TOWARD THE HOSPITALITY OF THE ACADEMY:
THE (IM)POSSIBLE GIFT OF INDIGENOUS EPISTEMES

by

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Abstract

The academy is considered by many as the major western institution of knowledge. This dissertation, however, argues that the academy is characterized by prevalent 'epistemic ignorance' – a concept informed by Gayatri Spivak's discussion of 'sanctioned ignorance.' Epistemic ignorance refers to academic practices and discourses that enable the continued exclusion of other than dominant western epistemic and intellectual traditions. The academy fails to recognize indigenous epistemes grounded on different conceptions of the world and ways of knowing, and thus, indigenous people 'cannot speak' (Spivak); that is, when they speak from the framework of their own epistemic conventions, they are not heard or understood by the academy.

This dissertation suggests that there is a need for a radical shift in approaching 'cultural conflicts' in the academy. So far, various programs and services for indigenous students have been set up on the premise that they need special assistance to adapt to the academy. I argue, however, that the academy is responsible for 'doing its homework' (Spivak) and addressing its ignorance so it can give an 'unconditional welcome' (Derrida) not only to indigenous people but to their epistemes, without insisting on translation. This process must continually be watchful of the arrogant assumption of 'knowing other cultures' while engaging to 'learn to learn' (Spivak) from indigenous epistemes. If the academy does not assume its responsibilities, the gift of indigenous epistemes remains impossible.

To counter epistemic ignorance, indigenous epistemes have to be recognized as a gift to the academy. This implies perceiving them according to the ethics of responsibility toward the 'other' and the reciprocity that foregrounds the gift logic of indigenous philosophies. With examples drawn primarily from Sami and Northwest Coast First Nations' contexts, I propose a new interpretation of the gift as a central part of indigenous worldviews. I also test the theories of Spivak and Derrida against the traditional indigenous notions of gift and hospitality. Following Derrida's argument of the 'limit of the impossible' where the academy is exposed to 'forces from without,' I suggest that this threshold is also the limit of possibility, a place where the gift eventually becomes possible.

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous people and higher education is a topic that, in the past years, has increasingly received attention particularly by indigenous but also other educators and educational scholars.[1] The issues commonly addressed by scholars include the invisibility, marginalization and under-representation of indigenous students in universities and colleges. From the perspective of the academic institution, these concerns are often defined in terms of inadequate achievement, retention and attrition.[2]

A large number of the difficulties experienced by indigenous students in the academy are rooted in differences between indigenous and mainstream cultures of the West (cf. Carney 147-8). These differences include the academic fragmentation and compartmentalization of knowledge in contrast to a more holistic frame of reference and the emphasis on individual status and competition in contrast to a collective identity, consensus and cooperation.[3] When seeking solutions to challenges commonly referred to as 'cultural conflicts,' the representatives of educational institutions usually focus on indigenous students, rarely on themselves or the institution and its structures, discourses, practices and assumptions that operate in the academy. This reinforces the idea that the problem ultimately lies with indigenous students and their differing cultures, not with the university.

The institutional response to this 'problem' usually is one of 'accommodating' and 'mainstreaming' indigenous students into the conventions of the institution. Most commonly this is done by establishing various support and counseling services and access programs with an intent to 'bridge' the assumed gulf between the cultures of indigenous students and that of the institution, or help students make the transition from their cultures to the academic 'culture'

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[1] In North American context, see, for example, Barnhardt; Carney; Castellano, Davis and Lahache; Deloria, "Higher Education and Self-Determination"; Grant; Guerrero; Kirkness and Barnhardt; Swisher and Tippeconnic; Stein; and Tierney. For higher education in the Sami context, see J. H. Keskitalo.

[2] See, for example, Davis; Dodd et al.; Falk and Aitken; and J. C. Henderson.

[3] On the cultural differences in learning and educational practices, see, for instance, Deloria, "Higher Education and Self-Determination"; Kirkness and Barnhardt; Sanders; and Thompson.

with its assumptions, expectations and values.[4] The values and perceptions of the world held by Native students are not, by and large, recognized or respected in the academy but instead, students are frequently "expected to leave the cultural predispositions from their world at the door and assume the trappings of a new form of reality, a reality which is often substantially different from their own" (Kirkness and Barnhardt 6).

As an institution, the academy supports and reproduces certain systems of thought and knowledge, structures and conventions that rarely reflect or represent indigenous worldviews, thus silencing and making invisible the reality of many indigenous students. This reality is obliterated not only figuratively but literally (Henderson, "Postcolonial" 59). Eber Hampton (Chickasaw) maintains that

> Universities typically operate on the assumption that Eurocentric content, structure, and process constitute the only legitimate approach to knowledge. First Nations history, culture, knowledge, and language are largely ignored, and even when they are subjects of study, the perspective is almost always Eurocentric. ("First Nations" 210)

The academy remains, to a large extent, founded on exclusionary, selective epistemological practices and traditions reflective of and reinscribed by the Enlightenment, colonialism, modernity and in particular, liberalism. These traditions, discourses and practices have very little awareness of and offer only highly limited and controlled openness to other epistemes. Even in the academic spaces considering themselves most devoted to 'changing the paradigm,' individuals usually refuse to examine the blind spots of their own epistemic foundations or acknowledge their privilege and participation in the academic structures and the various ongoing colonial processes in society in general.

Today, there are numerous special educational initiatives aimed at creating culturally appropriate education for indigenous students, including Native/First Nations/Aboriginal/ Indigenous Studies and Native education and teacher training programs.[5] Although culturally-based educational initiatives play an important role in making the academic world more hospitable and relevant for many indigenous students, these efforts do not reach indigenous

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[4] See, for example, Beaty and Chiste; Falk and Aitken; Henderson, "Minority Student Retention"; Moore-Eyman; Pidgeon; Pottinger; Tierney, "The College Experience of Native Americans"; and Wright, "Programming Success."

[5] See, for example, Castellano et al. (part 4); Champagne and Stauss; and Swisher and Tippeconnic.

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people outside specific programs. Moreover, they do not address the core problem of sanctioned ignorance of the academy at large.

So far, various programs and services for indigenous students have been set up on the premise that they need special assistance to adapt to the academy. I argue, however, that it is the responsibility of the academy to 'do its homework' (Spivak) and address its ignorance so it can recognize and give an 'unconditional welcome' (Derrida) not only to indigenous people but to their epistemes. My argument is, therefore, that the root problem is the sanctioned epistemic ignorance of the academy rather than the 'conflicting' values and perceptions of the world of indigenous people. In spite of being the major western institution of knowledge, the academy is characterized by epistemic ignorance which results in the failure to recognize indigenous epistemes grounded on different conceptions of the world and ways of knowing.

The starting point of this thesis, then, is the analysis of the prevailing sanctioned ignorance pertaining to indigenous epistemes or worldviews in the academy. Ignorance, often reflected in indigenous people's accounts and narratives of their experiences in the academic world, is a little studied and analyzed field in either indigenous scholarship or research on higher education in general. My concept of epistemic ignorance is informed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's discussion of 'sanctioned ignorance' and it refers to academic practices and discourses that enable the continued exclusion of other than dominant western European epistemic and intellectual traditions. I employ the notion of 'episteme' to signify 'worldview' or 'discursive practice' – a concept that is broader and less restrictive than the concept of 'culture' (see Chapter 2).

Delores J. Huff (Cherokee) notes how studies illuminating the problems of institutional racism "rarely are translated into national social policy because most of them offer solutions that inevitably lead to resolving and reversing centuries of entrenched institutional racism in American communities" (151). Feminist, critical race and anti-racist theories in particular have analyzed extensively the relations of domination and agency, the systemic character of discrimination, and racism and sexism in their various forms in the academy.

There are numerous different forms of inequalities constructing and reinforcing disparate relations in the academy, including institutional, structural, power, economic and epistemic inequalities. Although all overlapping and mutually reinforced, I am particularly

interested in epistemic inequalities and exclusions. Moreover, there is a need to engage in our critiques on multiple levels and sites (cf. Smith, "Protecting"). My argument builds upon the previous research of indigenous scholars on the ways in which knowledge is constructed and validated in and by the academy.[6] It elaborates indigenous scholarship on knowledge construction to the analysis of how the exclusory and limited discursive practices in the academy lead to circumstances where indigenous peoples are not 'heard' even if they are welcomed to the institution and 'given voice' to express their views. As William G. Tierney puts it:

> One arrives at a picture of institutions and individuals that are not hostile to minorities, but indifferent. Officially students are encouraged; institutionally they find discouragement. Responsibility is partitioned and goals are elusive. ... Overt acts of racist behavior may not be readily apparent, but the lack of understanding of minority issues is a constant theme. (*Official Encouragement* 112)

I believe that addressing the issue of epistemic ignorance is indispensable because there is a need to complement and further elaborate previous considerations of racism and eurocentrism in the academy with an analysis that focusses on discrimination at the epistemic level. While I definitely do not desire to disqualify concerns of racism in any sections of society, I do find the language of anti-racism often quite limiting.[7] First, it addresses the question of epistemes only partially. When I first started to ask myself what is wrong in the academy, I did not find very satisfactory answers in discourses of anti-racism and the language of white elitism where relevant concerns are frequently discussed in somewhat dualistic or restrictive terms, thus falling back to fixed categories or colonizer-colonized dichotomies. In this regard, deconstruction has proved helpful in its insistence on paying attention to exclusions and silences in narratives, particularly by drawing attention to and breaking down binary oppositions

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[6] See, for example, Battiste and Henderson; and L. Smith, *Decolonizing*.

[7] Stephanie M. Wildman suggests: "It is difficult to see and talk about how oppression operates when the vocabulary itself makes those power systems invisible. The vocabulary allows us to talk about discrimination and oppression, but hides the mechanism that makes that oppression possible and efficient. It also hides the existence of specific, identifiable beneficiaries of oppression (who are not always the actual perpetrators of discrimination). The use of -isms language masks the privileging that is created by these systems of power" (658).

(Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 19, 43).[8] Recognizing the limits of the narratives as well as its own participation in what one criticizes, this critical intimacy – instead of the usual, conventionally highly-valued scholarly distance – does not allow me to conveniently forget that as I engage in this current criticism of the academy, I nevertheless remain part of it, privileged and complicit in many ways (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 425). It reminds me of Jacques Derrida's insistence that, "We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is foreign to this history. We can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest" (*Writing and Difference* 280-1).

I agree that the discourse of anti-racism is in many ways necessary but at the same time, I have personally experienced it as somewhat alienating. Where, for one, would I (and other people like me) fit in? I am a Sami person but I neither appear like a person of colour nor can I identify with the white elite (despite some of the white privileges, I, no doubt, enjoy because I am perceived as white)? Indigenous peoples are not ethnic minorities though they can be racialized and numerical minorities in certain contexts (see the discussion of the term 'indigenous peoples' below). I am not very comfortable with inscribing myself as a person of a racialized minority and even less of a visible minority – if there is anything 'visible' in me, it is that I do not 'look' like a stereotypical indigenous person.

Second, what Spivak calls 'single issue movements' (*Post-Colonial* 124) isolate, at least at the level of language, complex, heterogeneous and overlapping issues that weave through every sphere and stratum of society and thus may prevent us from seeing the intricate, crucial linkages between various forms of oppression (see e.g., Wildman). I am not, however, suggesting that I have solved the problem of language in this inquiry – all I have been able to do is to expand and build on the existing language and in that way, try to contribute to our discourses by making them more open to and representative of our complex realities. As far as I am concerned, there are no totalizing explanations for issues raised in this inquiry. Instead, I propose the possibility of keeping the river running and opening the doors, seeking to keep them open by drawing attention to the responsibility of the academy and by calling for

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[8] For a brief and accessible description of some of the main strategies of deconstructive practice, see, for example, Derrida, *Positions* (pp. 41-53) and Spivak, *Critique* (Appendix).

responsiveness. I also believe that indigenous contexts and scholarship can inform the 'race' and identity debates in fruitful ways.

The main argument of my inquiry is that indigenous epistemes remain an impossible gift due to the prevalent epistemic ignorance in the academy. There are several reasons to suggest that indigenous epistemes have to be recognized as a gift. The gift forms an integral part of many indigenous worldviews and philosophies which foreground the individual and collective responsibility to look after the overall balance of the socio-cosmic order. The stability of the world, which is considered a *sine qua non* of well-being and survival, is established and sustained primarily by gift giving and recognizing the gifts of others, including the land. As I suggest in this thesis, the gift constitutes a specific logic that is radically different from the logic of exchange, for instance, through which many of the analyses have (mis)interpreted the 'archaic' gift. The gift logic articulated here is grounded on an understanding of the world consisting of intricate relationships that extend to everybody and everything. Because of these relationships, this logic emphasizes the recognition of and responsibility toward the other.

The academy in its current state with discourses and practices that sanction ignorance toward other ways of perceiving the world and constructing knowledge does not recognize its responsibility toward the 'other,' not to mention recognizing the gift (except when it comes in the form of monetary donations from generous philanthropists or corporations). As I argue in this inquiry, however, the future of the academy, the 'institution of knowing,' depends on recognizing the gift of indigenous epistemes.

The recognition of the gift is also imperative for the well-being of indigenous people of the academy, including those outside programs specifically intended for them. Importantly, the question of the hospitality of the academy and the call for the recognition of the gift extend beyond culturally inclusive curriculum and pedagogic practices (which are, of course, also important), or cultivating a liberal understanding of 'otherness.' As Derrida suggests, the "politics or ethics of the university... implies something more than knowledge, something more than a constative statement" ("Future" 254).

This recognition, however, is not possible without acquiring – or learning and committing to – a particular logic. In short, the call for the recognition of the gift is an articulation of a new paradigm put forth by this inquiry. The related questions that my thesis

seeks to answer correspond to those raised by Jürgen Kremer with regard to presenting indigenous scientific knowledge within the academic conventions:

> Is there a particular way in which this ancient knowledge should be welcomed into academic discourse ...? Is there a particular responsibility that the participants of the established discourse might have in reading and responding to knowledge that has been historically invalidated through imperialism and colonialism? Is any preparation necessary for the transition from reading and dialoguing within the Western paradigm to engaging with knowledge from a very different paradigm?" ("Indigenous Science" 2)

If indigenous worldviews represent a radical epistemic challenge to the academy, is there a way that they could be welcomed to the academy? Even more importantly, is there a particular responsibility that the participants of the established discourse individually and the academy as a collective entity might have in listening to, responding to, and most significantly, recognizing these worldviews? How can the academy, both at the individual and institutional level, prepare itself to respond to and reciprocate with these worldviews?

The call for hospitality and the recognition of the gift is necessary for two reasons. If the academy remains ignorant and dismissive of epistemes that differ from the dominant western thought and intellectual practices, not only can indigenous people not speak (cf. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?") – what they say is either misunderstood or ignored – but also the epistemological foundations of the academy remain narrow, exclusionary and hierarchical. In other words, by sanctioning epistemic ignorance, the academy is not able to profess its profession – its multiple truths – in an appropriate and adequate manner (cf. Derrida, "Future"). Thus, the question investigated here is not only about what the academy could do for (the well-being of) indigenous peoples but also, what it needs to do for (the well-being of) itself.

The concepts of the gift and hospitality form the core of this inquiry. Both notions are familiar to indigenous and western societies alike, and they have been quite extensively studied and theorized particularly in anthropology but increasingly also in sociology and philosophy, among others. In this thesis, I draw examples particularly from Sami and Northwest Coast First Nations' contexts and traditions and combine them with contemporary critical analyses by indigenous scholars. I also employ considerations and approaches from postcolonial analysis

and deconstruction as they relate to the questions examined here and bring in new dimensions to these concepts.

While the considerations and practices of indigenous people form the foundation of my work, the concepts of the gift and hospitality are further elaborated, theorized and also complicated particularly by deconstructive practice. The application of considerations by critics who are commonly located within deconstruction is also a strategic move. The strategy to use some of 'the master's own tools' has two main functions. First, it makes it more difficult for non-indigenous scholars and readers simply to dismiss this consideration as something that has nothing to do with them. Second, while Audre Lorde's famous statement, 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' might be valid in some contexts, I see the need to challenge it in this particular context. The same tools with which the house was built may help undermine, if not deconstruct, the house. As Spivak insists, "sometimes it is best to sabotage what is inexorably to hand, than to invent a tool that no one will test, while mouthing varieties of liberal pluralism" (*Critique* 9).[9] Applying deconstruction, often defined as a critique of western metaphysics from within, is also to demonstrate to the western university that it has still a long path to follow in order to live up to its self-proclaimed ideals, and ultimately, its future.

Further, there is a need for rigorous analyses of the relationship between the academy and indigenous epistemes which foster our understanding of the more surreptitious dimensions and forms of the hegemonic relations at play in the university. New theories and interpretations that are grounded on indigenous philosophies and practices but also draw upon other appropriate sources are needed to advance indigenous scholarship. Such theories can do this at least in two ways: by consolidating the work of indigenous academics, and thereby indigenous discourses, and by critically re-evaluating the previous analyses and interpretations of indigenous thought and conventions. At the same time, I am acutely aware of the existing tensions between the institution (the physical space) where indigenous people fare on a daily basis and theoretical language of the gift and hospitality. While it is clear that they cannot be

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[9] Paula Gunn Allen notes on structures: "I am not opposed to structure in academic life... [But] I am seriously concerned that structure means oppression, ignorance, and perpetuation of ideas and attitudes that have historically resulted in the extinction or near extinction of countless cultures and civilizations. ... Because 'structure' in this context can only mean 'Western structures,' because 'concepts' in this context can only mean 'Western concepts'" (*Off the Reservation* 140).

conflated or that the one should not be taken for the other, it is important, however, to engage in envisioning new forms and models of the future university which is increasingly becoming also a community of indigenous academics.

With my thesis, I also challenge some persisting assumptions found in particularly those discourses seeking to transform and undermine the current structures and hegemony according to which 'master's tools' are necessarily harmful and/or useless. Another common assumption that needs to be critically re-examined is that the only ways to carry on indigenous research is to focus on one's own community, to write your work in the format of a story or to conduct empirical study rather than engage in theorizing indigenous issues. All these methods are, of course, entirely valid but indigenous scholars should not be required to and cannot be limited to and by them. Further, I resist the simplistic expectations of relevance according to which, in my case, for instance, only research directly dealing with a Sami topic is relevant for the Sami people. Not only can I not arrogantly assume to know what is relevant for the entire Sami people but also it would be naive to think that it is possible to achieve a consensus on such a contingent, ever-evolving issue.[10]

Now that indigenous scholarship is being more strongly established (to an extent that some of it even gets read and taken up by mainstream, non-indigenous scholars), there is an increasing pressure both from inside and outside to write and conduct research in a particular style 'authentic' to indigenous people, which often means storytelling. I come from a region famous for its oral tradition and consequently, for writers who skillfully integrate the oral tradition into their writing. Several of my relatives are writers, my mother included. Storytelling is thus something that has always been a part of my life, and something I respect and value highly. I have written Sami stories and discussed the significance of Sami oral tradition elsewhere.[11]

In this thesis, however, I want to challenge both the expectation that indigenous scholars should always write their research in the form of a story – it no doubt works perfectly with

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[10] This does not imply that I entirely ignore the question of relevancy of our research to our indigenous communities – quite the opposite as the following chapters indicate. Here I want to call attention to careless arguments of relevancy which too transparently and quickly assume indigenous communities (or developments in these communities) to be homogeneous, static and uncomplicated entities.

[11] See, for example, Kuokkanen, "From the Jungle Back to *Duottar*" and "Re-Storying the Sami Strength."

certain topics and I appreciate this kind of research – and the view that indigenous scholars are only good at writing stories, not theory.[12] As I have experienced such views myself while working on this thesis, I believe that there is a serious need to question them. Academics and scholars harbouring such expectations should ask themselves where these assumptions come from and what they are based upon. Furthermore, we cannot escape the fact that this is a Sami story grounded in and emerging from a specific context and social, cultural, geographical and historical circumstances. Those for whom 'story' signifies 'traditional,' 'authentic' or something else equally problematic, may not recognize this inquiry as such. I can only suggest that they rethink how they conceptualize and understand not only stories but contemporary indigenous people at large.

The Concept of Indigenous Peoples

For some, the term 'indigenous peoples' continues to be highly problematic and controversial. More than once I have been told that it is too homogenizing or unspecific by academics from various disciplines, including a well-known American ethnographer according to whom the term 'indigenous' is too vague and too universalizing to have any intellectual value. Every time I hear these comments I am confounded by the ignorance and arrogance of the way some scholars are so eager to and can so easily dismiss a collective identity of another group of people. While it appears to be an accepted and normal practice for mainstream and/or western scholars and academics to call themselves 'western' – scholarly literature is a great indication of this – indigenous people are nevertheless denied this collective self-identification which has, in the past decades, played an enormous role in the global affirmation of the rights of these peoples. As bell hooks puts it, "it is always a marginal 'other' who is essentialist" (*Teaching* 81; see fn.

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[12] bell hooks also challenges 'monolithic notions of theory' and "need to continually assert the need for multiple theories emerging from diverse perspectives in a variety of styles." She also points out that the assumption according to which writing by working-class women and women of color is considered 'experimental' while the writing of white women is seen as 'theory,' often merely reinforces racism and elitism (*Talking Back* 37).

15 and my discussion below). One can only wonder whether it is another sign of the continuance of the colonial control over names and thus over people, a reflection of academic arrogance or simply a fear of losing disciplinary boundaries and carefully defined 'particularities' (cf. Vizenor, "Interview" 162).

In *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*, Ronald Niezen employs the term 'international indigenism' to refer to the global phenomenon and form of indigenous activism. This internationally recognized identity of indigenous peoples which emerged in the mid-1970s has had a particularly significant impact in international politics and human rights. For several decades, international institutions such as the United Nations have been the principal focal point for indigenous rights, drawing indigenous representatives from every part of the world and generating various initiatives and investigations pertaining to indigenous peoples and their issues. The persistent work by indigenous representatives within a body established to represent nation-states – not peoples – has culminated with the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2002, currently chaired by Sami politician Ole Henrik Magga.[13]

> *Natives are the run of seasons, the rush of rivers, and tricky creation stories, but natives are not analogies by surveillance, by cultural substitution, by social science remissions, or simulations of an ethnic originary (Vizenor, Fugitive Poses 28)*

While there obviously cannot be a single, fixed definition of the term 'indigenous peoples,' there are various working definitions that are also widely accepted by the indigenous community. According to the definition of the International Labour Organization's Convention no. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, a person is

> regarded as Indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. (ILO Convention no. 169, Article 1(b).)

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[13] For accounts of the history and development of an international network of indigenous peoples, see, for example, Anaya; Battiste and Henderson, "Preface"; and Wilmer.

Not merely ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples remain in a colonial situation within or across the borders of nation-states that have not recognized their self-determination or sovereignty which, according to international law, is an inherent right of all peoples. This is the reason why indigenous peoples insist that they are *peoples* (in plural), not minorities, populations, groups or anything else that denies this status.[14] A reflection of this status is, for instance, preservation and continued practice of their particular social, economic and cultural institutions and traditions. Another, widely employed definition is by the UN Special Rapporteur Jose R. Martinez Cobo:

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

The Cobo definition emphasizes four main characteristics of indigenous peoples: the historical continuity of their societies on territories they have occupied and inhabited for generations, their distinctiveness from 'mainstream' or dominant societies, their current non-dominant status in relation to larger society and their desire and willingness to defend, protect, advance and pass on their identities, languages, cultural and social traditions, conventions and philosophies. Based on this definition, therefore, it would not be appropriate to call, say, the Irish an indigenous people. While the Irish have experienced a long history of colonization by the English empire and they are arguably 'the original inhabitants' of their territory (i.e., 'historical continuity') – though there is evidence that the Celts 'replaced' another, pre-Celtic people upon their arrival – they are not 'distinct from other sectors of the society now prevailing in those territories,' as they run their own state and government, making decisions on their identities, languages, cultural and social traditions as well as a range of other issues, including economics. While the Irish as a people control over their own lives and future as *a people*, indigenous peoples, for the most part, do not.

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[14] This is an ongoing dispute between the representatives of indigenous peoples and nation-states (particularly the United States) which often refuse to accept or employ the term peoples exactly because of the right of self-determination of all peoples. This dispute is commonly known as 'the s-problem.'

In other words, the concept of indigeneity (at least as it is used by indigenous people themselves) is grounded on and inseparable from the contemporary politics and ramifications of the history of colonization. This is clear both in the Cobo definition that refers to societies at present and in statements that argue that to be indigenous is synonymous to being colonized *today*. To claim then, as is often done, that 'we are all indigenous' is to either be blind to this contemporary reality or refuse to recognize the ways in which the colonial history continues to affect not only indigenous peoples but also the relations between states and indigenous peoples. The statement 'we are all indigenous' is a reflection of not wanting to take responsibility for or engage with these issues that do not belong to the past but continue to keep indigenous peoples in a subordinate position without the same rights that peoples with nation-states can and do take for granted.

It is interesting how academics are often very concerned about generalizations and even more so, essentialism, particularly when it involves non-dominant, non-mainstream people or issues.[15] In this inquiry, my intention is neither to essentialize nor polarize 'the academy' or 'indigenous' – the terms I inevitably have to use to construct my argument and analyze the issue at hand. I am aware of the dangers of using such generalized categories, recognizing that each 'entity' is markedly complex and heterogeneous with multiple internal divisions and conflicts. But as Spivak notes, generalizations are occasionally necessary in order to analyze anything and that from time to time, the moment of essentializing is irreducible (*Post-Colonial Critic* 51). In effect, anti-essentialism can be a way of *not* doing one's homework (Spivak, "In a Word" 160). As is discussed in Chapter 4, doing homework is necessary particularly for the academy in order for it to receive the gift and carry out its responsibilities.

Rather than pretending that we never essentialize or counterproductively repudiate our practices, then, Spivak suggests that "let us become vigilant about our own practice and use it as

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[15] Taking issue with Diana Fuss's *Essentially Speaking*, bell hooks notes that in Fuss's account, "it is always a marginal 'other' who is essentialist. Yet the politics of essentialist exclusion as a means of asserting presence, identity, is a cultural practice that does not emerge solely from marginalized groups. And when those groups do employ essentialism as a way to dominate in institutional settings, they are often imitating paradigms for asserting subjectivity that are part of the controlling apparatus in structures of domination" (hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* 81).

much as we can" (*Post-Colonial* 11).[16] Uma Narayan also warns us of the dangers of what she calls 'pseudoparticularism': "equally hegemonic representations of 'particular cultures' whose 'particularism' masks the reality that they are problematic generalizations about complex and internally differentiated contexts." She argues,

> I believe that antiessentialism about gender and about culture does not entail a simple-minded opposition to *all generalizations*, but entails instead a commitment to examine both their empirical accuracy and their political utility or risk. It is seldom possible to articulate effective political agendas, such as those pertaining to human rights, without resorting to a certain degree of abstraction, which enables the articulation of salient similarities between problems suffered by various individuals and groups. (97-8)

In spite of the historical, political, social, economic and geographical differences, the world's indigenous peoples share certain similarities such as experiences of continued colonialism and certain salient, fundamental principles embedded and manifested in their worldviews and value systems. The immediate relationship with the natural environment has generated various other cultural values and practices, some of which will be discussed in the following chapters. By discussing indigenous epistemes, my purpose is not to attempt to give a complete taxonomy or an exhaustive explanation of either what they have been in the past or what they are in present. I have focussed on certain underpinning aspects and values and offer only a partial, provisional explanation which is necessary in illuminating my overall argument. I am painfully aware that I have done this at the cost of addressing the specificities of various indigenous peoples and communities. I am also aware that there are real and deep distinctions between different indigenous worldviews but it is clear that I cannot – I am not even equipped – to engage in comparative research on these distinctions, not to mention that such a topic would merit an inquiry of its own.

I coincide with Spivak who notes: "When I invoke the possibility of an alternative vision, I am not thinking to romanticize the actual Aboriginal, just as much as ... I am not interested in finding in him [or her] a negligible example of humanity as such" (Spivak, *Critique* 403). Her statement inspires me to contemplate the possibility of elaborating a vision

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[16] So to paraphrase Spivak, then, I can only declare that because I cannot *not* be an essentialist, I *can* look at the ways in which I am essentialist, carve out a representative essentialist position and do politics while remembering the dangers of the essentialism! (cf. Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 45).

for change without invoking idealized or homogeneous actual indigenous epistemes (or peoples). There are dangers, for sure, but at least one can acknowledge their existence and one's complicity rather than pretend that if constructed in another way, one would be freed from them.

As I draw my examples from previously published accounts of both indigenous students and faculty, it is obvious that my choice already represents a form of exclusion (as would any other). By choosing to focus on the analysis and reconceptualizing the current relations of the academy and various indigenous epistemes (rather than producing an empirical study including interviews or 'stories'), I have, for instance, excluded indigenous 'voices' and experiences that have not been published. These are choices and decisions that we, as scholars and academics, all have to make and this is what I have considered most important at this particular point and in these circumstances.

The gulf between different worldviews is a central question to the present inquiry – a concern that initially prompted me to engage in the current undertaking. Although it may occasionally seem that the worldviews which have predominantly characterized indigenous societies, on the one hand, and modern societies of the West, on the other, are hopelessly incommensurate, I strongly believe that there are ways to find at least certain pathways to increased understanding also on the epistemic level. For many socialized into and trained within the 'eurocentered' or modern consciousness, it might be occasionally difficult and challenging to fully grasp the meaning of arguments and perspectives represented and explained by indigenous thought. For this reason, it might occur to some that providing more definitions would have been helpful in this regard. I, however, seek to remain attentive to terminology and the danger of definitions. Kremer asserts:

> Definitions are tricky business in the context of this cross-cultural exchange, which spans qualitatively different assumptions about almost everything (not just differences in scale). Words such as *culture, consciousness, science, native, indigenous,* and so on frequently seem to serve more as magnets for projections, and our understanding oftentimes seems to say more about our own implicit assumptions and ideologies rather than the meaning which the context of a statement is attempting to evoke. ("Indigenous Science" 3)

There are also certain serious risks in imposing one's definition on others, as illustrated in an example by Spivak: a benevolent European against the irresponsible development of a mega-

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project seeks to interpret and translate the terminology of a subaltern but gets it wrong because of his impatience and inattention (see Spivak, "Responsibility" 63-4). Comments Spivak: "However sympathetic the intention, to rob the mother tongue of the subaltern by way of an ignorant authoritative definition that is already becoming part of the accepted benevolent lexicography is a most profound silencing" ("Responsibility" 64).

Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaq) and James Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw) thus argue for the need to question the eurocentric desire of definitions. In their view, the "quest for universal definitions ignores the diversity of the people of the earth and views of themselves. ... From the Indigenous vantage point, the process of understanding is more important than the process of classification" (36-7). In this inquiry, the difficulty of discussing certain concepts and issues in a way that is accessible to different audiences is reflected in instances where I have attempted to explicate, while seeking to avoid sweeping totalizations, how certain taken for granted, apparently transparent concepts such as 'responsibility' may have radically different meanings in different epistemes and systems of thought.

While we may agree that there are no fixed meanings; that any word or concept consists of a field of meanings rather than a final point of unassailable, single meaning, I do not think that in this particular case, the use of the same words with different meanings can solely be ascribed to poststructuralist 'différance' (see, e.g., Derrida, "Différance" in *Speech and Phenomena*). It rather reflects some of the differences in the way in which people in indigenous and dominant societies perceive themselves in relation to others as well as to the world in general. It is therefore necessary, throughout my inquiry, to inquire into concepts that are central to the main argument of my work. If anything, the occasionally lengthy explanations demonstrate how some of the most commonly employed concepts and notions can have altogether different meanings and contents in different epistemes and modes of social reality. It also reflects the complexity of the current undertaking.

This inquiry consists of two parts. The first part creates the necessary context by means of the guiding concept-metaphors[17] of this thesis. In the chapter "Deatnu – the River," I evoke a river of my home place as a metaphorical undercurrent of my work. In that chapter, I situate myself by way of discussing the river Deatnu both as an actual place where I come from as well as a concept-metaphor of the fluidity and coalescence of various discourses and epistemes. I discuss how and why the metaphor of the river is necessary for my inquiry and useful for scholarly inquiry in general. The chapter also illuminates my path, or, staying true to the metaphor of the river, the current that has led me to undertake the present inquiry on the relationship between indigenous epistemes and the academy.

The second chapter reconsiders the concept of the gift, emphasizing its dimension as a reflection of a particular worldview rather than a form of exchange economy as it has been defined by many previous theories and analyses. To understand my argument pertaining to the (im)possible gift of indigenous epistemes, it is necessary to critically examine previous assumptions about the gift and to acquire a new perspective of it as a means of constructing and sustaining relationships not only between human beings but also in the interaction between humans and the natural environment. Many scholars of the logic and functions of the gift have invariably noted the the intricate and ambiguous nature of the gift, yet they have not been able to rid themselves of certain biases influencing their interpretations. Ironically, many of the analyses are imbued by condescending views, rendering indigenous systems into 'primitive thought' while at the same time recognizing the complexity of the gift. In this chapter, I also

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[17] I use the term 'concept-metaphor' in a deconstructive sense, attempting to repeal the binary between the two and call attention to its meaning as a combination of the two terms (without prioritizing either) that often are separated and categorized into two different realms of existence. Spivak notes that if neither metaphor nor concept is given priority (or both are), it is possible to analyze poetry "as a serious objection to the privileging of theory that takes place when humanists gather to discuss 'cultural explanations.'" She argues, "If we could deconstruct (as far as possible) this marginalization between metaphor and concept, we would realize not only that no pure theory of metaphor is possible, because any premetaphoric base of discussion must already assume the distinction between theory and metaphor; but also that no priority, by the same token, can be given to metaphor, since every metaphor is constrained and constituted by its conceptual justification" (*In Other Worlds* 115). See also Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *Margins*, 207-57.

illuminate some aspects of the traditional Sami worldview and practices with regard to the gift.

The second part of my work delves into the question of indigenous epistemes in the academy. The first chapter of this section gives an overview of some of the previous critiques of the academy that implicitly inform my own inquiry and argument. First, I take a quick look into the historical development of higher learning and universities and the eurocentric foundations and nature of the academy. Second, I discuss the 'crisis' of the liberal education, the feminist critique of the academy as well as the critiques of anthropology and ethnography. I also briefly consider racism in the university and criticism of academic practices and discourses by indigenous scholars.

In the second chapter, I outline the current academic circumstances that gave impetus for my analysis and consideration. By drawing upon various examples of the experiences of indigenous people in the academy (my own 'field notes' included)[18], I demonstrate the main issues – commonly referred to as 'cultural conflicts' between the cultures of indigenous peoples on the one hand and the academy on the other – underlying the inhospitality of the academy and its lack of responsibility toward the other. In this chapter, I also problematize the concept of culture and explain my use of the concept of episteme. At the end of the chapter, I will elaborate the notion of epistemic ignorance and analyze some of the common manifestations of passive and active ignorance.

In the third chapter, I suggest, following Spivak's argument, that considering the present circumstances, many indigenous people often 'cannot speak' in the academy. In other words, they are not heard, listened to seriously or understood but rather, reduced to the position of native informants who consolidate the dominant selves of the academy. In short, 'the indigenous other' appears and is allowed to appear only when she is needed in the production of hegemonic knowledge. In this chapter, I also return to the notion of the gift, further elaborating why it has been perceived to be a threat. This discussion foregrounds my argument

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[18] In this regard – writing 'field notes' from and within the academy – I could perhaps consider myself, with intentional self-irony, what Spivak calls a 'wild anthropologist,' someone "who went out to do field work in the West" (*Post-Colonial* 165; see also *Critique* 157). I certainly hope to be able to say that "'Fieldwork' for me has come to mean something else, working in the field to learn how not to formalize too quickly, for one's own benefit in learning to resonate with responsibility-based mind-sets; rather than a generally hasty preparation for academic and semi-academic transcoding" (Spivak, *Critique* 409). The reason I can only express my desire for such a position is that I am aware of the difficulty of it, constantly grappling with generalized taxonomies and arguments and sliding still too easily into the trappings of formalizations.

that in current circumstances, indigenous epistemes remain an impossible gift in and to the academy. At the end of the third chapter, I consider the notion of 'recognition' and explain what I mean by calling for the recognition of indigenous epistemes as a gift. I also suggest that recognition is central to the indigenous logic of the gift.

In the fourth chapter, I analyze and problematize the idea of knowing other peoples and cultures. While it is clearly necessary to have knowledge and understanding of indigenous peoples and their epistemic traditions to rid oneself from ignorance, there are numerous pitfalls in this 'knowing,' including Romantic notions of the colonized Other, 'Eurocentric arrogance' or 'unexamined nativism' (Spivak, *Critique* 377, 208, 173). Here Spivak's articulation of the need for doing one's homework is very helpful. I link it to the notion of the responsibility toward the other as the crucial premise of the re-imagined future academy. In this chapter, I also further explicate the concept of responsibility, a notion commonly evoked in academic circumstances but rarely defined or specified. How does this notion relate to the ways responsibility is often understood in indigenous contexts? I outline responsibility as a call for a response and a specific form of action and knowing.

In the last chapter of my inquiry, I discuss the possibility of a new relationship of hospitality between the academy and indigenous epistemes, based on the arguments and conceptualizations of both indigenous thought and Derrida's theorizing of hospitality. First, I delineate some initial encounters of hospitality between indigenous people and early colonizers as well as traditional perceptions of hospitality. I then examine the notion of hospitality in the academy through discussions of academic freedom and the question of the roles of the host and the guest. I also deliberate what an unconditional welcome would imply in the academy. Finally, I suggest an open-ended model of hospitality characterized by interchangeability. This interchangeability prevents us being locked into reductionistic and apparently false fixed categories of the guest and host by allowing both the academy and indigenous epistemes to occupy the positions of host-guest (*hôte*) simultaneously. In this way the necessary reciprocation can occur, making the gift eventually possible.

My analysis and theoretical arguments are occasionally complemented and interspersed with by literary excerpts, particularly poetry, of indigenous writers. The purpose of these literary reflections is manifold. Much of the analysis of the experiences of indigenous people in the

academy has to do with emotions. In many cases, poetry reveals these emotions succinctly and more effectively than any conventional scholarly explanations would. The use of the literary also reminds us that it is a theoretical discourse for many people, including countless indigenous peoples who have always theorized through various forms of their oral traditions. While adding another dimension to my inquiry, I leave the poems unanalyzed, allowing them to have the effect they may evoke on the reader. The inclusion of poetry does not, however, imply a transparent model of representation – I do not assume that I am allowing the 'subaltern' speak for herself through the selected literary excerpts. Such an assumption would efface my role and conceal it as an 'absent nonrepresenter' (cf. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 292). My use of the literary excerpts is undoubtedly selective, strategic and irretrievably mediated.

Furthermore, guided by the notion and the movement of the river, I intend to illuminate the potential capacity of bringing several epistemic, philosophical and scholarly traditions together, however tentatively, temporarily and above all, fluidly. I believe that with the help of the metaphor of the river, it is possible to avoid getting stuck in fixed, deterministic positions. The river enables the constant movement of this coalescence and if necessary, coming apart again. The fluidity of the river prevents forcing anything but it also enables things that otherwise might not be conceivable. As such, then, this inquiry should not be considered offering definitive answers or solutions to the questions raised in this work. Instead, it should be viewed as an invitation to respond and opening into a new level of analysis concerning indigenous epistemes and the gift logic in the academy.

i. DEATNU – THE RIVER

"Like a silver ribbon the swift river winds through its deep yet spacious valley. Uninterrupted birch forest gives to the slope a luxuriant air, reminiscent of the South; the river is something like a Rhine of the North."
(Kalliala 51)[1]

Deatnu, often regarded as one of the best salmon rivers in Europe, is officially considered the border river between Norway and Finland.[2] For many of us along the river, however, Deatnu is not a border but rather a bond that connects families who live on both sides of the river. The entire Deatnu valley is the landscape[3] of our home. Before the roads were built on both sides of the river, Deatnu was the main *johtolat* – a Sami word signifying passage, way, route, channel, connection – for people, news, foodstuffs, mail, building materials and so on. During the summer, traveling and commuting was done by boat. In the winter, the thick ice of the river served as a road for horses and oxen and later cars. In short, everything and everybody moved along the river, except during short periods in the spring and fall when the ice was either too thin to carry weight or, in the process of being formed, prevented boating. Besides being a significant salmon river, it has functioned as a source of both physical and spiritual sustenance for generations.[4]

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[1] While mostly correct, this description by a Finnish person reveals a desire if not exoticize, to construct the river and the valley 'as good as' something that is recognized and valued within European sensibility. Also reflecting the common attempt to comprehend and represent the unfamiliar by means of the familiar, it nevertheless embodies "a systematic and revealing distribution of values" (Todorov 128).

[2] The Sami along the river consider Deatnu 'the mother of all rivers.' Etymologically, the name of the river is derived from the Sami word 'eatnu' signifying a large river. 'Eatnu,' in turn, has the same root as words 'eatnan' (earth), 'eadni' (mother).

[3] I am aware of the problematic nature of the term 'landscape' (see e.g., Silko, *Yellow Woman* 27) yet for lack of a better word in English I occasionally use it to refer to the entirety of a certain environment or surrounding.

[4] For many indigenous peoples, salmon is not merely an economic resource, but as Michael Marker puts it, while discussing the significance of the salmon for the Lummi on the Pacific Northwest Coast, "the salmon represent a merging of economic and spiritual survival" ("Lummi Identity" 410). Jeannette Armstrong notes: "Where salmon is the most important source of life and the outward expression of God, the spirit of a whole people become wounded beyond expression when that source is annihilated. I have seen that deep despair in the many river peoples who can no longer harvest salmon" ("Unclean Tides" 182).

Sami musician Mari Boine recalls her childhood when she was told that on the other side of the river is a foreign country called Finland. She could not understand how that was possible for her family lived on both sides of the river. Only later she learned that colonization had divided her homeland into different countries and in that process, her home river had become a marker of these artificial boundaries.

A metaphor of the formation of multiple, complicated identities, living on the border and in between different worlds – whether geographical, physical, political and/or colonial, racial, cultural or any combination of these – has long been a theme of poetry and other creative writing. Sometimes these borders are not mere metaphors but concrete, lived experience. Thomas King (Cherokee/Greek) tells a humorous yet highly poignant story of a Blackfoot woman attempting to cross the Canadian-U.S. border with her son. She runs into trouble when the border guard wants to know her citizenship:

> "Blackfoot," my mother told him.
> "Ma'am?"
> "Blackfoot," my mother repeated.
> "Canadian?"
> "Blackfoot."...
> "Now, I know that we got Blackfeet on the American side and the Canadians got Blackfoot on their side. Just so we can keep our records straight, what side do you come from?" ... "Canadian side or American side?" asked the guard.
> "Blackfoot side," she said. ...
> Most of that day, we wandered around the duty-free store, which wasn't very large. The manager had a name tag with a tiny American flag on one side and a tiny Canadian flag on the other. His name was Mel. Towards evening, he began suggesting that we should be on our way. I told him we had nowhere to go, that neither the Americans nor the Canadians would let us in. (King, "Borders" 136, 140)

Today, Samiland is also divided by the borders of four different nation-states and while the crossing of these borders is made relatively easy due to Nordic cooperation agreements, including the Nordic Passport Union,[5] I am always somewhat ill at ease when I am asked which country I come from. Not only do I feel that replying "Finland" is incorrect in the sense that it does not say anything about my Sami background – it does not adequately reflect my reality but

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[5] The Union dates back over 40 years and has meant the elimination of passport controls at internal borders.

I also feel the weight of the absurdity of such an innocent question. If the vagaries of the history such as the "closing" of the border of present-day Norway and Finland had taken place, say, ten or twenty years earlier or later, who knows if my family might have been living on the side of the river that became Norway, and I might today carry a Norwegian passport rather than a Finnish one. I would reply that I was from Norway and feel equally uncomfortable. In a way, I am grateful for the Nordic Passport Union since at least I am not subjected to the same kind of nonsensical and, most of all, hurtful questioning as was the Blackfoot woman in King's story, travelling in her own territory. However, even if I am not stopped every time I cross the border in Samiland, the borders are made visible in numerous implicit and explicit ways.

The emergence of postcolonial criticism has also made the idea of the border a popular topic of scholarly analysis.[6] For Paula Gunn Allen (Pueblo Laguna/Sioux), living on the border does not refer so much to physical and geographical boundaries as to "multiculturality, multilinguality, and dizzying class-crossing from the fields to the salons, from the factories to the academy, or from galleries and the groves of academe to the neighborhoods and reservations" (*Off the Reservation* 166). She calls this kind of existence 'boundary-busting,' best illustrated in writing by people who belong to more than one community, creating a new 'border literature' – "literature that rides the borders of a variety of literary, cultural, and ideological realms" (*Off the Reservation* 165).

Living on both sides of the river Deatnu has, for centuries, meant living on the border in the sense delineated by Allen. People have been multicultural and multilingual out of necessity – understanding other cultures and languages has been the key for everyday survival. On the Finnish side of the Deatnu valley, Sami carried quite an isolated life from the rest of Finland until the postwar period. Sami scholar Veli-Pekka Lehtola notes that some people even designated the northernmost municipality as its own republic (*Evakko* n.p.). After the return from the evacuation in Central Finland, life got restarted mainly with the help of the Norwegian connections. Unlike in many other places, there was no lack of food on the Deatnu river

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[6] Considerations on the concept of the border and 'borderlands' include Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*; Anzaldua and Keating, ed, *This Bridge We Call Home*; Arteaga, ed, *An Other Tongue*; Castillo and Cordoba, *Border Women*; Gomez-Peña, *Dangerous Border Crossers*; Hicks, *Border Writing* and Moraga and Anzaldua, ed, *This Bridge Called My Back*. See also analyses on hybridity, including Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* and Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other*.

because of the nearby towns on the Norwegian side. People also relied on the health services of those towns. In Vuovdaguoika school, located on the Finnish side of the river, there even was a Norwegian hospital running for a while, admitting patients from both sides of the river.

After the war, however, the border of Finland and Norway was patrolled more closely, particularly because the two countries were considered to belong in different 'camps.' Northern Norway was liberated from the German occupation by Russians while Finland was, at the end of the war, a German ally. The first Finnish border patrol station was established in the region in 1945, after which the formal connections to the other side of the river gradually weakened (Lehtola, *Evakko* 196-8). After the war, people were required to settle down more permanently on either side of the river, although many families had land on each side. New laws were passed to regulate land ownership. According to the Norwegian law, 'Finnish citizens,' i.e., the Sami who happened to live on the Finnish side of the river when the 'border was closed' (in 1752), were no longer allowed to own land on the Norwegian side. My great-grandmother, who had married from one side of the river to the other, however, was able to retain her land on the Norwegian side and, after retiring, she moved back with her husband. Her situation was by no means unique, as illustrated by Sami poet Rauni Magga Lukkari:

> I row across my river
> Father's river
> Grandfather's river
> Row first to the Norwegian side
> then to the Finnish side
> I row across my river
> to Mother's side
> Father's side
> Wondering
> where homeless children belong (141)

Besides being a small-scale farmer with cows and sheep, my great-grandfather was a trader who regularly traveled to the port towns of Northern Norway. My grandfather in turn occasionally worked as a fisherman at sea – again in Northern Norway yet still in Sápmi.

Intermingling of cultures and languages has a long history in the Deatnu valley and is still taken for granted by many local people.[7] Our place – my mother's and her siblings' birth place – continues to reflect this reality today, particularly in the summer when various family members come to spend their holidays by the river. Communication takes place in various languages and there are always people who do not understand all the languages spoken. This is considered entirely normal and I was made aware of it only after my mother told me a story of a visitor from a completely monolingual region in Finland who had expressed his uneasiness with languages that he did not know. He had been resting upstairs when he had realized that people downstairs were speaking at least a couple of different languages and neither of them was Finnish. All these 'foreign' languages and so little Finnish in spite of being in Finland (or at least this is what he thought)![8]

Discussing national borders, Leslie Marmon Silko (Pueblo Laguna) maintains that "borders haven't worked, and they won't work, not now, as the indigenous people of the Americas reassert their kinship and solidarity with one another" (*Yellow Woman* 122). She points out that in the region of the present-day Southwest of the US and Mexico, indigenous peoples have always traded and shared cosmologies and oral narratives. In her view, these exchanges and human migrations cannot be stopped, because like rivers and winds, human beings are also natural forces of the earth.

For me, it is easy to relate to Silko's words and her denunciation of physical, colonial borders that attempt to break up and divide existing communities and kinships. This is exactly why I have difficulties with fully embracing the notion of living on the border. In my case, celebration of in-betweenness would include recognizing the colonial borders of the nation-states that split my family and divide my people into four different countries. It would mean the

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[7] Here the notion of border territory with regard to Samiland gains a new meaning. Einar Niemi argues that the idea of the 'border territory' is much older than the present-day state borders. Writes he: "Since the Middle Ages the northern Sami habitation area was regarded as a border territory between cultures and ethnic groups and between east and west" (63-4). Later, during the official assimilation policies known as the Norwegianization between the mid-1800s and WW II, this view was revised into a notion that Northern Norway was seen as "the last stronghold of European civilization in the North against 'Eastern barbarism.' Here the 'civilized house of Europe' bordered 'Asian anarchy and chaos'" (Niemi 75). This is an interesting strand to the discussion of borders in Samiland which cannot, however, considered further in the context my inquiry.

[8] The 'cosmopolitan' nature of the Sami is also discussed by Valkeapää, "I Have No Beginning" and Vuolab, "All Situations."

recognition of the borders which were established much later than the era when my ancestors inhabited the river valley. In short, for many along the river, Deatnu remains a borderless river that nevertheless carries the implications of its invisible border.

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The attempt to situate myself with the Deatnu river stems from my conviction, shared by many indigenous and other scholars, that no academic inquiries can remain disconnected from the inquirer whose capacities and limits of knowledge are always implicated in their work. The basic Foucauldian premise that subjects can only speak and know within the limits imposed by the discursive frameworks of a particular time, informs my understanding. These frameworks are central to my possibilities of understanding and interpreting the questions at hand. In other words, I do not attempt to escape the fact that knowing is always partial and embedded in certain historically and culturally situated and constructed accounts. In this chapter on the river Deatnu, therefore, I discuss my own social, cultural, geographic, historical and intellectual locatedness that shapes and constructs my knowing and thinking.

In its apparent straightforward flow toward the sea, the river meanders and digresses, constantly changing its rhythm and speed. The rhythm changes according to and depends on its physical features, seasons as well as human activities (which, luckily, on Deatnu have been so far relatively minimal). Swimming upstream, the salmon also has its rhythm, stopping and resting behind big rocks and in deep pools. There are countless tributaries that feed into the river, making the river stretch far away from the main current. The movement of the stream appears linear yet its various currents, rapids and eddies make it also circular. This fluid and shifting nature of the river defies fixed, clear-cut boundaries or divisions. Such ambiguity is the strength of the river – it cannot be reduced to characteristics of binary oppositions. Literally, the river, both as an actual river and as a concept-metaphor, requires us to look beyond the surface

in order to see its various contexts and circumstances.

The river is like a genealogy – in fact, it *is* a genealogy in a very concrete way, considering how many of my family members live in various locations along the both sides of the river. It is like a genealogy also in that at the specific location that I consider my home, there always is an upstream, the river that comes before, and a downstream, the river that comes after. For this reason, it is necessary to recount several stories that relate (though circuitously) to the intentions of this inquiry. Like the river, the various accounts in this chapter meander and digress while all being integral to it; without them the river would be incomplete.

There are many places where I could start this particular 'river/genealogy.' One of the most obvious is the larger Sami context, and in that, the dominant Sami discourse that constructs and is constructed by the contemporary Sami society of which I am part regardless of my physical location.[9] By Sami discourse I mean not only the ways in which common interpretations of Saminess are constructed, but the ways in which common 'truths' are generally perceived and interpreted in Sami society. In my inquiry, I employ the notion of discourse in the Foucauldian sense according to which discourses are constituted of a certain, limited number of statements and unwritten rules that are continually referred to. Discourses thus establish what is conceivable to say and think, what are the criteria of 'truth' and who is assigned to speak with authority. Here I am interested in the statements and unwritten rules of Sami discourse, i.e., the statements made in the public Sami context that express the taken-for-granted representations of the Sami.

In many ways, my relationship to that discourse is central to my work both within and without the academy. It also informs, however indirectly, the current inquiry. Although the link between a critique of the academy and Sami discourse appears somewhat distant, they are

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[9] While recognizing that a discourse is always a site of contested meanings and that also in Sami society there are several concurrent discourses, my focus here is on the discourse produced by the Sami elite, i.e., academics and politicians. This discourse is the predominant, 'official' discourse in that it is very influential in defining the parameters of Saminess and Sami culture. Yet in many ways, it remains uncritical of its underlying assumptions that contribute to its own complicity in colonialism. In spite of concentrating specifically on Sami discourse, I understand that many of the issues raised here also apply, in varying degrees, to other indigenous peoples' situations, reinforcing the idea of connectedness to other cross-cultural examples and enabling a supportive reflection of other indigenous contexts. The Sami may have articulated a clearer position of engaging in the game of the dominant discourses and structures than many other indigenous peoples, but the difference is more a matter of emphasis.

connected. My criticism of narrow, selective epistemic and intellectual traditions of the academy also implicitly criticizes the dominant Sami discourse. As far as I am concerned, Sami society at large is facing a subtle but far-reaching epistemic or cultural displacement in regards to our values, worldview and cultural practices. There is a pressing need to recognize our epistemically impoverished state which is in a stark contrast to the general material well-being of the Sami. There is a need to address the cultural or epistemic displacement of the Sami and become more aware of the subtle forms of colonization that have become internalized during the hundreds of years of colonization and today affect much of our basic assumptions and thinking. Lacking a critique of discursive practices of colonialism in particular, the dominant Sami discourse has not paid adequate attention to the gradual erasure of the Sami episteme – the deeper structures such as values, worldviews, underlying assumptions and principles.[10] Therefore, we need both awareness of our subjugation and a new vision of Sami society. As Sami scholars we have to both enter and know the struggles within a discourse and of multiple discourses in order to be able to examine critically the profound effects of colonial processes on us and our society.

Quite naturally, we need to bear in mind that to discuss the Sami episteme – a set of values, system of knowledge and worldview deriving from a distinct Sami understanding and interpretation of the world and its phenomena – does not imply its immutability throughout time. While constantly changing, the Sami episteme, however, contains certain underlying premises and beliefs that remain relatively stable, informing the basic values and norms of society. Like the Deatnu river, it is in a constant flux, gradually changing all the time yet remaining in its course. My intention is not to call for an impossible return to the 'golden past' but to argue that in our attempts to negotiate our position in the contemporary world, the Sami need to pay a much closer attention to their own episteme – to recognize that the process of negotiation is not an either-or game.

A central part of the self-determination process of indigenous peoples is to resist the definitions of the world according to frameworks deriving from the western scholarly tradition

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[10] As Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) puts it: "No one is suggesting that Indians 'revert' to the old days or old ways. Rather we must be able to understand what those old days and ways really were and model our present actions and beliefs within that tradition" ("Research, Redskins" 16). He particularly recognizes the responsibility of scholars in this process of renegotiation.

and instead, name it according to indigenous systems of thought.[11] The Maori, for instance, have created a research philosophy and practice called Kaupapa Maori based on certain principles that not only reflect Maori values but also address the shortcomings of earlier research and current policies directed at the Maori people.[12] Much of Sami scholarship, on the other hand, has so far rather uncritically (and often unconsciously) employed and reproduced mainstream, western theories and adopted their scholarly traditions without considering alternative Sami modes of research. The river as a guiding concept-metaphor is, therefore, my personal attempt to begin constructing a basis for analysis that is based on Sami social and cultural realities. Moreover, the idea of the river in its fluidity and constant change corresponds to the context of Sami worldview characterized by porous boundaries between human, natural and spiritual realms, making the transformation and movement in and out of different worlds commonplace and 'normal.'

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Guided by the river, I approach Sami discourse through a meander – from a critical comparative perspective. Looking from afar and contrasting Sami contemporary realities with other indigenous peoples has been instrumental for me in recognizing many of the naturalized and taken-for-granted assumptions of ourselves as Sami, our society and our relationship to others.

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[11] Related to this sense of belonging and responsibility is the common practice of indigenous research to 'decolonize' the idea of stereotypical generic 'Indians' and other 'natives' by indicating the 'tribal affiliations' of each indigenous individual. Denoting the people, nation or tribe of an indigenous individual is to name them properly and also to give them a voice as who they are collectively. In this way, they and their words are also connected to their cultures and certain backgrounds. As a practice, it is a way of respecting and recognizing who we are as diverse and heterogeneous indigenous people with differing social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts yet sharing certain fundamental principles that are characteristic to indigenous peoples around the world. In my inquiry, therefore, I will name the people or nation of an indigenous individual, usually simply in brackets. Since it is not a common practice in non-indigenous scholarship, I have not extended it to others quoted or mentioned in this work.

[12] See, for instance, G. Smith, "Kaupapa Maori: Theory and Praxis"; L. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Irwin, "Maori Research Methods"; and Bishop.

When we were kids, one of our favourite summer time activities by

Deatnu river was to climb up to Sávjabákti, a mountain beside us, and

look down at the river. Sometimes we walked along the path made by

our grandparents' sheep and cows but sometimes we took a shortcut,

climbing straight up the steep hill. On reaching the top, we sat on rocks

and looked down the river curving around our place. It was fun also to

follow our family members in their outdoor duties – chopping wood,

carrying water from the river, gardening, fixing or building something

– or just having a smoke or walking on one of the many paths between

the various buildings. It is no surprise, then, that in spite of currently

being on the West Coast of Canada, I quite often feel that I am still on

the top of Sávjabákti, looking at things from a distance yet from within.

Predominantly focussed on issues of language and material aspects of culture, the dominant Sami discourse lacks a critical awareness of the more subtle forms of colonization such as what Spivak calls 'epistemic violence'; "a complete overhaul of the episteme" ("Can the Subaltern Speak" 76) or the imposition and internalization of another set of codes and values (e.g., *Post-Colonial* 126). This type of subtle violence has gone mostly unnoticed in contemporary Sami society, which further contributes to its unconscious reproduction. Still relying heavily on taken-for-granted symbols of Saminess, defined by the Sami movement during its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s, Sami discourse has created a double bind which has placed the Sami as part of the international indigenous discourse and also the conflicting (but somehow naturalized and reconciled by many Sami scholars and leaders) discourse of modernity.

On the one hand, the Sami associate themselves with the world's other indigenous peoples, arguing that we are an indigenous people as defined by the internationally recognized, semiofficial definitions of the United Nations and other international organizations. On the other hand, there is a tendency by the Sami elite in particular but also many ordinary Sami, however unconscious, to place the Sami as belonging to modernity and the epistemological and

philosophical traditions of the West. This tendency, implicitly present in much of Sami discourse reflected in media, politics and generally in ways in which Sami talk about themselves, is particularly obvious in the underlying assumptions of knowledge and premises by which Sami research is conducted. This does not mean, however, that there are no endeavours and research that seek to decolonize and transform Sami society and its discourses, both in research and other fields. Particularly at the Sami College, there has emerged in the past years a determined interest to develop Sami pedagogical models and transform schools to reflect local Sami values and ideas instead of merely teaching the mainstream curriculum in the Sami language.[13]

In much of Sami discourse, adaptation is considered one of the cornerstones of Sami culture and society. Many Sami regard the ability of Sami culture to adapt both to the natural environment and societal changes as one of the most fundamental and important factors of Sami history (e.g., Lehtola, "Nimettömän" 17; Laiti 121). Lehtola argues that despite the long period of colonization, the Sami have successfully adapted into new changes without losing their integrity:

> In the face of new influences, new models of government, new restrictions and new abuses and drawbacks, the Sami never rushed to an uprising and resistance. Instead, they have always given way, receded and retreated but yet held their own and integrated changes as an integral part of their own culture. ("Nimettömän" 17-8)

Adaptation and withdrawal are considered a central Sami survival strategy that has guaranteed the continuance of Sami culture despite assimilative pressures and policies. The practice of considering withdrawal as a distinctly Sami survival strategy is poignantly described in the following poem by Sami writer Kirsti Paltto:

Goaskimin	As eagles
mii eat riegádan	we weren't born
Eat boaimmáža sohkii	Not into the family of rough-legged buzzards
eat čearreta lundui	nor the nature of Arctic terns
goddesáhpána mii eat áddestala	lemmings we don't imitate

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[13] See, for example, Hirvonen, *Mo sámáidahttit skuvlla?* and *Sámi skuvla plánain ja praktihkas*; Balto, "Sámi jurddašanvuogi pedagogalaš vuoddu."

Rievssata bajásgeassin	Upbringing of a ptarmigan
min eallima čuvoda	is what our lives follow

Rievssatlávkkiin jávkkitat mii	With steps of the ptarmigan we disappear
skálvve sisa váhččema vuordit	into a snow drift to wait for fresh snow

Ja vuordit	And wait
hortevalvviid mannama meattá	for the hounds to pass
(*Beštoriin* 82)	

Whether a realistic representation of the ingenious strategies employed by the Sami when threatened or an ironic, critical commentary on contemporary Sami society and its leaders, the poem depicts the Sami as highly adaptable and non-aggressive, if not inoffensive. Unlike eagles or buzzards, or even terns and lemmings that can be extremely vicious when confronted, 'we' remain quiet and go into hiding rather than offer resistance or attack the aggressors or invaders. The comparison to ptarmigans – which have traditionally played an important role in Sami subsistence – can be then, depending on the interpretation, viewed either as a praise or criticism.

