

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE WRITING OF CULTURE:

A PROFILE OF SEPARATION

by

Pauline E. Rowsell

A Thesis
in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the
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PAULINE E. ROWSELL

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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This is probably the most difficult enterprise that I have undertaken in my academic career. I say this not because it is a thesis, to be judged and adjudicated by my examiners, nor because it is probably the single, longest document I have produced in the academy. It is because it is a deconstruction of Women as they are constructed by both Feminism and Anthropology, the two areas of concern in this thesis. It is also difficult for me as a woman to have to deconstruct the Feminist construction of culture, since it might be construed by my examiners and readers that I am in opposition to the Feminist core value of alleviating the oppression of women at the hands of men. I am not. I believe that Feminism and Feminists are coming dangerously close to replicating the cultural construction of Women that Anthropology has produced in the form of The Culture of Man. I am deeply committed to changing the status of Women in any cultural context, just as I am deeply committed to Anthropology and Culture. I believe that it is only through such commitments that one can find the courage to pursue the kinds of research needed to change the situations that Feminism and Anthropology find themselves in. I use the word "courage" because such perspectives as mine are often marginalized by both Feminism and Anthropology.

In this thesis I am not criticizing Feminism and Anthropology for the sake of criticizing or simply producing

a document for a degree requirement. This thesis is the first of two stages in a deconstruction aimed at strengthening both Anthropological and Feminist theory and producing a more inclusive Culture regardless of whether one is a Feminist, an Anthropologist; regardless of sex, ethnicity or class. This thesis is also an experiment in pushing as much as possible against the boundaries of both Feminism and its molar gloss or surface performance of Culture, and Anthropology's exclusive Culture of Man.

The idea for this work arose from frustration: frustration in Women's Studies programs that assert "women's culture" or "the women's community" as a molar gloss that springs directly from a central and totalizing theoretical paradigm. Frustration was also the key ingredient in my academic career in Anthropology where nomothetic glosses effectively minimize Difference between women and bury women further in the Culture of Man. The preponderance of cultural isomorphisms in both Anthropology and Feminism is preventing insights into a possible integrated pluralism of women.

When I began the baseline research for this thesis, it was immediately clear to me, that "women's culture" could not exist. It could not exist because feminist theorists, who are the producers of a notion of "women's culture", have not yet come to terms with the Culture of Man and the Anthropology that has produced it. Within the first week of data collection, the evidence was overwhelming that "women's

culture" was a figure of academic assertion. The further my research progressed, the more clear it became that this "women's culture" was an exclusive entity with rigid boundaries set along lines of class and ethnicity. It was also abundantly clear to me, as the data started to accumulate, that the Language of Women's Studies programs was an exclusive boundary maintenance function itself that acted to alienate those outside its class parameters.

A similar situation exists in the discipline of Anthropology which has produced a Culture of Man. Like Feminism, the Language of Anthropology has effectively alienated itself from the very thing it has been seeking, namely Culture. Both disciplines concern themselves with the Other and the construction of that Other; it is this construction that is of central concern here in this thesis. The working definition of Culture that I have used throughout this work is: Culture is the socially and symbolically learned and more or less shared knowledge which underlies behavior; this knowledge gives meaning and order to human cognition and experience and is a product of consciousness. In my understanding and treatment of Culture meaning is assigned, and from this assignment comes cultural experience and value.

This is a symbolic work that owes a considerable debt to M. Foucault and his work Power and Knowledge (1980). In designing the research I believed like Foucault that there is a power in knowledge particularly between those who know and

those who do not know. Like Foucault I have suspended the usual concept of power as being an ascendant force, something to be seized and wielded; rather I have used it as the power that is inherent in particular discursive fields that operate behind the Language of the disciplines of Feminism and Anthropology. I have attempted to access this discourse and its knowledge in order to determine if "women's culture" as mobilized by feminist theorists exists. I felt that by suspending the usual conception of power I might move beyond the Language glosses of the academy i.e., the performance of the assertion of a culture and access or "tap into" a more substantive or anthropological notion of Culture, in this case, a women's culture.

In the chapter entitled "Narratives" I have presented for the reader the discursive fields in the form of narratives in order that the reader have access to the kinds of discourse that comprise the data base. The narratives themselves are blocked out or bounded in the text exactly as they occur on the interview tapes. My treatment in the form of analysis based on these narratives either precedes or follows these narratives. This is an experiment in textuality that moves beyond the more classical approaches where the words of the informant are only experienced through the author's transformations. It is impossible to present every narrative to the reader and as a result I have fitted the narratives into fields, discursive fields, based on a symbolic domain

analysis (Spradley 1979). These discursive fields were derived from the entire body of narratives, combining two procedures, namely a domain analysis and key symbols (Ortner 1973b). It is impossible when undertaking this kind of research to avoid categorization, and I have laboured at keeping this facet to a minimum. However, the women who took part in the research did in many instances give similar discourse, and it is from these similarities and differences generated by the women themselves that I have devised the discursive fields.

One of the demons that I live with as a woman and an anthropologist is the structural nature of my discipline; specifically the paradigm of binary oppositions that is inherent in Anthropology. In this thesis there are two "Results" chapters. In one of these chapters entitled, "Language and Alienation" I discuss the nature of Language and the nature of discourse as I use it here in this work. As a word of caution to the reader, Language and discourse are NOT opposed in the way in which structural anthropology opposes its binary oppositions. Nor is any other concept opposed in this manner. If the reader conceptualizes perspectives as being opposed, then that is the product of the reader's cognitive processes rather than the intent of this thesis or its design. The rigid paradigm of binary opposition as it operates in *The Culture of Man*: nature-culture, woman-man, wild-tame and so on throughout the cultural literature is in my mind to be avoided at all costs. I have worked to provide

an avenue where we can begin as women and as anthropologists to engage Difference as it applies to both Culture and women.

The database of this thesis is what I call narratives or recorded interviews which I have organized into three discursive fields. I address and discuss this in depth in Chapter Three. Throughout this thesis I make a distinction between Language and discourse. As mentioned above they are not opposed but rather a means for me to readily differentiate between what I see as the Language or meta-Language of Anthropology and Feminist writers and the words of the women who gave the narratives. Also, there is a further distinction to be made with regard to my mobilization of discourse here, namely, the meaning of discourse itself. Like Michel Foucault, I treat discourse as an event that is situated beyond the immediate and superficial meaning of words. In doing so, discourse moves beyond a mere conveyance of meaning and becomes a representative framework for cultural practices, morals, events, economies and laws.

By treating discourse as an event and not a simple conveyance of meaning, I have attempted to access the cultural institutions that "line-up" behind the discourses that flow from particular experiences and knowledges. Further, by determining the power in these discursive fields distilled from experience and knowledge I have attempted to demonstrate that the gloss of "a women's culture" is a product of a meta-language and not the on-the-ground operating ideology of many

women. Also cogent to this thesis is Foucault's work on the impact of discourse on bodies (Foucault 1980). What Foucault means by "bodies" can be written and understood in this work as behavior. This facet of discourse is discussed in depth in Chapter Five, Language and Alienation. Throughout the thesis and specifically in the chapter on Language and Alienation I have attempted to demonstrate that in both Feminist writing and anthropological writing, the Language of theory itself has come to be a form of domination. In my perception this is a hegemonic system of homologies. What I mean by this is that there is an assertion and a performance of unity and homogeneity that, in fact, does not exist. This denial of plurality is an act of exclusionary power or hegemony. I have also attempted to demonstrate that the Feminist assertion of a "women's culture" finds its roots in the centralized theory of Women's Studies programs. All the narratives in this thesis, both those that are revealed and the ones that are not, stand as a counterpoint to that claim. It is all these narratives that comprise what I call the profile of separation, derived directly from the domain analysis of the discursive fields.

Throughout this thesis I have capitalized certain words such as Culture, Other, Difference and Voice. I have done this to mark what I perceive to be the logocentrism of the meta-languages of both Feminism and Anthropology. The capital is itself a meta-marker that signifies what I regard as the

reification of centralized, theoretical symbols in the academic language. In the narratives themselves, words such as "culture" have not been capitalized because the narratives have been transcribed directly from the interview tapes. When these women spoke, they spoke as women not as anthropologists i.e.; they were not employing the meta-language and meta-markers of anthropologists. My manipulation of the narratives occurs in my compilation of the discursive fields, themselves derived through a symbolic domain analysis and a mobilization of significant symbols (Geertz 1973).

The body of literature that is of concern to this thesis is immense. It encompasses Feminist writing, Anthropological writing, several theoretical fields such as post-structuralism, structuralism, discourse analysis, deconstruction and critical theory. The writing of Chapter Two on Review of the Literature was an immense job. Subsequently, I have limited the discussion in that chapter to those works that in my estimation best represent the areas that are in a direct relationship to the central theme of this thesis. In Anthropology I have selected those works that illustrate the meta-language of the Culture of Man and its exclusive boundaries. I have also included works by feminist anthropologists that are often mistaken as "women's words" when in fact they have a solid base in the androcentric cultural model. In the Feminist literature I have attempted to mobilize those works that are in turn mobilized in Women's

Studies programs in the assertion of a "women's culture." I have also mobilized the Feminist literature that I think is pertinent to my claim in this thesis that what is often called "women's culture" can be seen as an extension of what I call The Culture of Man in Anthropology.

Throughout this work I have been attempting to demonstrate that "women's culture" as it is mobilized in the Language of the academy does not exist in the discourse of everyday life beyond that Language. In order to do this I employed the methodology and procedure outlined in Chapter Three on Method. The database was organized by me into three discursive fields, which I refer to in this work as S1, S2 and S3. These discursive fields were designed to be counter-points to one another and each field was scrutinized and analyzed in order to derive the symbolic discursive field based on the narratives given. The symbolic profiles of each sample's discursive field was arrived at by using a domain analysis which is available to the reader in the Appendices. I was not seeking the Culture of Man so evident in our everyday experiences and knowledge, but rather I was attempting to determine if a separate culture, for and by women, existed as some feminist writers claim.

There are several literatures central to this thesis. They are: post-structuralism, structuralism, Feminist theory, Anthropology and Feminist Anthropology. The contradictory nature of Feminism and Anthropology is also of considerable significance in terms of the literature review for they are constructed to be in opposition to one another. Marilyn Strathern's problematic article "An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology" (1987) is the best example of this supposed opposition between the two areas. Both Feminism and Anthropology deal with the construction of women, either deliberately as in the Feminist literature or fortuitously as in the case of Anthropology. I say fortuitously because I hope to demonstrate in this thesis, using my research data as a base, that Feminism and Anthropology are not as contradictory as one might think. It is the intent of this thesis to demonstrate that there is indeed a performance of Difference between the two paradigms, yet both mobilize the same notion of Culture. Each paradigm constitutes itself as different from the other; but, this thesis demonstrates that this performance of difference is a false consciousness.

I use paradigm here to mean the conceptual frameworks and working assumptions that are inherent in particular knowledges as they are mobilized by either Feminists or anthropologists. Paradigm in this thesis is also used to indicate a particular cultural construction. Gender, for instance, is a cultural construction. Other constructions from both disciplines of concern here are what I call the Culture of Man, Voice, Other, Empowerment, "women's culture" and in general the generative power inherent in the collective subjectivity of textual correctness demanded by each theoretical area.

There is an important element common to both disciplines, namely, the focus of authors on experience and knowledge as a mechanism in the final textuality of theory. In both Feminism and Anthropology, the Self and Other are critically linked through this element of experience. The recent trends of ethnography in Anthropology, represented by ethnographers such as Rosaldo (1989), Clifford (1983) and Rabinow (1977), attempt to reach out to the experience of the Other and incorporate it in the text. To date this has only resulted in a further cultural blurring of the Other beneath the centralized experiences of the ethnographer. This type of textuality can be found in Rosaldo's Culture and Truth (1989) or in Marcus and Fischer's Anthropology As Cultural Critique (1986). These ethnographies have not moved beyond what Roy Wagner (1981:4) has called "cultural, eclectic relativity"; whereby the ethnographer's invention of Culture becomes the connector

between the experiences of the anthropologist and the Other s/he constructs.

In these ethnographies one can perceive a performance of a movement away from the classical stance in Anthropology when, in fact, it is a textual illusion. Experience is touted as being some sort of common ground between the cultural Self and the cultural Other, when in fact nothing has been changed in the model in terms of the actual cultural construction except to employ experience in a universal manner. The expropriation of the cultural experiences of the Other is not different than the expropriation and hidden manipulation of other cultural elements inherent in the framework of classical ethnography. The model has not been revamped, but rather simply renamed.

George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) in Anthropology as Cultural Critique, do nothing to remove the dualist and androcentric stance between themselves and their informants. Their supposedly new method in ethnography claims that the cultural Other is not "critically attacked". Effort is invoked in order to establish a relationship with the Other in order to illuminate Difference (1986:137). Clifford (1983) calls this effort a "discourse that will contain multiple voices" in which everyone shares in the final textuality. This is in fact not the case. The words of the cultural Other are always controlled at a multiplicity of levels by the author. There is no way in the current framework of Anthropology to

avoid this fact. As anthropologists we have, as Wagner (1981) says, invented Culture, and subsequently we have rigidly defined the acceptable ways in which the cultural Other is defined. I believe the current trends in ethnography remain structuralist, androcentric and exclusive in the same manner that the constructed Culture of Man is exclusive.

Nowhere is this better represented than in Renato Rosaldo's 1989 text Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. The strength of this work lies in its critique of the classical research methods of distance-normalizing techniques such as participant observation. The weakness of this work is that Rosaldo assumes there is a system of Culture that can be integrated with individual, intimate feelings and that this can be carried through to the final textuality. Feminists writers have also operated in this manner, which I will discuss shortly. In both Feminism and Anthropology this Culture is asserted rather than demonstrated in the final textuality. Eclecticism is a central principle in current approach to ethnography. However, Rosaldo's personalized eclecticism is frustrating, for it prevents the cultural Other that he so desperately seeks from becoming visible to the reader. His discussions of women, as with many male ethnographers, are superficial and additive rather than integrative.

Rosaldo attempts to mobilize Feminism in instances where the links to the text in general are not apparent. He promises

the reader an integrated discussion of "women's voice" that can never materialize because of his own gender. What is intrinsically embedded in his work is the mobilization of Michelle Rosaldo's work from the 1970's. Unfortunately, Renato Rosaldo has learned little from it, since he replicates the same problems found in that work in terms of the hierarchial framework and the use of gender-loaded language. (See: M.Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere 1974.)

This is the same troublesome model Roger Keesing utilizes in his repertoire of published works (e.g., Keesing 1983). This method, like Rosaldo's, continues to assume that men can write the experience and knowledge of women. It is also a problem in the work of Marilyn Strathern who, although a woman, continues to mobilize an androcentric model that treats women in an isomorphic manner. However in the case of Rosaldo (1989), Keesing (1983) and Edwin Ardener (1975), these ethnographers seem unaware of the epistemological problem of men speaking and writing for and about women.

Like many ethnographers, Rosaldo (1989) is concerned with the position of objectivism in Anthropology. He mobilizes his own grief and rage from his wife's death to introduce the element of subjectivity into his text. In doing so he has completely troped, or transformed, the useful version of subjectivity in post-structuralism into a subjectivity as problematic as the objectivism he claims to oppose in the classical ethnographic techniques. There is no difference

between objectivity and subjectivity in Rosaldo's work, or for that matter in the work of many current ethnographers. The subjectivity these men utilize remains a hegemony and is imperialistic in its textual authority. The cultural Other is an additive quality that follows behind the events of the author's experience.

For instance, Rosaldo (1989) imposes his own experience of grief on the Ilongot model without accounting for the nature of the conflicting cultural contexts involved. It is slippage such as this that might fail to convince hard-boiled ethnographers that the post-structuralist idea of subject interviewing subject might be a valid approach to the writing of Culture. This type of subjectivity found in such works as Rosaldo's is not the intended subjectivity of the post-structuralist paradigm. Rosaldo (1989), Marcus and Fischer (1986), Kevin Dwyer (1982) and Paul Rabinow (1977) are among a host of ethnographers who have not yet come to terms with the fact that as anthropologists we tend to be distrustful of the bare words of informants. In the classical genre, we are encouraged as ethnographers to present the informants words only as they have been treated by the anthropological author.

Culture and Truth does nothing to solve the problem of Anthropology's treatment of women. The work produced by here still clings to an imperialist nostalgia, only now it is encapsulated in the performance of a subjective experience as common ground between Self and Other. How does this differ

from the classical methods that employ the same system of nomothetics under the guise of an objective experience? It does not. The most damaging element of ethnographies such as this is that they claim to speak for the Other under the guise of giving Voice. This is just as insidious as the Feminist writers who claim their methods "allow" women to have Voice. Both are imperialist and exclusionary stances. There are static, structuralist models in which subjectivity and its relation to meaning and experience are rigidly fixed in entrenched and opposed essentialist positions. This perspective will only continue to trivialize the cultural Other. As a method it is "performance oriented", that is, this method is only a pretence of the Voice of the Other filtered through the troped experiences of the author.

