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Module 12

The Politics of Monoculture and Diversity in the North

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Key Terms and Concepts

- the gift economy vs. the exchange economy
- McColonialism,
- economic fundamentalism,
- globalization and North/South relations,
- monoculture and asymmetrical power relations
- ethnocentrism and racism
- Arctic Othering
- cultural appropriation
- the politics of difference
- ethnocultural and ecological diversity
- cultural and gender-related self-determination
- modernized traditional knowledge.
- diversity as socio-cosmic and ecological gift giving vs. the exchange economy
- subsistence perspective

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module you should:

1. Have a basic grasp of the links between global politics of monoacculturation, neo-conservative and free market trade policies, and cultural/gendered self-determination in the twenty-first century
2. Be able to identify the mechanisms of power and monoacculturation used in intercultural relations and between men and women
3. Have a basic grasp of the conditions preventing or enhancing the conditions for cultural/gendered self-determination
4. Have a basic knowledge of the key terms as they apply to the northern/circumpolar world



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5. Have general knowledge and understanding of the current problems to do with cultural colonization/self-determination facing residents in different parts of the North
6. Achieve an awareness of the value of diversity and of the subsistence perspective (and the gift economy) in the North

Module Readings

Read the Overview and Lecture for Module 12, then read the assigned readings given below.

Reading 34: Kaarina Kailo, 2002. Violence vs. Women, Nature and Democracy: Alternatives to the Politics of “Arctic Othering.” Available at http://www.arctic-council.org/files/pdf/takingwing_eng.pdf

Reading 35: *Taking Wing Conference Report*. 2002. Conference on Gender Equality and Women in the Arctic. 3–6 August. Helsinki: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Select articles relevant to the topic (e.g., Chapter III, Gender in the Self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, pp. 126–186). Available at http://www.arctic-council.org/files/pdf/takingwing_eng.pdf

Overview

This module will direct students toward an understanding of the global processes of monoculture and the importance of ethnocultural, gendered, and ecological diversity from the northern perspective. The module elaborates on minority-majority relations. First, it introduces the specific ethnocultural issues that create the tensions of monoculture and diversity in the North. Then the module takes a more thorough look at the key concepts that allow one to identify undemocratic processes based on asymmetrical power relations. The module concludes with a discussion about the value of biological, cultural, and gendered diversity from the point of view of the subsistence and of the gift economy.

The module will give students an introduction to the theoretical aspects of monoacculturation and sustainability and will increase their consciousness regarding the current ethnocultural and global-local problems facing citizens and the ecosystems of the North. In this module, students will learn how the cultural, spiritual and psychological well-being of northern communities is established and enhanced through an increased understanding of anti-racist and gender-sensitive, ecologically sustainable ways of coexisting and co-operating.



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Lecture

Introduction

The remote Arctic and Northern areas of the world are, paradoxically, an increasingly central part of the planet. In many ways, their condition contributes to the future of the global village. The North's resources, ranging from oil to minerals, are believed to be a major influence on the Earth's climate, as well as being important for the economies of many countries (Robbek 1996, 19). The ecological wisdom of the indigenous populations, and of women as a group, can be considered a source of valuable knowledge, which can act as a balance to one-sided, market-driven, technological know how, and which represents the wisdom rooted in the diversity that the world needs in order to survive.

The aim of this module is to make visible the links between institutionalized manifestations of power, the mechanisms and attitudes leading to monoculture, and the resulting threats to ethnocultural, gendered, and ecological diversity. It is important to introduce students of Northern studies to the mechanisms of power, for the North is increasingly the arena of mutually contradictory and competing local-global politics. The Circumpolar North is the home, not only for the indigenous populations that first populated it, but it has become a contested ground for corporate, research, and military interests that are not always serving the best, long-terms interests and well-being of local groups.

Intergovernmental co-operation across national and ethnocultural borders in the North has increased dramatically, but an analysis of the tensions between the various political actors must be situated in the context of global economic fundamentalism (Lakeman 2000), the modern form of monoculture in the guise of dominant economic beliefs.

