: A Curricular Approach to Antiracist Education* (1988). The purpose of this document was "to legitimize, to normalize, and to validate the experiences of all students representing all racial and ethnic groups in our multicultural society through the identification and discussion of racial and ethnic bias in literature and through the teaching of a multicultural curriculum" (p. 3). The document provides North York English teachers with background research on such topics as "Suggestions for Developing Positive Racial Attitudes," "Huckleberry Finn and the Traditions of Blackface Minstrelsy," and "Does Literature Promote Racism in High Schools?" But even more helpful than these articles is the list of the basic aspects to consider when examining materials for use in the classroom. These aspects were derived from Dr. Robert Moore's keynote address, "Racism in the Curriculum." Three of Moore's aspects are historical background, language and terminology, and characterization.

Concerning historical background Moore observes that teachers and students should recognize the roles played by people of colour and by women in Canada's past and that books set in various eras should be checked for accuracy.
with regard to their depiction of these groups. He also argues that students should understand the systemic nature of racism and should be made aware of the limitations of any historical accounts which treat racism and discrimination as if these were only the result of prejudiced individuals.

Some questions which the report therefore recommends that students and teachers ask when applying the historical accuracy criterion in order to identify explicit and implicit racial bias in literature are:

Is colonial experience glorified as being beneficial to the third world group or country, rather than beneficial to the colonizing country or business interests of the colonizer?

Is the history recounted from the viewpoint of what was advantageous to whites or how events appeared to whites?

Are the minority heroes and heroines in the textbook the people who acted on behalf of their own people? Or are they described in terms of the help that they gave to white interests? (p. 13)

If students are investigating language and terminology in learning materials Moore recommends that teachers draw their attention to value-laden terms such as "inscrutable," "primitive," and "savage" when these words are used to describe particular people of colour. Some questions to ask under this criterion might be:

Are minority characters given unusual or "funny" names, given only first names, or left nameless?
Does the work present colour symbolism that implies that white is positive and other colours are negative? (p. 14)

Examples of Moore's aspect of characterization are the super-minority syndrome "in which a person of colour must accomplish a superordinate task in order to win acceptance from whites," (p. 11) and victim-blaming in which people of colour are said to need to learn English or to assimilate in order to solve their problems. Some questions to ask when looking for instances of racist characterization are:

Does the author omit a minority perspective in describing a situation or conflict?

Does the author present a story line in which the goal of the third world character is to be accepted by whites, or in which the third world character is accepted only after performing superhuman feats or exhibiting superhuman forgiveness? (p. 11)

When these criteria were applied by teachers at the conference to the passage from Harper Lee's novel, To Kill a Mockingbird (1960), in which Mrs. Merriweather and Mrs. Farrow discuss, in the presence of the maid, Sophy, the problems which they have experienced with "sulky" domestic servants, the teachers derived the following strategies for decoding the characters' racist discourse:

1. As a pre-reading exercise, ask students to describe in their journals any situations in which they have ever had to remain silent and accepting when they did not want to, and share these with a learning partner.

2. Have each learning partner ask the questions: "Why did you remain silent?" "Why didn't you do anything?"
3. As a reading exercise, ask students which comments made by Mrs. Merriweather would insult the black servant serving the coffee and why she might remain silent. (p. 25)

Projects such as these which were dedicated to developing antiracist approaches for the teaching of high school English and which were carried out by a few Ontario school boards during the 1980s eventually led the Ministry of Education to develop policies which mandated the teaching of multicultural literature on a province-wide basis. Even though the Ontario government's policy statements had not yet embraced antiracism in 1987 when John Borovilos and Suwanda Sugunasiri published their English Guidelines profile, Multicultural Literature Within the English Curriculum, they did manage to include antiracist strategies in their curriculum at a time when Ontario's English Guidelines were still emphasizing the multicultural goal of the "celebration of diversity" rather than the antiracist goal of "decoding discrimination." For instance, included in the profile is a "Checklist for the Evaluation of Racial, Religious, and Cultural Bias in Learning Materials" which asks such questions as "Are members of minority groups depicted only in subservient and passive roles?"

Both the Multicultural Literature profile (1987) and Borovilos's textbook, Breaking Through (1990), are intended
to help students to break through barriers of racial and ethnic prejudice by encouraging them to respond to short stories, poems, and essays written by and about Canadian immigrants, native people, visible minorities, and ethnic groups. Borovilos's multicultural goal, as is clearly stated to the students in the preface of *Breaking Through*, is to help them to "acknowledge the similarities and celebrate the differences of all the people in Canada's mosaic" (p. xiii). However, Borovilos demonstrates a definite interest, as well, in combating racism through some of his assignments and selections. For example, after students have read John Barber's essay, "History's Racial Barriers," Borovilos asks them, "According to Barber, what caused 'history's racial barriers' in Canada? How and why were those barriers overcome? Do you agree with Barber's major thesis?" (p. 276).

The variety of response strategies which he offers the students provide them with interesting "entry points" for diary writing, small group discussions, and imaginative extensions, as well as many other approaches which encourage them to share their thoughts about these works with each other. Both this textbook and his profile provide lists of additional readings such as plays and novels so that the students may carry on independent studies after they have
acquired a basic understanding of the course's subject matter.

Rather than examining diverse cultural origins through the study of world literature, Borovilos focusses upon Canadian writers because he wishes to reinforce the students' appreciation for their Canadian identity and to emphasize such themes as cultural conflict, assimilation, and xenophobia. Perhaps this is because he has designed his course to fit within the multicultural policy of the Ontario Ministry of Education's guidelines which require that such a course should "reflect our pluralistic society and the many contributions made by both men and women, and by minority and ethnic groups" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987, p. 4).

If we examine one of the works included in Borovilos' text, we can easily see, however, that he does not intend his students to accept the notion of multiculturalism uncritically. In the essay, "I'm not racist but...," Neil Bissoondath makes the following attack upon Canada's multicultural policy:

We like to think, in this country, that our multicultural mosaic will help nudge us into a greater openness. But multiculturalism as we know it indulges in stereotype, depends on it for a dash of colour and the flash of dance. It fails to address the most basic questions people have about each other: Do those men doing the Dragon Dance really all belong to secret
criminal societies?... Such questions do not seem to be the concern of the government's multicultural programs, superficial and exhibitionistic as they have become. (Borovilos, 1990, p. 190)

It is clear from this excerpt alone that Borovilos has selected writers who are anything but fence sitters. Students and teachers cannot remain neutral when dealing with Bissoondath's criticisms of the government's policy and of the society's false hope in our easy attainment of "openness." Rather, Borovilos encourages his students to take strong positions on multicultural issues in order to work out an understanding with fellow classmates on the basis of serious debate.

Even though the work of English teachers and coordinators such as John Borovilos, Robert Lebans, and Ellen Anderson has done so much to launch the attack upon Eurocentric representations of people of colour in the textbooks studied by Ontario high school students of multicultural literature, these educators' theories of representation lack the complexity and sophistication which the postcolonial theory of representation brings to the multicultural literature curriculum conception. In the following pages, therefore, I propose a modification to the antiracist curriculum conception which takes into account the ways in which postcolonial theory has redefined the
notion of literary representation to include a fluid and heterogeneous view of racism and racial difference.

However, before I discuss the postcolonial modifications which I propose to make to the antiracist conception of the multicultural literature curriculum, I would like to explain the differences between multiculturalism and antiracism which I have alluded to earlier in this chapter. By so doing I intend to clarify how antiracist educators view the term "racism." As well, I intend to show the connections between antiracist and postcolonial criticisms of multicultural education policies and curricula which fail to address adequately the problems of racism in Canada and the world.

Racism in Canada cannot, as some multiculturalists would have us believe, be attributed to the aberrant attitudes and behaviours of a few white supremacists, but, instead, it must be seen as a phenomenon that is deeply ingrained within the political, social, economic, and cultural discourses and practices which are the legacy of centuries of colonial oppression. When Canada's high school students read multicultural literature, therefore, they should be given the opportunity to examine some of the broader postcolonial intertextual terrain within which the particular texts they are studying have been constructed.
For instance, they should be made aware that racism has been a persistent feature of the Canadian experience ever since the first Europeans began to colonize North America in the 16th century. After perpetrating numerous crimes against Natives during the early years of British and French colonial rule in the new country which came to be known as Canada, one of the colonial oppressors' more noteworthy abuses of First Nations people was the Indian Act of 1876 which gave government administrators control over the lives of Indians, Metis, and Inuit by denying them the right to own land, to hold or attend large gatherings, to leave the reservations without permission, and to educate their children in the ways of their ancestors (Frideres, 1988, p. 75).