Marilyn Strathern is a Feminist anthropologist. Her work attempts to define the Feminist perspective in ethnographic research. Strathern's work is an example of how women either consciously or unconsciously apply the androcentric bias inherent in classical ethnography. The results of such models is a reinvention of women's "traditional" roles. In an article entitled "Domesticity and the Denigration of Women" (1984), Strathern attempts to demonstrate that the denigration of domesticity found in western (sic) cultures cannot be applied in cross-cultural contexts, in her case, Hagen, New Guinean women. After stating its case as a feminist piece, this article lapses into a relativism from which it does not

recover. This theoretical construct tends to shift the analysis from the real problem, what I see as an androcentric and essentialist bias, to a polemic of cross-cultural comparisons.

Strathern achieves this shift of emphasis by erroneously expropriating a Hagen New Guinean symbolic system, the public ritual denigration of women's roles. By using a Western (sic) meaning system in a classical structure of binary opposites, she fuses the two symbolic systems in the final textuality. This effectively minimizes the cultural differences between women in both cultures under discussion. Strathern's method is deeply indebted to the application of cultural universals, inherent in androcentric cultural models. Also, Strathern's own perspective leans heavily on the male hegemony in ethnographic texts. She could have mobilized the work of any number of female Melanesian scholars, yet she refers to and relies on the problematic work of her husband, Andrew Strathern (see Strathern, A. 1971). The implications this reliance on her husband's work has for a Feminist perspective should be obvious. Andrew Strathern's work represents the classical ethnographies, effectively countered by such works as Roy Wagner's Invention of Culture (1981). A. Strathern "went native" by immersing himself into Big Man Melanesian politics.

Although Marilyn Strathern attempts to write in a cross-cultural manner, she proceeds with the assumption that the

cultural activities of men are more important material for ethnographic texts. In the article "Virgin Spirit Cults" (1980), this fact is brought home when Strathern says, "men are the agents of conversion through which women's power of regeneration is usurped (sic) with the spirit of the virgin cult." (1980:22) It is these groups which practice ritual denigration of Hagen women's roles which Strathern claims have no relation to women's everyday lives. The problem with this kind of assumption in symbolic analysis is that it does not recognize that symbolic evocation is grafted on to direct signification and the symbol is not mobilized in isolation. The concept of symbol is integrally connected to sign. Symbolic analysis must be concerned with the action of the symbol itself.

Symbolically Strathern's work replicates Ortner's Key Symbol model of culture/nature (1973b) and in "Domesticity and the Denigration of Women" Strathern continues the androcentric opposition by employing constructions such as:"rubbish/prestige:private/public and we/they" (1973b), all exorcized in contexts she claims ought not to be compared in the first instance. Reflexively this is problematic. When Strathern says, "the denigration of domesticity is used to symbolic effect" and "women's association with the domestic domain gives particular value to femaleness"(1984:31) she is saying that these symbols do not affect the cultural derivation of selfhood for women. I believe she has either

consciously or unconsciously separated sign and association. Association, or the connotational aspects of symbol, also can have an impact on behaviour, as Foucault (1980) aptly demonstrates. Also, the associative aspects of symbols are particularly important in Anthropology, given its rich collection of ritual practices.

Strathern's account renders the symbolism of everyday life in Hagen society meaningless and disembodied by separating sign and association. She has not come to terms with Difference, written in her theoretical framework as "cross-cultural" referents. In applying the androcentric model she has effectively minimized difference between women by believing that she is working in "cross-cultural" contexts but unfortunately fails to unpack what I see as the Culture of Man in either case. This effectively works as an agent of exclusion for "Western" culture which in itself is not an isomorphic modifier. Signs as a function of symbolism are implied propositions. Strathern does not analyze the nature of the knowledge to be derived from the symbols that she manipulates. The final result is the hegemony inherent in the classical paradigm.

STRUCTURALISM:

From my perspective, three of the most problematic areas

in Anthropology are directly related to both methods and paradigms that derive their theoretical and cognitive frameworks from such works as Levi-Strauss's Structural Anthropology. (1963) Levi-Strauss' work was undertaken about the same time as Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes. Anthropology is well-acquainted with both Barthes and Levi-Strauss. Lacan and Derrida, and later Michel Foucault, are frequently referred to as post-structuralists, whose work is beyond the rigid paradigms of Structural Anthropology (1963) which in turn was closer to de Saussure's work than any of the deconstructive work of Derrida (1978) and to some extent Lacan.

From such structuralist works as Levi-Strauss' comes the cognitive framework of dualism and its paradigm of binary oppositions. Such constructs have had a destructive impact on the cultural Other, a category that includes women. Further dualism both as a method and a cognitive paradigm also have shaped the problematic profile of the reality and textuality of women.

"Nature, Culture and Gender" by P. MacCormack (1980) is an example of the literature that attempts to deal with the essentialisms inherent in dualism.

MacCormack assails structuralist paradigms in the name of Levi-Strauss and traces his history back to Rousseau and to the model he borrowed liberally from de Saussure, the structural linguist. The basic premise of this paradigm

employs a binary opposition system to build in our mind our perceptions of the world. MacCormack says, "structuralists have smugly assumed that there is a single basic structure of binary thinking underlying all human mental functioning" (1980:2). MacCormack points out that like de Saussure, Levi-Strauss erroneously believed that the signs perceived in linguistics could be isolated from the rest of the cultural matrix. It is this technique, driven to oppose and categorize, that has produced the dualistic culture/nature dichotomy.

MacCormack's work exposes the central flaw of this type of anthropological thinking by confusing a culturally constrained ranking system of Nature with nature itself. The model of Levi-Strauss is flawed, as was de Saussure's, because it cannot separate on the one hand or connect on the other the crucial link between the unconscious functions of brain and the on-the-ground-reality it attempts to explain. In other words, its central assumptions are not demonstrable and therefore the rigid stasis of symbols always in opposition creates a cultural framework of exclusion.

One of the strongest features of MacCormack's article is her criticism of Levi-Strauss' structuralism for its biological reductionism inherent in the model and the structuralist insistence on the application of cultural oppositions. Anthropologists such as Edwin and Shirley Ardener (1975) continue this dualist model by postulating textual constructions such as: colonist/colonized,

capitalist/proletraian, male/female, culture/nature, tame/wild and self/other. These constructions are exclusionary in their diametrically opposed positions that in turn render a cognitive map of cultural behaviour. This is what I believe M. Foucault is talking about when he discussed the impact of discourse on behaviour in "Power and Knowledge" (1980). The impact of a binary oppositional discourse are falsely opposed signifiers that drive a particular ethos that renders all women in terms of a nomothetic. In this system the only difference is between man and woman. Structuralism reduces Culture to biology, it is a science of separation. Levi-Strauss dismisses these concerns as "mere methodological devices". As MacCormack aptly says in her article, "culture is not nature, but nature is entirely a cultural concept" (1980:5).

I do not agree, however, with all that MacCormack has to say about structuralism. MacCormack (1980) claims that the structuralist model is dynamic. From my perspective it is not dynamic but rendered static by the hardened relationship and oppositional requirement of the oppositional signifier/signified. One category cannot transform into another by the nature of the essentialisms opposing each category. What is also cogent to this thesis is MacCormack's analysis of the structuralist practice of opposing male and female in discussions of gender.

MacCormack uses Edwin and Shirley Ardener's ambiguous

model of muted group (women) and muted Voice to emphasize what she calls the construction of a metaphoric truth, " a process which metaphor cannot bear" (1980:9). This is a similar process to what I call trope, that is, those figures of thought that turn or transform meaning, a process in which words are used in a way that effects a change in their standard meaning. Thus the presentation and manipulation of the informant's words in the text becomes the giving of Voice. Ardener's concept of "muted group" has been adopted by some Feminist scholars, however, its metaphoric troping of women is a classical construction of Other. Neither Shirley nor Edwin Ardener do anything to remedy the situation of women as they are troped in ethnographic accounts; they are content to only name it. There is no movement here away from the isomorphic treatment of women in ethnographic texts. To designate women as "muted group" continues the nomothetic.

I have used Carol MacCormack's work here to deal with structuralism and its problems. It is by no means a definitive example. MacCormack's work, while providing an excellent critique of structuralism in Anthropology and its mistreatment of symbolism, is flawed in terms of its treatment of gender. In an otherwise solid article MacCormack concludes with an enigmatic statement, "if both men and women did not accept the universal model of female subordination at the hands of men there would be no social ferment surrounding gender" (1980:18).

It is impossible in a thesis of this nature to mention the entire range of problematic texts in Anthropology. Therefore I have chosen texts and works that best represent the central deconstructive concerns of my work. To that end one text needs to be discussed here, namely, Feminsm and Anthropology (1988) by Henrietta Moore. This is an important work in terms of the critical analysis of the textuality of women in Anthropology. In her work Moore makes a critical distinction between the study of gender and the study of gender as a principle of socio-cultural life (1988:126). From this distinction it is clear that any straight forward explanation of women's subordination under the guise of gender studies must take into account the enormous variation in women's circumstances or remain not only reductionist but extremely ethnocentric. This dichotomy illustrates that women are not a homogeneous category as the champions of Marxism would have it.

Moore's work is strong in her critique of the truism "western culture" found in Anthropology. She says that anthropologists treat Western culture as if there is a unity inherent in the words themselves. (See: Fischer and Marcus 1986; Rosaldo 1989; Strathern, M. 1980, 1987, 1988 for examples of this isomorphic treatment.) In Feminism and Anthropology, Moore opposes the use of universalisms, particularly in relation to race, class, sex and ethnicity. She says that these elements must be dealt with simultaneously

in ethnographic texts and not as separate discrete entities or disregarded altogether. She brings into sharp relief the tendency of anthropologists to minimize cultural differences and calls for a reconsideration of these differences with a focus on the intersection of race, sex, class and ethnicity. Moore sees Anthropology's role in illustrating these intersecting elements as crucial.

Moore uses a deconstructive approach to the depiction of women as property in Anthropology and illustrates how this is perpetuated in ethnographic accounts. Central to her argument is Christine Oppong's (1983) work, Female and Male in West Africa. Moore (1988:20) uses these ethnographic accounts to shed much needed light on the historic and problematic construction of women in terms of colonization, capitalism and the division of labour. She establishes the relationship of difference per se and Difference and cultural exclusion by outlining what she sees as an inherent androcentrism pervasive in Anthropology. The mechanism for this exclusion is the homogenization of women that arises from an entrenched Western cultural perspective.

From a woman's perspective, Moore's work is critical for a much needed revision of the nomothetic gloss of women in Anthropology. If this trend of minimizing cross-cultural differences is superimposed on the debate in the Feminist literature on Difference, both disciplines can be seen moving toward a tendency to render one culture in terms of another.

This is an exclusionary tactic that treats women in an isomorphic or universal manner. In this light, Moore does an excellent job of deconstructing the male bias in Edwin Ardener's (1975) construction of women and the cultural Other as a "muted group". Ardener's construction of muted group has been given too much credence for the one-sentence gloss that it is.

Moore (1988) takes great pains to tease apart the difference between the Anthropology of women and Feminist anthropology. She believes that a Feminist anthropology has been marginalized in the discipline in favour of androcentric models. However, Moore's one work becomes problematic. Her use of Meigs' (1983) work is questionable. Moore attempts to mobilize this ethnographer's work on Melanesia in a discussion of gender as a social role without any deconstruction. Meigs' work on the Hua of New Guinea is riddled with male biases, gender-loaded language and itself minimizes cultural Difference.

Another difficulty exists in Feminism and Anthropology in its mobilization of Marxism. Moore (1988:126) fails to deconstruct the fact that Marx himself operated with the ideology of biology as destiny and the "naturalness" of the family unit. I feel this is a curious tact for Moore to take, since, in the opening chapter she aptly critiques Ortner's (1973b) unavailing construct of male is to female as Culture is to Nature model; Nature being closer to the animalistic

element and supposedly central to women's subordination. (1988:40) It would have been wiser had Moore relied on Michelle Barrett's, Women's Oppression Today (1980) to demonstrate the uneasy alliance of Feminism and Marxism, rather than accepting, uncritically, the perspectives of Marx on gender and its naturalness.

Moore's discussion of the differential effects of capitalism on women is an epistemological disappointment. Once again, far too much textual energy is consumed by what is for me a dead-end debate focused on the tautological issue of when the division of labour occurred in human history. In brief, there is no empirical evidence for the timing or form of a division of labour. All textual discourses of this form are synchronic constructions of a putative diachronic process. In addition, Moore makes a fatal mistake in the conclusion of Feminism and Anthropology when she assumes that the simple acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of the male bias in Anthropology is sufficient praxis for generating new theoretical frameworks. The anthropological literature is riddled with work written by women whose textuality is that of sociological males (e.g., D.Dwyer 1978; Ortner 1973b; Meigs 1983; Strathern, M. 1972, 1980, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1988). Moore's most powerful statement in this book is her exegesis that the concepts of Women and Culture in Anthropology are in need of serious revision.

POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism as a theoretical paradigm could be a powerful ally not only for the deconstruction of women in Anthropology, but for the discipline itself which sorely needs to extract itself from androcentric dualism. Post-structuralism was initially a product of the late 1960's and the early 1970's French idealism and is best represented by writers such as Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. For my purposes here in this thesis I shall concentrate on the work of Foucault and Derrida as it relates to the theoretical and deconstructive basis of this thesis. Other important aspects are the textual construction of subject and author, deconstruction of the rigid oppositions of dualism, definitively represented in Anthropology by the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, and sign and symbol encountered in discourse analysis. I will add to the post-structuralist paradigm my own work which I consider to be post-feminist and epistemological. The work of Jacques Lacan is very psychoanalytically based and disengaged from cultural analysis and, as a result, is not mobilized in this thesis. Lacan's extensive attention to meaning has, often, a scattered and disembodied quality as a result of its form, that is, a poetic textuality; consequently, its application is not practical to the nature of my research here. His anything-goes approach and self-centered textuality would be counter-productive to a

sound epistemological base, particularly in the context of my research.

The attractive aspect of Derrida's work in relation to women and Anthropology lies in the deconstruction of the privileged position given to certain ideologies found in Feminism and ethnography such as textual hegemony and the power derived from such elements. In both Anthropology and Feminism such privileged positions of textuality are used as the basis of textual and methodological correctness and are held up in Anthropology as being unassailable. I am referring to the classical method and construction of such tenets as objectivity and other "distance-normalizing techniques" that become first principles of operation. They operate by constructing binary oppositions and, in doing so, create a system of exclusion and a false consciousness in general but, in particular, a false consciousness about the separation of Self and Other. These oppositions which ensconce themselves as cultural cognitive maps are exclusionary because they transform what could be perceived as a rich and variable continuum into two discrete entities. Post-structuralism and its emphasis on deconstruction offers a means by which these destructive oppositions can be negated or obviated.

In Writing and Difference (1978), Derrida makes some crucial distinctions with regard to binary oppositions that could be of great value to an anthropological reflexive analysis, that is, an analysis of its own self-construction.

Derrida understands binary oppositions as a cognitive paradigm, not simply a method of analysis. This distinction has profound implications for the foundation that is the basis of this thesis, namely, the rigid boundaries ideologies draw between what is acceptable and not acceptable in terms of cultural knowledge. The tendency of local Feminist groups in Winnipeg to accept the ideologies drawn by national and international Feminist theorists defines the boundaries of this proscriptive "women's culture." These ideologies, in my estimation act to conceal the realities of local functioning cultures. In addition, these ideologies treat women's "culture" , should it exist, as a homogeneous entity, that is, in a universalistic and totalizing manner.

Anthropologists who insist on using the dualist framework enforce the continuance of universalisms. In the case of Levi-Strauss' ethnographic texts such as The Raw and the Cooked (1969), the actual positioning of dualistic terms in the text carries an insidious intent. According to Derrida (1978), the first term used in each opposition is the privileged state as in the example: culture/nature opposition. Derrida uses a mechanism he calls "sous erasure" (1978:196) as a warning to the reader not to accept the privileged word at face value. For Derrida, marks of erasure indicate a temporary status of a word that is mistrusted by the author forced to use the word. In this thesis I mark such words of privilege by capitalizing the first letter of each of them in the text.

The deconstructive framework of post-structuralism can also be beneficial in unpacking the rigid construction of an objective author in Anthropology. From Derrida (1978) comes the idea to undo the need for a balanced equation in the form of binary oppositions such as Author/Informant, Self/Other and Subjective/Objective. This notion of a balanced equation, also evident in the symbolic movement in anthropological texts that move from Nature to Culture, or in Ortner's scheme from woman to man, is one of the most troublesome constructions in the discipline. It is this construction that Rosaldo (1989), Marcus and Fischer (1986) and M. Strathern (1988, 1987, 1984, 1980, 1972) are unable to extract themselves from. Derrida's Difference claims to allow real differences to exist, to differ, to be unlike and not homogenized into cultural universalisms.