There is, however, a need to recognize that the strategy of camouflage and retreat, however legitimate, might be flawed and has the potential to backfire as the aggressors find no resistance and thus can assume control. Whether withdrawal and adaptation really are survival strategies or a myth that prevents us from seeing how we have internalized colonization as a part of our own practices is another question that requires critical attention among the Sami people.

Similarly, we have to pay closer attention to arguments on Sami bicultural competence. Sami scholar Harald Gaski maintains that the Sami aspire to "mastering both their own world and the view that 'the others' had of the world" ("Introduction" 19). Like withdrawal, the 'mastering of both ways' is considered a Sami strength and strategy which has resolved the dilemma between a minority culture and the modern world. What exactly these 'both ways' are, however, is left unexamined, and the reader is left with questions such as: What are the Sami ways that are retained? Is it limited to linguistic competence or does it also deal with the deep meanings and values of the culture? What are the modern ways in which the Sami excel?

While acquiring the competence to operate in two worlds is both necessary and

desirable, the level of success in the Sami case is somewhat suspect. We presume that we have acquired a balance between the Sami and 'modern' worlds. In many cases, we have engaged in 'mastering' the practices of the dominant societies at the cost of our own ways and practices. The concept of mastery has been criticized by innumerable postcolonial, feminist and indigenous scholars who point out how the concept refers to (masculinist) domination and control, war and conquest and is thus closely linked to the mentality of modernity and colonization.[14]

In Gaski's view, "the challenge of the modern natural man" – that is, the Sami (men?) – is to function as the mediators between the two worlds, including advocating "the view of the 'natural man' to the international society" ("Introduction" 24). Discussing the concepts of nature and culture in the North American indigenous context, Jack D. Forbes (Powhatan-Delaware) explains the etymological origins of these words and notes that they reflect quite a different worldview from a Native American one where a sense of continuity with the world and universe is paramount ("Nature and Culture" 7). Val Plumwood also notes that "the gendered character of nature/culture dualism, and of the whole web of other dualisms interconnected with it, is not a feature of human thought or culture *per se*, and does not relate the universal man to the universal woman; it is specifically a feature of *western* thought" (11). One wonders, then, about the Sami preoccupation with modernity and 'modern world.' Could it be a reflection of the unconscious internalization of mainstream values, or is it a deliberate choice in order to belong to and be equal with the modern world?

The modern consciousness forms the foundation of the mechanistic worldview that considers the natural world as a background, resource or commodity and is characterized by "an alienated account of human identity in which humans are essentially apart from or 'outside of' nature" (Plumwood 71). It is a perception radically different from indigenous peoples' perceptions in which the relationship with the surrounding environment is defined in terms of respect, responsibilities and reciprocity. In indigenous scholarship, the discourse of modernity is criticized and analyzed as a form of dominance and hegemony. In his enigmatic and playful style, Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) calls modernity a "mirror of science, material culture, and

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[14] See, for instance, McClintock, *Imperial Leather*; Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race*; Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* and Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism*.

the courier of the other" which "causes the disenchantment of essence, traditional authority, and overruns natural reason" (*Fugitive Poses* 38). He maintains that, "Modernity is rational, a constitutional dominance. Modernity is the very ideological possession of the other, the representations of *indian* cultures by the documents and languages of civilization" (*Fugitive* 94).[15] Silko also asserts that her people have ensured that their awareness "never deteriorated into Cartesian duality, cutting off the human from the natural world" (*Yellow Woman* 37). In the dominant Sami discourse, it seems that the strategy of cultural adaptation appears to be more important than ensuring an awareness and application of the Sami worldview and system of values.

Hegemony, defined by Antonio Gramsci as a special form of ideological and cultural domination whereby the consciousness of subordinate groups is constructed by the discourse of those in power, appears to explain quite well the processes undergone by Sami society.[16] In hegemonic conditions, the subordinate groups reproduce, without recognizing and even while struggling against, the conceptual and institutional structures of the dominant society. This is what has also taken place in Samiland, resulting in a situation where we have internalized the colonizing assumptions about ourselves and, therefore, inflict epistemic violence upon ourselves.

In other words, by being mainly preoccupied by what is considered 'mastering both ways,' we have actually learned to 'master' the non-Sami ways and ignored the way of the river Deatnu and its gifts to us. Many of us have mentally detached ourselves from the river that gives us direction and sets the rhythm of our actions. We have either got stranded on the sand or drifted to the open sea far from our source of meaning that, although in a constant flux and continuation, is deeply channeled in its course. We recognize the obvious gifts of the river, the silvery salmon that swims upstream every summer, but we have ignored its other, less tangible gifts. Lanniko L. Lee (Cheyenne River Sioux) discusses the ways of knowing afforded by the wisdom of 'her' river, the Missouri, before the construction of the Oahe Dam:

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[15] Vizenor makes a clear distinction between the terms *indian* (intentionally lowercase and in italics) and native. "The *indian* is a simulation, the absence of natives; the indian transposes the real, and the simulation of the real has no referent, memories, or native stories" (*Fugitive* 15).

[16] See Gramsci's discussion on hegemony, for example, in Hoare and Nowell Smith, ed, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.*

I believe the river provided the basis for healthy and whole families, and without it, all manner of assault has been made against those families to hamper their survival in all the ways that really matter. Government remedies are powerless to replace the gifts of wholeness provided by the river wisdom that upheld ethnic identity and cultural learning, all very much a valid part of our human experience. (40)

Besides sustaining us physically, the river nourishes us spiritually and mentally by connecting us to a specific location as well as to our ancestors who lived along the river before us. Through activities and practices on and along the river, it connects us to the local stories, providing us with a sense of continuity and collectivity. For Sami along the river, it is simultaneously an exterior and interior landscape that shapes both our activities and thinking. In other words, the river is implicated both in our daily actions and our stories through which we hear who we are (cf. Silko, *Yellow Woman* 25-47). Moreover, the constant motion reminds us that nothing is static – every summer, for instance, the bottom of the river is slightly different and the main channel has moved a little from the previous year, never mind the seasonal changes, which in the Arctic are literally like day and night. Yet in spite of the constant process of change, the river remains a river without losing its underlying characteristics. The constant motion of the river is what Vizenor calls 'transmotion,' a sense of native motion, an active presence, native memories and sovereignty. In his poetic rendering, he argues,

The sovereignty of motion is mythic, material, and visionary, not mere territoriality, in the sense of colonialism and nationalism. Native transmotion is an original natural union in the stories of emergence and migration that relate humans to an environment and to the spiritual and political significance of animals and other creations. Monotheism is dominance over nature; transmotion is natural reason, and native creation with other creatures. (*Postindian* 182-3)

The transmotion of the river Deatnu alerts me to dualistic structures, helping me to be aware of and avoid the trappings of dualisms and dichotomies that sometimes characterize indigenous scholarship such as 'colonizer-colonized.' This is not to argue that the relationship does not exist or that its legacy does not continue to impact our lives today in numerous ways. Rather, I am interested in paying more careful attention to the shifting nature of this relationship and the differences within the categories by recognizing our privileges and participations, albeit often marginal or minimal, in various colonial processes.[17] I concur with Spivak who argues, "Our

[17] See, for instance, Spivak, "Transnationality" 84-5 as well as her discussion in *Critique*, ch 4.

work cannot succeed if we always have a scapegoat" (*Critique* 307). At the same time, however, we have to continue critically analyzing the ever-changing, historically and geographically and highly gendered specific encounters between colonizer and colonized that still exist today (Razack, *Looking White People* 3). By employing a deconstructive approach that corresponds to the fluidity of the river Deatnu (which is not, however, synonym of or limited to deconstruction), I attempt to practice "[a] caution, vigilance, a persistent taking of distance always out of step with total involvement" which is, according to Spivak, "all that responsible academic criticism can aspire to" (*Critique* 362).

To a varying degree, I am both insider and outsider to all of the discourses employed here – Sami, indigenous or western (if I may lump, even for practical purposes, vast and contested traditions into such homogeneous categories) – making it unavoidably a process of constant negotiation.[18] One of the great appeals of the deconstructive practice of not only refusing to be pure or accept binary oppositions and totalizations (and thus deconstructing them) but also being aware and openly accepting the ambiguity and even crisis – "the moment at which you feel that your presuppositions of an enterprise are disproved by the enterprise itself" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 139). Thus, instead of being so concerned of the possible impossibilities that my work may present, I am more interested in Spivak's notions of productive crisis and interruption; the idea of bringing various, even opposing discourses together in order to them critically interrupt one another rather than throwing away one and keeping the other (*Post-Colonial* 110-1). It is at the confluence of these various shifting streams – discourses and intellectual conventions – where I find and also seek to locate myself, both intrigued and vigilant. I hope to be able to swim in and out of various discourses with the ease of the salmon which migrates between fresh and salt waters.[19]

Whether we (want to) recognize that or not, our lives are implicated by the patriarchal

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[18] Linda Smith has discussed the difficulties of indigenous researchers who are at once partially insiders and outsiders in relation to their own communities (*Decolonizing* 5, 137-40). She notes that, "One of the difficult risks insider researchers take is to 'test' their own taken-for-granted views about their community" (*Decolonizing* 139). For me personally, looking at the Sami society from outside (yet, of course, remaining at least a partial insider) has been the most effective way to contest my taken-for-granted views on my community.

[19] To those who are not familiar with the life cycle of the salmon: after being born in the river, salmon migrate to the sea, and return to spawn to the river. Most of the Pacific salmon species die soon after spawning, but the Atlantic salmon that I am most familiar with usually returns again to the sea after spawning.

global capitalism. As indigenous people, we can criticize and challenge it by having alternatives within it such as different ways of expressing and living in our cultures. Spivak has repeatedly paid attention to the complicity of academics, even those considered 'sympathetic,' 'well-meaning' as well as 'marginalized' themselves ("Can the Subaltern Speak" 73-4). She calls for the need to look at the structure of complicity through a deconstructive investigation that allows one to see "the ways in which you are complicit with what you are so carefully and cleanly opposing" (*Post-Colonial Critic* 122). Even though academics are not a monolithic group, they all participate, in a way or another, in the 'business of ideological production.' Speaking of the role of academics within the institution, Spivak maintains:

> So long as we are interested, and we *must* be interested, in hiring and firing, in grants, in allocations, in budgets, in funding new job descriptions, in publishing radical texts, in fighting for tenure and recommending for jobs, we are *in* capitalism and we cannot avoid competition and individuation. Under these circumstances, essentializing difference, however sophisticated we might be at it, may lead to unproductive conflict among ourselves. ("Teaching for the Times" 181)[20]

Ignoring the ways in which we are implicated within academic structures and assuming it is possible to remain 'uncontaminated' by any 'outside' influence despite our daily interaction in the academy only further contributes to our marginalization and construction of a monolithic understanding of ourselves or our objectives and challenges. Marcia Crosby (Tsimshian/Haida) rightly asks, "Isn't pretending that any of our pasts survived untouched by colonialism itself a dangerous thing?" (29). Recognizing the enormous importance of recording indigenous oral tradition, histories and languages, she nevertheless criticizes the implicit erasure of the inevitable gaps of the historical memory in "the production of seamless, linear Indian histories and traditions" (Crosby 28).[21]

Therefore, instead of upholding notions of unadulterated indigenous theory or misleading ourselves as to an "impossible ahistorical quest for purist positions," there is a

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[20] Unlike some other postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Spivak acknowledges "the privileged middle-class position that she occupies as a postcolonial intellectual in the western academy" which is different from the experiences of many other postcolonial migrants (Morton 31). She also stresses the fact that the space she occupies " is produced by western higher educational institutions funded by multinational capitalism" (Morton 31).

[21] See also Spivak on 'unexamined nativism' (*Teaching Machine* 280).

need to recognize that even as marginal participants of the academy, we are unavoidably negotiating with the structures of cultural imperialism (cf. Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 150; see also *Teaching Machine* 63).[22] We cannot remain ignorant of our own roles, positions and implications if we desire to convincingly analyze the ignorance of dominant epistemic conventions.

Moreover, locking ourselves in positions of binary oppositions freezes us in the same way that certain disciplines and research have frozen us into limited, stereotypical representations and modes of analyses. As Robert Allen Warrior (Osage) suggests, "perhaps our greatest contribution as intellectuals is understanding our experience in wider contexts" (123). In his view, we need to rid ourselves from the "death dance of dependence between, on the one hand, abandoning ourselves to the intellectual strategies of white, European thought and, on the other hand, declaring that we need nothing outside of ourselves and our cultures in order to understand the world and our place in it" (123-4). If we free ourselves from this type of dichotomy, new possibilities of understanding emerge, including a notion of sovereignty which does not imply (the impossible task of) eradicating all 'outside influence' but claiming the right and responsibility to make decisions, both individually and collectively, about issues pertaining to ourselves (Warrior 124; see also Nakata, "Foreword" viii).

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The river encourages me to seek an epistemological basis that is grounded on concepts and

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[22] For Spivak, 'indigenous theory' remains suspect: "I cannot understand what indigenous theory there might be that can ignore the reality of nineteenth-century history. ... To construct indigenous theories one must ignore the last few centuries of historical involvement. I would rather use what history has written for me" (*Post-Colonial* 69). Although I generally agree with her point, I find her encouragement to use the material left and written by history somewhat problematic, particularly when often there is not much that history would have written for me (or for the Sami people, or even for other indigenous peoples, for that matter). This view is, of course, based on a narrow (colonial) interpretation of both 'history' and 'writing' and when considered from a different (deconstructive) perspective, 'history' becomes like a 'text' – the multiple "politico-psycho-sexual-socio" contexts and organizations (cf. Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 25, 120) – and 'writing' is a code preexisting speech (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*). We then open up a radically different space for ourselves to "use what history has written for me" or us.

metaphors deriving from Sami cultural practices and circumstances while simultaneously allowing me to move to other 'waters.' Coming from the Sami scholarly discourse (in which I am implicated even when criticizing it[23]) which has not yet established its own epistemological tradition (except the common alignment with modernity and Enlightenment ideals) is both a shortcoming and a challenge. It allows (and forces) me to exist within several different discourses, recognizing their tensions, challenges and possibilities. It is necessarily an unstable position that permits me to look at various directions and intellectual traditions without assuming full certainty in any of them.

Rather than a limit(ation), the threshold or confluence of various discourses presents us with several possibilities and challenges.[24] Whether it is due to the multigenerational existence in the transmotion of confluences by the river Deatnu or the questionable claim of the Sami being "one of the most modernized indigenous peoples in the world" (Gaski, "Introduction" 24), it is easy to concur with Spivak's disinterest in 'being pure,' theoretically or otherwise (*Post-Colonial* 12). What is more interesting and possibly more fruitful and constructive is to find out how to negotiate with dominant academic discourses – with the purpose of interrupting and intervening – since as a marginalized group, it is something we cannot avoid doing (cf. Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 72).

Indigenous scholarship and its multiple discourses may not be constituted by modernity or western liberalism (like many, if not most academic discourses), but they do nevertheless at least partly exist within and are influenced by the dominant academic discourses. Indigenous discourses and theories can, therefore, never be pure in the sense of being free from 'contaminations.' Even approaches that claim to draw upon and be entirely embedded in a specific indigenous oral tradition or social practice cannot avoid negotiating with the structures of cultural imperialism. This, of course, does not deny the validity or possibility of indigenous theories and approaches. Recognizing the constant and unpreventable process of negotiation can only reinforce them by making them more tenacious. Australian Aboriginal scholar Martin

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[23] Or, as Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso puts it, "Just as the rivers we followed home changed from the huge, wide Missouri River to the shallow water in the San Juan riverbed, the place of my birth is the source of the writing presented here" (x).

[24] Perhaps this threshold is similar to Vizenor's 'threshold of native survivance' which resists notions of tradition as a limiting, determined practice and embraces ambiguity and irony (see *Postindian* 60).

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Nakata also recognizes the tension and need for negotiation in the intersection of western and indigenous 'domains,' calling this space a 'cultural interface' and acknowledging how the boundaries between the two domains are never clear-cut or definite ("Cultural Interface" 7).

For Spivak, negotiation seeks "to change something that one is obliged to inhabit, since one is not working from the outside" (*Post-Colonial* 72). It recognizes the impossibility of 'a neutral communication situation of free dialogue' – a position suggested by Jürgen Habermas – because the idea of neutral dialogue "denies history, denies structure, denies the position of subjects" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 72). As indigenous discourses have (or are forced) to negotiate with dominant academic discourses, also mainstream discourses negotiate with indigenous discourses even if it is not always acknowledged or occurs in the form of appropriation. This kind of 'negative negotiation' occurs when the dominant forecloses the marginal and denies its significance as for example in phallocentrism (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 147-8). With regard to indigenous people, 'negative negotiation' is manifested in eurocentrism which denies the contributions and knowledge of indigenous peoples, appropriates their knowledge or imposes its authority over them (see Smith, *Decolonizing*).

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The river Deatnu starts at the confluence of two smaller rivers, Anárjohka and Kárásjohka. While it is intriguing to place oneself in such a flow of various currents, feeling the pull of forthcoming questions and attempting to negotiate with issues that seem irrevocably incommensurable, it also presents certain challenges. One such challenge is the question of experience. In indigenous epistemologies, knowledge is primarily derived from and rooted in individual and collective experience.[25] In much of academic discourse, however, regarding experience as knowledge is considered suspect. Relying on experience as knowledge is seen to result in mere solipsism and reactionary self-referentiality. Even feminist standpoint theories,

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[25] See, for example, Battiste and Henderson (esp. pp. 35-58); Dei, Hall and Rosenberg; Deloria, *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*; Goulet; and Wilson.

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which stem from women's experiences of marginalization, do "not treat experience as knowledge, but as a place to begin inquiry" (Smith, *Writing the Social* 96). On the other hand, 'experience' has also been used to further discriminate against marginalized groups in the academy. bell hooks contends that "racism is perpetuated when blackness is associated solely with concrete gut level experience conceived as either opposing or having no connection to abstract thinking and the production of critical theory" (*Yearning* 23; see also Razack, "Racialized Immigrant Women"). Poststructuralist theories are even more suspicious of knowledge being grounded on experience, considering such a view a totalizing notion of modernity which assumes a unified subject who has a direct access to 'reality.'

The significance of individual or collective experiences in informing and constructing theory and analysis cannot, however, be entirely dismissed. In postcolonial and feminist theory, it is argued that rather than lapsing into expressive self-referentiality, "experience must be recounted within a broader socio-historical and cultural framework that signals the larger social organization and form which contain and shape our lives" (Bannerji, "But Who Speaks for Us" 94). Further, the power of personal narratives and 'testimonies' as a means of 'giving voice' to painful or even shameful personal and collective histories cannot be underestimated.[26] As Christine Overall notes, "the dangers of an uncritical, too-respectful appeal to experience do not mean that experience not be used at all, only that it must be used critically and with care" (29). Many indigenous authors, among other marginalized groups in society, cite personal experience as one of the main reasons they write. Sharing their experiences of, say, residential schooling on the page, has helped many readers to understand their own often unexpressed feelings and to realize that they are not alone with their feelings and experiences.[27]

At first, it may appear that indigenous epistemologies which lay emphasis on the personal and collective experience may have difficulties defending themselves against charges like those above. It is necessary, however, to differentiate between having a system of

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[26] On 'theoretical autobiography,' see Middleton. For further reading on feminist theorizing of personal experiences, see, for example, hooks, *Talking Back* and *Teaching to Transgress*; Miller, *Getting Personal* and "Public Statements, Private Lives"; Neumann and Peterson; Overall; and Smith and Watson. On feminist standpoint theory, see, for example, Harding; Hartsock; and Clough. On developing an indigenous standpoint analysis, see, for example, Murdock; and Nakata, "Anthropological Texts and Indigenous Standpoints."

[27] In the Sami context, see, for instance, Vuolab (58); and Aikio (79).

knowledge rooted in experience and practice that has been accumulated over generations and describing one's own experiences or limiting one's inquiry to personal experience and expressive self-referentiality. Indigenous epistemologies are not based on an experience of one individual, but on what Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaq) calls 'a collective cognitive experience,' established by combining personal experiences and sharing views within a community ("Enabling").

The intergenerational accumulation and communication of knowledge is thus central in indigenous epistemologies. Within an indigenous system of knowledge, the final decision of the validity and usefulness of knowledge is made jointly based on varied experiences of the community members. In short, indigenous knowledge is constituted in response to past circumstances and shared with other members of the community through language, oral tradition and ceremonies. Further, the problematic nature of experience is recognized also in indigenous research. Linda Smith, for instance, notes that while one's personal experiences as an 'insider' cannot be disputed, it is arrogant "for a researcher to assume that their own experience is all that is required" (*Decolonizing* 137).

My experiences in the academy may also first appear as isolated incidents but when considered more carefully, they reflect larger questions of decolonization and emergence of criticism and methodologies that is underway among indigenous scholars and students. After completing my Master's degree and thesis on contemporary Sami literature, I was interested in continuing my studies in the field of comparative indigenous literary criticism – a field that I imagined relatively well-established in North American universities. I believed that certain openness and basic, general understanding of various, relatively recent theories challenging and undermining the legacy and ethnocentrism of the rationalist-humanist tradition of the West would also imply openness and general understanding and acceptance of indigenous epistemes and epistemologies. I could not have been more misguided in my expectations of a welcome. I had believed that even in the most mainstream academy, 'the time was right' for comparative indigenous criticism, yet it proved to be quite different.

My expectations of hospitality turned gradually into a reality of hostility, teaching a good number of lessons on the relationship between indigenous people and their epistemes and the academic discourses and structures – how at its best, this relationship is quite complicated

and at its worst, very agonizing (cf. Newhouse et al. 72). Eventually, these lessons made me think more closely of hegemonic and hierarchical structures of knowledge and discourse that seemed to prevail in the academic world despite the well-intended rhetoric. As Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan) puts it: "There is a lot of intellectual, theoretical talk about it but very little willingness to actually engage, in terms of practice, life practice – doing things in a different way" ("Ones from the Land" 7; see also Monture-Angus "On Being Homeless" 282).

Instead of open minds, I was faced with doubtful hesitation, blank looks and gaps of silence. My knowledge and previous studies were suspect, not worth a transfer to the doctoral program in spite of my own conviction (and several others' affirmation) that I met the requirements for a transfer. Even letters from my previous university did not assure the coordinators of the program of my research abilities; instead, they encouraged me either to consider the anthropology department, learn more of other periods of literature or at the very least, stop analyzing everything through a framework of indigenous perspective.[28] Dismayed by the fact that it was still possible to hear such comments at the end of the twentieth century, I declined all the suggestions that I received. I concluded that only when non-indigenous students are asked to consider doing literary studies in an anthropology department and taking even *one* course on any indigenous literatures of *any period* or to stop analyzing everything through a framework and perspectives deriving from western intellectual and theoretical traditions, would I be willing to do the reverse as I was told.[29] Meanwhile, I felt that there are other, more urgent things to do – such as dispute the validity and legitimization of such an epistemologically biased system.

Besides my distress and frustration, there were also moments of self-doubt and mistrusting my knowledge and academic abilities. As I read and talked to other indigenous students and scholars, however, I learned that it was nothing unheard of. The inhospitable if not hostile behaviour by many academics was a part of larger questions of decolonization and

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[28] Interestingly enough, in her latest book, *The Death of a Discipline*, Spivak declares the death of comparative literature and makes an urgent call for a 'new comparative literature' within which more attention would be paid to the transformative role of literary works toward social justice.

[29] Jennifer Kelly, for instance, discusses the marginal status of Aboriginal literature courses in Canadian universities where they commonly are "appended as electives to the core curriculum" (149).

recognition of non-western epistemologies, worldviews and premises in the academy and the field of research. I started to observe, in various classes, the recurring clash between indigenous and dominant, hegemonic discourses, making me occasionally wonder whether they indeed were totally incommensurate worlds never able to meet and be understood by one another (not to mention the unequal structures and discourses of power between the two). Other times, I was intrigued by the thought of finding a way to find a bridge between the two. I felt that if anything, such a bridge might assist other indigenous students avoid some of the difficulties I had to go through in a program that was not a Native Studies program.

There was a question that kept coming back to me: what is it in indigenous epistemes that does not seem to fit into dominant perceptions of academic knowledge and the world in general? It became clearer that while indigenous discourse is allowed to exist in the university, it only exists either in marginal spaces or within clearly defined parameters of the dominant discourse grounded on certain views of the world, conceptions of knowledge, assumptions and values. Further, conversations with other indigenous students confirmed the commonness of not being able to adequately express yourself in the classroom outside courses within indigenous/Native/First Nations studies. Many students expressed the same frustration that I had also increasingly started to pay attention to – the difficulty of speaking from a position of indigenous episteme/epistemology, and even more so, of being understood by others in the classroom.

In many cases, indigenous students (myself included) were left with two unsatisfactory options to deal with these situations: either become a teacher of indigenous perspectives for the others in the classroom, or worse, check those perspectives and understandings at the door and replace them, temporarily or permanently, by views informed by perspectives embedded in the intellectual traditions of the West (i.e., the assumed *neutral* framework through which I was

also told to undertake literary criticism).[30] Probably personally more gratifying and meaningful, the former easily becomes a burden and in worst cases, hinders the student's own studies. The latter, though easier, often leaves students feeling badly about themselves, as they consider it a sign of co-optation and quiet acceptance of prevailing paradigms.

As I started to look more closely into the problematics of what is commonly called the 'cultural clash' in the academy, I found a few articles by indigenous scholars discussing and analyzing their own not-so-hospitable encounters in the academic world. The relatively small amount of research on the topic viewed the issue as more of a problem of indigenous students (and less so, scholars) rather than the problem of the academy at large. Even if recommendations invariably included the need for changing attitudes and increasing of knowledge of the general body of students, faculty and administration, the focus was nevertheless on indigenous students and their *special* needs. Yet while recognizing the importance of attending to special needs of any marginalized group, I was increasingly assured that it was at least equally important and urgent to insist that the academy – that is, other students, faculty and administrators, the academic structures, discourses and intellectual traditions – assume their responsibilities in transforming the academy away from its "limitations, unjustices, and wastefulness of Eurocentric education on behalf of the exclusionary and/or assimilationist nation" (Battiste, Bell and Findlay 91).

My personal experiences prompted me to pay attention to and contemplate questions pertaining to the relationship between indigenous people and the academy, hospitality and the responsibility of the academy toward the other and the gift of indigenous epistemes. This inquiry, however, is not about my experiences, and I would hesitate to consider experience (mine or others') as 'truth.' Instead, my experiences have made me want to look into these concerns, to analyze them and ultimately theorize a new model of considering the inhospitality

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[30] Here and also elsewhere I am talking about those indigenous students aware and cognizant of the existence and contents of (some) indigenous epistemes/epistemologies, because I do not assume that all indigenous students everywhere are aware or cognizant for a multitude of reasons ranging from the various effects of colonialism to personal interest and emphasis. There are also indigenous students who have, willy-nilly, acquired and accepted the so-called dominant western paradigm as their own. Vine Deloria, Jr. for instance, is critical of those "overeducated younger Indians who have uncritically accepted scientific folklore as fact." For him, "Nothing is more annoying than listening to an educated Indian parroting what he or she has been told in a lecture and discovering that tribal traditions have simply been thrown out the window without careful examination" (*Spirit & Reason* 119-20).

of the academy. As Michael Marker (Arapaho) puts it, there is a need to "acknowledge that our experience is at the same time both personal and academic; at a certain point it becomes unnatural to try to separate them" ("Economics" 37). One of the reasons to want to do this, of course, is so that others who have experienced something similar may find some useful tools to make sense of it. The main reason, however, is call for the academy at large to recognize both the gift of indigenous epistemes and its responsibilities; in other words, to scrutinize the nature of their hospitality and openness toward the other.

Despite such broad, apparently abstract themes, I believe that my inquiry is nevertheless embedded in several local circumstances and accounts.[31] It is grounded on the metaphor of the river which is also a concrete location. My work is also grounded on being a student at the University of British Columbia which is located at the estuary of another major salmon river, the Fraser:

> The Pacific Coast is a lace work of streams, rivers and lakes flowing into the inlets, fjords and deltas along the ocean front of the mainland. The waters flow down from the mountains and plateaus to drain the interior spawning streams through rapid and icy cold rivers, on to the delta estuaries, in one of the richest salmon habitation sites of the world. Salmon have come home to these rivers for over an estimated one million years. All species of salmon – the Chinook which live longer, the red-fleshed sockeye, the coho, the silvery chum and the numerous small pinks – follow life cycles starting in the rivers, going out to the ocean and, finally, returning to the rivers to spawn. (Armstrong, "Unclean Tides" 181)

Further, my use of certain general categories does not imply homogeneous indigenous peoples or cultures, even on this continent. When using the term 'indigenous epistemes,' for

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[31] Asserting the role of the immediate, particular natural environment in shaping indigenous conceptions of the world as well as the way indigenous people relate to one another, Deloria emphasizes the locality of this experience. In other words, experience rooted in particular locations is not used to establish abstractions or universal concepts (Deloria, *Spirit & Reason* 224). This is also noted by Michael Marker (Arapaho) who asserts that abstractions "are not entirely sound because they neglect the distinctiveness of the local stories that contain the deep and concrete aspects of reality" (401). Generalizations are not part of traditional Sami way of thinking either (e.g., Vuolab 48). This does not, however, make indigenous (or any other) systems of thought, including language, any more 'primitive' or incapable of abstract thinking than the so-called modern languages, as is often assumed. As an example, Benson Bobrick argues the primitiveness of Khanty language and that it lacks a capacity for abstraction. This is, however, as many linguists and others have pointed out, a crude misinterpretation of the fact that speakers of a language lack words or expressions for things that are unknown or unimportant to them (e.g., Pennycook on the 'great Eskimo snow myth' in *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*, pp. 147-51).

instance, I refer to certain shared, common denominators, philosophical principles and cultural attributes that are characteristic of indigenous thought and worldviews. By no means do I suggest that indigenous epistemes are everywhere the same or that the tenets and cultural assumptions embedded in them are manifested and present in all contemporary indigenous societies to the same degree, if at all. Clearly, however, aspects of various indigenous epistemes are embedded, knowingly or unknowingly, in much of contemporary indigenous thinking, the Sami included.

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The river Deatnu contextualizes my work and arguments presented in this thesis by giving the readers an idea of where I come from not only physically and culturally but also intellectually. It is not, however, the topic or theme of my inquiry. It rather is a concept-metaphor which assists my thinking and analysis, allowing me to move in and out of multiple discourses and intellectual traditions. It transgresses the borders of binary dualisms, reflecting the Sami worldview in which boundaries between nature and culture, human and non-human are fluid and in a constant flux. In short, the river allows fluidity or 'transmotion' which is absolutely necessary in a venture attempting to bring multiple discourses and intellectual traditions together, even if only tentatively or temporarily. The river also allows a fusion of various theories and critical approaches without one's getting stuck in rigid categorizations or dichotomies.

Moreover, the river allows a relatively unrestrained navigation – particularly in the sense of negotiation as discussed above – between and around discourses and theories. Reading Spivak has helped me understand that I can only see the value of any theory if I recognize its limits and stop asking it "to do everything for me" (*Post-Colonial* 134),[32] I have learned to focus on what various theories might have to offer and use them as stepping stones – like rocks surfacing from a river along which it might be possible to get across to something else rather

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[32] The need for acknowledging limits is also noted by Graham Smith who insists on recognizing the limitations of the western academy and disengaging from its politics of distraction ("Lecture").

than treat them as the final answers.[33] This has enabled me to combine aspects and insights from various fields of theory and criticism such as indigenous discourse, deconstruction and also to some extent, critical theory.

While both deconstruction and critical theory offer valuable insights and tools for analyzing indigenous issues and contexts, they both also contain problematic arguments and assumptions. Emphasizing the notion of emancipation and recognizing the need for change, critical theory acknowledges the value of visions and even utopias as goals to be strived for. It also regards incremental victories as important in aspiring to the goals. In education in particular, critical theory has also stressed the need for analyzing educational inequalities and suggesting strategies to transform those circumstances.[34] In this inquiry, I also acknowledge the serious need to pay attention to social, power and structural inequalities. Moreover, as with any research within the framework of indigenous scholarship, this consideration emanates from and is rooted in the recognition of the urgent need for transformation. While not necessarily explicitly deriving from critical theory, both these aspects form an integral part of my inquiry.

Deconstruction, on the other hand, tends to question the possibility of emancipation and notions such as false consciousness both of which have been central to much indigenous scholarship.[35] A deconstructive impulse, however, is necessary for an inquiry dealing with questions of hospitality simply because deconstruction *is* hospitality. Argues Derrida: "Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction.... *deconstruction is hospitality to the other*, to the other than oneself, the other than 'its other,' to an other who is beyond any

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[33] Not surprisingly then, the etymological roots of 'theory' are in Greek *theoria*, signifying 'viewing' and 'seeing,' or as Battiste and Henderson note, 'seeing for yourself' (117). This is also the way in which I understand and employ the term in this inquiry. While the notion of 'theory' has western origins, indigenous scholars have effectively appropriated the concept and created new ways of theorizing to serve their own purposes and needs (see, e.g., L Smith, *Decolonizing* 38). Graham Smith also reminds indigenous scholars of "the interventionary potential of theory" ("Protecting" 214). It is important, however, to bear in mind, as noted by bell hooks, that "[t]heory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end" (*Teaching to Transgress* 61).

[34] Critical theory has been employed particularly by Maori scholars creating their own academic spaces and transformative theories (see, for example, G. Smith, "The Development of Kaupapa Maori").

[35] Spivak, for example, notes that "there's a real problem when the critic of ideology takes a diagnostic position and forgets that she is herself caught within structural production" (*Post-Colonial* 54). She is also critical of the tendency of the 'radical intellectuals' to patronize the oppressed in attempts to prescribe blueprints of transformation.

'its other'" ("Hostipitality" 364, emphasis added). Deconstruction is, at least for Derrida, a form of hospitality, a practice of welcoming of the other, a "philosophy of 'the responsibility to the other'" (Caputo 109). Not surprisingly, then, much of the consideration on hospitality in this inquiry draws upon Derrida's arguments. In considering the institution of the university and its responsibilities, Derrida asserts the usefulness and necessity of deconstruction:

> Precisely because deconstruction has never been concerned with the contents alone of meaning, it must not be separable from this politico-institutional problematic, and has to require a new questioning about responsibility, an inquiry that should no longer necessarily rely on codes inherited from politics or ethics. Which is why, though too political in the eyes of some, deconstruction can seem demobilizing in the eyes of those who recognize the political only with the help of prewar road signs. Deconstruction is limited neither to a methodological reform that would reassure the given organization, nor, inversely, to a parade of irresponsible or irresponsibilizing destruction, whose surest effect would be to leave everything as is, consolidating the most immobile forces of the university. ("Mochlos" 23)

This lengthy quote weaves together several strands central to this inquiry. First, it suggests that deconstruction may offer a new way of challenging conventional understanding of responsibility by seeking to move beyond traditional interpretations of politics and ethics. Second, Derrida calls for subtlety and responsibility in the process of transforming the university, arguing that proceeding in any other way will eventually backfire and merely reinforce the existing structures and discourses. In a way, these points form 'guidelines' both for the readers by giving them a sense of the way I wish to employ deconstruction and for myself, reminding me particularly of responsibility – of avoiding 'irresponsibilizing destruction.'

My relationship with deconstruction, however, is somewhat different from that adopted by some of the more 'orthodox' approaches. Bringing in the work of critics who are (relatively) well-known particularly within dominant discourses and scholarly circles, to an inquiry dealing with the gift of indigenous epistemes and the academic responsibility of hospitality is a way bringing closer the two sometimes separate worlds of indigenous and non-indigenous

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scholarship.[36] In this way, it is possible to demonstrate the relevance of both discourses to one another. It is also a strategy of calling for the attention of those scholarly circles who otherwise might dismiss considerations on indigenous issues as either irrelevant to their own fields or worse, unscholarly.

Rather than seeking for the most correct interpretation or the ultimate meaning of the critics' words, I have used their approaches and considerations as a source of inspiration, as intellectual and theoretical tools by which we can further elaborate and augment our analyses. In my view, this is the very beauty of theory which links it to the idea of the river: to allow oneself to be carried away with various streams and currents. As an element that defies containment and control, the river also allows me to be less fettered in 'correctly interpreting' theories and works by philosophers. By relying on the river, it is possible to deem various approaches and critical practices as springboards for reflection rather than limiting myself to speculation on the 'real meaning' of a particular theory or thought.

I started this chapter with a discussion on borders and how the river Deatnu is perceived, depending on one's perspective, either as a border river between the nation-states of Finland and Norway or 'a mother of all rivers' that unites and sustain families that live on each side of it. While for many Sami, the ideology embedded in state borders remains problematic and uneasy,[37] these and other borders have nevertheless increasingly influenced our thinking and ways of life. Derrida has defined three types of border limits:

> first, those that separate territories, countries, nations, States, languages, and cultures
> (and the politico-anthropological disciplines that correspond to them); second, the
> separations and sharings between domains of discourse ... [and] third, ... the lines of
> separation, demarcation, or opposition between conceptual determinations, the forms of
> the border that separates that are called concepts or terms. (*Aporias* 23)

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[36] The critics that I particularly draw upon in this inquiry are Gayatri Spivak and Jacques Derrida, both of whom occupy a somewhat ambivalent position within western theory (whatever that may mean). Spivak herself thinks that she was drawn to Derrida's work in the late 1960s because she had felt that she "was resonating with someone who was not quite not French" in a similar way that she was "not quite not British." It was this kind of "insider/outsider" position that fascinated Spivak in Derrida's analysis of western metaphysics ("Transnationality" 70). Perhaps this at least partly explains why I am also drawn to their work.

[37] For example, a declaration of the Sami Council, a NGO and political body representing Sami organizations from all four countries, stresses that the Sami are one people despite the state borders that split Samiland into four countries (cf. The Declaration of The Sami Conference in 1980).

As an analysis of borders – particularly the second and third types – this inquiry is determined to strive to reach beyond them. The ambivalent nature of the river Deatnu – not only with regard to state borders but also as an element of transmotion – may help crossing all three types of borders not least because it is a gift for everybody. It keeps us in constant motion, reminding of both fluidity and equilibrium – whether it is our views and perspectives, arguments and interpretations, or life in general. It also gives us the possibility of multiple perspectives – whether in the water like the salmon or on a boat looking down, or further away on the river banks. Even on the surface, the river is never the same.

ii. THE GIFT

There is no shortage of studies and theories of the gift. While practices of giving in 'archaic societies' has been a popular topic in anthropological research since its early days, the gift has more recently also attracted interest in ever-widening circles of philosophy, economics, theology and sociology, among others. The gift has also been presented as a challenge to the dominant paradigm of global capitalism and the exchange economy informed by patriarchal values and ideology (e.g., Vaughan; Kailo, "From Sustainable Development" and "From 'Give Back'").

It is a well-established argument that the gift functions primarily as a system of social relations, forming alliances, solidarity and communities and binding "collectives together" (Berking 35).[1] What is often ignored, however, is that the gift in indigenous worldviews extends beyond interpersonal relationships to "all my relations."[2] Put another way, according to these philosophies, giving is an active relationship between human and natural worlds based on a close interaction of sustaining and renewing the balance between them through gifts.

In this chapter, I consider some of the previous theories and perspectives of the gift and address their shortcomings with regard to an understanding of the gift in indigenous thought and practices. More importantly, however, I will demonstrate why this particular notion of the

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[1] Besides Mauss, other early work on this theme includes Durkheim; Goffman; Lévi-Strauss; and Sahlins .

[2] The expression "All my relations" (or 'all my relatives') is commonly used as a way of concluding a prayer, speech or piece of writing by North American indigenous people, reflecting the underpinning philosophy of the interconnectedness of all life (e.g., Deloria, "If You Think" 41). In the introduction of an anthology of the same name, the editor Thomas King writes that besides reminding us of our various relationships, it is also "an encouragement for us to accept the *responsibilities* we have within this universal family..." ("Introduction" ix, my emphasis). Moreover, as Deloria contends, the phrase "describes the epistemology of the Indian worldview, providing the methodological basis for the gathering of information about the world" (*Spirit & Reason* 52). Tom Happynook refers to indigenous cultural practices and responsibilities as "unwritten tribal law" which are "directly tied to nature and are a product of the slow integration of cultures within their respective environment and ecosystems" ("Cultural Diversity"). This does not mean, however, that all indigenous people are environmentalists (On the sometimes conflicting discourses between indigenous peoples and environmentalists, see, for example, Bruce Braun, *Intemperate Rainforest*, which discusses the complex relationships between notions of nature and culture in British Columbia). Recognizing the current tendency of using it as an advertisement cliché, King notes that indigenous people are often as prone to make mistakes about the natural environment as others. The question has more to do with having "a particular sense of that physical world that is so much a part of culture and so much a part of the ceremonies and everything else" (King, "Interview" 116). The term 'original practical ecological philosophy' is used by Spivak in reference to indigenous peoples' systems of thought (*Critique* 383).

gift is necessary not only to the overall argument of my dissertation but the future of the academy itself. I focus on giving to nature because it illustrates most effectively the logic of the gift – or as Spivak puts it, 'gift discourses of ethnophilosophies' ("Translation" 19) – that I seek to advance in this thesis. Moreover, I focus on this aspect because the reciprocity with the land, or the spirits of the natural realm, is also one of the most commonly misinterpreted aspects of indigenous philosophies.

I suggest that the gift is a central aspect of the land-based worldviews of many indigenous peoples. It is characterized by a sense of collective responsibility, reciprocity and reverence which in turn are informed by an understanding according to which the well-being of the entire world – the human, natural and spiritual realms – is dependent on a balance between the various realms. The gift plays a central role in forming and reinforcing a multitude of intimate relationships with the natural environment in which people live and have lived for generations. These relationships on both individual and collective levels are the foundation of many indigenous worldviews, reflected in the often shared sense of kinship and coexistence with the world.

It is important to state that to discuss these relationships as part of indigenous worldviews is not romanticization.[3] The relationships indigenous peoples have forged with their environments for centuries are a consequence of the living off the land and the dependency on its abundance. They are a result of a relatively straightforward understanding that the well-being of land is also the well-being of human beings. Critical of the mystical, misty-eyed discourse of indigenous peoples and land, Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out:

> I believe that our survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know how to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing, we had to predict, to learn and reflect, we had to preserve and protect, we had to defend and attack, we had to be mobile, we had to have social systems which enabled us to do these things. We still have to do these things. (*Decolonizing* 12-3)

To avoid romanticization and reductionism, there is a need to understand both the various cultural and socio-economic aspects that have led to the worldview grounded on reciprocity with

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[3] As Spivak notes, while we need to guard against romanticizing, it is nevertheless "a danger one must face, because the other side of romanticizing is censorship" ("Transnationality" 87).

and respect for the land and also the ways in which the survival of indigenous peoples and their worldviews today is linked to the questions of land rights. Without the recognition of the existing title of indigenous peoples to their territories by governments, it is increasingly difficult if not impossible for these peoples to continue to assert their identities and self-governance or to maintain their livelihoods or social and cultural practices – in short, to be who they are and have a control over their own lives and futures as a people.

Various gift practices related to nature are often assigned to belonging only to traditional indigenous societies (or what anthropologists in particular but also others are inclined to call 'archaic') and thus something that does not describe current realities of indigenous peoples. As a result, indigenous gift philosophies are usually discussed in the past tense as if they do not inform the practices and thinking of people today. As the discussion below indicates, however, the logic of the gift is a central aspect, for instance, of contemporary indigenous research ethics and protocols. I suggest, therefore, that if we want to grasp appropriately the significance of the gift philosophy, there is a need to be able to see beyond 'traditional' gift practices and look at the ways in which the philosophy behind these practices continues to inform discursive practices of many indigenous people today.

The logic of the gift as understood particularly in indigenous thought is relevant to this inquiry for two main reasons. First, the gift philosophy foregrounds notions of responsibility and relationships of reciprocity. Second, the central premise of the worldview that affirms relationships also with the natural environment is that the gifts of the land are neither taken for granted nor commodified. Rather, they have to be actively recognized and received accordingly which usually implies the observation of certain responsibilities (e.g., ceremonies, gestures of gratitude). This kind of approach – recognition informed by certain responsibilities followed by appropriate reception – is currently lacking in the academy with regard to indigenous epistemologies and more generally, worldviews. The objective of my inquiry is therefore to introduce the logic of the gift which establishes not only a different kind of relationship of reciprocity but also introduces a different way of thinking about the significance of indigenous epistemes in the academy.

The classic gift theories tend to view the gift as a mode of exchange imbued with the notions of obligations, countergifts, pay-backs, debts, forced reciprocity and other mandatory acts. These considerations are often grounded on an assumption according to which exchange is the primary structuring principle of society. This view is articulated particularly by Claude Lévi-Strauss for whom all societies are founded on various forms − kinship, economy, culture − of exchange.[4]

The central thesis of Marcel Mauss's influential essay on the gift (*Essai sur le don, forme archaique de l'echange*, first published in 1924) argues that the gift is constituted by three obligations: giving, receiving and paying back. Existing within distinctive social rules, the gift is both constrained and interested even if it may first appear voluntary and disinterested. For Mauss, the gift exchange represents a disguise and replacement for a deeper hostility, an alternative to war. Building on Mauss's agonistic notion of the gift exchange as a substitute for hostility, Pierre Bourdieu has analyzed the gift as symbolic violence, which, according to him, is "the most economical mode of domination" ("Selections" 218). For Bourdieu, the gift exchange ultimately leads to the accumulation of social capital of obligations and debts that are paid back, among other things, in the form of homage, respect and loyalty.[5] In this system, the gift implies power acquired by giving:

> there are only two ways of getting and keeping *a lasting hold over someone*: debts and gifts ... or the moral obligations and emotional attachments created and maintained by the generous gift, in short, *overt or symbolic violence*, censored, euphemized, that is,

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[4] See Derrida's critique of Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the gift as the logic of exchange in *Given Time* ch. 3.

[5] Here Bourdieu agrees with Malinowski who considered the chief of a group 'a tribal banker' who accumulates wealth "only to lavish it on others and so build up a capital of obligations and debts..." In this way, the political authority is established; economic capital is converted into symbolic capital, "which produces relations of dependence that have an economic basis but are disguised under a veil of moral relations" ("Selections" 216). Material capital thus produces symbolic capital which is actively 'misrecognized' as something else − obligations, relationships, gratitude, etc.

misrecognizable, recognized violence. (Bourdieu, "Selections" 217, emphasis added)[6]

For Bourdieu, gift-giving is an observation of 'moral obligations,' an active denial and misrecognition of the embedded symbolic violence. Material capital produces symbolic capital that is actively 'misrecognized' as something else such as obligations, relationships and gratitude. He suggests that "the pre-capitalist economy is the site *par excellence* of symbolic violence" for in this system, the only way to establish and reinforce relations of domination is through strategies the true nature of which cannot be revealed – it would destroy them – but instead must be masked, transformed and euphemized.

It is interesting that Bourdieu should want to interpret a social order constituted mostly of non-adversarial relationships observed through mutual responsibilities as a site *par excellence* of a form of violence. While there is no need to romanticize indigenous (or 'pre-capitalist') communities as nostalgic examples of societies without violence, it hardly does any justice either to the complexity of the logic of the gift or the social order which largely depended on negotiation, cooperation and non-aggression to reduce one of the central structuring principles, the gift, to a form of violence, however subtle and symbolic (cf. Silko, *Yellow Woman* 93, 130).

Violence hardly has been absent in any society, including indigenous ones which have, like other nations, fought wars among themselves as well as alongside and against various colonizers. Traditionally, however, violence has never characterized indigenous societies in the same way as it does modern, western society, which Paula Gunn Allen calls a culture of death: a culture where the presence of death is evident everywhere around us ("Interview" 30, *Sacred Hoop* 127-35).[7] Could it be possible then that Bourdieu's interpretation is informed by his own cultural notions of adversarial, competitive and dominating relationships more than anything

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[6] In a similar fashion, Georges Bataille in his *The Accursed Share* examines gift giving as a form of acquisition of power.

7 On violence in contemporary indigenous communities, see, for example, Bachman, *Death and Violence on the Reservation*; Mihesuah, "Colonialism and Disempowerment"; LaRocque, "Violence in Aboriginal Communities." Emma LaRocque notes: "There are indications of violence against women in Aboriginal societies prior to European contact. ... It should not be assumed that matriarchies necessarily prevented men from exhibiting oppressive behaviour toward women. ... There is little question, however, that European invasion exacerbated whatever the extent, nature or potential violence there was in original cultures" ("Violence" 75).

else, preventing him from seeing other functions and logic? Leroy Little Bear (Blackfoot) suggests that although anthropologists have described indigenous peoples' customs fairly accurately, "they have failed miserably in finding and interpreting the meanings behind the customs" which usually focus on maintaining "the relationships that hold creation together" (81).

Bourdieu's analysis of the logic of the gift ignores the giving and sharing that exist outside the restrained system of indebtedness in spite of countless examples that indicate otherwise. One such example is the Sami 'grave gifts' in which the dead person is given a gift related to her or his livelihood as well as food and tobacco.[8] Tobacco was also "put down in the earth to the departed" every time a person passed by a grave (Bäckman, "The Dead as Helpers?" 35, 40).[9] The function of the gift in grave gifts is preeminently social and spiritual, ensuring the continuance of a congenial relationship between the deceased and her or his living relatives (Bäckman, "The Dead" 36). This type of giving is often called an 'offering' to the spirit world and thereby considered separate from (or perhaps a sub-category of) the gift proper.

For Mauss, one of the themes in the economy and morality of the gift is giving to gods or nature. He does not, however, advance a theory on this theme, partly because of the lack of facts in this area but also because of its "strongly marked mythological element which we do not yet fully understand" (12). Similarly, most other considerations of the gift that address the aspect of giving to the natural world at all only give meager attention to it. They also are often imbued with assumptions of primitiveness, strangeness and antiquity. One of the reasons many scholars do not give non-western systems of thought the serious and rigorous attention they do to western counterparts is the insistence, as Vine Deloria Jr. notes,

> that non-Western peoples represent an earlier stage of their own cultural evolution –
> often that tribal cultures represent failed efforts to understand the natural world .... Non-
> Western knowledge is believed to originate from primitive efforts to explain the
> mysterious universe. In this view, the alleged failure of primitive/tribal man [sic] to
> control nature mechanically is evidence of his ignorance and his inability to conceive of

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[8] Hyde calls this type of gifts as 'threshold gifts' or 'gifts of passage' (40, 41).

[9] Tobacco plays an important role also among many indigenous peoples in North America. It is one of the sacred herbs and is used for making offerings in prayers and ceremonies (see, e.g., Winter).

abstract general principles and concepts. ("If You Think" 37)

Classic gift theories are also usually characterized by serious misinterpretations simply because the analysis is informed by the paradigms and thought of modernity that are incapable of adequately grasping the deeper meanings of gift giving to the land. Instead of viewing gift giving to gods and nature as a reflection of indigenous worldviews founded on active recognition of kinship relations that extend beyond the human realm, Mauss explains it as a "theory of sacrifice" in which people have – they *must* make – exchange contracts with the spirits of the dead and the gods who are the real owners of the world's wealth. He gives the Toradja of the Celebes, Indonesia, as a classic example of people who believe that "one has to buy from the gods and that the gods know how to repay the price" (14).

Moreover, for Mauss, "the idea of purchase from gods and spirits is universally understood" (14). This is, however, a gross misinterpretation of the Toradja (or Toraya, as some spell it) and other indigenous worldviews based on an understanding that the socio-cosmic order is maintained through the stability of various relations within that order, necessarily including the natural world and the ancestors. Following the teachings of her elders, a Toraya woman explains that according to the understanding of her people, Deata ("Creator") provides the Toraya everything and that every creature has a spirit. The Toraya give gifts or "offerings" to thank Deata for everything that they have. After the harvest, for instance, the Toraya hold a ceremony to express gratitude for the season. These practices and this understanding are definitely not considered a purchase from the gods but a form of thanking and respecting the natural world (Sombolinggi). From this perspective, it is peculiar why Mauss, critical of the economic interpretations of the gift, has to resort to interpreting a practice reflecting a perception of the world that postulates a moral universe founded on respect and responsibility toward other forms of life by means of the terminology of economics (exchange contracts, purchase).[10]

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[10] The inability of economic models to deal with human activity and behaviour is addressed, for example, by John Ikerd, emeritus professor of agricultural economics who notes: "Contemporary economics assume that society is nothing more than a collection of individuals.... It also assumes that these individuals naturally seek to maximize their material well-being; to acquire as much as possible while giving up as little as possible" (qt. in Tarnoff A11). This is, however, a relatively new position even in economics. Ikerd points out that the idea according to which the purpose of human activity is no longer the pursuit of happiness but the pursuit of wealth has emerged only within the past century in economic thinking of the West.

To suggest that the gift necessarily extends beyond interpretations of exchange economy is *not* to deny the role of the gift also in the economic sphere of indigenous societies. There is a need, however, to question the economic bias that appears to inform the majority of interpretations of the archaic gift (Godbout 128). In this regard, Mauss's interpretation represents an exception for it recognizes how in archaic societies,[11] the gift represents 'total social phenomena' which

> are at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, morphological and so on. They are legal in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality... They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious... They are economic, for the notions of value, utility, interest, luxury, wealth, acquisition, accumulation, consumption and liberal and sumptuous expenditure are all present, although not in their modern senses. Moreover, these institutions have an important aesthetic side ... the dances performed, the songs and shows, the dramatic representations given between camps or partners, the objects made, used, decorated, polished, amassed and transmitted with affection, received with joy, given away in triumph, the feasts in which everyone participates... (76-7)

Though recognizing the gift as representing various aspects and functions in society, Mauss's interpretation on many occasions tends, however, to emphasize the gift as an exchange economy which is a predecessor of the current market system and thereby implying an evolutionary process from the primitive to more developed forms of exchange. Writes Mauss: "We may then consider that the spirit of gift-exchange is characteristic of societies which have passed the phase of 'total prestation' ... but have not yet reached the stage of pure individual contract, the money market, sale proper, fixed price, and weighed and coined money" (45).[12]

Jacques Godbout is critical of analyses of the gift that view it in terms of exchange, noting that "the gift forms a system with its own coherence, one that cannot be reduced to

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[11] The term 'archaic societies' is used by Mauss to refer to indigenous and other non-western societies that maintain a vital and active link to their social and cultural practices. To discuss the logic of the gift in indigenous societies and thought does not imply that similar values do not exist in other societies and cultures. Values of giving and sharing as well as the sense of responsibility for the other are present in many other cultures and religions, including Christianity (see, for example, Derrida's analyses in *Adieu*, *The Gift of Death* and "Hostipitality").

[12] Bataille is, however, critical of this view, demonstrating the shortcomings of mechanistic models in analyzing human existence which seek to reduce all of its aspects to classical economic balance between production and consumption (see *The Accursed Share*).

anything but itself, just as the market is a phenomenon *sui generis*, one whose nature would be violated if we tried to think of it in terms of something else" (130). He also argues that classic theories

> all downplay the uniqueness of the archaic gift, on the pretext that in order to understand it we must see it as an expression of constraints or motivations that are universal in themselves: economic interest, the prohibition of incest, the obligation to exchange, substitution of peace for war through social contract, the necessary subordination of the imaginary to the symbolic, or the sacrifice of a scapegoat in order to reestablish order among all members of society. (129)

In spite of his valuable critique, Godbout, like many others, analyzes the underlying philosophy of the "archaic" gift only cursorily and with a somewhat condescending tone, referring to gift practices as something "strange," "curious" and "primitive" (134). While he recognizes that "the gift represents the overall complex of relationships that brings together ... all the personalized powers that inhabit the primitive cosmos: human, animal, vegetable, mineral, or divine" (135), he reduces it, however, to what he calls "the strange law of alternation" which rules that in archaic societies, giving is only possible by taking turns.[13] In his view, this might be "a primitive democratic requirement" motivated by the fear of revenge and destruction (134).

Such a representation is inaccurate as it conceals the fact that giving to nature is grounded neither in "the strange law of alternation" nor in fear of revenge. This might be the case in some contexts but does not form the rule in what Godbout calls archaic societies. In worldviews characterized by gift giving to the land, the emphasis is not on apprehension or retaliation but on expressing gratitude for its gifts and kinship. The main goal of the gift to nature is to sustain the relationships which the socio-cosmic order is based upon. As Kaarina Kailo suggests, this kind of interpretation "consists of elements (values, structures, gender roles) which it has naturalized without heeding the animistic [sic] world's own attitudes towards life" ("From the Unbearable Bond"). His representation is also masculinist since giving to the land does "not necessarily get organized along those dichotomous, conflictual lines that [many theorists] take for granted" (Kailo, "From the Unbearable Bond").

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[13] Also Berking argues that in "archaic" societies, nobody is free to escape the duty of giving which "cannot simply be equated with the reproduction cycle of a social community," including the dead and gods (34).

THE LOGIC OF THE GIFT IN RECIPROCITY WITH THE LAND

Instead of viewing the gift as a form of exchange or as having only an economic function, I

argue that the gift is a reflection of a particular worldview characterized by a perception of the

natural environment as a living entity which gives its gifts and abundance to people if it is

treated with respect and gratitude (i.e., if certain responsibilities are observed). Central to this

perception is that the world as a whole is constituted of a infinite web of relationships extended

to and incorporated into the entire social condition of the individual. Social ties apply to

everybody and everything, including the land. People are related to their physical and natural

surroundings through genealogies, oral tradition and their personal and collective experiences

pertaining to certain locations. As Elizabeth Woody (Navajo/Warm Springs/Wasco/Yakama)

puts it, the land "is the embodiment of our ancestors" ("Voice of the Land" 165).

Interrelatedness is also reflected in many indigenous systems of knowledge. These systems are

often explained in terms of relations and arranged in a circular format consisting mostly or

solely of sets of relationships seeking to explain phenomena. In many of these systems of

knowledge, concepts do not stand alone but are constituted of "the elements of other ideas to

which they were related" (Deloria, *Spirit & Reason* 48).

It is important to note that when we talk about indigenous peoples' relationship with

their lands, it is not a question of whether an individual may or may not have a relationship with

her or his environment. Obviously, it is important to distinguish between a philosophy or a

worldview and individual thinking and behaviour which may not always reflect or comply with

the former.[14] The question in this particular context is about a worldview, or as Thomas King

proposes, an ethic – a specific way of knowing and being in the world which is transmitted

[14] Santa Clara Pueblo artist Roxanne Swentzell provocatively expresses her view on the current discrepancy as
follows: "Most of the people here at Santa Clara don't have anything to do with the land, with the place,
anymore. They go off to work from eight to five just like everybody else and they want their new car and their
TV and their VCR. What they really want is to be middle-class white Americans" (217). As the discussion
below indicates, however, there are many indigenous scholars, among others, who adhere to the values of their
worldviews in their practices and daily lives.

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through values and cultural practices. King notes:

> While the relationship that Native people have with the land certainly has a spiritual aspect to it, it is also a practical matter that balances respect with survival. It is an ethic that can be seen in the decisions and actions of a community and that is contained in the songs that Native people sing and the stories that they tell about the nature of the world and their place in it, about the webs of responsibilities that bind all things. Or, as the Mohawk writer Beth Brant put it, "We do not worship nature. We are part of it." (*The Truth* 113-4)

In indigenous worldviews that foreground the multilayered and multidimensional relationships with the land, the gift is the means by which this order is renewed and secured. The gift is the manifestation of reciprocity with the natural environment, reflecting the bond of dependency and respect toward the natural world. From this bond, certain responsibilities emerge. In this system, one does not give primarily in order to receive but to ensure the balance of the world on which the wellbeing of the entire social order is contingent. Thanks are given in the form of gifts to the guardians of the land that sustain human beings but the gifts are also given for a continued goodwill. Because, according to this worldview, human beings represent only one aspect of the creation, their view of the world is marked by a clear sense of responsibility toward other aspects with which the socio-cosmic order is shared and inhabited. As Deloria notes, this "view of life was grounded in the knowledge of these responsibilities.... The human ceremonial life confirmed the existence of this equality and gave it sustenance" ("Out of Chaos" 262-3).

The Sami Perception of the World

According to the traditional Sami perception of the world, like in many other indigenous worldviews, the land is a physical and spiritual entity which humans are part of. As survival has depended on the balance and renewal of the land, the central principles in this understanding are sustainable use of and respect for the natural realm. The relationship with the land is maintained by collective and individual rituals in which the gift and giving back are integral. The intimacy and interrelatedness is reflected in the way of communicating with various aspects of the land

which often are addressed directly as relatives. The close connection to the natural realm is also evident in the permeable and indeterminate boundaries between the human and natural worlds. Skilled individuals can assume the form of an animal when needed and there are also stories about women marrying an animal (Porsanger 151-2).