Although Canada's disenfranchised indigenous communities have experienced some of the most devastating effects of racism, such as the high levels of suicide among Native youths, many other minority groups in Canada have also suffered the abuses of institutional racism. After Chinese-Canadians were no longer needed as a source of cheap labour with which to build the trans-Canada railroad, numerous bills were passed to restrict their rights, the most notorious of which was the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act which excluded the Chinese from entering Canada for twenty-
four years before it was repealed" (Li, 1988, p. 2). During
the Second World War 22,000 Canadians of Japanese descent
were forced to give up all of their property and to live in
internment camps even though the Vice-Chief of the General
Staff of the Canadian Army saw them as no threat to Canadian
security (Ujimoto, 1988, p. 143). In Canada, and throughout
the British colonies, the abuses of East Indians as
indentured labourers often resulted in their deaths by
disease or suicide because of a system of economic
exploitation which in many respects was indistinguishable
from slavery (Bolaria, 1988, p. 164).

At the present time, although the Canadian government
has made some significant attempts to improve its human
rights legislation and to make reparations for past
injustices through, for instance, the settlement of some
Native land claims, there are still daily occurrences of
racist abuses of people of colour at the hands of the white
majority. For example, during 1984 while 5,235 immigrants
were admitted to Canada as service workers with landed
immigrant status, 27,042 non-immigrants were admitted to
perform service work. As one Jamaican woman observed, "We
have become the new coolies in Canada - good enough to work
on the land but not good enough to remain in the country"
(Bolaria, p. 200).
A view of racial difference which does not focus the students' attention upon such instances of institutional racism, but simply encourages them to appreciate Canada's cultural diversity, will fail to enable high school students to deconstruct racist discourse as they encounter it in dominant culture (mis)representations of Canada's racial minorities, and such a view will also poorly prepare them to understand what minority writers are doing when they write back against the oppressive discourses of empire in their counter-hegemonic texts. To help teachers to avoid the pitfalls of the multiculturalist approach to dealing with racial diversity, therefore, Godfrey Brandt, in his book, *The Realization of Antiracist Teaching* (1986), makes the following distinctions between multicultural and antiracist discourse. While multiculturalists feel that the basic problem is one of non-recognition of minority people and of intercultural misunderstanding based upon ethnocentrism, antiracists feel that racism has historical roots and is embedded in such institutional practices as racial exploitation, containment, and marginalization. The multiculturalists, therefore, believe that we simply need to find consensus between the majority and minorities by using cultural pluralism as the model, and that racism will then disappear, while antiracists complain of the conflict
between the racist state and racially-defined oppressed groups. Where the key concepts for the multiculturalist are cultural awareness, equality, and self esteem, the antiracists are more concerned about human rights, power, and justice. While multiculturalists wish to eradicate prejudice, misunderstanding, and ignorance, the antiracists wish to fight existing power structures. In a word, then, multiculturalism means "awareness" while antiracism means "struggle" (p. 121).

Although I have presented Brandt's distinctions between multicultural and antiracist discourse as if there were a clear difference separating the two approaches, Brandt is careful to point out that these distinctions are in fact fuzzy and that there are at least five ways of describing the relationship between multiculturalism and antiracism.

The first perspective describes multiculturalism as the attempt to bring about greater social harmony and mutual understanding in a society which is basically consensual. Racism is rarely addressed from this multicultural perspective because its main goal is the celebration of diverse cultures. The second perspective sees antiracism as a subset of the dominant culture's multicultural program. Antiracists would argue that this second perspective fails to acknowledge that multiculturalism is "a racial form of
education constructed by the oppressors to maintain the status quo of the dominant and dominated, of the oppressor and oppressed" (p. 118). In the third perspective teachers with the right antiracist consciousness are expected to multiculturalize the curriculum content, but this, of course, can be a difficult task because of those complex factors beyond the teachers' control which govern the development of specific curricula. The fourth perspective emphasizes antiracism as the teacher's primary goal, but it also assumes that the multicultural approach is a necessary feature of such antiracist education. And, finally, the fifth perspective is that multiculturalism is a strategy used by the dominant culture to cope with, rather than to meet the special needs of, minority groups. Antiracist education must be led, therefore, by the minority groups' suggestions for opposing racism.

Brandt's distinctions between antiracism and multiculturalism are very useful to English teachers who would like to ensure that they are empowering their students to decode racist discourse at the same time as they are teaching them how to read multicultural literature. Nevertheless, what Brandt and many other antiracist educators fail to do when they discuss how to combat racism is to problematize the term "racism" itself. For a
postcolonial deconstruction of this key term in the antiracist conception I now turn to the work of the African American literary theorist, Henry Louis Gates.

One of the documentaries which I used to familiarize my OAC English students with the postcolonial theory of representation was *Color Adjustment* (1992), which was produced and directed by Marlon Riggs, with the support of the National Black Programming Consortium. In this videotape, sociologist, Herman Gray, and cultural critics, Patricia Turner and Henry Louis Gates Jr. provide a clear and easily understandable deconstruction of the changing image of blacks on American television from the 1950s to the present. Near the beginning of the OAC multicultural literature course I introduced my students to the relationship between the problem of racism and postcolonial notions of representation by showing them this hour-long study of such television classics as, "Amos and Andy," "The Beulah Show," "The Nat King Cole Show," "Julia," "East Side, West Side," "I Spy," "All in the Family," "Roots," and "The Bill Cosby Show."

The documentary's thesis, as it is elaborated by Gates and his colleagues, is that it is the task of television producers to sell the dream of the mythic American family in such a way as to attract, without controversy, a large
viewing audience. In shows about white families in the
1950s, such as "Father Knows Best," characters lived an
ideal life in which love and humour could overcome any
conflicts that might arise for the fictional, normal
American family. Representations of black families, on the
other hand, went through a series of adjustments over the
first forty years of television as producers wrestled with
issues of race relations at the same time as they tried to
satisfy their sponsors' desire for high ratings.¹

The students' viewing of Color Adjustment was intended
to clarify for them Gates's key point about the problem of
literary representation that no longer "are the concepts of
black and white thought to be preconstituted; rather they
are mutually constitutive and socially produced" (Gates,
1992, p. 309). Gates has arrived at this formulation of the
problematic nature of the black/white binary opposition by
adopting a poststructural approach to interpreting African-
American literature and culture:

Drawing on poststructuralist theory as well as deriving
theories from black expressive, vernacular culture,...
[the work of critics such as Gates] might be
characterized as a new black aesthetic movement, though
it problematizes the categories of both the "black" and
the "aesthetic." An initial phase of theorizing has
given away to the generation of close readings that
attend the "social text" as well. These critics use
close readings to reveal cultural contradictions and
the social aspects of literature, the larger dynamics
Besides the *Color Adjustment* documentary I provided the OAC students, as well, with a second model for the antiracist, postcolonial deconstruction of representations of blacks by encouraging them to read Chinua Achebe's essay, "An Image of Africa" (1988), in which he selects several quotations from *Heart of Darkness* in order to prove that "Joseph Conrad was a thorough-going racist" (Achebe, 1988, p. 11). Achebe develops the argument that Conrad's representation of Africans reduces them to a "whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling" (Conrad cited in Achebe, 1988, p. 5). He illustrates with several such quotations how Conrad denies speech to his Africans, how he contrasts the demon lover of Kurtz with his civilized fiancee back in Europe, and how he uses Africans to serve as a part of the primitive and evil jungle rather than as three-dimensional human beings.

Both the Gates documentary and the Achebe article demonstrated to students that, while antiracism might be an important aspect of their study of multicultural literature, the postcolonial theory of representation provides them with many different ways of interpreting the discourses of race.
which they encounter both in imperialist fiction such as Conrad's and in resistance texts such as Achebe's.