Like Roy Wagner (1981), Derrida stresses the irreducibility of metaphor and the difference at play within the construction of literal meaning. This is of central importance in this thesis and will be elaborated in the chapter entitled " Language and Alienation". The type of deconstruction that Derrida proposes is a systemic deconstruction of the notion and ideology of binary oppositions not a simple reversal of categories. Often what is done is simply reversing categories but keeping the original categories in tact. A good example of Feminist post-structuralism that leaves categories in tact is represented by

Chris Weedon's Feminist Practice and Post-Structuralist Theory (1987). Weedon's work is paradoxical from a number of perspectives. In the first instance her model utilizes a post-structuralist framework without deconstructing the androcentric nature of the paradigm. Like a host of other Feminist and anthropological writers she simply overlays the theoretical construct on the study of women. Regardless of how strong the post-structuralist paradigm may seem in comparison with other paradigms, it still needs to be defused of its male biases. However, Weedon seems unaware of the conflict of ideologies in her work.

Secondly, Weedon's work is replete with essentialisms which begin again with the so-called naturalness of the family unit (1987:17) and conclude with a system of dualism that reinforces a hierarchy of meaning that smacks of binary oppositional meaning where one term is privileged over another. Weedon also uses the isomorphic "western" marker (1987:27) that in my estimation is an essentialism close to what Derrida (1981) calls logocentrism.

It becomes clear that Weedon (1987) has accepted the Feminist assertion of a "women's culture", and, she mobilizes religion, morality and politics within Feminist political movements as bases for this Culture (1987:29). This is the kind of slippage that results from the assertion of Culture by Feminist writers whereby a politic is transformed into some notion of Culture. Weedon also views Feminist post-

structuralism as " a mode of knowledge production"(1987:40) rather than a deconstruction of the existing categories. By proceeding in this manner Weedon fails to defuse the androcentric model and simply reverses the already problematic and dualistic categories of androcentrism by superimposing them with something she calls a "woman-centred" system (Weedon, 1987:40). Weedon attempts to give primacy to a political Language that does not account for the influence that Culture has on Language. In my data Language is a product of Culture, and Weedon fails to deal with Culture as a central and determining factor in Language. This displaced focus on a politic as Culture functions to homogenize the differences between women and differences between cultures. Weedon's own discursive field is troublesome. Throughout the text she constantly refers to "normal femininity" (1987:48) and "essential femininity" (1987:63) and to "normal development" (1987:63) without any attention to a deconstruction of the Culture that produces such Language.

Another enigmatic area of Feminist writing parallels Weedon's work in Feminist post-structuralism and is best represented by Feminism/Post-modernism (1990), edited by Linda Nicholson. This text also applies the androcentric tenets of post-modernism in the social sciences. In the introduction to the volume Nicholson claims that Feminist post-modernist writers do not suffer from the same generalizations as other post-modernists (1990:5). She says,

"Feminist theorists have not attempted, by and large, the construction of cross-cultural theories of the true, the just or the beautiful." (1990:5). Clearly Nicholson is unaware of Feminist writers like Marilyn Strathern, Paula Gunn Allen (1986), Charlotte Bunch (1987) and a host of other Feminist writers who have attempted the construction of cross-cultural theories. Furthermore, Nicholson demonstrates an incredible lack of insight when she says, "as feminists we are freed from the need to root politics in identification" (1990:12). This is an unbelievable oversight given the continued logocentrism of Feminists on a multiplicity of levels-"the personal is the political." Feminists have constructed the oral totem of the "women's movement" as exactly and only political and, in fact, synonymize what is political with what is cultural.

One of the most valuable aspects of post-structuralism of concern in this thesis is the deconstructive aspect that allows an unpacking of the traditional conceptions of the ethnographic writer. Post-structuralism emphasizes Difference, including the Difference between Self and Other. However, from the perspective of my data there are some problems inherent in post-structuralism. The disengagement of meaning from the rigid framework of binary oppositions must be closely monitored to avoid an anything-goes approach such as Weedon's work (1987) represents. Deconstructionists tend to herald the fact that there is nothing other than interpretation and this lends an endless quality to strings of signifiers. From a

creative standpoint this is attractive, yet in a thesis of this nature it might render Meaning as disembodied and nebulous. In order to avoid this I have borrowed from Foucault the idea of discursive fields, (1980) in an attempt to link discourse and meaning. In this thesis the discursive fields of the narratives that form the data base are used as an organizing principle to extract the power in particular knowledges that derive from cultural experiences.

Post-structuralism is most attractive as a theoretical framework for its tendency to move away from universalisms, however, it can lead to a fragmented meaning system which borders on impracticality. The work of Jacques Lacan (1966) is the best example of this dispersion of meaning. Although I am attracted to Derrida's (1978) notion that no meaning can be fixed, I am concerned about a total disembodiment of meaning of writing. Nor can we as anthropologists accept the post-structuralist framework uncritically for it too is androcentric and continues to emphasize the words of men in a metaphoric trope that must be closely monitored. Feminist writers have to exercise more caution in attempting to apply post-structuralism and work to ensure that a suspension of rigidly opposed signifiers does not mean a further suspension of women's words at the hands of androcentrism in theoretical frameworks.

THE FEMINIST LITERATURE

The idea that Feminists and the Feminist movement have achieved "women's culture" is a pervasive one kept in place in the academy by particular theoretical components in Women Studies programs. There is also an extensive history in Feminism that underlies this superficial acceptance of a "women's culture", by and for women. In 1845 Margaret Fuller wrote "Woman in the 19th Century", in which she referred to women's culture as distinct from that of men. Fuller's idea of Culture is a product of Romanticism and stresses the emotional, intuitive side of knowledge coupled with an organic world view (1968:36).

Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1891 added fuel to the fire of a "women's culture" in her article "The Matriarchate" in Kraditor, Up From The Pedestal (1891:140). In this article Stanton claims there was a time in the past when for centuries "woman" (sic) ruled supreme(1891:140). This theme that claims a matriarchal base for human society persists today and its utopianism prevails as an assumption that women have an inherent Culture simply because they are women. This mythic ideal of a primitive matriarchy has found expression in contemporary Feminism recently in the form of a film entitled "The Goddess Remembered" (National Film Board:1989) in which archaeological finds from the Minoans to European witchcraft have been mobilized to support the claim of a Goddess cult and

a matriarchal society. Charlotte O'Kelly's Women and Men in Society is an excellent deconstruction of this claim that concludes there is little solid evidence for the existence of a truly matriarchal society at any time (1980:6).

The White Goddess (1952) by Robert Graves is probably the publication single-handedly responsible for the contemporary claim to a past matriarchal culture. This book is not what could be described as a solid anthropological account and like most of the literature on the subject makes the claim to a matriarchal society based on literature rather than on archaeological or anthropological research. From Grave's account there have been a host of spin-offs, best represented by books such as Elizabeth Gould Davis' (1971) The First Sex.

Another piece that is probably one of the most utilized publications in support of a "women's culture" is the Feminist and Wiccan writer Starhawke. "Witchcraft as Goddess Religion" in The Politics of Women's Spirituality (1982) is a good example of such writing. Starhawke's article is yet another example of the quantum leap made in the literature that claims women have achieved a separate culture for themselves. Starhawke uses the concept of a Goddess or matriarchal society of the past to mobilize "the oneness of everybody" (1982:53) to build the case for a "women's culture" that she describes as " a life-style culture" (1982:53). In the same volume, anthropologist Sally R. Binford's article "Are Goddesses And Matriarchies Merely Figments of Feminist Imagination?"

(1982:540), Binford refutes such claims to "women's culture" based on putative Goddess cults. Binford concludes these claims are based on assumptions that cannot be supported by archaeological evidence. Binford calls these claims "the new fundamentalism" (Binford 1982:540).

The putative "women's culture" is spread in a variety of ways including media and word of mouth, however none has been as far-reaching as that of the printed word. Textuality has been the vehicle of this notion that Feminists have achieved Culture; in terms of this thesis, textuality has been the singular most problematic means of conveyance. It is through this textual assertion of "women's culture" that Women Studies programs have perpetuated the false idea of "women's culture." The tendency to remake evidence and to assert Culture through textuality has operated as a single-minded source of alienation from Feminism among women according to my research for this thesis. This aspect will be discussed at length, later in the thesis.

The so-called Second wave of Feminism has latched onto these putative roots for a "women's culture". The Second Wave of Feminism arose from the counter-culture of the late 1960's and most of the problems in Feminism today run parallel to the problems with that socio-cultural phenomenon. In the Feminism of the 1990's, in Winnipeg in particular, can be seen the idealism of this counter-culturalism of the 1960's. The troublesome focus on the individual in Feminism today comes,

I believe, directly from the 1960's where the personal became the political. Also, from this counter-cultural movement comes the Feminist praxis that activists must maintain a high level of oppositional Rage against the System. Most important and perhaps the most damaging aspect of the cultural climate that persists in Feminism today, is the minimizing of Difference and the cultural application of universalisms.

The most definitive work that asserts "women's culture" is Charlotte Bunch's (1987) Passionate Politics. This text is/was a popular handbook of Feminist theorists in Women Studies programs. Bunch (1987) uses a synchronic and diachronic analysis of the movement from 1968 to 1986. Bunch herself describes Passionate Politics as a "handbook for organizing rage against real oppression" (1987:28). In some Women Studies programs Bunch is considered to be one of the foremost Feminist visionaries. Unfortunately however, Bunch's exegesis uses a shallow and one-dimensional conception of Culture. Hers is a classic formulation of Culture as an external expression of performing arts that has caused a serious oversight in the Feminist search for an underlying cohesive factor to unite women.

In Passionate Politics Bunch says, "it is time for more radical Feminists to reach beyond the Feminist sub-culture" (1987:14). Even the assumption of a sub-culture here is premature as my data will indicate in this thesis. The Feminist writers of the 1990's have not yet done this, yet

there is an underlying assumption and assertion of "women's culture." This is the profile of Feminist writing that is in reality an exclusionary textuality that assumes "women's culture" exists and proceeds as if this is a cultural base for women, by women. Bunch falls into the trap that many Feminist writers do when they assume "women's culture" and her textuality reduces women and the differences between them to an isomorphism while operating in a false construction of a unification among all women, Feminist or otherwise. Bunch's concept of "Non-Aligned Feminism" (1987:46) attempts to define a political movement that "incorporates the experiences of a wider variety of women" (1987:46). My data, compiled in Winnipeg, demonstrates that this has not been achieved and in fact locally, factionalism is rampant there. One of the central problems in this factionalism at the local level is the shallow assumption of Feminism that writers like Bunch are correct when they speak of a Culture of women, by women.

Feminist theorists locally and nationally confuse cultural Feminism with Culture and in doing so deploy a flat or superficial notion of Culture. Bunch herself speaks of Culture as an everything-we-can-see-out-there performance and fails to delve beneath the surface to deal with ideologies beyond the political realm. Like many Feminist writers she fails to recognize cultural differences between women and relies on politics to unify women. She has no sense of the cultural conflicts and differences between women that have for

more than 100 years been the pivotal block to an integrated pluralism among women. Bunch is by no means alone in this oversight of differences among women.

In Passionate Politics, Bunch outlines a concept she calls "our independent feminist base" (1987:59). This is a troublesome construct, for it is never made clear exactly what this "independent base" might be. For me it comes dangerously close to the androcentric tendency to classify all women nomothetically on the basis of their biology. There is considerable slippage and Bunch seems to use this concept as a euphemism for Culture, yet she unfortunately does not develop it beyond this one-line statement. Nowhere in Passionate Politics is there a recognition that Culture defines the meaning of experience as it tropes into knowledge and values that outline our behaviour. Culture in this sense seems to be of no value to Bunch because she sees Culture as apolitical and separate (1987:59). This for me undeniably indicates her lack of understanding of what Culture is. Culture can never be separated from any other process. To this end Bunch and many other Feminist writers ignore class and ethnicity and the implicit hidden sets of rules, codes and conventions that manifest themselves as differences and conflicts between women. She further homogenizes these elements into what she ultimately comes to call a "passionate politic." This failure to delve beneath the politics of Feminism to the cultural differences has been fatal to

Feminism.

Culture, as ambiguous as it might seem to Feminists, is probably the most resistant of all ideologies to change or correction. If it is to survive, Feminist praxis and theory must move to a cultural analysis of all those not-so-shared-but-taken-for-granted elements of difference that exist beyond the wasteland of the Feminist politic. Too long has cultural Feminism been glibly accepted as Culture writ large. It is the juxtaposition or equation of Feminist politics with Culture that has shifted a political linear ideology into the role "women's culture." This is in reality an exclusionary pseudo Culture based on performing arts, or the classical notion of "high culture." In Passionate Politics, Bunch actually defines Culture as "art, poetry, music and restaurants" (1987:190).

Finally, Feminist writers of the 1990's and Feminists in Women Studies programs have carried this vision of "women's culture" from its putative base in the late 1800's through the Second Wave of Feminism into the textual privilege of the 1990's. What is dangerous about this assumption of Culture is that it is insidiously incorporated into the analyses of women's experiences. An example of this is a volume entitled Interpreting Women's Lives (1989) edited by The Personal Narratives Group. In an article by anthropologist Riv-Ellen Prell entitled "The Double Frame of Life History in the Work of Barbara Myerhoff," the author covertly slips in the assumption of "women's culture" into the text in much the same

manner as Bunch has done in Passionate Politics. Prell utilizes Myerhoff's use of life histories of the Huichol to claim a cultural tradition of women. This is nothing more than a leap of faith that I believe Myerhoff herself does not make. In reading Prell's article, the reader needs to apply the Derridean notion of a close reading of the text to catch the concealed move from women's recounting of their life histories to a Culture of women. Prell uses the Feminist penchant of journal writing to imply that this is the constitutive basis of a Culture of women (1989:250).

In the same volume, another article entitled "Forms That Transform" authored by the Personal Narratives Group (sic), equates the morphology of the narrative to Culture itself. The authors claim that the form or framework that a writer chooses in order to reveal her life-story is a testament to Culture itself (1989:102). This is the assumption that "journaling" is a form of "women's culture." I believe it is a covert tactic that has led many Feminist writers to assume "women's culture" based on a form of textuality. In this technique of "journaling" women's experiences are utilized in Women Studies programs as a mechanism that in the end functions as an implicit "women's culture." This slippage allows the construction of "journaling" to operate as a connector between all women, and implies a cultural base for all women. Through the medium of the journal, the experiences of women are troped into a connected sameness that requires an extremely close

reading of such texts in order to separate out the leaps of faith.

Among the various perspectives of contemporary Feminism is cultural Feminism. Earlier in the chapter I mentioned the putative historic beginnings for such a viewpoint. However, cultural Feminism, coupled with the technique of "journaling" in Women's Studies programs, needs further discussion. In Josephine Donovan's Feminist Theory (1988), the tenets of cultural Feminism and its implications for a "women's culture" are outlined. This perspective is based on the proposition that there is "an electrical intensity about women that men do not have" (1988:34). This viewpoint is rife with universalisms and used as the agent for change for a feminization of Culture. In reality, according to Donovan, such a change to Culture would mean a "harmonic, peaceful rule, an end to violence in all areas, including violence against the self such as the use of alcohol and drugs, and the slaughter of animals for food" (Donovan 1988:35). This feminization of Culture would result in "the establishment of the reign of love and peace" (1988:35)

These ideals, it might be argued, are attractive and noble goals that find expression throughout Feminist ideologies at a variety of levels as well as in non-Feminist ideologies. However, I mobilize them here to show how it is that the collective subjectivity of political and textual correctness lends itself to the erroneous assumption of

"women's culture." Such proscriptions of Culture are now embedded in Feminist formulas for change. However, like the putative matriarchal societies of the past, they are based on assumptions that are unsupportable from a multitude of cultural perspectives. My data in this thesis seeks to illustrate the problematic basis of this assumption of "women's culture" derived from theoretical texts.

CHAPTER THREE:METHOD/PROCEDURE

In September of 1989 I began what I call baseline research for this thesis. By baseline I mean that I had a mental sketch in my head for the design of this research and I moved beyond the academic position with it in that I went into the so-called "community" as it is referred to in "the academy" in the city of Winnipeg. In this baseline research it was my intention to discover the contiguity of the so-called "women's community." I began by asking questions at such annual events as "Take Back The Night" marches, International Women's Day rallies and other events such as vigils, as to who was who in terms of various political groups represented at such events. In addition I made a list from such publications as The Social Services Directory for the city of Winnipeg and compiled a list of services directed towards the needs of women. I also kept in touch with a variety of newspapers and newsletter publications in order to attend events to further expand my experiential knowledge of the activities of this "women's community."