It is hoped that this module will provoke in you the following questions: Whose North, whose interests and future, whose benefits, values, and ideologies are being considered when addressing the North? Who sets the rules for "globalization" and the regional, local, and global politics that are impacting in unprecedented ways on the North? If the subject under discussion is the Northern human being, does it conceal biases, such as a focus on the dominant men as the invisible "norm"? Are women's specific concerns considered and given equal weight? Who benefits from the flow of capital and investments to the North (the local communities or the investors?) Do the profits flowing from Northern development stay in the North, what percentage goes to the foreign investors? What are the social, ecological, and cultural costs of development? Whose interests are governments protecting (those of corporations, or those of local actors, or both)?

While this module does seek to expose the asymmetrical power relations that threaten the diversity of the North, it leaves open the tension between



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“development,” “modernization,” and the maintenance of “traditional” cultural values. In fact, modernization and tradition need not imply a dichotomy. After all, all cultures have ways of adapting to new situations, provided monocultural hegemonic forces do not create obstacles to such flexible processes based on self-determination.¹

The Context of Neo-liberal Globalization, Monoculture, and the North

“To attract companies like yours... we have felled mountains, razed jungles, filled swamps, moved rivers, relocated towns... all to make it easier for you and your business to do business here.” Philippine government ad in *Fortune* magazine (quoted. in Korten 1996, 159)

Discussions about global economic growth generally look upon the North as the site of the rich, industrialized leaders of the world. The “South” refers, in contrast, to the “developing” world or the poorer countries from southern Europe to Africa. However, in the context of the European North, there is an internal centre-periphery divide between the mainly indigenous North and the dominant non-indigenous South. (E.g., in the Scandinavian context and in many areas of North America and Russia.) As Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva point out in *Ecofeminism*,

. . . the world’s socio-economic structures are full of inherent inequalities that permit the [non-native] North to dominate the South, men to dominate women, and the frenetic plunder of ever more resources for ever more unequally distributed economic gain to dominate nature. (1993, 2)

Such North-South relations also affect the Northern regions of Europe, albeit in the reverse direction; it is the richer, more powerful South that is imposing its market values and structures on the more marginalized northern regions as the end result and continuation of a long history of colonization.

Although exposing and responding to these inequalities is a global human and women’s rights issue, it is a matter also of long-term survival and well-being for the world at large, including its ecosystems. Also, socio-political and economic disparities create a climate for violence and social unrest, which threatens food security, world peace, and balanced intercultural relations. In the twenty-first century, the North no longer evokes the irrational images of “Terra Nullius” to be populated, conquered, “civilized” and colonized (Richardson 1992). However, the very same colonial forces that cornered and colonized the original inhabitants, have assumed new and more globally threatening forms in the global village. Oil, gas, minerals, fish, and pure nature continue to attract capitalist, non-local investors who are finding new ways of harnessing the people, animals, and ecosystems of the North for short-sighted commercial and political goals. Scholars and eco-activists also continue to flock to the Northern regions in search of

¹ For the double adaptation strategies of Inupiaq women, see Fogel-Chance (1994, 94).



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exotic or victimized cultures that need—not missionary conversion—but new modes of salvation. It is up to the students to form a critical opinion regarding the complementary and contradictory trends, traditions and cultures in the North.

Nordicity

The term *Nordicity* refers to the study of issues in and around the North Circumpolar World, based on a web of considerations that must be kept in view when dealing with this vast region. As a political and psychological idea, and as the matrix of conscious and unconscious fantasies, dreams, assumptions, and even fears, Nordicity refers to a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences that it is feared are disappearing (Penniket 1985; Hamelin 1978).² Like the Orient, it is not only a particular geographic site, but also a mindscape for those longing for their imaginary, “primitive” past; a psychic projection screen for escapism from urban boredom. It can represent an illusion for non-Indigenous people or those un-identified with their indigenous roots (see Birkeland 1999). This is because the North implies longings for purity and the destruction of the very purity longed for and pursued at any cost. One can call this projection of psychological longings, desires, and fears *Arctic Othering* because the Arctic (coming from the Greek, *arctos*, meaning bear) represents the less familiar (and hence more idealized and also more denigrated) dimension of many humans’ externalized experience. In political terms, Arctic Othering also manifests itself as one-sided exploitation or “development” of northern lands and peoples as exotic playgrounds for the privileged who have the time and money to seek a lost rapport with “nature.” As the ecofeminists, Shiva and Mies note:

The car drivers who flee from the overcrowded cities into the hills and the countryside destroy these landscapes, and forests where they want to find unpolluted nature are destroyed by the fumes from car exhausts. The sex-tourists who flee to Thailand [or northern communities] destroy the women there, make them into prostitutes and possibly infect them with AIDS. In conclusion therefore, we can say: Before yearning there was destruction, before romanticizing there was violence. (1993, 145)