When the students next proceeded to read Nadine Gordimer's short story, "Africa Emergent" (1992), many of them made good use of their newly acquired understanding of literary representation in their written and oral responses to the story. "Africa Emergent" was selected from Barbara Solomon's anthology, Other Voices, Other Vistas (1992), which is an excellent collection of contemporary short stories from Africa, China, India, Japan, and Latin America. Several of the short stories which I used in the OAC Multicultural Literature course were taken from this anthology.³

"Africa Emergent" is a complex tale narrated by a liberal, white South African architect who is trying to make sense of the relationships which he has experienced over a number of years with two black men. He had met them both in an amateur theatrical group and had tried to help each of them to experience success in their chosen vocations. The first black man, Elias Nkomo, a gifted sculptor, is given the chance by an American benefactor to study art in the United States. But once he leaves South Africa he knows he will never be allowed to return. Elias has difficulty producing art in the United States and he seems to suffer
feelings of displacement as, for example, he is conscripted by Stokely Carmichael to speak (wearing West African robes) at an anti-apartheid rally. Eventually Elias kills himself leaving the narrator to wonder whether or not he was personally responsible in some way for the death of Elias. The second black man, who remains nameless throughout the story, is a friend of Elias who also travels to the United States to study. His studies involve acting and directing. This "friend" of Elias is suspected of being a member of the South African secret police, but in the end he is imprisoned for treason, and so the narrator remains uncertain about what really are the friend's true allegiances.

In order to enable the students to attempt their own interpretations of the story, I asked them for homework to write some observations about "African Emergent" in their response journals but did not give them any questions to consider in advance, because I did not wish to influence their interpretations. When they came to class the next day we sat in a large circle and listened as students volunteered either to read their responses verbatim or to present their interpretations extemporaneously if they wished. After each response was heard other students could ask questions or they could offer counterarguments.
One student, for example, offered the following interpretation which in its references to the story's representations of blackness and whiteness establishes the added dimension that postcolonial readings can bring to the antiracist project:

The two men, the narrator and Elias, seem to be close but really aren't, and it is not until Elias is gone that the narrator realizes the truth. He only likes Elias for his "white" qualities. Elias wanted to fit in and the narrator liked to see this in him and tried to amplify this by totally immersing him in white society.

[The unnamed character,] "he," is the other part of the story that is more difficult to explain. He is the perfect example of someone who has no real home. He is black but he is also "white." This marks him as an outcast in both societies.

Elias has a strong love for his home so moving to the U.S. greatly affects him. He loses his real home and can't return and nobody in the U.S. understands his real ancestry. The Americans associate Elias with an image that he is nothing like.

This student's remarks were typical of many which were presented to the class as the students came to recognize that racism in the story was not a matter of individual, psychological bigotry but of the institutionalized segregation of whites and blacks through the systems of apartheid in South Africa and of racial discrimination in the United States. But even more significant was the fact that many of the students understood that the African-Americans in Gordimer's narrative were also involved in a subtle way in the imperialist commodification of Elias as an
authentic and noble black brother from their ancestral homeland. The student's observations that the unnamed man is "black but he is also 'white'" and that Elias is only liked "for his 'white' qualities" also indicate that Gates's deconstruction of the black/white binary opposition in Color Adjustment was clearly understood by my students. In its attempt to develop students' levels of multicultural literacy the postcolonial approach encourages them to think in more complex ways than does the antiracist conception about the possible meanings of the distinctions made in their texts between blacks and whites or between Africans and African-Americans. While the antiracist conception, like the postcolonial approach, focusses upon the racist treatment of blacks in the story, its lack of a poststructural theory of representation which encourages students to play with binary oppositions such as black/white does not enable students to think seriously about the complicities and commonalities among dominant and subaltern groups or about the socially constructed nature of blackness and whiteness.

A second student, Jeff, made some valuable contributions to the class discussion by comparing the representations of black-white relations, of institutional racism, and of injustice as these are portrayed in "Africa
Emergent" with what he had been learning in his independent study project about these aspects of South Africa from his analysis of Andre Brink's novel, *A Dry White Season* (1979). For each of the five cultural groups (Africans, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and Natives) whose literatures the class studied, approximately one fifth of the students were involved in independent studies of that culture's literature. Thus, when the students were discussing African stories, for example, several of them were able to contribute useful additional information from their reading of other books about African and African-America peoples. In Jeff's case, for example, he chose to compare depictions of racial tension in Brink's novel with Spike Lee's attempt to represent on film racial tensions in the United States in *Do the Right Thing*. Jeff's postcolonial analysis of the complexities of representing racism and racial difference is clearly evident in the following excerpt from his essay on "Racial Tension in *Do the Right Thing* and *A Dry White Season*:

Brink chooses to have a white man tell a predominantly black story for several reasons. One reason is likely that Brink does not want to overstep his bounds by speculating on how a black man would feel about the situation in South Africa... It is not by chance that [the white narrator] Ben Du Toit is ignorant of the treatment of blacks at the start of the story.... Through other characters, such as Stanley and Melanie, Brink makes sure this ignorance is not an acceptable
excuse for Ben's inaction. These characters both note that Ben's ignorance was due in part to his living with his eyes closed. Only by having a white narrator can Brink have a realistic means to enter into the true bureaucracy of the South African system of government. Du Toit's failed inquests into the deaths of the Ngunbuenes vivify the injustice of the system. A black narrator would tell of the turmoil of the townships better but would not even get through the doors of government buildings where the root of the problem is found.

When a student named Keith decided in his independent study project to compare representations of black men in Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* (1965) with those in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960), he discovered several interesting contrasts between the two books:

Hemingway respects the talented hunter, the beautiful tribe, but cruelly pokes fun at the belligerent or "useless" black man. He writes about the Masai that "they were tall, their teeth white and good, their hair was stained brown...they carried spears and were extremely jolly, not sullen and contemptuous like the northern Masai...They were the tallest, best built, handsomest people I had seen in Africa." His words of praise for the Masai's physical appearance are overwhelming. He qualifies his statement of course with the words "best in Africa" and makes no mention of any cognitive, spiritual, musical or other abilities they might possess. The unfortunate non-hunter, the black man with "ugly negroid features" (p. 123), is ridiculed. He is also considered untrustworthy. One such man they called the "tragedian" (p. 202), was named this because of his animated dress and speech. He could not hunt well, and Hemingway must have disliked him. "He talks in his own bloody language all the time, he's probably lying" (321).

Conversely, in *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe suggests that it was British interference in Nigeria that created the lies and corruption that plague the government. This book followed *Things Fall Apart*, a story about the disintegration of a Nigerian village at
the hands of European colonizers. In Achebe's second novel, the English don't have the same influence as they did during the nineteenth century, but it seems that they still dominate the economy. A combination of corrupt, bribe-propelled politicians and a foreign-based economy, provide an inhospitable environment for the heroic Obi Okonkwo to succeed.

It is, therefore, evident in each of the above excerpts from response journals and independent study papers, that if senior high school students are given the rudiments of a postcolonial theory of representation upon which to base their interpretations of racist discourse in multicultural literature, then they are capable of achieving what I believe to be rather sophisticated readings which enable them to see, not only that racism is a product of imperialism, but also that it is an issue which is hotly contested within cultural discourses through writers' strategic deployments of stereotypical and oppositional representations of self and Other.

While John Borovilos's antiracist conception of the multicultural literature program has made a tremendous contribution to the debates over racism in Ontario's high school English classes, I have argued that the addition of postcolonial reading strategies to programs such as his can improve students' abilities to interpret how racism is reproduced and resisted in the discourses which traverse their multicultural literature texts.
Notes

1. Gates argues that "Roots" represented the dream of the mythic American family as this extremely popular made-for-television movie reduced the history of structural racism in the United States to a tale of the brave struggles and eventual triumph of one immigrant family fighting against a few evil white men and establishing themselves in the promised land. And in the 1980s "The Bill Cosby Show," with its representation of a wealthy, successful black family, reinforced neo-conservative beliefs in the post-civil rights politics of the Reagan era with the comforting myth that if African-Americans would only develop the right attitude they could overcome the mounting unemployment rate and become doctors and lawyers.