The porosity of the boundary between the human and the non-human is sometimes seen as a reflection of shamanistic worldviews. In traditional Sami society, shamans in particular – *noaidis* who were the spiritual leaders but also healers and visionaries of the community – were in contact with the spirit world where they travelled often in an animal form. In a worldview in which survival and thus knowledge depend on the intimate connection with the world, this kind of transformation is not considered supernatural but is rather a normal part of life.[15] The Sami *noaidi* communicated with the spirit and natural worlds also with the help of the *govadas*, a drum depicting the Sami cosmos on its surface. The Sami cosmos consists of a complex, multilayered order of different realms and spheres inhabited by humans, animals, ancestors, spirits, deities and guardians, all of whom traditionally have had specific roles and functions in the Sami cosmic order.

An interesting, almost completely ignored aspect in the analyses of Sami cosmology and 'religion' is the role of the female deities in giving the gift of life (to both human beings and domestic animals, mainly reindeer) and the connection to the land. One could suggest that the Sami deity Máttáráhkká with her three daughters signified the very foundation in the Sami cosmic order for they are the deities of new life who convey the soul of a child, create its body and also assist with menstruation, childbirth and protection of children (see Ränk 31). Thus the most significant gift or all, a new life, was the duty of these female deities that often in ethnographic literature have been relegated to a mere status of wives of male deities (reflecting the patriarchal bias of these interpretations). Moreover, Máttáráhkká could be translated as 'Earthmother' (the root word *máttár* refers to earth and also to ancestors). Initially, she could have been an individual ancestress (Ränk 19). Moreover, words for 'earth' and 'mother' in the Sami language also derive from the same root (*eanan* and *eadni* respectively). The role of women and female deities in Sami cosmology and the world order of giving and relations is a

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[15] As *noaidis* were among the most important members of the community, they were the first ones to be exterminated amongst the Sami by church and state representatives (e.g., Paltto, "One Cannot" 28).

neglected area of study but should be noted here when considering Sami notions of giving.[16]

As the physical and spiritual wellbeing of Sami society has traditionally been inseparably linked to a stable and continuous relationship between the human and natural worlds, knowledge of taking care of that relationship has been an integral part of Sami social structures and practices, including spiritual practices (cf. Mulk 127-8). In other words, what is central in this worldview is that well-being depends on knowing, not actively changing the environment (cf. Brody 117). An important part of this knowing is the awareness of one's responsibilities and norms of behaviour. As "[e]very geographical place was considered an entity in which the physical dimension was in balance with the spiritual one, [b]oth aspects needed to be taken into consideration when making a living" (Porsanger 153). Gifts play an important role in maintaining this balance:

> We still did not erect our *lávvu*[17] without the spirits' permission
> moved *lávvu* if it chanced to be be placed on a trail
> And when we left our winter camp
> we apologized if we had acted wrong
> and thanked the camp because it had fed us and our reindeer
> And when came to the summer camp
> some of us dressed in red *gáktis*
> adorned ourselves
> offered a libation as well to your light beautiful camp
> and asked it to open its embrace for protection once again
> (Valkeapää, *Trekways* n.p.)

Traditionally, one of the most important ways to maintain established relations and the socio-cosmic order has been the practice of giving to various *sieidis*. *Sieidi*, a sacred place of the gift, usually consists of a stone or a piece of wood to which the gift is given to thank certain spirits for the abundance in the past but also to ensure fishing, hunting and reindeer luck in the future. Although the several centuries' long influence of Christianity has severely eroded the Sami gift-giving to and sharing with the land by banning it as a pagan form of devil

[16] It would be worthwhile to pursue this line of thought further but it is, however, beyond the scope of this inquiry.

[17] *Lávvu* is a Sami temporary dwelling that closely resembles a teepee.

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worshipping, there is a relatively large body of evidence that the practice of *sieidi* gifting is still practiced (Kjellström; see also Juuso 137).[18]

The common location for *sieidis* are in the vicinity of sacred places, camp grounds or fishing and hunting sites. Stone or rock *sieidis* are usually natural formations of unusual shapes, functioning as natural landmarks particularly in the mountains. Wooden *sieidis* are either trees with the lowest branches removed, carved stumps or fallen trunks. For the Sami, *sieidis* were considered alive although many ethnographers interpreted them merely representing inert stones and structures. Sami reindeer herder Johan Turi describes the nature of the *sieidi* in the early twentieth century as follows:

> Some *sieidis* were satisfied if they received antlers, and others were content with all the bones, which meant every single bone, even the the most wee ones. Fish *sieidi* did not demand less than a half of the catch but then it directed to the nets as much fish as people could collect. Some *sieidis* wanted a whole reindeer which needed to be embellished with all kinds of decorations, cloth, threads, silver and gold. (108)[19]

Sieidis require regular attention and if neglected, the consequences could be drastic: a loss of subsistence luck, illness or at worst, death. It is interesting in Turi's description that the gift reindeer also had to be decorated. As Kira Van Deusen suggests, for some indigenous peoples such as those in the Amur region in Siberia, decoration and more broadly, aesthetics is a spiritual phenomenon on its own with a special function of protecting from bad spirits. Decorations of the gift reindeer could also be considered gifts of their own, not only a means of increasing the 'gift value' of the reindeer.

The Sami practice of giving back to *sieidis* involve spirits and guardians of the elements (e.g., wind, thunder) and various spheres of the natural world (animal birth, hunting, fishing). *Sieidi* gifts are, particularly in ethnographic literature, almost invariably referred to as 'sacrifice,' usually defined as a gift exchange with gods and nature. As a forfeiture of something for the sake of receiving something else, sacrifice is not voluntary but given under certain pressures or

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[18] The Sami 'religion' has drawn the attention of outsiders for centuries and it has been the subject of innumerable ethnographic, anthropological and religious studies around the world. See, for instance, Ahlbäck; Bäckman and Hultkrantz; Holmberg; Karsten; Manker; Pentikäinen; Scheffer; Sommarström; and Vorren.

[19] My English translation.

conditions.[20] Jacques Derrida notes:

> Sacrifice will always be distinguished from the pure gift (if there is any). The sacrifice proposes an offering but only in the form of a destruction against which it exchanges, hopes for, or counts on a benefit, namely, a surplus-value or at least an amortization, a protection, and a security. (*Given Time* 137)

I argue that contrary to conventional interpretations, giving to *sieidi* cannot be completely understood through the concept of sacrifice. Even if *sieidi* gifts do have aspects of sacrifice, they are not and should not be regarded solely as such. They may have other dimensions that can be as significant – if not more so – as the aspect of sacrifice. Bones are given back, the catch shared and reindeer given to the gods and goddesses of hunting, fishing and reindeer luck represented by *sieidi* sites as an expression of gratitude for their goodwill and for ensuring abundance also in the future. In this sense, giving to *sieidis* appears involuntary as it is done for the protection and security of both the individual and the community.

On the other hand, *sieidis* are considered an inseparable part of one's social order and thus it is an individual and collective responsibility to look after them. While it may appear that such a gift is an exchange and a mandatory forfeit (especially when interpreted from the framework of a foreign worldview[21]), I suggest that it rather is a voluntary expression of a particular worldview. Reflecting the Sami worldview of respect of and intimate relationship with the land, the practice of *sieidi* gifts is a manifestation of circular or loose reciprocity which should not be confused with the restrained reciprocity present in systems of exchange.

If analyzed through the paradigm of exchange economy, it is, of course, possible to suggest that any kind of giving is always form of exchange; that gifts are exchanged for collective well-being. Discussing the bear ceremony in which the bones of the bear are ritually returned to nature and the spirit of the animal, Kailo notes that even if it might be "rooted in the exchange of gifts between hunters, the bear and the other actors of the bear drama ..., the attitudes, mood, values and philosophical context are very different" ("From the Unbearable

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[20] See, for example, the discussion on gift as sacrifice in Mauss, chapter 1.

[21] See, for example, Greg Sarris's (ch. 2) discussion how analyses through different worldviews result in different interpretations.

Bond").[22] She notes that while the ethnographic accounts on bear rituals do not explicitly discuss the underlying paradigms the interpretations are based upon, one can observe the implicit ideology of the nineteenth century nationalism and its unexamined assumptions of 'primitive' cultures and male interpretations which stress the primacy of self-interest, guilt and aggression. In other words, these ethnographic interpretations are usually rooted in certain colonial, Eurocentric and patriarchal worldviews, ideologies and values (Kailo, personal communication).[23]

Forms of Reciprocity

The underlying logic of the exchange paradigm is that gifts cannot be given unless the receipt of countergifts is guaranteed. Reciprocity, usually defined as giving back in kind or quantity, is considered the condition of the gift by many theorists. In Bourdieu's view, the gift can remain unreciprocated only when one gives to an 'ungrateful person' ("Selections" 190). This kind of constrained reciprocity – "a binary give-and-take" (Hyde 74) – emphasizes the movement inward and toward self, seeking to maintain the independence of the self. It requires that gifts are 'paid off' by giving exact value back in order to remain self-contained and independent from others. For Vaughan, reciprocity is problematic for it is "a way of maintaining the self-interest of both of the parties involved in the interaction" (*For-Giving* 58). In constrained reciprocity, based on the worldview of individualism and the notion of the Cartesian subject,

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[22] According to Kailo ("From the Unbearable Bond"), the bear ritual is "an effort to give back and pay tribute to the totem animal [who is] also venerated as half relative." Traditionally, the Sami have also conducted bear ceremonies.

[23] Kailo also questions the often taken-for-granted view that the western assumptions of human nature, for instance, are somehow more correct and legitimate than those of indigenous peoples and that such considerations are always necessarily interpretations as humanity or human nature cannot be scientifically measured.

dependency on others is considered a burden.[24] According to the desired norm of individualist subject, dependency on other people is met with trepidation – the common attitude of 'no strings attached' or 'even steven' supports the existence of separate, self-contained individuals with minimal responsibilities toward the other (cf. Tyler 78). In its extreme form, receiving gifts in this model is considered a burden for it implies owing something of at least equal value to the giver:

> Behind every gift lurks the ulterior motive of the giver who expects a return, and it is the recipient's perception of the giver's ulterior motive that impels him to 'give as good as he gets' in order to be free of obligations or, conversely, to be locked into an ongoing relationship of reciprocal relationship of reciprocal exchanges over time. (Tyler 78)

According to this thinking, dependency and responsibility are regarded as something negative – an obligation and a duty external to oneself imposed by others, whether individuals or society at large. From this perspective, responsibilities are no longer seen as necessary for the well-being of an individual or community (even if they in fact are) – in other words, the connection between the self and the world has been weakened.[25] For Hélène Cixous, this view is a reflection of the

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[24] Here I refer to individualism as rooted particularly in Renaissance humanism and characterized by a strong emphasis on unique, self-sufficient, independent individuals whose possibilities and freedoms are viewed as limitless. Today, this individualism is manifested in the current economic ideologies with the focus on individual rights, freedom and choice which are in conflict with the recognition of collective solidarity, one of the fundamental values of indigenous peoples (Smith, "Protecting" 214). This does not imply that the notion of individual is nonexistent in indigenous communities. LaRocque asserts that the question of collective vs. individual is more complex than generally perceived by many non-Natives and Natives alike. She argues that, "The issue of 'individual' versus 'collective' rights is a perfect example of Natives resorting to a cultural framework when boxed in by western liberal democratic tradition that are associated with individualism. Perhaps unavoidably, Native leaders have had to overemphasize collective rights to make the point that such rights are even culturally feasible. However, the fact that native cultures were egalitarian in organization does not mean Native peoples acted on some instinct akin to a buffalo herd with no regard for the well-being of individuals!" ("Re-examining" 87). Individualism in Native cultures is also addressed by Vizenor who affirms the value of individual visions and dreams (*Postindian* 62). For further discussion on different concepts of individualism in indigenous and western cultures, see, for example, Bowers, Vasquez and Roaf, "Native People and the Challenge of Computers: Reservation Schools, Individualism, and Consumerism."

[25] Radical exclusion and hierarchization of realms of the self and the world has a long history in the intellectual tradition of the West, starting from the Greek philosophers and further articulated by Descartes. Though it is beyond the scope of my inquiry to delve into this in detail at this point, it would be good to point out that this is one of the differences between philosophical traditions of the western and indigenous worlds (cf. e.g., Silko, *Yellow Woman* 37 and Mander 212-24). Armstrong has also pointed out how the traditional Okanagan teachings and prophesies caution "that we are cutting ourselves off from the ability to live well by distancing ourselves from the natural world. This is what my generation has been told by our elders. We are cutting off the abilities that we previously had that gave us the best chance to be in a healthy relationship with ourselves as people and with the rest of the world" ("The Ones from the Land" 7).

masculine economy characterized by uneasiness when confronted by generosity. As an alternative, she suggests feminist economies which do not imply a form of exchange but affirmation of generosity and establishment of relationships ("The Laugh of the Medusa").

Hyde suggests that there are two forms of giving, reciprocal and circular, which differ from one another in several ways. Reciprocal giving is the simplest form of gift exchange while in circular giving one has to give blindly, i.e., "to someone from who I do not receive (and yet I do receive elsewhere)" (Hyde 16).[26] For him, the condition of the gift is not constrained reciprocity but circulation and keeping the gift moving: "[a] gift that cannot move loses its gift properties" (8).[27] The circulation of gifts is recognized also by Mauss who points out that "it is something other than utility which makes goods circulate in these multifarious and fairly enlightened societies" (70). In constrained reciprocal giving, the gift is signified as a 'loan' or 'credit' rather than a gift. Unlike limited, binary reciprocity, circular or loose reciprocation seeks to assert the bond of relationships in the world simply because according to the worldviews from which such an understanding stems, it is constitutive of our very existence.

Reciprocity is commonly considered one of the central dimensions of indigenous thought. It, however, goes beyond the reductionist 'binary give-and-take' and more often takes the form of circular reciprocity and sharing and what is called 'ceremonial reciprocity' (cf. Kailo "From the Unbearable Bond"; Richter 14-5). This is not to assume, however, that circulation of gifts (or goods) exists only in indigenous or 'pre-capitalist' societies. As Rodolphe Gasché notes, modern economy is also characterized by circulation. Yet the

[26] As examples of circular giving, Hyde mentions the *kula* circuit of the the Trobriand Islanders in Papua New Guinea, one of the best-known circular gift practices, as well as several stories from European folklore tradition. For the *kula*, see Malinowski; Damon; Landa; Leach and Leach; Mauss's discussion on the *kula*, pp. 19-29; and Uberoi.

[27] Hyde's gift analysis particularly with regard to the potlatch is criticized by Christopher Bracken, who asks: "Why 'must' Hyde seek a 'truly aboriginal' essence pure of any admixtures – and how can he claim to find it in texts that he considers contaminated? Such a move serves the overriding aim of his study, which is to use a pure theory of the pure gift to inscribe a clear limit between 'art' and the marketplace of 'European capitalism'" (237). This is an invaluable reminder for all considerations of the gift, including mine, to not to assume the existence of the pure gift or a clear, fixed limit between the gift philosophy and say, western philosophical tradition. In this inquiry, I do not intend to present 'a truly indigenous essence' of the gift but instead, discuss a worldview with which some people still genuinely associate themselves and which differs from the dominant modern worldview. This is not to imply that similar values and practices to the logic of the gift in indigenous thought would not exist in the latter but as the prevalent hierarchies and gross inequalities in contemporary mainstream society manifested concretely many people's everyday realities, these principles are overlooked while other values are foregrounded and prioritized.

circulation of the modern economy "seems to be somehow deficient because a certain privilege of accumulation tends to produce absolute impoverishment. The privilege of accumulation makes closure of the circle of circulation as well as its compensatory action simply impossible" ("Heliocentric Exchange" 107).

In reciprocity practiced according to indigenous thought, gifts are not given first and foremost to ensure a countergift later on, but to actively acknowledge the sense of kinship and coexistence with the world without which survival (of human beings but also other living beings) would not be possible. The main function of circular or ceremonial reciprocity is, therefore, to affirm the myriad relationships in the world from which stems the sense of collective and individual necessity "to act responsibly toward other forms of life" (Deloria, *Spirit & Reason* 51). This kind of reciprocity implies *response-ability*; an ability to respond, to remain attuned to the world beyond self and be willing to recognize its existence by means of gifts. Such a sense of responsibility embedded in the gift is a result of living within an ecosystem and being dependent on it. As collectivities, indigenous peoples generally continue to be culturally, socially, economically and spiritually more directly dependent on their lands and surrounding natural environments. This thinking is still a central part of indigenous philosophies while for many other peoples, this previously existed connection and relationship with the physical surroundings started to erode generations ago as a result of modernization, urbanization and other developments since the Renaissance and Enlightenment which continue today in the form of neocolonialism,[28] capitalism, consumerism and globalization.[29]

An example of the ability to respond and to remain attuned to the world beyond self and willingness to recognize its existence by means of gifts is the Sohappy case which also illustrates the conflicting worldviews with regard to a person's responsibilities toward the natural world. The Sohappy case took place in Oregon at the end of the 1960s and was named after David Sohappy who fought for decades for the right to fish as part of his tribal rights and also his identity. Sandra Osawa (Makah) notes how the explanation of this extraordinary man

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[28] For a discussion on neocolonialism and global indigenous issues, see, for example, Haunani Kay Trask's speech presented at a world conference of indigenous women hosted by the Sami people in Kárásjohka, Samiland (Norway) in August 1990 (Trask, ch. "Neocolonialism").

[29] The differences are not, of course, absolute between the different systems of thought. Many 'modern' concepts, for example, are imbricated with a Christian tradition of hospitality.

to the question why he had to keep fishing the river was never properly understood in courtrooms or by news reporters. He was not understood because he was speaking from a perspective of another worldview. "He was speaking as a man with a unique relationship with the salmon and he knew that the salmon and his people were as one. Along with this relationship came a special duty and responsibility to remain on the river" (Osawa 145). Other people were not, however, either able or willing to recognize and comprehend this relationship, stemming from his tribal traditions and with certain responsibilities that he attempted to articulate. In other words, due to ignorance of the representatives of law and many others, the salmon was not recognized as a gift that came with a relationship and responsibilities, and Sohappy ended up in prison for five years.[30]

In circular reciprocity, responsibility is commonly regarded as an integral part of being human and inseparable part of one's identity. In cultures and societies that foreground reciprocity, individuals are brought up with an understanding and expectation of acting for others (Williams, "Vampires" 614, 618; also Worl 66). Jeannette Armstrong articulates this kind of understanding of responsibility in terms of her relationship to the surrounding environment:

> I know the mountains, and by birth, the river is my responsibility: They are part of me. I cannot be separated from my place or my land. When I introduce myself to my own people in my own language, I describe these things because it tells them what my responsibilities are and what my goal is. ("Sharing" 461)

Armstrong's notion of self is not limited to her as an individual but inseparably entails the connection to a certain place toward which she has certain responsibilities for the land.[31] As the existence and survival of indigenous peoples were largely dependent on the social and ecological stability, the central element of their worldviews was teachings of responsibility

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[30] There are several other similar accounts that address the limit of understanding between two different worldviews which end up being contested in court. One of the more well-known cases is the Delgamuukw, now a landmark case of Aboriginal rights in Canada (see, for instance, Culhane; Gisday Wa and Delgam Uukw; Mills; Persky). Linda Hogan's riveting story about the clash of worldviews also culminates in the courtroom in her novel *Power*.

[31] This responsibility belongs to everybody, as pointed out by Elizabeth Woody ("Voice" 196). She shares the comment made by her uncle which reveals a difference in perspectives on this responsibility: "We are all in this together, except we, as tribal people, will not leave or neglect our responsibility. We don't have that luxury. There is too much at stake" ("Voice" 171).

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toward other beings, whether human or non-human. Responsibility is, therefore, an integral and necessary part of a person's upbringing in a different way than in a society where individual success is emphasized.

By recognizing her responsibilities, Armstrong knows her location and her role in her community; in short, she knows who she is ("Sharing" 462). This notion of responsibility emphasizes interrelatedness of all life forms – the well-being of the mountains and river is related to her personal well-being as well as to the well-being of her community. It does not separate the self from the world to an extent that it would be possible to view human beings as independent from the rest of the creation. It foregrounds an understanding "that life depends on maintaining the right kind of relationship with the natural world" (Brody 289) and that personal and collective responsibilities toward the natural environment are the necessary foundation of society.[32] Tom Mexsis Happynook (Nuu-chah-nulth) elaborates this understanding as follows:

> When we talk about indigenous cultural practices we are in fact talking about responsibilities that have evolved into unwritten tribal laws over millennia. These responsibilities and laws are directly tied to nature and is a product of the slow integration of cultures within their environment and the ecosystems. Thus, the environment is not a place of divisions but rather a place of relations, a place where cultural diversity and bio-diversity are not separate but in fact need each other. ("Indigenous Relationships" n.p.)

As with many classic interpretations of giving to nature, analyses of responsibility in indigenous societies are often characterized by assumptions grounded on foreign worldviews and values, remaining blind to other ways of knowing and relating to the world. For instance, Bourdieu contends that the circulation of gifts is nothing more than "mechanical interlockings of obligatory practices" ("Selections" 198). While it is not incorrect to suggest that giving to nature is one of the many forms of socialization whereby an individual learns to conform certain cultural norms and rules, it is however extremely reductionistic and dismissive to interpret

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[32] Happynook observes how in the colonial context, these cultural responsibilities have been forced into a framework of 'Aboriginal rights' to be defended usually "in an adversarial system of justice." These rights are, however, at their root first and foremost responsibilities (n.p.). Interestingly, also Spivak talks about the difference between right-based and responsibility-based ethical systems and the "constitution of the subject in responsibility." She notes: "When so-called ethnophilosophies describe the embedded ethico-cultural subject being formed prior to the terrain of rational decision making, they are dismissed as fatalistic" ("Translation" 18).

indigenous (or any other) gift practices as merely rules which are blindly obeyed and conformed to out of duty. Such views lack an understanding of different ethics and ways of being in the world and thus deny them also to other peoples and cultures. Instead of being mechanically observed practices, giving to nature is the basis of ethical behaviour and a concrete manifestation of worldviews which emphasize the primacy of relationships and balance in the world upon which the wellbeing of all is contingent.

The logic of the gift continues to characterize indigenous people's practices in contemporary contexts. This is one of the reasons why it is misleading and inappropriate to consider and discuss the gift in 'archaic societies' by even those who are otherwise critical of the narrow interpretations of the gift as economic exchange. Alf Isak Keskitalo is critical of research of the Sami by scholars of the dominant Nordic societies because, among other things, the tendency of these 'ethno-scientists' "to fix attention on the more archaic aspects of the minority group, and thus underestimate its complexity and differentiation" (12). One could add that the focus on archaic aspects also leads to perpetuating both implicit and explicit assumptions of 'frozen' cultures and may reinforce tradition-contemporary binaries. As Brody asserts, "[w]e are all contemporaries, whatever lands we live on and whatever heritage we rely on to do so. All human beings have been evolving for the same length of time" (7). An example of the gift logic in contemporary contexts is indigenous research practices and protocols.

SCHOLARLY 'GIVE BACK'

A central principle of indigenous philosophies, 'giving back' also forms the backbone of current research conducted by many indigenous scholars and students. It expresses a strong commitment and desire to ensure that academic knowledge, practices and research are no longer used as a tool of colonization and as a way exploiting indigenous peoples by taking (or as it is often put, stealing) their knowledge without ever giving anything back in return (cf. Smith, *Decolonizing* 1). After centuries of being studied, measured, categorized and represented to

serve various colonial interests and purposes, many indigenous peoples now require that research dealing with indigenous issues has to emanate from the needs and concerns of indigenous communities instead of those of an individual researcher or the dominant society.[33] Indigenous research ethics assert the expectations of academics – both indigenous and non-indigenous – to 'give back,' to conduct research that has positive outcome and is relevant to indigenous peoples themselves (e.g. Smith, *Decolonizing* 15; Battiste, "Introduction" xx).[34]

Vine Deloria, Jr. is one of the first indigenous scholars to call the attention of non-indigenous researchers to recognize the necessity of 'putting something back into the Indian community.' He even questions the need for further research of Native communities particularly by 'people from the outside' ("Research, Redskins, and Reality" 16; see also "Our New Research Society").[35] Other central elements of scholarly responsibilities include distribution and sharing of the research results in an appropriate and meaningful way while recognizing that the process of sharing knowledge is a long-term responsibility involving more than sending the final report back to the community. Linda Smith differentiates between 'sharing knowledge' and 'sharing surface information' by pointing out the necessity of sharing "the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented" (*Decolonizing* 16). This is explicitly recognized and

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[33] The objectifying colonial research discourse characterized by the salvage paradigm and practices of categorizations and measuring indigenous peoples alongside the flora and fauna or in zoological terms (cf. Allen, *Off the Reservation* 12; Smith, *Decolonizing* 8, 59) does not belong to the past. Linda Smith outlines ten ways how indigenous peoples continue to be colonized by research (*Decolonizing*, 100-3).

[34] Beatrice Medicine, however, problematizes the common ideal of 'wanting to help our people' by asking: "When we hear this utterance of benevolence, is it an echo of an often-articulated caveat of the expectations of members of the larger society, or do we truly believe that this is the most basic motivating factor in our lives?" (84). Medicine suggests that this kind of benevolence might be a reflection of 'new ethnocentrism' based on tribal chauvinism and tribal rivalry which ultimately has a detrimental effect on Native education.

[35] Deloria's suggestion to establish a system of 'designated Master Scholars' among various Native American peoples seems, however, rather ill-informed and likely would be unable to properly address the problem at hand. In fact, his proposed model is quite surprising: as we have somewhat agreed on rejecting discourses of universalism and Master Narratives, why would we immediately want to rebuild them? And even more so, how would we do that? (Who would be the members of the committee? How would they be elected? By tribal councils or by academics? It indeed sounds like a system too susceptible of turning into another good old boys' network.) Perhaps there is a good intention behind the idea which, at its present stage, sounds quite crude and in need of further elaboration. Indigenous communities hardly are homogeneous entities that could have single answers on good research. Having said this, I am aware that his suggestion may well be another sarcastic, indirect criticism of mainstream academia, not necessarily an idea to be taken literally.

acknowledged by Sharilyn Calliou who, in her article "Decolonizing the Mind," names several First Nations' scholars and considers their contributions as 'give-aways'; gifts to indigenous scholarship. The principle of giving back is also reflected by Fyre Jean Graveline (Métis):

> I am Obliged by my Community ethics.
> My Elders Teach:
> Give Back to your Community
> ALWAYS Do Whatever you Can for Others.
> ("Everyday" 74)

The principle of 'giving back' in research – whether it is reporting back, sharing the benefits, bringing back new knowledge and vital information to the community, or taking the needs and concerns of the people into account – is part of the larger process of decolonizing colonial structures and mentality and restoring indigenous societies. The ethics of relevance and giving back guide my work. For example, I consider it important that that my academic work also contributes, however indirectly, to the broader transformation and decolonization of Sami society. Further, my consideration on the relationship between indigenous epistemes and dominant academic discourses is an attempt to contribute to the decolonization of scholarly practices that continue excluding and marginalizing various groups of people and their epistemes. With my work, I hope to 'give back' to the growing body of indigenous scholarship by undertaking an issue with which quite a few indigenous people are faced today in the academic community but which has so far received relatively little scholarly attention; that is, the question of urging the academy to recognize its responsibilities toward and take seriously the gift of indigenous epistemes.

The participation of the community, acknowledgment of traditional genealogical and other organizing structures, relevancy of research and culturally appropriate research practices and codes of conduct, capacity building as well as the commitment to eradication of the detrimental structures and elements resulting from colonization have become the hallmarks of what is today commonly known and recognized as 'indigenous research.'[36] Today, the majority of methodologies and theories elaborated and established by indigenous people are constituted

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[36] According to a commonly shared understanding within contemporary indigenous scholarship, 'indigenous research' refers to research conducted by indigenous people according these principles while other type of research by indigenous scholars is often considered to fall outside this category. The main reference point of indigenous research is self-determination.

in the principle of reciprocity which derives from cultural protocols and traditional values of a society and often incorporated into formal guidelines of ethical research.[37]

The recognition of and responsibility toward indigenous epistemes does not, however, necessarily imply an impossible nativist movement of returning to pre-colonial indigenous practices.[38] Instead, it refers to a condition where various practices and modes of thinking based on or deriving from principles, conventions and systems of knowledge of indigenous cultures are recognized, known and appreciated by academic discourse. Discussing the significance of Native scholars' contribution to contemporary scholarship, Emma LaRocque (Métis) contends that

> ... in a sense, we bring 'the other half' of Canada into light. Not only we offer new ways of seeing and saying things, but we also provide new directions and fresh methodologies to cross-cultural research; we broaden the empirical and theoretical bases of numerous disciplines, and we pose new questions to old and tired traditions. ("Colonization" 12)

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[37] Maori scholars have been engaged in a very active discussion on what is known Kura Kaupapa Maori, theorizing and developing research practices on central concepts of Maori philosophy and social conventions such as *rangatiratanga* (sovereignty), *whakapapa* (genealogy) and *whanau* (extended family). One of the main objectives of Kura Kaupapa research is to create an intellectual space to legitimate and validate Maori ways of knowing and thinking (see footnote 10 in the previous chapter). Among indigenous scholars in North America, developing their own methodologies has particularly focussed on models of pedagogy. Several scholars have proposed a pedagogy based on the medicine wheel or four directions philosophies. See, for instance, Calliou, "A Medicine Wheel Model"; Graveline, *Circle Works*; Hampton, "Towards a Redefinition"; and Weenie. Others have grounded their pedagogic models on storytelling such as Archibald, "Coyote" ; Lenigan; and Sterling. At the University of British Columbia, the First Nations House of Learning has adopted the Longhouse Protocol that includes the teachings of respect, relationships, responsibility and relevance as a means of continuing and strengthening the circle of understanding and caring within both indigenous and academic communities (Gardner; see also Kirkness and Barnhardt).

[38] The danger of nativism is recognized by many indigenous scholars who are also aware how it can be used against their endeavours and attempts to restore their communities and self-governance deprived by colonial processes (e.g. Smith, *Decolonizing* 14). What most indigenous scholars are seeking is to reorient their current practices and activities by grounding them on premises and values deriving from their own epistemes rather than those of the West and seeking appropriate solutions within themselves. Loretta Todd (Métis), for instance, makes it clear that she is not advocating nativism, "or a naively imagined separate, autonomous world. Instead, I seek to explore the 'to and fro' movement between the Fourth and First Worlds" ("What More" 75). Spivak has also defended the use of 'strategic essentialism' whereby manifestations of indigenous cultures and societies are privileged to resist the pressures of assimilation, although more recently, she has been critical of using it as "a kind of carte blanche for being an essentialist when one wanted to be." In her view, "What is useful for political intervention is to keep questions of collective agency right in front of one's nose, and to be very careful to realize that what makes collective agency possible is rational, established discourse and ... that the only way to work with collective agency is to teach a persistent critique of collective agency at the same time" ("Politics of the Subaltern" 93).

Besides generating respectful and responsible scholarship, the recognition of the gift of indigenous epistemes also provides it with a deeper, more informed understanding of contemporary indigenous-state (or the dominant society) relations manifested in numerous and complex ways as well as of the different perceptions of the world which emphasize the relationship between human beings and the natural environment. Considering the destructive agendas of unlimited economic growth based on prevailing neoliberal, global capitalist paradigms labelled as 'free trade' and commodification of all life forms is yet another reason for the academy and the mainstream society at large to recognize and become cognizant of the main principles in indigenous philosophies.

As I have argued above, the gift in indigenous societies encompasses numerous spheres and therefore, interpretations of the gift as exchange or economy (or both) are limited and biased. Normativization of these interpretations has influenced even many indigenous perceptions of the gift, rendering them into a form of exchange and forced reciprocity within the neoliberal framework of modern economics, implying the impossibility of a 'true' or 'pure' gift. Indeed it may well be that, due to the imposition of colonial, capitalist and patriarchal interpretations, the gift has become, on many fronts, impossible. One of these fronts is the academy.

In this thesis, then, I suggest that indigenous epistemes – ways of knowing the world – have to be perceived as a gift to and by the academy. On the one hand, to perceive and acknowledge them as a gift is the prerequisite for ensuring hospitality of the academy and making the academy a good host (as well as guest) – good in a sense that it is cognizant not only of the gift but of its responsibilities toward the other. On the other hand, hospitality of the academy is only possible if indigenous epistemes are recognized as a gift. In other words, the recognition of indigenous epistemes as a gift and the hospitality of the academy are inseparable, necessitating and making one another possible. There is, however, a long history of not only neglecting and making the gift invisible but also demonizing and pathologizing it. As the following discussion with regard to the potlatch tradition of the Northwest Coast indicates, the logic of the gift can also be considered a threat to the 'civilization' and the establishment of the nation-state.

For many scholars and theorists, the gift has been and continues to represent a paradox, enigma, aporia, simulacrum and the impossible. Mauss, for example, is forced to conclude that the gift is an odd 'confusion' that makes everything blend together into a hybrid (70). The ambivalence of the gift is also reflected in its double meaning. Etymologically, the word gift derives from the Latin *dosis*, a 'dose' as for instance, in poison (see Benveniste, *Problems* and *Indo-European*).

Christopher Bracken's account of the potlatch demonstrates how the gift as practiced in indigenous societies of the Northwest Coast became perceived as a threat to the emerging Canadian nation-state and in particular, the values it represented and wanted to represent.[39] The gift of the potlatch institution was associated with excess and waste, and people practicing it were defined as the ultimate other of Europe by the colonial administrators. What the early government agents experienced on the Northwest Coast of the newly emerged nation was "a practice that Western civilization wants above all to exclude from itself: the practice of non-productive expenditure as it is manifested in gambling and giving away" (Bracken 39).

In the eyes of early colonial agents of the Northwest coast, the philosophy of gifting and sharing came to represent a threat. Although there was no immediate opposition to the potlatch at the time of initial contact with Europeans on the Northwest Coast, antagonism increased with the arrival of missionaries and government agents for whom potlatch and other feasts represented a sign of moral degradation, "inscribing Native people of the West Coast with the mark of savagery" (Bracken 36). Officials and other government representatives saw the urgent need to eradicate such 'barbaric' habits, though it was very difficult.

The Kwakwaka'wakw, for example, were repeatedly defined by colonial agents "as a group incapable of integrating themselves into Euro-Canadian culture" (Bracken 46).

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[39] The potlatch is one of the most extensively studied indigenous gift institutions of all time (see, e.g., Anderson and Halpin; Boas; Clutesi; Codere; Drucker and Heizer; and Jonaitis). As I have, however, limited the discussion of the gift in this thesis on giving to nature, it is beyond the breadth of my inquiry to consider the various aspects and functions of the potlatch in detail.

According to commissioner Malcolm Sproat, "the Patlach is a form of aboriginal self-government that stands in the way of the Canadian government and its civilizing mission..." (Bracken 47). Sproat also condemns the potlatch "for producing 'indigence, thriftlessness, and a habit of roaming about which prevents home associations and is inconsistent with all progress.'... 'It is not possible,' he continues, 'that Indians can acquire property, or become industrious with any good result, while under the influence of this mania'" (Bracken 48).

In short, gift-giving in the form of potlatches signified a threat to emerging civilization and progress. A former Hudson's Bay Company trader George Blenkinsop reported "that, until the local Indians were cured of their propensity for potlatching, 'there can be little hope of elevating them from their present state of degradation'" (qtd. in Bracken 37). He formulated his remarks within a set of opposing terms of high and low, elevation and degradation, civilization and barbarism. From the point of view of the notion of gift, it is interesting that, "[w]hat marks the limit between these contradictory terms is not the 'feast' but the notion of expenditure" (Bracken 37).

Frustration over failed attempts to 'civilize' the people practicing potlatch and gifting led to demands of legislation prohibiting these ceremonies by the federal government. The first version of the anti-potlatch law was passed in 1884, but was difficult to enforce because of its ambiguous language.[40] Later, however, the law was amended, and

> following a large potlatch held at Village Island in December 1921, forty-five people were charged under Section 149 of the Indian Act. Of those convicted of offenses including making speeches, dancing, arranging articles to be given away and carrying gifts to recipients, ... twenty men and women were sent to Oakalla Prison to serve sentences of two months for first offenders and three months for second offenders. ... For some years the potlatch went 'underground' to evade further prosecution under the law. In Fort Rupert, for example, people favored stormy weather as a suitable time to hold potlatches, knowing that neither the police nor the Indian Agent could travel in such weather. The Kwakwaka'wakw continued to hope that the anti-potlatch law would be repealed. However, when the Indian Act was revised in 1951, Section 149 was simply deleted. (Umista Cultural Society, n.p.)

Whether an event of pure loss violating the principle of classical utility, as it was for Sproat, or a manifestation of the absolute other to Europe, as it was for Franz Boas (Bracken

[40] For further discussion on the anti-potlatch law, see Cole and Chaikin.

44-5, 46), the potlatch signifies an aporia: "...the northwest coast sits at the very limit of the Western European economy. The gift is the sign of this outer boundary. A pure loss without return, the gift marks the zone where civilization ends and barbarism begins" (Bracken 39). In other words, the gift and the potlatch represented an alien, completely unreasonable practice of prodigality opposed to all the central values of the western world that was attempting to gain foothold also on the Northwest Coast. Not only did the practice not make any sense in the light of the values central to western civilization but it was also considered perilous to the values and principles of the budding nation state such as individualism and the cash economy.

As the other examples above illustrate, gift-giving in indigenous societies cannot be reduced to mere mundane and obligatory giving and receiving; that is, a form of exchange. Indigenous people's relationship with their territories cannot be understood only in utilitarian, economic terms of giving only to receive. The early colonial authorities were aware of the problematic nature of the kind of giving that did not comply to their values and notions of progress. Paradoxically, if the gift in Native communities of the Northwest had been interpreted merely as a form of exchange, it might not have been perceived as dangerous and threatening enough to be outlawed. But the colonial state authorities saw the power of the gift of the potlatch and how it represented a potential interruption and subversion. The only way to be protected from this potential threat was to ban it, declare it impossible by law.

It may not, therefore, be a mere unfortunate coincidence that the gift of indigenous epistemes is not currently recognized in the academy. The gift of indigenous epistemes may still appear for some as a threat or disruption. It may threaten existing structures and discourses and the current status quo. To echo Wendy Rose's (Hopi/Miwok) remarks,[41] someone might be benefiting from *not* recognizing and receiving the gift and from not engaging in a new logic of reciprocal responsibility and relationship of hospitality.

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[41] See Chapter 2, section "Passive Ignorance."

CHAPTER ONE

CRITIQUES OF THE ACADEMY

The birth of the university is often traced to the fifth-century BC Greece, its philosophers and in particular, Plato's academy, and the establishment of the first universities situated in Europe in the twelfth century. Higher learning has its roots and much longer history, however, in the Middle East and Far East. In ancient Egypt, elite males studied theology, medicine, physics, astronomy and mathematics. The Sumerians excelled in literary, scientific and legal scholarship, while the Hebrews focussed on morality and the law of God. The Brahmins, a class of intellectuals and priests in India, provided religious and philosophical education by 1500 BC, and by 600 BC, *parishads*, university-level institutions, offered also instruction in logic, grammar and the law. Later, higher education was made more democratic and accessible by Buddhists and Jainists. In China, intellectual life flourished between the eighth and third centuries in the form of several schools of thought such as Confucianism, Taoism, Moism and Legalism (Axelrod 9-10; see also Le Goff).

Higher learning can hardly be assumed to be the invention of the western world, though the contemporary university clearly shares certain characteristics and values with ancient Greece and Rome. The word 'university' derives from Latin *universitas*, 'a guild,' signifying a union of scholars particularly in fifteenth-century Europe. One of the central features of the contemporary university is what has become known as liberal education, *eleutherios*, which was intended to provide individuals with holistic cultivation aimed at personal growth (Axelrod 10). The two major principles which universities are founded upon also strongly resonate with central ideals of western intellectual tradition. According to the first, truth exists independently from human perceptions of it. The second claims irrelevancy of the personal characteristics of the person seeking truth. Known as the western rationalist tradition, these two ideas still form the bedrock of the university (Marchak 16-17).

The academy is often defined as a community of intellectual inquiry nourishing critical

thinking (or 'speculative contemplation' as in Ancient Greece) and cultivating the comprehension of diverse ideas while simultaneously specializing in a field of knowledge or discipline – principles usually shared with the common goals of liberal education (cf. Axelrod 34-5). It is often suggested that the main function of the university is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge. Moreover, the university is considered an institution which plays an important and central role in the development of the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of a contemporary society (Nwauwa xv).

Contemporary universities are, by and large, commonly considered the successors if not representatives of the university as first articulated by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who not only made the division between higher and lower faculties but also argued for the need to establish the university on the principle of reason. In other words, philosophy – particularly German philosophy of the late nineteenth century – has extensively influenced the model of the university (Derrida, "Roundtable" 21). Jacques Derrida, for example, uses the term 'modern university' to refer to "the one whose European model, after a rich and complex medieval history, has become prevalent... over the last two centuries in states of a democratic type" ("The Future" 233).

Simply put, the academy denotes certain more or less taken-for-granted academic settings, scholarly practices, concepts, paradigms, epistemological and theoretical traditions. It also refers to certain ways and traditions of producing and reproducing knowledge. One of the central principles of this kind of "mainstream academic knowledge" (Banks 8) is that objective truths can be discovered and validated through rigorous empirical methods and analysis which are detached from human interests, values and views (e.g., Greer; Kaplan; Polkinghorne; see also Bordo). It is argued, however, that the university is

> an intellectual world that has been assembled from within an exclusively European tradition, which therefore organizes the work of classrooms, the resources of library, and the language, objects, and conventions of discourse as a centre defining others who are not represented as subjects of authorized speakers.... Women or students from histories or cultures that were and are discursively excluded as subjects, and who may today be finding themselves as subjects and speakers in specialized programs (Women's Studies, Native Studies, and so on), are still absent or marginalized in mainstream discourse. (Smith, *Writing* 202)

Although the 'university' – a place for production and reproduction of knowledge – cannot be homogenized, it clearly is an institution based on and deriving from a specific legacy and intellectual tradition. The university has not been a monolithic entity through its centuries' long history and varied geographical location – one can talk, for instance, of the British, German, Scottish or American academic traditions and models.[1] These different traditions are, however, all founded upon certain fundamental values and principles of western European thought. These can be traced to the Greek humanist tradition and influenced by various intellectual and societal developments in Europe such as the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Age of Reason and Industrial Revolution and ultimately, colonialism and imperialism. Arguing that universities have been established to support the historical processes of colonization and founded on the denial of the collective existence of indigenous peoples, Linda Smith mentions the University of Auckland in New Zealand as an example of an institution which has directly benefited from the oppression of Ngati Awa tribe whose land was confiscated in 1865 for the university ("Dilemma" 4). Writing in the Hawai'ian context, Haunani Kay-Trask (Kanaka Maoli) also discusses how the University of Hawai'i is 'a living symbol of colonialism':

> In many ways, the university is an educational equivalent to the American military command center in Hawai'i. Both serve as guardians of white dominance, both support the state economy, and both provide a training ground for future technocrats. Just as universities in other colonies function to legitimate and entrench the power of the colonizing culture, so the University of Hawai'i functions to maintain *haole* (white) American control. (151-2)

Besides historically participating in the displacement of indigenous peoples, universities also reflect and reproduce epistemic and intellectual traditions and practices of the West through discursive forms of colonialism. During the colonial era, universities, accompanied with the ideology of the superiority of 'western' or European knowledge,[2] were transplanted in various

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[1] See, for instance, Pocklington and Tupper whose book *No Place to Learn: Why Universities Aren't Working* also offers an account of the various influences behind the establishment of Canadian universities.

[2] See, for instance, Battiste and Henderson (ch.7), and L Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (ch. 3).

colonies with a strongly stated civilizing mission (Ma-Rhea 208).[3] The metaphors employed in relation to the establishment of universities clearly revealed the colonial attitude. In some cases, the metaphor was that of a 'family': the British university was the parent and the colonial university was the child (Ma-Rhea 209). In other instances, metaphors related to cultivating the land such as the tilled and untilled soil were applied (Ma-Rhea 210). Such a loaded metaphor likens a 'civilized' person to tilled soil, as suggested by Zane Ma-Rhea, and also evokes the ideology of colonialism according to which the land remains unoccupied and unowned until it is cultivated.[4]

Another ideological tool of the university system has been the establishment of academic disciplines and sustainment of disciplinary boundaries. As sociopolitical mechanisms of control, disciplines consolidate certain ways of looking at the world while excluding others (cf. Smith, *Decolonizing* 65-8). For Michel Foucault, "[a] discipline is not the sum total of all the truths that may be uttered concerning something; it is not even the total of all that may be accepted, by virtue of some principle of coherence and systematisation, concerning some given fact or proposition" ("The Discourse on Language" 223). Instead, disciplines consist of 'truths' but also 'errors' which have their own positive functions and valid history that cannot always be separated from the 'truths.'[5] For a proposition to belong to a discipline, it must fulfill certain conditions that are recognized to be 'within the true,' that is, understood to be a valid proposition at a particular time or epoch. In other words, while one can always speak the 'truth' in a void (i.e., remain unrecognized and unlegitimated by one's peers and discipline), "one would only be in the true, however, if one obeyed the rule of some discursive 'policy.'" Disciplines, therefore, "constitute a system of control in the production of discourse" (Foucault, "Discourse " 224).

While the boundaries of a discipline are continuously modified, there are nevertheless

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[3] For an analysis of the establishment of British universities in its colonies, see, for example, Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African*; and Nwauwa.

[4] This argument continues to be used against the land claims of indigenous peoples, including the Sami. See Tuulentie on the rhetoric of Finnish politicians in Parliamentary discussions of Sami land rights in the early 1990s and how the argument of tilled soil was used to argue against the recognition of Sami land title.

[5] For further discussion on academic disciplines, see, for example, Abbott; Becher and Trowler (especially ch. 3); and Kelley.

strict rules that determine the limits of the modification, denying access from other propositions and thus, other individuals. Foucault calls this a rarefaction among speaking subjects: "none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he [or she] has satisfied certain conditions or if he [or she] is not, from the outset, qualified to do so" ("The Discourse" 224-5). It is thus not that disciplines are not open to new ideas and observations; they are welcome but only as long as they fall within what is currently considered discernible or perceivable. When they fall outside the realm of what is seen and understood as feasible, they are less likely to be considered valid (cf. Battiste and Henderson 118).

While neither natural nor inevitable (cf. Menard, "The Limits" 18), the disciplinary boundaries and factionalism tend to demarcate the limits of our thinking, often contributing to the situation where indigenous epistemes appear incommensurable with the dominant, academically recognized disciplines and discursive truths. Linda Smith has observed how "[m]ost of the 'traditional' disciplines are grounded in cultural world views which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems" (*Decolonizing* 65). Not surprisingly, the emergence of certain disciplines such as geography, anthropology and literary study coincides with a global imperial perspective, consolidating the colonial process (cf. Said, "The Politics of Knowledge" 173).

A good example of this is how English literary studies assisted the civilizing mission of colonialism. Analyzing the establishment of English literature as a discipline in India, Gauri Viswanathan demonstrates how, in the colonial context, literary study gained an ideological content and was ultimately employed for the British political interests. Exasperated by both missionaries and the fear of local insurgency, British colonial administrators "discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education" (Viswanathan 17). English literature and literary study thus functioned as a strategy of containment and a means of social control which lessened the need for direct force (Viswanathan 23; see also Spivak, "Imperialism," "Three Women's Texts" and "Rani").[6]

Social control by means of academic disciplines continues today, for instance, in the

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[6] In a similar fashion, the notion of the literary canon is applied to construct certain texts and forms of expression as 'the great books' containing 'universal truths' while other texts and forms are considered 'parochial' and 'temporal.' This tension remains at the heart of the multiculturalism debate addressed more in detail in chapter five. On the formation of literary canon, see, for instance, Guillory.

form of reluctance to create space for interdisciplinary studies such as various indigenous studies which are sometimes seen as "an interloper having little if any intellectual rigor" (Newhouse et al. 73). Many 'area studies' programs have also "faced fierce resistance from the 'imperialism of departments' since they challenged the fragmentation of the human sciences by disciplinary departments, each endowed with a particular methodology and a specific intellectual subject matter" (Palat 98). Due to the prevailing 'imperialism of departments' and disciplines, it may also be considered "academically unsound and ideologically and politically untenable" to locate indigenous studies "within the confines of established disciplinary boundaries" (Durie 2). Indigenous and other interdisciplinary 'area studies' as well as the whole range of postcolonial, postmodern, feminist and cultural studies which are interdisciplinary by definition (cf. Menard 18), potentially pose a threat to conventional disciplines and their usually clearly demarcated territories. They have also contributed to the transformation of epistemological and discursive boundaries to an extent comparable to the Copernican revolution (Said, 'The Politics" 182).[7]

In spite of these changes, the negative effects of the academy's ideological position are still felt particularly by those who historically have been and in many cases remain marginalized within academic settings. Duane Champagne (Chippewa) and Jay Stauss (Jamestown Band S'Klallam) discuss the limitations for indigenous people of institution built, by and large, around western thought:

> Mainstream academia reflects the goals, interests, values and institutions of Western civilization – that is, the community it studies. Applying the Western intellectual experience and categories of discourse and analysis to the study of Indigenous Nations puts the prospective scholar of Indian life at an initial disadvantage. Such modes of analysis may be helpful and illuminating within their own context, but they most often do not address or express the interests, values and goals of Native communities. (8)

Born in Europe in and from specific cultural, social and intellectual circumstances,

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[7] I will discuss indigenous studies programs in detail in chapter 4. What often gets glossed over in discussions of 'area studies' is their rather disturbing (for some, at least) origins particularly in the United States in the aftermath if the Second World War. "Originating in specialized military training programs devised to train soldiers and civilians assigned to administer occupied territories in Europe and the 'Far East,' area studies was constituted as a field of inquiry on the U.S. ascension to a position of global hegemony" (Palat 88; see also Ahmad; Dirlik; and Spivak, "Transnationality" 83). For further discussion on interdisciplinarity and 'area studies,' see, for example, Miyoshi and Harootunian; Peters; and Rowe.

universities have, since the Second World War in particular, spread to most if not all the countries in the world. The global existence of universities is thus relatively recent (Winchester 638-9). The last few decades, however, have experienced a serious challenge to the legacy – values, worldviews and epistemologies – of the academy as a distinctly and exclusively European (and eurocentric) institution. Increasingly, universities have become places (and spaces) of historical and geographic differences and of multiple, even conflicting discourses. Some individuals and groups have even established their own universities and academic institutions based on different cultural and intellectual values than that of the European or western academy.

In this chapter, I have a brief look at some of the critiques of the academy, focussing on those that are most relevant to my own inquiry. These include the discussion around the so-called crisis of liberal education, the feminist critique of the academy and the (self-)criticism of anthropology and ethnography as it emerged in the 1970s and marked, in the mid-1980s, a turning point within these disciplines. At the end, I also consider the central arguments made by indigenous scholars with regard to their concerns pertaining to the academy. The discussion in this chapter contextualizes my inquiry academically, indicating some of the arguments which inform my work on the exclusionary and selective epistemic foundations of the academy.

It would be meaningful also to include here a discussion on the various theories and arguments which have, during the past decades, undermined and dismantled the superiority of western and eurocentric intellectual and epistemological canons, conventions and legacies once declared universal and neutral. Due to limited space and the focus of my inquiry, however, I can only mention their significance in contributing both to the general critique of the academic institution and its discourses and practices and to indigenous scholarship in particular.

Emerging under the rubric of poststructuralism (Barthes, Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Lacan)[8] in the late 1960s – concurrent with and related to the student uprisings both in Europe and North America – the new wave of criticism signified the beginning of a crucial paradigm shift in Western discourse. It led to a period of profound

[8] The lists of names given here are by no means exhaustive, but intend only to give an idea of some of the main contributors to these areas of theory. Moreover, the categories are inevitably overlapping; in other words, many theorists could be simultaneously placed into several categories.

transition in the human and social sciences of the 1980s, as noted by George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer:

> It is not just the ideas themselves that are coming under attack but the paradigmatic style in which they have been presented. Particularly in the social sciences, the goal of organizing disciplines by abstract, generalizing frameworks that encompass and guide all efforts at empirical research is being fundamentally challenged. (7)

Numerous trends of postcolonial (Anzaldua, Bannerji, Bhabha, Fanon, Gates, Gilroy, S. Hall, hooks, Mohanty, Mukherjee, Said, Spivak, Trinh, West), postmodern (Baudrillard, Lyotard, Jameson) and feminist (Cixous, Code, Collins, Harding, Haraway, Irigaray, McClintock) theories and analyses, including various considerations of race and ethnicity have greatly contributed to questioning the validity of colonial, patriarchal and capitalist 'Master Narratives' that have long excluded, marginalized and oppressed vast sections of the world. Many of these theories and critiques have offered countless invaluable insights and openings to new spaces of understanding that have also assisted indigenous issues to enter the academic arena. Moreover, various theories and practices in the field of critical, anti-racist pedagogy and critical race theory (Apple, Bernstein, Freire, Giroux, Habermas, McLaren, Ng, Razack) have in particular contributed to the development of indigenous scholarship, a great portion of which focusses on reclaiming and creating space for indigenous people as well as further elaborating indigenous pedagogies and educational practices.

The complicity of education in dominant society's hegemonic structures and the reproduction of the social order in educational institutions are also discussed by other scholars in fields such as sociology and Marxist criticism. Pierre Bourdieu in particular has demonstrated how the educational institutions "reproduce existing social classifications" and have contributed to "the continuous social production and reproduction of a certain structure of domination" (*State Nobility* 333, 186). His concept of 'cultural capital,' referring to a set of non-economic forces including class, family background and resources, has been particularly useful to understanding the ways in which resources other than economic ones contribute to academic and other achievements in society. Providing credentials and qualifications, cultural capital is a "certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to power" (Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital" 248).

Analyzing the French academic setting in his *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu also pointed out 'two antagonistic principles of hierarchization' of the university, a cultural hierarchy rewarding intellectual contributions, and a social hierarchy reinforcing extramural and temporal power within academia (48).

Similarly, Louis Althusser considers the production and reproduction within the education system which, for him, is one of the dominant ideological state apparatuses. The educational system's role as the dominant reproducer of state ideology derives from its central and apparently neutral status in the society: "no other ideological State apparatus has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven" (148). An educational system including the academy represents, therefore, the structures and ideologies of those in power in society, seeking to reproduce them in the succeeding generations. While many scholars continue to analyze and criticize the nature and ideology of the educational system as a means of reproducing the 'hidden curriculum' of liberalism, there are many others who consider the liberal 'ideology' itself to be in crisis for a number of reasons.

‘UNIVERSITY IN CRISIS’

In the recent years, one of the many debates about the current condition as well as the future of the university has taken place particularly within the humanities and liberal arts where scholars argue that the academy is either bankrupt, in crisis, a state of conflict or even ‘in ruins.’[9] This is

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[9] Indicative of this ‘looming crisis’ are the numerous titles of books, including American Civil Liberties Union, *Crisis at the University of California* (published as early as 1951); Ash, *German Universities Past and Future: Crisis or Renewal?*; Axelrod, *Values in Conflict*;Bercuson, Bothwell and Granatstein, *Petrified Campus: The Crisis in Canadian Universities* and *The Great Brain Robbery;* Daniells, *University and the Impending Crisis;* Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University*;Emberley and Newell, *Bankrupt Education: The Decline of Liberal Education in Canada*; Miller, *Revolution at Berkeley: The Crisis in American Education*; Natale, *Higher Education in Crisis;* Neilson and Gaffield *,University in Crisis;* Readings *,The University in Ruins*; Taylor, *Students Without Teachers: The Crisis in the University*; Von Zur-Muehlen *,The Canadian Universities in a Crisis*; and Wallerstein and Starr, *The University Crisis Reader.*

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not, however, a new concern, as the academy has been regarded as being at a critical state already in the late 1960s during the student uprisings on university campuses in Europe and the United States which resulted in the diversification of the student body. Over three decades later, the debate about the decline of the ideals of liberal education continues unabated. On the one hand, the threat is now considered to be coming from without in the form of the corporatization of the university. On the other hand, the enemy is within in the form of multiculturalism and increasing demands of the diverse student body to dismantle the eurocentric bias of the academic curriculum.

The debate about multicultural threats culminated in the United States in the dark prophesy of Allan Bloom's best-selling *The Closing of the American Mind* which declared that the crisis of liberal education reflects not only a grave intellectual concern but poses a challenge to western civilization. This crisis, in Bloom's view, was engendered by cultural relativism and the intrusion of the divisive politics of identity dealing with issues of race, gender and sexuality, and would ultimately result in the disintegration of values. Bloom saw its roots in the campus upheavals of the late 1960s which had jeopardized the integrity of liberal education and the preservation of 'high culture' by the university.

Bloom's arguments hardly went uncriticized. In his book *Battleground of Curriculum: Liberal Education and American Experience*, W. B. Carnochan demonstrates that since the inception of the modern university almost two centuries ago, curriculum has always been a battleground of various academics and disciplines. In *The Opening of the American Mind,* Lawrence W. Levine also challenges Bloom's views, arguing that it is precisely the new disciplines and fields of study which will reinforce liberal education by presenting forms of knowledge to students that previously have been marginalized and excluded. In a similar fashion, Martha C. Nussbaum, in *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, argues that the new multicultural curriculum can be justified by the Socratic tradition underlining the importance of 'examined life' and 'pluralism' of investigating different cultures. Taking a slightly different angle, Edward Said, equally critical of Bloom's ideas, contends that

> it needs to be noted that professors such as the author of *The Closing of the American Mind* have no difficulty accepting money from corporations and foundations outside the

university who happen to espouse their own deeply conservative views. To say of such practices that they represent a double standard is no exaggeration. ("Identity, Authority" 217-8)

The other theme pertaining to the looming crisis of the university is the commodification and corporatization of academic spaces, directly related to the rapid decline of government funding in the past decades. While some academics argue that in the current circumstances, it is the only way to keep the doors of the university open, others insist it has put universities on the road to ruin caused by bureaucratization, corporatization and consumerism fed by global capitalism.[10] In *The University in Ruins*, Bill Readings contends that due to the end of the nation-state and thus national culture, culture no longer defines the activities and objectives of the university. According to Readings, the university is guided by empty rhetoric of excellence without reference and supported by encroaching commercialization.[11] Readings's account of the development of the university of reason through culture to excellence has been, however, seriously challenged in articles in *the University of Toronto Quarterly*, which devoted an entire issue to responses to Readings.[12] There is general disagreement with Readings's claim that universities have been conscious agents of the nation-state. As Terence Grier notes, "[c]ertainly there have been and continue to be courses and programs which accomplish some of this, but largely as part of the study and appreciation of Western culture that goes beyond the boundaries of any particular nation-state" (615).[13]

It is suggested, then, that instead of bemoaning the loss of the imagined ideal state and

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[10] The body of literature dealing with the corporatization and globalization of the university includes Axelrod; Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*; Currie and Newson; Shumar; Scott; Slaughter and Leslie; Tudiver; and Turk.

[11] As T H. Adamowski points out, Readings does not discuss "the important issue of the demographics of administration. Just *who* are these higher administrators who actually run our universities during the day..." (648). Adamowski even suggests that the needs of today's universities and the military have certain parallels. Writes he: "It takes no expertise in political economy to recognize that the transfer of power in universities to a new class of techno-financial administrators – versed in budgets and skilled in lobbying and fund-raising – arises from needs similar to those that affected the military" (648).

[12] See also LaCapra, "The University in Ruins?", where he contends that some of Readings's arguments are hyperbolic in their excess, lack nuance, eliminate countercurrents and "blindly replicate some of the most dubious features he imputes" (35).

[13] Some of the contributors (Findlay, Orwin and Varadharajan), however, contend the opposite – that Readings has underestimated the national role still played by universities.

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the Golden Age of Greece – which was not so golden for a variety of groups of people – it would be more important and constructive to recognize, in Rose Scheinin's words, how "[t]he University is in flux yet again and surely not for the last time" (662), and engage in both the old and new challenges that the academy represents.

FEMINIST CRITIQUES

We are driving to SFU to hear Lee Maracle speaking on "Decolonization in the Feminine." My friend tells about her recent trip to an American university and the implications of the Patriot Act on students, campus activism and even teaching – how, for example, instructors are not allowed to teach certain topics which are suddenly considered 'political,' otherwise the corporate funders will pull their monies. So much for academic freedom (maybe we should start talking about 'corporate freedom' instead?).

This is what Lee Maracle also opens her talk with – the disorder of contemporary society in the name of protecting American interests which for her dangerously resembles the Lebensraum politics of the Third Reich. Of all the things that Maracle discusses in her energetic yet humorous way, what remains with me most is her remark on the university as a feminine space, as a house of learning. For her, learning and education are female processes. Although it has been very clear to me that traditionally, much (though not all) of the responsibility of teaching the younger generation belonged to the women, it had never occurred for me to think of the academy as a feminine space or even house of learning – a term which at least on UBC campus is strictly reserved for the First Nations Longhouse.

Maracle's notion and perspective derive from First Nations thinking and suggest a way of perceiving the university in new terms. I struggle trying

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to consider the academy as a feminine institution, particularly when recalling

accounts by numerous women faculty (including indigenous women) of the

chilly climate and the dubious mechanisms of old boys' networks[14] in the

academy.