In fact, trafficking in women, as well as child and youth prostitution, are relatively new Northern problems, at least in their current scope. Linked with the global “restructuring” of social security networks and the rising gap between the wealthy and the poor, these symptoms of social dysfunction and misery are best analyzed in light of the impact of development policies. The issues facing the Circumpolar North and the Northern hemisphere at large (Northern United States, Canada, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway,

² I am indebted to Kathleen Dana for some of the references regarding Nordicity. Likewise, I wish to express my thanks to Rauna Kuokkanen with whom I have collaborated over the years on issues of minority/majority relations, particularly regarding women and the Saami people. For research assistance, I also thank Auli Suorsa and Marjo Taivalantti.



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Iceland, Denmark, and Greenland) are intertwined with economic and political globalization, and above all, with the impact of the increasing power of multinational corporations seeking outposts of “development.”

The Gift vs. the Exchange Economy

The ideological starting point for an analysis of the tension between modernity and free market globalization must be made explicit if we are to expose power asymmetries. This module is based on the belief that students must have access to views, values, and interpretations of the North representing the interests of groups other than the Eurocentric, capitalist, male actors within global politics. The current tensions of competing interests can be summed up as the ongoing conflict between gift economies and the exchange model (Vaughan 1997). Philosopher Genevieve Vaughan argues that two basic economic paradigms coexist in the world today, the unconditional gift giving paradigm (*gift economy*), which seeks to satisfy needs and consolidate communal life, and the *exchange paradigm*, based on shortsighted and divisive self-interest. These paradigms are logically contradictory, but also complementary. One is visible, the other invisible; one highly valued, the other undervalued (Vaughan 1991, 84). The former is essentially connected with elite white men; the other with women and indigenous cultures based on traditional gift economies. The latter have and continue to express the values of gift giving through their philosophy of giving back to nature (1997, 257–258). The economic model and social contract that has been made invisible has, in the course of history, been replaced with a competitive and aggressive market ideology:

The seemingly simple human interaction of exchange, since it is done so often, becomes a sort of archetype or magnet for other human interactions, making itself—and whatever looks like it—seem normal, while anything else is crazy. For example, we talk about exchanges of love, conversations, glances, favors, ideas . . . The definition mediates whether or not a concept belongs to a certain category, just as monetarization of activity mediates its belonging to the category of work or not. (Vaughan 1991, 84)

The very visibility of patriarchal exchange is self-confirming, while other kinds of interaction are rendered invisible or inferior by contrast or negative description. What is invisible seems to be valueless, while what is visible is identified with exchange, which is concerned with a certain kind of quantitative value. Vaughan argues that:

The alternative paradigm, which is hidden—or at least misidentified—is nurturing and generally other-oriented. It continues to exist because it has a basis in the nature of infants; they are dependent and incapable of giving back to the giver. Without care, however, they will suffer and die. (Vaughan 1991, 84)

These children, nurtured “free” or thanks to tokenistic resources, form the work force that the current economic system requires to create its profits and “efficiency.” Yet this remains the least valued social contribution.



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indigenous cultures and women embrace as groups, if not always as individuals, these other-oriented values based on an ethics of care—the rationality of catering to needs unconditionally. The values have nothing to do with gendered or ethnic essentialism but with a different logic than the one based on profiting and exploiting the more vulnerable beings and entities. The logic of giving to needs beyond the “reciprocity” of exchange represents a set of values and processes to guarantee collective well being. In contrast, the exchange economy fosters the myth of cultural dialogue and symmetrical trade while concealing the forced gifts on which it rests. Gift giving appears to be an underdeveloped version of exchange, rather than a different and more viable method of organizing society. We can understand many of the irrational and harmful aspects of patriarchal capitalism as a point of contact between the two paradigms. Surplus labour—that portion of the workers’ labour time that is unpaid and goes towards the profit of the capitalist—can be considered as a gift under constraint, from the worker to the capitalist (Vaughan 1997, 59). Technologies of various kinds, including earth-friendly technologies, have the potential to provide abundance for all. For Vaughan, this abundance threatens exchange by making it irrelevant and unnecessary. Gift giving in abundance can provide for everyone, and abundance is necessary for effective, life-enhancing gift giving. In abundance, forced giving, as it appears in exchange and hierarchies, has no reason for being because needs can always be satisfied by a multitude of ready sources. Hierarchies continually re-create scarcity by siphoning off surplus wealth. They thereby maintain exchange as the mode of distribution for all. Not only wars, but one-sided and ecologically short-sighted development projects destroy resources and create scarcity, thereby ensuring the continued need for imported goods, services, and investments, which are not needed in a subsistence economy and abundance. Native North American potlaches were forbidden precisely because they redistributed social wealth without the values of accumulating capital and goods. They represented a threat to the exchange economy.