In undertaking this phase of my research I had as a goal the broadest and most inclusive sample that was reasonably possible for a single researcher within the time period of one

year. The fact that I did baseline research for one year and then gathered data for eight months is one of the limitations of this research design. However, in this case I think I can account for such limitations epistemologically. At the onset, the research framework was to include data on the basis of race, class and ethnicity, that is, I attempted to give equal access to all ethnicities and classes of women to ensure that not only the white, middle-class women were central to the database. In describing my attempts to achieve the broadest sample possible given the limitations of the project I must discuss briefly a problematic concept that I encountered. I will deal with this concept in depth in Chapter Five, Language and Alienation.

The concept is one which is borrowed and used by feminists, particularly in the academy where it is referred to as "margin and centre" (Hooks 1984 and Lorde 1988) and in the community where it is troped into "isolation". My experience in conducting this research was that "margin and centre" were rhetorical buzz-words with vague meanings that were extremely difficult to define. "Centre" as such, shifts its meaning according to the group of focus. Subsequently, as "centre" shifts, so does "margin", rendering the words meaningless beyond specific contexts. The use of "margin and centre" in discourse and in any potential praxis, in my experience works to fragment process rather than bind. It is another instance where the onus to think globally and act locally works against

any local integrated pluralism and is, in my experience, an excellent example of how national or international feminist concepts are glibly adopted without attention to local cultural needs.

In the original proposal for this work, I intended to employ a questionnaire. Early in the actual data collection period following the acceptance of the proposal and the ethics review, it became clear that questionnaires would be inappropriate on a number of counts. In the first instance, the questions were too structured and the method of having to write something down in many situations was completely counter-productive to generating informant-situated knowledge (Haraway 1990). Had I used the questionnaire method, I would have needed such a range of versions as to be impractical and too costly. Therefore I taped each interview/conversation after obtaining a signed "Informed Consent" form in which the respondent was advised of the nature of the research (See Appendix One).

During the Baseline Research phase, I attempted to introduce or be introduced to women at the various events I attended. These events represent a broad spectrum, ranging from Native Pow-Wows and other ceremonies (feasts, meetings) to so-called Feminist events. During this period I socialized at other ethnic events, such as the Chilean Women's fundraiser, Lambada Night and clothing exchanges in order to assess the range of ethnicity in women's groups. Perhaps I

should explain that I was fully aware that I would not be able to include all these groups in the research. However, during the baseline research, I wanted to become aware of the range of groups that were organized and run by women. The word "feminist" was not always overtly used by these women, however, the underlying ideologies have a base in feminist thinking.

Concurrent with this phase of research was some empirical work in terms of the annual events in this "women's community. At this stage I made note of any groups (See Chart: Appendix Two) that either attended events as a group or formed as a group over this period of one year. It was my intention at that time to use these empirical observations in conjunction with other procedures of assessment in attempting to determine any morphology of group that might have carried over into any other form(s) in either of the three samples from which data were actually collected. For example, if a group of women attended selected events as a group and then appeared in the data sample as a group of a particular political ideology or class or ethnicity, then I made a cross reference for this (See Appendix Two). I was interested to see if there was an emerging profile of group contiguity among the various individuals. My idea in this comes from Homan's statement that "groups are what culture uses to make more culture" (1950:10). These empirical observations proved to be a value instrument later during the data collection in terms of

interviewing individuals from different levels of group organization.

The research for this thesis is definitely of a qualitative nature and yet beyond the general anthropological assumption of qualitative that still employs the classical procedure of distance-normalizing technique and the false construction of a neutral and objective researcher/author. The conversation style interview technique I used is more in line with the method used by Rosaldo in his ethnographic work Culture and Truth (1989), and at the same time beyond this method since I attempted to incorporate a more epistemologically sound approach to the construction of "voice" and "the giving of voice" by both feminists and anthropologists. In order to achieve this I did not approach each interview with a rigidly structured set of questions that I would ask regardless of the interview atmosphere. This presents immediate difficulties for the research since a large pool of informants is necessary in order to extract any cultural data. Also, such a method necessitates a longer interview and in the conversation type of interview (Spradley 1979) questions are formulated in situ from the respondent's narrative. In terms of the institutionalized aspect of Anthropology, such narratives may not correspond with what the classically trained ethnographer thinks she wants to access. However, in terms of an experimental design the intent of which is to hear the experiences of the respondents, it proved

in this research project to be useful.

Admittedly my research and this thesis is experimental in the same light that Rosaldo's (1989) work is experimental. As the researcher I feel that I should be capable of applying both a critical and a reflexive analysis to these narratives after the fact, rather than forcing them to fit into a rigid set of question driven by a set of often hidden a priori assumptions. Clearly it is difficult if not impossible to eliminate all assumptions of the individuals involved. The method I used here was again an experiment in moving closer to a more meaningful interview process. This research paradigm has a number of central problems that will be discussed later in the text. Another experimental procedure I used was to ensure that a clear separation between myself as researcher and the respondent as narrator is carried through into the final textuality. However, it is important to note that my separation of researcher and respondent is not the dualist separation of structuralism. There is in this thesis no value to either position, that is, there is no judgement of relative superiority or inferiority. I employ this method in an attempt to prevent the troping of the words of the respondents during discourse analysis.

Another kind of method needs to be discussed briefly. It is the general assumption that French writers such as Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes are post-structuralist writers. I do not agree with this

designation and will deal with this in the theory section of this thesis. The post-structuralism that I use is a feminist post-structuralism and moves beyond the post-structuralism of these four prominent writers who are really neo-structuralists rather than post-structuralists. From a feminist perspective, their theoretical framework does not move beyond the problematic paradigm of binary oppositions and suffers from the false conscienceness of the "death of the author" (Foucault 1977) which, particularly from a woman's perspective, is simply another trope in an androcentric model to suppress the words of women in texts. My research and textuality attempts to be more in line with the theoretical framework outlined in Luce Irigaray's work (1974 and 1977) in terms of a deconstructive approach to these so-called post-structuralists.

The reason for mentioning post-structuralism here and the problematic nature of Derrida et al. is to deal with the voice of the author and the voice of the narrator in the final product. In order to avoid the current construction of the author I have included a chapter entitled Narrative Concordance in which the dialogue of the respondent and my conclusions and analysis of this dialogue run side by side in order that any trope or interpretation on the part of the author is made clear. Therefore in opposition to Derrida et al., I make the author evident, for without the author the text would not exist. However, I do not do this in the same

manner that Rosaldo (1989) does in his work. I do not include symbols in the text to indicate pauses, lapses of dialogue or the intake or expulsion of breath by the respondent. In a thesis of this nature such linguistic markers are simply excessive and disruptive to the text in the same way that it is in Rosaldo's work (1989:127-143). Originally the research framework was organized in three samples with a target goal of 30 respondents in each sample. I use the term 'sample' here in a general manner or a qualitative manner not in the quantitative sense that some anthropologists might be used to. The three samples were designed to represent a broad cross-section of the so-called "women's community". One sample was selected by placing advertisements in newsletters and on bulletin boards; the second sample was self-selected from a letter-blitz to women's organized groups providing services to women in the city of Winnipeg (the self-selection occurred when the contact-groups either replied and/or agree to take part in the research), and the third sample largely occurred from word-of-mouth referral and volunteer respondents. In each instance the original number of participants exceeded the initial numbers and when I curtailed research the total sample numbered 117 respondents. I officially suspended data collection in March, 1991. However, following this deadline a number of respondents contacted me and demonstrated a willingness to be interviewed. Initially I had contacted these individuals in October of 1990 and I decided to include them.

Therefore the number of respondents rose to 121 women by April 1991.

This might be seen by some to be excessive; however, in order to allow respondents to generate their own narrative as much as possible in such a project this procedure was necessary. The rationale was that a symbolic domain analysis (Spradley 1979:107) would fit well with such a data pool and reveal a symbolic profile from the language used in these narratives. Should there be a shared and integrated plurality to the cultural ideology in the so-called "women's community", my research design would make it apparent through a language domain analysis and a theoretical analysis similar to Geertz's (1973:33) "significant symbols." This method was designed solely to aid my analysis as researcher.

I would like to deal with the three samples themselves. The difficulties of generating a truly random sample of Feminists should be immediately evident. Not only is there a great deal of variation in terms of the meaning of the words "feminism" and "feminist" as one might expect, but, in addition, the telephone directory does not list our ideology! Moreover, culture itself is not random and therefore there is no need to try to account for it randomly. Indeed, given the nonrandom character of culture, it would be epistemologically unsound to attempt to account for it randomly. I tried to design a research paradigm that would allow for the broadest representations possible of ethnicity and class.

The first sample (S1) was generated from contacts I had made at the group level during the baseline research stage. I attended events that were open to the public, such as bingo's, pow-wows, the Winnipeg Peace Village of 1990, Lambada Nights, and Fun Nights at community centres, and I dropped in "for coffee" to centres with a variety of backgrounds. Eventually I came to know women by name after I was introduced by the others I knew in the group. Also I "put the word out" by word of mouth in addition to placing ads on bulletin boards and in newsletters. Students who were enrolled in one or more of my classes also provided me with contacts for the first sample.

As mentioned earlier the second sample (S2) was chosen using a letter-blitz and a mailing list from the Social Services Manual of Winnipeg. I made an initial selection when I compiled the list from the manual by only selecting those organizations that focused on women's issues. The self-selection occurred when the various groups replied to these letters and then again when they agreed to participate in the research. However, no selection was made on my part in terms of class or ethnicity.

These samples are neither random; nor do they represent a cross-section of the so-called "women's community". The notion of a "cross-section" of the women's community would be a problematic descriptor at best and I will deal with this issue more specifically in Chapter Five. Any symbolic profile that emerges from this data is a configuration of my analysis

based on the women who responded and formed a part of this database.

The third sample is at least epistemologically curious. It was generated entirely by word of mouth by the participants of samples S1 and S2. Respondents gave me names of people who "wanted to be interviewed"; who had been made aware of the research by either a friend, relative or co-worker after they themselves had been interviewed. Curiously, in some cases where a particular group's executive director or board members refused to participate, employees and clients of these organizations came forward voluntarily to participate in sample 3 (S3).

Clearly selection was made throughout this research. The initial selection that placed the first limit on the framework was the hypothesis itself - - the claim by feminists in the writing of feminist theory that Feminism was generating a women's culture (Adamson 1988; Bunch 1987; Frye 1983; Lerner 1986; Miles 1989; Rich 1986; Spellman 1990).

Earlier I mentioned that the format of the interviews was designed to move away as much as possible from a structured approach. In his Ethnographic Interview Spradely (1979:223) mentions an interviewing technique called "Conversational Type Questions." Although there are some problems with Spradley's method, one valuable notion is the technique of using the respondent's own words to generate any questions either for information or as a momentum mechanism,

rather than following a rigid set of criteria. Spradley is problematic in terms of his classical approaches and his distance-normalizing methods, however, the Conversation Type Question did provide a more usable method to interview women. The method here is my own version of Spadley's method, however, since my approach was designed to be more symbolic than his.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS:

In all phases of research I maintained a strict adherence to the Code of Ethics outlined by my department and, further, to the ethics of women interviewing and writing about women. The signing of the Informed Consent by each respondent prior to each interview assured each woman confidentiality of information and anonymity.

There are no men in this data pool. Personally I do not have a problem with this, however, epistemologically I must account for it. Feminists claim to have generated a women's culture (Adamson 1988; Bunch 1987; Frye 1983; Lerner 1986; Miles 1989; Rich 1986; Spellman 1990) for women, by women. It is this feminist claim that forms the initial problem for the hypothesis upon which this thesis is based; its construction precludes men. In the initial letter blitz men were contacted; however, when I received the response, it was a woman who responded. These men were initially included by me since they were listed in the services manual as being employed by

feminist organizations. In the final analysis, there are no men in this data pool. If an anthropologist were interested in the oral traditions of men's groups in a particular ethnographic area, for example, Melanesia, it would make sound epistemological sense to interview men and actually exclude women. Here it is epistemologically sound to interview women and exclude men .

It was my intention that samples S1, S2, S3 be cross-checked with each other; and I will demonstrate later in the analysis that they in fact were. Theoretically each sample should provide a symbolic, cultural profile that can be counter-pointed to any other emerging profile that might emerge from the other samples.

My "method" of symbolic analysis is a combination of three prominent methodological trends in Anthropology. Two have been mentioned in this section: "Domain Analysis" (Spradley 1979) and "Significant Symbols" (Geertz 1973). The latter is not really a method as such, but the concept is useful as a first order tool of narrative sorting and discourse analysis. Briefly, both Geertz and Spradley stress the connectedness in symbols and both explore the relationship between symbols - - Spradley in a more classical sense than Geertz, however, the result is the same in that a symbolic profile is expected to result from informant/respondent narratives. Such a profile is, according to Spradley, obtained by recording or using the frequency of a symbol in

the informant's dialogue. For Geertz these "significant symbols" are words, gestures, sounds, unshaved legs, buttons, slogans (1973:33), in short, anything that is disengaged from its mere actuality and manipulated or maneuvered to exist as symbols in common places. In both Spradley and Geertz, once these symbols emerge through the process of analysis, they are then to be subjected to another level of analysis in terms of the connectedness to each other.

I have taken this one step further by applying what I call, for lack of a better word, a denotational/connotational analysis to attempt to illuminate any essentialist or universalist elements. This level of analysis, for instance, might use the denotational significant symbol that emerged in the narrative such as "woman" in the biological and essentialist sense and counter-point these with a set of connotational significant symbols that emerge of "woman" in the suggestive sense. I used this concept to attempt to link the associative significance of the symbols. From this I expected to see a symbolic profile emerge from the narratives, and ultimately from this derived my idea of the profile of separation among women in Winnipeg along lines of class and ethnicity. This separation is discussed in depth later in the text.

In the final analysis these significant symbols were used to determine if the feminist cultural ideology in Winnipeg, according to my data pool, was a shared, integrated and plural

product of consciousness fitting with the Feminist claim to a women's culture. I was attempting to discover an ideology (through symbolic analysis) that Winnipeg feminists practitioners might utilize to explain to women who they are and to justify to them the kinds of lives they lead. The criterion of this search for the (symbolic) meaning in these narratives was experience and practical images generated by the informants. These images were analyzed intensively in terms of their function as symbolic images. To stretch an anthropological point, it might be said that my method relied on "oral tradition" while stressing the importance and consciousness of the hearer in the analytic process. To quote Josephine Donovan, "ideology is often used in two distinct ways: one, as a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced, tranformed. The second is more narrowly used to imply a false intellectual system rooted in ruling class interests"(1988:86).

In the planning stages of this research I decided to use the work of George Homans (1950) to begin the framework since Homans began his theory design by relying on semantics to trace words back to their references in observed fact (1950:10). Homans speaks for the discipline of Sociology when he says, "we are devoted to big words" (1950:10). What Homans say about Sociology is the same as my experience in Anthropology . Words like status, culture, kinship, function, heuristic, etc. and in Feminism: voice, healing, culture,

power, privilege and so on are powerful examples of what Homans warns us against. I agree with Homans that all too often we work with these words and not with observations. Where possible in this research I have made every reasonable attempt to couple the symbolic profile with observations. Some may not have much faith in the subjective nature of observations and the results. From the point of view of theory construction and the union of theory and praxis, however, empirical evidence is an important step in the process of bringing the two elements together. Homans says it best, " a theory is a form in which the results of observations may be expressed" (1950:16).

The duration of the interviews themselves were quite variable, ranging from 45 minutes in some cases to over two and a half hours. In all instances I allowed the women who responded and agreed to be interviewed to choose the venue for the interview. Often I went to their homes; others came to my home, others to my office at the University of Manitoba, and some preferred an outdoor setting when the weather allowed. In many situations the interview continued after the tape recorder was turned off. During these times I did not take notes; rather, I attempted to listen in order to hear what was being said. Later, if I felt it necessary, I made a record of those segments of the interview, only recording what had been said by the respondent. Often, however, these conversations were elaborations of the recorded data.

In generating Sample 1, which is primarily composed of non-white ethnicities, I did not use the marker "Feminist" in any of the advertisements to solicit informants. In compiling the letter to solicit respondents for Sample 2, I did use the marker "Feminist" to describe the research. In Sample 3, which was comprised of volunteer respondents, the use of the marker "Feminist" varied. In some cases, for instance, where the respondent was non-white, the feminist marker did not emerge in the discourse. In the final analysis Sample 1 is comprised of non-white women with the exception of three women; Sample 2 is comprised of mostly white, middle-class women, with the exception of nine individuals, and Sample 3 is mixed in terms of class and ethnicity.

In structuring the research in this manner, it was my intention to use the symbolic profiles of each sample in comparison with each other to obtain an overall cultural profile or contiguity of the women who participated in the research. My goal was to use these profiles derived from the data, to examine the link between the cultural ideologies of the women and social observations. I recognize that my analysis is and must be in the abstract, since it deals only with some of the elements of the concrete situation. However this does not negate the implications this research might have for concrete action in the cultural paradigm concerned. By generating a symbolic profile from my data I hope to demonstrate that the configuration of symbols will clearly

indicate either a connectedness between activity/interaction in group contiguity or a cultural separation in terms of activity/integration.