We discuss this on the way back to UBC, recognizing the common

difficulty of putting one's finger on concrete and explicit examples of the

workings of the patriarchal system and masculinist practices of exclusion

within academic institutions. To my mind, it appears to be most visible in

group dynamics and ways of communication. In the context of public talks,

(middle-aged) men invariably bond together, including indigenous male

academics, who seem to effortlessly join those informal gatherings, while one

rarely sees women, never mind younger female students, joining these old

boys' chats.

There is no question that the old boys' network thrives also within

indigenous academic circles (no matter how indigenous male academics might

have learned that learning and education is a feminine process). In the context

of just having heard Lee Maracle talking about the urgent need for

decolonization in the feminine, it is ever more striking (and frustrating) to bear

witness to workings of exclusionary male bonding among indigenous men in

the academy, examples ranging from handshakes between male professors

and male grad students and calling one another 'brothers' to the gathering of

male academics into their own in discussion circles in a setting where they are

expected to spread around to different groups. All of this makes me wonder

whether they do it unconsciously, without even recognizing how they reproduce

exclusions and hierarchies that they argue that they challenge and dismantle

through their work and research. Moreover, it makes me think that perhaps it

is no coincidence that it is mostly indigenous women who have written and

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[14] 'Old boys' network' refers to informal yet influential networks and structures operating within an institution, where critical information is discussed and shared and where important contacts and decisions are made. These networks take the form of going for coffee or socializing over lunch, dinner or drinks (Luther, Whitmore and Moreau 19).

published accounts and narrative of their difficult experiences in the academy.[15]

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Sometimes considered a site of feminist struggle (Bannerji et al.), the academy – referred to variably as a 'bastion of white male privilege' (Monture-OKanee [Monture-Angus] 12), 'androcentric' (Hannah, Paul and Vethamany-Globus 5), 'man-centered' (David and Woodward 4) or 'masculinist' (Overall 23) institution – practices various covert and subtle forms of exclusion and marginalization as the large body of literature shows. Since the early 1970s, women in higher education has been a topic of academic discussion and research, focussing particularly on gender discrimination. The ways in which women academics have experienced and continue to experience various forms of exclusion, marginalization and discrimination and the relationships between gender, power and knowledge in the academy remain central questions in feminist scholarship.[16]

The topic continues to be timely in the contemporary academy, though some of the analyses also address the (limited) progress and changes that have occurred during the last two decades.[17] Examining the commonly held myths pertaining to academic freedom, tenure and the ways in which they sustain various barriers to women's advancement in the academy, Judith Glazer-Raymo argues:

[15] Discrimination and marginalization on the basis of one's ethnicity or indigeneity is common among indigenous male students, as their own accounts and research indicate (see, for example, accounts in Garrod and Larimore; and Tierney, "The College Experience"). In addition to discrimination based on ethnicity, many female students experience sexism even within their own group. Nicole Adams notes: "To many students, an Indian woman who is active and outspoken is 'non-traditional' and 'power hungry.' For being outspoken as a Native woman, then, I was labeled as a 'white feminist wannabe'" (112; see also Chamberlain 166). On the ways in which patriarchy embedded in colonialism has had extensive impact on the current roles and positioning of indigenous women, see, for instance, Armstrong, "Invocation"; Huggins; Eikjok; Jaimes and Halsey; Irwin, "Maori, Feminist, Academic"; Monture-Angus, *Thunder in My Soul* (especially ch. 9); LaRocque, "Violence in Aboriginal Communities" and "Colonization of Native Woman Scholar", and Johnston and Pihama.

[16] See, for example, Abramson; Aisenberg and Harrington; Furniss and Graham; Piper; and B. Richardson.

[17] See, for example, Cheetham; DiGeorgio-Lutz; Glazer, Bensimon and Townsend; Glazer-Raymo; Malina and Maslin-Prothero; Subbarao et al.; Stiver Lie and O'Leary; Valian; and Welch.

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Although significant advances have been made since 1970 to enlarge women's representation in the academy, institutional leaders are reluctant to acknowledge the tenacity of policies that deter women's full participation. ... Among the more salient issues affecting academic women are disparities with respect to men in almost every indicator of professional status – rank, salary, tenure, job satisfaction, and working conditions – across a range of institutional categories and types. (ix)[18]

In spite of certain successes such as "vesting some at least of the institutional resources of the academy in preserving, transmitting, and advancing knowledge of and for women," challenging "the radically one-sided character of the male-dominated discourses of the disciplines and sciences" and "creating a richness of critique and alternatives that is astonishing given the relatively brief period of our 'renaissance'" (Smith, *Writing* 20), women faculty in general nevertheless remain in a second class position in the academy.

The exclusionary circumstances prevailing in the academy are commonly referred to as the 'chilly climate,' denoting circumstances where women are tolerated but rarely unconditionally welcomed.[19] This hostile environment has been increasingly challenged by women faculty who want to bring their narratives out to the public as testimonies as well as support for others facing similar situations. *Breaking the Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty* (edited by the Chilly Collective) is one of the first anthologies of this kind, followed by many others, such as the recent *Women in the Canadian Academic Tundra: Challenging the Chill*, (edited by Elena Hannah et al.) which, despite the 'southcentrism' of its

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[18] A central part of this 'renaissance' is the establishment of women's studies programs in the university. See, for instance, Broyles-Gonzalez; Conway-Turner et al; Griffin and Braidotti; Howe; MacNabb; Rogers; Wiegman; and Winkler and DiPalma. There are also a few feminist universities, including the Feminist University and Northern Feminist University, both located in Norway. On the establishment of the Feminist University, see Ås. Perhaps another indication of this 'renaissance' is the emerging genre of guidebooks for women academics, some of which take a strong feminist starting point while others avoid being framed as 'feminist.' See, for instance, Caplan; Gmelch et al; Katz and Vieland; Toth, *Ms. Mentor*; and Wenniger and Conroy.

[19] 'Chilly climate' was first pointed out and described in the mid-1980s by Hall and Sandler. At the local level, it culminated in the Chilly Climate Campaign in 1995, involving the University of British Columbia and its Department of Political Science. Describing this campaign, Stephannie Roy defines chilly climate as "a quiet, creeping, often subtle collection of negative experiences which as they continue to unfold, make those experiencing them feel that their academic contributions, and even their presence in the university, are not welcome" (131).

title,[20] attests to the continuation and endurance of the discrimination of women and their work in the academy, as well as the multiple jeopardies of First Nations and immigrant women, women of color and of various ethnicities and women with disabilities or physical challenges are faced with. Besides being a testimony to continual discrimination, the anthology represents "a tribute and a testimony to the persistence and resilience of such women who, against many odds, continue to contribute to the academy with energy and determination" (Hannah et al. 3).

Another recurrent metaphor illustrating women's experiences in the academy is that of the 'glass ceiling' (or sometimes 'glass wall'), a term which, in the late 1980s, first emerged in American management literature to describe the transparent barrier keeping women from achieving the highest-ranking senior posts and positions (David and Woodward 14). A glass ceiling is created by old boys' network through exploiting gender and race issues (Locke 340). There are also differences in feminist criticisms of the academy. Some female scholars limit their criticism to the academic glass ceiling which prevents "them from rising as high as the men they wish to emulate," while others "put their careers and promotions on the line in order to challenge the Ivory Tower itself" (Kailo, "Ivory Tower" 62). The former, whom Kaarina Kailo calls 'Ivory Tower feminists,' often "shy away from Women's Studies and woman-only research because they have either internalized the lower evaluation of woman-identified culture and research, or they simply know better: it is easier to succeed and get funding within the patriarchal paradigm and structures" ("Ivory Tower" 65; see also Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders* 6).

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[20] I call it 'southcentrism' because I think it is important to recognize that tundra is not just a place of desperation and misery. In the introductory chapter, the editors note: "The tundra is a treeless, barren land, semi-frozen for much of the year, inhospitable to most forms of life. The Canadian Arctic falls into this geographical zone. We, the editors, found a parallel between the struggle it takes to survive in the Canadian tundra and the lives of the academic women who have had to face a daunting, unsupportive working environment. Life in the tundra is harsh, and it takes extraordinary tenacity, determination, and strength for creatures to eke out a living in this terrain despite its rugged beauty" (3). Having traveled across the Canadian Arctic and lived in the European Arctic, I wonder who the editors asked what it takes to survive in the tundra (or did they ask in the first place); in other words, whether their argument is based on certain assumptions about the Arctic and the tundra by people who never *lived* in these places. It might have been illuminative to ask the suitability of this metaphor from, say, an Inuk female academic (Inuit women's experiences are not included in the book). Suffice it to say, though life in the tundra may be harsh at times, it is not daunting, unsupportive or inhospitable, particularly when your genealogy is intricately and inevitably woven within and into this landscape of 'rugged beauty.' See also Shields for more on the discourse of the North.

nanabush is an english professor
sitting in an ivory tower
looking down upon the masses who go herd-like to their
    classes
writing books that no one looks at
reading poetry on money
drinking tea and eating crumpets with the dead men who
    turn women into bone
(Akiwenzie-Damm 323)

If white or western women experience discrimination and remain confined within the lower ranks of the faculty and administrative positions, a sexist and racist academic environment often represents a multiple burden for black women and women of color, many of whom also come from a working-class background.[21] Discussing and analyzing her academic experiences in much of her work, bell hooks acknowledges how first as a student and later, as a professor, she has found life in the academy quite difficult due to various encounters with sexism, racism and classism (*Talking Back* 58, 59, 100). Although she continues to feel imprisoned in the academic world (*Outlaw Culture* 10), she remains there mainly for a pragmatic reason: it allows her to do the work she considers important (*Killing Rage* 229). Notes hooks: "People have this fantasy (as I did when I was young) of colleges being liberatory institutions, when in fact they're so much like every other institution in our culture in terms of repression and containment – so that now I feel like I'm trying to break out" (*Outlaw* 232; see also Sischy 126).

As a student, she also started to pay attention to class differences and boundaries in the academy of which nobody wanted to discuss or address:

> It was easier to downplay them, to act as though we were all from privileged backgrounds, to work around them, to confront them privately in the solitude in one's room, or to pretend that just being chosen to study at such an institution meant that those of us who did not come from privilege were already in transition toward privilege. To not long for such transition marked one as rebellious, as unlikely to succeed. ("Keeping Close to Home" 101)

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[21] See the low percentages of female (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American) full-time faculty in the United States, for example, in Glazer-Raymo, ch. 2.

Not only was class overlooked in the university, it also played a role in her family's concerns about her attending university far away from home: "Like many working-class folks, they feared what college education might do to their children's minds even as they unenthusiastically acknowledged its importance" (hooks, "Keeping Close" 100-1). The ways in which classism functions in the academy together with other forms of discrimination is also considered by Christine Overall who, in addition to those already mentioned, also addresses ableism and ageism. In her 'theoretical autobiography,' she develops what she calls the 'phenomenology of a working-class academic's consciousness' which not only "makes it more difficult to acclimatize to the academic environment [but] also offers potential insights into the class-based operations of the university" (27; see also Tokarczyk and Fay).

It is particularly the critique of the academy by women of colour[22] which is most relevant to and reflects issues raised by indigenous scholars. Many academics of colour point out the colonial roots and structures of the academy, arguing "that the standard of measurement in the academy is still whiteness, and that success is dependent upon conformity and 'mimicking of White knowledge and values'" (Luther et al. 88, 89). Other common issues of concern for faculty of colour include 'ghettoization' in their 'special area' studies and teaching, tokenism in committee assignments, invisible demands (such as requests and invitations to be guest speakers to different classes on topics pertaining to Native issues, race or ethnicity), exclusion from both formal and key decision-making structures and informal networks (Luther et al. 16-19). These and other issues profoundly impact the lives, thinking and behaviour of individuals experiencing them, resulting in forced isolation, self-doubt and a sense of being under constant scrutiny and valued only in the areas of their 'difference.'

Many women also express frustration at "being 'managed,' controlled and restricted in terms of their time, intellect, interests, capabilities and energies" (Luther et al. 20). Further, the way in which Native faculty and faculty of colour are being heard in academic settings often

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[22] For lack of a better term, I use the problematic expression 'women of colour' to encompass women from various backgrounds who in Canada or elsewhere in the western would be categorized as 'minority' or 'ethnic,' including (but not limited to) Asian, African, African American, Black, Latino/a, Hispanic and Pacific Islands. On analyses of the academy by African American academic women, see, for instance, Allen-Brown; Benjamin; Bernard; Carroll; hooks, "Black Women Intellectuals"; Moses; and Myers. On accounts and analyses of the academy by 'faculty of colour' in general, see, for instance, Bannerji et al. *Unsettling Relations*; Essed; Gainen Boice; Luther et al; Ng at al.; Padilla andChavez; and Turner and Myers, Jr.

poses certain challenges and problems. In many cases, issues of culture, race and victimization raised by Native faculty and faculty of colour are listened to and taken seriously only, if at all, when spoken in non-challenging ways (Luther et al. 19; see also Razack, "Racialized"; Bannerji "But Who Speaks"). This usually leads to isolation and not being able or comfortable to disagree with one's colleagues. In a situation where one is in the numerical minority, it is "difficult to openly disagree with one another for fear that they may be seen as being disloyal not only to one another but to their entire community" (Luther et al. 22). As a consequence, many women feel either silenced or intellectually restricted. Feminist criticism of the academy by women of colour and indigenous women has also extended to specific disciplines such as anthropology, an academic field of study intimately linked with indigenous peoples, or as Linda Smith puts it, a discipline "most closely associated with the study of the Other and with the defining of primitivism" (*Decolonizing* 66).

CRITIQUES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Trinh Minh-ha's *Woman, Native, Other* marked one of the first feminist-postcolonial critiques of anthropology and ethnography. Critical of both the ethnographic envisioning of the other and the anthropological language of nativism, she considers anthropology as 'a scientific conversation of Man with Man' or scientific 'gossip': "a chatty talk, which, under cover of cross-cultural communication, simply superposes one system of signs over another" (*Woman, Native, Other* 68). Trinh also argues that anthropology has given form to legal voyeurism with its various rhetorical manipulations as well as self-congratulating, patronizing (yet refined) discourse of nativism that seeks to 'see them as they see each other' (*Woman* 69, 73).

Sami scholar Vuokko Hirvonen has also looked at ethnographic research and research ethics from the perspective of a Sami woman. Focussing particularly on what is known as 'Lappological' research – ethnographic, anthropological, folklore studies of the early twentieth century – she is critical of the invisibility of Sami women in this literature that discusses the

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Sami people but in fact, is only talking about the activities and perspectives of Sami men. She argues that "Sami folklore published until now has in the most part been men's folklore and it has been the majority society which has defined it" ("Research Ethics" 9).

Critiques of anthropology play a central role in forming and supporting early indigenous criticisms of the university and its discourses and practices. It could be argued that the more recent indigenous criticism of the academy has its roots in the criticism of anthropology by Native scholars, particularly by Vine Deloria Jr. who, as early as 1969, wrote about 'anthropologists and other friends' in Native communities. This scathing and highly ironic analysis of anthropologists and their activities set the tone for decades, continuing to 'dazzle' especially Native American students and function as "rallying cry for Indian militants and tribal people alike" (Medicine 3).[23]

Another early critique of anthropology and ethnography in indigenous circles was by Sami scholar Alf Isak Keskitalo whose conventional academic style is quite different from Deloria's. In his essay "Research as an Inter-Ethnic Relation," presented in 1974 and first published in 1976, his main concern is the 'asymmetry of ethno-science'; research by non-Sami ethnographers, social anthropologists and certain sociologists on the Sami grounded on several practical, political, institutional and financial asymmetries. Not only is such research based on a one-way relationship in which knowledge flows from Sami to Nordic ethnoscientists but there also is "the frequently observed absence of an effective feed-back" (13) and most visibly at the community level, the disturbance and pressure on the people in question by the presence of the ethnoscientist by whom this often goes unnoticed (11-2). Other problems of

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[23] Anthropologists saw Deloria's early remarks as 'negative portrait' or 'caricature' which is "about as realistic as the earlier heroic versions of participant-observation" (Clifford 9). It is important to notice, however, that despite his fierce attack on 'anthros,' Deloria is also critical of the unheeded acceptance of the authority of anthropologists by many Native people who now 'parrot' them and adopt their slogans such as living between two cultures as excuses 'for Indian failures.' For Deloria, "They are crutches by which young Indians have avoided the arduous task of thinking out the implications of the status of Indian people in the modern world" (*Custer Died* 88). On more contemporary perspectives of anthropology by representatives of local, British Columbia First Nations, see, for instance, Ignace, Speck and Taylor, "Some Native Perspectives." Despite strong and common critical views of anthropology and anthropologists, there are numerous indigenous anthropologists many of whom have chosen their careers in order to 'do it differently.' As expressed by Davina Ruth Begaye Two Bears (Dine),"Instead of being an anthropologist who takes away from Indian people, I will be an anthropologist who gives back – through work with repatriation and reburial, or in other ways" (62). The dilemma of 'learning to be an anthropologist and remaining 'native'' is also addressed by Beatrice Medicine in chapter 1 in her book of the same title.

'ethno-science,' in Keskitalo's view, include the paradox of researchers trying to "grasp phenomena of which we already have cognitive and theoretical mastery" and giving the presence of the ethnoscientist "a tinge of luxury and superfluousness" (12). Unfortunately largely ignored (though republished in 1994) by Sami and non-Sami researchers alike, Keskitalo's essay is still very valid in many regards in present-day Sami society and research.

The emerging critique of anthropology within the discipline itself goes back to the early 1970s and to scholars such as Clifford Geertz, Dell Hymes and Talal Asad, among others. Since those days, critical, self-reflective anthropology seems to have become, at least in certain circles, the only viable option for any self-respecting scholar. In the 1980s, a new wave of critical and provocative thinking swept over considerable parts of the academic world. In anthropology, this culminated in texts such as *Writing Culture* (edited by Clifford and Marcus), and *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (by Marcus and Fischer) – now considered classics – which profoundly question previously held assumptions about truth and fiction, the nature of cultural representation and description as well as notions of subjectivity and objectivity. The partiality and fictionality of ethnographic truths and the prevailing gender bias have now been recognized, as is the impossibility of knowing "anything certain about other people" (Clifford 7). According to Clifford,

> Ethnographers are more and more like the Cree hunter who (the story goes) came to Montreal to testify in court concerning the fate of his hunting lands in the new James Bay hydroelectric scheme. He would describe his way of life. But when administered the oath he hesitated: "I'm not sure I can tell the truth.... I can only tell what I know." (8)

For indigenous peoples, most significant in the re-evaluation of anthropology and ethnography has been the recognition of the ways in which anthropology has been implicated in colonialism and imperial expansion – the analysis of how it has been implicated in the colonial/modernist project of either saving or erasing the 'other.' Bernard McGrane refers to anthropology as "an extremely subtle and spiritual kind of cognitive imperialism" and "a power-based monologue about alien cultures" (127), while Johannes Fabian, among others, has pointed out that anthropology "contributed above all to the intellectual justification of the colonial enterprise." Fabian's early criticism was directed particularly to the way in which

anthropology endorsed the belief in 'natural,' or evolutionary time through its conceptualizations. He contends:

> A discourse employing terms such as primitive, savage (but also tribal, traditional, Third World, or whatever euphemism is current) does not think, or observe, or critically study, the 'primitive'; it thinks, observes, studies *in terms* of the primitive. Primitive being essentially a temporal concept, is a category, not an object, of Western thought. (*Time* 18)

The dichotomy between the 'primitive' and the 'civilized' is among the most insidious both in popular and academic thought and discourses employed either to delineate the evolutionary process culminating with 'modern man' or to romanticize the other as exotic and noble threatened by the degeneration of civilization (Gee 47).[24] While some anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Franz Boas and Claude Lévi-Strauss already in the early twentieth century demonstrated that 'primitive societies' are in fact, not primitive at all but as complex as any other 'modern' or 'civilized' society, this dichotomy persists not least because these scholars, while rejecting previous dichotomies, introduced new, equally problematic ones.

Lévi-Strauss's structuralism divided the world into cold and hot – traditional and modern – societies marked by differences in their historicity. Traditional societies were characterized by myth and timelessness, modern societies by history and chronology. Another common division of societies has been along the lines of oral and literate cultures which has, however, been challenged by various scholars who question the narrow, eurocentric assumptions and views on writing (e.g., Brotherston; Derrida, *Of Grammatology*; Mignolo). Analyzing Lévi-Strauss's consideration of the Nambikwara, an indigenous people in South America, Derrida contests the idea of a people without writing. He demonstrates how the Nambikwara have a form of writing even if it does not necessarily follow the model of phonetic writing, arguing that separating language from writing is merely an attempt to restore a romantic notion of authenticity (*Of Grammatology* 101-40; see also Brotherston). As noted by Mignolo,

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[24] See also Kremer, "The Shadow of Evolutionary Thinking" where he takes issue particularly with Ken Wilber's work, looking at the ways in which "evolutionary theorists deal with contemporary indigenous peoples" (42). He notes: "Wilber never concerns himself explicitly with the indigenous peoples who remain. He primarily discusses the anthropological construct 'shamanism' and 'shaman' when elaborating the earlier evolutionary stages. This isolation of shamans and the 'shamanistic state of consciousness' inappropriately focuses only on certain aspects of the holistic and integral process of indigenous conversation..." (44).

Derrida's analysis inevitably remains, however, within the eurocentrism it criticizes. In Mignolo's view, European discourses of writing and literacy do not necessarily apply in Mesoamerica (303).

Anthropology has been closely linked to the colonizer's imperative to produce knowledge about the colonized. Despite the new, critical stances and practices, the legacy of anthropological and ethnographic representations is still being experienced by indigenous peoples in the form of stereotypical or biased views of indigenous peoples and their cultures and on a deeper level, in persisting attitudes of the public reflected in media and elsewhere in society (Champagne, "American Indian Studies" 187; see also TeHennepe). It is thus not surprising that twenty years after the 'crisis in cultural representation' and the consequent self-criticism and reflexivity, new forms of collaboration and partnership within anthropology and ethnography, they still are under strong criticism by indigenous scholars and others for many of the same reasons as in 1969 by Deloria. Another persisting legacy of anthropology and ethnography in indigenous communities is the resistance to research, which, according to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, is a word that is "probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (*Decolonizing* 1). One of the ramifications is the still relatively common view, particularly among older generations in indigenous communities, that research is an activity only conducted by anthropologists (Smith, *Decolonizing* 199).

INDIGENOUS CRITICISMS

I've walked these hallways
a long time now
hallways pallored by
ivory-coloured
thoughts

...

I do my footnotes so well

nobody knows where I come from
hallways without sun
the ologists can't see
they count mainstreet
bodies behind bars
they put Ama's moosebones
behind glass
they tell savage stories
in anthropology Cree
(LaRocque, "Long Way From Home" 161)

This poem by Cree/Métis scholar and poet Emma LaRocque illustrates some of the issues and challenges faced by indigenous people in the academy: although the notion of the contemporary university as an ivory tower is contested by many academics, including indigenous scholars,[25] the academic world remains, in many ways, removed from the lives, issues and concerns of indigenous communities. LaRocque's poem also addresses the pressure to conform to and comply with certain explicit and implicit norms and expectations of the university while observing the often painful academic scrutiny of placing one's culture under a microscope especially by the disciplines of ethnography and anthropology, as noted by Maori filmmaker Merata Mita (cited in Smith, *Decolonizing* 58).

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive consideration of indigenous criticisms of the academy simply because most, if not all indigenous scholarship, explicitly or implicitly, either is a critique of academia and its discourses and practices, or is based on and stems from commonly held assumptions that the academy has not worked well for indigenous people. In the following, I trace some of the central and recurring themes and concerns addressed by

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[25] Champagne and Stauss, for instance, argue that "The ivory tower myth in Western academia is a misnomer; many of the disciplines of today's universities are deeply engaged in legal, cultural, policy, political, economic, and related issues of concern to the United States and the world" (9-10). Elizabeth Cook-Lynn also contends: "academic institutions have never been the 'ivory towers' they've claimed to be" because "they have always had a political agenda, one that has been in serious conflict with the interests of native populations" ("American Indian Studies" 173). It is also quite disturbing to learn that at least in the United States, the academy proved its significance to the state through the development of weapons during and after WW II (Bok, *Beyond the Ivory Tower* 63). For other arguments against the notion of the ivory tower, see also Ashby, "The Case for Ivory Towers"; Pocklington and Tupper (7); and Schrecker.

several indigenous scholars and academics. Besides criticism aimed at anthropological research, the roots of the current indigenous critiques of the academy can be found in the early critiques of colonial education of indigenous peoples. In Canada, the National Indian Brotherhood's[26] policy statement *Indian Control of Indian Education*, released in 1972, set the foundation for the First Nations peoples to reclaim their inherent right to control of their own education. Articulating principles of local control, parental responsibility and culturally based curriculum, the document states: "We want education to provide the setting in which our children can develop the fundamental attitudes and values which have an honoured place in Indian tradition and culture" (National Indian Brotherhood 2).

In the same year in the United States, the American Indian Movement presented similar claims to the government in their position paper titled "Trail of Broken Treaties: 20 Point Indian Manifesto."[27] In 1972, the first Native-controlled survival schools were established to counter the high dropout rate among American Indian students and lack of culturally relevant curriculum and programs. The decades to follow have witnessed an increasingly growing field of study and analysis pertaining to various aspects of indigenous education, focussing both on the legacies and consequences of colonial education and on the future challenges and visions.

Like the critiques of colonial education and residential schools, the general criticism of the academy by indigenous scholars analyzes, first and foremost, structural and institutional legacies of colonialism. In the university, the struggle is particularly over the control of academic knowledge: the need to address "the underlying structural issues which are concerned with what students are required to learn, how they learn and how this learning will serve them in their own practice" (Smith, "Dilemma" 10, see also Monture-OKanee [Monture-Angus] 20-1). Another major concern of indigenous scholarship is research on indigenous issues conducted by non-indigenous scholars who either in their ignorance or arrogance fail to follow protocols and guidelines for ethical and culturally appropriate research developed by various

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[26] In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the National Indian Brotherhood underwent a revision of its basic structure and in 1982, changed its name into the Assembly of First Nations (see <www.afn.ca/Assembly_of_First _Nations.htm>).

[27] Another landmark document, the U.S. Senate report "Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge" was released in 1969, shortly followed by allotment of funds by the federal government " to the purpose of preparing Native Americans to fulfill positions of leadership in education" (Graham and Golia 127).

indigenous research institutions and political organizations.[28]

In the academy, indigenous people and indigenous scholarship are confined within limiting, often oppressive structures and dominant western or eurocentric canons, standards and notions of knowledge and research which serve certain values and interests and marginalize and exclude others (Hampton, "First Nations" 210). Many indigenous scholars also argue that the intellectual and epistemological basis of the academy is profoundly saturated by colonial and also patriarchal and racist assumptions and practices which define and characterize the conditions of academic and intellectual endeavours.[29] Marie Battiste suggests that universities have

> been contrived to oppose or devalue Indigenous knowledge. The faculties of the contemporary university have been created to influence people and be the gatekeepers of Eurocentric knowledge in the name of universal truth. Yet, that truth is nothing more than a philosophy of Western Europe invested in history and identity to serve a particular interest. ("Decolonizing" 196)

The way in which the colonial experience and resulting colonial mindset are reflected and still exist in the academy in relation to indigenous peoples is analyzed by Patricia Monture-Angus (Mohawk) who points out how it continues to be acceptable that Native Studies programs are run by non-Native people although it is not considered appropriate that Women's Studies programs were run by men or Black Studies programs by white people. She maintains: "It is still seen (albeit silently) as acceptable that the 'Indian' needs the help and guidance of the white man" ("On Being Homeless" 280). Another indication of the prevailing colonial mindset is the paternalistic or disparaging attitudes of faculty members towards their indigenous colleagues and their work (Cleary 185; see also Green 87; LaRocque, "Interview" 190; Medicine 85). Feeling that she is not considered "a full-fledged member of the faculty,"

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[28] See, for example, Battiste, "Decolonizing the University"; Battiste and Henderson (esp. ch. 8); Carpenter Grenier; Hirvonen, "Research Ethics"; Hudson and Taylor-Henley; Inuit Tapirisat of Canada; Masuzumi and Quirk; Mihesuah, *Natives and Academics*; Müller-Wille; Oakes and Riewe; L. Smith, "On Being Culturally Sensitive" and *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Special Issues of *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 20.2 (1993): "Researching with Mutual Respect," and 25.1 (2001): "Sharing Aboriginal Knowledge"; and N. Te Awekotuku and Manatu Maori.

[29] See, for example, Battiste, "Enabling Autumn Seed"; Graveline, "Lived Experiences" and "Everyday Discrimination"; Green, "Transforming at the Margins"; Monture-OKanee, "Introduction"; Irwin, "Maori, Feminist, Academic"; and LaRocque, "Native Woman Scholar."

Delores Black-Connor Cleary (Okanogan/Colville) notes that "I suspect that I will always be known as the 'little Indian girl' who is the 'opportunity hire'" (185, 194).

Further, indigenous scholars criticize the Eurocentric bias which results in that the validity of their research is commonly questioned and undervalued by their departments and colleagues. Research by indigenous scholars is deemed irrelevant or 'revisionist' because, in many cases, it either falls outside 'mainstream' research or focusses on personal experiences as a member of a 'minority group' (Stein 105; Smith, "Dilemma" 9; Cleary 195; Mihesuah, "Epilogue" 105).[30] Indigenous research on their own communities and issues may also be assumed to be subjective and biased and consequently dismissed as self-serving (Dorris 104; LaRocque, "Native Woman Scholar" 12).

These concerns reflect the broader question of hierarchies of knowledge; such as the way in which indigenous epistemologies are often regarded as inferior compared to western scientific knowledge based on neutral and rational inquiry. Even if there might be an increased awareness of indigenous systems of knowledge included in some curricula and academic courses, they nevertheless remain in the background as *a* knowledge compared to the normative western knowledge. In short, indigenous people are faced with multiple forms of marginalization in the academy: "the marginalisation of [indigenous] intellectualism, a marginalisation of what we call academic work, a marginalisation of our preferred pedagogical practice, and a marginalisation in the way resources are distributed" (Smith, "Dilemma" 8).

This kind of systemic and institutional discrimination is a reflection of the continued colonial mentality present in the academic institution. As first pointed out by Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, colonialism does not only signify the occupation of territories but also a certain type of relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in which the latter is considered inherently inferior ('uncivilized,' 'savage,' 'primitive'). Although the categorical dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized has been (and needs to be) challenged, the fact

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[30] Vine Deloria points out: "The identification of scholars working in the field of Indian-white relations has this strange quality to it: proponents of the Indian version of things become 'revisionists,' while advocates of the traditional white interpretation of events retain a measure of prestige and reputation" ("Revision" 85). Michael Dorris also argues: "Certainly it is true that most Native American scholarship could be termed 'revisionist,' but that in itself does not prove illegitimacy. Europeans and Euro-Americans have not felt shy in writing about their respective ancestors and are not automatically accused of aggrandizing them; why should native scholars be less capable of relatively impartial retrospection?" (104).

nevertheless is that the legacy of that relationship is still with us in many ways. As Monture-Angus notes, it is possible to trace a "disturbing pattern of systemic exclusion of Aboriginal people" in the academy ("Homeless" 279; see also Graveline, "Everyday Discrimination").

Like other faculty belonging to groups traditionally excluded from the academy, many indigenous scholars and academics, in their analyses of the academy, address in their work the alienation, and sense of irrelevance and frustration resulting from the various manifestations of institutional racism, discrimination, marginalization and assimilation rooted in the legacies of colonial history (e.g., Allen, *Off the Reservation* 132-4; Green 83; and Monture-Angus "Homeless" 276-7). Joyce Green (Métis) calls her condition in the academy a 'Never Fitting In' phenomenon, commonly experienced by 'women of all sorts' (Green 84, 87), while Monture-Angus talks about being homeless and not feeling culturally safe in the university ("Homeless" 277). Indigenous faculty are also often overcommitted in their teaching, mentoring, community outreach and committee activities (Stein, see also Cleary). Caught between benign neglect and detrimental dismissal, there are many indigenous faculty members who either consider leaving or have already left the academy while others have found more hospitable circumstances in Native and other indigenous studies programs (Stein 101; see also Allen, *Off the Reservation* 134; Champagne 185; Green 83; Huggins 76; and Monture-Angus, "Homeless" 277).

RACISM IN THE ACADEMY

In the second edition of *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education*, the editors note that in the late 1980s, when they started to write the first edition, there was very little analysis and discussion on 'race' in higher education. Even if some things have changed since those times – for instance, racial tensions on university campuses have become less severe and somewhat less divisive – the authors argue that racism still does exist on campus, only its location has moved to the sphere of policy and the courts, complicating issues further: "The end of the 1990s saw a

variety of court decisions, voter initiatives, and election results antithetical to affirmative action; and the policy climate dramatically changed" (Smith, Altbach and Lomotey xvi).[31]

While the discussion around affirmative action is, for the most part, unique to the United States, similar issues have been discussed elsewhere in slightly different terms, including Canada where the debate takes place in the context of the official multicultural policy and appears not to be as polarized as in the United States.[32] Instead of creating a melting pot of cultures, Canada prefers the idea of a cultural mosaic. As Asha Varadharajan points out, however, not all parts of the mosaic are created equal: "The mosaic occasionally implies satellite cultures revolving around the two founding cultures or involves the concept of unity in diversity, neither of which negates the peripheral status of 'other' cultures" ("Cultural Peripheries" 144).[33] Indigenous people also have their particular reasons for arguing against their inclusion under the rubric of multicultural. Many of the reasons are articulated in a lengthy quote by Gloria P. Simms and Marianne Couchie:

> Native peoples have consistently made the point that they do not intend to be identified with the ideology of multiculturalism. The argument by Native peoples for not wanting to be defined within the context of 'official multiculturalism' is based on their objection to being classified as part of 'ethnic Canada.' Native peoples maintain that they are not 'immigrants' or 'ethnic' or 'visible minorities.' They are Canada's First Nations who have had a long history of spiritual and economic relationship with each other, and have a legal and inalienable stake in the land base through aboriginal and treaty rights. Distancing themselves politically from the multicultural movement is very important to the Native nations. History has taught them that they must continuously struggle to get all Canadians to *recognize* their special status and their rights. They also realize that the nature of interaction and social relationships within Canadian society are such that they will eventually experience the multicultural movement as another aspect of the usual hierarchical patterns that have been established over time. Institutions and the various levels of government will develop the rhetoric of equality and justice while society

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[31] See Danius and Johnson for an illuminating discussion with Spivak on affirmative action, political correctness and multiculturalism in the American scene.

[32] Affirmative Action Programs have been established in some Canadian universities as well, such as the University of Saskatchewan where such a program was established in 1987 "to benefit Aboriginal students" (Basran 273).

[33] For Canadian multiculturalism and education, see, for example, Ahamad; Tator and Henry; and Mallea and Young. For critical analyses of Canadian multiculturalism, see, for example, Bannerji, *Insider-Outside of the Nation* and *The Dark Side of the Nation*; and Razack, *Looking* and *Race, Space,and the Law*.

continues to adapt to the rigid mold popularly called the 'Canadian mosaic' - a socio-economic structure reflecting the reality that Native peoples have remained over time the poorest and most oppressed segment of the society. (140, emphasis added)

There is very little doubt that racism and race-related issues remain salient in higher education where they have become equally institutionalized, less covert, complicated, and consequently, more difficult to detect and point out.[34] Though less open and frequent, racist attitudes and views of society are still being expressed at the individual level in classrooms and other academic circumstances. As Cleary points out, "racism is alive and well even in the upper echelons of education. My experience is consistent with the findings of other minority academics, who indicate that racism is a persistent presence in higher education" (186; see also Marker, "Lummi Identity"; Reyhner, "Native American Studies" 102; Trask). Cleary recognizes how the public debate on Native rights and sovereignty has resulted in increased stereotyping and demonization of Natives in society which have also influenced students' views on Native people and issues. As a consequence, most of her students have "preconceived negative notions about Indian people" (Cleary 187). Monture-Angus also addresses the inherent racism in ways in which her professional authority is questioned by students "who cannot accept a Mohawk woman teaching them Canadian law" ("Homeless" 278).[35]

The new form of discrimination, whether referred to as 'colour-blind racism' (Bonilla-Silva), 'aversive racism' (Gaertner and Dovidio), 'symbolic racism' (Sears) or 'elite racism' (Van Dijk; see also Johnsrud and Sadao), "allows Whites to sincerely believe that they as individuals are no longer supportive of racism, while the numerous effects, old and new, of racism continue unabated" (Scheurich and Young, "White Racism" 221; see also discussion on epistemic ignorance in the next chapter). One of the main reasons for blindness in the academy as well as in society at large is that

racism is seen as solely a function of what an individual consciously believes. Thus, if an individual faculty member consciously believes that she or he is not a racist, that is

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[34] As a local example, there have been two relatively recent racial and/or sexual harassment and discrimination cases involving the Political Science departments at the Universities of British Columbia and Victoria (e.g., McIntyre, "Studied Ignorance and Privileged Innocence", Marchak, *Racism, Sexism, and the University*, and ch. 10 in D. Smith, *Writing the Social*).

[35] On the interlocking structures of oppression in classrooms, see, for example, Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye.*

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the end of the issue for that person and the end of her or his responsibility....
Consequently, as long as White faculty stop with an individual-level understanding,
racism will be left to permeate the university deeply and pervasively. (Scheurich and
Young, "White Racism" 221)

In contemporary society, the indirect influence and power of academics are more extensive than
is commonly assumed and accepted by many academics themselves. Scholars particularly in
social sciences but also in other fields outline theories and perspectives on ethnic relations that
are applied in "committees, institutions and bureaucratic frameworks that organize ethnic
decision making in virtually all social domains" (Van Dijk 158). Although nature and
manifestations of racism have changed in the past decades (reflected in the fact that explicit
prejudices and derogatory discourses have generally become suspect in the liberal consensus of
contemporary societies), these changes have not transformed the power relations founded on
ethnic divisions. Van Dijk points out:

the economic, political, and cultural dominance of both European and Europeanized
countries and societies were hardly dented by occasional equal opportunity practices, a
limited sharing of wealth, and a more tolerant public discourse.... Although the notion of
racial supremacy was increasingly found to be old-fashioned, more subtle forms of
ideology found their way into political, social, and scholarly discourse. (162)

Institutional racism manifested in the academy (among other places), is defined as either
intentional or unintentional discrimination embedded in organization's procedures, practices
and operational culture (Van Dijk 195; Scheurich and Young, "White Racism" 225). It is
reflected in "research that subtly blames the victims, denial of racism, growing lack of interest
in remaining inequalities, opposition against Affirmative Action, irritation about minority
radicals who are seen as 'exaggerating,' and so on" (Van Dijk 195). Institutional racism occurs
also if "a university's standard pedagogical method is culturally congruent with the culture of
White students but not with the cultures of students of color" (Scheurich and Young, "White
Racism" 225).[36] In Battiste's view,

Confronting cultural racism in Canada is a difficult task because cultural racism cannot
be contained to any one portion of the state. It is a systemic form of racism that cannot

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[36] For further analysis of institutional racism, see, for instance, Feagin and Vera; Hacker; and Huff. See also
Archibald et al. "Honoring" (pp. 150-5 and 158-60); Trask (ch. "'Racism against Native Hawaiians at the
University of Hawai'i") and Salmond, "Institutional Racism at the University of Auckland."

be dealt with in schools through classroom supplements or add-on courses. Confronting the problem requires a holistic understanding of modern thought and the purpose of education. ("Maintaining Aboriginal Identity" 195)

As the discussion in the next chapter on cultural conflicts and problem of 'speaking' demonstrates, this kind of symbolic, institutional racism is also experienced by many indigenous people in the academy. By focussing particularly on the question of epistemic ignorance and calling for a new paradigm based on the philosophy of the gift in the university settings, I do not intend to downplay the role played by institutional racism and the consequent unequal social relations or their negative effects on indigenous people in the academy. Quite the opposite – in my view, this analysis can be reinforced and supported by an examination of the discrimination at the epistemic level.

The notion of the academy denotes physical settings and a discursive space both of which are hugely powerful in terms of allocating access and resources unevenly among various groups and sectors of society. The focus of previous critiques by indigenous scholars has been on the transformation of cultural context and the structures of the university (including the redistribution of resources). Other important issues have included the questions of agency and the construction and validation of certain types of knowledge. What has been largely missing is the epistemic argument, which presents an additional dimension to the existing critique. There is a need for critical analyses of the academy on multiple levels, such as structural, cultural, epistemological and epistemic. In my view, the epistemic level cannot be concealed by or buried under the argument of 'cultural.' As I argue in the following chapter, the problem of the exclusory epistemic framework of the academy is a structural and systemic rather than cultural concern.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL CONFLICTS AND EPISTEMIC IGNORANCE

Though the academic world may seem unfriendly and intimidating for most new students, it is widely recognized that it is especially so for indigenous students.[1] When indigenous people come to the university, they are often faced with numerous challenges and difficulties which range from benevolent ignorance, indifference and misconceptions about their cultures to individual and institutional discrimination and marginalization. Statistics reveal that albeit gradually increasing, both the graduation and retention levels in postsecondary institutions remain relatively low among indigenous students in various parts of the world.[2] Kirkness and Barnhardt contend: "It is clear that despite the many efforts to improve First Nations' participation, U.S. and Canadian universities, by-and-large, do not yet provide a hospitable environment that attracts and holds First Nations students at a satisfactory rate" (4).

While most of the examples in my thesis are drawn from the North American context, the experiences discussed here hardly are limited to North America – similar sentiments can be heard among indigenous people from elsewhere as well.[3] Moreover, as suggested by William Tierney, personal accounts of college and university experiences by Native American students are both unique and representative at once. He maintains that although students' perceptions and reactions to the world are unique to each individual, "they are situated within a tribal culture that is shared with other American Indians" (Tierney, "College Experience" 313). This is not to imply that indigenous cultures even in the North American context are monolithic. As

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[1] See, for example, Archibald et al. "Honoring What They Say"; RCAP (ch 5, section 6); Garrod and Larimore; Grant; Makinauk; Reyhner, "The Case for Native American Studies" ; and Tierney, *Official Encouragement.*

[2] See, for example, Armstrong et al. *University Education and Economic Well-Being*; Dodd et al.; Hampton, "First Nations-Controlled University Education"; Stordahl; Te Puni Kokiri/Ministry of Maori Development; and Tierney, *Official Encouragement.*

[3] While hardly ever documented, these sentiments are common topics of discussion in any formal or informal gathering of indigenous students and scholars. I have myself discussed these issues with First Nations, Native American, Sami and Maori students and academics.

Tierney notes, the Native American student population is, in some respects, more diverse than any other student group: besides the conventional variables pertaining to all university students, there is a need to take into account certain additional variables such as the role of the tribal language, traditions in her or his life and whether a Native student grew up on or off a reservation ("College Experience" 312). In spite of this diversity, there are nevertheless many similarities among indigenous peoples when it comes to university experiences.

By addressing some of the challenges and difficulties indigenous people may experience in the academy, my intention is not to generalize these experiences. For sure, there are indigenous students whose 'bumps on the academic road' are limited to those that most students experience at some stage in their studies (cf. Albers et al. 147). There are also those indigenous students for whom the university is a place where they have learned, 'discovered' or become more aware of their identities; a place where especially the presence of other indigenous students, faculty and staff has meant an opening or a new perspective on knowledge of their cultures and communities.[4] What I am interested in this particular inquiry, however, is to consider questions related to differences between cultural backgrounds (and more fundamentally, values and worldviews) of the academy and indigenous peoples and to propose a new way of approaching and addressing this issue.

Further, it is important to note that the discrepancy between values, requirements and expectations of one's own community and people on the one hand, and of the academic institution on the other, is not limited to students. It is an issue also among many indigenous scholars and faculty members who, according to William T. Cross, are one of the least known segments of higher education.[5] Patricia Monture-OKanee (Monture-Angus), for example, maintains that the conflict between her cultural values and the mainstream legal system has not disappeared even after she has become a professor or despite the fact that she is part of both 'worlds.' She notes that as a Mohawk woman, she does not share the view of the world or a personal history with her colleagues. Because her colleagues limit themselves to viewing her

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[4] See, for example, some of the student comments in Archibald et al. "Honoring."

[5] Monture-Angus points out, however, that the experience and the shape of oppression is not necessarily the same for students and faculty ("Homeless" 275).

only as a law professor, they usually do not realize the lack of common background (Monture-OKanee, "Introduction" 16, 24).

It is widely recognized that conflicts between cultural values, expectations and goals between indigenous and mainstream societies are among the most common reasons for uneasiness among indigenous students in the academy.[6] While the highly competitive, institutionalized environment of the academy can be challenging for everybody at times, for people who do not share the cultural and epistemic traditions the university represents and reproduces, however, it is a different kind of struggle – that of dealing with more fundamental questions of values and assumptions underpinning not only the nature and the production of knowledge but also of perceptions of the world. As Bill Bray (Creek/Choctaw) points out:

> For myself as an Indian academic, the problem of locating 'home' within the academic structure was serious. More than any people in North America, Indians can point to a piece of the world where home lies, and they can often even trace it back to specific rocks, trees, and bodies of water. The university is not where we point. We cannot adopt academia in the way Euro-Americans can. Having no concept of links that cannot be broken, Euro-Americans can pull themselves up by the bootstraps and plant themselves firmly in the academic community, *a community historically conceived to take care of them*. Aside from a few minor scrapes and disharmonies, they fit academia like a hand sliding into a glove. What, however, can an Indian do? What can Indians do when the glove is tailored to the white hand, and the white hand is already happily inside it? (39, emphasis added)

Historically, educating indigenous people has been established on the premise of 'civilizing,' that is, assimilating and eradicating elements that separated and differentiated indigenous peoples from the dominant society, its culture and values. It is thus not surprising, then, that the difficulties of indigenous students are of quite a different nature from those of students who come from that society and tradition. As Bray describes it, almost everyone gets

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[6] Although cultural conflict is by no means the only challenge faced by indigenous people in the academic world, it is among the most recurrent themes in students' accounts (see, for instance, Archibald et al., "Honoring What They Say"; Carney; Garrod and Larimore; Guyette and Heth; Kirkness and Barnhardt; R. C. Richardson and Skinner; TeHennepe; Tierney, *Official Encouragement*). Other difficulties and challenges include a lack of funding of appropriate programs, high drop-out rate in earlier education, educational and socio-economic disadvantages and issues related to family and community, academic setbacks, lack of encouragement, motivation and role models, internalized oppression and distrust of the institution (see, for example, Archibald et al., "Honoring What They Say"; Deyhle, "Constructing Failure"; LaCounte; McIntosh; Reyhner, "American Indians Out of School"; Thompson; Wright, "American Indian and Alaska Native Higher Education").

bruised, but when the fundamental values and norms that the academy represents are radically different to those with which Native students grew up, it is not merely a question of having a different opinion.

However, the notion of 'conflicting values' can be highly problematic. Even mainstream society is constantly in conflict over values such as environmentalism, globalization, gay rights, abortion, race, sexuality and multiculturalism, to mention only few.[7] In the academy, the tension between the objectives of liberal education and corporatization of universities is also regarded as a conflict of values (e.g., Axelrod). In this particular context, however, I am referring to *cultural* values of peoples who characterize themselves and are defined as distinct from the rest of society or nations forming the current nation-states. These values are closely attached to and associated with distinct assumptions and perceptions of the world (including the human relationship to the world) and therefore, are not necessarily directly comparable with various values and perspectives circulating in the dominant society and its worldviews. Leroy Little Bear suggests:

> Aboriginal values flow from an Aboriginal worldview or 'philosophy.' Values are those mechanisms put in place by the group that more or less tells the individual members of the society that, 'If you pursue the following, you will be rewarded or given recognition by the group,' or alternatively, 'If you pursue the following, you will be ostracized or punished by the group.' Aboriginal traditions, laws, and customs are the practical application of the philosophy and values of the group. (79)

If the student's set of values and basic perceptions of the world are built upon premises and presuppositions that are not recognized or appreciated by the institution, the processes of learning and producing knowledge will, no doubt, be something else than 'minor scrapes and disharmonies' that all students experience. Tierney maintains:

> Institutions and systems – be they schools or political structures – are imbued with cultural and symbolic meanings. Over the last 20 years a wealth of literature has investigated the culture of educational organizations.... Obviously, the culture of an organization derives from the larger society in which it resides. A mainstream university will reflect the social and cultural values of the individuals who come from that

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[7] This debate over values, most heated probably in the United States, has been dubbed the 'culture wars.' See, for example, Hunter; Gates, *Loose Canons*; Jay; and Shore. See also Scapp for further discussion on the tension between values in the educational system.

mainstream. Minorities, by their very definition, will differ in some manner from the majority culture. (*Official* 46; see also Hampton, "First Nations" 214)[8]

Cultural conflicts and their outcomes have been studied quite extensively at least in the United States in relation to high drop-out rates among Native students at the high-school level. Danielle Sanders has pointed out that cultural conflicts play a central role in the academic difficulties of Native American students starting as early as the fourth grade. Summarizing a large body of research, she concludes that a significant factor in declining academic performance beyond Grade Four "seems to be a growing feeling of isolation, rejection, and anxiety felt by American Indian children as they confront the incompatibility of their cultural value system with that of their Anglo-American classmates" (81). This in turn may lead to alienation, poor self-image and withdrawal. Studies also indicate the link between low self-esteem, related to group identity, and the low achievement records of Native students (Sanders).[9]

'Cultural clash' or 'conflict' is an expression that is being used to describe the situation where indigenous scholars and students, in educational institutions which are predominantly Western European in their intellectual and philosophical traditions, are faced with a set of values, views and expectations that differ in several critical ways from their own. The underlying principles and values of the 'dominant' or 'mainstream' culture, underpinning many theories and practices of the academy, often not only differ from but conflict with those of indigenous cultures.

Conflicts between mainstream and indigenous values are most commonly manifested in classroom discussions, yet they are rarely articulated and are virtually invisible to non-indigenous students and professors (e.g., Makinauk, TeHennepe). In many cases, indigenous students choose to remain silent, which is often misinterpreted as either a lack of interest or even

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[8] Even if many indigenous people oppose being categorized as ethnic minorities (see Simms and Couchie in the previous chapter, also Battiste and Henderson 173), they currently are in a numerical minority in the academy.

[9] Donald A. Fixico (Shawnee, Sauk & Fox, Creek, and Seminole), for example, describes his experiences as follows: "Many years ago as a child in grade school, I often wondered why I thought in a different way than my classmates, and why I did things differently from a mental point of view" (xi). In Fixico's case, these experiences did not lead to withdrawal or dropping out, but instead, to writing a book *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World*. In the book, he contrasts what he calls Indian thinking – "the native logic of American Indians" (xii) – with the 'Western mind of empirical evidence.'

intelligence (cf. Garrod and Larimore 6). Combined with the fear of being misunderstood by peers and professors this may create a serious dilemma and double bind for some indigenous students (Begaye Two Bears 55; Duthu 238; Tierney, *Official* 73). Lori Alvord's (Navajo) account of her experiences at the medical school poignantly illustrates these challenges:

> The very thought of exhibiting my skills and knowledge before others was disturbing. I could not bring myself to participate in class discussions and debates, or to volunteer answers to professors' questions, although it was expected.... I didn't feel comfortable raising my hand in class, I wasn't competitive enough about test scores and project, and I didn't draw attention to myself. I lacked the 'right stuff' that every med student needs: a competitive edge. Yet it was hard for me to behave any other way. Silence is a normal part of Navajo communication; words are used sparingly and weighed carefully. It took me a long time to be comfortable with the non-Navajo style of learning. (qtd. in Fixico 68)

It could be suggested that the academy appears inhospitable, if not openly hostile, to many indigenous people particularly because of three major shortcomings: the lack of relevance, the lack of respect and the lack of knowledge about indigenous issues. The lack of respect relates to the problem of cultural conflicts particularly when it occurs at the collective level 'as a people.' The values and perceptions of indigenous students are generally not recognized or respected, and instead, students are frequently "expected to leave the cultural predispositions from their world at the door and assume the trappings of a new form of reality, a reality which is often substantially different from their own" (Kirkness and Barnhardt 6). Moreover, as Kirkness and Barnhardt argue, much of what is taught and discussed in the university often has little relevance to the cultural predispositions and aspirations of many indigenous students which might be connected "with much broader collective/tribal considerations, such as exercising self-government, or bringing First Nations perspectives to bear in professional and policy-making arenas" (5; see also Medicine 7, 83-4, Garrod and Larimore 15, Adams 109, Two Bears 62-3, Worl 72, Alvord 228).[10]

Instead of teaching issues pertinent to the goals, needs and circumstances of indigenous peoples, the academy may appear as drawing indigenous people away from who they are

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[10] This kind of desire to contribute to and improve conditions and opportunities in their communities holds true also for many faculty of colour (Luther et al. 24; see also Villalpando).

(Hampton, "First Nations" 218; Carney 147; Monture-Angus, *Thunder* 91; Tierney, "College Experience" 311). At its extreme, some students are forced to develop sometimes painful strategies to survive, as the following account of a UBC student indicates:

> When a Native student goes into a classroom, part of you is removed and sort of your Indian spirit is put apart from you, so you are separated so you can deal with the mainstream society values. When you try to talk about the Native matters that are in the text without using the eyes of your Indian spirit ... When you look at it with your wholeness all that emotional stuff wells up. You try to see it through their eyes. When you leave the room your spirit is back. This is how I deal with pain. Remove yourself from your body. Your spirit is up there waiting for you. You are up there and looking at yourself. You look back and you see compliance. You comply. (qtd. in TeHennepe 257)

Albeit no longer explicitly in university mission statements and other rhetoric, the common academic assumption according to which "[s]uccess in postsecondary education demands that the individual becomes successfully integrated into the new society's mores" (Tierney, "College" 316) continues to underpin much of the operating principles of the academy. This integration can, however, prove too big a challenge and some students resist such demands by leaving the institution. Tierney notes,

> Instead of appropriating the cultural capital of mainstream society, many minority students either decline to participate in higher education, or they resist the dominant ethos at work in white institutions and leave. ... Rather than assimilate minorities into the organization, the conditions need to be created where alternative discourses can be heard. (*Official* 51)

Besides irrelevance and disrespect that many indigenous people experience in the university, the general lack of knowledge about indigenous peoples, their issues, cultures and histories also plays a significant role in making the academy rather hostile. One common manifestation of such ignorance is the lack of understanding of university faculty and staff toward indigenous cultural practices and values (Adams 108-9; Archibald et al. 64; Makinauk 100; RCAP 501; Tierney, *Official* 71). Listing some of the differences between cultural expectations and values of Native American, on the one hand, and Anglo-American, on the other, Sanders remarks that not only do Native American students enter the "school system with a background and set of values quite different from the educational system itself" but for these

students, "school is an experience that runs contrary to the social norms, self-perceptions, and expected behaviours that they have learned at home and that have been reinforced in their own cultural community" (85). School experiences are not made any easier by paternalistic notions common among teachers and counselors who may have limited expectations for Native students and who perpetuate the problem as a consequence of their ignorance (Sanders 86-7).

Instead of considering 'cultural conflicts,' I am particularly interested in the ignorance that prevails in schools but also in the academy (and in society at large). In my view, focussing only on the idea of conflicting cultures or cultural values can be limiting when it seems that the 'conflict' in fact is a consequence of a larger problem of ignorance which has not been adequately discussed in considerations dealing with indigenous students in the university. I suggest call it 'epistemic ignorance,' a lack of recognition of indigenous epistemes. I believe that with this concept, it is possible to pay closer attention to the responsibility and role of the academy itself rather than focus solely on indigenous people. Further, I think that there is a need to shift away from considering these issues in terms of 'culture,' since it also may limit our analysis.

CRITIQUES OF 'CULTURE'

The concept of culture is problematic in several ways, not least because, as Raymond Williams argued already several decades ago, "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (87).[11] 'Culture' is sometimes considered a colonial construction referring particularly to 'other' societies which are associated mainly with stasis or focussed on its material or physical elements. The role of anthropology in creating a certain understanding of a culture by concentrating only or mainly on material cultures is discussed by numerous

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[11] It is suggested that 'culture' "is multi-discursive; it can be mobilized in a number of different discourses" (O'Sullivan et al. 68). In other words, a fixed definition of the term cannot be imported from one context to another but instead, the discursive context itself has to be identified.

scholars, both indigenous and others, and is beyond the scope of this inquiry. Johannes Fabian observes:

> Culture (and its predecessors such as custom and tradition) had the undeniable merit of getting us out of a morass of racist theorizing. Still, the concept deserves being castigated for its emphasis on integration, conformity, and equilibrium; for privileging identity over change; for advocating purity and authenticity over hybridity and syncretism; for being fixed on symbols and meaning rather than on performances and praxis. ("Culture" 88)

The problematic nature of the term is also reflected in the dichotomy of culture-nature.[12] Originating from the context of agriculture, the notion of culture (cultivation) implies growth but also tending "a strain with selected, refined or improved characteristics" (O'Sullivan et al. 69). When applied to people and conveniently combined with theories of Social Darwinism and race biology among others, it was concluded that some peoples were clearly more 'cultured' than others; those who remained in the state of nature. In the mid-nineteenth century, culture became to signify the pursuit "of spiritual perfection via the knowledge and practice of 'great' literature, 'fine' art and 'serious' music" (O'Sullivan et al. 70; see also Arnold). Though seriously contested, many of the implications of this elitist notion of culture prevail in contemporary society. Some scholars argue that the concept of 'race' was merely replaced by more neutral 'culture' without, however, a change in discriminatory ideology (e.g., Van Dijk 162-3; also Razack, *Looking*).

Further, there are definitional problems when considering a term in a 'cross-cultural' context. Discussing the definition of culture within Canadian First Nations context, Dennis McPherson points out the discrepancy between the ways 'culture' is generally understood in English and French, on the one hand, and within Aboriginal contexts, on the other. He contrasts the views of Aboriginal presenters to the public hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the abstract categorizations and definitions of non-Aboriginal societies in order to illustrate how the concept of culture both carries distinct meanings for different peoples and also is so all-encompassing that it may become meaningless (McPherson 78-9). James

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[12] For a discussion on this dualism from a Native American perspective, see Forbes, "Nature and Culture: Problematic Concepts for Native Americans" (briefly discussed in the chapter on Deatnu).

Henderson also rejects "the concept of 'culture' for worldview." He contends: "To use 'culture' is to fragment Aboriginal worldviews into artificial concepts" ("Ayukpachi" 261).

What is more, an excessive focus on 'culture' may result in 'culturalism' which, as suggested by Cathryn McConaghy, "privileges 'culture' as an explanatory tool for knowing matters of social difference" by incorporating binary oppositions that concentrate on a certain form of oppression while ignoring others (43).[13] She argues that in Australia, for example, culturalism has been the predominant convention for knowing indigenous issues for most of the twentieth century, totalizing social experience and homogenizing subjectivities by prioritizing questions of representation (44).

Discussing the problem of culturalism, Spivak suggests that we should view the word 'culture' "as the site of a struggle, problem, a discursive production, an effect structure rather than a cause" (*Post-Colonial* 123). She notes that what often is neglected is that "culture is also something that is the effect of the production of cultural explanations, and that cultural explanations are produced also because a certain culture needs to be fabricated, a monolithic explanation of a group needs to be fabricated" (*Post-Colonial* 123). She is not, however, suggesting that 'culture' does not exist, but rather that when it is considered an agent with a certain descriptive power, it necessarily entails a politics of discursive production.

Patrick Macklem also refuses to reduce indigenous difference to cultural difference.[14] He insists that looking merely at 'culture' is inadequate and instead, the particular history and context must be included in any consideration of indigenous peoples (4-29). This is also noted by Tierney who argues:

> [T]raditional analyses often appear as if the mainstream has no culture and only those individuals who are minorities have a past that influences their present and determines their future. The most radical of mainstream analyses will then view culture as

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[13] See also Razack, *Looking at White People*. For further analysis of the problematic nature of culture in the light of contemporary cultural politics and cultural studies, see, for example, Benhabib; and Couldry.

[14] While the notion of cultural difference is criticized by many for its colonial, hierarchical and even racist undertones (see, e.g., Razack; and Van Dijk), Homi Bhabha, in his essay "The Commitment to Theory," employs 'cultural diversity' and 'cultural difference' as oppositional terms in order to distinguish between two modes of representing culture. For him, 'cultural difference' recognizes the process of 'coming to be known' rather than assuming fixed, pre-determined cultural contents. This argument, however, is beyond the scope of my current inquiry.

something that holds individuals from participation in the mainstream. (*Official* 61)[15]

Considering the numerous aspects of 'culture,' I suggest that there is a need for an alternative terminology to engage in an effective analysis of ignorance in the academy. This is also echoed in the comment by Vine Deloria who argues that in attempting to understand certain culture-specific issues and aspects, we need to move from "the immediate cultural context to the more philosophical and abstract conceptions" underlying the specificity of a particular culture (*Spirit & Reason* 24). Therefore, I introduce the concept of episteme – worldviews[16] and presuppositions or conceptual frameworks through which one looks at and interprets the world. This enables us to frame the problem of cultural conflicts in broader terms which may also offer new perspectives to the issues discussed in this thesis.