The exchange economy has led to increasing corporate, patriarchal domination of the world’s agenda. Corporations care little about human rights, biological and cultural or gendered diversity and, as recent developments have proven, environmental protection can lead to corporations suing governments, as has happened in Canada and the United States (Korten 1996). The environmental protection laws, they argue, create obstacles to their profit making. The fact that some companies have won lawsuits under article 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), has led to an increase in environmental racism. Those living in the poorer areas generally lack the means to contest such unjust regulations and face having to live in polluted areas. Such a trend in global economics threatens the ecosystems and suggests the dysfunctional nature of many government policies. As the ecofeminist Maria Mies expresses it:

One reason for this collective [global] schizophrenia is the North’s stubborn hope, even belief, that they can have their cake and eat it: ever more products from the chemical industry *and* clean air and water; more and more cars and no “greenhouse” effect; an ever increasing output of commodities, more fast- and



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processed-foods, more fancy packaging, more exotic, imported food *and* enjoy good health and solve the waste problem. (1993, 57)

Many scholars are critical of the master discourses on the North, but do not necessarily oppose all aspects of development; rather, they seek to provoke debates and collective responses as to the full meaning and interpretation of the term. For example, self-sufficiency in terms of food security does not make one poor, even if one does not own all the technological fixes of the “developed” elite; in fact, becoming “modern” has meant for many “poor” groups becoming totally dependent on salaried employment and modern products in a context that has not meant “progress” to them. Development has brought social problems, alcoholism, increased violence, weakened communal ties, and prostitution, instead of “progress.” The subsistence economy, based on self-sufficiency and non-consumerist values and life styles, is associated, by Westerners, with “poverty” whereas dependency on Western “goods” and the adoption of its values is hailed as modernity. In such views one must beware of “Arctic Othering” as a way of defining progress merely in Eurocentric, techno-missionary terms.

Asymmetrical Power Relations

For most ecologically oriented scholars, the world is threatened with the irreversible and unprecedented loss of ethnocultural, gendered, and biological diversity if the market and profit-driven monoculture succeeds in further harnessing women, aboriginal peoples, and nature to short-sighted commercial ends (for a definition of monoculture, see the next section). For example, if and when northern women and indigenous nations are kept isolated, uneducated, and in general ignorance about the conditions which shape the economic and cultural patterns under which they live, they can be violated without protest. The essence of *asymmetrical power relations* is the distance between the alleged power that the groups are represented as having, and the reality of their limited access to concrete sources of power and social impact (Keskitalo 1976; 1996). The most educated and politically astute groups in the Northern peripheries are faced with overbearing odds against cultural *self-determination* without solid economic and political resources. Although mere consciousness does not lead to a guarantee of cultural self-determination, difference, and survival, it helps to know the more subtle ways in which homogenizing politics operate.

As for definitions of *self-determination*, they also reflect power relations. Male definitions tend to forget that women, too, are striving for self-determination beyond the national strivings. For Tero Mustonen, the concept limits itself to general issues of governance and cultural rights:

Self-determination: A right and ability to choose their own destiny without external compulsion. It is the right to be a supreme authority within a particular geographic territory. Self-governance: Group can make significant choices of political, cultural, economic and social affairs without having sovereignty (adapted from Peters 1999, 412). (Mustonen 2001, 172)



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For Gordon Pullar:

The term “self-determination” is . . . generally thought of in conjunction with the Indian Self-determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, under which Indian tribes can contract with the federal government to provide the services to their own people that would ordinarily be provided by the government. When speaking of self-determination in Alaska, it is usually in reference to contracting under this law. Self-determination has a much broader meaning, however. As a political concept, it has been the official policy of the U.S. government towards Native Americans for more than a quarter century. Under this policy Native American tribes, including Alaska Native villages, are encouraged to manage their own affairs with the greatest degree of autonomy possible. (Pullar 1996, 42)