Finally I would like to say a few words about the charts that represent empirical data in this research project. Again I rely on Homan's words to explain that the charts taken by themselves will not reveal much. The order of events and rituals is not intended to represent any chronological order or any order of importance (Homans 1950:82). In addition, it is impossible to account for the non-attendance at such rituals and annual events by using the charts alone. What they do reveal is that particular groups or individual women attended particular events, which is not a static condition. The charts of empirical data then, can only illustrate group or individual attendance of specific events over time and the fluid nature of this dynamic. However, coupled with the other methods of analysis in this thesis, the empirical observations revealed a rich cultural contour of the women who participated in this research. The charts of empirical observations also do not imply that individuals belong to one group only or attend only one type of event. Initially, I used such charts as a research tool during the baseline stage. As Homans points out the use of such charts is not such an unusual method; we do it every day when we conclude on the basis of observations, such statements as, "so and so, and so and so see alot of each other" (1950:85). In my experience, observation is a critical

tool in a process such as this.

CHAPTER FOUR: NARRATIVES

The focus of this research has been a search for Culture. In searching for Culture, I had to deal with meaning in discourse. Inseparable from this is the impact discourse has on bodies, writ behaviour, in particular cultural behaviour. The starting point for this research was my curiosity, as an anthropologist, with the impact the Feminist discourse surrounding a "women's culture" could or would have on the "bodies" (behaviour) of women (Foucault 1980). The same curiosity applies to Anthropology. The discourse of the discipline has had a profound impact on Culture itself. Anthropology has served to create the human image and to create the behaviour of this humanity in terms of Culture.

The fact that discourse has an effect or impact on bodies or behaviour is undeniable. Even those anthropologists who believe that the discipline should be confined to science cannot deny that the empirical evidence for the impact of discourse on behaviour is overwhelming. In the case of this research, both Feminism and Anthropology have contributed directly to this impact. Both Feminism and Anthropology have mobilized what Homans referred to as "big words" (Homans 1950). In Anthropology, the impact of such concepts as kinship, power systems, voice, gender and so on set up specific models of behaviour which in turn produces a

textuality that functions to drive what we believe to be certain truths. The process is similar in Feminist textuality, as it is in all disciplines that generate Language to sanction textual behaviour.

This conceptualization of the power of discourse over bodies owes a tremendous debt to Michele Foucault's work "Power and Knowledge". Foucault rightfully claims that " the connections that link a discourse to bodies result from the discourse's capacity to produce and convey power" (1980:91). More importantly, Foucault treats discourse as an event, as I do in this thesis. In doing so, discourse moves beyond a mere conveyance for meaning in communication, and becomes a system of cultural institutions, practices, laws, legislation, economies, morals and science. To treat discourse as an event is to access the non-discursive field as well as the discursive.

In this thesis I attempt to utilize discourse and the discursive field as it functions behind logocentrism in order to access the various perspectives in which a discourse can be viewed. Like Foucault, I am interested in what happens behind the logocentrism or signifiers that Homan's calls "big words." Further, I am interested to see what impact these logocentrism have on bodies and, in particular, what impact the assumption of Culture has had on the behaviour of women. I have defined Culture in this work as: the socially and symbolically learned and more or less shared knowledge that

underlies behaviour. This knowledge gives meaning and order to human cognition and experience. Meaning is assigned, and from this assignment comes cultural experience and value.

Given this definition of Culture, empirical evidence for Culture is readily accessible since it is the ideology that drives behaviour. To extend this point to include Foucault's treatise on the impact of discourse on bodies means that in discourse (as an event) can be found the roots of behaviour. Foucault's treatment of discourse as an event is parallel to his concept of the archaeology of knowledge. In this particular conceptualization nothing stands alone, but like discourse as an event, is connected to institutions, laws, morals and so on that are stratified and intricately interconnected with one another.

An example from Anthropology of the impact of discourse on knowledge can be given in the form of Kinship. We believe in Anthropology that Kinship is observable. It is also a discourse that manifests itself directly in the process of naming kin. This discourse of kinship, either by the anthropologist or the cultural Other has a direct impact on behaviour in both instances. The scheme of kinship offers a discourse that designates particular individuals by a certain name, and in doing so defines or delineates a specific behaviour toward the individual so named. Although there may be significant differences between the anthropological textualization of kinship and on-the-ground behaviour, the

discourse has a concrete impact on subsequent behaviour.

Similarly, the claim by Feminist theorists to a "women's culture" had, according to my research, a profound impact on how particular women behave. The Feminist language that proceeds as if a women's culture existed also has had a concrete impact on those women who accept it as fait a compli. Wagner, in his works, The invention of Culture (1981) and Lethal Speech (1978) discusses this at length. In this thesis I have accepted the fact that discourse does have an impact on behaviour. Consequently to proceed "As If" there is culture in any given context, rather than to determine if there is Culture could/would have an incredible impact on behaviour. In the case of my research in this thesis, it is what drives the profile of separation among women.

Discourse analysis has proved to be an invaluable implement in this research. It has provided a means of tracing the cultural tropes that occur when specific discourses begin to manifest themselves into behaviours. Discursive fields are continually dynamic in themselves. This does not mean that action or behaviour is also dynamic in some automatic sense. My research for this thesis indicates that both discourse and behaviour can and do become entrenched when, as I discussed in the preceding chapter, the discourse or more accurately Language of theory is allowed to become centralizing and totalizing. As Foucault says:

"...a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality" (1980:126).

In this work I distinguish between Language and discourse. In this thesis Language is signifier of a central and totalizing theory that is used as power in the conventional ascending sense. In the case of Feminist theory, Language is that vehicle of power that produces "the right kind of feminist", a logocentrism inherent in all the collected narratives that form the raw data for this piece of work. My research illustrates that this Language is the direct product of external influences and, is an alienating factor. On the other hand discourse is used as the system behind the Language of a centralized theory; it is for me the vernacular of specific actions or more precisely where every-day behaviour exists. By comparing the Feminist Language and the discourse of the women in this work I have been able to determine the impact such practices have had on what I see as a process of separation of women that is in reality no different from the processes of separation along class and ethnic lines in the broader national and inter-national communities. This notion makes the case for not thinking globally and acting locally. It is not my intention in this work to oppose the discourses collected as data with the

Feminist Language in the traditional manner that structuralism does. Should the reader conceptualize the two this way, that is for the reader to reconcile. Discourse as I use it here and Feminist Language are but two points in a cultural trope; they are not intended as binary oppositions.

Like Foucault (1980), I am interested in the power of discourse behind the signifiers, or power at the extremities away from the logo, the textuality, the language of a central theory.

Later in this chapter by offering the raw data of my research I hope to illustrate that fine but tenacious grip that Language and then discourse can maintain over our bodies, writ behaviour.

As Foucault says "this is then the level at which power is organized into effective strategies that take an immediate hold over our bodies" (1980:90). Power, not the ascending power of law or legislation, but rather the power of everyday interaction between those who know and those who do not, produces discourses. In this thesis the indices of power between those who know and those who do not are similar to the indices of power between Language and discourse. By using the narratives that constitute the raw data in this work I believe I have accessed the power of alienation itself that drives the process of separation of women along lines of class and ethnicity, which has made it impossible for women to have generated a separate Culture for and by women.

One of the symbols that repeatedly emerged in the oral data collected in this research was "power". I shall present the discourses later in the text and the reader can discern for her/himself what symbols emerge where. However, this word deserves marking-out on its own since it was so pervasive in all the discursive fields of the interviews. There was a common discursive element surrounding "power" in all the stories recounted to me during data collection. Women either used the Feminist Language to trope power into empower or combined "power" with privilege in their discourse. The power of discourse in this work is a process of trope that moves the negative power of Language into a positive, workable strategy that sustains specific forms of cultural existence. By suspending the popular symbolic use of power as an ascendant force to be seized and wielded, and by moving it to an inherent element of all human communication, power is removed from the conventional use. By moving beyond the power of a centralized theoretical language to the strategic discourse of everyday survival one can access the knowledge that produced that discourse and thus Culture (or lack thereof.)

"Recognized forms of knowledge always
bring power, and power in turn justifies
the formation of specific kinds of
knowledge"

Foucault, 1980:52.

It is at the point where the negative power of Language moves or tropes into a positive survival discursive strategy

that Culture emerges. To use my own example of kinship again, it is the point of difference between the textual language of anthropological kinship and the lived, everyday experience and knowledge, writ discourse of kinship. Put another way, discourse is the clay from which Language fashions its molar gloss and it is this molar gloss that becomes what Foucault (1977) calls "the single-minded violence of classical techniques." Both Feminism and Anthropology have fallen victim to the power of their own classical Language. Feminist theorists claim to have a "women's culture" yet they have little concept of the differences that emerge from differences of cultural ethos. Anthropology discusses the differences of cultural ethos, yet has no concept of the differences of women. I do not mean to imply by omission, in the preceding statement, that Feminism understands the differences between women, for it clearly does not.

STORIES

In Chapter Two, I discussed the three samples that make up the data of this research. The sample pool was large in order to generate a symbolic profile from the narratives in each sample. It is my intention here to provide some of the transcriptions from these narratives in order to allow the reader access to the data from which I derived the profile of

cultural separation among women in the data pool. It would be impossible to present all the transcriptions in a thesis such as this. Instead, I have selected those narratives that represent a discursive field. Not all the narratives in each sample were in fact usable, which was my initial reason for collecting as large a data set as possible under the circumstances. In some instances the narratives wandered far afield from the research intent and often such narratives contributed profile phrases or words that were useful only in the domain analysis. In order to leave the narratives as they occurred and demark clearly what the respondent said and how I manipulated the data, I have blocked-off the narratives. In addition I have transcribed them as the respondent spoke. I have not corrected pronunciation, or added grammatical corrections, nor will I. My analysis and mobilization of the narratives either proceeds or follows the narrative.

In selecting a transcribed narrative to represent a discursive field there were a number of characteristics I selected for. Firstly, I have included those narratives in the body of the text that point to either a cultural cohesion among women or those that indicate a separation among cultural groups. Secondly, I have only included those narratives that are pertinent to my research concerns. As I mentioned earlier, many narratives became tangential and obviously would be of no use in this research, although they may prove useful for future research. Thirdly, I have included those narratives in

the text here which represent a shared discursive field or profile. All identifying markers of place names, or markers that might indicate the identity of the woman giving the narrative have been removed. The first narrative is from Sample 1 (S1) and is an excerpt from a long transcription.

S1/12

_____ Q: You have been talking about women and change in your community,- what you think needs to be done. Can you expand on that a little more?

A: Well, I guess...well, for me it all started about the school. I thought that we...the parents should be more involved in our kids' education. I think we have to do it ourselves...what do they call it? Empower ourselves...and I guess that's good because we are the ones (who) can change the system. We are the community people...I mean...we are all community people...here...from the community. It's about self-esteem...they can do it on their own...community people and I think we are as important as others...more important. We live here and its our community our culture.

No one knows what this area...community is all about...if you want to change whatever....you have to have respect in the

culture of the community. These other women...I mean maybe what they think is good for them but...I don't really think anyone, 'sept someone from here knows what's goin on. Alot of people think they know what the North End is all about...but...well, they see what they want to see, but...they talk about experience...WELL...they have no experience here, they don't know it....

Q:What do you mean by "they don't know it?"

A.I...you can see that...well, most of the women, I don't know if they all are...feminists...or whatever...but you can see they want to help....I mean they care about kids but you...well!...I can definitely see that they live in a different world. Sometimes you'll hear them talk.....I hear them talk!...and they say something about this community...well...kinda...they say "Well what do you expect from someone here."

Q: What do you think they mean by that?

A: Well, women here....like here...in this community, don't have a high degree of education,stuff like that and when people from outside....ah...say if there is a problem...they say "Well,how you can expect these kids to be brilliant", meaning they can't do anything since they are from here.

Q: Have you actually heard them say this?

A: Oh yes...and more I can tell you. I really think they do it this way...these kids come from a lower level of education and they don't expect as much of them as they would from their own and stuff like that.....

It's disappointing in a sense...that's why the children are where they are I guess, because they are always put down...like us...it's the story here in this community.

You know...they think..."Well, you're like that so we won't try to push you...you know.

Q: Push you?

A: Well...more encourage them to do better...they don't think we can do much I guess...you know...they are all white these people...

....and we're 90% native in this community, culture whatever

...and they say...you know...this needs to be done, change this and they push native culture to us and they got to realize we are native!and maybe we don't want to go back to the country...Ha..The Land! A lot of us were born here in the city probably on social welfare and they try to push

us...everyone, not just us, but the Philipino women says to me "I'm sick of this"...even the natives are sick of it.

Q: Sick of what? Being told what to do?

A. Yeah, well...that an'...they shouldn't be pushing any culture...but this is our culture and they are still White.

Q: You told me you thought that the women in this community were making things work. Could you explain to me what you mean here?

A: Well...I don't...well, I think that the bureaucrats, you know the politicians, and all those other who think they know what will work for women...I don't think they really care about people like us...I mean even the police...response time is...Ha!...its sick...even they won't come.

...then some woman...feminist says...you should do this about violence here in the community and do something about alcohol and...you know about a week ago I was walking home and this guy was drunk and yelling at me. He was really bad "You stupid...can I say that? Well...he called me a bitch an more...and then he smashed the window on his door. He starts throwin glass at me...and this is my street, I live here an' I don't want to do nothin' 'cause he can find out where I live. So I call the cops an they go an get him and bring him

to my house to identify him! Now! Would you do that in Tuxedo? Would you do that anywhere else but here? I mean...its really a class thing...its different...you have to be here.

What I mean is, its a grassroots thing here...yeah...a grassroots thing that got the community going...an'its from the inside...its our culture...the people live here...I mean it comes from a real need. You may here people say "Never trust anybody from _____" ...but people here are honest--honest about their situation...and their situation gets them into trouble sometimes.

Q: I'm not sure what you mean about their situation gets them into trouble.

A: People in other areas...you know...better off...they get to hide things and they learn to lie so they don't get classed the same...people here tell the truth...you know...they say...yes, I do drink or yes, I was arrested...you know...but really they care about one another like family in a sense I guess. You know you don't want to be talkin about this one or someone else...because everyone is connected...like cousins or aunts and we all know each other....like you would not believe.

Q:What is the big difference for you, say culturally speaking, from others outside your community.

A: Well....there's lots....people here are very....like in terms of clothes and things...I mean the right kinds of clothes...there is no such thing here. We're not so materialistic. We're survivors...our class is low income and...if say someone comes into money....they move out...go somewhere else.

Q:What do you mean by "grassroots?"

A:To me it means people who live in the community...I guess in the culture too...who really know it...are the ones who are the part of changing it....or deciding IF to change it...

Grassroots is not somebody who thinks "Well, gee maybe they need this", you know. People in the community might think they need something but they have a different way of seeing it...we don't think the same as some woman from Tuxedo...and people know what's goin on...they can tell if you're from the community...I'm from the community...I work here and we all can relate to one another. Yet...you know..there are lots of people who are from outside....and even if there are only two of them at a meeting...the rest of us don't relate anymore...its just because there is authority there who can use big words which makes us so bored because we don't understand half the words or the language...so when these women tell us about how we have to ban together

with...whatever we don't understand what's goin on because its...language...you know it looses us.

Q:So this ...or these women...was the fact that you couldn't understand them part of the community becoming motivated?

A:I mean... yeah...we have to do it for ourselves. We know...only we know the grassroots needs...no one knows this...especially not some woman....feminists from well...some other area. Like an example is this is a transient area, so we started a housing registry here and we all went to city hall and got a list of all the landowners in our area and then we phoned them and ask them to join our registry. When they have something for rent they phone us and we advertise it....around you know...on bulletin boards at the school and so forth. We don't go an' inspect the premises because that would never work. We're not out to get them...but if someone in our community have to move in a hurry or whathaveyou...they have a better chance to find somewhere back in the same community where it is the same culture so...the kids are in the same school and they are with the people they know.What's important is to stay in the same community. That's stability. I don't know that someone outside would see it that way....well...they think we should inspect the places an all that...but that's not it.....I mean do they know what our community is? Their community isn't my community.....this is just my opinion...not

anything...you know...its just what I think.

I think we have to start speaking up....at meetings and tell them....you don't know what you're talkin about. You know...are they goin to come and ask us how to change there community....do they even have a community....do they even have a culture? They are always pushin ours...we have to start to speak up.