2. Gates's use of poststructural reading strategies has been criticized by William E. Cain who argues that "the risk that accompanies certain poststructuralist readings of Afro-American literature -- a risk apparent in Gates book -- is that these readings may make the text less historically grounded and less socially significant even as they seek to enliven it with methodologically up-to-date, and seemingly historicized, terms" (Cain, 1988, p. 201).

3. Solomon provides an introduction to the anthology in which she discusses some of the reasons for reading contemporary multicultural fiction. Among these reasons she suggests that it can show us how "tribal values have been destroyed by colonialism" (Solomon, 1992, p. 19). Although some of Solomon's introductory remarks about "universal human values" and "an essential human condition" (p. 14) indicate that she is not, herself, a postcolonial theorist, her analysis of such themes as "global awareness," "human rights," and "poverty" can serve as useful starters for class discussions about the anthology's stories. Also the biographical information which Solomon presents is very helpful for its suggestions of additional readings by each author which the students might wish to consider. Some of the internationally respected writers included in Other Voices, Other Vistas are Chinua Achebe, Wang Anyi, Wang Meng, R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Kobo Abe, Yukio Mishima, Isabel Allende, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Jorge Luis Borges.
Chapter 8
Conclusions

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to compare the effectiveness of existing multicultural literature curriculum conceptions with the postcolonial approach. These comparisons have illustrated various ways in which the postcolonial conception offers more pertinent theoretical perspectives and reading strategies than do the New Critical, archetypal, feminist, reader-response, and antiracist conceptions for helping students and teachers to interpret the necessarily dynamic and heterogeneous textual representations of dominant and subaltern cultures as these are encountered in literary works.

My analysis of the New Critical conception's reliance upon aesthetic interpretation and upon the notion of the unified work of literature has shown how the postcolonial conception can retain many of the worthwhile reading strategies of the New Critical approach while, at the same time, it can add to the critical process the opportunity for students to deconstruct, for example, Orientalist discourses which traverse Eurocentric depictions of Indians.
In Chapter 4 I deconstructed the archetypal conception's attempts, on the one hand, to locate North American Native people's essence inside a purported mystical bond with nature and, on the other, to use Jung's theory of archetypes to justify this essentialist move. My reason for carrying out a postcolonial critique of the archetypal conception was that, as Arnold Krupat argues, archetypalism affords no space in which cultural difference can be explored to the advantage of both Native and non-Native border intellectuals.

My critique of the feminist conception's attempt to identify the essential features of oppressed women as these features are discussed in world literature is that this universalist project fails to take into consideration the great variety of problems experienced by women of different cultures as well as the variations in experience among women within a given community such as the first- and second-generation Chinese-Americans represented in the autobiographical fiction of Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan.

The point of my deconstruction of the reader-response conception's notion of the reader's relationship to culture is that it does not take into account the bicultural perspectives which many high school students in Canada and
the United States today bring to their interpretations of literary texts. From the postcolonial perspective there is no such thing as a pure cultural insider. Students reading across cultures, therefore, can often deconstruct the traditional insider-outsider binary opposition which has been used, for instance, by essentialists to stereotype Asian people and their cultures.

Finally, the problem which I found with the antiracist conception's definition of "racism" is that, while it is very effective at drawing student's attention to imperialism's project of reifying "racial difference" to perpetuate the dominant culture's control over the subaltern within such oppressive social, political, and legal constructions as apartheid, antiracism lacks a sophisticated theory of representation with which to enable students to deconstruct racist rhetoric within imperialist discourses. As well, the antiracist conception of the multicultural literature curriculum does not sufficiently emphasize the nature of the struggles which take place, for example, when writers such as Chinua Achebe combine European and Ibu narrative techniques to write back against the representational strategies employed by Eurocentric writers.

Although each chapter has focused upon a different conception of the multicultural literature curriculum, the
criteria which I have employed to measure the effectiveness of each curricular approach have been the same throughout the thesis. In every case I have argued that what distinguishes the postcolonial conception from other approaches to the teaching of multicultural literature is its goal of developing multicultural literacy in students by helping them to achieve greater sophistication in their interpretations of texts and by enabling them to reach an acceptable level of skill at intercultural communication.

What remains to be elaborated, however, is the nature of the challenges which still face the advocates of the postcolonial conception. I therefore devote the first half of this chapter to answering three questions which I have yet to address fully in the previous chapters: 1) What have been the results of my border pedagogic attempts to develop multicultural literacy in students? 2) How are teachers to construct their authority within a poststructural curriculum conception? and 3) How are students to adopt a moral position while recognizing the need to relativize their own beliefs when reading the literature of other cultures? I then conclude by examining some of the potentially fruitful aspects of the postcolonial conception which are perhaps worthy of further consideration by teachers and researchers who may wish to construct their own multicultural literature.
curricula and to expand upon the theoretical foundations of this project.

Throughout this thesis I have chosen to use the term multicultural literacy, rather than cultural literacy, to describe the reading and writing skills acquired by the students I have studied. I have defined multicultural literacy in Chapter 2 as involving students in the interpretation of various literatures, and I have, thus, distinguished it from E. D. Hirsch's (1987) notion of cultural literacy which encourages students instead to focus primarily upon classic and modern works of the Western literary tradition. In so doing I have attempted to emphasize how important it is for the teacher, as border pedagogue, to encourage students to deconstruct notions of cultural difference which they encounter in their texts. Such postcolonial responses to texts enable students to analyse literary representations from multiple perspectives, thereby calling into question writers' stereotypical depictions of cultural groups. It obviously lies beyond the scope of this thesis to state in quantifiable terms the extent to which the students in my study benefitted from their experiences. Nevertheless, each time I have read their response journals, tests, essays, and e-mail correspondence in order to assess the levels of
multicultural literacy attained by the students, I have asked myself whether or not they have come to a better understanding of themselves and their peers. At the same time I have considered to what extent their work with multicultural literature and their efforts at intercultural communication have changed their views of the various cultures they have studied.

In Roger Simon's book, *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility* (1992), he argues that young readers need to be given opportunities to "shift the grounds of [their] own readings" (p. 114):

> We might take the central aim of textual study as self-referential. That is, through a study of one's responses to text, one can be helped to locate oneself (one's perceptions, beliefs, desires) within the very 'worldly' discourses that constitute a person's way of being in the world. This would be done with the intent of raising questions as to the commitments, ethics, limitations, and possibilities of such discourses. This effort would be part of a pedagogical project that is concerned with helping students to come to a better understanding of who they are, how their history has been constituted, and how this knowledge can open up possibilities for change and enhancement, not only of their own lives but the lives of others as well. (pp. 114-115)

As I now briefly summarize some of the students' gains in multicultural literacy which I have recorded throughout this dissertation, I subscribe to Simon's vision of the central aim of textual study which is to help students to understand who they are and how they can change and enhance
not only "their own lives but the lives of others as well." In Chapter 3, for example, during one student's comparison of representations of Indian women in Forster's *A Passage to India* and Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and "The Management of Grief," she claimed to have learned a great deal about the difficulties encountered by Indian immigrant women in Canada, while, at the same time, she felt that she had gained an appreciation of the different ways in which Indian women were portrayed by each writer. The Native students in British Columbia and the non-Native students in Ontario whom I studied in Chapter 4, when given the opportunity to share, via computer communications, their impressions of family relationships and of racism, discovered both that they possessed a common respect for the stories of their elders and that each of their communities suffered, in different ways and to different degrees, from the effects of European imperialism's legacy of institutional racism. The young men and women students whom I observed in Chapter 5 exercised their skills at feminist interpretations of stories about Chinese women by both Chinese and British writers as they gained a new appreciation of the complexities of autobiographical fiction and of the contrasting values and discourses of first- and second-generation Chinese-Americans. In Chapter 6, the collaborative responses which
took place between bilingual Japanese students in Kyoto and Chinese-Canadian students in Vancouver enabled them not only to understand more clearly the themes and symbols of the Japanese short story which they studied together, but their collaborations also taught them that they were not alone in their feelings of dislocation as they attempted to share with each other what it means to be, in Trinh Minh-ha's terms, hyphenated selves. And, finally, the comparative analyses which students carried out in Chapter 7 between the representations of Africans which they discovered in the works of Eurocentric and postcolonial writers, helped them to attain a sophistication in their understanding of the differences between the writing, for example, of the tourist, Ernest Hemingway, and the resistance writer, Chinua Achebe, which they could not have achieved without border pedagogy's postcolonial approach to the development of multicultural literacy. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that the students' exposure to a rudimentary postcolonial theory of representation provided them with a broader base of reading and writing strategies and theoretical insights into the relationship between imperialism and culture than they would have had access to had they responded to their multicultural texts using only traditional literary critical reading strategies. Indeed, they repeatedly demonstrated in
their work, not only their newly acquired skill at comparing Eurocentric and postcolonial representations of dominant and subaltern cultures, but also their personal engagement with the moral, political, religious, and economic issues raised in the various discourses of their multicultural texts as they reassessed their own cultural assumptions in relation to those which they had encountered during their studies.