These male definitions contrast with the one quoted by Mililani Trask, an Indigenous Hawaiian activist for whom:

The right of self-determination is the right of all peoples, not just men, but all peoples, to determine our political status, and by virtue of this right, to structure our own political futures; to determine and define how we wish to develop our economies, how we wish to utilize our land, and how we wish to create economic programs in our community and structure health care programs. This is the right of self-determination. It is an international human right, and it is time that we enunciate our right as women in terms of international legal standards that for too long have only been applied to white males from the dominant society. (International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, quoted by Mililani Trask 1996, 17–18)

In patriarchy, women are determined in relation to their male relatives while men are defined as subjects in their own right (Rich 1997). Indigenous women in the United States, Canada, the Scandinavian countries, and Russia have all lost not only their cultural self-determination as a result of colonial acts but also their more egalitarian status within their nations (Eikjok 1992). However, now, even main societies in the Western world are threatened with the loss of democratic processes as governments are prioritizing multinational corporate interests and privatization at the expense of social programs and citizens’ equal educational and health needs.

Corporate Interests

By 1992, the richest one per cent of Americans gained 91 per cent in after-tax income while the poorest fifth lost 17 per cent of their income. This has led to the top one per cent’s total income equaling that of 40 per cent of the population. (Eisenstein 1998, 79)

Some 70 percent of the world’s income is produced and consumed by 15 percent of the world’s population. This inequity exists within and across nations. More than one-fourth of U.S. workers do not earn wages above the poverty line while CEOs make 149 times as much as an average factory worker. The top 1 percent



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of U.S. families have more wealth than the entire bottom 90 per cent. (Golding 1986, 82)

As numerous studies and citizens groups have demonstrated, the dominant agenda of the global village is increasingly determined by large multinational corporations whose interests weigh more than the needs of local actors and national citizens (Nader 1993; Korten 1996). New levels of global control have emerged as nation-states are being overshadowed by the rulings of the World Trade Organization and the world corporations. Of the world's largest 100 economies, 51 are corporations, not countries. The 200 largest corporations hire less than three-fourths of one per cent of the world's work force, but account for 28 per cent of the global market. The 500 biggest corporations account for 70 per cent of world trade (Eisenstein 1998, 1). Democratic institutions, processes, freedoms, and values are under serious threat through this concentration of faceless power located beyond local borders, beyond ecological and communal responsibility. The Norwegian scholar Berit Ås interprets the term *globalization* to mean resistance to democratization and implementation of human rights (1999, 95). She sees *globalization* as a process of concentration of wealth and power, mainly for transnational corporations, through trade liberalization, deregulation, and privatization, removing the obstacles for global movement of capital, goods, labour, and services (1999, 95). She is also concerned about the dismantling of the Nordic welfare state and the asymmetrical impact that has on women. Neoliberal policies threaten, in particular, women's equal possibilities to combine motherhood and family life, and to meet the increasing demands of professional life. In *Globalization as the Feminization of Poverty: What Whom and How do We Teach?* (1999), she documents how globalization continues to accelerate the feminization of poverty everywhere—including the North—and she raises the issue of how patriarchal dominance, both as an economic practice and as legislating power holders, is totally indifferent to this effect (1999, 96). Ås points out that the new literature on global economic concerns by male authors—from the “Global Trap” (Martin and Schuman 1997) to “The Myth of Free Trade” (Batra 1994, quoted in Ås 1999)—nowhere mentions differential effects on the sexes. According to Ås, Norwegian economists, for example, ignore the gendered aspects of poverty. Pessimistic or realistic views thus contend that globalization is no more than the integration of the powerless marginal world into the (economic, consumerist, anti-ecological, and monocultural) agenda set by the West (Dijaba 1997, 112, in Ås 1999, 96). The current situation in the North is also one where an organic consciousness of the world and of nature has been replaced by mechanistic philosophies and the gradual severance of ties with the biosphere and the cognitive, physical, and emotional-spiritual realm coded as “feminine.” Although awareness of the interdependence of the world's different parts is not new, many scholars stress that we are facing an intensification and speeding up of processes that connect the parts of the planet in unprecedented positive and negative ways (Held et al 1999; Appadurai 1991). The North, in many ways, epitomizes the above trends.