THE CONCEPT OF EPISTEME

Episteme is a broad and flexible concept which covers aspects of 'epistemology,' 'philosophy,' 'cosmology,' 'ontology,' 'religion' and various practices stemming from these without being limited by them. As I argue below, particularly in many indigenous contexts these are all dimensions that are inseparably interconnected (cf. Moore 272). The concept of episteme is also broader than 'epistemology,' a concept of which is commonly defined as a study of

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[15] This argument corresponds to prevalent attitudes on ethnicity; that only the 'other' (non-mainstream, minority, immigrant, native) has ethnicity while dominant society represents the norm against which the 'ethnic' is perceived and constructed. For ways in which ethnicity is problematic for Native peoples in Canada, see Fee; and Kulchyski.

[16] Walter J. Ong was the first to point out the problematic nature of the term and concept 'world view' which "reflects the marked tendency of technologized man to think of actuality as something essentially picturable and to think of knowledge itself by analogy with visual activity to the exclusion, more or less, of the other senses." Societies that lay emphasis on orality, on the other hand, tend "to cast up actuality in comprehensive auditory terms, such as voice and harmony." The 'world' of 'oral societies' "is not so markedly something spread out before the eyes as a 'view'" but is experienced and understood through the combination of several senses (Ong 634). This difference can, in Ong's view, make analyses between the different 'world views' difficult if not entirely impossible.

knowledge or (philosophical) theories, definitions and identifications of knowledge. 'Epistemology' is often used to denote a system of knowledge or a way of knowing which may or may not include value systems, ontologies and perceptions of the world – none of which can really be separated from knowing (see e.g., Fay and Tiblier).

Episteme, on the other hand, is neither a form or a single body of knowledge nor a type of rationality (Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* 191). 'Epistemology' appears to have several meanings and interpretations some of which differ from one discourse to another. There is a difference, for instance, between the ways in which western philosophical discourses and indigenous discourses employ the concept of epistemology. In the former, epistemology is usually applied to denote a (theoretical) study of knowledge, while in the latter, the application is much wider; it is commonly used as a synonym for system of knowledge, way of thinking, worldview, traditional philosophy etc. In the context of my inquiry, I prefer to employ the concept of 'episteme' instead of 'epistemology' because I believe that episteme better refers to and includes perceptions of the world. It allows an analysis that extends beyond theories or systems of knowing.

'Episteme' is often used to denote 'of or pertaining to knowledge.' Michel Foucault, however, defines epistemes as "something like a world-view" and "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems" (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 191). He considers an episteme as a period of history organized around a certain assumption about the world which determines what and how a culture thinks, sees and understands. Further, an episteme is said to consist of "the sum total of the discursive structures which come about as a result of the interaction of the range of discourses circulating and authorized at that particular time" (Mills 57). The episteme is a lens through which we perceive the world, structuring the statements that count as knowledge at a particular period. In other words, it is a mode of social reality, the taken-for-granted ground whose unwritten rules are learned (and as Foucault would say, 'written' in the social order) through the process of socialization into a particular culture.

An episteme is 'invisible' and taken for granted in the sense that it is constituted of usually unstated presuppositions of which individuals are not necessarily aware unless they

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come into contact with other epistemes. Usually we are socialized into a certain episteme at an early age (cf. Scollon and Scollon 12, 28) which becomes our primary socialization and thus is foundational in terms of our values, perceptions of the world and attitudes. Later, we may acquire other epistemes which form our secondary socialization. As an explanation of reality giving meaning to the world and producing certain concepts (and not others), an episteme is implicit in language and reflected in knowledges, discourses, disciplines, institutions, rules and norms of a society consistent with those statements. The concepts of knowledge, discourse and discipline are, in many ways, intertwined and it is not always possible to speak of one without another.[17]

Although Foucault's definition of an episteme refers to different periods of history, I suggest it is also possible to have concurrent and parallel epistemes based on different discursive practices and assumptions of the world, value systems and perceptions of knowledge. We can thus talk about a Sami episteme or indigenous epistemes in general to denote certain common and shared ways of seeing, understanding, interpreting and relating to ourselves and the world within a society or a (group of) people who exist side by side with other, clearly different modes of interpreting the world. These shared characteristics derive above all from the kind of relationship indigenous peoples establish with the world they live in (cf. Brody 117). As it is possible to discuss the Renaissance, Classical and Modern epistemes,[18] I believe it is equally possible to talk about indigenous epistemes (or more specifically, Sami, Salish or Maori epistemes, for example) in a way does not imply essentialism, particularly if we recognize how no episteme is a self-contained, sealed entity but always is, in varying degree, influenced by

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[17] Moreover, as pointed out by many, to speak of 'knowledge' is to consider not only ways of knowing and things known, but also what gets defined as 'knowledge,' who does this defining, and who benefits from the act of definition. We also need to pay attention to ways in which knowledge acquires authority and legitimacy also in realms other than those from which it arises.

[18] On a broad and general level, Foucault has identified these three major epistemes that during the last four or five centuries have dominated the western European thought and world (Danaher, Shirato & Webb 19).

other epistemes.[19] It is also important to recognize that no episteme is ever isomorphous within itself. However, it could be argued that certain epistemes are characteristic of a predominant group (not necessarily all) of the people in question (cf. Scollon and Scollon 100).

Indigenous Epistemes

As worldviews, ontologies, cosmologies, systems of knowledge and values are dynamic and constantly evolving in time and space, so it remains impossible to define an indigenous episteme, or even more specifically, a Sami, Salish or Maori episteme. However, although separate and distinct in many ways, they share certain fundamental perceptions particularly related to the human relationship to the natural world as discussed in the chapter on the gift. This is also noted by Sanders: "Although each tribe is different because of tribal structure and geography, there are prevailing basic, consistent values and attitudes held by American Indians that transcend and cut across tribes as well as across reservations and urban areas" (82).

Even if it can be argued that indigenous 'discourses,' 'paradigms' or 'philosophies' (or whatever term is preferred), have increasingly come closer to the predominant modern episteme – in which various forms of colonialism, including our "colonial presence" (cf. Gregory, "Power, Knowledge and Geography"), play a role – they are not, in any circumstances, the same as the major epistemes of the West (cf. Walker 187-8). This is articulated by Frank R. LaPena as follows:

> As one hears different stories, one begins to realize that images of nature and life known and related to by the dominant society are estranged from the Native American view of the world. The Native American sees the world as a 'different place' from that seen and described by the dominant society. As a Native American, my world is a gift of my teachers. ... We are taught to respect the earth, for it is a place of mystery, wonder and

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[19] Leroy Little Bear (Blackfoot) points out the fragmentary effect of colonialism on indigenous worldviews, leaving a legacy of 'jagged worldviews' among indigenous peoples who "no longer had an Aboriginal worldview, nor did they adopt a Eurocentric worldview" (84). He rightly notes that "[n]o one has a pure worldview that is 100 percent Indigenous or Eurocentric" (85). In discussing indigenous epistemes, I do not suggest that either. Instead, I call attention to the fact that despite the legacy of colonialism, there is a range of core aspects of indigenous worldviews that continue to exist today.

power. The earth and the universe are alive, living entities. (274)

Elaborating indigenous worldviews and philosophical traditions in this way does not imply that these arguments and positions apply to every single indigenous individual in the world – even to assume so would be as inappropriate as to propose that, say, Cartesian thinking applies to every individual in dominant society. By epistemes, I refer, by and large, to the traditions of beliefs, assumptions or perceptions of and ways of relating to the world that have been dominant in certain societies and thus influenced the construction of predominant discourses in these societies, not individual psyches and behaviour. In a way, epistemes are the invisible principles according to which a society functions. It is obvious that the long period of domination by various forms of colonial practices has eroded and changed indigenous epistemes and estranged many contemporary indigenous people from their epistemes.

As I argued in the chapter on the river, the Sami, for example, have experienced a very subtle colonial process which has resulted in a situation where only traces of the Sami episteme are left, as many Sami have internalized and adapted to 'modern consciousness.' In other words, as I talk about epistemes, I do not intend to suggest either that all indigenous people possess it or that those who do, have a full understanding of and are completely familiar with their particular indigenous epistemes. Even if there are countless contemporary indigenous individuals who have been socialized into the epistemes of their people, there are also a vast number of those who have neither had a full access nor access at all to them. This does not diminish, however, the scope of the problem pertaining to epistemic ignorance in the academy. Episteme is not something that one has to, needs to or even can be 'fully versed' in in order to be able to know the world, think and speak through it.

For sure, discussing indigenous epistemes poses various problems. In attempting to explain indigenous epistemes in a language that may radically contrast and even conflict with those aspects, we cannot avoid the danger of violating the integrity of those epistemes as they are not easily translatable into another system or reduced into simple categorizations or taxonomies (cf. Kremer, "Indigenous Science"; LaRocque, "Re-examining"; Scollon and Scollon 99). This is also why I have limited my discussion only to some of the aspects rather

than attempted to offer detailed or schematic comparisons.[20]

In the chapter discussing the concept of gift, I sought to clarify the central principles of indigenous epistemes as expressed and articulated by indigenous people themselves. What follows here is a brief explanation and interpretation of indigenous worldviews from a slightly different angle, in terms that could be considered 'academically more familiar.'[21] While many 'scientific' considerations of indigenous epistemes, cosmologies and ontologies by non-indigenous researchers may lack contextual understanding or linguistic training to grasp complex philosophical concepts and meanings, this is not, however, always the case.

Tim Ingold suggests that in indigenous thought, "the world is not an external domain of objects that I look *at*, or do things *to*, but is rather going on, or undergoing continuous generation, with me and around me" (108). For him, animism and totemism (terms used by him as labels of convenience) are "not so much systems *to* which people relate as immanent in their ways of relating" (112). Engagement and participation are not only conditions of being but also knowledge. As an example, he compares some aspects of mainstream western and the Ojibwa (or Ojibway/Anishinaabe) ontological premises:

> Mainstream Western philosophy starts from the premise that the mind is distinct from the world; it is a facility that the person, presumed human, brings to the world in order to make sense of it. ... For Ojibwa, on the other hand, the mind subsists in the very involvement of the person in the world. Rather than approaching the world from a position outside of it, the person in Ojibwa eyes can only exist as being *in* the world, caught up in an ongoing set of relationships with components of the lived-in environment. And the meanings that are found in the world, instead of being superimposed upon it by the mind, are drawn from the contexts of this personal

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[20] I am aware that even this does not prevent me from making generalized arguments. I am however, guided by Spivak's remark that generalizations should not be viewed as "as descriptions of the way things are, but as something that one must adopt to produce a critique of anything" (*Post-Colonial* 51).

[21] This is not to invalidate explanations by indigenous scholars but rather an attempt to present another perspective on some of the central, shared aspects of indigenous epistemes. For further elaborations by indigenous scholars on their epistemes, see for example, Balto (esp. pp. 119-49); Battiste, *Reclaiming Voice*; Battiste and Henderson; Deloria, Jr., *God is Red*; Helander and Kailo; Kawagley; Kuokkanen, "Toward an Indigenous Paradigm"; and L. Smith, "Te Tiimatanga."

involvement. (101)[22]

Though Ingold is speaking about a specific North American indigenous episteme which cannot be generalized to other indigenous worldviews, on the level of ontological principles the Ojibwa way of relating to the world corresponds to many ways of other indigenous peoples. Hugh Brody illuminates the question of knowing about and being in the world from a slightly different angle, suggesting that in order to understand the radically different social systems, we need to understand that they are largely shaped by different origin stories both in terms of their economic bases but also values and beliefs. In his view, mainstream western society reflects the social system of the farmer established by Genesis and characterized first and foremost by *control* – the necessity to control and change the environment for material well-being (77, 117; see also King, *The Truth About Stories* 24-9).[23]

The social system of indigenous peoples (or more specifically, hunter-gatherers), on the other hand, is characterized primarily by the necessity to *know* the environment for individual and collective survival. For Brody, "the distinction between respect and control is of immense importance" to an understanding of these two modes of knowing and being in the world (255). He argues:

> The hunter-gatherer seeks a relationship with all parts of the world that will be in both personal and material balance. The spirits are the evidence and the metaphors for this relationship. If they are treated well, and are known in the right way, and are therefore at peace with human beings, then people will find the things they need. The farmer has the task of controlling and shaping the world, making it yield the produce upon which agricultural life depends. If this is done well, then crops will grow. Discovery by discovery, change by change, field by field, control is increased and produce is more secure. (306-7)

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[22] Similarly, Kremer argues: "People of European descent or people who have entered the eurocentered process of consciousness have split themselves off from ongoing interaction of place, ancestry, animals, plants, spirit(s), community, story, ceremony, cycles of life, and cycles of the seasons and ages. This dissociation has created a conceptualization of social evolution, in which a major shift has occurred from prehistory to history, from oral tradition to writing civilization, from the immanent presence of spirit(s) to the transcendence of god(s)" ("Shamanic Inquiry" 128).

[23] This desire for control originates from the Biblical creation story in which the humans "are instructed to go out into this new world, to use, subdue and rule over every living thing. They are to conquer and control the things of Creation (sixth day)" (Brody 73).

In other words, "[t]he skills of farmers are centred not on their relationship to the world but on their ability to change it" (Brody 225).[24] This emphasis on change is in turn reflected in the worldview of the agricultural, and later, industrial society of modernity. Besides change and control, integral to this worldview have also been the notion of enclosure – a drawing of unambiguous boundaries and production – according to which land is wasted if not made to produce as much as possible.[25]

Ingold suggests considering the different ontological premises in the light of genealogical and relational approaches or models. The genealogical model, based on linear and static assumptions of ancestry and cultural memory, is not only fundamentally colonial but also deeply implicated in the discourse of the state.[26] It is the relational model, in Ingold's view, which better reflects the ways in which identities, knowledge and relationships with the natural environments of indigenous peoples are constituted. Borrowing from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, he compares the relational model to the image of the rhizome which makes it possible to conceive the world and life in constant movement. One of the founding premises of the relational model of the world is that life is not an internal property but immanent in the relations

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[24] This view is subsequently reflected in various theories and ideologies of change, the best-known of which is the central tenet put forth by Marx that the point is not to know the world but to change it. It is a view that makes indigenous worldviews focussing on knowing inferior to those which emphasize the necessity of change. Interestingly, it is a view sometimes employed also by indigenous scholars without criticism of its implicit assumptions of the hierarchy of epistemes.

[25] All these notions, also echoed in classic liberalism, have formed the blueprint for the development of modern, western society and continue to characterize contemporary ideologies and realities. As Bhikhu Parekh illustrates, liberalist thought as articulated by Locke was unable (or unwilling) to grasp any other modes of property and ownership than one that involves a certain type of enclosure, resulting in a situation where the indigenous episteme was completely ignored and misunderstood and thus not taken into account (90-1).

[26] According to Ingold, the genealogical model "is the principal source of legitimation for the state's sovereign entitlement to defend and administer its territory in the name of the nation. For the state, the land belongs to the national heritage, and is held in trust by each generation of citizens on behalf of their descendants" (Ingold 151). The difference between genealogical and relational models could thus also be conceived in terms of an 'opposition between people of and on the land.' Despite the problematic nature of the genealogical model, it is necessary for indigenous peoples to make their claims and assert their rights within contemporary politics and settings imposed by nation-states. In Ingold's view, "the official definition of indigenous status faithfully reflects the self-perception of the non-indigenous populations of nation-states, as descendants of settlers who founded the nations they represent on alien soil." Therefore, "we are left with the question of why people should feel the need to articulate claims to indigenous status in terms that, by their own accounts, are incompatible with their experience and understanding of the world. The answer, I believe, is that these people are compelled to operate in a modern-day political context in which they are also citizens of nation states" (Ingold 151).

between persons and things. Moreover,

> As hunters and gatherers have explained to their ethnographers, with remarkable consistency, it is essential to 'look after' or care for the land, to maintain in good order the relationships it embodies; only then can the land, reciprocally, continue to grow and nurture those who dwell therein. (Ingold 149)

Emphasizing the reciprocity and stability of the social order, this way of knowing the world consists of an infinite web of relations. Interestingly, the metaphor of rhizome resembles the notions of textuality in deconstructive practice which does not imply, as is often suggested, that "everything is language" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 25). Instead, 'textuality' signifies a network, an interweaving or a weave (cf. Derrida, *Positions* 26). Arguing for a new notion of the 'text,' Derrida proposes that text "is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces" ("Living On" 84). He also suggests that "a text is never anything but *a system of roots*" which are endlessly interwoven together (*Of Grammatology* 101-2). The notion of text and texture, therefore, implies that "we are effects within a much larger text/tissue/weave of which the ends are not accessible to us" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 25).

Although Spivak is not talking about ontological assumptions but rather the ways in which we all are inevitably implicated in socio-historical processes, one can detect how both indigenous thought and deconstructive practice recognize the embeddedness of the human existence within intricate webs which never can be grasped fully or once and for all. Of course, this does not indicate that deconstructionists would share or automatically understand the basic premises of indigenous epistemes. On the contrary, many theorists of deconstruction are deeply implicated in ontological and philosophical traditions of the West. It might be, however, productive to recognize the value of some deconstructive practices for contemporary indigenous scholarship which in some cases tends to be grounded on theories rooted in modernist views of linear reality and assumptions of easy access to a neutral truth or the human consciousness.

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The concept of epistemic ignorance is connected to 'sanctioned ignorance,' a term coined by Spivak, but also informed by considerations of epistemological marginalization. For Spivak, sanctioned ignorance – the way in which 'know-nothingism' is justified and even rewarded in the academy – is "of heterogeneous provenance," manifesting itself in various ways (*Critique* x). It refers to academic practices that enable the continued foreclosure of the 'native informant' by not acknowledging her role in producing knowledge and theories.[27] Sanctioned ignorance also relates to ways in which intellectual practices obscure contemporary concerns such as global capitalist and neocolonial processes. Sanctioned ignorance is, therefore, inseparable from colonial domination (Spivak, *In Other Worlds* 199).

Spivak has demonstrated how even critics and intellectuals whom she calls 'hegemonic radicals' – "our best prophets of heterogeneity and the Other" – are guilty of sanctioned ignorance by not recognizing their own implications in historical and colonial processes (*Critique* 248-50).[28] With regard to sanctioned ignorance pertaining to indigenous peoples, Len Findlay suggests: "The consequence of academic complicity with colonialism has been a massive and persistent deficit in the national understanding of the rights of Indigenous peoples and the values and potential relevance of Indigenous knowledge to economic prosperity and social justice in Canada" ("Always" 311). As a result, universities are faced with a serious and demanding challenge of self-education with regard to indigenous epistemes but also its own

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[27] Spivak, borrowing from Lacanian psychoanalysis, uses the concept of foreclosure to talk about ways in which the 'native informant' and her perspective is erased by the production of academic elite knowledge. She has defined it as "the interested denial of something" (*Post-Colonial* 125; for a detailed elaboration of the concept, see *Critique* 4-5)

[28] See also the discussion in Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" which takes issue with Foucault and Deleuze, who, however 'well-meaning,' dissimulate their complicity in epistemic violence by constituting the colonial subject as monolithic and transparent. Elsewhere, Spivak recognizes her own ignorance with regard to Native American issues but as she notes, she seeks no sanction ("Race before Racism" 41). Her ignorance of indigenous issues is also evident in her writings where she refers, in passing, to the Sami; she calls us 'the Suomis of Northern Europe' (e.g., *Critique* 211, 380, "Afterword" 198). When I wrote to her to let her know that 'Suomi' in fact means 'Finland' in Finnish, she did not seek to sanction her ignorance but told me that if there is a second edition of her *Critique*, she will make sure to get it right next time.

often biased assumptions.

A common example of sanctioned ignorance can also be found in the "intertextual chain of information retrieval": scholars who draw solely on non-Native sources "to produce authoritative, but often highly inaccurate, accounts of indigenous experience" (Donaldson 45). Another recurring example of sanctioned ignorance is the way in which much environmental discourse fails to recognize colonization as a fundamental aspect of the domination of nature (cf. Smith, "Anticolonial" 24). This denies settlers' complicity in the historical process leading to current ecological crises and prioritizes ecological domination over other forms of subjugation. It also constructs two sets of distinct realities: the environmental present and the ethnographic past leading in a practice where indigenous philosophies and epistemologies are viewed as alternative models without taking into account the contemporary socio-political conditions of indigenous peoples (see Chapter 4).

Sanctioned ignorance is present in these and other discourses which reproduce partial, simplified accounts of 'indigenous practices' while ignoring the responsibilities and instructions the stories and ceremonies carry with them (Kremer, "Millennial Twins" 38). One of the more severe consequences of sanctioned ignorance is the violation of the rights of indigenous peoples. Discussing the general ignorance of the American public, Leslie Marmon Silko refers to a report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights which finds that "civil rights violations are prompted by public ignorance of Indian rights and by the failure of appropriate parties to respond promptly to any infringement of Indian rights" (qtd. in Silko, *Yellow Woman* 74). Silko notes:

> The majority of Americans are not necessarily 'anti-Indian,' but profiteers know how to manipulate the ignorance of the American public and the racism that is generated, not as an end in itself, but as a means to ensure continued profiteering by special interests at the expense of Indian tribes. (*Yellow Woman* 75)[29]

What I call epistemic ignorance refers to ways in which academic theories and practices ignore, marginalize and exclude other than dominant western European epistemic and intellectual traditions. These 'other' epistemic and intellectual traditions are foreclosed in the

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[29] In another context, Silko notes: "Ignorance was blissful and profitable" (*Yellow Woman* 159).

process of producing, reproducing and disseminating knowledge to an extent that generally there is very little recognition and understanding of them. In other words, it is a concept that is not limited to merely not-knowing or lack of understanding. It also refers to practices and discourses that actively foreclose other than dominant epistemes and refuse to seriously contemplate their existence. Epistemic ignorance is thereby a form of subtle violence. When other than dominant epistemes and forms of knowing are not seen or recognized, they are made to disappear through this invisibility and distance (cf. Shiva 10). The dominant system also "makes alternatives disappear by erasing and destroying the reality which they attempt to represent" (Shiva 12).

Operating on a more or less taken-for-granted set of values, norms and expectations, the academy at large usually knows very little, if anything, about indigenous epistemes, creating various kinds of conflicts with and perpetuating discrimination against those indigenous people who 'speak through' their own epistemes – who desire or attempt to express their views based on an episteme foreign to the mainstream academic conventions. While there might be awareness of the *existence* of 'local narratives' and 'truths' (and possibly other epistemes), there is not necessarily much understanding of their meanings. This in turn can make it difficult to communicate from within other than the dominant epistemes upon which the academy is founded. Confronting ignorance can be difficult and challenging in a sometimes hostile atmosphere which does not appear to be welcoming the idea of bringing indigenous knowledge to the academy (cf. Newhouse et al. 79).[30]

Epistemic ignorance is not, however, merely a concern of communication. It is not only a question of individuals acquiring a 'multicultural perspective' or 'a cross-cultural understanding'. It is not limited to changes in the curriculum. Instead, it is a much more fundamental concern involving the narrow epistemic foundations of the academy which fail to welcome and recognize indigenous epistemes. Manifestations of epistemic ignorance are thus not random offshoots or isolated incidents but rather, a reflection of a structural and systemic problem which "are endemic to the social, economic, and political order, deeply embedded in all of its self-reproducing institutions" which the academy is part of (McIntyre 160). It occurs at

[30] See also Razack, "Racialized Immigrant Women" on the dilemma experienced by women of colour between the spaces of resistance and that of the 'good girl' in the academy.

both the institutional and individual levels and is manifested by exclusion and effacement of indigenous issues and materials in curricula, by denial of indigenous contributions and influences and the lack of interest and understanding of indigenous epistemes or issues in general by students, faculty and staff alike.

Epistemic ignorance is excused and sanctioned in numerous ways such as veiling it in sentiments of political correctness (i.e., 'mainstream' faculty cannot teach issues pertaining to 'others'), concerns of colonialism (i.e., teaching about 'others' signifies colonization) and even 'cannibalism' (i.e., the fear of 'consuming' indigenous practices).[31] It is thus a question of the legacy of colonial histories and power inequalities but also of understanding – as Spivak notes, "to ignore or invade the subaltern today is, willy-nilly, to continue the imperialist project; in the name of modernization, in the interest of globalization" (*Critique* 290). It is not only a question of 'epistemological racism' (i.e., what is considered legitimate epistemologies in academia)[32] but also sheer ignorance which takes dominant western epistemes for granted and as the only valid point of reference.

By and large, the academy still operates as if there is only one episteme; that is, it does not take into account other epistemes in any meaningful way beyond a superficial, token acknowledgement. It occurs in the form of 'selective helplessness' which serves "as a code for a more broadly sanctioned reluctance to act boldly and decisively on behalf of Aboriginal knowledge" (Findlay, "Foreword" xi). As long as epistemic, widely sanctioned ignorance is not adequately addressed – as long as the academy does not assume its responsibility toward the other – the relationship between the academy and indigenous epistemes remains antagonistic; that of the master and the native, a newer version of the older master-slave relationship where the master is the subject of knowledge (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 216).

As a heuristic tool and model of analysis, the concept of epistemic ignorance could be

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[31] Some of these sentiments are encouraged, for various reasons, by some indigenous scholars as well.

[32] 'Epistemological racism,' is defined as racially biased ways of knowing in dominant epistemologies that tend to distort the realities of people outside the mainstream or the dominant group. These epistemologies govern the current range of research paradigms and originate from a certain history and society (or a group), reflecting and reinforcing assumptions of that particular society or group and excluding epistemologies of other peoples and societies. Epistemological racism ensures that other than normative epistemologies remain inferior and subordinate (Scheurich and Young, "Coloring Epistemologies" 8-9).

divided into two broad categories. The first is passive ignorance, or the lack of adequate knowledge simply because the information is not there as a required, central part of one's education (and socialization in general). The second type is active ignorance or the refusal to know for reasons such as colonial history, majority-indigenous relations, racism, bias and denial.[33] Obviously, these two forms are overlapping and mutually reinforcing, and it is not always easy to draw a line between them. For current analytical purposes, however, I will clarify the concept of epistemic ignorance with the help of these two different forms.

Passive Ignorance

Exclusion and foreclosure of indigenous issues and materials in teaching, curriculum, course readings, books or conversations both construct and reinforce epistemic ignorance. In most cases, indigenous peoples remain among the least-understood groups in the academy – not only by scholars but also administrators and policy-makers. It is argued that, "Among most contemporary courses on ethnic studies, the central role in Indian communities of sovereignty, self-government, land, and culture is not well covered or well understood" (Champagne and Stauss 6; see also Archibald et al. 64). The lack of knowledge of indigenous issues and realities perpetuates one-sided, superficial and sometimes stereotypical or prejudiced views and notions which form the basis of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of current indigenous issues and concerns not only in the academy but in society at large (cf. Mihesuah, "Trenches of

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[33] On the relationship between different sets of values, racism and the politics of Native/non-Native relations in society, see, for instance, Deyhle, "Navajo Youth and Anglo Racism"; and Marker, "Lummi Identity and White Racism."

Academia" 17; Reyhner, "Native American Studies" 95).[34] This in turn further reinforces ignorance as well as alienation and frustration of indigenous people who may find their attempts to participate in the academy futile (see e.g., Graveline, "Everyday"; Green, "Transforming"; Mihesuah, "Trenches" and Monture-Angus "Homeless").

The roots of passive epistemic ignorance can be found in the hegemonic and eurocentric context of the academy. Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaq) uses the concept of 'cognitive imperialism' to illustrate this from an indigenous perspective. Referring to "a form of cognitive manipulation used to discredit other knowledge bases and values," cognitive imperialism ensures that one source of knowledge, usually that of the western tradition, is legitimized over others and defined as the norm. As a consequence, dominant western epistemologies can claim to have superior grounding while indigenous worldviews and knowledge are ignored and dismissed. The descriptions of the world of these epistemologies postulate the superiority of Europeans and therefore, exclude and make indigenous epistemes invisible (Battiste, "Enabling Autumn Seed" 20).

The invisibility of indigenous and other 'non-western,' 'non-Euro-American' epistemes and epistemologies in the academy is made possible largely by hegemonic control. Domination by consent, hegemony is subtle domination and an effective form of symbolic violence which, through certain mechanisms and 'state apparatuses' (Althusser) such as education and media, constructs and represents the interests of the dominant group(s) as the interests of everybody in society. The interests of the dominant group(s), then, become accepted as the common interest and are eventually taken for granted. Hegemony also enables the educational processes by which indigenous people "are socialised with white colonial values and knowledges"

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[34] Reyhner notes, for example, that "Non-Native Americans who have not bothered to understand the realities of American Indian cultures hold mistaken or exaggerated impressions of Native religions. ... Moreover, just as non-Native Americans overlook the positive values of American Indian religions, so, too, do they either overlook the contributions that American Indians have made to modern society or reduce these contributions to simplicities such as the domestication of corn. Traditional Native American environmental values are overlooked in favor of shortsighted agricultural and mining policies that are destroying our top soil and rapidly depleting replaceable resources, leaving little for future generations. Because of their own distorted views of American Indian community institutions, educators often do not draw on these institutions to support Indian students" (101).

(McConaghy 227).[35] There are also those faculty members who argue that they are teaching their disciplines, not culture, which, according to them, does not even belong in the the academy. This argument, however, is deeply fallacious, as pointed out by Jon Reyhner:

> Cultural values and assumptions and societal norms permeate all facets of life, including university life. Thus, the curricula in American universities generally reflect 'White Studies.' College history courses, for instance, tend to concentrate on the development of white America and its European roots, not American Indian history; political science on federal, state, and county governments, not tribal governments; English on American and European literature, not tribal literature. Throughout American campuses, American Indian contributions to world civilizations tend to be ignored. ("Native American Studies" 103-4)[36]

Reyhner further explains how such neglect is not accidental but a result of the active attempts to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream society continue today ("Native American Studies" 104). Ignorance is recognized as a serious concern also by many Native scholars. In Emma LaRocque's view, ignorance results in a lonely situation of not being understood by white Canadians ("Interview" 186). Wendy Rose points out the way in which Native Americans are systematically "left out of the books" and argues that such an exclusion is not only a cultural but also a political concern. In her view, there is no excuse for it, nor is it an accident: "Somebody is benefiting by having Americans ignorant about what non-Europeans are doing and what they have done; what European Americans have done to them" ("Interview" 122; see also Henderson, "Ayukpachi").

The fact that there are faculty members are neither able nor willing to see this exclusion for what it is, is an excellent indication of the effectiveness of hegemony and the way it operates. Due to hegemony that reproduces certain epistemes as the taken-for-granted norm, it may not even occur to many people that other epistemes do co-exist. Those who are aware of the existence of other than dominant epistemes, often see them as background, as *a* knowledge compared to the normative western knowledge. According to Val Plumwood, backgrounding,

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[35] Because the culture and discourses of the academy are considered neutral by many academics – these assumptions are reflected, for example, in their practices – and because hegemony remains, by and large, invisible, the socialization by the academy and the school system in generally is usually denied.

[36] On 'White Studies,' see also Churchill's article of the same name.

the treatment of the other "as the background to the master's foreground," is a common mechanism of exclusion through which the significance of the other's contribution and even the reality of the other is negated (Plumwood 48). The view, or in this case, knowledge, of the other is rendered insignificant and the denied areas are considered not 'worth' noticing by various practices such as focus and attention or the insistence on hierarchies. Linda Smith, for example, points out: "When discussing the scientific foundations of Western research, the indigenous contribution to these foundations is rarely mentioned" (*Decolonizing* 60). Another example of historical denial is the way in which in the western scholarly tradition, indigenous peoples were considered not only alongside nature but *as* nature, as the objects of research and thus unable to make an active contribution.

Despite radical undermining of the normative knowledge in the name of local and particular narratives and forms of knowledge, much academic curricula and discourses do not reflect the change except in 'special area studies.'[37] If the knowledge of the 'other' is recognized, it is usually done only "as located in its difference from the privileged normative traditions" (Battiste & Henderson 121). Indigenous epistemes thus remain mere supplements constituted as the self's shadow that have relevance only if they have something to offer to existing theories and discourses (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 266).[38]

This is not to suggest that the academy has hopelessly succumbed to hegemony. The last three or four decades in particular have signified a major rupture and challenge for what are known as the master narratives of the West. Looking from the perspective of indigenous epistemes, however, it is not difficult to concur with Spivak who argues: "although references to (post)colonialism have become more frequent ..., the story of reference remains unchanged" (*Critique* 208; see also Peterson 107). In other words, while there might well be individual attempts to undermine and transform the hegemony and contemporary forms of 'benign neglect' policies which involve minimal intervention on the part of the government, yet the

[37] The question of Native/First Nations/Indigenous Studies Programs will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

[38] Supplementation could function as a useful strategy if there were no implicit hierarchies of value present. Spivak suggests that instead of placing two theories in competition with each other, they should be supplemented by one another. In the case of indigenous epistemologies, however, this strategy remains problematic as long as unequal power relations are an issue.

underpinning epistemological structures remain intact (see Mukherjee).[39] As Foucault has noted, "Diffused, entrenched and dangerous, [the effects of power] operate in other places than in the person of the old professor" (*Power/Knowledge* 52). Yet on the other hand, we cannot entirely ignore the role of 'the old professor' either, who, in one way or another, always is, like all academics, part of ideological production, as pointed out by Spivak (*Post-Colonial* 103).

Active Ignorance

The inhospitality of the academy becomes an issue particularly with the second type of epistemic ignorance characterized by a denial and an active refusal to know and learn. In her article "Studied Ignorance and Privileged Innocence," Sheila McIntyre proposes that some of the most obvious dimensions of systemic inequality include the tendency of the privileged academics to choose not to know "in order to assert their individual innocence of exercising the oppressive habits of systemic privilege" (147; see also Feldthusen). She maintains that, "[s]ubsumed within that exercise of privilege ... is the right not to learn how systematic inequality operates" (161, 174-5; see also Bonilla-Silva 1-11).[40]

McIntyre delineates "three complacent fictions among the systematically privileged" that prevent seeing their own complicity in structures of discrimination. The first is the claim that discriminatory behaviour and values are atypical incidents expressed by others than 'us.' The second claim is that "privileged people who genuinely deplore all forms of discrimination and who genuinely struggle against injustice do not benefit from the expression of bigotry by others." The third is that because academics do not want to be 'bigots,' they strive to "interact with Others as full equals, unencumbered by our immersion in a systematically unequal culture" (McIntyre 164). This kind of 'habit of dissociation' reflects and cultivates hubris

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[39] On 'benign neglect' in comprehensive school, see Davis.

[40] A similar rhetoric of innocence is also applied elsewhere, such as in discourses opposing the affirmative action which often claim the status of the "innocent white victims" but which usually are grounded in unconscious racism (Ross). On various 'moves of innocence' by white, privileged academics, see Susanne Dabulkis-Hunter.

among the privileged, manifested and fuelled by liberal educational norms.[41] Stephanie M. Wildman also points out 'the privilege of silence.' "Another characteristic of privilege is that members or privileged groups experience the comfort of opting out of struggles against oppression if they choose" (Wildman 659).

Though gradually changing at least in some academic spaces, there still is reluctance in receiving indigenous epistemes and epistemologies in the academy (LaRocque, "From the Land" 71; Newhouse et al. 79). As Patricia Monture-Angus notes, the relationship between the different epistemes remains largely a 'one-way street': "Those times when it was not a one-way street came largely at my (or another *student's*) initiation and insistence" (*Thunder* 115). Devon Mihesuah (Oklahoma Choctaw) in turn points out the arrogance of university instructors who do "not accept alternative viewpoints or will not stand corrected" ("Trenches" 37). Why is it, then, that the academy, the supposed generator of knowledge, appears so hesitant and disinclined to engage with indigenous epistemes? Also, considering the endless number of studies on and information about practically every imaginable topic dealing with world's various indigenous peoples, how can the general ignorance on indigenous epistemes continue to be so pervasive?

At the institutional level, the heart of the problem cuts to the foundations of the academy and as one could suggest, its failure as the generator of knowledge: the idea that other epistemes exist at all is hardly ever contemplated except in certain pockets of the academy. The existence of other epistemes has never been a serious issue in and for the academy. At the individual level, there are several reasons for the reluctance. In an atmosphere that sanctions ignorance, some academics are simply too negligent and comfortable to divert their attention to anything else outside their own fields of study. Others are actively unwilling to give up privilege and power and change the status quo that appears to serve best those who are the most unsympathetic and unwilling to recognize – never mind act upon – their responsibility toward the 'other.' There is also a fear of relativistic chaos if multiple epistemes are possible.

There are countless examples of how individuals (in many cases students) belonging to the privileged group whose epistemes are taken for granted in the academy feel threatened when

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[41] See the discussion on pluralistic models of inclusion in the following chapter, and Razack, *Looking* 10.

faced with perspectives and information that challenges their earlier knowledge and ingrained views of the world (e.g. Cleary 188-9; Mihesuah "Epilogue" 104; see also Ng, "Woman Out of Control"). As a non-indigenous faculty member puts it:

> In my experience, when indigenous perspectives are genuinely included in the curriculum and the classroom, the epistemic and pedagogical changes involved are *huge*. I believe that is why so many otherwise forward-looking faculty resist it or don't manage to 'get around' to it – because of implicit recognition that their epistemic and pedagogical power will be eroded. (Courtenay-Hall n.p.)

The maintenance of personal epistemic and pedagogical power usually is the first priority for many academics. The question is, therefore, not only about 'not-knowing' but also about power and privilege as well as attitudes and views shaped and constructed by western rationalism which considers systems of knowing not based on the superiority of reason less legitimate, unsound and even erroneous (cf. Churchill, "White Studies" 246). There are also faculty members who are openly indifferent and argue that 'studying others' is an additional burden for which they simply do not have time or interest. As one professor puts it:

> I should understand Indian culture. I also should understand Blacks, Hispanics, women, and everyone else, too. I also should read in my area, and get grants, and publish, and serve on committees. I'm not whining. But I may only have a couple of Indian kids in any class I teach. They just aren't a high priority. (qtd. in Tierney, *Official* 99)

As indigenous peoples, never mind their epistemes, are not 'a high priority,' it can prove difficult to get their issues and materials included in courses other than those specifically dealing with indigenous peoples. These efforts are confronted by faculty members who either take refuge in academic freedom or claim that they lack expertise in that field and thus cannot include indigenous issues and perspective in their courses (Monture-OKanee [Monture-Angus] 15). This reluctance is often combined by the general denial of recognition of indigenous peoples' realities and histories (Monture-OKanee 17).

Besides backgrounding, denial is another mechanism of exclusion (Plumwood 48). Literature is one of the fields spawning examples related to the denial of the value of contributions by indigenous people. It is still not uncommon to hear that indigenous literatures are not 'literature proper' as defined by and in western European aesthetic and literary

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traditions. Due to differences in structure, format, story line, mode of telling or expression and even purpose, indigenous literary conventions are often rendered as 'folklore,' 'myths' and 'legends' or worse, 'primitive,' 'childlike,' 'overpopulated' or 'having no clear plot' (Blaeser 54-5; Kailo "Puilla Paljailla" 22; Paltto, "One Cannot Leave" 39; Petrone 4).[42] In Jack D. Forbes's view, this is a symptom of the prevalent intellectual colonialism in the academic and literary scenes ("Colonialism" 17).

In addition to denial, assumptions above stem from ignorance toward other than western literary conventions as well as eurocentric views according to which indigenous literatures are somehow not 'literature' but rather 'folklore' or 'ethnography.' Wendy Rose's account of her experiences in the academy closely reflects those of mine. When she was at the university working on her dissertation on Native American literature, the only department that agreed to deal with her work was Anthropology, while literary studies departments such as Comparative Literature or English refused, the latter making it clear to her "American Indian literature was not part of American literature and therefore did not fit into their department" ("Interview" 124).[43]

Exclusion from curriculum is another aspect of active ignorance. Looking back on her first year English class, Monture-Angus recollects being "frustrated and alienated by the curriculum because no works by Native American authors were included on the course reading list." When she asked her professor, she was told that "there were no works of literature authored by Aboriginal people worthy of inclusion in a course on Canadian literature" ("Native America" 20-1). Exclusion from curriculum is so common that it has found its way as a theme in indigenous fiction. In Sherman Alexie's (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) novel *Indian Killer*, one of the main characters, a Native woman, encounters problems with her professor who refuses to use books written by Native Americans in his course on Native American Literature.

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[42] LaRocque also discusses the way in which Native writing are branded is 'bitter,' 'biased' and 'protest literature' when writing about the colonial history and experiences ("Preface" xvii).

[43] While attempting to embark on the PhD program in Comparative Literature, I was also asked, among other things, if I had considered doing my dissertation in Anthropology. Rose notes: "...as faculty now, I see my Indian students running into situations that are even more bizarre than things I experienced because it's becoming increasingly okay among the general population to become racist again or to express the racism that was always there" ("The Bones" 259).

Instead, he uses texts by frauds, biographies of Native Americans co-authored by white men, studies of Native spirituality written by white women, traditional Native poetry translations edited by a white man, and an Indian murder by a man who claims to be a Shilshomish Indian (Alexie 59).

With the help of the concept of cultural capital, Guillory considers the reproduction of the social order in educational institutions, pointing out that it is not the individual authors or their works that play a crucial role in this reproduction but the educational institution itself by regulating "access to literary production by regulating access to literacy, to the practices of reading and writing" (ix). Further, he suggests that

> it is only by understanding the social function and institutional protocols of the school that we will understand how works are preserved, reproduced, and disseminated over successive generations and centuries. Similarly, where the debate speaks about the canon as representing or failing to represent particular social groups, I will speak of the school's historical function of distributing, or regulating access to, the forms of cultural capital. (vii)

For Guillory, exclusion is not so much a question of exclusion from representation but a question of excluding "from access to the *means of cultural production*" (18). The exclusion of Native American authors or works by indigenous people in general from syllabi is, then, not solely a question of the lack of representation but of preventing indigenous people from gaining and having an access to various forms of cultural capital and the production of it. Indigenous people are thus again foreclosed, remaining generalized native informants required for the production of hegemonic, elite knowledge.

What is more, claiming not to possess enough knowledge on indigenous issues to address them in the classroom is a common excuse and a way in which epistemic ignorance is sanctioned. For Monture-Okanee (Monture-Angus), excuses of not possessing enough knowledge of other people and cultures represent "thinly disguised attempts to continue to adhere to the status quo" as are refusals "to examine the way that race and culture have an impact in the power relationships that exist within the university environment" ("Introduction" 18; see also Tierney, *Official* 38). This is also noted by Suzanne de Castell and Mary Bryson who assert that this time in history, "educators cannot any longer be permitted not to know

things which we may no longer claim not to have seen, not to have understood, and that there must be an end to demands for 'further proof'" (4).

As Spivak has pointed out, the common argument that "one cannot truly know the cultures of other places, other times" is a way whereby hegemonic readings are determined and maintained (*Critique* 50). Rather than ground oneself in reactionary stances of refusing to know, she urges academics and students to do their homework (see Chapter 4).[44] She insists that foreclosing colonialist structures and broader narratives of imperialism, sanctioned ignorance constitutes an excuse for continuing those practices without needing to address or examine one's own complicity and involvement in those structures (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 93).

An effective way to avoid examining one's own complicity and involvement in the structures of unequal power relations and the status quo is denial of one's responsibility. Academics and others may deny their responsibilities by individuating and personalizing a collective and systemic problem (cf. McIntyre 182). This kind of denial of one's responsibility is reflected, for example, in sentiments which suggest that 'I personally do not think or see the world according to a modern consciousness even if I might have been brought up in it.'

By claiming privileged innocence in this way, an individual is able to absolve herself or himself from those responsibilities that this inquiry is also calling for (cf. McIntyre; Ross; Trask 171). It could be argued, to quote Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty, that epistemic ignorance "is itself based on privilege, on a refusal to accept responsibility for one's implication in actual historical or social relations, ... the denial of one's own personal history and the claim to a total separation from it" (208).[45] By denying one's complicity in the studied ignorance, the person denies not only the overall power of primary socialization over the modern consciousness but also the fact that epistemic ignorance is, as noted above, not a question of some individuals not knowing but rather a systemic problem involving the epistemic foundations of the academy (as well as society at large).

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[44] Spivak charges particularly the university system of the United States – the most opulent in the world – of having an ideology of 'know-nothingism' that rides on elitism which starts where one's comprehension stops (*Post-Colonial* 93).

[45] See also Graveline's ("Everyday Discrimination") and Trask's accounts of the denial of racism at their universities. Trask also discusses the way in which many faculty members withdrew into 'privileged innocence' (151-68).

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE GIFT

At the end of the panel discussion, the audience is welcomed to participate in the conversation with questions and comments. I want to raise the issue of collective responsibility as an important aspect of research. People in the panel have talked about research in such individualistic, celebratory terms that I have difficulty relating to them. The past few days, I've been reading First Nations and Maori scholars' perspectives and approaches on academia and I haven't come across a single article that wouldn't have raised the issue of researcher's responsibility and commitment toward the larger community. Now, I want to raise this issue and perhaps ask how the panelists see their responsibilities. Such a simple question, but as I sit there, feeling like an outsider in a room full of people who are mostly white and seem entirely comfortable with the direction of the discussion, I cannot bring myself to ask it.

The feeling of not belonging, of not feeling safe enough to disagree, is very real in that moment. I think of Trinh's words: "Even and especially when I visibly walk in the 'center' with all spotlights on, I feel how utterly inappropriate(d)ly 'other' I remain" (Trinh, Framer Framed 156). Though not literally walking in the center with all spotlights on, I think sarcastically, I am in the 'center,' as we refer to ourselves in our program and feel utterly 'other' with my feelings of unease. Yet even the self-irony cannot diminish the fact that I am increasingly uncomfortable and frustrated with myself and my silence. The more I think about it, the bigger the barrier seems. Why though? Why do I disconnect in such a welcoming, open space? I'm afraid that they won't understand and that I won't be able to express myself in an intelligible way. I don't feel comfortable in a place that emphasizes safety and belonging so much.

I walk home with a First Nations student who also attended the talk. I vent my frustrations and finally she admits that she also wanted to say something about her traditions and question some of their views but then decided to keep quiet. As I walk the last bit on my own, I recall Audre Lorde's words: 'Your silence won't protect you.' Yet we continue to silence ourselves in so many occasions and circumstances. I'm not sure whether it really consoles me to know that I'm not the only one.

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In the previous chapter, I suggested the need for broadening considerations of 'cultural conflicts' to an analysis of epistemic ignorance which can be further divided into forms of passive and active manifestations of ignorance, including denial, exclusion and systemic racism. In this chapter, I suggest that epistemic ignorance results in a situation where indigenous people 'cannot speak.' They are either forced to communicate within dominant epistemic paradigms represented by the academy or faced with the risk of being misunderstood or dismissed if they attempt to express themselves through and from within their own epistemic conventions. In short, while indigenous people might be encouraged to attend and work at the university, it might be very difficult for them to 'speak' once they are there. The doors and gates might be open, but due to the restricted epistemic foundations of the academy, the discourses that guide what can be said and what is understood are set to function only within certain parameters and rules.

'Speaking,' of course, refers to a wide range of issues. We may speak in order to raise awareness or to 'conscienticize,' to use Paolo Freire's term. In the context of my inquiry conscienticizing would imply, for instance, indigenous people in the academy speaking out in ways which would increase the level of awareness of both indigenous people themselves as well as non-indigenous people of issues related to discrepancies of cultural values and worldviews.

The problem of speaking also denotes the practices of silencing and the systematic refusal by colonial, imperial institutions to hear the speech of the marginalized people (cf. Busia 103; also discussed in the previous chapter). In the deconstructive sense, it could indicate the problematic nature of speech itself, undermining its assumed ability of direct, lucid and transparent (self-) representation without the slippages and gaps of written communication. These are all important aspects of 'speaking.' I, however, apply the word 'speaking' in my analysis simply as a metonym for being heard or understood. It relates to Spivak's notion of speaking as "a transaction between speaker and listener" (*Spivak Reader* 289). It refers to expressing one's views and perspectives rooted in a worldview in a way that they are recognized by others who do not share an understanding of that worldview. It therefore includes not only speaking but also being heard and listened to. It also implies the possibility of speaking without the need to translate one's own episteme into other, dominant discursive practices.

The demand and desire of translating indigenous cultures and epistemes into forms recognizable by the dominant, colonial society is at least as old as colonialism itself (cf. Patton 25). Translation is a form of manipulation (e.g., Hermans) and displacement that particularly historically has been used against indigenous peoples in colonial attempts to dispossess them of their land base.[1] In the contemporary neocolonial age, the demand of translation has not ceased though it has slightly changed its nature. This time, it is the indigenous people themselves who are expected to translate their own epistemes, an activity which for the most part remains invisible and unaddressed. While translation is no longer the *prerequisite* of entering or participating in academic and other spaces, it is clear that if one does not 'speak' the dominant episteme, there is a risk of not being understood or heard. A person may bear and offer the gift of an episteme but it remains impossible because it is not recognized by and within the existing parameters and frameworks.[2] As a result, the gift is made into something else. In current circumstances, indigenous people are invited to participate and express their views in the name of diversity and multiculturalism, but due to the general lack of recognition of these epistemes

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[1] See, for example, Fenton and Moon who discuss the translation of the Treaty of Waitangi. Comparing the English and the Maori texts of the treaty, they note: "The convoluted and technical English text is recast in simple Maori, with glaring omissions" (33).

[2] Cf. Foucault's argument of being 'within the truth' discussed in chapter on Deatnu.

and also knowledge pertaining them, they are not necessarily comprehended and perceived in a way they were initially intended. Spivak calls this 'listening-as-benevolent-imperialism' – listening through the dominant discourses and epistemes and therefore, not hearing what is actually said (*Post-Colonial* 59).

> So, by native names we were distinctive, but we had arrived at the academic turnstile with the same stories as the students, invented by discovery, removal, and reservations, and forever a translation of absence. Sadly, many bright native students became the very aliens of their own stories of victimry. (Vizenor, *Chancers* 16)

The question is by no means whether or not indigenous people are capable of doing the 'translation' between their own and other epistemes or that indigenous people in the academy purposefully want to 'cling' to certain perceptions of the world that differ from the mainstream, dominant ones. Many indigenous people translate their epistemes all the time, however partially, strategically, temporarily or permanently, voluntarily or involuntarily. The problem is that when indigenous people attempt to express themselves and their perspectives in a way that is grounded in their own epistemes and discursive practices reflecting those values and assumptions, they most likely are miscomprehended or misinterpreted as the example of Sohappy in the chapter on the gift demonstrates.[3] In other words, there is no discursive space in the academy (besides some exceptions) where indigenous people could be encountered in their own terms (cf. Spivak, "Politics of the Subaltern" 83) As a result, many indigenous people end up speaking in a vacuum, 'learning an alien way to talk' (cf. Garrod and Larimore 3) or 'transcoding' their discourse patterns into dominant ones (Spivak, "Translation"; see also "The Politics of Translation" in *Teaching Machine*; and "Translation as Culture"). As argued in Chapter 5, hospitality is not possible if the guest is required to speak the language of the host. Below, I look at 'speaking' in the academy in more detail.

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[3] The fact that there are many indigenous people who have not had the opportunity to be raised, even partially, within their indigenous epistemic traditions and who have thus learned about their epistemic traditions later in their lives does not diminish the question of speaking about it in its own terms and concepts. In other words, if they make a conscious decision to discuss their epistemes in terms used in that episteme, the likelihood of being misunderstood is serious, whether they grew up under the influence of those epistemes or not.

The Problem of 'Speaking'

After a presentation in a grad class on 'indigenous feminisms' – what a brave topic that is – I come home thinking that at least I am lucky to be dealing with people who are mature enough to admit that they are struggling with what I say. In the classroom, a male student had made a comment that although 'we' (he didn't specify) have now become familiar with feminism to an extent that it's no longer a big deal, he still has to struggle with what I had to say about 'indigenous feminisms.' His comments surprise me, since all I gave them was a few quotes by various indigenous women activists and my own account of attending the annual conference of the Commission on Status of Women at the UN some years ago. Another male student expressed his appreciation because my words had given him insights to his own work with which he was currently struggling. Not all, however, were too impressed. A female student, who had already earlier declared that the answer offered by Linda Smith's book Decolonizing Methodologies *wasn't unique enough (not that she told us what her question was), asked me what NEW can indigenous feminism offer.[4] She was either unable or unwilling to recognize that I was trying to reflect the 'new' – a new way of looking at feminism(s), for instance – in practice in my presentation by representing 'indigenous feminisms' as a continuum of issues, by breaking away from the linearity and reductionist categorization of*

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[4] Interestingly enough, Linda Smith has, in a way, answered this question by noting that there is always the danger of voyeurism to indigenous methodologies by outsiders and therefore, it is our responsibility not to give ready-made answers but to rather make others think ("Lecture ").

Western intellectual tradition and by offering a poem "Indian Woman"

by Jeannette Armstrong instead of a sheet of scholarly quotes (which

most of the students did for their presentations). Considering the level

of discussion, I wasn't so sure of my success after all.

Perhaps I should've been more explicit in my intentions; perhaps I

should've given them guidelines of how to listen to my presentation. But

how long will I need to do that? Will we ever reach a point where

others recognize it themselves, where they will know enough and where

it is possible to proceed without a word of warning first that now I will

be trying to do this differently, that now I will speak from a different

framework and discourse? And will it always be that indigenous

anything has value only if it has something to offer for the dominant

paradigm?[5]

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If the classrooms I inhabit(ed) had a discourse of 'difference,' we would not be so frustrated, outraged or silent. We would be the direct producers within the discourse. But what would we speak about: How would we communicate our particular ways of being and seeing to others who do not share our experiences? And what finally would be the objective of our speaking? (Bannerji, "But Who Speaks for Us?" 84)

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[5] The challenges of integrating indigenous epistemologies and philosophies into academic practices as a doctoral student is also addressed by Christine T. Lowery (Pueblo), who writes: "The journey to the Ph.D. is not without confusion or pain and is made even more complex by the mixed messages that one draws from academia and the messages one carries in one's heart. Sometimes the academic din is so compelling, the ability to hear the messages that guide us as Indian people quickly fades" (1).

Considering the perspectives above as well as my observations and discussions with others, it seems that one of the key challenges with which indigenous people are faced in the academy (and also elsewhere) is that 'speaking' through an epistemically different framework is too quickly interpreted as not more than a 'difference.' This difference, then, usually requires a translation into the 'sameness' – the language that makes sense to a general public and the code that we are expected to share in academic circumstances for communication.

Assuming that the underpinning structures and practices of the academy, by and large, reflect and embody what Foucault would call the modern episteme with certain perceptions of knowledge and ways of knowing the world, attempts at speaking through and from the framework of another episteme may prove challenging if not altogether impossible. In a setting relatively ignorant of and indifferent to indigenous worldviews, a person positioned within a framework of a different episteme is forced to negotiate with the structures of colonialism and also with oneself: do I conform and check my 'cultural baggage' at the gates of the university or do I take the baggage with me and thus risk the chances of being understood? While some indigenous people are aware of different epistemic frameworks and the way in which they operate and thus are able to make a conscious decision about this, there are others who are not necessarily aware of the 'cultural capital' of the academy that is different from theirs. As Foucault points out, epistemes are largely invisible, taken-for-granted foundations of seeing and knowing. Some indigenous people thus may not be able to do the necessary 'transcoding' to successfully participate in the academic discourse.

Analyzing cross-cultural communication, Ron Scollon and Suzanne Scollon suggest that "problems of miscommunication are based on differences in the organization of discourse" (9). In their view, "[i]t is the way ideas are put together into an argument, the way some ideas are selected for special emphasis, or the way emotional information about the ideas is presented that causes miscommunication" (12). For others, however, the problem lies not merely in different ways of organizing discourse but in different languages and worldviews. Georges Erasmus (Dene) cites the findings of a study conducted for the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples. According to the survey, even when using the same words, Aboriginal people and government representatives often spoke about different things (101). In

Deloria's view, "The fundamental factor that keeps Indians and non-Indians from communicating is that they are speaking about two entirely different perceptions of the world" (*Metaphysics* vii). In a similar fashion, N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa) notes:

> I believe that there is a fundamental dichotomy at the center of [North American Native and White] relations, past and present. The Indian and the white man [sic] perceive the world in different ways. I take it that this is an obvious fact and a foregone conclusion. But at the same time I am convinced that we do not understand the distinction entirely or even sufficiently. I myself do not understand it sufficiently, but I may be more acutely aware of it by virtue of my experience than are most. (156)

It seems that different ways of organizing discourses are a result of different ways of perceiving and knowing the world. It is therefore important and necessary to look at the root problem and pay attention to the different worldviews themselves rather than only to ways of organizing discourses. Scollon and Scollon further argue that miscommunication plays a considerable role in discrimination against 'ethnic groups' (4). They suggest that by cultivating "deep and genuine respect for differences in individual and ethnic communicative styles" the problem of miscommunication could be resolved (4). This is also suggested by Donald Fixico:

> Due to this difference in perspective, class instructors ... should ... respect the perspective of the American Indian student. To discriminate against a differing point of view, especially from the instructor, or even harboring prejudice against another viewpoint, is biased and disallows academic freedom. Furthermore, it is a negation of the cultural existence of the Indian intellectual. (15)

Kirkness and Barnhardt discuss the necessity of respect as the first principle in creating a more appropriate higher education for Native people. In their view, "The most compelling problem that First Nations students face when they go to university is a lack of respect, not just as individuals, but more fundamentally as a people" (6). Respect also plays a central role in arguments and efforts to build an inclusive university.[6] Critical anti-racist, feminist pedagogies and postcolonial analyses have both emerged from and responded to the pressures of student

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[6] On the need for mutual respect and 'respectful intellectual disagreement' in the academy, see Gutmann, "Introduction."

demands to address marginalization and exclusion of 'minority' students,[7] seeking to increase the inclusivity of the curriculum and respect of cultural differences, struggling against oppression and for empowerment of students and analyzing the interconnections between racism, sexism and class privilege (Stasiulis 165).

In my view, however, 'cultivating respect' can be an inadequate approach particularly in academic contexts where 'respect' is often reduced to mere tokenism of multiculturalism or even worse, empty rhetoric. Mere 'respect' would not resolve the problem of ignorance or the lack of recognition and knowledge because even if 'speaking' of indigenous people was respected it would still not necessarily be 'heard' or comprehended. As Emma LaRocque asserts: "I would like it, after I have spoken or written, to be understood. I mean in a sense of comprehension, not in a sense of emotional empathy but *comprehension*. There is still such a distance, ... between Native and white there is such a distance in comprehension" ("Interview" 199).

In her well-known essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985), Spivak analyzes the problems of representation and complicity of well-meaning western intellectuals in constructing the colonial subject as Other. She also describes the circumstances surrounding the suicide of a young Bengali woman that demonstrates a failed attempt at self-representation. Because the attempt of this young woman at 'speaking' outside conventional patriarchal channels was not 'heard' (that is, understood or supported), Spivak concludes that 'the subaltern cannot speak.' Her complex argument has been interpreted in numerous ways, including charges of "terminal epistemological and political pessimism" and silencing the marginalized (e.g., Parry; see also Spivak, "Politics of the Subaltern" 83, 89).[8] Spivak's point, however, is not that the subaltern does not seek to express herself in numerous ways, but that, if speaking is "a transaction between speaker and listener" (*Spivak Reader* 289), subaltern talk does not achieve the dialogic level of expression.

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[7] The term 'minority' is used here to signify groups and peoples who have been (and in many cases, continue to be) marginalized within the academy, traditionally a white male institution.

[8] See also Lazarus; Loomba; and Varadharajan, *Exotic Parodies*. For further discussion of her argument, see, e.g., Busia; Coronil; Medovoi et al.; Montag; Veira; Bernard-Donals; James Penney; Rai; and Young, *White Mythologies* (ch. 9).

Spivak also seeks to demonstrate with her argument that by claiming to represent or speak for the experience of the subaltern, the radical western intellectual in fact silences her in the same way as the claims of British colonialism silences the Hindu widow by rescuing her from *sati*, the self-immolation on a dead husband's pyre. In other words, the subaltern cannot also speak when she is represented by others. Further, she is silenced when the two forms of representations, aesthetic and political, are conflated; that is, when the artistic or philosophical representation (as re-presentation) is taken as an expression of the political interests of the subaltern (as 'speaking for'). Spivak maintains that while related, these two forms are "irreducibly discontinuous" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 70).

What is particularly relevant to this inquiry is Spivak's intention to illustrate that the level where the subaltern could be heard or read cannot be reached because what is said is either ignored, forgotten or it simply "disappears from the official, male-centred historical records" (Morton 33). Whether muted by colonial authorities or the liberal multiculturalist metropolitan academy, the intended 'message' of the subaltern remans either not heard or misinterpreted (*Critique* 308). Spivak's argument has, therefore, revealed how "the historical and structural conditions of political representation do not guarantee that the interests of particular subaltern groups will be recognized or that their voices will be heard" (Morton 57). It could be similarly argued that the academic conditions of intellectual representation – liberal multiculturalism, tolerance, diversity – do not guarantee that indigenous epistemes will be heard.[9] In a similar way as the attempt of the young Bengali woman at rewriting *sati* failed, attempts to bring the gift of indigenous epistemes to the academy will fail as long as that gift is not recognized.