For me as researcher this narrative is typical of the narratives in S1 and for this reason I include it here. From this narrative a number of things are made clear, the first being the separation along lines of language and class. The dialogue indicates many points of an inside/outside boundary maintenance function from a cultural perspective and the entire narrative illustrates the "different worlds" of those inside the cultural community in question and those who come in from outside. Particularly pertinent to me and my research is the statement about what I have called Language and its alienation. The woman who gave this narrative was extremely clear when she claimed that women from the community related well to each other but when there are even two people from outside "we don't relate." She cites Language as "big words"

that "bore people" and for her in this narrative this Language represents "authority." This is not an atmosphere of cultural cohesion and "women's culture" since the narrative clearly cites separation along lines of Language, class and ethnicity.

The woman who gave this narrative would not consider herself a feminist. Her connection was not through sociobiological trope to all other women in the world, but rather to her community and specifically to the people in that community. For her Culture and class are specific and bounded. This is evident in her story of her encounter with the drunk and the police. Her discourse in this narrative does not include all women as sisters or even all women as being linked by Culture. Absent in her discourse are words like sharing, sisterhood, collective, egalitarian and other markers that are mobilized to demonstrate an integral link between all women through their biology. Her link in this narrative is to her cultural community and the people in it. She would avoid using such language markers in any context.

The next narrative is from Sample Three (S3) which was comprised of women who volunteered to be interviewed when they became familiar with the research through a third party. Women who had been interviewed contacted me to say they knew women who wanted to participate. In this sample I began each interview by asking the woman if she considered herself to be a feminist and then proceeded from there. I offer this next

narrative as a contrast to the previous one. I want to point out that it is not offered as an opposition by any stretch of of the imagination. There is no value judgement of correctness intended on my part. Should the reader attach value that is quite another matter and not the intention of the author. It is a simple textual procedure on my part to demonstrate the range of responses I employed to arrive at my profile of separation among women. This narrative also represents a discursive field prominent in Sample Three and its connection with Women's Studies programs in the academy.

S3/7

Q: Do you consider yourself to be a feminist?

A: Yes...yes

Q: Could you tell me what it means to you...to be a feminist?

A: I guess being...a feminist...means to me at its most basic...

the way I treat other women...and it means treating other women with regard to their individuality with regard...to their personhood. I suppose it means treating other women with the kind of regard that our culture doesn't extend to them.

...other parts of feminism to me...are things like...political action. I think that...um...one can be a feminist without being political...if that's what one chooses.

I mentioned this because I think its very dangerous for feminists to script other feminists. Its something we have to be careful about...because its very tempting to do...so I guess...I distinguish between...at its most basic...its how I treat other women. But...its a politic, feminism is political. Its...you know, whether you use hair spray or not...that's political. One could be a feminist and still use hairspray.

Q:What do you mean by script?

A:I guess...I mean...we shouldn't interfere with the individuality of other women and their right to do what they want.

Q: What is the profile of feminism in Winnipeg?

A:It's a political involvement...it involves engagement in social action or becoming...lobbying for change...

...part of feminism becomes friendship. I work on the _____ and those women are feminists and are very close friends, so we have a close working relationship. So that is part of it. I've experienced feminism in Winnipeg to mean friendship with other women. It means socialization with other women. It means...it meant at one time and I hope it will again...mean scholarly work with other women. Supporting other women.

Q: Is this the broader profile among women in this city do you think?

A: That's how I've experienced it...I can't speak for others...

Q: Do you think there is a shared...um...ideology,...or say... a consciousness among women in the broader picture?

A: A lot of women I know who are feminists...they're friends...and a lot of them...I can call them my sisters...there is a commitment to political change. Feminists in this city are in social service groups and they are sisters...we...can call each other that...and they are committed to change. I think there are lots of us out there. I think we have some love in common, because we have made some small changes. You know like the creation of women's centers in Winnipeg. Also there has been a real growth of women's music in the city...and...also there's the women's bookstore.

Q: Is this women's culture do you think?

A: These are manifestations I think...and even other bookstores have a women's section...so...really when you think about it...there is a women's culture. There really is...there's quite a dramatic change.

Q: So...if there is a women's culture how important is language in this culture...do you think?

A: Well...in 1980...up until that point I didn't.....you know that's a tough one! I'm just thinking...yes my language has changed...yes, looking back. You know I've used male pronouns...now I never do...and its not just political because its no longer politically acceptable, its because now I understand it and have come to terms with that kind of language and what it did to me.

Q:Other feminists have said that language was a means for them to connect themselves to move out of isolation. How does that fit with you and your account of language?

A. Well...I don't think I was isolated before...I didn't go from isolation to community or anything like that...but I do have a richer relationship with other women because of language...yes and..I guess I do have a better connection with women. I think that feminism is absolutely central in changing my language and also...brought about a change of consciousness and a profoundly different view of reality.

Q: What is the women's community, is it a united geographic group

or something or are there factions? What is it?

A: I...see alot of groups that don't always work well together...but when push comes to shove...they're...they would unite and come together to deal with an issue. I'm talking about social services feminists now. We wouldn't find them at

loggerheads with each other to get more money for...they would all work together...say...to get more money for battered women.

A: Is this what is women's culture then...this coming together for a common purpose?

A: Sometimes...most of the time the differences comes down to personalities, they....these groups...

Q: Could you define culture from your point of view.

A: I'm working on this.... I'm working with _____ and one of the things we're trying to define there is culture. I suppose....it depends...well, one definition of culture is art...but I think it may be something broader than that...I don't really know...I suppose it is the manifestations of all kinds of behaviour...the way you do things.

Q: I'm trying to get at the shared and learned aspects of culture...you know the...the...ideology that drives behaviour to demonstrate if there is a women's culture...different...separate...women.

A: Well...you know I think there is...I've said that...a few minutes ago...but one of the things that occurs to me is that

I know...I mean within ten minutes of talking to someone if she's a feminist or not, even if we're not talking about feminism. Now...how do I pick that up if there's no women's culture? Even...to say it takes 10 minutes is crazy...I mean even if there is no exchange of words...I know if a woman is a feminist...there's a message. So there must be something alerting us to other women...and its something cultural.

Q: So...you believe there is a women's culture...you know...full blown?

A. Yes....and I was thinking, you know that being able to know a woman is a feminist...as I mentioned...means there must be a culture there even though I don't necessarily know how to define it...except by more blatant things like a bookstore, like special services for women. I think that women created them...these things and they are the manifestations of that women's culture. I don't know what else...I mean...I suppose for me women's culture was very closely related to my academic experience. I mean...developing an interest in women's studies, ...those were very, very important in the development of women's culture.

...And I came alive intellectually and that was a wonderful joining of sense and sensibility. That's what women are trying to do in their culture...is bring these two things together because we've been living in a schizophrenic world

Q: So for you women's studies is a key factor?

A;It's a bridge to the community...my experience has been there is a lot more reaching out to the community. Alot of women in my experience are surprised to find out that they are feminists and coming to terms with it. But it depends on who is teaching it...and if they recognize that the personal is political and encourage that....then it enables women to get in touch with their experiences in these programs.

Particular aspects of this narrative and the discursive field it represents offer rich data in terms of my research. My initial hypothesis was that the "Culture" utilized by feminist theorists was/is a product of a centralized theoretical language generated by Women's Studies programs. This is also the case in the discipline of Anthropology which has almost single-handedly constructed the conceptualization of Culture. Culture is a slippery entity. In this thesis I have as a working definition of Culture: the socially and symbolically learned and more or less shared knowledge which underlies behaviour. This knowledge gives meaning and order to human cognition and experience. In my scheme, this knowledge is the product of consciousness that attempts to explain to us

who we are and to justify the kinds of lives we lead.

By defining Culture this way I have removed Culture from popular or high culture and I have also positioned Culture so as to demonstrate Foucault's idea that discourse does have an impact on behaviour and can be accessed. In my definition of Culture, discourse can have an impact where meaning is assigned and from this assignment of meaning comes behaviour in the form of experience and knowledge. In terms of the preceding narrative, the meaning of Culture, in this case "women's culture" comes from the academy, specifically, Women's Studies programs where experience is troped using the biological basis of women to connect all women in an assumption of Culture.

The concept of Culture in Anthropology, although problematic in an everyday sense, is the result of years of study of cultures and their differences. Further, the notions of Culture in Anthropology are inductively derived, working from a set of specific cultural cases to generalized statements about Culture. The feminist Language asserts that there is "women's culture" for women, by women, and the covert understanding here is for all women, by women. My research conducted here in Winnipeg demonstrates that such is not the case. I discuss this at length in Chapter Five.

The preceding narrative is but one such narrative in a discursive field in the research base that illustrates my original hypothesis, namely, that "women's culture" as it is

constructed in these particular discursive fields is a product of a centralized theoretical Language and is the point where some women have made the leap of faith to Culture to include all women. Another narrative from Sample 2 (S2) demonstrates this process of using the biology of women as a common basis for "connection" between women in a universal sense.

____Q: What do you mean that women share certain assumptions? Do you mean all women are connected whether they know it or not?

A: Yes...by being women we are connected...it means that as women we ARE connected...because all women are marginalized and put down in hundreds of ways...all the time. That is the bond....we are all affected by that...sexism...yeah...the sexism against all of us is what connects us I guess...that shared...

What is interesting to me here in this particular discursive field is the biological connection of women. It is this biology that is troped into the descriptor "shared assumptions" that continually emerged in the narratives that make up my research base. I was asking this woman, as I did with most women in the data pool, if they thought this Culture

had a shared ideology on a broad level.

____A: Yes...I think there is a shared ideology among all women. I'm getting back to the idea of woman-centered...at the very simple level of seeing things through women's eyes...um...through which a woman's experience is the norm. I'm talking of a bodily sense of ourselves...being a woman...that's what connects us and...and...from this...being a woman...comes a connection and an understanding and awareness that as women we've...I mean...we share certain assumptions...because we are women.

This kind of language is crucial for my hypothesis in this thesis. For me, this narrative demonstrates, as did many narratives in S2 and S3, that the simple biological fact of being female is the initial point of connection that is then troped into a "women's culture" spoken of as being all inclusive. This profile did not emerge in the discourse from S1 whose discursive field is illustrated by the first narrative offered in this chapter.

The second long narrative from S3 (S3/7) in this chapter pinpoints the discursive field that emerged from women who clearly had been influenced by the academy and its theoretical language. When this woman defined "women's culture" she said:

"I suppose for me women's culture was very closely related to my academic experience...I mean...developing an interest in Women's Studies those were very, very important in the development of "women's culture."

This pinpoints for me the problematic nature of this concept of "women's culture" - - the fact that in my research data it does not exist in the sense of being shared in the broader, more general context that Culture needs to be located in. Feminist theoretical texts, like anthropological theoretical texts, are the fodder of the discipline, and are structured "as if" theory and what we like to call praxis, are one and the same. This thesis, which I view as an experiment in attempting to reconcile the two, is meant to demonstrate that the "women's culture" of Feminist Language and the Culture of Anthropology are in reality one and the same. The Feminist writers proceed as if "women's culture" existed without coming to terms with the Culture of Man that is the Culture of Anthropology.

What is striking in the narrative in question (S3/7) is the fact that this woman talks about Culture in the same manner as the feminist theorist Charlotte Bunch in Passionate Politics (1987). Both women equate, as many people do, Culture with the popular notion of high culture: art, music and poetry. In this scheme high culture is associated with a notion of class--upper class. Now, no self-respecting feminist would ever intentionally wield class as a levelling mechanism.

However, it is achieved indirectly by connecting all women through biology and the nomothetic of the oppression of women. In this molar gloss, sameness, invoked by sexism, has inadvertently and covertly been equated with a class symbol or icon.

In Anthropology one of the manifestations of Culture is a shared ethos, or world view. As women, whether feminists or not, we have not achieved a world-view, which is generally believed to come about from a shared language, derived from a shared knowledge and experience. My research indicates that none of the ethos, knowledge or experiences are necessarily shared either across samples or even in some instances within the samples.

Another narrative from S2 displays a similar notion of Culture imbedded in a feminist rhetorical language.

S2/22

Q: But is this culture? How are you using Culture here? Could you explain what you mean?

A: I guess when I think of culture, I simply thinks of ways of living more consciously and ways of understanding the world...and our experiences in it. So I guess I tend to think of culture as those series of experiences that help us be

deliberate about our lives, and think about them...and enrich and empower us...by thinking about them...and by providing that kind of thought perspective. So for me culture...can be a conversation that's engaged.

...it's a shared sense too...women share all these ways of looking at things and even at the basic level we share assumptions about what matters because we are women...and it seems to me that those kinds of things have always been shared by women and probably have been for a long time.

Through-out the entire research process, from base-line research to the final interviews, this notion of shared assumptions arose, but only within the discursive fields of S2 and S3. These shared assumptions find their roots in feminism, particularly feminist theoretical Language and are axioms. Culture for me as an anthropologist is not really a set of axioms, whereas Feminism is a set of mottos. This is as close as I have come to teasing apart what these shared assumptions really are. No one in the two samples who generated this language gave corresponding definitions for "shared assumptions" that offered any satisfactory explanation. This also occurred with another descriptor used in all three samples, namely "grassroots." When I attempted to delve further into the meaning of "shared assumptions" I got

the following responses.

S3/11

A: Well... its... I can give you an example. When we say the personal is political... it means we all share the personal... that's shared by all women...

S2/19

A: I think shared assumptions come from a shared way of thinking that comes from being women... you know... women-centered... its the basic way of seeing things as women.

Another narrative from S2 provides an interesting illustration of a woman who felt that Feminism had provided her with a language and with this language a means of overcoming what she called "isolation." There are several references in the narrative that remain unclear to me. One is a reference to "a belief system of inequality". When I

attempted to solicit clarification the interview process threatened to disintegrate and not wanting it to flounder I allowed it to stand unaltered. I was unable to determine in the end what "a belief system of inequality" meant and can only speculate that it describes the unequal position of women in the Culture at large.

S2/8

___Q: You told me earlier that you felt isolated until you found a language that allowed you to change things. Could you explain this little more, with regards to how your language is different now than before?

A: Well, it was having a belief system of inequality. I mean...before it was...I was floundering because you didn't fit in the traditional role of being a woman and...by getting the language...it was like a key...in a block that fitted in. Someplace...it really was like that how it happened it was like...hey! ...would you believe there's a place...you're not a little island off by yourself floundering.

Q: Are you saying you're more integrated now....how?

A: It was a blend for me of the individual and the culture,

but also of who I was...and that blended for me when I encountered the language...

Q: the language...what do you mean?

A. the feminist language...its a basis of analysis..to look at inequalities...that women face in society. For myself...I guess...it gave me a sense of legitimizing myself and my identity...and where I should fit...I guess..it goes back to basic feminism, you know...the empowering of groups...they connect women...and you learn we are all the same...all women...our analysis of inequalities and the injustices...this is our culture...and...we're connected thru that...and feminism empowers women...its the connection...its the value.

Q: Value?...do you mean cultural value...I'm not sure...

A: the value for women is the network...the connectedness of women...all women are connected, it doesn't matter who you are...all women are connected...most of the issues are the same...and the language lets us realize that....and analyze...share...

Q:What does culture mean to you?

A: it means...their...roles in society...I we're individuals in a structure and you know from the language that we are all connected in some form.

Q: So would you say there was women's culture?

A: I think there is a women's culture, its mostly political though...but in women's culture....um....what I worry about is will they end up becoming a hierarchial culture itself...you know...and that scares me...and looking at the women's community...in many ways....I wonder...if there is a place for grassroots women...who are privileged like the others...you know...

Q:What do you mean by grassroots?

A: Its a perception...

Q: A perception?

A: Yes...the way you see things...or ...a value I guess.

I was unable to get any further clarification from this woman as to what "grassroots" meant except by juxtaposition with what she referred to as "women of privilege." In a further discussion after the tape recorder was turned off she indicated that feminism was mostly based on "power and privilege" and that it was impossible for these "privileged women" to understand "grassroots" women. She allowed that these women whom she felt were privileged by class and education and thus economic position could "intellectualize" the conditions other women live in but could not "really understand grassroots women". I took from these statements that there was in her discourse a hint of a cultural shear

among women based on economic class .

I would like to offer another narrative from the discursive profile that emerged from S1. This woman self-described herself at the start of the interview as being "grassroots" and "working class". She had "managed" to get appointed to a government position that had been terminated due to funding cuts after more than eight years employment.

S1/24

_____Q: You raised the term "feminist" earlier and I would like to know if you consider yourself to be a feminist?

A:...yes...ah...

Q: Why do you hesitate?

A:Well...yes I'm a feminist...I believe that they think they are doing the right thing...but they aren't aware how they isolate us?

Q: Who?

A: Women like...me...that are grassroots women...working class. We..there's still alot of anger. Feminism...is classist...or...no...its classist here. There's no...its impossible to resolve the class part...

Q: Why is it impossible?

A: We don't know the words, the right words....a...the protocol...

Q:Protocol?

A:...how to smile, the correct behaviour...how to act...the

right clothes. That's protocol. Upper and middle class women are so good at it...so accomplished.