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A (socio-political and) economic system can remain viable only as long as society has mechanisms to counter abuses of either the state or market power and the erosion of the natural, social, and moral capital that such abuses commonly exacerbate (Korten 1996, 89).³ On closer scrutiny, the myths of the “free trade,” open markets, and economic growth conceal tightening trade regulations for local, less powerful groups and new modes of unfreedom based on dependency on corporate rulings (e.g., article 11 of the NAFTA, which allows corporations to protest environmental regulations and to sue the governments that enforce these “impediments” to profit). (See also Nader 1996.) These new developments are also threatening the cultural and material bases of Northern peoples; from the North American Native peoples to the Saami of Fennoscandia and the Finno-Ugric and other indigenous nations in the Russian North. The very myths of equality and “free trade” themselves represent one master technique—the linguistic appropriation of terms associated with, and used by, freedom and human and women’s rights movements. Many forms of economic, political, and cultural self-determination and freedom have been seriously curtailed and narrowed since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the United States. This development began with the “trickle-down” economic theories of the 1990s in Canada, Britain, and the United States (Miles 2000; 2002; Lakeman 2000). “Corporate monoculture” is the end result of centuries of one-sided colonial processes in the Western world, now expanding beyond the borders of the leading industrial nations. Among the world’s minorities and oppressed groups, Indigenous or “Fourth World people” in the Northern regions occupy a particularly vulnerable position because they are not represented in the governments of the dominant societies occupying their home territories, despite some positive developments regarding autonomous lands in the Canadian North. While it is true that all humans, ultimately, suffer from the short-sighted plundering of nature, it is Native peoples, women, children, and the ecosystem that are now the immediate victims of these trends. Capitalism is based on the extraction of free, forced gifts (Vaughan 1997), and women have always been seen as reserve labour or as a cheap, dispensable resource for hefty profits. While development does bring new jobs and opportunities, one must consider the extent to which the outflow of corporate profits and the benefits they get from women’s labour outweigh the destruction of the sustainable food security and cultural life style of the “locals.” Large-scale agribusiness and fishing have concentrated profits in the hands of corporations while displacing the traditional small-scale fishermen and women (see Proppe 1998). These developments have benefited the corporations much more than the local inhabitants.

³ Korten sums up the vision shared in his view by the architects of globalization: "The world's money, technology, and markets are controlled and managed by gigantic global corporations; A common consumer culture unifies all people in a shared quest for material gratification; There is perfect global competition among workers and localities to offer their services to investors at the most advantageous terms; Corporations are free to act solely on the basis of profitability without regard to national or local consequences; Relationships, both individual and corporate, are defined entirely by the market, and there are no loyalties to place and community" (Korten 1996, 131).



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Monoculture and the Mechanisms of Monoacculturation

Strategies of Monoacculturation

It is necessary to identify and recognize the operations and mechanisms of power, for it is only through such awareness that one can defend oneself on the national, ethnic, and gendered levels of interaction. In this section, I will elaborate on the subtle and less subtle ways in which the tension between market monoculture and cultural diversity is created, or even concealed.

The relations of domination and subordination at the micro, local levels of society make possible the global systems of inequalities in power.

Monoacculturation refers to the goals sought after and the strategies used by a particular hegemonic power matrix at any historical moment to control and define reality, values, and tools of socialization and thus secure its own interests (Kailo 2000). An essential aspect of this process is that it promotes one truth, one *valorized* system of beliefs and values.

Women have traditionally been defined in relation to a male-defined “social contract” which, under closer scrutiny, turns out to be a hidden and even invisible “contract” between the dominant men. Hence the concept, “veiled” gender contract. Monoacculturation is complete when the subjugated groups themselves embrace and internalize this contract as “natural” or “normal.” This is accomplished if the institutions of acculturation have not presented alternatives to the social scripts or ethnic stereotypes. Privilege and ecofriendly or woman-friendly values do not characterize any one group in an essentialist way although, as groups, women, Indigenous people, and other marginalized people include more opponents of cut-throat monocultural processes. As groups, women and indigenous nations have been socialized more than white men with the values based on an “ethics of care” and communal sharing. For Vaughan, they are more in alignment with the logic of gift giving than the values of exchange economies (1997). Historians of science and philosophy (Plumwood 1993) also demonstrate that western history has been particularly influential as a transmitter of monocentric, patriarchal, nationalistic politics which, over the years of colonial history, have led to the marginalization and even total overwriting of the visions, knowledge-related conventions, traditions, philosophies, and values of less-powerful groups (Helander and Kailo 1998; 1999). Critics of “free” market globalization find that hegemonic processes⁴ have shifted from monotheistic control within religion and culture to the monoculture in the name of the One corporate truth. Father-headed churches and nuclear families have lost much of their traditional power and significance as people have become more secular and as women become heads of families as bread-winners or single parents. Traditional patriarchy has been replaced as

⁴ Hegemonic referring to the impact of concentrating power and resources to a powerful group.