Further, the question of not being able to speak is about not being listened to seriously. For Spivak, listening seriously means that the listener is able to go beyond benevolent imperialism that makes arrogant assumptions about the speaker and her background. In her view, one of the biggest problems of listening occurs "when the cardcarrying listeners, the hegemonic people, the dominant people, talk about listening to someone 'speaking as'

[9] As Parekh notes, early liberal thinkers such as John Stuart Mill who endorsed diversity did so only within carefully confined parameters "of the individualist model of human excellence" (95). This view of diversity was culturally specific and had no room for any understanding or tolerance for nonliberal ways of life that did not cherish individualism in the same way that has become the cornerstone of liberalism.

something or the other." This enables them to cover over "the ignorance that they are allowed to possess, into a kind of homogenization" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 60). According to Spivak, 'speaking as' also assumes a generalizing and distancing from one's self and without recognizing that a person always inhabits many subject positions at once (*Post-Colonial* 60). To represent a voice is to assume an abstract terrain that bears relationship to real, existing people always only partially.

My focus here is not, however, the questions of 'speaking as.' Instead, in the following I demonstrate why it is possible to argue that indigenous people may not be able to 'speak' in the academy. To suggest that indigenous people 'cannot speak' is not the same as to demand to have more indigenous voices represented in the academy which is an important, but clearly a different concern. Even if more indigenous voices are allowed and invited to be represented in the academy – both in classrooms and in curricula[10] – they may still be listened to through a filter of benevolent imperialism. This is noted by Devon Mihesuah, for instance, who asks: despite the increasing numbers of Native scholars and writers, who will listen to them in the first place? ("Trenches" 23; see also Cook-Lynn, "Intellectualism"). In other words, merely having a 'voice' does not guarantee that the subaltern is heard or listened to seriously. Secondly, to argue that indigenous people may not be able to 'speak' in the academy is not to victimize them by perceiving them as powerless and voiceless – this is neither my point nor the case at all.

It is also necessary to notice that 'the problem of speaking' discussed here is not whether indigenous people are being *allowed* to speak or not in the academy. In many cases, the situation is quite the opposite: they are not only 'given' a voice but *urged* to speak and express their views and perspectives in the name of diversity and decolonization (though in official, public circumstances such as conferences and anthologies, they tend to remain tokens in the fashion of 'one indigenous person per event/publication'[11]). Trinh Minh-ha calls this phenomenon "the voice of difference that they long to hear." She contends: "Now I'm not only given the permission to open up and talk, I'm also encouraged to express my difference.

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[10] See Guillory who points out that it is quite a different matter to be represented in the classroom than in the literary canon.

[11] This practice is also called the one-minority-per-pot syndrome by Reyes and Halcon.

My audience expects it, demands it – otherwise people will feel as if they have been cheated" (*Woman* 88).

There is, however, a need for caution when employing Spivak's argument in the context of indigenous people and epistemes in the academy. First, we should avoid making generalized statements about subalternity of all indigenous people, particularly in the academy. Spivak defines 'subaltern' as "an abstract name for persons who have no access to upward mobility" ("Response"). For her, "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference" ("New Nation" 45). The concept of subaltern does not, therefore, necessarily apply to every indigenous individual in the academy who have, however limited, access to its discourses and practices. At the same time, however, "the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern" 79). If 'speaking' signifies 'a transaction between speaker and listener, ' in many cases, and as demonstrated in the previous chapter, indigenous people 'cannot speak' due to the inequalities of power, privilege, exclusion and marginalization in the academy.

Further, Spivak is critical of using the concept of subaltern too carelessly, as "a classy word for oppressed, for Other" ("Interview" 45). She insists, that

> just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word 'subaltern' ... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern. ("New Nation" 46)

While not disagreeing with her point, I see the need, however, to explicate how the argument presented in this inquiry slightly differs from her statement. As noted above, indigenous people in the university are within the hegemonic discourse (however marginally) and no doubt most of them, if not all, want 'a piece of the pie' (whatever that piece might be). This is however, where, the problem starts: to have their 'piece,' they are forced to use the hegemonic discourse and thus, in many cases, switch from one discursive practice to another (if they are capable or willing to doing so). That the academy requires and necessitates the use of the hegemonic discourse represents an act of epistemic violence; a recodification or an overhaul of one episteme into another (cf. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern" 76).

To summarize my point, then: we may not want or need to call indigenous people in the academy 'subaltern,' but the problem remains, however, that they cannot speak unless they do so through the hegemonic discourse. This is what I consider a serious concern that has not been adequately addressed by indigenous or other scholarship. Epistemic ignorance causing this inability to speak outside the hegemonic discourse is also a serious shortcoming of the academy that claims to be a place of knowing.

It could be suggested, therefore, that the current academic circumstances create a climate of 'repressive tolerance' (cf. Spivak "Teaching" 182, *Critique* 176). In such a climate, indigenous people and their epistemes are tolerated and allowed to exist in the spirit of general multiculturalism, but they are not recognized in an any meaningful way. As Anita Heiss (Wiradjuri) observes:

> I know you tolerate me,
> But you do not value me.
> I know you permit to speak
> But you do not listen to what I say.
> I know you put up with my opinions,
> But you do not respect them.
> I know you endure the history lessons I give you
> But you still can't admire the strength of those who struggled.
> You may think it's enough not to call me names,
> But it's not.
> ... (Heiss 18)

At the individual level, indigenous people and their discourses might be tolerated, but the academy is neither capable nor willing to take responsibility toward the other which would require an unconditional welcome of their epistemes (discussed in Chapter 5). Moreover, the repressive tolerance of the liberal academic institution ensures that 'minorities' remain powerless collaborators within the system (cf. Spivak, "Teaching" 182), as the academy disregards and turns a deaf ear to its responsibility to open up its epistemic foundations. While the official rhetoric speaks about tolerance and diversity, in practice the repressive discourse of the academy imposes 'a general and studied silence' upon other than dominant discourses

(Foucault, *History* 4). In this way, indigenous and other epistemes and discursive practices are effectively managed, regulated and administrated by the repressive tolerance of the academy which is necessary to maintain the status quo and prevailing hegemony that serve the interests of those in power (cf. Foucault, *History* 24). Indigenous people are allowed and even encouraged to speak, but they are not listened to or heard in a way initially hoped for by indigenous people themselves. Instead, their 'speaking' is oftentimes used for purposes other than their own interests and intentions – that is, put in the service of colonialism and epistemic violence through the practices of the native informant and the self-consolidating other (cf. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern" 76; *Critique* 205, 207, 246, 274). In short, the foreclosure of the subject lacking access to the position of narrator is necessary for consolidating the position of the western European and/or hegemonic, colonial thought.

Native Informant

A native informant is a category in anthropology through which information about other cultures and societies is made available. It is "the person who feeds anthropology" (Spivak, *Critique* 142).[12] The native informant is also a position denoting the "the curious 'objectified' subject-position of [the] other" (Spivak, "Imperialism" 229); that is, those indigenous teachers and mentors of anthropologists who later in academic circles are referred to as 'informants,' "suggesting espionage rather than social science" (Brody 145). A figure denoting the practice of knowledge-gathering without individual acknowledgment, the name of the native informant (i.e., the source of information) cannot be identified or disclosed in order for the knowledge to flourish (Spivak, "Response"). The construction of the colonial subject is dependent on and constructed by the necessary indigenous 'other' who can only be represented by that subject. Spivak calls this process the conversion from "an incommensurable and discontinuous other

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[12] In her book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak shows the ways in which this practice is carried out in the fields of philosophy, literature, history and cultural studies.

into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self" (Spivak, *Critique* 130).[13] This is also the dilemma of Native scholars:

> If we serve as 'informants' to our non-Native colleagues, for example, about growing up within a land-based culture (e.g., on a trap line), our colleagues would include such information as part of their scholarly presentations; it would authenticate their research. Yet, if we use the very same information with a direct reference to our cultural backgrounds, it would met, at best, with skepticism, and, at worst, with charges or parochialism because we would have spoken in 'our own voices.' (LaRocque, "Native Woman Scholar" 12-3)

Spivak further argues that the production of 'elite knowledge' effaces and forecloses the subaltern who is inscribed as the native informant by the West: "The *possibility* of the native informant is ... inscribed as evidence in the production of the scientific or disciplinary European knowledge of the culture of others" (*Critique* 66-7). One of the results of this practice is that in the academy, indigenous people (among others) often become 'stand-ins' for contentious issues such as the colonial relations, economic marginalization, land claims, racism and cultural genocide. Once seen as 'representing' the 'traditionally marginalized,' the 'dominant' is let off the hook who no longer is required to address these issues (cf. Spivak, "Commentary" and *Critique* 360; see also Razack, "Racialized").

In the context of indigenous scholarship, the critique of native informant is directed especially at the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography though it exists in other disciplines as well (e.g., Medicine 4-5, Stauss, Fox and Lowe 83).[14] Also the way in which old forms of oppression are euphemized is criticized: indigenous people who were "once referred to as 'informants' are now called 'consultants,'" 'partners' or 'co-curators'" (Crosby 28).[15]

The emergence of indigenous scholarship in the past decade is a direct response to counter the various practices of "establishing the 'native' as a self-consolidating other" (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 131). As indigenous scholars increasingly define their own priorities and

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[13] Linda Smith has illustrated how this process has taken place historically within research practices and the production of knowledge in relation to indigenous peoples (see *Decolonizing*).

[14] For a discussion of the ways in which the category of native informant is gradually changing, at least in some anthropological texts, see Clifford,"Introduction: Partial Truths" (15-17).

[15] This process is recognized also by Spivak who discusses the way in which the native informant is being reconstituted for epistemic exploitation (*Critique* 370).

objectives and create methodologies, research practices, they validate and carve out a space for their systems of knowledge and thinking. But how can we counter the inhospitality of the academy revealed not only through the processes of domestication and devouring of the other but also in the lack and inability to recognize and receive the gift of indigenous epistemes? In current circumstances, is it possible to establish conditions in the academy where the 'subaltern' – in this case indigenous people – can be heard and comprehended without turning them into either a native informant or self-consolidating other? Spivak suggests:

> When a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony. Unless we want to be romantic purists or primitivists about 'preserving subalternity' – a contradiction in terms – this is absolutely to be desired. (*Critique* 310)

Spivak does not elaborate what she means by 'inserting the subaltern into the long road to hegemony.' If it implies the subaltern joining the hegemonic structures because the only other alternative is being romantically preserved, I disagree with her argument. In my view, to ask to be heard when speaking from another episteme does not have to imply a romantic attempt to 'preserve subalternity.' While I concur with her in that nobody should want to preserve subalternity, I maintain, however, that there has to be an alternative of creating conditions "where alternative discourses can be heard" rather than assimilating the 'marginalized' into the institution (Tierney, *Official* 51).

If epistemic ignorance – the not-knowing in the academy – results in a situation where indigenous people 'cannot speak' in or are not heard by the academy, what would an alternative discourse look and sound like? My contribution is to suggest a paradigm in which indigenous epistemes need to be regarded as a gift. In the current context, the gift of indigenous epistemes remains impossible in the academy – it is not only not received and refused but its existence is not even recognized. If the gift remains unnoticed and impossible, indigenous people continue to be inscribed and positioned as generalized native informants[16] in the service of the production of hegemonic, elite knowledge. The gift not only fails but is misconstrued, appropriated and consumed as commodity. In short, the gift remains impossible in current circumstances, or as

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[16] See Spivak's discussion on the production of the generalized native informant in *Critique* 337ff.

Jacques Derrida argues, the figure of the impossible.

GIFT AS THE IMPOSSIBLE

Of all theorists of the gift, Derrida has most rigorously argued the impossibility of the gift, maintaining that the gift is *the* impossible, "the very figure of the impossible" (*Given Time* 7). For him, the precondition of the gift is that it is *not* recognized, for once the gift *is* recognized as a gift, it ceases being a gift and instead, becomes something else (credit, loan, obligation):

> It suffices ... for the other to perceive the gift – not only to perceive it in the sense in which, as one says in French, 'on perçoit,' one receives, for example, merchandise, payment, or compensation – but to receive its nature of gift, the meaning or intention, the intentional meaning of the gift, in order for this simple recognition of the gift as gift, as such, to annul the gift as gift even before recognition becomes gratitude. The simple identification of the gift seems to destroy it. The simple identification of the passage of a gift as such, that is, of an identifiable thing among some identifiable 'ones,' would be nothing other than the process of destruction of the gift. (*Given Time* 13-4, emphasis added)

A gift annuls itself as soon as it is recognized as a gift, because it immediately becomes an object of exchange; that is, something that requires gratitude, another gift or returning the favour. The gift is also made impossible in the academy by reason. Drawing upon Kant (1724-1804) and Leibniz (1646-1716), Derrida asks: "Could reason be something that gives rise to exchange, circulation, borrowing, debt, donation, restitution?" ("Principle of Reason" 8). If exchange, circulation, borrowing, debt, donation and restitution – all antinomies to the pure gift – are brought by reason, it implies that reason contradicts the gift. He argues that reason – *logos* – is sent into crisis by the madness and the impossibility of the gift: "In giving the reasons for giving, in saying the reason of the gift, it signs the end of the gift" (*Given Time* 148). If we need to give a reason in order to give, what is given is no longer a gift but something else. Reason seems to cancel the gift.

When analyzed more closely, however, we can see that in fact the gift is not so much *opposed to* reason as *passing* and *going beyond* it (Derrida, *Given Time* 77). The gift will always be without the border which is commonly associated with rationality: "A gift that does not run over its borders, a gift that would let itself be contained in a determination and limited by the indivisibility of an identifiable *trait* would not be a gift. As soon as it delimits itself, a gift is prey to calculation and measure" (Derrida, *Given Time* 91).

Throughout history, the academy has been considered an institution of reason.[17] In *Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant reinforces this perception, asserting that the university has to be governed by 'an idea of reason.' How, then, is it possible to bring the gift to the academy, an institution which regularly requires *giving* a reason for everything; reason that contradicts the gift? A gift constantly crossing its borders appears ambiguous, uncontrollable and unreasonable. As such, it may present a threat to the academy which does not necessarily welcome such ambiguity and unpredictability. Besides impossible, would it be also futile to seek to bring the gift to the academy? Would such attempts inevitably fail, at the borders of reason?

Derrida maintains that "'thought' requires *both* the principle of reason *and* what is beyond the principle of reason" ("Reason" 18-19). Further, he brings forth Levinas's suggestion of reason as 'hospitable receptivity' and asks: "Reason *in a position to receive*: what can this hospitality of reason give, this reason as *the capacity to receive...*, this reason under the law of hospitality?" (Derrida, *Adieu* 27). One could argue that reason as hospitable receptivity signifies certain openness beyond control. Reason as the capacity to receive might also be able to receive the gift responsibly, with a response and therefore, also reciprocity. As pointed out by Genevieve Vaughan, receiving is not passive as is often thought. It is active and creative, taking many forms ("Jacob Wrestles" 36). In other words, receiving implies responsibility: "It is necessary *to answer for* the gift, the given, and the call to giving. It is

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[17] While largely accepted, this claim has also been contested by some scholars. For example, Ernest Sirluck maintains that "Kant's concept of reason was never made the referent of an actual university. Humboldt and others used it to develop the idea of culture, which was embodied in the founding document of University of Berlin and had much influence in Germany" (617). Robert Young also argues that, "No English university ... is founded on reason" ("Chrestomatic" 99). See his analysis of the idea of the chrestomatic or practically-oriented university in "Chrestomatic."

necessary to answer to it and answer for it. One must be responsible for what one gives and what one receives" (Derrida, *Given Time* 63).

If the university is an institution of reason and reason implies the capacity to receive, isn't there something seriously wrong in the academy which can not receive the gift? Without a logic rooted in responsibility and reciprocity, it is easy to exploit and misuse the gift, as is the case with indigenous epistemes that have been increasingly commodified and appropriated by the global capitalism that has developed new, powerful tools such as intellectual property regimes for further increasing corporate monopolies and consolidation of profit. Besides the reasons of commodification of indigenous systems of knowledge for profit, there are other, perhaps more fundamental reasons to make the gift impossible; that is, to reduce indigenous epistemes into forced gifts and disregard the entire gift logic as obsolete and unsophisticated. These practices, as argued above, enable the foreclosure of the native informant for the purposes of consolidating the hegemonic self and "the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow" (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern" 75).

The gift continues posing a threat to the prevailing modes of thinking and interaction that characterize the contemporary transnational capitalism in the same way as potlatch (and countless other gift-practices) posed earlier a threat to the civilization and the emerging nation-state of Canada – so serious that it had to be outlawed by the early colonial authorities and later put under erasure by various, sometimes very ambiguous and insidious forms of cultural imperialism. In other words, the gift has the potential to interrupt and even subvert the agenda of what Spivak calls 'the new imperialism of exploitation' (*Critique* 371). As Derrida contends: "There is gift, if there is any, only in what interrupts the system as well as the symbol, in a partition without return and without division [répartition], without being-with-self of the gift-counter-gift" (*Given Time* 13). One of the reasons for the academy not to recognize the gift is then the fear of interruption and ambiguity, loss of control, erasure of boundaries (e.g., disciplinary), excess of endless relativity. The gift may threaten the hegemony and hierarchy of epistemes which serve certain interests. One reason to prohibit the gift is also that the current academy is deeply rooted in the ideology of exchange economy.

For Vaughan, gift giving is made impossible by the creation of scarcity necessary for

the functioning of the exchange economy. In Vaughan's view, exchange signifies a patriarchal, capitalist paradigm based on an adversarial and hierarchical logic of competence and domination. The "scarcity is artificially created by the appropriation of the gifts of the many by the few, the gifts of poor countries by wealthy countries, the gifts of nature, the past and the future by the few for their profit in the present" (Vaughan, *36 Steps* 2). As an example of the creation of artificial scarcity, Vaughan mentions the global arms spending – 18 billion US dollars a week – but as she notes, there are many "other non-nurturing and wasteful expenditures in order to create and maintain an environment in which exchange and hierarchy appear to be necessary for survival" (Vaughan, "Gift Giving" 6).

The dominant paradigm highlighting the importance of exchange has made the gift of indigenous epistemes impossible also in the academic world. In a current system, indigenous epistemes are not regarded as gifts but are as something else such as intellectual property. In some cases, they are appropriated and exploited for economic purposes or to fulfill the spiritual needs of others. The basic premises of the exchange paradigm are manifested in the one-sidedness and unilaterality of academic discourses that are usually thoroughly self-oriented without attention – that is, 'responsibility' – to the other. The failure or refusal to receive the gift has led to serious deterioration and disruption of relationships (of discourses, worldviews, for instance) that has made the academy an untenably difficult place for many indigenous people.[18]

The exploitative, hegemonic and asymmetrical exchange that commonly takes place in academic discourse is a reflection of a broader, dominant neocolonial and also often neoliberal paradigm continues to foreclose indigenous epistemes. This logic of dominance is not, however, detrimental only to indigenous peoples and their worldviews, but it removes everybody "from all connections except the circuit of capital accumulation" (Kailo, "From Sustainable Development" n.p.). The commodification of all life forms and the shortsighted abuse of the environment, women, the 'Third World' and other vulnerable countries and groups also affects the culture of learning, education and academic freedom (Kailo, "From 'Give Back'" n.p.).

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[18] Many anthropologists have argued that the refusal to accept the gift may even lead to a war between clans or tribes. I would hesitate to use such a militaristic metaphor for the current state of relationships between indigenous people and the academy but the fact is that in the contemporary academy, the failure of recognizing of the gift has indeed resulted in a conflict, as we have seen in the preceding chapter.

The gift is impossible when it is located within the exchange economy informed by colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy – all of which have made sure that in many cases only traces are left of indigenous relation-oriented epistemes and social and cultural orders. Conversely then, the gift *is* possible only in specific circumstances outside the logic of exchange. The gift is possible only when the circle of exchange – in which the gift returns back to the original giver in the form of a counter-gift – is disrupted (*Given Time* 9). In Derrida's view, the gift is possible when there is

> no reciprocity, return, exchange, countergift, or debt. If the other *gives* me *back* or *owes* me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term deferral or differance. (Derrida, *Given Time* 12)

Indigenous gift philosophies do not limit the gift to mere exchange, countergift and debt. For sure, exchange and debt are not entirely foreign to indigenous epistemes and practices either but the difference, however, is in the degree of primacy. Exchange, countergift (or profit) and debt do not foreground indigenous worldviews in the same way as they do the interactions and thinking of the dominant paradigm of global, patriarchal capitalism. Interactions and relationships are perceived and thus discussed in a different manner. What is more, the ethic of respecting, giving and responding to land is not limited to rhetoric but fostered in practice. Again, it is important to notice that we are not talking about 'archaic' societies or gift practices in the past, but epistemes that continue to influence the way in which many people think and behave today.

In a system where the logic of the gift does not imply 'earning' the gift or 'owing' something to the giver, and where the formation of the relationship through gift giving is not considered in negative terms (a burdensome obligation, or a loss of one's individuality and independence) but a condition of balanced existence and ultimately, part of one's identity, the gift cannot be ignored or rendered to something else. In such a system and social order, if the gift is not recognized and received, it ceases to be a gift and the relationships formed through the gift are weakened and ultimately lost. Contrary to Derrida's argument that the gift is annulled when it is recognized, I maintain that in indigenous philosophies, it is the very

recognition that makes the gift possible. This does not necessarily oppose Derrida's argument – as far as I am concerned, his explanation is valid and needs to be understood within the exchange paradigm. When the gift is taken outside that framework, it does become possible. My argument is, therefore, that we need to perceive indigenous epistemes in another framework, within the logic of the gift of indigenous philosophies, where it is the recognition that makes it possible. In the following, I take a closer look at various forms of recognition and explain the specific kind of recognition that is called for in this inquiry.

THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

Recognition is generally considered an "acknowledgement that must be given to human beings who are subjected to inquiries," consisting primarily of remembering and knowledge (Fabian, "Remembering" 159-60). It has long been a topic of philosophical discussion inspired particularly by J. G. Fichte (1762-1814) and Hegel (1770-1831). The work of Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre introduced the question of recognition to the critique of colonialism.

'Recognition-as-something' is a process of identifying and making sense of the world by placing the unfamiliar or new into preexisting categories. As we recognize an animal resembling a cat as a cat and not a dog, in a similar way we also inscribe people according to their physical appearance, gender, behaviour, status, background, and so on. This process of classifying, grouping and often also judging relies heavily on our previous, often entrenched and ingrained ideas of the world, some of which may also be quite stereotypical. Recognition-as-something is usually based on certain expectations, whether realistic or not, such as the expectation of an indigenous person to look and perhaps even to behave and live in a certain way. As Marc Augé argues: "By a short-circuiting of thought everywhere attested, people *desire less to know the world* than to recognize themselves in it, substituting for the indefinite frontiers of an ungraspable universe the totalitarian security of closed worlds" (82, my

emphasis). Recognition can, therefore, also become a proxy for avoiding the responsibility for doing the homework of finding out about things that are unfamiliar; a way of closing the doors and windows rather than granting an unconditional welcome (see Chapters 4 and 5).

In the academy, 'recognition' generally implies an acknowledgement of one's acquirements in research, teaching or service.[19] Acknowledging one's accomplishments is about giving credit for and making the work of an individual visible; in short, saying that the institution (or part of it) values the type of work the person is doing. At the same time, however, such recognizing is inevitably about exclusion and making invisible. Recognizing someone always 'misrecognizes' others, thus making them and their work invisible. Therefore, to recognize someone's work or accomplishments is always about conforming to a certain predetermined norm, a set of previously agreed assumptions of what is worth recognizing.

Johannes Fabian suggests that recognition is part and parcel of ethnographic knowledge. In his view, recognition is

> a condition that makes communication possible but ... it is an agonistic relationship; it involves confrontation and struggle. Recognition is not something that one party can simply grant to the other; *Anerkennung* is not doled out like political independence or development aid. Recognition may be defined by legal rights, but in situations in which ethnographers usually work, it is achieved through exchanges that have startling, upsetting, sometimes profoundly disturbing consequences for all participants. (Fabian, "Remembering" 175)

Particularly in earlier ethnographic contexts mutual recognition has been, however, considered an undermining of the authority if not superiority of the ethnographer (Fabian, "Remembering" 163). More recently, the question of (and the quest for) recognition has emerged as a pressing issue due to demands of multiculturalism, feminism and various 'area studies.' People and groups previously marginalized in and by the dominant society have called for the recognition of difference, their identities, agencies and subjectivities. This 'politics of recognition,' a phrase first introduced by Charles Taylor (1992), is critical of institutions for failing to recognize and respect particular cultural or gender identities (Gutmann 4). In his essay "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition," Taylor's central argument is that our

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[19] See a discussion of the quest and competition of academics for the recognition as 'great scholars' in academic fields or disciplines in Becher and Trowler (75-8).

identities are partly shaped by recognition or its absence and that therefore, due recognition is not merely a courtesy we owe people but a vital human need (26).[20]

In some cases, recognition does not go beyond rhetoric. At worst, recognition is relegated to a mere gesture of tokenism as in officially, publically acknowledging those considered 'minorities' or marginalized' and then quickly forgetting them and continuing 'business as usual.' An interesting example of recognition is the custom relatively common at least in some circles at the University of British Columbia: the acknowledgement that the university is located on the Musqueam territory.[21] While many university students and faculty members generally agree that this is an important gesture, there are others who question such a seemingly benevolent but superficial engagement with the Musqueam people.

Could such a 'gesture of convenience' mark an attempt of a neocolonial discourse to fabricate its allies in a new way, as suggested by Spivak (*Teaching Machine* 57)? Does this discourse suggest an exchange (which is a tit-for-tat relation, not a gift) that agrees to recognize 'the indigenous other' for a conciliatory cooperation as native informants, 'add-ons' (Bennett, "Introduction" 5) or consultants (and perhaps in the future, shareholders, as universities are increasingly aligning themselves with corporations)? Or could it be argued that it is better than anything; that it is a good starting point? Spivak disagrees, insisting that

> 'One must begin somewhere' is a different sentiment when expressed by the unorganized oppressed and when expressed by the beneficiary of the consolidated disciplinary structure of a central neocolonialist power.... If the 'somewhere' that one begins from is the most privileged site of a neocolonial educational system, in an institute for the training of teachers, funded by the state, does that gesture of convenience not become the normative point of departure? (Spivak, *Teaching Machine*

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[20] See Benhabib's criticism of Taylor's position (pp. 51-9) where she notes, among other things, that one of the biggest shortcoming in Taylor's argument is the conflation of the individual right to identity (or authenticity) and the collective self-expression of a group or a people.

[21] This gesture of recognition at the University of British Columbia appears to be quite an uncommon practice; at some other North American universities Native people have not even heard about such thing. A quick informal 'survey' at the Indigenous graduate student conference in Berkeley in May 2003 revealed that Native students and/or faculty from Universities of California-Berkeley, Arizona, Saskatchewan and Toronto (OISE) were not familiar with the gesture of recognizing the people on whose traditional territory the university was located. I was prompted to conduct such a 'survey' because I was the only speaker at the conference to recognize the Ohlone and Coastal Miwok (not even all the conference participants studying or working at Berkeley were sure who the Native peoples of the area were).

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The gesture of recognition perhaps is a necessary first step in engaging with, establishing or improving relationships with the indigenous peoples of the area. It cannot, however, become a proxy for continued repressive tolerance or benign neglect of their issues, concerns and epistemes. Recognition cannot be merely an item on a list which, once checked, needs no further consideration or attention. Moreover, it requires great vigilance on the part of those who participate "in such a privileged and authoritative apparatus" and are in peril of becoming mere allies of the neocolonial discourse (Spivak, *Teaching Machine* 58).

The recognition of particular cultural identities is of great importance also for indigenous people as argued, for example, in the RCAP Report: "recognition of the distinct place of Aboriginal nations in the Canadian federation and accommodation of Aboriginal culture and identity should be regarded as a core responsibility of public institutions rather than as a special project to be undertaken after other obligations are met" (515). The question of recognition as a form of validation is also crucial for indigenous peoples who are fighting for the recognition of their rights erased and obliterated by various colonial gestures many of which are still in place today. The lack of recognition of these existing rights has resulted in cultural genocide, displacement and dispossession and created a situation where indigenous peoples around the world remain as colonized peoples. Without the recognition of the valid legal rights and title of indigenous peoples to their lands and territories, they are exploited and commodified in the same way as the gift that remains unrecognized.

Delgamuukw, the landmark case involving the Gitskan and Wet'suwet'en First Nations of British Columbia in 1997, recognized, for the first time in history, that First Nations' oral evidence has equal weight with written documents in the legal system of Canada. This signified a major step in validating indigenous forms of knowledge and transmission of knowledge, setting an important precedent for other indigenous peoples in the world as well, for many of whom the reality of non-recognition also means governments' attempts to render them

invisible.[22] In the United States, for instance, there are over 200 federally non-recognized tribes (in California alone the number is over 40, and in Washington 12). If a tribe is not recognized, they are not eligible to receive services from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and their tribal rights remain unrecognized.

The need to be officially recognized by the federal government in order to practice one's culture and exercise one's collective, historical rights is, of course, very problematic. It is an indication of continued colonial control and oppression. The application process with its legal tests which a tribe is subjected to is also utterly false and humiliating in its eurocentric assumptions of social organization. These regulations reflect non-Native concepts of tribe, models of leadership and social network of relations and organization (Miller, *Invisible Indigenes* 80-1) – this despite the ruling of the International Court of Justice already in 1975 according to which "Indigenous governments do not have to emulate European governmental structures to have sovereignty over their territory" (Venne 46).

One example of the absurdity of this process is the Duwamish case. The Duwamish, a Coast Salish tribe whose territory is the area of the present-day city of Seattle, Washington (named after the Duwamish-Suquamish leader Sealth), submitted a petition for federal recognition in 1976. The tribe was not recognized and remained landless and without tribal fishing rights. Today, the situation has only become worse:

> In the period between 1996 and 1999, the tribe responded to each point in the negative determination and concluded that they would sue the Department of the Interior in the event that they were turned down again. The BAR [Bureau of Acknowledgment and Research, the U.S. federal agency responsible for federal recognition], in turn, delayed its response, seeking extensions, until Lee Fleming finally notified the tribe at 5:59 p.m. on January 19, 2001, that their recognition was approved. This was the day before the new president, George W. Bush, was sworn in... Two more years had passed. Subsequently, the Bush administration suspended last-minute orders of the Clinton administration..., and the decision to recognize the Duwamish was reversed on September 27, 2001. (Miller, *Invisible* 95)

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[22] Non-recognition is also a technique of 'noticing by not considering race' applied by various advocates of the 'colour-blind model.' As Neil Gotanda argues, non-recognition "fosters the systematic denial of racial subordination and the psychological repression of an individual's recognition of that subordination, thereby allowing it to continue" (35). Gotanda examines how this model is employed particularly in courts and legal discourse. See also Bonilla-Silva for his articulation of colour-blind racism.

As a result, the Duwamish continue to remain landless and without an access to tribal fisheries, a central part of both their economy and culture, in spite of existing rights recorded in the Treaty of Point Elliott first signed by chief Sealth in 1855. The Duwamish example indicates that the recognition for indigenous peoples is more than a multicultural quest for acknowledgement of their cultural difference. Yet despite its significance for indigenous peoples and their survival as distinct peoples, the recognition can be a problematic notion. Elizabeth Povinelli argues that recognition is also "at once a formal meconnaissance of a subaltern group's *being* and of its *being worthy* of national recognition and, at the same time, a formal moment of being inspected, examined, and investigated" (39). The core problem is therefore that "this inspection always already constitutes indigenous persons as failures of indigeneity as such" (Povinelli 39).

As far as I am concerned, there is a need for yet another type of recognition that slightly differs from the idea of validating identities or recognizing existing collective, historical rights. While I do not intend to suggest that other forms of recognition discussed above are not imperative, I do think we need to add another dimension to the idea of recognition, a dimension that is embedded in the gift logic with regard to indigenous peoples' relationship to the land. In this framework, recognition is a condition for survival. It stems from the philosophy according to which the well-being of all is dependent on the socio-cosmic balance. Therefore, nothing can be taken from the land without acknowledging the intricate and necessary relationships that sustain and enable this stability. Within the logic of the gift, recognition is, therefore, a form of reciprocation not only between human but all living beings. Living in a reciprocal relationship with the land is manifested in everyday activities:

> If camas root is to be dug or bark taken from a birch or cedar tree to fashion a basket, 'permission' must be first sought. A prayer is offered.... If a hunter is to successfully track a deer, respect must be given, respect often shown in terms of 'not taking too much,' 'using all that is taken,' 'or never boasting about the hunt.' When such respect is shown, the deer, in reciprocity may offer itself to the hunter. (Frey 41-2)

These and other activities on and with the land are informed by an understanding of the ways in which human beings are related to the natural environment – to camas root, birch or cedar tree and deer – which results in a behaviour that seeks to sustain those relationships by not taking

them for granted or by exploiting them. In short, by offering a prayer or showing respect, these living beings and the relationship a person individually and human beings collectively have with them are acknowledged. Put another way, their existence and the relationship between them and human beings are actively recognized by observing and exercising certain responsibilities.

Further, it is important to emphasize that these and other practices of recognizing, thanking and honouring do not belong to the past as is often thought when discussing indigenous peoples and their cultural practices. At a recent conference dealing with indigenous issues, Marcia Pablo (Salish), discussing the protection of cultural sites and resources, reminded the audience of the continuing reciprocal relationships that her people have with the land. She emphasized the responsibility of human beings to take care of the land but also the fact that the land takes care of 'us' in the reciprocal relationship. What is significant (and perhaps challenging for some) in this recognition and reciprocation is that it is not a question cause and effect (i.e., a matter of 'if I take care of the land [the cause], the land will take care of me [effect], or the other way round). Rather, it is a radically different way of understanding and making sense of the world without the need for explanations of causality (cf. Fixico 8). Fabian's notion of recognition as always an agonistic relationship is, therefore, not applicable in the context of the gift philosophy in which recognition is based on an ethical relationship seeking to maintain the social and cosmic order.

Calling for the recognition of the gift of indigenous epistemes in the academy is therefore different from both the 'politics of recognition' and recognizing indigenous peoples' rights delineated above. In the same way that the gifts of the land cannot be taken for granted or exploited within this specific logic of the gift, indigenous epistemes should not be ignored, appropriated or misused in the academy. To recognize indigenous epistemes as a gift, then, necessitates, among other things, learning about the gift logic. In the following chapter, I take a closer look at the complex question of this learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

'LEARNING TO LEARN'

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed epistemic ignorance and their effects in the academy. I have suggested that there is a pressing need for a shift from the current paradigm to a new relationship between the academy and indigenous epistemes – a new way of perceiving other than dominant, western epistemes. This relationship consists of the recognition of the gift of these epistemes – not only recognizing their existence but recognition as perceived by the logic of the gift according to which it necessitates responsibility toward the 'other' and thus, reciprocation. As suggested later in this chapter, responsibility also necessitates knowledge. In this chapter, then, I examine the problematic and contentious question of knowing the 'other' – a question riddled with dangers of arrogant assumptions and ethnocentrism (which particularly takes the form of eurocentrism). I consider the issue from the perspectives of both indigenous scholarship and critical race theories/anti-racist pedagogies. I also discuss Spivak's notion of doing one's homework as one of the means by which epistemic ignorance can be addressed.

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I attend a talk "Making Space for Indigenous Voices in Education: Engaging in New Conversation" by Ethel Gardner and Lisa Sterling from Simon Fraser University. Lisa Sterling, from the Nlakapamux First Nation of Nicola Valley, first gives a brief overview of the history of Aboriginal Education and addresses the present-day priority of legitimization and reaffirmation of indigenous knowledge in educational institutions. Ethel Gardner from the Sto:lo Nation

tells the audience of mostly white women about the indigenous education programs and initiatives at SFU. She points out that what they as First Nations educators are dealing with today is the legacy of the assimilation and integration policies of the Canadian government. She also notes how there is still very little awareness and understanding in the faculty about First Nations – that it is still possible today to go through the education system without learning anything about Aboriginal peoples.

Ethel concludes her talk by posing a question to the audience: "What is the role of non-Aboriginal society in relationship to Indigenous peoples as the conversation shifts to making spaces for Aboriginal voices?" I look forward to hear what people have to say to such a challenging question, not least because it is closely related to my own work. People are eager to engage which is of course a good sign. Some people express their gratitude for this kind of discussion and emphasize the need for further awareness raising on these issues. One woman is spot on to point out that what needs to be done first is to "get the plain history out there" though it is a real challenge when people usually don't want to hear it. She also notes the problem of discussing about various First Nations issues such as residential schools, land rights and treaties separately, hardly ever in a way that would reveal the connections between them. "At the end of the day," she concludes, "the question starts with the land."

Way to go, I think, but then things start going downhill. A young woman wants to know what is the First Nations identity in 2004 because for her, it seems unavoidably bicultural, both Canadian and Aboriginal at once. I'm surprised though I shouldn't really be. 'Identity' seems to be the standard question at any talks dealing with indigenous issues. Once again I find myself wondering the reason for such questions: Why is it so difficult to grasp indigenous identities as a contemporary reality? Is it because of the diehard assumptions of indigenous identities only as 'traditional' and/or entirely

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separate, both in terms of time and space, from the society we live in? Or is it a conscious attempt to delegitimize arguments about the need to transform the current circumstances – an attempt to demonstrate that because indigenous identities in the twenty-first century are moot, arguments concerning the legacy of assimilation and oppression aren't valid? Or, is it an age-old attempt to impose a fixed, authentic identity on indigenous peoples which allows the hegemonic people to avoid taking responsibility for their personal histories and seeing how these histories materialize in their privilege today? (cf. Silko, "Old-Time")

The speakers themselves don't even get a chance to reply as someone else from the audience jumps in and reveals how all her First Nations friends are as different from one another as her mainstream friends... Oh really. The worst is yet to come. A couple of people stand up to stress the need for education for all and not only focus on some groups because it leaves other cultural groups behind. We're after all one human family who need to learn from one another! I'm dumbfounded – it's not that it's the first time I hear this, but how can people come up with that after hearing what we've just heard? How do these people listen? Is it the deep denial or plain inability to hear what Ethel just had said – that it is the consequences of historical oppression and discrimination that we're living as we speak – which makes it impossible for some to see the need for efforts of creating spaces for indigenous voices and education and perhaps even more importantly, the need for people like the commentator herself to take their share of the responsibility to make it happen?

The all-time classic of conversations on indigenous issues is yet to come: We're all Aboriginal! We just need to know our own heritage and cultural roots to find out that all traditions are the same. Once we've done that, the spaces for indigenous education automatically happen! I should've known this was coming. I'm slightly surprised that neither of the speakers interrupts and challenges the direction of the conversation which is dangerously starting

to resemble the views of the New Age Movement according to which everybody

is an equal member of the happy human family holding hands – or perhaps it is

just an embellished version of the neoliberal parlance of level playing fields.

Yes, we might be all indigenous but some of us are more ripped off than others.

Moreover, we should consider the following: "Is examining my own Irish,

Scottish, English ethnic heritage – or even my own Canadian ancestors – a

productive move, or does it also simply add to my privilege, my 'cultural

capital,' my power?" (Fee 687)

KNOWING THE 'OTHER'

It is a widely recognized fact that any attempt or claim to know (about) other peoples and cultures is loaded with problems and dangers. A well-meaning but patronizing humanist-liberalist tradition is reflected in views according to which a mere cultivation of understanding or an increase of information will facilitate the encounter with the 'other' (e.g., Axtell 82) or even eradicate the systemic social and power inequalities. At its extreme, it asserts that liberal democracy is a "social strategy for enabling individuals to live *the good life*. It is unalterably *opposed to ignorance*. It trusts that *knowledge and understanding* have the power to *set people free*" (Rockefeller 91, emphasis added).

For Spivak, these views represent what she calls the 'eurocentric arrogance of conscience' – a simplistic assumption that as long as one has sufficient information, one can understand the 'other' (*Critique* 171). She uses Jean-Paul Sartre as an example of 'arrogance of the radical European humanist conscience.' In his *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre argues: "Every project, even that of a Chinese, an Indian or a Negro, can be understood by a European... There is always some way of understanding an idiot, a child, a primitive man or a foreigner *if one has sufficient information*" (qtd. in Spivak, *Critique* 171).

In its high-minded arrogance, this view assumes the universality of epistemologies and the transparent access to any episteme or system of knowledge. These assumptions have been, however, contested on various grounds by different discourses in the past couple of decades. In indigenous scholarship it is often argued that other peoples cannot be known from a perspective of cultures based on entirely different assumptions and perceptions of the world. Postcolonial theories denounce attempts at knowing the other through a colonial, imperial bias, while feminist critiques also remind of the implications and legacies of the patriarchal gaze and criticize the androcentric bias of knowledge previously assumed gender-neutral. Anti-racist and critical race theorists consider the idea of learning about other people and cultures a liberal approach aiming at improved control of the difference. Many anthropologists and ethnographers continue to struggle with the crisis of cultural representation. Poststructuralists, in turn, ask whether one should imagine knowing other peoples and cultures when a person can never even fully know herself.

The question of knowing other peoples and cultures is further complicated by the argument that understanding does not always increase sympathy and mutual respect but may, in effect, result in violence as the example of Hernando Cortés, the Spanish conquistador who seized the kingdom of Montezuma in the present-day Mexico, indicates. Tzvetan Todorov argues that 'an understanding' of the Aztec by Cortés resulted in the destruction and annihilation of the Aztec civilization. Cortés understood the Aztec and their world relatively well. This understanding, however, not only did *not* prevent the destruction of the Aztec civilization but in effect, made it possible. While it could be argued that this can be explained by suggesting that in this case, knowing and understanding is accompanied by the negation of the value of the other people and culture, conquistadors' writings indicate otherwise. In these writings, it becomes clear that at least on a certain level, the Aztecs provoke admiration in Europeans. The marvel of the Spaniards is, however, by and large limited to objects produced by Aztecs:

> Like today's tourist who admires the quality of Asian or African craftsmanship though he is untouched by the notion of sharing the life of the craftsmanship who produce such objects, Cortés goes into ecstasies about the Aztec productions but does not acknowledge their makers as human individualities to be set on the same level as himself. (Todorov 129)

'Understanding of other cultures' in terms of architecture, design and objects such as artifacts or material, physical culture cannot, therefore, be conflated with understanding of different worldviews or immaterial, intellectual culture. The separation of the product of a culture from the actual people who produced it is a convenient way to avoid addressing and recognizing the actual human beings on either individual or collective level. At the extreme, this enables the simultaneous appreciation of the material culture (both in past and present) on the one hand, and a perception of indigenous people as the 'social problem,' on the other.

Knowing is also associated with power and control. It is often argued that producing and having (or claiming to have) knowledge of other peoples reflects the desire of the knowing subject, if not to possess or devour, to tame and consume the 'other.' Knowledge – both producing it and imposing it upon others – has also been a means of controlling and gaining power over indigenous peoples.[1] Spivak calls the process of containing the other for colonial, imperial purposes as 'othering'; domesticating an incommensurable and discontinuous other in order to consolidate the imperialist self (e.g., "Rani" 134-5, *Critique* 130-1). In this way, the other is conventionalized in the dominant discourse and the epistemic discontinuity that might have existed is neutralized while the 'subaltern' is constructed as monolithic (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 208, 284).

The desire for knowing and understanding cannot, however, put to rest or make it disappear by declaring it suspect. Even if at times one might be tempted to side with the more pessimistic view of the incommensurability of the modern and indigenous epistemes, the only way forward, toward the future of the academy, appears to be, however, to commit ourselves in building a responsible (response-able) academy and inscribing hospitality in its practices. In short, it "is necessary to seek to extend our own [epistemes] – not simply to bring the other way within the already existing boundaries of our own" (Winch 30).

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[1] See, for instance, Linda Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, particularly chapter 3. See also Spivak and her notion of 'worlding,' the process by which imperial discourse is inscribed upon the colonized 'space' by activities of mapping, naming and simply being present ("Rani").

Problem of 'Indianism'

"While the white people had much to teach us, we had much to teach them, and what a school could have been established upon that idea?" (Standing Bear 236). This question, posed by Luther Standing Bear who was the first Lakota student to attend the Carlisle Indian boarding school in Pennsylvania when it first opened in 1879, continues to be relevant in the contemporary context of the academy. At the press conference of the release of the report "Learning About Walking in Beauty," in November 2002, the chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the Honorable Lincoln Alexander stated: "Clearly, Canadians know little but wish to know more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, which ought to be presented honestly and respectfully in school curricula" (CRRF News Release).

This report reveals the persistence of many of the same problems and concerns exposed several years ago by the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples which stated that "the limited understanding of Aboriginal issues among non-Aboriginal Canadians" presents various obstacles "to achieving reconciliation and a new relationship" (RCAP 92). The RCAP report also notes that while knowledge is much needed and a prerequisite for any human relationship, it is inadequate to change deep-seated hostility and fundamental attitudes, many of which are clearly prejudiced. Like Standing Bear, the report strongly recommends public education as a means to eradicate such attitudes as well as "move beyond policies that are the failed relics of colonialism" – something that according to report, would benefit all Canadians (RCAP 92-3).

The situation in Canada is hardly unique, whether the question is the lack of knowledge pertaining to indigenous peoples or the inability to address the multiple marginalization of these peoples and their communities. It is suggested that in the United States, Native Americans are the least-understood groups even among academics (Champagne and Stauss 6; see also Marker, "Lummi" 409). Among the majority of Finnish students, including those studying in teacher education, there is also a clear lack of knowledge and correct information about the Sami (cf. Rasmus). In other words, while there clearly is an urgent need to know more, the question remains whether it is possible to know and understand worldviews, systems of knowledge and

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values radically different from those of one's own? If yes, how do we go about it? If no, is our only option to sanction the prevailing ignorance toward indigenous and other epistemes not only in the academy but in society at large?

One of the biggest problems of 'knowing other cultures' is that even if there is an interest in indigenous peoples and their cultures, there is relatively little interest in either addressing them on their own terms or understanding indigenous perspectives and values (Champagne, "American Indian Studies" 187). Borrowing from Edward Said's notion of orientalism, David Newhouse (Onondaga), Don McCaskill and John Milloy call this phenomenon 'Indianism.' It refers to articles and studies written in "attempt to explain Aboriginal peoples" yet lack "voices of Aboriginal peoples or explanations posited using Aboriginal ideas" (Newhouse et al. 78). This approach, which also could be called the 'anthropological mode of knowing'[2] continues to defer to mainstream expertise and dominant discourses, perpetuating the undervaluation of indigenous perspectives and worldviews (Smith, "Dilemma" 12; Battiste, "Decolonizing" 198-9; Cleary 186-7; and Monture-Angus, "Homeless" 278). The discourse of 'Indianism' is, therefore, an inappropriate way of addressing the problem of epistemic ignorance.

The opposite of Indianism is not without problems either. Common suggestions of 'finding indigenous voices' include the call for more information produced by indigenous people themselves and the encouragement of 'listening to indigenous elders.' While both are valid suggestions and need to be taken seriously, they fail to take into account some of the accompanying difficulties. The former fails to recognize that there is already a fair number of excellent studies, documents, articles and various kinds of books – academic, fiction, children, coffee table and everything in between – widely available and accessible for different audiences by indigenous scholars and writers. The problem is not that there are no books on indigenous peoples by indigenous people. The problem often seems to be instead that "[a]s Vine Deloria

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[2] An example of this kind of knowing that has a strong focus on culture and is characterized by unexamined and problematic assumptions with regard to concepts such as normality, transparency and accessibility of a culture, can be found in Geertz's *Interpretation of Cultures* where he writes: "understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity. It renders them accessible: setting them in the frame of their own banalities, it dissolves their opacity" (14). It could be suggested that this kind of discourse is another version of eurocentric arrogance of conscience.

has pointed out, non-Indians are still more comfortable with Indian books written by non-Indians than they are with books by Indian authors" (Silko, *Yellow Woman* 165). As books by indigenous peoples are usually written from a perspective based on a different, unfamiliar epistemic convention, many non-indigenous people may find them either too different, too challenging or too simplistic. The sad fact is that writings by indigenous people usually do not conform to or confirm the common stereotypical ideals many people have of indigenous peoples.

The latter idea of listening to and learning from indigenous elders who are occasionally described as 'traditional PhDs' is very important for indigenous and non-indigenous people alike. It is also in line with the suggestion to listen in a way that is not characterized by benevolent imperialism as discussed in the previous chapter. It is not, however, as easy and straightforward as we may think at first. It is wrong to assume that a person unfamiliar with epistemic and cultural conventions embedded in elders' teachings will be able to 'get it' – to appreciate and understand the teachings since they often are in a format that does not follow or conform, for example, to the linear logic of modern consciousness. Further, it might be inappropriate to assume indigenous elders take the role of teaching ignorant people especially when considering the long history of such expectations by anthropologists in particular.

Indigenous Studies Programs and Indigenous Faculty

Critique of the academic world by indigenous scholars and attempts to address the educational needs of indigenous students have led, since the late 1960s, to the creation of various indigenous studies programs and departments in many universities around the world. It is suggested that indigenous studies programs are in many cases a response to colonization and relations of oppression (Green, "Canon Fodder" 40; Walker 187). For others, indigenous studies programs are not different from other academic disciplines "with an identifiable history, a unique subject matter, an integral literature, a distinct epistemology, and a rigorous pedagogy" (Albers et al. 148). Many indigenous scholars also maintain that improving the status and role

of indigenous studies programs is an effective way of increasing knowledge and information regarding indigenous peoples and their issues. Devon Mihesuah contends that, "The fundamental argument for a good Indian studies program is to educate students who are ignorant about Indians" ("Epilogue" 99).

Together with creation of models for indigenous pedagogies and research methodologies, these programs are central in the process of indigenous people validating their systems of knowledge, building capacity for their communities and claiming space for indigenous students and scholars.[3] They represent the hubs of indigenous research, scholarship and capacity building both in terms of intellectual and wider, communal self-determination within the mainstream academic system. They are locations where indigenous people, both students and faculty, can focus on their own priorities and issues from their own premises and practices; places and spaces where they can disengage from what Graham Smith calls the 'politics of distraction,' issues and questions of secondary significance stemming from needs and concerns of the mainstream academy and society ("Protecting" 211; see also Keskitalo, "Research" 12; Mihesuah, "Epilogue" 105 and "Trenches" 21).[4]

More recently, efforts to 'create space' in the academic world for indigenous scholarship have also taken the form of creating indigenous universities, including the First Nations University of Canada (previously known as the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College), created as a result of the movement created by the 1972 declaration of National Indian Brotherhood (Stonechild et al. 165) and three recently established Maori universities in New Zealand. There is also ongoing discussion on the establishment of an Indigenous University in

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[3] Early discussion of Native Studies programs include Russell Thornton, "American Indian Studies as an Academic Discipline" and "American Indian Studies as an Academic Discipline: A Revisit"; Clara Sue Kidwell, "Native American Indian Studies" and Vine Deloria, Jr. "Indian Studies – The Orphan of Academia."

[4] Politics of distraction is comparable to what bell hooks calls 'remammification.' While black women are "[n]o longer maids and servants of white women, the covert demand is still often that we serve their needs" ("Joining the Dialogue" 252).

the United States as well as a Sami University in Samiland.[5]

While there are important epistemological, psychological, pedagogical and ethical reasons for such programs and the establishment of separate programs offers very important, culturally appropriate, necessary and safe spaces for indigenous students within mainstream universities, they are not without problems.[6] The unfortunate fact is that most indigenous studies programs remain both intellectually and financially marginal within the university structure that, in spite of welcoming new fields of study, often fiercely seeks to protect its intellectual core (Atkinson 74-5).[7] Such marginalization and ghettoization of 'special' or area studies is considered a form of discrimination and an expression of eurocentrism, dismissing them "as fringe programs of less merit and credibility" (Guerrero 58).

Indigenous studies programs often are also poorly integrated into and ignored by the rest of the academy (Green, "Transforming" 86). Further, the 'add-and-stir' model of education is considered insufficient in helping disempowered students to overcome their oppression (Battiste, "Enabling" 21; see also Churchill, "White Studies" 254; Cook-Lynn, "Native Studies" 152; Cummins, "Empowering"). It is also pointed out that while Native studies offer a space where indigenous students are not marginalized at the outset, the fragmentation of knowledge and objectification of Native peoples also take place in Native

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[5] On some of the challenges of establishing a university based on indigenous values and premises, see for example, Ray Barnhardt, "Higher Education in the Fourth World: Indigenous People Take Control." I would argue that the establishment of indigenous universities may also pose certain dangers of accommodation and repression. Discussing the problems of Arab higher education, Edward Said notes how many Arab universities have become places of political conformity and self-preservation rather than intellectual inquiry, advancement of knowledge and above all, the freedom to be critical. Concerned for substituting the Eurocentric norm by an Islamo- or Arabocentric one, he insists that "[a] single overmastering identity at the core of the academic enterprise, whether that identity be Western, African, or Asian, is a confinement, a deprivation" (Said, "Identity" 227; see also "The Politics of Knowledge").

[6] These challenges include "gaining and maintaining institutional support, attracting and retaining [indigenous] students and faculty, and developing a coherent vision that balances all the important components of the program – teaching and research, student services, and community outreach" (Graham and Golia 124).

[7] These circumstances, however, might well change in the future. The report "Learning About Walking in Beauty" urges the Canadian government together with other institutions to turn their attention to "collaboration between all education authorities to enable and promote *mandatory* Aboriginal Studies" (4; emphasis added).

Studies programs (Monture-Angus, "Homeless" 278, 282).[8]

Indigenous studies programs cannot, therefore, address or solve all problems (not that they were ever intended to) pertaining to indigenous people in the academy. There are always indigenous people who, for various reasons, study and work outside these programs. Further, these programs do not have the capacity to seriously challenge the hierarchical structures which maintain exclusionary practices in the academy at large, thus leaving the underlying inequalities and marginalization intact. As Ward Churchill (Cherokee) argues, the establishment of separate programs "has accomplished little if anything in terms of altering the delivery of White Studies instruction in the broader institutional context" ("White Studies" 254). In his view, the transformation of academic institutions requires a permeation and subversion of the existing structures rather than a creation of parallel structures; a conceptual rather than merely what Churchill calls 'contentual inclusion' of non-western intellectual traditions. He maintains:

> Content is, of course, highly important, but, in and of itself, can never be sufficient to offset the cumulative effects of White Studies indoctrination. Non-Western content injected into White Studies format can be – and, historically, has been – filtered through the lense of eurocentric conceptualization, taking on meanings entirely alien to itself along the way. ("White Studies" 251)

The mere inclusion of indigenous issues in the academy is problematic because they may easily become interpreted through foreign frameworks and concepts and thus represent a form of epistemic violence (cf. Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 14, 77, 95, 126; "Maailma" 22; see also Nwauwa xvii). Moreover, indigenous studies programs cannot be expected to become places to educate ignorant non-indigenous students (and where would ignorant non-indigenous academics be educated?). This would go against the mandates and priorities of these programs aiming to primarily address the needs and interests of indigenous students. A large number of indigenous people maintain that these programs must serve first and foremost indigenous peoples and be spaces where indigenous people can feel safe and find a sense of community and belonging usually absent in other academic departments (cf. Newhouse et al. 76; LaRocque, "From the

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[8] The fragmentation of knowledge is one of the major challenges for indigenous scholars and students attempting deal with indigenous systems of knowing in the academy. Deloria remarks: "Indians have found even the most sophisticated academic disciplines and professional schools woefully inadequate because the fragmentation of knowledge that is represented by today's modern university does not allow for a complete understanding of a problem or of a phenomenon" (*Spirit & Reason* 146).

Land" 71).[9]

Another concern involving indigenous studies programs is the question of indigenous epistemologies: are they supposed to be solely a subject to be taught or are they a way of organizing the curriculum? (Moore 273). John H. Moore points out that "[t]he fundamental problem is that undergraduate programs [in general] are organized and structured, spatially and temporally, according to principles about the world very different from the Native American principles that Native American studies programs would like to communicate" (293). In other words, there are numerous issues with regard to indigenous studies programs and cannot be all addressed in detail here. While they continue to be debated among indigenous scholars and others, they need to be raised when considering the question of 'knowing the other' even if they remain unanswered.

Another commonly heard and very pertinent suggestion to address the predominant ignorance in the academy is hiring more indigenous faculty or inviting them into classrooms as guest lecturers. Although increasing the number of indigenous scholars as faculty could serve as a way of breaking away from the cycle of ignorance, it also presents certain challenges. It may offer for non-Native academics yet another excuse to consider themselves relieved of their responsibilities to Native students (Stein 107). Even if it is absolutely necessary to make the university more reflective of the population and introduce new forms of knowledge and practices, it is important to recognize that these procedures may also reinforce systemic racism and colonial hegemony (cf. Churchill, "White Studies" 251). Systemic racism is perpetuated, for example, if

> the faculty members are seen as Native Informants and/or as qualified to teach
> Aboriginal subject matter *only*; if they are assumed to be responsible for anti-racist
> work in the university, if [they] are used as evidence that the predominantly white
> faculty and the system they inhabit are not involved in systemic racism and that the
> 'work' is done. (Kelly 155-6)

In the same way, inviting Native faculty and faculty of colour as guest speakers in the classroom may at first appear a reassuring and propitious gesture of inclusion. While it is good

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[9] There are also scholars who maintain that Native studies are a comparative field of study "with theories and methodologies that include but extend beyond local cultural interests" (Albers et al. 148) and that the curriculum of these programs needs to serve and teach the widest possible student body.

that there is willingness to be 'inclusive' and offer different perspectives as well as recognition of the expertise of Native faculty and faculty of colour, this recognition may confine and ghettoize this expertise as belonging solely to those groups (Luther et al. 17). It also reveals the ignorance of the rest of the faculty. By continually inviting guest lecturers to speak about issues of race, ethnicity, Native peoples – of 'difference' – sanctions the gaps in knowledge and ignorance of faculty members unmarked by these 'differences.'[10]

Further, relying on indigenous guest speakers may also reinforce the idea that only indigenous people can and should teach indigenous issues (also noted by Vizenor in the next section). As Kelly notes, it "can function to marginalize [indigenous issues] as separate from the Canadian social, historical, and political fabric, and can absolve [non-indigenous academics] from *our responsibility to do the cultural and historical homework* necessary to teach the materials effectively" (156, emphasis added). Therefore, we need to bear in mind also that "Indians are not the only people with knowledge about Indians" (Mihesuah, "Epilogue" 103). This is not to suggest that hiring more indigenous people and inviting them as guest speakers is not crucial. It is important, however, to be aware that these gestures and practices remain inadequate without other, equally important measures and without being aware how these measures and gestures can also function as a means of foreclosing the 'other.'

Teaching 'Tribal Values'

There are a few indigenous scholars who consider teaching their worldviews and philosophies to outsiders not only impossible but also inappropriate because they will inevitably be rejected, misinterpreted, appropriated or misused. Some suggest that all we can ask is respect because it is not possible for others to properly understand indigenous thought and perspectives (Bennett, "Why Didn't" 146). Deloria, who sees a problem in discussing ethnicity and Native cultures in generalized, abstract terms, maintains that "we would be on very thin ice if we purported to

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[10] The problematics of the notion of difference, including the 'politics of difference' is a vast field of research and discussion, ranging from feminism to postcolonial and poststructural theories, and beyond the scope of my current inquiry.

teach what I regarded as the cultural context of Indian life" (*Spirit & Reason* 24, 25, 157). In his view, it would be more important to focus on training better policy-makers for the future by teaching the history of the relationship between Native Americans and the federal government.

The problem of teaching 'tribal values' in a classroom is also addressed by Gerald Vizenor. In his novel *The Trickster of Liberty*, a character in the novel, the director of urban tribal education Marie Gee Hailme, confesses in 'The Last Lecture' how she has been teaching 'biased and amiss' tribal values:

> "My skin is dark," she whispered, "you can see that much, but who, in their right mind, would trust the education of their children to pigmentation?" ... "Who knows how to grow up up like an Indian? Tell me that, and who knows how to teach values that are real Indian? (*Liberty* 109)

An orphan who grew up in a boarding school and is later put in charge of developing classroom materials about 'Indians,' Hailme ends up lecturing about 'Indian' values "to help white teachers understand how Indian students think and why they drop out of school." Once in the classroom, however, a question from a student makes her realize the inherent problem of her assumptions and position:

> 'What kind of Indians are you talking about? There aren't no Indians like that out here on our reservation.' I realized that I was describing an invented tribe, my own tribe that acted out my hang-ups, which had nothing to do with being a person stuck in a public school. (*Liberty* 109)

Though humorous, Vizenor's criticism of unheeded assumptions in teaching 'tribal values' should be taken seriously. First, as Vizenor notes, there hardly is a set of fixed 'Indian' or indigenous values that would have remained unchanged through time or that would be exactly the same from one people (or tribe, nation) to another. Second, any articulation of a set of values is inevitably a generalization if not an idealization and as such, does not apply to every individual even within a group or people. It is always an 'invention' or a construct of some sort even if it does not always have to be a reflection of anybody's personal 'hang-ups' as is the case with Hailme.