In Winnipeg its..."give me power"...its..."I'm a woman...its okay"...and you find out its the same as with men...its oppressive...hierarchial. It's dangerous because you think...well...I'm safe...these are women...and you relax...you open -up and "disclose" yourself to them and then they crush you...you aren't the right kind of feminist and you pay for it...I'm still paying for it! What they do is worse than what men do...you...with men you know what to expect...and you don't let your guard down.

Q: What needs to be done...or is that too broad a question?

A: Working class women need to form their own groups. But...even...then its a catch 22 because they don't know the process, the language...the people in...power I guess.

Middle-class women say to us "Anger, Anger, Anger". You're damn right I'm angry...they see according to their own privilege..

Q: Can you give me an example?

A: Look at the vigils

Q: Which vigils?

A: The one's on t.v. all the time, at the legislature...they're a good example. Look at those women there...that's pretty much privilege to me. That's where it starts right there like that...the split between the real victims...the working class women who the vigil is usually

for...again victimized by the privileged women who use them for "personal politics."

Q: Could I...

A. Yes...

Q: You've used this word grassroots alot and I'm not sure I understand it...what does it mean...to you?

A: Grassroots means working class, the everyday life of the working class, real...everyday needs and means...

Q: Would you say that feminism as you know it was a grassroots thing?

A: No. Here...its for what I call...the privileged. I'm not saying its malicious...they just don't know...like...when we don't understand or know the procedure...the protocol...they by-pass us. In the beginning they say, "Oh, its okay if you don't understand...its okay...and that's the end of their commitment. It needs to be explained over and over again each time...when we don't understand or use the language...so we know they mean it. But its just...there no real understanding...no real commitment.

Q: Could you define privilege for me?

A: Well...its a power some people have...its political power,...educational power...and class...not grassroots...oh...I guess its being connected to protocol.

____Q: When you spoke earlier about some of the things you have been involved in, you said that the word "feminist" wasn't used alot in your community. Why is that?

A: Well... feminist to us...me...well, we're predominantly Aboriginal here and of a very low level of education...and maybe very little employable skills and also...alot of fear of the systems that exist, the welfare system... and feminism I think maybe is part of those systems.

We identify with this community...the women I mean...women who never sat on a board....its called grassroots...community and the needs here....

Q: This here....

A: What you see here, this is what I call grassroots.

The final narrative that I offer in this chapter is different from the others in that the woman is not a resident of Winnipeg but was in the city on business and expressed an interest in being interviewed. I have included her in sample three. She has been an educator for more than 25 years at the university level in Canada. I have included her to illustrate my hypothesis that "women's culture", as a product of Feminist Language, results in an alienation among women.

___Q; Are you a feminist?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you define that for me?

A: I guess being a feminist means being concerned first and foremost with the rights, and privileges of women who have largely been ignored and in my own work, it is the attempt to deconstruct the androcentric nature of my own area and reconstruct a feminist, or woman-centered...or feminist critique of those kinds of things. So, there is an ideological component and a political component.

A: Are you familiar with the body of literature generically referred to as feminist theory?

A: Oh yes..

Q: Would agree...or disagree if I said that Culture is beyond art, music and poetry.

A: Um-hmm. Yes.

Q:Do you think that feminism has achieved "women's culture"?

A....No. I think...with small exceptions...that is...a number of exceptions or small enclaves, intellectual or cultural enclaves or even philosophical enclaves, women are as enculturated in what I call an androcentric culture as men are. I think they can clearly work toward a women's culture but I think they or we..or...I would prefer it as "they" have not understood the real impact of their enculturation on how they think the world. So they make certain kinds of language

substitutions but don't think about what that substitution of language is really doing or not doing. I think that they have often generated the illusion of progress...thinking that they are creating something new when...really I fear they are re-creating that which is old and that which is traditional....

Q: Traditional?

A: Well...traditional as problematic...they have re-entrenched androcentric of the world by simply making minor modifications to certain kinds of language.

Q: Such as...the modifications?

A: Oh...modifications as to who they will read, or who they will listen to or how they will listen. So...I'm not saying its futile to attempt...or what we ought to attempt to construct is women's culture...but I think that most feminist theory creates the illusion that that's exactly what is being done in the present...I don't think they are addressing the critical issues.

Q: Which are?

A: Dealing with ideology...how they think the world. They think by changing words...changing the prefix or the suffix that they are changing androcentric words into woman-centered, woman-culturally-loaded words...but in fact what is really happening is they are keeping the same root of the word and by re-inventing that root, re-invent the meaning system to which the word is attached...and that is androcentric culture.

_____ This is the end of the data to be presented in this chapter in the form of the narratives. None of the samples used in this thesis to organize the data are mutually exclusive, however the discursive fields that emerged are distinctive. I have taken great caution to present the discursive profile from each of the samples I used in conducting the research. As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I have been seeking Culture and I have been doing it through discourse. I believe that discourse does have an impact on our behaviour, writ bodies by Foucault (1980). My idea here was that by seeking the power in discourse between individuals, the power between those who know and those who don't know, I could get at the meaning behind the Language by using the discourse of women. In the next chapter I shall offer my conclusions based on the data from which these narratives are extracted.

"...these invisible yet pervasive manifestations of power are quite real and it is with these effects that are discernable at the level where discourses take hold on bodies and effect the everyday existence of humans" (Foucault 1977:96).

CHAPTER FIVE: LANGUAGE AND ALIENATION

In Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, I outlined some of what I consider to be the central problems inherent in the feminist operating assumption that culture had been achieved. In this chapter I would like to expand on this and illustrate that in both Feminist Theory and Anthropology, theory itself has come to be a form of domination. In Anthropology this can take the shape of the structuralist paradigm in which rigidly opposed signifiers operate as irreducible cultural absolutes. Examples of these prevalent absolutes such as culture/nature, self/other and man/woman have been outline and discussed in Chapter One. These absolutes are a curse inherited from the thought patterns intrinsic to the processes that spring from binary oppositions. The psychology of oppositional meaning systems have come to structure our thinking to such an extent that we apply them in a automatic axiomatic manner.

The mechanism that effectively achieves this process of setting everything in opposition is the alienating Language of centralized theory which is a constant source of alienation and of which structuralism is a part. I believe that in discourse, away from Language, there is a power that comes from experience and knowledge and that has a profound cultural impact on bodies, written here as behavior (Foucault 1977).

It is this hegemony of Language that generates privilege-both textual and actual. This is the Language of "theory as centre" which produce logocentrism that become a totalizing and formulaic presentation or performance. This theory-as-Language-as-reality seeks out a unique niche for itself and by the nature of this centering, becomes reductionist in terms of class and ethnicity. It treats both class and ethnicity in a homogeneous way that denies both variation and real Difference. Language plays a central role in the production of meaning and is not far from Homan's comment about an academic dedication to "big words". However, the Language I refer to here has moved beyond Homan's conception which, like other structuralist-functionalist positions, itself tends to be static.

The post-structuralist treatment of meaning and language and the capacity to generate culture is a more dynamic approach than what Homan's developed in the 1950's. The point remains, however, that such words do play an integral and constitutive role in the construction of Culture.

Language as a symbolic conveyance of meaning, particularly in the case of feminist and anthropological texts, constructs an impenetrable boundary of privilege based on Language. This is the source of alienation from Language that appears in my research data. In the specific case of Feminist Language the sources are located in Women's Studies programs which in turn adopt the Language of national and

international feminist thinkers and in doing so create the filters through which local cultures cannot penetrate. This totalizing process gives power to the centre (the theory itself) and glosses over problematic areas that may need attention, such as the division of women in terms of socio-economic class and ethnicity. This has an insulating effect that then spills out into the so-called "women's community" and effectively acts as another source of alienation in that it renders a disembodied politic at the local cultural level.

When theory is mobilized in such a totalizing or absolute manner it has a profound impact on action or praxis. Feminism has assumed Culture in exactly this manner and locally the politic is derived from this assumption regardless of the on-the-ground reality. This practice of operating "as if" there were a culture for and by all women, propped-up by the Language network of Women's Studies programs, is an ideological design troped into "the community". My research indicates that the symbolism of feminist Language derived directly from feminist texts does not work to integrate "the women's community" but rather works directly to drive a further separation between women already alienated from one another along cultural lines. Both Wagner (1986) and Geertz (1971) have discussed at length the importance of the symbolic as the constitutive and organizing elements of cultural life. From this one might expect that the symbols embedded in the feminist Language would point to this "women's culture" if it

in fact existed. The concept of significant symbols introduced by Geertz (1973) proved a valuable empirical aid during the baseline stage of this research. Significant symbols are "words for the most part, but also gestures, drawings, jewellery, buttons, slogans--anything in fact, that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience" (Geertz 1973:45). Any symbols that appeared to me to be significant, were confined to a specific and bounded group of women who also used the Language in a manner fitting this definition. These symbols, which I have chosen to see as being significant in this research, were not shared in the broader context of women in this research data.

In The Invention of Culture (1981), Wagner says: "the interpretive elicitation of meanings, which I call 'invention' can be seen to have a life of its own and can mould the use of cultural conventions to its purposes." This is particularly important for my work since my data indicates that among the women in my sample this "interpretive elicitation of meanings" is first and foremost small-group oriented and not contiguous with the general population of women. These meanings are the trappings of a feminist theoretical Language that works effectively to drive the profile of separation among women rather than fostering an integrated plurality of groups.

In my database, alienation begins with Language - - a Language that begins with rhetoric in Women's Studies programs and spills into "the community" where it acts to alienate

women whose daily lives are beyond the boundary maintenance function of this Language. This process, centered on feminist theoretical Language, expects women to work for a cause that in the end separates or alienates them from their own class and ethnic backgrounds. The basis of meaning in this Language is not a function of local discourse and therefore the cultural process which gives meaning to action is not present for those women who are not part of the Language enclave. This Language effectively alienates women outside the white, middle-class boundary. Nor is there, according to my data, any evidence of shared and functioning core symbols within this select political boundary to indicate that a women's culture exists there either. In my research even the Language itself becomes a point of separation for those who use it . Usually core symbols act to unify and motivate individuals towards the cultural points of reference that situate culture. However because "women's culture" is asserted by the theoretical Language rather than a reality, the core symbols themselves contribute to a disembodied atmosphere. Core symbols also must move to construct their own conditions that eventually encompass the individual perception and the integrated plurality of the collective culture. This is not the case in my research data and I will demonstrate this in the following chapter.

The importance of metaphor and cultural trope in the production of Culture can never be overplayed. The production

of feminist metaphors and the iconicity it wields at all levels of symbolic production is centered away from most local cultures. Cultural trope are those symbolic figures of speech and imagery that turn, convert and change the standard meaning of a word. In the Feminist Language "power" becomes "empower", "able" becomes "enable" verb forms that represents forms of action such as to know or to judge, are rendered as gerunds e.g., "knowing", "judging". What was symbolically a site of action in the verb form now becomes, by substituting the gerund, a more passive and personal position. For me, this is intrinsically a deliberate trope to passivity using a centered, theoretical language. It is trope for instance that allows Charlotte Bunch to obviate culture from a socially and symbolically learned and shared knowledge which underlies behaviour into "art, music and restaurants" (1987:190). This approach that tropes a centred theory into cultural praxis as if it were an integrating factor cannot render cultural meaning that is integrated across class, and ethnic boundaries. In other words, to use Foucault's idea, the feminist discursive field derived from the language of woman-centredness translates into a language of privilege for particular classes of women and effectively acts as a boundary maintenance function. This is the central premise of my profile of separation in the three samples that constitute my data. The language of Women's Studies programs works to generate theoretical language, gleaned from national and

inter-national feminist textual fields and tropes it into a language used to centre local action. This quest for a unique centre for women has backfired and instead of being a cohesive factor alienates women from one another. This is nothing new; rather it is simply another means of exclusion. It is, however, an excellent example of how theory becomes a form of domination and separation in itself.

In "Truth and Power" (1980:126) Foucault demonstrates the close connection between discourse and power. If we were to apply this model to the feminist rhetoric, "power" would be troped into "empower." This textual ploy of moving "power" to "empower" is a mobilization of a word into the role of praxis and causality. This is a hegemony that assumes that feminist theorists indeed have the power to dispense Culture to others in the guise of "empowering" them. This is akin to the imperialist methods that characterised the early ethnographies in Anthropology or what Foucault (1980:126) aptly calls "the single-minded violence of the classical technique." In doing so, the constitutive or organizing principle of metaphor as it functions in cultural meaning is bypassed to create an atmosphere of mystification through Language. This is, in my experience, a ritual process that continually counts things over and over again at the expense of moving away from semiotic constructions that roadblock an integrated plurality of women. In addition, since this praxis/causality derives its origin from a theoretical framework that has become a

totality, it creates a privileged boundary that alienates any differential discursive perspectives. Should feminist theory and theorists continue this praxis, it will force the socio-cultural life of women to become entirely symbolic, for it could be nothing else under such totalizing constructs. In fact, my research indicates that this is the case in the local situation of women in Winnipeg. Large numbers of women whose class and ethnicity cannot function in the centred feminist Language have been alienated by a symbolic field that is useless to them in the maintenance of their daily lives.

As acculturated beings we are adapted to cultural meaning. The symbols, signs and language that drive these meanings are a preoccupation in both feminism and Anthropology. Therefore it follows that how we use and mobilize the symbolic is what counts. In my research the symbols that supposedly point to a culture of women are its greatest source of alienation. This alienation is the impact that language has on action. Feminist writers and theorists have proceeded "as if" this culture of women is an everyday reality by making closure at the level of theoretical language. (I say it is, therefore it is.) A by product of the "as if" construction is that these writers and theorists have been able to entrench their status as subjects of knowledge and all the power in the traditional sense of power that this generates, by constantly situating the Language of this culture of women in a socio-historical context. By connecting

the Language to a historical context and the history that context legitimizes, the present discourse has the appearance of being grounded in cultural actuality. This application of a socio-historical continuum is nothing more than a construction of putative cultural origins achieved by mobilizing a history that in reality chronicles the history of class and ethnic separation of women by other women. The socio-historical account, is a popular format in Canadian Feminist writing, that perpetuates the search for a unique centre that by its very nature must become reductionist (For example see Ristock and Vine 1991). The socio-historical context effectively alienates those outside its specific parameter. The "as if" method, central to this historical context assumes an isomorphic pattern that presumptuously speaks for all women.

For me, this is the connection between the traditional, androcentric concept of power as ascendant, generated by Language and political power. It is a destructive course to take since it focuses on Language as an end in itself in the same manner as it totalises theory. By concentrating on a praxis derived from texts rather than functioning Cultures, feminist writers succeed in illuminating the link between textual knowledge and privilege. This is what my research attempts to reveal. In this experimental work I have concentrated on the theoretical Language and the symbolic system it generates and the constitutive power or lack

thereof, of that symbolic system for producing Culture.

I feel that Feminists have allowed theory to become totalizing and central. From this comes a Language of political convenience where "women's culture" is assumed and asserted. The alienation that results becomes the most effective mechanism of separation of women. This in itself constitutes "system" and "structure" that are closed and exclusionary.

The importance of critical theory and deconstruction as a counterpoint to the alienation inherent in feminist and anthropological theoretical language is central. Critical theory is the prime mover in this work and based on the premise that much needs to be, and can be, done to extract both feminism and Anthropology from the totalizing mire in which they have become entrenched. Any theory construction or design that condones entrenchment through a central Language is complicit with that entrenchment. The importance of Discourse, as it is used in this thesis, and not Language, cannot be emphasized enough since it is central in shaping Culture and the subject within Culture. My approach to the symbolism of the language that constitutes the database of this thesis is in the first instance deconstructive. Secondly it attempts to avoid closure, and thirdly, it vigorously resists the binary oppositions so inherent in Anthropology and feminist theoretical glosses.

The discipline of Anthropology is also guilty of

mobilizing theory in a totalizing manner as are the Feminist theorists. The most damaging of these paradigms is that of structuralism and its fixed, rigid binary oppositions. The impact on and the ability of the structuralist language to shape anthropological praxis has been phenomenal. The moulding of cultural ethos inside Anthropology based on binary oppositions has produced the enigmatic self/other, we/they, and the presumptively isomorphic "western" culture as in opposition to other cultures. Anthropologists also proceed "as if" the culture we have created is in fact what we say it is. Culture itself, as it is created by anthropologists is a totalizing concept that literally controls each and every ethnographic enterprise. As Wagner (1981:10) states "since anthropology exists through the idea of culture, this has become its overall idiom, a way of talking about, understanding and dealing with things, and it is incidental to ask whether cultures exist. They exist through the fact of their being invented, and through the effectiveness of this invention."