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a parallel power concentration by neo-colonial capitalistic politics. *McColonialism* is a reference to the ongoing colonial practices which have reached their culmination in the neo-liberal trade policies since the 1990s and which are spread by the world economic institutions (e.g., the IMF and the World Bank) as the global, generic, homogenizing agenda of the leading Western industrialized nations. Many refer to it as *economic fundamentalism* with profits as the new god. *Monoacculturation* as the means of rendering all economic, cultural, and political systems similar refers also to the Eurocentric dimensions of mind colonization that goes beyond the more obvious forms of physical violence and abuse. Its essence is to condition all ethnic groups and both genders to adopt its norms and values; for example, to adopt the same generic products, values, and logos (Shiva 1993). At worst, Native groups could give up, or simply lose, their cultural practices. For example Saami joiking or Native cultural traditions, where music and other art forms combine in idiosyncratic ways, could be displaced by American pop music, thus consolidating the cultural and economic power of global entertainment agents.

Power is about control, not only over human bodies and physical and financial resources, but over the ideology that sets rules and ideals. The root of power and *monoculture* is that it defines everything in relation to itself with difference being relegated to inferior status. Hence the lowered self-esteem of many groups whose cultural products have been deemed more “primitive” or less worthwhile. Also, institutional hegemonic structures tend to centralize power, to control those dependent on them, and to force them into a standard mould. Such a mould of practices, beliefs, and rituals together create the conditions for mental, emotional, spiritual, cultural, psychological, and physical abuse—including cultural and epistemic (knowledge-related) violence (Spivak 1993). This abuse exists on a continuum that can range from mild to more severe expressions and manifestations. Cultural hegemony and violence are the effects of policies and politics coercing members of a group to stress sameness, to integrate, and adopt the values of the centre (for indigenous views on cultural value systems, see Lowe 2001; Rattray 2001; Oscar Angayuqaq Kawagley 1996). Indigenous attitudes towards the land, for example, are very different from those characterizing Western businessmen. To quote Lana Lowe of the Dene Tha nation: “The adoption of traditional ways of conceptualizing human relationships to the land would go a long way toward instilling a sense of resource stewardship” (2001, 113). Lowe quotes Potts (1992, 37) as providing an Anishnabai attitude towards the land:

The Anishnabai have always had to hold ourselves back from what we could do with the land, for the benefit of the land and the non-human life on the land, because if you destroy the linkages on that land, then your destroying something that has evolved over thousands of years. How are you going to excuse yourself for doing that? (Lowe 2001, 113)

For Gordon de Frane (Coast Salish):



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All things of the land are sacred; this includes human people, non-human people and inanimate people as well . . . All teachings are sacred; all teachings are stories; all stories are sacred. Sacred Teachings explain everyday life to Salish young and old. Salish people are taught from birth how to be with everything in the land . . . The philosophy of Take No Photos, Leave No Footprints addresses the practice of being prepared before we enter the land. It is a way of being that presupposes that any human people would know how to be spiritually, physically and mentally, and employ reason to ensure that the intrusions are limited in duration and leave no evidence of having been there. . . The Land is our host when we are on the Land. Being guests on the Land means working with the Land in a mutually respectful way. (de Frane 2001, 135)

Choice is limited or denied when prices for products are set by mega-corporations that drive small enterprises and local “competition” out of the market. In such asymmetrical situations, small- or medium-sized (and often local) businesses or communities cannot compete with the mega-corporations. Thus, the self-determination of many communities is threatened and the markets destroyed for local produce that reflects culturally diverse contents and values. At worst, governments speed up and enhance this development by supporting corporations with disproportionate tax breaks while denying equivalent funding to cultural institutions and local actors. For Korten (1996), one needs to question whether, in this age, governments protect corporate rights over citizens’ rights, and numerous scholars fear for the future of democracy under free market regulations.