Bearing the possible dangers of assumptions of 'tribal values' in mind, it is not, however, entirely false or wrong to argue that there are certain shared principles that characterize

indigenous philosophies and worldviews; principles that could also be called values. The concept of 'value' is, as pointed out in Chapter 2, far from unproblematic. Discussing the (recognition of the) gift of indigenous epistemes in the academy, however, is not the same as teaching 'tribal values.' Suggesting hospitality in and of the academy does not imply or require teaching a fixed set of indigenous values to non-indigenous students. On the other hand, however, openness to and responsibility for the other requires a certain level of recognition of aspects of indigenous epistemes. There also is a pressing need for concepts and tools to deal with complex issues of 'cross-cultural' issues and communication which are not resolved by simply integrating new material into the curriculum.[11]

It would be equally false and misleading to suggest that indigenous epistemes cannot be 'brought' to the academy because in fact, this has already happened and continue to happen in the form of the increasing presence of indigenous people in universities. As will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, without awaiting a welcome or invitation, indigenous epistemes have already crossed the threshold of the academy. This is not the concern of this inquiry. The problem is the prevailing epistemic ignorance resulting in the gift of indigenous epistemes remaining impossible in the academy. But how can we even start addressing ignorance if teaching and knowing about other cultures appears suspect? Below I take a further look at some of the problematic assumptions of liberal multiculturalism.

Liberal Multiculturalism

What actually happens in a typical liberal multicultural classroom 'at its best'? On a given day we are reading a text from one national origin. The group in the classroom from that particular national origin in the general polity can identify with the richness of the texture of the 'culture' in question, often through a haze of nostalgia. (I am not even bringing up the question of the definition of culture.) People from other national

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[11] A good example demonstrating this need is the case that shook a New York City school in 1998 when a white teacher included a book *Nappy Hair* written by an African American scholar Carolivia Herron in her grade 3 class readings. She was well-intentioned but ill-equipped to deal with the complex issues emerging from a narrative on self-esteem that is not as straightforward as the media, for example, presented it (see Scapp, *Teaching Values*, ch. 2, "Happy to be Nappy"). See also Sarris who discusses similar difficulties with regard to bringing traditional Native American stories to a classroom of Native American students.

origins in the classroom (other, that is, than Anglo) relate sympathetically but superficially, in an aura of 'same difference'. The Anglo relates benevolently to everything, 'knowing about other cultures' in a relativist glow. (Spivak, "Teaching" 183)

Teaching cultural codes, rules and values of other people is considered highly objectionable, particularly in critical and anti-racist pedagogy and theory. Scholars in these fields have pointed out that the shift to cultural differences suggests that the history of oppression no longer plays a role in contemporary relations in society. It is argued that the idea of cultural sensitivity – being aware of certain central cultural behaviour of other groups of people – only produces a 'catalogue of cultural differences' while colonial relations remain unaddressed. Focussing on the cultural characteristics of the other suggests that the other is "merely different, rather than oppressed" (Razack, *Looking* 8; see also Ng, "Woman Out of Control" 90). Therefore, Sherene H. Razack argues that "education for social change is not so much about new information as it is about disrupting the hegemonic ways of seeing through which subjects make themselves dominant" (*Looking* 10). She further asserts:

> What makes the cultural differences approach so inadequate in various pedagogical moments is not so much that it is wrong, for people in reality are diverse and do have culturally specific practices that must be taken into account, but that its emphasis on cultural diversity too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place. (*Looking* 9)

This kind of 'harmonious, empty pluralism' results in what Chandra Mohanty calls 'the race industry'; a process which diminishes collective, historical and institutional inequities to individual and psychological levels ("On Race" 198). It implies that dominant discourses are no longer characterized by racism, sexism and other biased, stereotypical attitudes and that "with a little practice and the right information, we can all be innocent subjects, standing outside hierarchical social relations" (Razack, *Looking* 10; see also McIntyre). This is of course not the case – as discussed in chapter 1, various forms of systemic racism continue to exist in the academy where it is manifested through intentional or unintentional discrimination embedded in the procedures, structures, practices and operational culture of the institution.

It is also disturbing how liberal multiculturalism with its discourses on cultural diversity, tolerance and respect are implicated in neoliberal global capitalism. In Spivak's view, liberal multiculturalism

> is an important public relations move in the apparent winning of consent from developing countries in the dominant project of the financialization of the globe.... If we are to question this distorting rationale for multiculturalism while utilizing its material support, we have to recognize also that the virulent backlash from the current *racist* dominant in [the United States] is out of step with contemporary geo-politics. *We* are caught in a larger struggle where one side devises newer ways to exploit transnationality through a distorting culturalism and the other knows rather little what transnational script drives, writes, and operates it. It is within this ignorant clash that we have to find and locate our agency, and attempt, again and again, to unhinge the clashing machinery. ("Teaching" 183)[12]

On the one hand, liberal multiculturalism is endorsed by contemporary global capitalism in the name of economic exploitation of cultures but also of people through the international division of labour. On the other hand, multiculturalism ensures sanctioned ignorance as knowing remains at the superficial level of liberal diversity[13] without making the connections between 'cultural' and 'economic' visible. As Meyda Yegenoglu contends, "the liberal imperative to tolerate and respect culture difference is far from displacing the sovereignty of the host." In her view, "we need to remain vigilant about what is being left intact" in the codification of respect for cultural particularities (n.p.). Elaborating Slavoj Žižek's argument of multiculturalism's eurocentric distance in respecting and tolerating the 'other,' Yegenoglu calls attention to the particular form of racism of multiculturalism which "does not reside in its being against the values of other cultures" but rather, "in respecting and tolerating the different, it maintains a distance which enables it to retain the privileged position of empty universality" (n.p.). Moreover, Elizabeth Povinelli, analyzing the tenets and policies of liberal multiculturalism in the social context of the Australian Aboriginals, suggests that multiculturalism, combined with its colonial legacy, sustains unequal power relations by constructing structures in which

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[12] See also, for example, Dirlik, "The Global in the Local"; Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity" and Žižek, "Multiculturalism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism."

[13] See footnote 9 in Chapter 3.

indigenous people are required to "identify with the impossible object of authentic, self-identity," culture and society (6).

Epistemic ignorance will thus not be addressed by teaching codes of cultural diversity or promoting multicultural respect and (repressive) tolerance. Quite the contrary: in that way, sanctioned ignorance is allowed to flourish unabated. For Spivak, it is within the clash between multiculturalism's complicity in global capitalism and the prevailing sanctioned ignorance where the potential and the possibility for unsettling and dismantling the complex, multilayered hegemonic relations can be found. Following her thought, I suggest that the struggle for transformation in the academy and for forging a new paradigm reflecting the logic of the gift must take place on various levels, including *both* comprehension and learning ('new information') *and* of practices of disrupting hegemonic practices and discourses. Instead of harbouring often too simplistic and highly problematic assumptions of respect, tolerance or learning about other cultures, I suggest that the academy has to start by doing its homework.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOING HOMEWORK

Look, you're an academic. Do your homework.
If I weren't supposed to teach you something, why are you in the class?
(Spivak, Post-Colonial 93)

The necessity of doing one's homework has been discussed in various contexts particularly by Spivak. She links it with unlearning one's privilege and also with the notion of 'unlearning one's learning' – "how to behave as a subject of knowledge within the institution of neocolonial learning" ("Interview" 25). This requires, among other things, addressing one's privilege and the 'ideology of know-nothingism' in a way that would make various forms of elite racism visible. It also requires critically examining one's beliefs, biases and assumptions and understanding how they have risen and become naturalized in the first place. Unlearning

one's privilege implies an analysis of the commonplace 'moves of innocence' which claim the right to not know (cf. McIntyre).[14]

Further, unlearning privilege is closely linked with 'unteaching.' In many cases, instructors of various indigenous studies programs, for example, spend a lot of time 'unteaching' the ideological baggage and previous misinformation with which many non-indigenous students come to the classes (Moore 298). While important, this 'unteaching' may shift the focus away from issues that indigenous people consider relevant, thus embodying the politics of distraction. Therefore, instead of allowing dominant, neocolonial and repressive discourses to occupy and monopolize these and also other spaces of knowledge – and thus, to produce indigenous academic homelessness (Monture-Angus, "Homeless") – we need to hold the academy at large responsible for committing itself to hospitality.

Instead of disavowing responsibility by simplistic breast-beating that allows business to go on as usual, Spivak urges 'the holders of hegemonic discourse' to "de-hegemonize their position and themselves learn how to occupy the subject position of the other rather than simply say, 'O.K., sorry, we are just very good white people, therefore we do not speak for the [other]'" (*Post-Colonial* 121). Instead of taking a position of the 'politically correct' dominant who argue that they can no longer speak, one has to examine the historical circumstances and articulate one's own participation in the formation that created this and other forms of silencing (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 42-3). One simply has to take a risk since "to say 'I won't criticize' is salving your conscience, and allowing you not to do any homework" (Spivak, *Post-Colonial* 62-3; see also *Critique* 284).

For Spivak, doing homework is also a continuous practice to find out as much as possible about the areas where the scholar takes risks. In teaching, this would mean knowing the field as well as possible and familiarizing oneself with the main texts and arguments of the

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[14] More recently, Spivak has modified her call for unlearning one's privilege to 'learning to learn from below' (discussed below). The reason for this change was her realization "of the sheer narcissism of the practical politics of unlearning one's privilege" ("Transformation" 121).

area ("Maailma" 21).[15] It also entails checking one's "theoretical presuppositions by testing them in areas as unlike the institutions of learning/certification/validation/information retrieval as possible" (Spivak, "Interview" 25). Put another way, we have to take our theories and academic work out to our various communities and see if they work when put into practice.

The most critical aspect of doing homework in the context of ignorance toward indigenous epistemes is, however, the subtle shift from 'knowing the other' to learning. This shift takes place in ways of discerning the question of epistemic ignorance. Rather than assuming the possibility of knowing the other, we need to learn to think in a different light. Instead of thinking that 'we must know' or even 'we are entitled to know' – positions that, by retaining the sense of ownership as well as distance, allow very little room for hospitality, the gift or reciprocity – the academy needs to draw a difference, however provisional, between knowing and learning (cf. Spivak, "Teaching" 181).[16]

This may sound too obvious to many – after all, isn't learning one of the main pillars of the academy in the first place? Even today, when universities emphasize the 'need' to cooperate with government, business and industry (cf. UBC Trek 2010), open-minded learning still ranks high in their priorities. The University of British Columbia, for example, strives to provide "a learning environment that will inspire and enable individuals to grow intellectually, recognize their social responsibilities, be prepared to live and work in a global environment, and achieve personal fulfillment" (*UBC Trek 2000*, 6). One of the goals is also to offer "education that takes advantage of our unique social and cultural make-up" (*UBC Trek 2000*, 6).[17] The predominant liberal (and hegemonic) academic discourse also maintains that universities are the most appropriate places to develop mutual respect and "an understanding and appreciation of 'the other'" (Axtell 72). This is particularly because in this discourse, universities and colleges

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[15] While this may sound obvious to teachers and educators, it should not be taken for granted. bell hooks, for instance, argues that educators are poorly prepared to confront diversity. "This is why so many of us stubbornly cling to old patterns" (hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* 41). The same sentiment is shared by Pamela Courtenay-Hall, above.

[16] Writes Spivak: "Without falling into too strict an adherence, to the iron distinction between the constative and the performative, I still have to hang onto a working difference between knowing about something and learning to do something" ("Teaching" 181).

[17] Left perhaps purposefully unspecified, one can wonder what 'taking advantage' might imply in this context. Should we understand it as 'drawing upon' and 'benefitting' or 'exploiting' and 'abusing'?

are considered "an intense, voluntary field of personal and cultural encounter" where "students are thrown together in close quarters with several thousand self-selected and usually friendly 'others' in a relatively safe environment where speech and thought are ideally free and intellectual stretching is encouraged by parents, faculty, and society at large" but also because this 'intellectual stretching' is done through philosophical inquiry (Axtell 72-3).

As the discussion above and in previous chapters demonstrates, this kind of description of the academy has been, however, challenged by many scholars who would note that such rhetoric is only possible from white male academics who have not done their homework in any field (cf. Mihesuah, "Trenches" 22). Arguments like those by Axtell, however, are repeatedly employed as the standard reply of the academy to the call for its responsibility toward the other. There is a need, therefore, to stress time and again that developing an understanding and appreciation of 'the other' is an inadequate, irresponsible response. As argued by some, it is a reflection of a specific type of racism which allows the dominant to occupy the position of universality whereas the others are particular and partial (Lloyd 70; see also Žižek; Yegenoglu). By means of distancing, the dominant takes the position of privilege and is able to dissociate from the active commitment of a relationship, of reciprocation.

Instead of multicultural 'appreciation of the other,' Spivak proposes 'transnational literacy' which allows a reading of 'stylistically noncompetitive' writings without attempts of forced comparisons ("Teaching" 194). In indigenous contexts, a practice of 'transnational literacy' ought to be applied to learning in general in a way that would assist in avoiding the temptations of the colonial containment – whether arrogant or benevolent – of the 'other' and remind the learners to guard against superficial, stereotypical cultural representations and constructions. 'Transnational literacy' would, in the context of learning from indigenous epistemes, also seek to escape idealistic and simplistic assumptions of the 'race industry' by acknowledging the impossibility of uncomplicated understanding of other epistemes (i.e., assumptions of the transparency, homogeneity or uncomplicated identity and representation of the 'other').

The responsibility of what Spivak calls ethical singularity requires a recognition of the agency in others that is different from a distorted version of liberal multiculturalism embedded

in and determined by the demands of contemporary transnational capitalisms ("Teaching" 182, 183). She elaborates:

> We all know that when we engage profoundly with *one* person, the responses – the answers – come from both sides. Let us call this responsibility, as well as 'answer'ability or accountability.... Yet on both sides, there is always a sense that something has not got across. This is what we call the secret, not something that one wants to conceal, but something that one wants desperately to reveal in this relationship of singularity and responsibility and accountability. (*Critique* 384)

To establish ethical singularity with the subaltern requires painstaking effort that goes beyond speaking for the 'oppressed.' It is an intimate, individual engagement with the 'other' which occurs in non-essential, non-totalizing and non-crisis terms. Below, I take a look at considerations of responsibility, another central aspect of the logic of the gift.

The Concept of Responsibility

Responsibility is a concept often heard in the academic discourse and regularly employed by a variety of individuals and sectors ranging from those who challenge the neocolonial, hegemonic structures of the academy to administrators who are seen as representatives of those structures and paradigms. Very rarely, however, one hears an elaboration of what is actually meant by the concept; what is actually expected and envisioned when we speak of responsibility. Besides the rhetoric of responsibility, there has emerged, since the early 1990s, a relatively new trend of demanding accountability of universities to the government and society at large.[18] In Canada, this includes new schemes and models of accountability, performance indicators and the Ontario Task Force on University Accountability (1993) which "supports the trend that sees 'ultimate responsibility' for an institution reside in a board of governors that monitors the

[18] In his *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, Derek Bok discusses some of the social responsibilities the university is considered to have to the larger society and state. While the 'social activists' generally support the role of the university in providing services to society, traditionalists promote academic instead of social responsibilities and argue that "the wholesale effort to serve society's needs has exposed higher education to pressures and temptations that threaten to corrupt academic values" (Bok, *Beyond* 67). For Bok, the academic responsibilities include basic scientific inquiry, humanistic scholarship, the analysis of society and its institutions; i.e., "contributions of lasting importance" (*Beyond* 69).

universities' adoption of objectives set by outside political appointees" (Emberley 129). In Peter Emberley's view, "[a]ccountability, in this state of affairs, becomes little more than means to bring universities more under the direction of government, because representatives of the academic community on boards of governors are deliberately kept in a minority" (129). This kind of accountability is, of course, quite different from the discussion of my inquiry and there is no need to further delve into it in this context.

Rodolphe Gasché argues that "[t]here is perhaps no theme more demanding than that of 'responsibility'" (*Inventions* 227). A normative definition in western tradition views responsibility "as a mechanical application of a framework of rules that simultaneously relieves the subject of the onus of decision and, hence, of all liability" (Gasché, *Inventions* 227). On the other hand, responsibility implies a responsible response which can take place "only if the decision is truly a decision, not a mechanical reaction to, or an effect of, a determinate cause" (*Inventions* 227). Gasché further notes that considering responsibility involves a number of risks and thus, "[a] responsible discourse on responsibility can indeed only assert itself in the mode of a 'perhaps'" (*Inventions* 228).

For Heidegger, responsibility is "a response to which one commits oneself" (Gasché, *Inventions* 228).[19] This idea of responsiveness or respondence is further explicated by Spivak whose notion of responsibility reflects Bakhtin's articulation of 'answerability.'[20] She proposes that response "involves not only 'respond to,' as in '*give* an answer to,' but also the related situations of 'answering to,' as in being responsible for a name (this brings up the question of the relationship between being responsible for/to ourselves and for/to others); of being answerable..." ("Responsibility" 22). Responsibility signifies the act of response which completes the transaction of speaker and listener, as well as the ethical stance of making discursive space for the 'other' to exist. For Spivak, "ethics are not just a problem of

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[19] On considerations of responsibility stemming from the western philosophical tradition, see, for example, French, ed, *The Spectrum of Responsibility*.

[20] See also Bakhtin's philosophy of answerability in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and *Art and Answerability*. Bakhtin's concept is discussed, for instance, by Nielsen, *The Norms of Answerability*. Central to this concept is the creative dimension of action and the question, how should we act toward other cultures? Nielsen notes that for Bakhtin, "[a]ction is more than an intelligent reasoned response to a problem or situation. The act or deed has the two-sided form of answerability" (136-7).

knowledge but a call to a relationship" (*Spivak Reader* 5). If responsibility cannot be merely mechanical expectation to answer, what does it mean, then, to call for a willingness to give a response and for an ability to response (i.e., response-ability)?

Responsibility necessitates knowledge. It requires knowing how to respond but also act in a responsible manner. Derrida suggests that "not knowing, having neither a sufficient knowledge or consciousness of what being *responsible* means, is of itself a lack of responsibility" (*Gift* 25). If knowledge is a prerequisite for responsibility, ignorance presents a serious threat to responsible, response-able behaviour and thinking. Moreover, responsibility demands action:

> if it is true that the concept of responsibility has, in the most reliable continuity of its history, always implied involvement in action, doing, a *praxis*, a *decision* that exceeds simple conscience or simple theoretical understanding, it is also true that the same concept requires a decision or responsible action to answer for itself *consciously*, that is, with knowledge of a thematics of what is done, of what action signifies, its causes, ends, etc. (Derrida, *Gift* 25)

Responsibility as action beyond theorizing poses a possibility of am interruption: "there is no responsibility without a dissident and inventive rupture with respect to tradition, authority, orthodoxy, rule, or doctrine" (Derrida, *Gift* 27). Responsibility as a rupture of tradition may sound at odds with indigenous perceptions and practices of responsibility which emphasize the *continuance* of tradition. However, no tradition is static, remaining unchanged throughout history, as indigenous people also repeatedly stress particularly when confronted by irresponsible demands for authenticity. There has always been a rupture, both inventive (usually from within) and intrusive, interventionist (usually from without).[21] In the context of the academy, responsibility with an inventive rupture implies, first and foremost, the ability of interrupting the self, of moving beyond the 'I' as the ethical subject (*Derrida*, Adieu 52), an issue examined in detail in the following chapter.

Indigenous people familiar with their epistemes and cultural and social practices usually are aware of their responsibilities embedded in the network of various relationships as discussed in previous chapters. They know what consists of a responsible action in a certain

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[21] There are also indigenous traditions that are in need of revision. See, for example, Eikjok, "The Struggle" and LaRocque, "Re-examining."

situation or context and most likely carry out their responsibilities accordingly. Similarly, when discussing the hospitality of the academy, indigenous people have their particular responsibilities. One of them is the responsibility to be willing to engage with the endeavour of hospitality even if it may not always be the priority or something that we would like to take part in. As pointed out by Monture-Angus: "I must continually balance my sense of responsibility against feeling like I am perpetuating the silence around certain exclusions by deciding not to participate" (*Thunder* 55). If the call for the recognition of the gift necessitates reciprocity and ethical singularity, indigenous people cannot, just like the rest of the academy, dissociate or withdraw from this process. This should not however, be emphasized too much. Focussing on responsibilities of indigenous people may easily become another union ticket for the academy to turn a blind eye to *its* responsibilities.[22] On too many occasions, the apparent unwillingness to participate by indigenous people has served as a convenient excuse for disengaging, for blaming the other and most of all, for not examining the reasons for such unwillingness.

This is where the first piece of homework of the academy lies – to be able to take on responsibility as an institution at large but also as individuals within the institution. Without this other steps remain impossible. Although the academy is prone to list its responsibilities in its lofty vision statements and to call for the responsibilities of students and researchers (see, e.g., UBC Trek 2010), we frequently witness the unwillingness of the institution *itself* to respond, to be answerable and take action. Instead of opening up toward the other, the representatives who feel implicated become defensive or remain silent. As Derrida notes in the above quote, responsibility links consciousness with conscience. It is inadequate to merely know one's responsibilities; one also has to be conscious of the consequences of one's actions. Without conscience, there is a risk of the arrogance of a 'clean conscience.'

Derrida further calls for "new ways of taking responsibility" in the academy which go beyond and are critical of the professionalization of the university ("Reason" 15, 17). These new ways would signify rethinking the university institution, examining its disciplinary structures and in particular, "a new way of educating students that will prepare them to undertake new analyses" ("Reason" 16). Moreover, the "new responsibilities cannot be

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[22] This is also the reason that I will not focus on this issue in this inquiry.

purely academic. If they remain extremely difficult to assume, extremely precarious and threatened, it is because they must at once keep alive the memory of a tradition and make an opening beyond any program, that is, toward what is called the future" (Derrida, "Reason" 16).

LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS EPISTEMES

There is no single, uncomplicated and exhaustive answer to the complex question of 'knowing the other.' The gift of indigenous epistemes must be recognized and received appropriately, even if it might not be possible to fully grasp the logic of the gift. A 'full comprehension' may not only prove impossible but also to ask for it may represent a colonizing, totalizing attempt to contain the other. In academic discourses and practices, it is necessary to bear in mind that while historically, knowing indigenous peoples has been an integral part of colonization, there is nevertheless an urgent need to raise the level of recognition of indigenous epistemes.

By shifting from the arrogance of knowing to learning, we also need to ask, as Spivak does, "What is it to learn, what does it mean to learn?" This might involve, among other things, "trying to learn outside of the traditional instruments of learning" (Spivak, "Interview" 25). But even that on its own is not adequate. Learning from indigenous epistemes also requires that "minds trained in the Euro-centered ways of knowing" would be willing and prepared to stretch into a different mode of understanding and perceiving the world and our relationship in it, "into the narrative nature of native being/knowing" (Kremer, "Indigenous Science" 3). This kind of a shift from the linearity and monocausality of dominant discourses might prove to be a serious challenge for the academy but it might also present the only viable strategy to approach the question of epistemic ignorance in a way that attempts to remain mindful of colonial legacies of knowing. What becomes absolutely necessary in such a process is *learning to learn* (cf. Spivak, *Critique* 391). Spivak contends:

I have no doubt that we *must learn to learn* from the original practical ecological philosophies of the world. Again, I am not romanticizing... We are talking about using the strongest *mobilizing discourse* in the world in a certain way, for the globe, not merely for Fourth World uplift. I say this again because it is so easy to dismiss this as quixotic moralism. This learning can only be attempted through the supplementation of collective effort by love. What deserves the name of love in an effort – over which one has no control yet at which one must not strain – which is slow, attentive on both sides – how does one win the attention of the subaltern without coercion or crisis? – *mindchanging on both sides*, at the possibility of an unascertainable ethical singularity that is not ever a sustainable condition. (*Critique* 383, emphasis added)

The 'original practical ecological philosophies of the world' – indigenous epistemes and philosophies – not only can teach how to learn but they also can function as a powerful mobilizing discourse for the entire world, not only indigenous peoples. Maybe this is what Luther Standing Bear also had in mind over hundred years ago; that 'white people' (or 'holders of hegemonic discourse') learning about indigenous philosophies and epistemes would not benefit only indigenous peoples but even more so 'white people' themselves who are not usually forced (like many others) to know other ways of thinking and perceiving the world in the same way that peoples and groups of non-dominant positions in society are (cf. Momaday's quote in the previous chapter).

Learning to learn from indigenous epistemes could indeed become the strongest mobilizing discourse *in* and *for* the world – mobilizing in dismantling epistemic ignorance but also in addressing the more mainstream goals of contemporary academy such as equity and sustainability (cf. UBC Trek 2010). We should not, however, be fooled thinking that these vast concerns could be appropriately addressed (never mind solved) by simply shifting from knowing to learning. Learning to learn is complicated by many of the same questions and issues discussed above. A good example of some of the difficulties could be drawn from discourses of sustainability which are an interesting newcomer in academic vision statements. It is also a topic that has received serious attention, particularly by scholars within environmental discourse which uses the current ecological crisis as its basis for consideration. Moreover, for many, there is a natural link between environmental and indigenous discourses as both of them share a concern for what is often called the 'land ethic.'

In his book *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture*, C. A. Bowers focuses on the role of education in recent efforts to create a sustainable society. In particular, he engages with a challenge that has become, in recent years, the focus of many academic and non-academic discourses alike: the revoking of the destructive, modern view of the world. Calling for a fundamental change in moral and environmental education, his suggestions include employing indigenous philosophies and practices as models in education for a more sustainable future.

Bowers urges a change that would transform current values and taken-for-granted beliefs such as materialism, consumerism, individualism, progress and anthropocentrism to an ecologically-based view of intelligence. In his own words, there is an urgent need to challenge "the cognitive principles that now guide the most recent educational reform efforts" (14). As Bowers' analysis demonstrates, such principles reinforce the modern cultural assumptions according to which every technological innovation is an expression of progress and tradition stands in the way of this development.

While extremely timely and necessary points, there are, however, several important issues that remain unanalyzed in Bowers' ambitious and significant project. It could be argued that the limitations of Bowers' work derive from his Eurocentric approach that privileges the present, prevalent in much environmental discourse. He discusses the ecological crisis but the destruction of the environment is articulated in terms of the well-being of the West, not the socio-political conditions of indigenous peoples who suffer even more from the lack of 'land ethic' of the mainstream society. Although his project is ultimately about the long-term sustainability of (supposedly all) ecosystems, the problem is framed in terms of "the survival of the culture" (15). Bowers does not elaborate whose culture he is discussing but clearly, he is talking about his own cultural and philosophical foundations (see Bowers 5).

The question that remains unanswered, then is, would "ecological sustainability of cultural patterns" (Bowers 49) or a 'land ethic' resolve the expropriation of indigenous peoples' land and recognition of other people's right to self-determination (i.e., to land)? Will it address the expropriation of Native lands? If these questions are not on the agenda, it is obvious that the framework of environmental discourse is problematically eurocentric. Environment cannot be separated from questions of history and politics. Environment does not exist outside

politics and history – which means that any discussion of environment and its destruction needs to start with the basic question of what and whose 'environment' we are talking about.

Some scholars have considered this link, and many indigenous people in particular have called for the recognition of colonization as a fundamental aspect of the domination of nature (e.g., Smith, "Anticolonial"). Val Plumwood also points out that different human groups do not "have equal responsibility for and benefit equally from the destruction of nature" (12). For her, human domination and human hierarchy are aspects of the same oppression. She writes: "Human domination of nature wears a garment cut from the same cloth as intra-human domination, but one which, like each of the others, has a specific form and shape of its own" (13). Also the "Dialogue Paper of Indigenous People for the World Summit on Sustainable Development" asserts that the accelerating loss and degradation of lands is directly linked to the worsening impoverishment and loss of livelihoods of indigenous peoples and vice versa. Environmental discourse for the most part, however, seems to ignore this link which for (at least) indigenous people is so central that it is inappropriate and irresponsible to talk about one without the other.

Considered from this perspective, Bowers' suggestion of employing indigenous philosophies or spiritualities as models for sustainable education raises several problems. First, discussing indigenous worldviews without recognizing the effects of various colonization processes ossifies them into the archaic past that also plagues some of the considerations of the gift. Second, there is a danger of simplification of these values and practices once they are detached from their social, political and cultural contexts. Finally, failing to consider how indigenous philosophies were negated, suppressed and inferiorized by white settlers and denied by the establishment (and enforcement) of modern values denies the western complicity in this process. A flight to the unproblematized and conflict-free past, the avoidance of present realities of all parties and the ways in which the injustices of the past continue in our present cannot offer solutions that are required for a sustainable change (or for that matter, a sustainable future).

Andy Smith's (Cherokee) critique of environmental and ecofeminist movements that lack an anticolonial dimension is very insightful in this regard. In her view, these movements

pay tribute to indigenous peoples and their land-centered ways of life, use them as inspirational symbols and quote them but decline to join the struggle for survival of these peoples or "do not adequately discuss the material conditions in which Indian people live, how these conditions affect non-Indians, and what strategies we can employ to stop the genocide of Indian people and end the destructive forms of resource development on Indian land" ("Anticolonial" 30). This seems to be what Bowers also does – employ Native Americans and other indigenous peoples as inspiration without engaging to respond to their concerns – when he considers "the use of these cultural groups as models for evolving *our own* ecologically sustainable form of culture" (5, emphasis added).

The practice of using indigenous philosophies as models for the dominant discourse also often conveniently ignores the disparate access to this discourse as well as power relations in society that render indigenous philosophies in the margins; philosophies and epistemes that do not 'speak' as equals in academic and other discourses. Perhaps the most serious shortcoming in using indigenous peoples as models for reconstructing modern metanarratives, however, is the lack of recognition for reciprocity reflected in indigenous philosophies. Bowers calls for an acquirement of indigenous peoples' 'land ethic' but he ignores or fails to recognize and practice the central and crucial aspect of this 'ethic': the principle of giving (back) and reciprocating. As a result, his use of indigenous teachings as educational models indicates the same exploitation that he is critical of himself, only at another level.

The mobilizing discourse of learning to learn from indigenous epistemes, therefore, must and cannot be limited to solely increasing understanding, changing attitudes or using indigenous philosophies as convenient models. Learning to learn from indigenous epistemes can become a mobilizing discourse for everybody only if it simultaneously addresses the systemic power inequalities and hegemony which continue to prevent hospitality and make the gift impossible. It cannot turn a blind eye to the responsibilities of the academy, including unlearning one's privilege which is, as noted by Spivak, a central aspect of doing one's homework. An important part of this learning to learn is also viewing indigenous epistemes and thus the logic of the gift "not only as repositories of cultural nostalgia but also as part of the geopolitical present" (Spivak, *Critique* 402). In other words, indigenous philosophies such as

the logic of the gift are not an aspect of archaic societies but something that continues to shape people's behaviour, practices and thinking today. The homework that remains to be done by the academy, then, includes the reconsideration of its epistemological and ontological assumptions, structures and prejudices.

My insistence that indigenous epistemes must be perceived as a gift to the academy is grounded in a conviction that only in this way is it possible to forge a new relationship between 'dominant' (modern, western) and 'other' epistemes. Recognizing that indigenous epistemes are a gift is the first step toward receiving this gift and therefore, also understanding the logic of the gift. Only by grasping the logic of the gift – a different way of relating – can we bring forth and call for the recognition of certain concepts such as responsibility and reciprocity as understood and practiced in many indigenous epistemes.

There are, however, certain dangers in suggesting that indigenous epistemes need to be perceived as a gift to the academy. The gift is not an exchange, a credit or a form of limited give-and-take, but something which implies unconditionality and other-orientation. In the context of a long history of appropriation, exploitation and more recently, commodification of various forms of indigenous knowledge, however, the idea of indigenous people giving their epistemes freely, without expectations of a return is not only foolish but risky and dangerous. Further, to propose a free gift may appear to squarely oppose the principles and codes of conduct formulated by indigenous scholars and communities for the protection of indigenous knowledge. One could even argue that it is entirely unreasonable and inappropriate to suggest that now that indigenous peoples have finally gained some control over their epistemologies and intellectual property through both their own mechanisms as well as national and international laws and regimes, we should again start giving freely.

In the current trend of accelerating commodification and commercialization of academic institutions, universities not only do not observe the logic of the gift, but they are moving to the other extreme where knowledge is increasingly defined through profit (cf. e.g., Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace*). This is one of the many reasons why alternative paradigms and mobilizing discourses are not only welcome but timely and indispensable. The gift remains impossible in circumstances that do not observe and follow the logic of the gift characterized by

commitment and participation in reciprocal responsibilities. As long as these circumstances do not exist, indigenous epistemes cannot be given as a gift. The gift remains impossible also as long as receiving and giving is framed in terms of 'owing' (as in the idea that the academy owes to indigenous peoples) or 'earning' (as in the idea that the academy has to earn the gift of indigenous peoples). This kind of terminology distorts and misrepresents the idea of the gift, construing it in terms of the exchange paradigm. In the gift logic, gifts are not and cannot be earned. One is given a gift which is an act followed by a responsibility to recognize it – i.e., not take it for granted – and to receive it according to certain responsibilities. Only by understanding the gift as an expression of the responsibility toward the other, we foreground the law of hospitality.

While hospitality, an unconditional welcome, would certainly make a difference to indigenous people (and to their gift) in the academy, it also affects and binds the academy itself. First, as a (self-proclaimed) host, the academy has to act upon its greater responsibilities toward the guest. Second, as Parker Palmer suggests,

> hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest.... By offering hospitality, one participates in the endless reweaving of a social fabric on which all can depend – thus the gift of sustenance for the guest becomes a gift of hope for the host. It is that way in teaching as well: the teacher's hospitality to the student results in a world more hospitable to the teacher. (50)[23]

In the following chapter, we finally arrive at the threshold of hospitality, considering questions such as: How should the gift be welcomed to the academy in a responsible and responsive way? What is the principle of hospitality that would give an unconditional welcome that could begin addressing the issue of epistemic ignorance?

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[23] See also Alan Bleakley who suggests a practice of teaching based on a gift economy and feminine ethics of care instead of the current model of a market economy and commodity exchange. According to this model, teaching is constructed as a gift given freely "through recognition of difference and resistance to totalising the other through identity" (82).

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARD ACADEMIC HOSPITALITY

What is hospitality? Mirelle Rosello suggests that it would be unreasonable to attempt to quantify hospitality or to reduce it "either to publically formulated definitions or to social practices that either confirm or contradict such definitions" (6). In her view, hospitality is

> made up of the untotalizable sum of individual or collective social practices, as well as of the layer of statements that comment on and judge the practices in question.... Simultaneously, hospitality also exists through constantly reinvented practices of everyday life that individuals borrow from a variety of traditions – from what their parents have taught them, from what they identify as their own traditional background – and practices that are sometimes similar to, sometimes different from, a supposedly shared norm. (6-7)

For indigenous peoples, hospitality is manifested through various social and cultural practices. Initial forms of hospitality formed, according to Delores J. Huff (Cherokee), the 'bedrock of cultural pluralism' on the North American continent (154). Further, the logic of the gift in indigenous philosophies foreground many of the principles and conventions of hospitality.

It is a relatively well-known, though inadequately acknowledged fact that early settlers and colonizers – who were not only foreigners and strangers but absolute, unknown and anonymous others – arriving on the continent today known as North America were in many cases presented with an unconditional welcome by various indigenous peoples who had been living on the continent for generations. Though unique in different regions and taking place in different periods of time, the history of first contact and early encounters between indigenous peoples and newcomers also shares many similarities across the globe, manifested in trade, conflict and conquest, intermarriage and politics characterized by 'gift diplomacy' of sealing

agreements and alliances with other peoples (Dickason 76-8).[1]

The hosts welcomed the *arrivants*[2] , the guests, and treated them according their laws of hospitality without which many newcomers would not have survived and prospered (Carter 33-6).[3] In many cases, however, this welcome turned against the hosts. As the advisor to the Aztec leader Montezuma observed, the people welcoming the strangers began to 'suffer a great mystery' – mystery because the disruptive and destructive behaviour and mentality of the newcomers were consistently at odds with the hospitality of those welcoming them (Sokolow 67; see also King, *First Peoples* 31-4). Ron Ignace (Shuswap) points out how hospitality of his people was ultimately abused and exploited by the 'guests':

> We invited [non-Native people] in freely and openly as guests to our house – we view the Shuswap country and Shuswap people traditionally as living one house, one nation, one language, one culture. We felt that when a person came into our house, we treated them very specially. ... we shared with them our riches, whether in the form of our cultural riches or the riches that come from our land. ... Non-Natives were free to come in and share what we have. You can live on half of our land base, providing that you recognize whose house you are living in and respect that relationship. We will equally respect you and freely share our wealth. To come in and live with us and develop friendships and ties, just as countries develop treaties with other nations and other countries. That's one fashion in which we would do that. This is why we're very cautious because when we originally did that, somehow we wound up being kicked out of our house and being placed into the woodshed. We lost control over our house. Now we live in the woodshed while other people live in our house, and live well in our house. (174)

In many First Nations communities, the violation of the laws of hospitality was usually

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[1] It is important, however, to differentiate between gifts and bribes or early settlers giving to the Natives in order to make allies. As argued in the chapter on the gift, this kind of giving is informed by the ideology of exchange and characterized by self-interest.

[2] Derrida observes: "if the new *arrivant* who arrives is new, one must expect ... that he [sic] does not simply cross a given threshold. Such an *arrivant* affects the very experience of the threshold" (*Aporias* 33). This certainly was the case with the colonizers and I would suggest, should, conversely, be the case when the arrivant is indigenous epistemes in the academy.

[3] Dickason notes that indigenous peoples in Canada, for instance, all observed the law of hospitality which "could be carried to the point of self-impoverishment" as in the case of potlatch – a characteristic which was not considered a virtue by Europeans (79-80). One could, of course, argue that to consider potlatching 'self-impoverishment' is to place it in a foreign framework of analysis which only takes places value on the accumulation of material possessions (capitalism).

considered a crime (Dickason 79-80). Often the newcomers did not, however, comply with the local laws of hospitality, offending their hosts by their greed, avarice and refusal to participate and reciprocate in the ceremonies (Dickason 128; Sokolow 67). This was also the case with the initial encounters between the Maori and Europeans. The arrivants were welcomed according to the Maori welcoming ceremony, *powhiri*, characterized by several formalities seeking to find out the intentions of the visitor and welcome them if they were arriving with good intentions. The approaching visitors were first greeted by challengers performing the *haka* (Maori war dance) which was meant to intimidate. As Ann Salmond notes, while the caution was necessary, "they were part of the traditional rituals of encounter and not necessarily hostile" (*Hui* 19). Europeans who were not aware of the procession of the welcoming ceremonies often responded with fire. Strangers who failed to engage in the ceremonies in an appropriate manner were treated as enemies and attacked (Salmond, *Hui* 15, 19).

These and other examples illustrate how the ethics of (infinite) hospitality is turned into politics of (finite) hospitality by the arrogance of the guest, the absolute other who is welcomed as a guest by a gesture of unquestioning hospitality marked by sharing 'what we have' (cf. Derrida, *Adieu* 18, 19).[4] The guest becomes an enemy who ultimately imposes himself (and occasionally, herself) as a colonial host. Spivak has supplemented Derrida's characterization of the foreigner (i.e., exiles, the deported, the expelled, the rootless, the stateless, lawless nomads, absolute foreigners) with the category of the colonizer as guest ("Resident Alien" 54). Rosello in turn discusses cannibalistic forms of hospitality and suggests that the host devours the guest (29-32).[5] In the instance described by Ignace, for example, it is the other way round: the guest-cum-enemy, devours the host by taking over, by becoming the 'guest-master' of the house.[6]

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[4] Derrida notes the 'constant collusion' between hospitality and power, suggesting that as hospitality, in the conventional sense, cannot exist without finitude, a limit, it can "only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence." Therefore, "a certain injustice, and even certain perjury, begins right away, from the very threshold of the right to hospitality" (*Of Hospitality* 55). The practices of hospitality, then, could also be viewed as unavoidable acts of power and control manifested both in private and public or official spheres in society.

[5] Recognizing the similarity between certain forms of hospitality and cannibalism is important as it offers an insight to the aspect of power embedded in a guest-host relationship.

[6] This is also a reversal of the process suggested by Spivak for whom "enemy [is] turned guest, and, finally, enemy turned host" (Spivak, "Resident Alien" 54).

Infinite or radical hospitality, on the other hand, exceeds invitation and thus consists of receiving, welcoming without invitation (Derrida, "Hostipitality" 360). The first hospitality is to go beyond the capacity of oneself, to open to the other infinitely. Emmanuel Levinas argues,

> To approach the Other in discourse, is to welcome his [sic] expression, in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to *receive* from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Discourse, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this discourse is a teaching. (*Talmudic* 48)[7]

This is what many indigenous peoples did to the foreigner and the absolute other who was received as a stranger but also as a guest.[8] They were eager to welcome the other because they wanted to learn from the stranger, to be open to the other and to be taught. Moreover, it is suggested that in many cases, Europeans were first considered to have a special relationship with the spirit world due to their apparent powers and novel material goods (Sokolow 66). Naturally, the hosts were keen to share the powers and knowledge of their guests.

Émile Benveniste examines the etymology of 'hospitality' and notes that 'guest' in Latin is called *hospes* and *hostis*. The term "*hospes* goes back to **hosti-pet-s*. The second component alternates with *pot-* which signifies 'master,' so that the literal sense of *hospes* is 'the guest-master'" (Benveniste, *Indo-European* 72). In Benveniste's view, this is an unusual combination. In the context of indigenous-colonial relations, it makes perfect sense as illustrated in the account by Ignace. It could be even suggested that this is the situation where indigenous people find themselves in the contemporary academy which has become the guest-master. The ambivalence of hospitality is further complicated by the etymological genealogy that connects hospitality to hostility. The Latin root *hostis* signifies not only the host and hospitality but also

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[7] Drawing on Levinas, Derrida argues, "hospitality is infinite or it is not at all; it is granted upon the welcoming of the idea of infinity, and thus of the unconditional, and it is on the basis of its opening that one can say, as Levinas will a bit further on, that 'ethics is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy'" (*Adieu* 48). The idea of open-mindedness also characterizes John Dewey's notion of hospitality, signifying "an attitude of mind which actively welcomes suggestions and relevant information from all sides" (182).

[8] Stranger also because of their strange appearance and peculiar habits – the dominant discourse is saturated with accounts of the explorers and others about the strangeness of indigenous peoples but only more recently more attention has been paid to the fact that people from overseas appeared equally strange to their hosts (see e.g., King, *First Peoples* 30-5; Sokolow 64-6).

hostility and hostage. The *hostis* is thus both a host and an enemy.

Hospitality is commonly understood as various practices of welcoming guests into a space that is considered, in a way or another, belonging to the host, whether an individual or a group of people. Like the gift, hospitality implies a relationship and is other-oriented in the sense that both hosts and guests are expected to look to the well-being and needs of the other. Like the gift, hospitality requires reciprocity, a contract between two individuals, groups or entities. Benveniste insists on the 'reciprocity of the commitment' in which "the foreigner doesn't only have a right, he or she also has, reciprocally, obligations..." (qtd. in Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 23). Both the host and guest have certain responsibilities in order to make hospitality possible. Yet on the other hand, these responsibilities at the same time limit and prohibit the very idea of hospitality. This is a similar paradox we have already noted in the gift: "For to be what it 'must' be, hospitality must not pay a debt, or be governed by a duty" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 83).

In order for hospitality to be hospitality – that is, not a mere duty – it must be unconditional. Derrida thus suggests a twofold nature of hospitality. On the one hand, there are the laws (in the plural) of hospitality – the conditions, norms, rights and duties imposed on hosts and guests. These laws signify the various practices and conventions which we usually think of when referring to hospitality (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 23-5). Various laws of hospitality are often ethnically encoded and may clash, even violently, in situations where "individuals are represented as belonging to separate 'cultures,' separate 'communities'" (Rosello 65). Assumptions of a simple coexistence of different modes of monolithic hospitality – that forms of hospitality can remain separate and uninfluenced by one another – are, however, too simplistic. Laws of hospitality vary even within a cultural or national group along, for instance, gender and class lines.[9]

In addition to the laws of hospitality, Derrida argues that there is *the* law of hospitality; the unconditionality which requires an unquestioning welcome. Absolute hospitality asks for

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[9] This does not mean that we ought not to compare practices of hospitality within or between groups. In Rosello's view, "as long as we do not assume that individuals are naturally, biologically bound to a given pattern" generalizations can be useful as they may help us to grasp radically different expectations with regard to hospitality. Further, generalizations should not be dismissed as myths not least because "myths are part of a national [or epistemic?] legacy that in practice determines what is acceptable or unacceptable" (Rosello 66).

opening up one's home, giving not only to the foreigner but to the "absolute, unknown, anonymous other, ... that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 25).[10] Contradicting the laws of hospitality, infinite hospitality nevertheless is inseparable from them. Without one, there cannot be the other. The two are indissociable: "[o]ne calls forth, involves, or prescribes the other" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 147). Both of these two regimes of law require one another in order to be what they are, implying and excluding each other at once (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 81). Moreover, radical, infinite hospitality requires receiving without invitation: "if I welcome the other out of mere duty, unwillingly, against my natural inclination, ... I am not welcoming him [or her] either: One must therefore welcome without 'one must'" (Derrida, "Hostipitality" 361).

In other words, if the academy only welcomes what it is ready to welcome, what it recognizes and what it considers it must welcome, it is not hospitality. It is not a welcome but a duty, a mandatory protocol, an act of superficial political correctness or token recognition without hospitality. For to have hospitality, to be hospitable, the academy must allow itself to be "swept by the coming of the wholly other, the absolutely unforeseeable stranger, the uninvited visitor, the unexpected visitation beyond welcoming apparatuses" (Derrida, "Hostipitality" 361-2).

Hospitality, therefore, has to be rendered to the other prior to knowing the other (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 29). In the academy, it would mean that indigenous epistemes are given an unconditional welcome without asking their names, that is, without asking them first to be defined or transcoded into the language of the host, and thus violated. Unconditional welcome also requires openness to be taught and the ethical singularity of learning to learn. In short, the hospitality of the academy must consist of two critical moments: a welcome of the other without conditions (such as translations or definitions) and openness to whatever teachings the other may have: an openness to receive the gift of a teaching.

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[10] Derrida differentiates between the foreigner and the absolute other by suggesting that "the latter cannot have a name or a family name" (*Of Hospitality* 25). Moreover, he reminds us of Plato's dialogues where "it is often the Foreigner (*xenos*) who questions." It is the foreigner who contests the authority and "shakes up the threatening dogmatism of the paternal *logos*" (*Of Hospitality* 5).

Hospitality presupposes an interior – space, house, home – where the host can welcome the guest, the stranger and the other. Derrida reminds, however, that "in order to constitute the space of a habitable house and a home, you also need an opening, a door and windows, you have to give up a passage to the outside world" (*Of Hospitality* 61). As an institution with a colonial legacy – knowledge produced about indigenous peoples initially emanated from the need for colonial control – and continuing neocolonial complicity (Findlay, "Foreword"), the academy has always had, and continues to have, a passage to the outside world. There are, however, many in the academy who would like to deny this, cherishing ideas of the ivory tower and disinterested scholar.

Can hospitality take place in the academy, an institution drawing heavily upon, if not based on the idea of academic freedom which, at least in theory, grants everyone the freedom to pursue whatever kind of knowledge they wish to? Would the call for hospitality not signify a constraint to this freedom, defined as "certain rights and privileges essential to the fulfillment of [the university's] primary functions: instruction and the pursuit of knowledge," including "the freedom ... to teach and to learn unhindered by external or nonacademic constraints" (*UBC Calendar 2003-4*, 31)? It is commonly argued that academic freedom provides academics with the security necessary to conduct their teaching and independent research.[11] In Bernard Shapiro's view,

> Academics should express ideas at odds with other views in the university and sometimes with the views of society and government. Academic freedom ensures that such ideas can be expressed without fear of interference or repression from outside (for example, government officials and politicians) or inside (for example, university administrators, peer review panels, and colleagues). (33)

The reality of academic freedom, however, is much more complex, problematic and

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[11] See the studies of the development of academic freedom in Canada and the United States by Horne; and Hofstadter and Metzger.

above all, confoundedly relative as it has never been absolute nor applied uniformly. As Louis Menard points out, it is misleading to consider that there exists some unproblematic, philosophically coherent conception of academic freedom ("Limits" 5). For example, it is quite clear that "what professors teach is not completely unregulated" (Smith, "Regulation" 154). Jennie Hornosty further argues that

> Free expression of ideas is available only to those whose ideas fall within the parameters of the approved discourse; unorthodox critiques are ignored or dismissed as nonscholarly. Accordingly, academic freedom fails to protect those whose ideas and scholarship are deemed subjective, irrational, incompetent, and without merit. (Hornosty 42)

This appears to be true particularly with regard to 'traditionally marginalized' people in the academy. Haunani-Kay Trask is one of those academics who was told what to teach and what not to teach, the latter including sections on racism and capitalism which she had initially included in her course. Writes she: "The chair pressured me to remove those sections and supplant them with units of the family and Christianity" (160). When she refused, the disagreement had an impact on the professional relationship between her and her colleagues. The relativity of academic freedom also comes forth in the variety of purposes how it can be employed. Based on her experiences at the University of Hawai'i, Trask maintains that academic freedom is decided by white men: "If they do not like what you say, they will try to shut you up by punitive actions and public vilification" (178).

Instead of being protected by academic freedom, Devon Mihesuah points out that "the reality [is] that Indian scholars still endure accusations that courses on Indians are not important, that our lectures are 'too politically correct,' and that we obtained our jobs because of our race" ("Epilogue" 105). Monture-Angus similarly observes: "Because I am a Mohawk woman, the academic freedom I possess is diminished against this idea of a 'standard' course if I do not conform" ("Homeless" 169). There are also instances where racist remarks and colonial attitudes toward indigenous people have been justified in the name of academic freedom (Marker, "Lummi Identity" 408). Some indigenous scholars ask the pertinent question: "Has academic freedom gone too far? Can scholars of the dominant society do whatever they want with indigenous knowledge?" (Fixico 127).

Academic Freedom for Whom?
What Rights will I ever have
in these Systems
Systems meant to Confine
Confuse
Conform Me
Me and My Kind.
(Graveline, "Everyday" 82)

Marie Battiste correctly reminds the academic community that academic freedom must not

signify a freedom to plunder indigenous knowledge ("Decolonizing" 199). As the need for

protection of indigenous knowledge and intellectual property from further attacks of global

capitalism has escalated in the past years, one of the growing challenges of indigenous

scholarship is finding a balance between the needs for academic freedom on the one hand, and

for increased control over knowledge and intellectual and cultural resources by indigenous

communities, on the other (Newhouse et al. 77).

Many scholars agree that academic freedom is first and foremost about the freedom to

be critical (Derrida, "Future" 235; Said, "Identity" 223; and Smith, "Dilemma" 8). At its

worst, however, this right has become to mean a backlash against the pressures of creating more

inclusive universities; a backlash that seeks to undermine what this movement calls 'political

correctness' (PC), 'biopolitics' (see Fekete), 'politics of feeling'[12] or 'new sectarianism' (see

Good) of the postmodern academy. By suggesting that 'postmodern academia' has abandoned

the Enlightenment principles of intellectual inquiry in the name of relativism and mysticism,

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[12] Good argues: "A new politics of feeling is emerging on campus, using nebulous metaphors like 'chilly climate' and 'hostile environment' for any incident that doesn't 'feel right' or 'feels uncomfortable' (88). It is interesting how for one thing, it is possible for him to dismiss arguments of 'chilly climate' based on large body of research (see Chapter 2) so lightly, and second, he himself seems to lapse into the politics of feeling in his article which, for the most part, is devoted to his personal views on the harmful effect of gender studies to the university and its principles (in other words, his arguments are not supported by a single reference to an academic study). Or, in Derrida's words: "We can easily see on which side obscurantism and nihilism are lurking when on occasion great professors or representatives of prestigious institutions lose all sense of proportion and control; on such occasions they forget the principles that they claim to defend in their work and suddenly begin to heap insults, to say whatever comes into their heads on the subject of texts that they obviously have never opened or that they have encountered through a mediocre journalism that in other circumstances they would pretend to scorn" ("Reason" 15).

academic freedom appears to be particularly threatened by the heterogeneous student body.[13]

Labels such as PC have served as a convenient shorthand for dismissing equity initiatives and reducing critiques of relations of power to "anti-intellectual dogma unworthy of exploration or discussion" (McIntyre 193). The idea of 'free and fearless pursuit of knowledge' is also occasionally used an excuse to repress and silence the emerging paradigms and perpetuate the status quo. This status quo, commonly referred to as 'standards' but, in a closer examination, reflects the traditional Eurocentric, androcentric canon and curriculum or as Amy Gutmann proposes, 'a mask for the will to power' (18).[14] Whilst it is clear that "too strong an emphasis on harmony and consensus ...tends to inhibit speech and the healthy spirit of criticism we expect to find at a university" (Fleming 128), we cannot frame our discourse by claiming the right to offend and deliberately behave in a destructive or hurtful manner. The future of the academy cannot be in offending the other, but as Derrida reminds us, opening up to the other, recognizing our responsibilities toward the other ("Future" 255).

Is the idea of academic hospitality – postulating a responsible and responsive relationship and the recognition of the gift – then, at odds with the idea of academic freedom? Academic freedom is a concept that rests and draws on liberal humanist assumptions, some of which share certain similarities with the call for hospitality of and in the academy and the responsibility toward indigenous epistemes. Drawing parallels between liberal education and indigenous epistemes is no doubt a risk, considering how a large number of liberal tenets are, in fact, complicit in the processes of colonialism (see Parekh). From the perspective of indigenous peoples, liberal humanism and its values – equity, individualism, rationalism, progress, democracy, among others – are inherently problematic as they, in many cases, squarely oppose the central principles of indigenous philosophies and worldviews. Moreover, its ideology of equal opportunity does not recognize differences in circumstances stemming from race, culture,

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[13] For various discussion on this topic, see Berman; Findlay and Bidwell; Kahn and Pavlich; Menard, *The Future of Academic Freedom*; and Tight. As Edward Said's analyses indicate, however, identity politics is not a product of multiculturalism and contemporary critical theory but derives from the imperial cultural enterprise which today continues, as a result of imperial experience, in the form of a politics of national identity ("The Politics of Knowledge"). See also Said, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*.

[14] On the critique of 'shared intellectual standards' and academic freedom, see also Dixon; Gates, "Whose Canon"; Hornosty; Menard, "The Limits"; Rothernberg; Said, "Identity, Authority"; Schrecker; and Smith, "Regulation."

class, gender or other factors. In other words, it assumes a level playing field without acknowledging various structural inequalities and systemic barriers in society. The equality of opportunity implies that success and failure are solely individual responsibilities. With regard to access to universities, the equality of opportunity, while it "opened universities to members of nontraditional groups, ... did not change the organizational culture of affect the traditional power structure of the institution" (Hornosty 40). With its blame-the-victim approach, the ideology of equal opportunity is, therefore, an inadequate and unsound response to calls for hospitality of the academy.

It might be worthwhile, however provisionally, to recall and emphasize one of the liberal principles, namely, its openness to all kind of ideas and knowledge.[15] Unlike the arguments of some of the staunchest proponents of academic freedom, liberal education signifies more than reading 'great books' and including them in curriculum. As Amy Gutmann notes, if unfamiliarity with a topic leads to blind rejection, the central tenet of liberal education, the spirit of free and open inquiry, has inevitably been forgotten (14). The ideal of liberal education is to cultivate the 'whole' person whose various sides – mental, emotional, and physical – need to be balanced and integrated. The lofty goal of intellectual comprehensiveness and malleability – promoted by liberal, humanist education but regularly ignored or forgotten by its defenders – corresponds to the goals of holistic education characterized in much of indigenous learning and pedagogies.[16] Openness to different kinds of knowledge is one of the core aspects of the idea of hospitality and responsibility toward the other. As Derrida argues, the future of the academy relies on this very ability to open up to the 'other.'

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[15] For widely-read Victorian discussions on the liberal, humanist university, see Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1899), and Newman, *The Idea of a University* (1852), often quoted as one of the most influential arguments written on the role and objectives of the university. For Arnold, universities were places where culture – defined as 'a study of perfection' – was developed and sustained. For Newman, knowledge was capable of being its own end and reward and liberal education was essentially an exercise of mind and reason.

[16] See, for example, Battiste and Barman; Cajete; Brant et al. ed; Hocking et al; Martin; John P. Miller; Ron Miller; Stiffarm; and Swisher and Tippeconnic III.

What does hospitality mean in the academy? To be a good host implies not only a commitment to responsibility but also infinite openness toward the other. It is to say welcome also to those guests who may bring with them issues and tensions that the host cannot expect and may not even like or appreciate. There are many indigenous people who contend that despite its rhetoric of welcome and hospitality, the academy is *not* a good host. Their experiences attest to the ways in which the academy is an inhospitable, even hostile host, showing a weak commitment to indigenous people (Green, "Transforming" 86; see also Kirkness and Barnhardt 4, Miller, "Academe" 283, Monture-OKanee [Monture-Angus], "Introduction" 12, RCAP 516). While access and bridging programs have opened the doors and welcomed indigenous students, they remain an inadequate solution to addressing the situation of being an outsider (Monture-Angus, *Thunder* 98; Battiste, Bell and Findlay, "Decolonizing" 83).

But who is the host in the academy? Who is to welcome the other, to take responsibility for the other? For many, the taken-for-granted, self-evident (if not self-styled) host, master of the house and authority of the academy is the institution itself; its campuses and buildings, faculties and disciplines, programs and centers represented by the president, the provost, deans, chairs of the departments and programs who, in countless university brochures, catalogues, information materials and flyers, assume the role of the host and thereby invite and welcome students and others to the academy. On the other hand, we could also consider the senate, the board of governors and various levels of administrators as the host of the academy, the host understood particularly in the sense of the master. They are, after all, those who make decisions and have control over the general direction, mandate, resources and vision of a university. The host could even be an abstract idea of the university, a community consisting of a mass of people without a particular human face, name or title attached to it. Some of us may even think of a guild of white male professors, to whom the academy has traditionally belonged, as the host of the academy (while simultaneously implying the ambivalence of meaning of *hostis* as hostility). For Derrida, the host is the one who welcomes:

To dare to say welcome is perhaps to insinuate that one is at home here, that one knows

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what it means to be at home, and that at home one receives, invites, or offers hospitality, thus appropriating for oneself a place to *welcome* the other, or, worse, *welcoming* the other in order to appropriate for oneself a place and then speak the language of hospitality. (*Adieu* 15-16)

By saying welcome, the academic institution, represented by various elected or chosen individuals, assumes the role of the host. By welcoming 'the others' (current and prospective students, new faculty, visitors, etc.), the institutional apparatus of the academy not only perceives itself to be at home, capable of giving hospitality but also appropriates the place of the host and the master of the house. It is not difficult to trace certain similarities between the seizure of the role of the host in the early colonial period and the way in which the academy, as an institution, is ready and willing, without hesitation, to say welcome and thus, take over the role of the host. As a result, some indigenous scholars have criticized the tendency of universities to forget or ignore the fact that they, in many cases, are located on land which continues to belong to an indigenous people (Marker, "Lummi" 404; Smith, "Dilemma" 3-5).

This is related to a concern raised by Michael Marker, a paradox represented by the presence of those indigenous students on a university campus who are local to the area. These students have "a unique sense of the history of the institution and the community" but nevertheless remain the most profoundly problematic outsiders for and in the institution where "[t]he often unseen – or hidden – aspects to the history of Indian-white relations can present the most obstinate and puzzling barrier to both the Native student and the administrator striving for change" (Marker, "Lummi Identity" 404; also "Economics" 41). The fact that the university is their neighbour if not on their lands yet refuses to recognize them and even less so, their epistemes, alienates these students from the institution and thus from the physical location they call 'home.'

At least to a certain extent, the University of British Columbia has attempted to address some of these concerns. In the spring of 1993 – which also happened to be the International Year of Indigenous Peoples declared by the United Nations – UBC and the local and academic First Nations community celebrated the opening of the Longhouse on the university campus, first of its kind in North America (Kirkness 6). The Longhouse is intended to primarily serve as 'the home away from home' for First Nations students attending UBC. This is done by

creating a culturally sensitive gathering space and thus making the university more accessible and responsive to First Nations. In short, the Longhouse is intended to be a place on campus where First Nations students do not need to experience epistemic ignorance or cultural conflicts.[17]

Through its practices and ceremonies, the Longhouse underlines the context of being located on the Musqueam territory (Archibald, "Living the Dream" 94). The Musqueam people are acknowledged as the hosts, even if not always physically present, and thanked for allowing the others to be guests on their land. Responsibility of being a good host is part of the teachings given by the Musqueam elders. The former director of the Longhouse, Jo-ann Archibald recalls: "Our Elders also teach us that *everyone is welcome* in the circle. Non-Aboriginal people are invited to share our space and to *listen and learn* with others. The Musqueam Elders have also *given us the responsibility to be good hosts* to those who visit us" ("Living the Dream" 94, emphasis added).