Despite my attempts, however, to prove, through analyses of student writing, that a valid and important variety of postcolonial interpretation can take place in the high school English classroom, critics of the postcolonial conception might still justifiably wonder whether or not the development of multicultural literacy is possible at the high school level if it requires students to become competent deconstructive theorists. Even Gayatri Spivak, one of postcolonial theory's strongest advocates, has claimed, in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993), concerning a form of literacy which closely parallels my own notion of multicultural literacy, that "it is perhaps unrealistic to expect transnational literacy in the high school classroom" (p. 269). And yet, in the same chapter, Spivak goes on to point out that "the high school humanities class is restructuring itself by way of books such as *Cultural Literacy*" (p. 270). If this restructuring process
is to take into account postcolonialism's concerns about the relationship between culture and imperialism, then there is little choice but to counter Hirsch's notion with some form of multicultural (transnational) literacy at the high school level.

If we look more closely for a moment at the way in which Spivak conceives transnational literacy it can be argued, I believe, that her pedagogical approach contains many of the same elements which are a part of the postcolonial conception I have been advocating here:

The point [of transnational cultural studies] is to negotiate between the national, the global, and the historical as well as the contemporary diasporic. We must both anthropologize the West, and study the various cultural systems of Africa, Asia, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas as if peopled by historical agents. (p. 278)

Spivak's only stated reason for excluding transnational literacy from the high school curriculum (and, for that matter, from the undergraduate curriculum as well) is that she is concerned about causing a "preprogrammed hostility toward poststructuralism" (p. 273) before the students reach the graduate school level. But she qualifies her remarks eventually with regard to the teaching of poststructural reading strategies at least to undergraduates:

It is because I am confident of the practical possibilities of the critique of humanism that I am cautious about using it too soon as more than a
pedagogical method, or as a pervasive and foregrounded structural topic of discussion. I am not discouraging theoretical teaching, or even an integration of theory into the general approach, on the undergraduate level. And I insist that the critical moment be included in teaching the great masters of European criticism, a practice that is all-too-often ignored even in graduate teaching. (p. 274)

In the final analysis, therefore, I believe that my decision to use postcolonial literary theory to inform border pedagogy is compatible with Spivak's transnational cultural literacy project. Both Spivak and I caution against teaching high school students either the abstruse critical vocabulary or the intricate and often maddening arguments of a Derrida, Foucault, or Lyotard. But I believe, as well, that I have provided some initial evidence in this dissertation that the hostility, which Spivak fears may be generated toward poststructuralism, need not occur if high school teachers are thoughtful about how they use theory and how they choose to construct their own authority within the classroom.

The problem of teaching multicultural literature to high school students from a poststructural perspective such as postcolonialism, as I have mentioned several times throughout this dissertation, is that the teacher must learn how to help students to dismantle the tools of imperialism's discourses while, at the same time, he or she is employed by an institution which, as Robert Morgan (1990) has argued,
has a century-old tradition of reproducing British Imperialist hegemonic discourses. If the teacher is, therefore, to subvert dominant culture Eurocentric discourse practices, then she or he must enable students to deconstruct teacher-talk in the same ways that they must be encouraged in the postcolonial model to deconstruct any other discourses which arise in classroom discussions and in their texts.

I turn next, therefore, to an analysis of the problem of negotiating teacher authority in the multicultural literature classroom because it is this problem which I believe is at the heart of debates about how to deconstruct the master narratives of imperialism in the multicultural classroom without at the same time completely undermining the authority of the teacher (Shor & Freire, 1987; Ellsworth, 1989; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). The problem of teacher authority in the postcolonial conception is directly related to the questioning of the metaphysical foundations of all master narratives by poststructural theory. Just as poststructural theory supplements the idea of authorial presence with the notion of intertextuality, so the focus in the multicultural literature classroom must shift, I would argue, so that the teacher does not act as the central authority on all matters. Instead, students can interact
with texts and with one another in the space that opens up when the teacher disappears as an enforcer of dominant culture discourse. One influential formulation of the crisis of authority is offered by Foucault in his essay, "What is an Author?":

It is not enough to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared. For the same reason, it is not enough to keep repeating (after Nietzsche) that God and man have died a common death. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers. (1989, p. 266)

The author's role as an authority figure, then, is called into question by poststructuralism in much the same way that the teacher's role is reconsidered from a postcolonial perspective. In the postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum teachers are encouraged to subvert their own authority as reproducers of dominant culture ideology. Thus, for example, they must consciously guard against speaking for the Other, whether that person is a student in the classroom or a multicultural writer whose work the students are trying to read. Linda Alcoff (1991) has carefully studied the problem of speaking for others and has made some important observations which can help to resolve the contentious issues which have arisen around the issue of teacher authority. As Alcoff points
out, with regard to the notion that a speaker's social location greatly affects his or her ability to speak for another, she rejects "reductionist theories of justification and essentialist accounts of what it means to have a location. To say that a location bears on meaning and truth is not the same as saying that location determines meaning and truth" (p. 16). In reference to Gayatri Spivak's article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988c), Alcoff argues that speaking for others can sometimes engage the speaker in the production of dangerous representations. "In the end Spivak prefers a 'speaking to,' in which the intellectual neither abnegates his or her discursive role nor presumes an authenticity of the oppressed but still allows for the possibility that the oppressed will produce a 'countersentence' that can then suggest a new historical narrative" (pp. 22-23). However, in order for border pedagogues to facilitate the production of the subaltern's "countersentences," according to Alcoff, these teachers must make a concerted effort to transform the cultural interactions within their classrooms by creating the conditions in which dialogic encounters can take place. She points out, for example, that "it has long been noted that existing communications technologies have the potential to produce these kinds of interaction even though research and
development teams have not found it advantageous under capitalism to do so" (p. 23). In Chapters 4 and 6 of this thesis I have made an effort to reverse this trend by keeping teacher interventions to a minimum and by letting the computer serve as the principal medium through which students can speak for themselves while also learning the limits to their own rights and abilities to speak for others.¹

I have endeavoured in each chapter to argue that the postcolonial conception, in developing students' multicultural literacy, has helped them to interrogate oppressive imperialist discourses. Some would object, nevertheless, that the postcolonial approach contains no strong moral principles, such as those advocated, for example, within the antiracist conception, upon which to base the teaching of ethical problem solving and critical thinking skills. But this type of objection, which is directed not only against postcolonial literary theory but also against any other theories which make use of deconstructive methods of analysis, is based upon too narrow an understanding of the problem of authority which I have been discussing in this chapter and with the problem of representation which I have addressed throughout this thesis. When critics of postcolonialism's apparent lack of
ethical principles misinterpret attempts by theorists such as Said and Spivak to expose the injustices perpetuated through imperialism's discourse practices, at the centre of these critics' misunderstandings of the postcolonial project is the fact that deconstruction eschews any claims to moral objectivity. Nevertheless, the various attacks which Foucault has made upon the oppressive discourse practices of penitentiaries and psychiatric hospitals, and which Said has carried out against Orientalist discourses, can hardly be considered amoral (or immoral) projects, based as they are upon problematizing the relationship between power and knowledge.2

In order for the postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum to be recognized as a pedagogy of moral engagement, or, to use Roger Simon's (1992) term, a "pedagogy of possibility," it is important that students and teachers understand why, at the same time, deconstructions of intertextual networks of power/knowledge are not concerned with the illusive task of achieving moral objectivity in literary analyses. Christopher Norris (1982) summarizes the ways Michel Foucault and Edward Said deal with the relationships which they have discovered between power and knowledge in the following passage:
Foucault follows Nietzsche in deconstructing those systems of thought which mask their incessant will to power behind a semblance of objective knowledge. His analysis of these various 'discursive practices' constantly points to their being involved in a politics none the less real for its inextricably textual character. Edward Said, in his book, *Orientalism* (1978), has offered a very practical example of how deconstruction can engage cultural history on its own textual ground and contest its claims to objectivity. The image of 'the Orient' constructed by generations of scholars, poets and historians is shown to be governed by an ethnocentric discourse secure in the power of its superior wisdom. Occidental reason is confirmed point for point in its mythography of oriental laziness, guile and 'exotic' irrationalism. To combat this discourse by exposing its ruses of metaphor is not to set up as a 'science' unmasking the confusions of ideology. It is an act of challenge which situates itself on rhetorical ground the better to meet and turn back the claims of a spurious objectivity. (pp. 87-8)

Poststructuralists such as Foucault and Said do have an ethical position, therefore, but their moral stance is based upon exposing the contradictions, damaging pretences, and false claims of objectivity which they discover in the oppressive discourses of the dominant culture.