It is the effectiveness of this invention which I want to address here. At the onset, Culture has been an androcentric invention, a fact easily demonstrated by a quick perusal of any ethnographic text. It is this invention of Culture as a levelling mechanism that must be investigated. It is a levelling mechanism because it acts as a buffer against alienation when the anthropologist encounters something

outside their own gendered and cultural experience. It is a mechanism for making familiar the unfamiliar and allows the anthropologist to render the unknown Culture in terms of the known Culture and the known Culture is androcentric. Both Anthropology and Feminism centralize this technique, in fact it is exactly this "process" that operates in the "effective" manner that Wagner discusses in both instances. This will be developed in the following chapter. However, if we "invent" Culture, it must be a and accessible Culture and not simply a product of theoretical and textual hegemony.

In 1981 Wagner wrote in The Invention of Culture that Anthropology was unique in its failure to institutionalize a theoretical consensus. I depart from Wagner on this point and I believe that the discipline indeed has institutionalized at least one "consensus" however unconscious it may be. I speak of the inherent dualism of the structuralist paradigm and for me it is a paradigm, not simply a method, for paradigm implies a cognitive aspect. Dualism and its product of binary oppositions provides a set of cognitive axioms that have become entrenched not only in the discipline of Anthropology but in the way we think Anthropology. The heritage of binary oppositions has been in existence as long as the discipline of Anthropology itself. The fact that as anthropologists we persist in requiring exotic fieldwork, is the best example of the functioning and systemic dualism in the discipline. Individual anthropologists may overtly dismiss dualism and its

system of rigid oppositions, yet covertly and perhaps unconsciously dualism occupies a central place in the final textuality in Anthropology. It is the psychological process to which we are culturally adapted, whether we are advocates of structuralism or not. Binary oppositions are firmly implanted in our ideological infrastructure.

An excellent example of this is the proscriptive and oppositional nature of Culture. In Anthropology Culture itself is in reality the Language of the meta-ethic or in this case meta-culture. This proscription of Culture is the commentary on what-ought-to-be and not what is. Incorporated into metaculture is the idea or notion that Culture can be written "as if" these theoretical components existed and leads to what I call a cultural shear or alienation. The writing of metaculture is in the first instance the first line of alienation for the individual, particularly if that individual is a woman.

Culture itself is a framing metaphor that continually tropes and turns along a continuum and should not be rigidly fixed. This is the post-structuralist perspective that can be a valuable implement in determining the nature of cultural meaning that remains fluid where binary oppositions cannot. Cultural trope is an important feature of this process of deconstructing this lethal dualism. The process of trope takes place on an intricate number of cultural indices both in spoken and unspoken symbolic planes, however none is more

immediate and available than discourse. Therefore the writing of Culture as metaculture itself becomes a source of alienation from that Culture. However, at all levels metaphor is the constitutive ingredient of Culture and it is the mechanism of trope, those turns and conversions of symbolic cognition, in which conflicts and differences are culturally utilized to bring about cultural change. It is through these tropes, almost institutionalized by Roy Wagner (1986), that the standards of ideology are adjusted, changed or turned. Cultural tropes are figures of speech that become figures of thought in which the symbols are used in a way that effects a change in the their standard meaning and therefore their "standard" place in Culture. Trope is integrally linked to metaphor as the machinery by which the conversion is accomplished. Any symbolic system that alienates this process from grounded Culture through further mystification such as the language of metaculture and Feminist Language is bound to fail to access Culture. In fact, the language of metaculture are textual and verbal equivalents of the kinds of hegemonic means that destroy or obviate variation or difference.

The language of metaculture in Anthropology has created Kinship, Man The Hunter, Woman the Gatherer, Voice, Gender, Nature, Culture and so on. The language of metaculture has constructed universalisms and essentialisms, and, in doing so, alienates us both as anthropologist and other. Culture, written as metaculture has been an androcentric construct and

what is needed to move away from its language and its alienation is a consciousness of method rather than a continuation of the alienation of essentialism inherent in the Language of metaculture. My database in this thesis is an experiment in illuminating the Language and alienation of metaculture. I did not apply the paradigmatic Language of anthropological metaculture in researching "women's culture". In this experiment I did not intend to design another realm of semiotics for Anthropology, however, I did have to grapple with the Culture of metaculture. I believe the Culture of Anthropology is metaculture. The culture of Feminism is also metaculture.

Like those Feminist theorists who have allowed theory to become a totalizing factor, Anthropologists have allowed the theory of metaculture to occupy the place of Culture. Both Feminism and Anthropology have achieved this by adopting a socio-cultural Language beyond the local Culture. Nationalism and its search for National Culture is the alienating process that attempts to assert the primacy of group affinity in both disciplines. This universalist direction or focus seeks out common culture, language, politics and economics as an ideological base. In doing this, the level of culture accessed is universal at the expense of local cultural plurality.

Dualism and its accompaniment of binary oppositions are a particular brand of essentialisms of which the disciplines

of Anthropology and Feminism must rid themselves. As a psychological process, dualism and essentialism have become intrinsic to our entire symbolic system to which we are intimately and culturally adapted. Metaculture and its binary system is an eloquent cultural propaganda that alienates the Culture we use for ordering our life experiences. This thesis is an experimental attempt to move beyond the alienation that is constitutive in the metaculture of Anthropology and Feminism. I have given a unique privilege to discourse in my research in this experimental attempt to avoid the alienation of metaculture. The tendency to centralize and totalized theory in both Feminism and Anthropology are their greatest sources of alienation. If theory is allowed to be the prime mover or substituted for Culture there is no way for it to avoid becoming a totality in itself. This kind of textual praxis legitimizes those who wield the theory and allows a political trope that turns from the subjects of knowledge to the subjects of power, even if it is written as "empower." In both disciplines theory and action have been collapsed into one another through the avenues of theoretical Language. The cultural alienation that results is difficult to undo. Every effort to oppose the prevalent textual hegemony in either discipline must also avoid becoming a totality itself. It is for this reason that in this thesis I experiment with a more specific and local ethnography, rather than continue the semiotic universalisms that have allowed theoretical Language

to stand in for grounded Culture.

CONCLUSION:

In his chapter, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man" in The Interpretation of Cultures (1973), Clifford Geertz outlines in a relatively brief statement one of the central problems facing anthropologists: "the notion that men are men under whatever guise and against whatever backdrop has not been replaced by other mores, other beasts" (1973:34). This kind of thinking is one of the greatest sources of essentialism and of the methodological application of universalisms inherent not only in Anthropology but in the social sciences in general. It effectively reduces difference, difference written: age, class, sex and race. It reduces difference as mere trappings of, to use Geertz's own term, "transient fashion." (1973:34). To Geertz's credit he recognized the pitfalls inherent in such classical approaches. Where he falls short is "the notion that men are men under whatever guise." In the complicated and often times circuitous search for what Geertz and others call "the constant, the general, the universal" or the Culture of Man, Culture has been inaccessible to Woman. Geertz and other post-modernist writers mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis have made important contributions in this search for Culture. However, it is they who have invented it in the first place -

- "they" being men and the "it" being Culture.

Both the Feminist and anthropological post-modernist literatures have effectively delineated the problematic, intellectual climate of the Enlightenment as the troubled conceptual child in this search for the laws of men that are/were believed to be the same as the laws of nature. The Enlightenment's conceptualization of man and his nature and his laws of nature was a wonderfully simple concept. And it still is. "Simple" in this instance is not to be troped into simplistic, for even though the concept of Man and the concepts of the nature of Man are simple, they are simple only in their lineality. In reality they are linear concepts that are full of complex essentialisms in the form of binary oppositions, and therein lies its simplicity. It is also a simple system by its proscriptive and exclusionary nature. "Man" as it is written in Anthropology is never troped into Woman, yet Woman is constantly troped into Man.

Despite its problems, Anthropology has at least achieved the level of understanding, albeit from a totally androcentric view, that humans unmodified by the locale of their sociality, sometimes written as Culture, do not, never have and never will exist (Geertz 1973:35). Perhaps this is as close as we have come to defining Culture without becoming, as Geertz says, "tortuously ensnared" in our own construction. Culture is not immutable; only by our own construction is it immutable. Anthropology has more potential for reaching an

understanding of Culture, by deconstructing what it has constructed in the first instance. Anthropology, I believe, can reconstruct itself by constructing a different kind of inclusion. This does not mean as Donna Haraway (1990:231) says, "Add women and stir." It means a transformed ideological inclusion. In other words, Anthropology has to deliberately trope itself.

If some feminists insist on "women's culture", then it is the same construction, skewed in the same manner as the androcentric Culture. What is surprising to me was to discover that many of the narratives collected during the research period for this thesis indicated that the connectedness between women is based on biology. For example:

S3/11

_____ A: Its like...the personal is the political...it means we...all share the personal as women.

To me...it means that we as women are connected...because all women are marginalized...and that is the bond...we are all the same under that...sexism I guess...that's shared...

S2/32

_____ A:I'm getting back to a sense of woman-centered, at the very

simple level of seeing things through women's eyes...ah...through which a woman's experience is the norm...I'm talking of a bodily sense of ourselves...as women that's what connects us and...

S2/15

A: For women its the network, the connectedness. Women are all connected...it doesn't matter...most of the issues are the same...the language allows us to analyse...share.

From my perspective this connection through biology of all women because we are women, differs little from the biological bases of the androcentric treatment of women based on biology. Further, I think the same problems arise from such a socio-biological connection. It allows a dangerous homogenization to take hold that facilitates the quantum leap characterized in Anthropology by rendering "women in cross-

cultural perspective" as all being one and the same. To say that all women are connected because we are all marginalized or because biologically we are all women, is to make the same mistake inherent in androcentric models of human behavior. This spawns such ridiculous statements such as " the Culture of Man", "the Antiquity of Man", "Man the Hunter" and so on. It also allows the kind of problems I discussed earlier in the review of the pertinent literature to continue and perpetuate both in Anthropology and in Feminist Anthropology, namely, the mobilization of the androcentric model by women. This leads to a re-invention of the androcentric and exclusionary model of Culture in the cross-cultural material, as well as in the Feminist language which attempts to apply the model as praxis.

Feminists and anthropologists have effectively minimized Difference because the androcentric model effectively reduces Difference; they are one and the same. Unfortunately feminist theorists have replicated the mistakes that anthropologists have made in terms of Culture, in reality written as the Culture of Man. How can it be otherwise? The Culture of Man has alienated itself from its own concept with its own language, just as Feminism is coming dangerously close to doing. Feminism is not "women culture", it is a politic. The body of ideas that constitutes Feminism is too diffuse to even be termed an ideology based on my research data. From my research it is clear that Feminism is a wide-ranging response to the injustices inflicted on women as women by men because

they are men. The call by feminists for a restructuring of Culture is, to say the least, important, but at this point in time it is not "women's culture."

During my research in Winnipeg, conducted for this thesis, I have discovered what I believe to be an interesting correlation between the profile of Feminist groups in the city and what I believe to be a political movement called Prairie Populism (C.Farber 1990:pers.comm.). The populist movement was largely an American phenomenon from the prairies that was also aimed at socio-cultural reform. These activities were agrarian in focus, however they have similarities which I feel are pertinent here. Populist groups held instructional classes for families and individuals to raise their consciousness of their social situation and reached levels of a counter-culture movement. These classes operated much in the same manner as do Feminist consciousness-raising groups in emphasizing history and political theory. There was a Populist press circa the 1890's and many writers of this movement allude to the practice of ritual ceremonies that acted as a reenforcement of the awareness raised in the classes (Goodwin 1987:180), much the same as Feminists in Winnipeg do such as vigils, marches and celebrations.

The populists formed themselves into co-operatives, much the same as Feminists in Winnipeg form collectives, where a dogma was espoused that often was in direct opposition to the prevailing doctrine of government or the jural systems.

Another interesting difference, however, between Populism and Feminism is the role of the middle-class. Populism was, using the words of the women in my research data, a "grassroots" agrarian movement. In my data pool, Feminism is largely a product of middle-class endeavors, even in circles of socialist Feminism. For me there are a number of interesting points of analysis between these two movements. I have discovered in my research that Feminism has not achieved "women's culture, but rather is an out-growth of Culture in general. As women what we need to develop is Culture. However, first we have to deal with Culture as we know it from the androcentric model.

Feminist theorists need to come to terms with the Culture of Man as we know it and as do anthropological theorists. The achievement of "women's culture" might provide the cohesion to render a base from which to establish a broader and more representative politic. Culture, according to my research, is an everything-out-there performance and not a shared ideology even the most basic sense. The sui generis nature of the Feminist politic, gleaned from the Language of academic programs, has resulted in a self-imposed separation from what might be a solid cultural base for women.

An inclusive Culture must come to define the meaning of our experiences, written as Difference as it tropes into knowledge and values that outline our everyday behavior. The Culture of Anthropology needs to be reconstructed so that it

includes a clarification of women's values both explicit and implicit by women. Only by reconstructing the immutable fixity of women in the Culture of Man can we transform exclusive Culture into inclusive Culture of Difference.

Anthropology in particular cannot afford to overlook the potential of the strong formulation between women, Culture and society. Again this does not mean "add women and stir" (Haraway 1990: 231) as the gloss and performance of "gender studies" has done in the discipline. Feminist theorists must cease to assert "women's culture" as an androcentric political trope and anthropologists must cease to mobilize "gender" to bury women under the Culture of Man.

As women we must first concentrate on making visible that so-far invisible seam between our cultural experience as women and our cultural reality as women. This cannot be a cultural trope of the androcentric Culture, nor can it be achieved by an exclusionary Language and politic. Culture, as ambiguous as it is, symbolically is the most resistant of all ideologies to change or correct, for it moves in its own circle of spontaneous qualities. We must move towards a reconstructed analysis of all those not-so-shared-but-taken-for-granted elements, both as women and as anthropologists.

For sometime I have been concerned that "women's culture" has been used as an unconscious trope of the Culture of Man. Likewise, I believe that a feminist political ideology, disguised as an independent Feminist base, is

substituted for a system of cultural representation. In my research it is evident to me that it is this very process of unconscious juxtaposition that has shifted an alienating, theoretical Language into the role of "women's culture." If we look again at my definition of Culture used throughout this work, as the socially and symbolically learned and more or less shared knowledge that underlies behavior, then as women we need to exact what it is we have socially and symbolically learned.

In this investigation we must look at the leap of faith some feminists have made in claiming "women's culture" and how that filters down to affect the locales of Cultures. These leaps of faith I have often called "cultural tropes" in this thesis. These cultural tropes are cultural notions that turn and convert the way in which cultural knowledge and cultural experience become transformed. As women, we desperately need the unity and distinctiveness of Culture for and by women. As Henrietta Moore points out in Feminism and Anthropology (1988:12), Feminism deals with women as a sociological category. As such, the entire notion of Difference between women potentially undermines the similarities of the sociological category. This kind of categorization occurs both within Feminism and Anthropology and treats women in an isomorphic manner.

Foucault successfully suspended the meaning of power in Knowledge and Power (1977) and demonstrated the relation

between power and knowledge. This is also what I have been using as a vehicle to access the discourse behind Language. For this reason I believe that post-structural models such as those inherent in work like Michele Foucault's can provide a point of departure for the reconstructing of a more inclusive Culture.

As George Homans successfully pointed out in The Human Group (1950), we can begin to look to the Culture of small groups to begin our reconstruction in Anthropology. It is in what I call the locale of small group cultures that we can begin to investigate the socio-emotional mechanisms of Culture. By "locale", I mean the holistic, cultural settings in which small group discourse is produced. In these settings I believe we can access the power driven from the knowledge and experience of Difference that can begin to transform the Culture of Man. Based largely on the research conducted for this thesis I believe we can discover the power behind the signifiers, the logos of Culture. It is here, at the level at which power is generated from knowledge, that we can see the impact our Language has as it is culturally troped into discourse.

Structuralism and its system of binary oppostions alienate us from our everyday culture, whatever that may be and regardless of our biology. In this system power is a negative entity, something ascendant, reified and imposed as a totalizing theory called Culture. Structuralism is a

bricolage in itself, a stop-gap approach. The textuality of structuralism is Language and an alienating one at that. It encourages the either/or, inside/outside, we/they constructions that breed an exclusive Language. In treating discourse as an event, as more than a transmission of meaning, by connecting it to the mechanisms that produce it, we perhaps can undermine the "as if" construction and concentrate on what "is".

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APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT

In affixing my signature to this document I understand:

- the nature and purpose of this research
- that absolute confidentiality of the information disclosed and
anonymity will be guaranteed by the researcher: Pauline Rowse.
- there are no benefits forthcoming in return for my participation
- I have the right to inquire about the research and have been given the information in order to do so
- I participate in this research willingly and
- that I may withdraw my participation at any time.

SIGNED _____

DATE

APPENDIX 2

The following is a list of my initial contacts with the "women's community". These are the events that I attended in order to form a cognitive map of the "women's community", in order to design the baseline research.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Nitassinan Action Call Rally
Winnipeg Peace Village
North-End Community Centre
Chilean Women's Fund-raisers
International Women's Day events and rallies
Take Back the Night rally
Meech Lake Native Solidarity marches
University Of Winnipeg Women's Centre events
Women's Centres fund raising events
Pow-Wows (rural and urban)