The Musqueam elders, who are the traditional owners and hosts of the land where UBC is located, have given the responsibility of being a host to those First Nations people who work at the Longhouse. This gesture indicates a protocol according to which the responsibility of being a host has to be granted by the initial host who welcomed and received the guests when they first arrived. On the other hand, the university – the guest-master – has neither asked nor been given the role of the host. It has assumed this role without asking anybody, without following the protocols of the initial hosts which remain in place and continue to govern the relationships between First Nations peoples and others who observe them (and which also are part of the logic of the gift). Moreover, the Musqueam Declaration from 1976 states: "Our ancestors [sic] aboriginal right and our aboriginal right, is to live upon and travel over our aboriginal lands, seas and waters without foreign control or restriction" (*Musqueam*).

Derrida has suggested that, "Anyone who encroaches on my 'at home,' on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming

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[17] Renato Rosaldo, for example, discusses how sharing a common history and set of cultural norms makes communication easier, noting that "people whose biographies significantly overlap can communicate rich understandings in telegraphic form. People who share a complex knowledge about their worlds can assume a common background and speak though allusion" (107). See also Basso (32, 44).

their hostage" (*Of Hospitality* 55). Does UBC, through its physical but also epistemic and institutional presence, signify 'foreign control or restriction' to the Aboriginal rights of the Musqueam? In other words, has UBC encroached on the Musqueam sovereignty as the host and therefore become a hostile subject, even an enemy? Most importantly, has it failed to carry out its responsibilities as a guest and are the Musqueam at risk of becoming the hostage of the guest-master?

The university does not portray itself in this light even if its role as the guest-master is apparent. Instead, in its insistence on focussing on the future, it seeks to "[e]xplore ways and means of developing a closer relationship between UBC and the Musqueam First Nation" (UBC Trek 2010, 7). Is it possible, is it responsible to consider developing closer relationships with the initial host on whose power of hospitality it has encroached for almost a hundred years?

These are questions that I cannot answer but need to be asked particularly in those contexts where the university is faced with its role as a host or a guest-master but also a hostile subject. It is also necessary to raise these questions every time we consider hospitality of the academy toward the gift of indigenous epistemes (or even hospitality in general) because they not let us obliterate those more difficult but definitely inseparable dimensions of hospitality (including hostility). The ambiguity and complexity of hospitality is further reflected in historical contexts and legacies manifested in today's power and structural inequalities. If UBC wants to enhance its relationship with the Musqueam people – and it *must* in order to have a future – it has to pay serious attention to this complexity and not lapse into popular (and populist) but utterly irresponsible (neoliberal) platitudes about 'level playing fields' and arguments that 'the past does not count today.'

Currently there are a number of initiatives that could be considered a part of UBC's attempt to build relationships with the Musqueam people. These include Musqueam 101, the First Nations language program and the Musqueam Museum School. Musqueam 101 is an initiative started in 2001 that brings together the knowledge of the two communities, Musqueam and UBC. At its weekly sessions held at Musqueam, speakers from UBC and elsewhere give a

talk on topics related and of interest to the Musqueam.[18] The UBC Museum of Anthropology has also developed a relationship with the Musqueam people through internships as well as their ongoing work with the weavers at Musqueam. The Musqueam Museum School, aimed at grades 3-5, brings together schools, Musqueam resource people, and the Museum of Anthropology staff to teach students particularly about Musqueam weaving and the importance and rehabilitation of the Musqueam Creek.

Besides its relatively random attempts to acknowledge the Musqueam and the fact that the university is located on their territory, UBC tends to disregard this relationship and the responsibilities this relationship brings with it in other ways. It not only assumes but also monopolizes the role of the host by not hesitating to say welcome. Existing initiatives may reflect the willingness of certain sectors and individuals to engage with the Musqueam people but in their current format, they do not challenge the implicit way by which UBC has assumed the role of the sovereign, ultimate host. The Musqueam are recognized when it is convenient for the university but ignored, neglected and pushed aside on other occasions, particularly when the university wants to represent itself – walk on the spotlights – as the sovereign master to the outside world as some of the recent examples indicate.

One is the infamous APEC meeting held at UBC in November 1997. When the most violent skirmishes between the protesters of the meeting and the police such as pepper spraying and arrests were widely reported in the media, some of the more subtle clashes were not, such as prohibiting the Chief of the Musqueam Nation to address the delegates. Notes Wes Pue:

> Many of the alleged actions are not easily supportable under either domestic or international human rights law. For example, the RCMP and/or the Canadian government have been accused of ... cancelling Musqueam Nation Chief Gail Sparrow's scheduled address to the APEC leaders at the last minute because it had a reference to human rights.... (192)

The second example is also from an event that received a lot of publicity. During the

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[18] I am very grateful for the opportunity to talk, at one the Musqueam 101 sessions, about my thesis, including the notions of the gift and hospitality and their implication in the context of the relationship between UBC and the Musqueam people. This was a wonderful occasion of sharing and also giving back to the people and community on whose territory I have both lived and worked for the past several years. I was also able to share a bit about my background, including the Deatnu river and the importance of salmon with the audience of mostly Musqueam elders.

visit of the Queen of England in October 2002, the Musqueam were not among the hosts welcoming Her Majesty on campus but occupied the role of entertainers,[19] reflecting a disturbing but perpetually common variation of the native informant. There also is an interesting division of labour often at work at such official events and processions. The Musqueam and also other First Nations are graciously invited to do the welcoming (which usually takes the form of a prayer) but they do not have the power to initiate this welcome or have much say or control over the ceremonies or the protocol. They are invited or welcomed to welcome and give the blessing but often not much else. This kind of division of labour reflects the unequal power relations and allocation of resources of various kinds between indigenous people and the academy, the initial hosts and the guest-master who, in addition to prescribing the role of the native informant, indeed seems to have encroached the sovereignty of the host. The academy not only has the money but also cultural and I would add, epistemic capital to make the necessary decisions and have the necessary contacts and relationships – particularly with the representatives of other sectors of society such as the government and the police – that enable the continued foreclosure.

The third, the most recent example, has not received much publicity at all despite its severity. It involves an alleged breach of legal obligations to consult the Musqueam by UBC and the Province of British Columbia. In Kara McDonald's dissertation analysis of the University's expropriation of traditional territories of the Musqueam Indian Band, she raises issues about UBC's 2002 purchase of what is known as the University Golf Course from Land and Water British Columbia Inc:

> When the Musqueam Indian Band discovered the sale of lands that lie at the heart of their traditional territories, they appealed to the BC Supreme Court to cancel the agreement. The Musqueam argued that the Province and the University were in breach of their legal obligations to consult and seek adequate accommodation of the Musqueam's interests over lands. According to the sworn testimony of the Musqueam Band Chief Ernest Campbell and Treaty Director Leona Sparrow, these lands are of significant spiritual, cultural, and archeological importance to the Musqueam and critical

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[19] This point was made by Rose Pointe of the Musqueam Band at the session of Musqueam 101, 7 April, 2004. It was further pointed out by the acting director of the Museum of Anthropology Michael Ames that while some people at the university were pushing for the Musqueam representatives being part of those welcoming the Queen, it was the provincial government who at the end did not accept the suggestion.

to their creation of an economically sustainable land-base for self-determination (Campbell, Affidavit, 23 Oct. 2003; Sparrow, Affidavit, 25 Mar. 2003). Before the court in December 2003, UBC argued that it had fulfilled its responsibility to consult the Musqueam by requiring the Province to fulfill its duties to consult the Musqueam. (McDonald np.)

For some indigenous people, the academy is a hostile subject not only because of the history (in which we live today) but also because the hostility of *hostis* (guest) is tightly intertwined with mastery, possession and power (cf. Derrida, *Adieu* 57). The colonizer-as-guest today is not necessarily different from the colonizer-as-guest of the past even if the code of conduct may appear different. The host might be taken as hostage by 'a gesture of convenience,' by making her or him a native informant or by silencing through not listening and being heard but also by employing the old colonial manners of breaking agreements and relationships as the third example above indicates. We therefore have to keep exercizing vigilance in hegemonic institutions which, as guest-masters, seek indigenous people's consent but turn their gifts into commodities and supplements or even simply exploit them without further consideration.

In current circumstances, there is no hospitality in the academy. A limited welcome opens the doors to indigenous people but is not, for the most part, even aware of the existence of the gift. As a result of the lack of hospitality and an unconditional welcome, the 'other' has been put under erasure by demands of translation (of their languages but also epistemes). As long as there is no hospitality in the academy, the gift of indigenous epistemes remains unrecognized and unreceived. As long as this is the case, the 'other' only exists under erasure, marked merely by traces of the gift.

Derrida argues that the question of hospitality begins with the question of translation. For him, translation is among the serious problems of hospitality: "must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all the senses of this term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome him [or her] into our country?" (*Of Hospitality* 15). If a good host is characterized by the ability of granting unconditional hospitality without a prerequisite that the guest speaks the language of the host, the academy cannot be considered a good host. In too many instances, the academy – usually implicitly,

sometimes explicitly through its discourses and paradigms – requires its guests to understand and speak its language not necessarily prior to a welcome but definitely after the welcome. As a result, the guest, the foreigner

> has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his [or her] own, the one imposed on him [or her] by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc. This personage imposes on him [or her] translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence. (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 15)

According to Derrida, "the foreigner is first of all foreign to the legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated" (*Of Hospitality* 15). One could easily suggest that this is exactly the experience of indigenous people who arrive in the academy with a foreign 'language' (i.e., a different way of understanding the world and system of values attached to it). Indigenous people are forced to "ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his or her own," and thus, faced with "the first act of violence" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 15). The 'subaltern' might be able to speak, but she is not heard, listened to, except through benevolent liberal multiculturalism or "in a generous desire for solidarity" (Simon 135). In many cases, she continues to be the native informant, however euphemized.

If the academy is the guest-master (aka host), are indigenous people unavoidably rendered to the role of the guest? And what kind of guests is the academy as the host ready to welcome? Only 'good' guests – well-behaving and predictable – while the 'bad' guest – a parasite, an illegitimate, clandestine guest – is expelled (cf. Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 61)? Are only guests without risks welcome? In hospitality, the notion of a 'bad,' mistrustful guest is a mere reflection of the intolerance, if not mistrust, of the host as well as the control s/he exercises. It is also a sign of the host's desire to get rid of and control ambivalence. There is no hospitality without an unconditional welcome, without saying welcome to the foreigner and the ultimate other even if we do not know their language (cf. Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 15).

Hospitality is characterized by a deep and immutable ambiguity. This ambiguity is reflected in the etymology which demonstrates the inseparability of the guest and the host (in French, both are *hôte*) and the short distance from hospitality to hostility. The latter, however, does not excuse us from our responsibilities of reciprocal relationships toward one another.

What this ambiguity implies that there is never a single host nor a single guest, that these roles are not fixed as history has already shown to us. These positions can and are occupied simultaneously. With regard to the contemporary academy, this is probably best illustrated in a space where indigenous people might experience the least amount of inhospitality or hostility, at their 'home away from home.'

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It is the second Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium at UBC. The first was held a year ago at Musqueam. This year we have gathered in the Longhouse and like last year, it is a beautiful and sunny spring day. We are welcomed by three hosts, all representing the different layers of hospitality, different dimensions of the host in the academy. There could not be one host. They are all 'at my home' in various ways and thus able to say 'welcome.' They are all hosts, but some are more guests than the others. The first host is Rose Pointe, Musqueam elder, who welcomes us to the Musqueam territory. She instructs us to place our left palm up and right palm down and join our hands in a circle. She says a prayer, encouraging us to share our knowledge and wisdom with one another.

The second host is Jo-ann Archibald who welcomes us to the Longhouse and the Sty-wet-tan Hall. (Rose Pointe had already told us that Sty-wet-tan means 'the spirit of the west wind' – the west wind having a cleansing element.) She shares with us the gifts of the teachings of the four house posts of the hall. Every time I hear these teachings I learn something new. Every time they evoke and generate new ideas and insights. This time I pay particular attention to the pole by Chief Walter Harris and his son Rodney Harris who are Gitskan from Kispiox. On the top of that pole, there are three human figures standing. One is speaking and the two others are listening, teaching us

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that we must listen twice as much as we speak. This strikes me in a different light today than any other time before – it reminds me of Spivak's words of not listening to the subaltern. For Spivak, listening has a specific meaning very relevant to us in this room as well, who, most likely, are listened to seriously and heard in this space of 'home away from home' but not necessarily in many other places on campus. If we, indigenous people on campus, were listened to twice as much as we speak, perhaps we would not only be heard through benevolent imperialism but also understood?

The third host is the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Robert Tierney, who welcomes us but also speaks about being welcomed, about being a guest. In fact, he tells us that he has never felt more welcomed than with First Nations in British Columbia.[20] One of the things that he has learned from them is the significance of values. The Dean also talks of how we are living the times of challenging, changing and transforming education for the future. What is most surprising to hear is that he maintains that the most influential people in British Columbia's future are the people in this room – First Nations graduate students. Perhaps one can hear a commitment in that. Perhaps it means – let's hope it means – that in the future, including the future of the university, policies of benign neglect no longer exist. Perhaps it means that in the future, the academy will be committed to its responsibility toward not only to this most influential group of people but also to their epistemes; the gift of their epistemes.

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[20] This, of course, makes me wonder why he has not felt welcome by indigenous peoples of his home country, Australia? Is it always easier to feel welcome elsewhere, when one is not personally, directly mired and implicated in current circumstances?

There cannot be only one host in the academy. It is impossible for anybody to claim a mastery or sovereignty over the role of the host. There are many hosts and they are all different hosts. There are many entities who can and do say welcome, but the welcome of these different hosts means and implies different things. They might be all important but that does not mean they are necessarily equal or have the same access to the institutional resources and discourses. There is the initial hospitality and the initial host who continues to be a host, even if at times it may appear that they have become the hostage of *hosti-pet-s*, the guest-master (through benevolent imperialism, epistemic ignorance, repressive tolerance etc.). There is the guest-master who also is a host and who says welcome. This host must, however, be aware and recognize the gifts of the initial host – if not, s/he is an arrogant *hôte* (host/guest) and thereby does not deserve the right to hospitality nor the right to say welcome. An arrogant *hôte* generates hostility and thus becomes an enemy, "the uncanny alien which is so close that it cannot be seen as strange, host in the sense of enemy rather than host in the sense of open-handed dispenser of hospitality" (Miller, "The Critic as Host" 218).

In the above, I have discussed hospitality between different groups of people, particularly hospitality of the academy toward indigenous people. That is not, however, the main argument of my thesis. The purpose of this inquiry is to call for the hospitality of the academy in a form of unconditional welcome to the gift of indigenous epistemes. In the following, I will attempt to address the question, What does hospitality mean with regard to worldviews and discursive practices? It is one thing to welcome indigenous people to the academy, but what does it mean, and take, to welcome their epistemes?

UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME AND THE PROFESSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Unconditional welcome calls for and urges the academy to take responsibility – to respond, be answerable to – toward indigenous epistemes by embracing the logic of the gift. This logic requires a new relationship that necessitates both knowledge and action; a relationship

which is continuous, interminable and where 'responses flow from the both sides.' As Patricia Monture-OKanee [Monture-Angus] has argued, "Real change requires a full and systemic institutional response" ("Introduction" 22).

Unconditional welcome requires transforming the way the dominant academic discourses and practices perceive and relate to other epistemes and also epistemologies. Unconditional welcome is both a mindset and relation that is propelled into action by a commitment to responsibility toward the other, whether a guest or a host. The academy cannot be disavowed of its responsibility for indigenous epistemes by mere respect and tolerance or by limiting itself to the creation of 'inclusive' curricula and course materials or the establishment of special access or indigenous studies programs. Unconditional welcome is a relation, not another academic policy, program, guideline or even perspective that can be forgotten once implemented. It is a way of coming together in relations foregrounded by the gift.

Unconditional welcome recognizes the existing tensions of the guest-host relationships and therefore does not falsely assume a space that is entirely comfortable and uncontested or even 'safe.' It is by definition, a site of constant negotiation and shifting boundaries. It recognizes that attempting to do away with the existing tensions is not hospitality but the continuance of ignorance, and consolidation of the Self by the shadow of the Other.

Unconditional welcome implies changing the way indigenous epistemes are perceived in the academy; neither as supplements nor commodities, but as indispensable elements in the process of pursuing knowledge; as imperative for the academy in professing its profession. Derrida has suggested that "[t]he university professes the truth, and that is its profession. It declares and promises an unlimited commitment to the truth" ("Future" 233-4). This is not to propose that there is only one truth: "The horizon of truth ... is certainly not a very determinable limit" (Derrida, "Future" 235; see also 234). In its profession, the university "should remain an ultimate place of critical resistance – and more than critical – to all the powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation" (Derrida, "Future" 235).

Related to the profession of the university is Derrida's call for the 'new Humanities' – the need for enlarging and re-elaborating the concept of the Humanities. In his view, one of the first tasks of the new Humanities "would be, *ad infinitum*, to know and to think their own

history, at least in the directions that can be seen to open up" ("Future" 240).[21] An important aspect of professing the truth while remaining critical is to challenge and deconstruct various fantasies of sovereign mastery. Part of this would naturally be the fantasy of the sovereign mastery of certain epistemic traditions and assumptions. Further, the profession of the truth cannot be limited to only certain (types) of truths or reduce it into partial, one-sided truths – thereby, 'non-truths' – in the service of interests and benefits of certain individuals or groups. In such a profession, to sanction ignorance or exclude other epistemes from the university, from those discussions *in* the university, would imply that the academy professes its profession poorly and very unprofessionally. Seeking to disavow and disregard other than the dominant western intellectual, philosophical and epistemic traditions by appealing to academic freedom or tenets of liberal thought and education would then signify a gross misrepresentation and distortion of the idea and the profession of the academy.

In order for the academy to properly practice its profession, it ultimately needs, in Derrida's view, to be unconditional and absolutely free. This would not, however, imply that academics can work without condition or that it is autonomous in the Kantian sense.[22] Instead, it refers to and calls for the responsibility toward the other. It necessitates "the opening of the university on its outside, on its other, on the future and the otherness of the future" (Derrida, "Future" 255). For Derrida, the future of the university is necessarily less enclosed in itself and more "*open to the other* as a future" ("Future" 256; see also "Principle" 16).

In other words, the ethics and the future of the academy require hospitality.[23] Without openness to the other, responsibility toward the other, there is no future of and in the academy.

[21] The idea of 'new humanities' has been also discussed elsewhere, independently from Derrida's speculations. K. K. Ruthven, for instance discusses the fear in the late 1980s of losing humanities to economic rationalism characterized by reforms in higher education. He notes how humanities is, however, 'alive and well' with new research centers and an expanding field, including 'new humanities' "powered by transformative energies of people responsive to changes in the material conditions of intellectual life both here [Australia] and overseas" (viii). This 'new humanities' – at least according to *Beyond the Disciplines: The New Humanities*, edited by Ruthven – consists of fields such as cultural, multicultural, cultural policy, feminist and gender, postcolonial and subaltern and legal studies. For some reason, indigenous studies still do not make it into the 'new humanities.'

[22] With pure autonomy, there is neither event nor future as it is a concept insisting on a sovereign enclosure (see Derrida, "Future"). On enclosure and liberalism, see also Chapter 2, fn. 25.

[23] I take it as an axiom that the future has always already begun, and that at once, it is constantly beginning over and over again. In other words, the future is always here at this moment yet it starts with every step we take.

The future of the university is in its openness to the other. This openness must go beyond a mere opening of the doors to indigenous people while dismissing or failing to recognize their epistemes. As a good host (or guest-master), the academy must accept and claim its responsibilities – it must respond to – for indigenous and other epistemes in the name of knowledge but also of ethics. 'The opening of the university on its other' also implies opening up the discourse which so far has remained rather selective and exclusive. Expanding the epistemic foundations is, therefore, a question of the profession of the academy but also of an ethical relation to the 'other.'[24]

As an institution with a colonial legacy and continuing neocolonial complicity, the academy – everyone in the academy – has an ethical responsibility and a stake in dismantling these colonial structures and practices. Long-term chair of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations and Special Rapporteur Erica-Irene Daes argues that as both "the oppressor and oppressed are witnesses to the same cruel historical process – a process that denigrates the relevance and meaningfulness of individual human lives ... The tragic experience of colonization is a shared experience"(6). Even if the oppressors may be economically and politically successful, "their external aggression returns to haunt them in a cycle of internal mistrust, domination, and violence" causing them to "suffer their own spiritual deaths" (Daes 6). The transformation of the academy is a collective challenge – collective between indigenous and non-indigenous people – also because "it is only in this way that we can break the patronizing, parochial and colonial nature of our educational relations" (Monture-Angus, *Thunder* 96).

The past several decades, indigenous scholarship has been engaged and striving toward redefining and 'indigenizing' education as well as research in various ways and levels. For Linda Smith, 'indigenization' is a multilayered enterprise, including 'researching back,' claiming, remembering, rewriting and also celebrating survival (*Decolonizing*; see also Findlay, "Always Indigenize"). This process is similar to Derrida's call for 'opening up' – indigenization also views education "not as about exclusivity and containment, but education as a leading out, a fanning out, a spreading out, a dissemination which is inclusive of communities

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[24] Derrida, while not explicitly a philosopher of 'ethics,' has throughout his work discussed ethics as the responsibility toward the other (e.g., Trifonas ix).

and validates their concerns and their knowledge" (Findlay in Battiste et al., "Interview with Linda Smith" 179).

Derrida's insistence on the academy's responsibilities to the outside world and to the other relates closely to the ongoing efforts of indigenizing not only the humanities but the academy at large (cf. Findlay, "Always"). Generally speaking, 'indigenous humanities,' a term emerging from an interdisciplinary group of scholars (First Nations and non-First Nations alike) at the University of Saskatchewan, refers to the conceptualization of who indigenous peoples are, who their ancestors were and their core capacity as a people. Indigenous humanities is critical of the concept of 'culture' which in many contexts, including the academic, has become to mean 'incapacity' which in turn has resulted in the establishment of special bridging programs at universities for indigenous students (Battiste, "Keynote").

According to Isobel Findlay, 'Indigenous humanities' is "a strategic labelling [which] is deliberately and unapologetically hybrid, collaborative, and interdisciplinary." It aspires "to dismantle the master's house by reinterpreting and exposing the foundational violences of the traditional humanities and their complicity in acts of delegitimation and dispossession" (Findlay, "Indigenous Humanities" n.p.). She asserts the obligation of holding mainstream institutions and thinking accountable in what Patricia Monture-Angus calls 'a decolonized way.'[25] Findlay suggests: "If the humanities were central to the cultural completion of colonialism, then they can be an important part of decolonisation" ("Indigenous Humanities" n.p.).

Besides resisting the persistently colonial mainstream and its attempts to simply accommodate or tolerate 'the Aboriginal perspective' in ways which merely perpetuate the status quo, Indigenous humanities also seeks to establish new communities of resistance and respect (Findlay, "Indigenous Humanities" n.p.). Indigenous humanities is, then, about indigenous people being human on their own terms but also a way of calling attention to and challenging the 'discourse of neutrality' in universities and their curricula that "have largely held onto their Eurocentric canons of thought and culture" (Battiste, Bell and Findlay,

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[25] Monture-Angus asserts the necessity of "turning the conversation around so that Canada is required to be accountable for the wrongs it has perpetuated ... an articulation of their role rather than a repackaging of Aboriginal thought" (*Forward* 253).

"Decolonizing" 83). It includes a vision of the future that would be of great interest for everybody in the name of knowledge that would better reflect humanity than the narrow notion of Eurocentric reason (Findlay, "Always" 314).

In connection to Indigenous humanities, Len Findlay suggests that there also is a need for "a radicalizing of the Eurocentric humanities from within" ("Always" 318). Referring to "a formidable challenge in self-education" in the area of indigenous peoples, their rights and knowledge, he suggests that "[o]ne might start where one might presume progress most likely, 'enlightenment most assured – namely, in the humanities" ("Always" 311). Among other things, the radical humanities would redraw the academic map and redistribute cultural legitimacy and territoriality in partnership with indigenous scholars themselves. Such an endeavour, Findlay asserts, would mark "an energizing departure from the colonial practice of Kantian and Arnoldian disinterestedness" ("Always" 322).

Equally important, radical or indigenous humanities would enhance the well-being of all as it would counterbalance the current trend of commodifying everything by offering the gift of the gift logic instead. The idea behind radical humanities also resembles Derrida's vision for the 'new humanities.' Articulating it, Derrida insists on the limit of the impossible:

> This limit of the impossible ... is the place where the university is exposed to reality, to the forces from without (be they cultural, ideological, political, economic, or other). It is there that the university is in the world that it is attempting to think. On this border, it must therefore negotiate and organise its resistance and take its responsibilities. Not in order to enclose itself and reconstitute the abstract phantasm of sovereignty whose theological or humanist heritage it will perhaps have begun to deconstruct, it at least it has begun to do so. ("Future" 247)

I suggest that it is at this limit of the impossible, the threshold where hospitality of the academy can take place because hospitality, like the academy, must open itself to an 'other' and is thus exposed to the 'forces from without.' This is also the limit affected by the arriving, the arrivant, the guest. At this threshold the academy welcomes the world and thus is expected to respond, be answerable but also to act. What is more, the limit of the impossible is the limit of possibility; a place where the impossible becomes possible and therefore, a place where the gift becomes possible. In other words, the gift (in this case, of indigenous epistemes) becomes possible when the academy meets the outside world and has to respond – is expected to *give* response but also

to receive and to recognize the existence of the gift.

An example of hospitality where 'western' and indigenous epistemes meet in a responsible and reciprocal way is Derrida's visit to the University of Auckland in August 1999 where he was received and welcomed according to the Maori tradition of *powhiri* held on the University's *marae* or the Maori meeting house. *Powhiri* is a ceremony which "pays tribute and honour to the *mana* (dignity and status) of the guest of honour" (Simmons et al., "Introduction" 12). Through the elaborate procession, the guest crosses the threshold, "passing from being strangers to becoming friends" (Simmons et al., "Introduction" 24). Moreover, as Lawrence Simmons, Heather Worth and Graham Smith argue,

> In the contemporary postcolonial context of Aotearoa, the *powhiri* is a moment when Western cultural rationalism is peeled back in order to submit to a different form of cultural appropriateness with regard to the values of 'welcoming', 'honouring', 'greeting', and 'hospitality'. ("Introduction" 12)

In the same way as in Maori ceremony of *powhiri*, the threshold for the academy is a place where the university comes together face-to-face with the world where some of its eurocentric, arrogant assumptions and definitions are challenged and where it has to assume its responsibilities. What is crucial, however, is that we notice that the 'world' is not something external or liminal, something 'out there,' but always already *in* the academy. This is also true with the gift which has already entered and arrived in the academy, and therefore, passed the threshold without waiting for hospitality. As Derrida deliberates:

> "Does not hospitality *follow* ... the unforeseeable and irresistible irruption of a visitation? And will not this inverse translation find its limit ... at the place where, as past visitation, the trace of the other passes or has already passed the threshold, awaiting neither invitation nor hospitality nor welcome? (Derrida, *Adieu* 63)

The fact that the threshold is always already *in* the academy and that the guest and the gift have already arrived does not mean that there is no longer need for the call for hospitality or for an unconditional welcome. Quite the contrary: the limit, this impossibility that enables the possible, is already in the academy implies that the academy *cannot disavow* its responsibility toward the other, cannot evade its responsibility because it is always already internal to it, not something outside and elsewhere (or even on the outskirts or at the gates of the academy).

Derrida further suggests that "the crossing of the threshold always remains a transgressive step" (*Of Hospitality* 75). With regard to the gift of indigenous epistemes, this means transgressing academic hegemony and exclusivity and irretrievably changing it, even if gradually.[26] With regard to the academy, transgressing the threshold (that is internal to it) means that it cannot not respond, it cannot disavow its responsibilities. In order to have a future, the academy must face the existence of the threshold and thus be responsible, be able to respond. It must be able to receive the gift beyond the capacity of the 'I', and also, to be taught, to listen, to learn to listen.

Characteristic to the threshold is that it cannot be controlled, that its limit cannot be decided: "It is necessary that this threshold not be at the disposal of a general knowledge or a regulated technique... so that good hospitality can have a chance, the change of letting the other come, the *yes* of the other no less than the *yes* to the other" (Derrida, *Adieu* 35). Paradoxically, however, hospitality simultaneously requires a rigorous delimitation of thresholds or frontiers (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 47-9). It is the very paradox which enables hospitality to exist. It is this paradox which makes the impossible possible: by receiving a guest whom one is unprepared and incompetent to welcome and thus, becoming capable of what one is incapable of (Derrida, "Hostipitality" 363, 364, 387). Put another way, by receiving a guest but also a gift (that the guest bears) which the academy is unprepared and incapable to welcome (and recognize), it becomes capable of what it is incapable of.

It has been argued above that responsibility necessitates knowledge and action: "the concept of responsibility has, in the most reliable continuity of its history, always implied involvement in action, doing, a *praxis*, a *decision* that exceeds simple conscience or simple theoretical understanding" (Derrida, *Gift* 25). On the other hand, it has also been suggested that

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[26] Here it might be good to point out that in many indigenous worldviews, sudden or big changes are not considered positive as they may disrupt the achieved balance with the socio-cosmic order. While changes have always taken place even in indigenous socio-cosmic orders, they have been gradual and subtle unlike other systems such as in agriculture, where change was the foundational premise (cf. Brody). It is also important to differentiate between the contemporary need to change the imposed colonial structures that leave indigenous peoples disproportionately suffering from systemic discrimination and the desire to change one's natural environment embedded in one's worldview (cf. Brody in chapter on the gift). Moreover, as noted by Shapiro, in spite of the prevailing tendency of the academy to think of itself "as embodying a very long, very rich tradition," change is not unfamiliar to the history of the academy (29). It is the very ability to reconceive and refashion themselves that has allowed universities to endure to the present.

in order to have hospitality, there must be an unconditional welcome even without knowing the other; that hospitality requires saying welcome to the foreigner and the ultimate other even if we do not know their language. How can these two positions – one that calls for knowledge and the other that argues knowing is not necessary at all – be consolidated?

On the one hand, hospitality calls for an unconditional welcome which implies that the language (or the episteme) of the guest (who also might be a host) cannot be asked to be translated to the language of the host (who is also the guest-master). On the other hand, hospitality calls for the responsibility toward the 'other' which in turn necessitates knowledge and action. However, this knowing is directed not to the 'other' (e.g., other epistemes), but to the host itself, to the necessity of the guest-master doing its homework. In short, it is the host who has the responsibility to do the homework which is not so much about knowing but learning to learn.

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF HOSPITALITY

Like hospitality, the gift poses always a risk in its ambiguity where the categories of having and being, giving and taking are inevitably blurred (Derrida, *Given Time* 144). For Rosello, "[r]isk ... is one of the keys to all hospitable encounters. Hostility is part and parcel of the contract between the host and the guest" (172). Moreover, "[u]nconditional hospitality is a risk, but hospitality without risk usually hides more serious violence. A perfectly gracious and generous host may be capitalizing on dark shadows, on ghosts that haunt his land, his house, his social position" (Rosello 173). As I have argued above, the conditional hospitality of the academy consists of instances of epistemic violence and pushing the Other to the shadow while using her to consolidate the Self.

Derrida suggests going to the limit where the truth of the gift can be found in its impossibility (*Given Time* 27). This impossibility is not an impossibility, however, in the sense that the gift does not exist. It is rather an impossibility in that it is the very impossibility which

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makes the gift possible. Therefore, there is "the necessity to rethink the concepts of the possible and the impossible" (Derrida, "Future" 245, 240).

If the academy assumes the role of the host as it appears to do, it must do it properly, appropriately. It cannot claim to be a host without unconditionality and responsibility for the other – this is the very subjectivity of the host (cf. Derrida, *Adieu* 55). This includes accepting the ambiguous, paradoxical nature of the gift and hospitality. Responsible action also consists of the negotiation between the two demands of the unconditional and conditional. It also requires taking a transgressive step across the threshold (cf. Derrida, *Adieu* 19; *Of Hospitality* 75), or, giving up the quest for certainty and control over knowledge and knowing, including control over indigenous epistemes.

The step across the threshold is transgressive also because what is ultimately needed is that the epistemes of the guest-host are not forced to be translated in order to be understood (cf. Derrida, *Adieu* 63). By calling for hospitality – responsibility toward the other and opening up to the gift – the academy, as the place of knowledge, will be challenged to think through its previous assumptions of the process of knowing and thereby pushed to its limits, to the threshold of impossibility. This liminal space, as in rites of passage, may then mark a transformation and transition to impossible,[27] the arrival of the impossible. As Derrida has explained, only the impossible can arrive. As a "performative produces the event of which it speaks," this event can never properly arrive because it is predictable. An event takes place only when it is not 'domesticated' and when the modality of the 'perhaps' is maintained (Derrida, "Future" 245).

It is at this limit where the academy is required to face the world: "This limit of the impossible, the 'perhaps', and the 'if', this is the place where the university is exposed to reality, to the forces from without... On this border, it must therefore negotiate and organise its resistance and take its responsibilities" (Derrida, "Future" 247). Hospitality occupies the liminal space also in that it necessitates going beyond the I, interrupting the self by the self as other (*Derrida*, Adieu 52). Levinas argues that

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[27] See van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, and Turner, *The Ritual Process*, for further discussion on liminal spaces, rituals and rites of passage. On liminality in postcolonial discourse, see, for example, Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

To be an I then signifies not to be able to slip away from responsibility.... The putting into question of the I by the other makes me solidary with the other in an incomparable and unique way – not solidary as matter is solidary with the block which it is a part of, or as an organ is solidary with the organism in which it has its function. Solidarity here is responsibility ... which empties the I of its imperialism and its egoism.... The I before another is infinitely responsible. ("The Trace of the Other" 353)

By accepting the ambiguity of the threshold as a space where the new mindset and relationship can emerge, previous precepts can be rejected and colonial circumstances encountered in a new way. Rather than succumbing to a position suggesting irremediable discrepancies or mutual exclusivity and irrelevancy between the epistemes, it is a gesture marking a shift from binary oppositions to the more productive process of engagement and relation. Through hospitality and the gift, there is then a possibility of breaking away from being locked in binary opposition of colonizer/colonizer and even host/guest (cf. Ahluwalia 196).

As the question of who is the host and who is the guest in the academy cannot be definitely answered – both the official representatives of the academy and indigenous people (those on whose traditional territory the university is located) occupy the roles of the host and guest simultaneously and concurrently (however differently and disparately), we cannot prescribe a form of hospitality that assumes fixity or purity. Instead, we may take heed of Rosello's suggestion that calls for a continuum between host and guest. This continuum keeps hospitality alive, as she points out: "that if the guest is always the guest, if the host is always a host, something has probably gone very wrong: hospitality has somehow been replaced by parasitism or charity" (167; see also 173).

The hospitality of the academy, then, calls for an interchangeability and acceptance of different and constantly changing practices of hospitality.[28] The interchangeability of hospitality is marked particularly by the equivocality of the roles and places of the host and guest – which is not the same as ignoring the current structural and discursive inequalities, systemic racism and the privileged, sanctioned not-knowing. The situation is comparable to the historical trust

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[28] For further discussion on the logic of interchangeability, see Rosello (especially ch. 4, pp. 85-118).

relationship discussed by Erasmus[29] – it acknowledges the discrepancies in terms of power but also calls attention to different sets of responsibilities. It also calls for the personal and collective acceptance of 'responsibility beyond innocence' (Flax). Jane Flax argues: "To take responsibility is to situate ourselves firmly within contingent and imperfect contexts, to acknowledge differential privileges of race, gender, geographic location, and sexual identities, and to resist the delusory and dangerous recurrent hope of redemption to a world not of our own making" (163).

According to the implacable law of hospitality, the guest inevitably "becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*)" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 125; also *Adieu* 41-2). It is thus necessary to recognize the inherent tensions embedded in any notion of hospitality instead of attempting to idealize certain notions of hospitality and the gift. Far from being absolute or pure, hospitality is always imperfect and heterogeneous (cf. Rosello 20, 26).

The hospitality of the academy implies a new way of perceiving indigenous epistemes. It is informed by notions of responsibility and reciprocity, particularly as they are articulated in indigenous thought. This new way of thinking recognizes indigenous epistemes as gifts rather than in terms of exchange economy. This kind of hospitality, besides emphasizing reciprocal responsibilities (which are not perceived as duties or obligations but part of the identities of the host and the guest) is, then, a continual and on-going process and relationship rather than a binary give-and-take (e.g., a change in curriculum or a program or service established for the 'other'). It also shifts the attention to and calls for the responsibilities of the 'dominant' rather than focussing on the 'special' needs of the 'other.' In other words, it is not something that can be implemented once and for all, after which the 'problem' is considered solved and the responsibility of the host-guest absolved. It requires a new mindset that embraces 'epistemic

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[29] Erasmus argues: "Aboriginal treaties are often described in legal terms as creating a *trust relationship*, one that invests the trustee with superior power and greater ethical responsibilities. For Aboriginal peoples, treaties created *a relationship of mutual trust* that was sacred and enduring. The bond created was like that of brothers [sic] who might have different gifts and follow different paths, but who could be counted on to render assistance to one another in times of need" (106).

pluralism' and the 'principle of interaction' (cf. James 82).[30]

There might still be some who wonder why the academy should bother to acquire a new sense of hospitality and engage in establishing a new relationship with indigenous epistemes – they are, after all, in the margins of the academic structures, discourses and paradigms and thus, arguably remain relatively insignificant to much academic inquiry. There are, however, some compelling reasons to reconsider such a view. As long as the academy remains ignorant of and indifferent to the gift of indigenous (and other) epistemes, the academy has failed in its profession as the producer of knowledge as well as in its objective of exposing students to a range of knowledge, perspectives and experiences rather than merely confirming or reinforcing their limited views of the world (cf. Gates, "Whose Canon" 199; and Ng, "A Woman Out of Control" 102). It has irretrievably failed in its profession and also fallen short of its vision statements charting its path to the future. In short, it has failed in its future defined as the openness toward the other.

The sense of responsibility is and must be grounded in the academics' commitment to their profession (cf. Derrida, "Roundtable" 260). Instead of considering hospitality and the gift of indigenous epistemes as threats to the foundations of the university, they should be conceived as in full agreement with the commitment of the academy to its inquiry for knowledge (cf. Smith, "Repression" 156). Battiste and Henderson also maintain that challenging the existing frameworks of systemic discrimination is "not just a task for the colonized and the oppressed; it is the defining challenge and the path to a shared and sustainable future for all peoples" (12). By assuming and recognizing their responsibilities, the guest-master (i.e., the academy at large) becomes, instead of a hostage, a hôte who receives. If this law of hospitality is observed, the logic of the gift can also take place, sustaining both the host and the guest and ultimately making the gift possible.

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[30] John Dewey suggests 'a radical epistemological pluralism' and hospitality as 'open-mindedness,' an attitude of mind which calls for respect in approaching other perspectives and the existing epistemological diversity (*Democracy and Education* 182; *The Quest for Certainty* 157). Not surprisingly, the roots and central commitments of pragmatism derive from Native American epistemes and epistemologies. See, for example, Pratt, *Native Pragmatism*, and Wilshire, *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

INVITATION TO RESPOND

It's the Global Day for Action on the one-year anniversary of the war on Iraq by the U.S. and its allies. On the transit down to the Peace Flame Park, I think of the little newspaper article I had just read on 'mourning sickness' – about a growing number of people who rather feel good than do good by wearing ribbons to demonstrate empathy with important causes, by mourning in public for celebrities and by participating in demonstrations to declare 'Not in My Name' instead of doing something to help the dispossessed.[1]

No wonder I reexamine my own motives for taking time off from writing my dissertation and going down to the march and even more so, for thinking badly of my friends who have prioritized other things than global peace. At the same time, I stare at the swanky ads at passing bus stops and I find myself thinking that those ads are my world whether I want it or not. I cannot dissociate myself from them and think that as long as I do my best to be critical of and try to resist the world the ads represent, it will remain out there (or at least an arm-length's away, for most of the time).

Which makes me think of my thesis. Isn't that – the sense of detachment and ability to dissociate – the same reason why the academy and people in there do and can remain epistemically so ignorant? In the same way as I can imagine being disconnected from the ads, they can dissociate themselves from other than their own epistemes; in the same way as I am, they are able to reject or deny that world, thinking that while it may exist, it always remains somewhere 'out

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[1] Later I learn that Civitas, a UK-based NGO for civic education, is a right-wing thinktank – a fact that puts things into perspective – are they saying this to stop people marching and become even more indifferent (and thus, more supportive of neoliberal militaristic agendas)? Or as Madeleine Bunting suggests, is it a reflection of "a long tradition of Western philosophy's suspicion of emotion" (13)?

there.' This comes to me as a slight shock: If we're all constantly dissociating ourselves without noticing – even 'us' who seek to address and challenge it – do our attempts to transform the current systems have a chance at all?

IGNORE AMERICA, one of the banners urges in front of me when I get to the park where already a considerable crowd made up of people from all walks of life has gathered. I recall a comic of an old Native man saying 'easier said than done' beside a Canadian farmer with a banner which says 'Keep the Europeans out.' How to ignore a bully whose influence, both economic, military and cultural, is felt everywhere on this planet? How to ignore such a pervasive, ever-present influence even if you manage somehow to ignore the country itself? Again, I'm thinking of my thesis and my argument of epistemic ignorance. You cannot ignore the big and powerful, but how easy it is to remain ignorant about the already colonized, the already marginalized.

The march organizers do their best not to remain ignorant; they recognize the Coast Salish peoples and their territories and also have invited the representatives of the Squamish Nation to open the rally at Sunset Beach, reminding the crowd that we're all in the same canoe. Moreover, the crowd is told that the occupation in Iraq is also about the occupation right here in Canada. But is this recognized just so we can forget it until next time? A token gesture of convenience which makes us feel good rather than do something about it? Does this marching qualify for 'doing something'? Sure, we stop the traffic on the bridge and downtown, we make ourselves visible, we send a clear message that we haven't forgotten, that we're still in solidarity, that we're still the second superpower in the world (however militaristic and masculinist that may sound). But do we actually do anything to end the occupation right here in British Columbia, on the streets of Vancouver, the Burrard Bridge, at Sunset Beach? And perhaps most importantly, does my own work contribute to that goal at all?

Some of these people are, no doubt, those who've also been active in the

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global social justice movement. That movement has interrupted and disrupted several international meetings and summits of the economic, corporate machinery which is ruining the planet on so many fronts. That movement has also convened three times at the World Social Forum; a platform of civil society with a slogan 'Alternative World is Possible.' At the latest forum held just a few months ago in Mumbai, the sentiment was further modified into 'Alternative World View is Possible.'

I have been putting off, for months, the writing of the conclusion of my thesis. Lately, there have been more urgent things to look after, such as completing the appeal to a provincial court in Finland over a decision involving the commercialization of a sacred Sami site back at home. Then, every time I think of the conclusion, I recall my conversation with an Englishman from the European Environmental Agency in Singapore in December 2003. He and I, together with ten or so others from various European and Asian countries were there to have a two-day 'free-spirited' discussion on 'human interaction with nature', an event organized by the Asia Europe Foundation. I was one of the two invited 'case studies' as they called the presentations by myself ('the indigenous representative from Europe') and by another indigenous woman ('the indigenous representative from Asia') on indigenous peoples and their relationship with the land (surprisingly they didn't call us native informants because that seemed to be the reason she and I were there). At the dinner table at a Spanish restaurant this man, who also served as the facilitator of our two-day talk shop, asked about my thesis.

I tried my best to convey the various layers and the main argument of my work. He seemed interested and asked a question that stuck with me: 'But what is the incentive for others, for non-indigenous people, to take responsibility for knowing indigenous worldviews?' Ever since, I have been asking myself: What indeed is the incentive? Is there any? Does there need to be any, beyond the ethics defined as the responsibility toward the other? Is it too naive or

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idealist to think that that would be enough? Have I indeed dissociated myself
from the world around me so badly that I'm no longer able to see that people
are not willing to even consider doing anything without clearly spelled out
concrete and practical incentives (such as personal benefit, economic profit,
maybe)? No wonder I haven't been able to start writing my conclusion despite
the piles of notes that I keep jotting down.

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As Joyce Green asserts, the historic, cultural and intellectual foundations of the academy continue to be informed by patriarchal and colonial discourses and practices, resulting in a situation where "[t]he conditions of intellectual life are circumscribed by these assumptions and practices" ("Transforming" 88). In this inquiry, I have sought to demonstrate that not only conditions of intellectual life but also what can be said and what is understood are confined and defined by these parameters. In other words, due to the selective, rarefied intellectual foundations of the academy, those coming from other epistemic traditions are either forced to 'transcode' their systems of knowing and perceiving the world into the dominant ones or simply remain 'unheard.' The main questions of my work, then, have been: How do we make the gift of indigenous epistemes possible in the academy? How do we transform the current conditions of impossibility into a possibility? What would be the conditions of such possibility? How do we transform the prevalent inability or disinclination to recognize 'other' ways of understanding the world and ordering of reality?

The notion of the gift has formed the backbone and the undercurrent of my thesis. I have suggested a new paradigm based on the logic of the gift as understood in indigenous thought, particularly with regard to giving to the land. While recognizing that indigenous peoples are not homogeneous even internally and that their cultures, histories and socio-economic circumstances are not the same, I maintain that underpinning these apparent

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differences is a set of shared and common perceptions of the world related to ways of life, cultural and social practices and discourses that foreground and necessitate an intimate relationship with their surroundings and natural environment. There also are a number of shared experiences related to being colonized and marginalized in dominant societies.

The logic of the gift that I articulate in this thesis foregrounds a new relationship characterized by reciprocity and, as articulated here, also by a call for responsibility toward the 'other.' So far, much academic attention has focussed on establishing various programs and services for indigenous students with a premise that they need special assistance in their attempts to adapt and accommodate to the academic world and its culture. This approach is based on an implicit assumption of indigenous people as the 'problem.' In this inquiry, I have insisted on shifting attention to the role of the academy and called for its responsibilities with regard to problems conventionally known as cultural conflicts. This shift does not imply that bridging and access programs and services are no longer necessary – they continue to play an important role in addressing and correcting the effects of historical and contemporary systemic discrimination. My intention has been to consider these issues from another angle, offer new conceptual tools, perspectives and understanding to analyze and further counter these concerns, and also move beyond these programs. It is clear that we need to engage in processes of transformation on several levels and locations and advocate strategies of both-and rather than either-or.

The multilayered theorizing of this inquiry starts with a suggestion of considering the problem of cultural conflicts in broader, more flexible and thus more productive terms. I have employed the concept of episteme and coined the term epistemic ignorance to refer to the predominant, general lack of recognition and knowledge of indigenous worldviews and discursive practices in the academy. With the help of the notion of epistemic ignorance, I have analyzed various practices of active and passive 'not-knowing' and mechanisms of exclusion in the academy which ensure that the gift remains impossible. At the same time, I have remained watchful of the simplistic and also arrogant assumptions of knowing 'other cultures.'

My 'method' of theorizing could be described as a confluence of various separate streams or tributaries all flowing into the same river and forming an irregular, unsettled current.

Besides indigenous scholarship, I have looked for insights in theoretical approaches such as Spivak's and Derrida's work which at first may not appear to be flowing parallel with the former. I have also attempted to 'think like a river' (cf. Worster) which has, among other things, spurred reflection. This 'method' has resulted in a confluence of voices but also a practice of reading – or even misreading – that has allowed me to be carried away by the ideas various theories and approaches represent (cf. Bal 19) rather than seek for an orthodox interpretation of them.

The main argument of my work has been that in the academy, indigenous epistemes need to be recognized as a gift – not as supplements, commodities or not perceived at all, as often is the case. I have contemplated, with the help of various considerations of hospitality, what recognizing indigenous epistemes as a gift would entail. I contend that this gift needs to be recognized according to the principles of responsibility and reciprocity that foreground the logic of the gift. I also call attention to the fact that indigenous epistemes cannot be recognized as a gift within the prevailing neocolonial, global capitalist system. By counting on the wealth and profit the gift or aspects of it such as 'traditional knowledge' can generate for the advancement of the academy, this system only exploits and commodifies the gift by perceiving it as part of the exchange economy. In this system, knowledge is being commercialized – a trend reflected, for example, in the view of Joseph Stiglitz, the former chief economist at the World Bank, according to whom today, knowledge is a global public good capable of producing benefits and "one of the keys to development" (320). The idea of the recognition of the gift challenges this ideology embedded in the current trend of universities on the road of "becoming corporate institutions motivated by profit-thinking" along the lines "[t]he more money one attracts, the more one is 'excellent'" (Kailo, "Ivory Tower" 65; also Findlay, "Always" 312).

The recognition called for in this context, however, is of a specific kind. It is not limited to the often fleeting moment of recognizing diversity in terms of 'other' identities and cultures associated with multiculturalism but as I propose, it stems from the understanding grounded in the logic of the gift. It requires knowledge but also reciprocity – one must take action according to responsibilities that characterize that particular relationship. As the various gifts of the land cannot be taken for granted in this logic – if they are, the balance of the world which life

depends on is disrupted – the gift of indigenous epistemes cannot be neglected because it would threaten the future of the academy. As the gifts of the land have to be actively recognized by expressions of gratitude and giving back, the gift of indigenous epistemes must be acknowledged by reciprocating which includes the ability to understand not only the gift itself but also the logic of the gift behind it.

Understanding the logic of the gift is a challenging, interminable process that requires a strong commitment to hospitality and a sense of responsibility toward the 'other' on the academy's part. Rather than simply comprehending otherness, it is a matter of recognizing agency (Spivak, "Teaching" 182). It is a commitment to not only learn – learn to listen carefully, not through benevolent imperialism, for instance – but also learning to learn from indigenous epistemes. The call for the recognition of the gift, then, does not imply a superficial approach of cultivating short-lived references to indigenous peoples' relationship with the land. Such an approach would merely simplify the logic of the gift always embedded in its specific contexts. It also would, due to the prevalent ignorance, romanticize and perpetuate persistent stereotypes with regard to 'tradition' versus 'contemporary.' In short, in the same way as in the past, such arguments – and also the way in which we, indigenous people ourselves, sometimes talk about these issues carelessly – are used to legitimize and justify positions of benevolent imperialism and neocolonial repression.

A commitment to openness and learning to learn also may assist in increasing understanding of the links between interconnected issues such as the logic of the gift and contemporary land rights of indigenous peoples – a question that, from the perspective of the dominant, often appears controversial, problematic and above all, political. The gift is a reflection of a worldview that emphasizes the maintenance of good relationships with the land. If there is no land to have a relationship with – that is, if the land is expropriated or used for other, more 'profitable' purposes, whether in the name of civilization or globalized economy – not only the gift is made impossible but also the survival of the people is impossible.[2] What is more, as a result, the gift is not only impossible but it is also 'forbidden,' reflecting the insidious practices

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[2] Another aspect of the connection between the logic and rights is 'the historical facts which are for many hard to swallow' as pointed out by Silko, "namely, that at best, the Anglo-American is a guest on this continent, and at worst, the United States of America is founded upon stolen land" ("Old-Time" 215).

of contemporary benevolent imperialism. In the indirect way of making the conditions of the gift impossible, the same results are achieved as with openly outlawing the gift.

Further, the gift has to be read in its various contexts. Neither various gift practices nor the logic of the gift can be rendered as belonging only to 'archaic' or 'traditional' societies. The logic of the gift remains central in indigenous epistemes. We are all contemporaries although some of us may have different ways of perceiving and relating to the world (cf. Brody). One of the multiple contexts is the academy and therefore, this thesis is also a call for hospitality of the academy – an unconditional welcome in the sense of openness to the other in a way that does not demand 'translation' of 'other' epistemes before they can be welcomed to the academy.

Hospitality, like the gift, is intrinsically ambiguous, presenting some compelling challenges in attempting to reconcile the tension of the threshold between the possibility and impossibility as well as conditional and unconditional hospitality. But as I suggest, this tension is also the threshold where the academy meets the outside world and has to respond – where it must *give* response; a response that includes the recognition of the existence of the gift and receiving it. This threshold is the limit of possibility; a place where the impossible becomes possible and the interchangeability of hospitality can take place. In short, it is at this threshold where hospitality can take place and where the gift is made possible.

I also propose that hospitality implies responsibility toward the other and that responsibility requires knowing. But as Spivak notes, "[w]e must remind ourselves that knowledge and thinking are halfway houses, that they are judged when they are set to work" ("Diasporas" 253). Thus, knowing (about) other cultures or in this case, indigenous epistemes will never alone erase systemic inequalities and disparate relations of privilege in the academy or elsewhere in society. This is where the academy is called into action by an abiding commitment to responsibility and reciprocity as discussed above. Echoing Spivak's words, my inquiry makes "a plea for the patient work of learning to learn from below – a species of 'reading', perhaps – how to mend the torn fabric of subaltern ethics..." ("Note" 15).

Such a plea is not romanticizing: "What we are dreaming of here is not how to keep the tribal in a state of excluded cultural conformity but how to construct a sense of sacred Nature

which can help mobilize a general ecological mind-set beyond the reasonable and self-interested grounds of long-term global survival" (Spivak, "Afterword" 199).[3] This construction, as discussed in Chapter 4, cannot and must not take the easy but irresponsible step across the threshold of embracing a 'land ethic' or the logic of the gift, for that matter, without addressing the contemporary realities or of viewing indigenous peoples as 'nature folk' and picking and choosing aspects of indigenous cultures according to the personal preference and need (cf. Moore 303). It is, then, not a call for simply paying tribute to indigenous peoples and their land-centered practices or for merely employing them as inspirational symbols without knowing and acting upon one's responsibilities as required by the logic of the gift.

The problem of epistemic ignorance in the academy (as well as elsewhere), therefore, is not solved by simply adding 'Native content' in curriculum and course syllabi. Calls for raising awareness and increasing knowledge are not new – they can be found in almost any list of recommendations dealing with education and indigenous peoples. In Canada, for instance, they are among the core recommendations in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996 and reiterated in the more recent report, "Learning About Walking in Beauty: Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms" in 2002.

If there is a recommendation that I seek to put forth in this thesis, it is the responsibility of the academy to do its homework. Doing one's homework is a complex and continuous process of unlearning and working through one's privilege. It is a process which one cannot repudiate by claiming eurocentric arrogance of conscience or by pushing the 'other' to the margins and evoking it only for the purposes of consolidating the 'self.' It is a reciprocal relationship with certain responsibilities that cannot be disavowed by the establishment of various programs and services. It is an invitation to respond; a call for response in a responsible manner particularly by the academy and various individuals at the university but also by ourselves, indigenous people who have the responsibility, among others, to resist and confront irresponsible responses.

What I have suggested in this inquiry is a unique perspective of the logic of the gift

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[3] 'Sacred,' Spivak notes, "here need not have a religious sanction, but simply a sanction that cannot be contained within the principle of reason alone" ("Afterword" 199). In this context, we can also recall the discussion of the impossibility of the gift that exceeds reason in chapter 3.

which foregrounds a sense of ethics defined as a relationship of responsibility. Whereas the primary focus of efforts toward the inclusive university is to diversify and 'democratize' the traditionally Eurocentric curriculum and the canon, the call for the possibility of the gift of indigenous epistemes is a more profound call for an epistemic shift grounded on a specific philosophy. In the discourse of inclusion (inclusive curriculum, increased Native content), the paradigm – the mode of thinking and relating, the relationship – remains unchanged, which I consider part of the problem. It remains as a one-way relationship in which knowledge always flows only from one direction, whether from indigenous people to the academy (the scene of the native informant) or from the academy to indigenous people (the scene of eurocentric, hegemonic intellectual foundations of the institution).

With this thesis, I have made the case that the future of the academy is dependent on the recognition of the gift of indigenous epistemes – recognition as understood within the logic of the gift that foregrounds the responsibility in the name of the well-being of all. As in indigenous epistemes, the future of the academy is dependent on its ability to create and sustain appropriate reciprocal relationships grounded on action and knowledge; in other words, to espouse ethics as responsibility toward the other.

This inquiry contributes to various fields of research and analysis. My theorizing of the gift as a central aspect of a particular worldview and engaging with the notion of hospitality provide new prospects to existing considerations on these themes. It opens up new spaces of analysis and criticism for indigenous discourses and also other considerations of the academy. The unique blend of sources demonstrates the relevancy of indigenous scholarship to other theories and scholarly approaches and vice versa. What is more, my testing of Spivak's and Derrida's theories against indigenous notions of gift and hospitality implicitly illustrates how these theories are, in many ways, informed by indigenous and other traditional approaches and conceptualizations. This also reveals how these two theoretical and intellectual paradigms – indigenous and deconstructive – are not as disparate and far apart as is usually perceived. At the same time, the somewhat unexpected 'confluence' of deconstruction and critical approaches by indigenous scholars demonstrates how deconstructive practice can foster and give a new critical edge to indigenous scholarship.

My 'cross-epistemic' conceptual analysis also illuminates the complexity and difficulty of various commonly used terms such as culture, responsibility and recognition, laying new ground for a more careful and nuanced application by indigenous and non-indigenous scholars alike. The problematization of 'knowing and teaching other peoples and cultures' offers new insights to educators and others. It also acts as an important reminder of the many challenges and pitfalls such endeavour always entails.

Further, expanding previous considerations of 'cultural conflicts' to a concern for epistemic ignorance brings the scholarship dealing with issues of indigenous people and higher education to the next level. Instead of focussing on the question of what needs to be done for indigenous people in the academy in creating a more hospitable environment, my conviction is that we need to hold the academy itself responsible for its ignorance and therefore, for its homework. My analysis maintains that creating indigenous spaces and making their voices possible in the academy is insufficient because these gestures do not guarantee that indigenous people can speak and are heard by the academy. In short, it is the hierarchical, limited epistemic foundations of the academy that have to be transformed. This shift of critical attention results in a fresh approach and lens of analysis whose focal point is the institution itself and the necessary steps it must take toward its future.

My consideration is, by no means, intended to be taken as – it simply cannot be – an exhaustive or final answer to the problem of ignorance or the question of indigenous epistemes in the academy. To suggest otherwise would inevitably contradict and negate the idea of hospitality, the fundamental openness to the other. The question of hospitality will not and should never come to a close – in the moment we assume the problem solved, we arrive at a totalizing closure. I wholeheartedly concur with Spivak who asserts that we have to stop looking for a single global solution which always is "deeply marked by the moment of colonialist influence" (*Post-Colonial* 15). Instead of yearning for an ultimate answer, we need to accept that necessarily, hospitality is a continuous, never-ending process of reciprocity and also negotiation – a productive crisis in which we work continuously toward a new way of thinking and ultimately a new relationship in which the academy is compelled to recognize and accept its responsibility toward the 'other.'

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I am faced with the problem of writing concluding words to something that must remain open by definition. Spivak's remark crystallizes this somewhat overwhelming endeavour:

> If we want to start something, we must ignore that our starting point is, all efforts taken, shaky. If we want to get something done, we must ignore that, all provisions made, the end will be inconclusive. This ignoring is not an active forgetfulness; it is, rather, an active marginalizing of the marshiness, the swampiness, the lack of firm grounding in the margins, at the beginning and end. (*Critique* 175)

Instead of a marsh, however, I want to think of beginnings and endings in terms of the fluidity of the river. I started my thesis with the Deatnu River, mooring myself in a specific geographical, cultural as well as intellectual location. It also encouraged me to approach the issues in my work like a river: with fluidity, mobility, openness and even with the occasionally unexpected or divisive. The river is also a site of reflection, continuation and constant change – of 'transmotion.'

Deatnu conjoins me with the Sami context, including the dominant Sami discourse with which I critically engaged in the beginning of this thesis. I called for a more careful examination of colonial discourses present in contemporary Sami society and also for a stronger commitment in restoring and envisioning Sami research and society at large by grounding ourselves on our own conventions and philosophies. Thus, my work is an invitation also to Sami scholars to respond and open up for further conversations.

As a Sami scholar myself, I bring a specific perspective into this inquiry. It is not, however, intended to be regarded as a specifically 'Sami contribution' on issues considered here, although I draw some of my examples from the Sami conventions and context. It is obvious that my position as a Sami scholar informs my concerns and arguments, but it is clear that they are also inspired by many other discourses, theories and analyses with which I have engaged as a student and a guest outside Samiland, away from the Deatnu River. The teachings

I have learned are the gifts that I will be bringing home, however difficult – or perhaps even impossible – it may prove to be. Instead of fixed positions, I have approached the questions of this inquiry with shifting, indeterminate boundaries guided by a conviction that each of the discourses employed here can inform and be informed by the others.

I conclude my inquiry by another great salmon river, the Sto:lo, better known as the Fraser River. I was recently told the meaning of its initial name by Larry Grant, the Musqueam language instructor. Sto:lo, like Deatnu, means no more or less than 'the big river.' This explanation made complete sense to me and marked an instant when I felt both the presence of the Sto:lo River and the connection between Deatnu and Sto:lo in a much more intimate way than 'Fraser' was ever able to evoke in me. It was a good and very powerful reminder of the significance of names and the connotations they carry. It was also a teaching of the interconnectedness of river, community, stories and names. I am very grateful for these teachings – which for some may seem relatively casual but for me are very critical – and I say *kukschm, giitu*, thank you.

This is the estuary where the river meets the ocean and it is where my thesis ends. It is a fluid, transgressive threshold where my work meets the 'world' and is opened up for responses.

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