Nevertheless, the problematic nature of the interconnections between power and knowledge in the discursive practices examined by Foucault and Said have lead many postcolonial theorists to conclude that a form of ethical relativism or pragmatism is a necessary feature of the study of multicultural literature. Such a stance requires the moral agent to acknowledge that ethical principles are always open to challenge or revision. It also requires the agent,
however, on a regular basis, to reason through and defend those ethical principles which she or he considers to be of worth. Christopher Miller (1990), in the chapter, "Ethnicity and Ethics," from his book, Theories of Africans (1990), after justifying the relativism which he feels must be a part of his studies of African literature, concludes that it is more dangerous to fail to relativize one's own beliefs when reading the literature of other cultures than it is to remain within them:

Unless the Western critic attempts to suspend - to hold in at least temporary abeyance - the systematic criteria and judgements that emanate from Western culture, ethnocentrism will persist forever. There is no way to break down intellectual imperialism if Western disciplines are not reconceived as 'local knowledge.' The Western critic must, of course, avoid the converse error, that of being deluded into thinking his/her beliefs have been completely suspended and that his/her analysis is transcendentally 'free'. (p. 65)

Miller, therefore, suggests that Western readers of African literature must use whatever information they can find from anthropology, history, comparative religion, etc., to attempt to see texts from local perspectives rather than to view them exclusively from the traditional Western perspective. This approach does not involve a simple contextualizing of the literature, however, because those anthropology texts which readers use to become informed
about local cultures may themselves be greatly influenced by the traditional Western perspective.

Postcolonial reading strategies, therefore, offer teachers and students a means of questioning ethical beliefs and of opposing Eurocentric biases in the discourses of their texts, in their class discussions, and in their interactions with the world outside the classroom. Thus, the argument throughout this thesis has been that students must learn repeatedly to construct, and deconstruct, the given and assumed representations of themselves and their worlds in order to relate to the multitude of moral and cultural differences which they encounter in their studies of multicultural texts. The postcolonial curriculum conception, by encouraging students to carry on these deconstructive analyses can hardly be said to lack an ethical dimension. Moral dilemmas are, in fact, one of the most common topics of discussion for students and teachers who employ postcolonial reading strategies. By critically examining how cultures are represented from dominant and subaltern perspectives students discover that moral principles are deployed as levers of power by both sides. It then becomes the task of students not only to weigh the relative merits of opposing representations of moral truths but to deconstruct how and why those representations have
been constructed. This, of course, does not preclude them from taking a stand ethically on a pragmatic, if not transcendental ground.

If the preceding argument is accepted, that the postcolonial conception is an ethically valid project in which teachers and students gain their authority partly by learning when it is more appropriate to listen to, or to speak with, rather than to speak for the Other, and in which the attainment of multicultural literacy is the principal goal of postcolonial literary study, then, in the space which remains, I would like to turn now to a survey of future research projects which could follow logically from the work begun in this dissertation. There are a number of possibilities for further foundational and practical research projects which could be based upon the postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum. However, let me preface these remarks by observing that, particularly as deconstruction, feminism, and cultural studies continue to develop new features and reading strategies, postcolonial theory and its applications in university comparative and commonwealth literature courses will change accordingly. The postcolonial conception should not, therefore, be considered a static or closed theory but one which will continue to be transformed as modifications
in related theories take place. Thus researchers and teachers who wish to make future improvements to the postcolonial conception of the high school multicultural literature curriculum should continue to read new works by established theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Arnold Krupat, Gerald Vizenor, Lisa Lowe, Rey Chow, Trinh Minh-ha and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. as well as works by new theorists to be found in journals such as World Literature Today, Critical Inquiry, Cultural Critique and College Literature.

In Chapters 4 and 6 I have discussed intercultural, computer-mediated, collaborative responses to Native and Japanese literature via e-mail. This is a relatively new area of reader-response research which postcolonial notions such as Arnold Krupat's ethnocriticism, Trinh Minh-ha's hyphenated selves, and Henry Giroux's border pedagogy can help to illuminate. Much more needs to be said, for instance, about the problems and potentials of intercultural collaborations using international computer networks such as Internet to enable students to share their impressions of various literatures and cultures with their partners from distant lands. Thus far I have observed the interactions among only two sets of students and discovered that the types of discourses produced in each case varied widely
according to the needs and interests of the classes involved. Clearly, then, as future researchers examine different cultural groups' responses to literature, the problems, needs, and approaches of the teachers and students involved will vary according to their cultural backgrounds.

Besides these kinds of computer-mediated, intercultural collaborations, there are, of course, a number of other important recent developments in computer technology which need to be explored by researchers and teachers who are interested in facilitating the development of high school students' multicultural literacy. George Landow (1992), for example, has discovered in hypertext computer software a very important aid for enabling students to experience multicultural intertextuality through computer-mediated literary research. In the following passage Landow describes his approach to teaching the works of Wole Soyinka in the introductory English survey course at Brown University:

One has to provide materials on colonial and postcolonial African history, politics, economics, geography, and religion. Since Soyinka combines English literary forms with Yoruban myth, one must provide information about that body of thought and encourage students to link it to Western and non-Western religions. (Landow, 1992, p. 159)

Thus, as the students read one of Soyinka's texts using a hypertext computer program, they can branch off into
readings of related information whenever the author makes allusions to cultural contexts which are new to the student. Although, at the present time, the process of developing hypertextual learning materials for high school students seems rather a remote possibility, it is still a promising model for providing interdisciplinary and collaborative team teaching opportunities among high school teachers.

While the main focus of this thesis has been upon how to teach students to read novels, short stories, and poetry, there is a need to consider as well how postcolonial theories of representation can affect the teaching of media literacy. In media literacy courses we need to move beyond the analysis of stereotypes in films, magazines, television shows, and music videos, to consider the wider range of issues about cultural imperialism and representations of the Other which postcolonial theory raises. I have discussed briefly how postcolonial theorists such as Rushdie and Mukherjee have deconstructed representations of Indians in David Lean's film version of *A Passage to India* and how Lowe and Chow have responded to Peter Wang's film, *A Great Wall*. But there are also many other examples of interpretations of films about India and China from which to choose if teachers and researchers are looking for models of such postcolonial film interpretations to provide for their students. With
the wide range of films that are now available on videotape such as Peter Brook’s version of the ancient India epic, The Mahabharata, Amy Tan’s The Joy Luck Club, Thomas King’s Medicine River, and Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing, there is no lack of opportunity for teachers to help their media students to analyze film’s both by Eurocentric directors and by postcolonial film-makers. Nor is there any lack of critical material for teachers who wish to provide models for their students’ deconstructions of orientalism and racism in these films. Gautam Dasgupta’s article, “Peter Brook’s ‘Orientalism’” (1991), for example, enables students and teachers to see some of the complexities of Brook’s attempt to capture the sacred Hindu text in a nine-hour-long film:

What is indisputably true is that such stagings [need to] address, implicitly and explicitly, a deeply ingrained structure of ritual beliefs and ethical codes of conduct intrinsic to its audience. The Mahabharata is nothing, an empty shell, if it is read merely as a compendium of martial legends, of revenge, valour and bravura. (Dasgupta, 1991, p. 264)

Media students viewing portions of Brook’s film, therefore, could be encouraged to compare scenes from the movie with excerpts from the original text of The Mahabharata (translated into English) in order to see how the intercultural blending of actors and acting styles which Brook’s adopts in his film changes the students’
understanding of the cultural contents of the tale. If media literacy is also to involve multicultural literacy, then teachers and researchers in the future will need to help students to become sensitized to the intercultural conflicts and orientalism which are affecting their perceptions of the cultures which they encounter in films.³

As I have argued throughout this thesis, postcolonial theory is not only interested in explaining to North American high school students how to interpret contemporary multicultural texts written by Chinese, Japanese, or African writers, but it is also concerned with helping them to deconstruct traditional and contemporary white, mainstream literature written by a William Somerset Maugham or a Joseph Conrad at the beginning of this century or by a Paul Theroux or a Mark Saltzman at the end of it. Much more needs to be done in the high school English curriculum about deconstructing mainstream literature from a postcolonial perspective. Thus a work such as Jane Eyre could be supplemented with Jean Rhys's postcolonial version of Bronte's tale, Wide Sargasso Sea. Works such as Huckleberry Finn, To Kill a Mockingbird, and The Tempest could be reconsidered using postcolonial deconstructive reading strategies. Instead of being concerned only with how people of colour are portrayed in these texts, however, the
challenge ahead is to provide students with opportunities to investigate how "whiteness" is represented in them as well. As bell hooks points out in her article, "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination" (1992), "it is useful when theorizing black experience to examine the way the concept of 'terror' is linked to representations of whiteness." She learned, for instance, as an African American child that it "was important to recognize the power of whiteness, even to fear it, and to avoid encountering it" (p. 344). Further research needs to be done into applying such methods of decoding the dominant culture's hidden signs of difference so that students and teachers of multicultural literature can learn to focus not only upon how the victims of imperialism have been encoded in texts but also how their oppressors have been represented.

Although I concur with many others such as Simonson & Walker (1988), Alex (1989), and Duff & Tongchinsub (1990) that the high school canon needs to be radically changed to suit the multicultural students who are reading these texts, I am not suggesting that one new canon be constructed to replace the old, nor am I advocating the removal of all "classics" from the classroom, but, instead, I believe that teachers in specific locations need to assess the needs of their students, and then, after teaching various books, they
need to share their findings with colleagues so as to develop curricula appropriate to their local populations. For example, when Sheryl Little was recently asking other members of the "Native Conference" on the Ontario Electronic Village Bulletin Board System what texts they thought she should teach in her new Native Literature course for grade 11 students in a mixed Native and non-Native school, she mentioned that she thought the rough language and homosexuality in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* would not be well received by the students and parents in her community. Another member of the conference, however, mentioned that her senior students found the play's language not to be objectionable but to be necessary for the development of the themes which Highway was addressing.

Closely connected to the problems of reconstructing the high school literary canon, are the difficulties teachers face when they attempt to decide which anthologies, if any, they wish to use in their multicultural literature courses. If teachers are to know how to select multicultural literature works for their curricula, then current anthologies need to be assessed in order to determine their suitability for classroom use. At the same time we need to explore how to stock high school libraries, train library personnel, and supply library computer databases such as...
those available on the Internet to enable students of multicultural literature to carry out their independent research by supplementing their texts with others from the school's resource center.

While I have been focussing here upon students' written responses to literature, it is also possible in high school courses such as written composition, history, geography, and sociology for students to employ postcolonial deconstructive reading and writing strategies. For example, deconstruction in university composition courses is now becoming popular (Atkins & Johnson, 1985; Barker & Kemp, 1990; Crowley, 1989; Donahue & Quandahl, 1989), but it has yet to be implemented by many high school teachers of composition. Much more research, therefore, is necessary in how to teach students to play deconstructively with notions such as voice (Leggo, 1989) and invention (Harms, 1991) in their writing. High school history teachers need to introduce their students to the deconstructive reading strategies of new historicism which have begun to change how historians at the university level interpret texts. And opportunities exist to carry out integrated studies units among English, history, geography, and sociology courses, if teachers wish to examine the ways in which the discourses of nationhood and cultural
difference are presently being deconstructed in university Cultural Studies courses (Bhabha, 1990).

While research, therefore, needs to be done concerning the application of postcolonial reading and writing strategies across high school humanities and social sciences curricula, practical applications of the postcolonial theory of representation could also add an important dimension to the teaching of high school drama courses. If, for instance, scenes from Tomson Highway's The Rez Sisters (1988) or Frank Chin's Chickencoop Chinaman (1991) were to be performed by drama students, they could be encouraged to use postcolonial reading strategies to analyse how their characters have been represented and to determine how they wish to interpret and perform their roles. The students' postcolonial interpretations would move beyond the usual attempts to understand a character's motivations to include, instead, deconstructions of the multiple discourses which a given character speaks both verbally and physically. How the students say their lines and react to their fellow actors' lines will not be a function of their ability to imitate the Native or Chinese people represented in their texts, but it will rather depend upon how thoroughly the students have grasped the complexities of the discourse patterns in their texts. Grappling with the complexities of
the heterogeneous speech patterns uttered by their characters could prove a powerful new method both for enabling students to play with the dramatic interpretation and performance of colonial and postcolonial discourses, and for helping them to understand how, at the level of speech acts, individual subjects both control and are controlled by the effects of imperialism.

I have attempted in this dissertation to develop a postcolonial conception of the multicultural literature curriculum which would provide teachers who are using New Critical, archetypal, feminist, reader-response, and antiracist pedagogical strategies with opportunities both to reconsider the theoretical assumptions behind their present teaching practices and to show them what I believe to be an important new method of thinking about the teaching of multicultural texts. By comparing the postcolonial approach with these other conceptions my goal has not been to reject the useful features of the curricula commonly in use in high school English courses throughout Canada and the United States. On the contrary, by devoting considerable space in the preceding pages to a review of a variety of interesting teaching strategies which educators such as Felsher (1968), Grant (1986a), Traubitz (1991), Olds (1990), and Borovilos (1990) have derived from traditional literary theories, it
has been my intention to show that each of these conceptual frameworks can be first critiqued and then modified to provide students and teachers with more interesting ways of responding to their multicultural texts. But where each of the existing conceptions has the potential to perpetuate Eurocentric imperialist interpretations of cultures, the postcolonial conception should prove a useful tool for those who wish to recognize some of the complexities which are built into representations of people and places as a result of the fascinating relationship that has existed for centuries between culture and imperialism.

Notes

1. Alcoff offers four very useful ways in which teachers and students should learn to be careful when speaking for others: "1. The impetus to speak must be carefully analyzed and, in many cases (certainly for academics!), fought against. This may seem an odd way to begin discussing how to speak for, but the point is that the impetus to always be the speaker and to speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination. If one's immediate impulse is to teach rather than to listen to a less-privileged speaker, one should resist that impulse long enough to interrogate it carefully. Some of us have been taught that by right of having the dominant gender, class, race, letters after our name, or some other criterion we are more likely to have the truth. Others have been taught the opposite, and will speak haltingly, with apologies, if they speak at all (p. 24).... 2. We must also interrogate the bearing of our location and context on what it is we are saying, and this should be an explicit part of every serious discursive practice we engage in. Constructing hypotheses about the possible connections between our locations and our
words is one way to begin. This procedure would be most
successful if engaged in collectively with others, by which
aspects of our location less highlighted in our own minds
might be revealed to us (p. 25).... 3. Speaking should
always carry with it an accountability and responsibility
for what one says. To whom one is accountable is a
political/epistemological choice contestable, contingent,
and as Donna Haraway says, constructed through the process
of discursive action. What this entails in practice is a
serious and sincere commitment to remain open to criticism
and to attempt actively, attentively, and sensitively to
'hear' (understand) the criticism. A quick impulse to
reject criticism must make one wary (pp. 25-26).... 4. In
order to evaluate attempts to speak for others in particular
instances, we need to analyse the probable or actual effects
of the words on the discursive and material context. One
cannot simply look at the location of the speaker or her
credentials to speak, nor can one look merely at the
propositional content of the speech; one must also look at
where the speech goes and what it does there" (p. 26).

2. Many critics, such as Washington (1989) and Ellis (1989)
for example, have argued that deconstructive theory lacks an
ethical dimension. The following is a good example of how
deconstruction is characterized by its opponents: "Derrida's
view of the relationship between methodology and ideological
critique is determined by his belief that there is no
objective standpoint from which value-systems can be
impartially reviewed. This has become a commonplace in our
own time, and deconstruction can legitimately be regarded as
a form of dogmatic skepticism. In such a context the
critic's task is not the pursuit of truth but the always
relativised evaluation of all discourses including — and
primarily — his own. This does not mean that no discourses
are better than others, only that better and worse are
themselves values determined in context, not in relation to
an absolute external standard" (Washington, 1989, p. 87).

3. Consider, for example, the representations of the
Chinese which the students encounter in films ranging from
Michael Cimino's obviously racist Year of the Dragon (1985)
which has been deconstructed by Renee E. Tajima (1989), to
the more subtly Eurocentric (mis)representations of the
Chinese to be found in Bertolucci's The Last Emperor (1987).
As Rey Chow observes, Bertolucci's attempt to "over-invest"
the movie with "exotic architecture" and an "abundance of
art objects" endowed the film with a "museum quality" and
turned the cinema audience into "vicarious tourists in front
of whom 'China' is served on the screen" (Chow, 1991, p. 11). If media literacy teachers in high schools wish to help their students to decode the (mis)representations which Tajima and Chow are discovering in such films, then more research is necessary into how postcolonial theory can provide the tools for this decoding process.
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Appendix A

Poetry Corner

This is an item where students can discuss with each other their feelings and thoughts about poems, songs, or short tales that they or their teachers decide to include here. To get us started I would like to offer a couple of poems by Native writers about their grandparents. After you read these poems perhaps you could write down some of your thoughts about them for other students to read and to reply to. Some questions that you might consider for example are: how have the old people in your life passed on to you their beliefs and wisdom, how important to you are the spiritual values of your elders, how difficult is it for you to remain faithful to the old ways while exploring the world outside your local community, and how have the old stories affected the way you feel about your own life now? You might also wish to ask some questions about what students in the other school have learned from their grandparents and other elders. And you might wish to write poems of your own about your grandparents.

Daniel David Moses, who wrote "Blue Moon," is a Delaware born in 1952 who lives in Toronto. He has been president of the Association for Native Development in the performing and visual arts. Louise Bernice Halfe is from the Saddle Lake Reserve, Alberta, and now works in Saskatchewan as a social worker.

BLUE MOON by Daniel David Moses

Look, Mom, how the second full moon this month rises through its purpler side of the dusk not quite a ghost

because of the colour of its face - purplish now
as if it has had as hard a time breathing as

Granpa did. Oh I know you can't sit down beside
the moon on its bed, hold its hand, feel its forehead

- not while riding along the highway on the way
to the bus I'll catch back to the city. Perhaps

that's good. Perhaps we should keep away from the way
the moon's also losing its colour. But it's much
prettier than the way Granpa lost his - and no
need to worry about burying it. See how

it rises without all that, how its face gets pink
as the blanket Granpa had on his bed the last
time I visited. You know how he always said
What can I do for you? You know how it put you

at ease? Well tonight, Mom, the moon's here, easily
breathing a similar light out into the air.

GRANDMOTHER by Louise Bernice Halfe

A shuffling brown bear
snorting and puffing
ambles up the stairs

In her den
covered wall to wall
herbs hang
carrot roots, yarrow,
camomile, rat-root,
and cha cha moose e gun

To the centre of the room she waddles
sits with one leg out and the other hugged close

She bends over her medicines
sniffs and tastes them
as she sorts roots into piles

Satisfied
she selects the chosen few
grinds them on a small tire grater
Small mounds of powder collect
Her large paws take a patch
of soft deer skin
In it she mixes and wraps her poultice
until hundreds of tiny bundle chains
swing from the rafters

The brown, labouring bear
Nohkom, the medicine woman
alone in her attic den
smoking slim cigarettes
wears the perfume of sage and sweetgrasses

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and earth medicine ties

Nohkom, the bear hag
healer of troubled spirits
healer of ailing bodies
queen of the sorcerers

She wears a red kerchief on her head
Long blond-white braids hang below her breasts
She hums her medicine songs

She bends and her long skirt drapes
Over her aged beaded moccasins
she brushes her portions off her apron
straightens and surveys her medicine chest

A long day's work complete
the bear nohkom ambles down the stairs
sweeps her long skirt behind her
drapes her paws on the stair rails
leaves her dark den and its medicine powers
in silence
Appendix B

Racism Chat

The following computer chat took place on June 1, 1993, among the students at the Coldwater Reserve in British Columbia, at Meaford in Ontario, and at Springdale in Newfoundland.

[Ont.] Philana is typing now.
[B.C.] Sara typing here. Are dropouts a problem in your school?
[Ont.] Drop outs are not a huge problem here.
[Newf.] Genny on line. It is not a huge problem but we do have a few dropouts here.
[B.C.] Have any of you guys ever thought about dropping out? If so, why?
[Ont.] Our drop out rate is lower than 15% here. Most of the reasons are to earn money or pregnancy. But most come back because they realize that you can't go anywhere without an education.
[Ont.] Hot news flash. A person at our school recently overdosed on epileptic pills thinking they would give him a high. He died and was brought back to life. So we do have some problems here. Do you have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse in your community?
[B.C.] We have a big problem with both drugs and alcohol in our community.
[Newf.] Yes, with alcohol and drugs. We have had a few people that had to go to the hospital and get the alcohol pumped out of their system. We have also had a few suicides due to drugs.
[Ont.] What is being done about these problems in your school? And do a lot of kids in the school have these problems?
[B.C.] (Dianne typing now) No, not very many students in our school have these problems.
[B.C.] (Kurt) Hello Karen, how are doing?
[Ont.] A lot of kids in our school drink "socially, responsibly and illegally". But we don't know if we'd go so far as to say that it is a problem.
[Ont.] (Karen) Hi Kurt I'm doing fine.
[B.C.] (Dianne) Most students drink illegally here, but it is a major problem in our community.
[Ont.] Any responses to our discussion on substance abuse? NO NAMES.
[Newf.] It isn't as big a problem as it was last year but there is still abuse here. To correct what I said before there were only some attempts to commit suicide related to drugs. The two suicides we did have were not related to drugs.
[B.C.] Substance abuse isn't a major problem among us students in school, but it is for the few drop outs we had.
[B.C.] How do you feel about Native Fishing Issues?
[Newf.] It is not a really big issue in this area. How do you feel about the fishing problems that Newfoundlanders face?
[B.C.] (Manie) Hi, Traci. How are you doing?
[Ont.] Our local Cape Croker Reserve recently sold fish to our community illegally to supplement their incomes.
[Ont.] (Traci) Hi Manie!
[B.C.] Over here the Natives were blamed for depleting the salmon stocks in the Fraser River. But meanwhile it was all those big boats in the ocean catching them before they go up the river.
[B.C.] Is racism a problem in your school?
[Ont.] Sometimes yes. People who don't think that they are, are sometimes the worst.
[Newf.] No racism is not a problem in our school. We don't have a lot of different cultures in our school. How many students are in your class now doing this chat?
[B.C.] 16 students are now in the chat. Jerry, our Native language teacher is here. He says "Ye ak qwin" "Are you well?"
[Ont.] Yes, thanks.
[Ont.] Karen has had racist slurs directed toward her while she was working in a restaurant.
[Newf.] We don't think that was very nice.
[B.C.] Dianne knows how it feels, the same thing has happened to her while she was working in a restaurant. You could read about it in the Macleans Magazine Feb. 22, 1993. We are sending a photo copy of the article.
[Ont.] Our class has gotten into a big discussion about racism now!
[Newf.] In Newfoundland we feel that there is a bit of discrimination against us from other parts of Canada.
[Ont.] We read that article already. It was very interesting. Racism in this school is not a problem. We've got to go now, unfortunately, but we will all be back on line in September. See you then!
[B.C.] OK :-) Catch you later, have a nice Holiday!!