As an example of the clash between modern, neo-liberal values and those representing ancient ecological attitudes, many Siberian Indigenous peoples wish to respect ancient rituals when killing reindeer. They believe giving up such respect for the animals that are sacrificed for human good would attract bad luck or would worsen human-animal relations (Valkeapää 1971). The impingement of “rationalistic” Western production methods on such beliefs threatens such ecofriendly world views. Hence, the protests of some reindeer herders against the mass-slaughtering techniques of the European Union, which show disregard for the suffering of animals transported to distant butcheries. Additionally, the treatment of animals as nameless resources for profits is not a universal Northern approach in economic matters. The patriarchal class also tends to rank the attributes, professions, and contributions of their own representatives as higher and more valuable in prestige and economic terms than those of the “other”—women and less powerful ethnic groups. Although there is great gender variance across the Northern world, the heterosexual gender system of the Western leading nations has become the “naturalized norm” for all surrounding cultures. It cannot comprehend the sexual diversity of indigenous cultures, or the Inuit sex-gender system based on more flexible “male” and “female” categories.

The global class of EU bureaucrats or representatives of corporate interest that have the means of material production at their disposal also have control over the means of mental production, so that the ideas of the “other” are subject to it. Hence the concept of “politics” refers to all forms of power from school systems, educational media, myths, and children’s stories to “normative” literature and cultural products. As Ward Churchill notes:



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“Literature and the stereotyping of culture establishes complete control over truth and knowledge. It finally replaces troops and guns as the relevant tool of colonization” (1992, 2).

One can list several items for consideration when exposing the overall politics of representation. These mechanisms can also apply more generally to understanding the functioning of power and its discourses and practices in any human or even human/nature interaction. The main strategies can be listed in an order characterized by increasingly exclusionary and monocultural impact. The mechanisms of “othering” include omission and silencing, disembodiment, appropriation, and misnaming or renaming (Kailo 2000). This is further linked with the tendency of the group in the subject position to name and identify itSelf while relegating the other to anonymity and disembodiment, or depersonalizing the other.⁵ A particular example is omitting information that reflects negatively on Self while including it for the other. This is also linked with biases by obliteration: omitting or ignoring positive information about the other, when that information is readily available. Advocates of monoculture are often also guilty of silencing by censoring and by denying the validity of diverse values and views. This may result in the conscious appropriation of the other’s voice, symbolic discourses, and representations, which, in its most extreme form, results in the active destruction of the other’s psychological, mental, and spiritual resources—appropriation.⁶ Unlike the above actions of excluding the other’s perspective and self-representations, or simply omitting anything to do with this group, tokenism refers to the politics of superficial and often meaningless inclusion. A woman or powerless group might thus be included in an otherwise all male or all white group or text but merely as an add-on, often for exotic overlay. Dualistic portrayal and stereotyping is manifested as idealization or defamation (distortion, denigration, and the unconscious uses of projection to displace or divert attention from the Self to the other). In seeking to make ethnocentric forms of cultural hegemony visible, it is important to have an understanding also of the difference between ethnicity and racism, also as practices that affect scientific practices—*epistemic violence* (Spivak; Helander and Kailo 1998; 1999). The media and advertising often excel in selling news and products by transmitting stereotypical representations that help perpetuate cultural biases and that promote sexism (discrimination based on gender) and racism (discrimination based on ethnicity or “race”). As these “isms” are part and parcel of the monoacculturation based on the superiority or allegedly normative status of the group defining values and the social contract, it is important to understand the terms more precisely.

⁵ I have adopted some of the items from a list of ten aspects of content analysis used by the Textbook Evaluation and Revision Committee of the Manitoba Indian brotherhood for analyzing the content of grade six Social Studies textbooks in the early 1970s. I do not have a more precise reference as the list was given to me at an anti-racism workshop at the Boston Theological School in 1993, and did not contain the precise source.

⁶ Closely related to this is also the psychological mechanism of incorporation. This can take place individually or communally by taking aspects of the culture one assimilates and claiming it as belonging to one’s own. Canadian scholars have identified so-called chill factors when gender-related insensitivity is further linked with negative evaluations.



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Ethnicity and Ethnocentrism

Ethnicity refers to the most neutral level of ethnic difference or distinction and involves cultural idiosyncracies in philosophies, practices, and values. Ethnicity becomes ethnocentrism when a particular group labels its own politics, policies, values, traditions, rituals, beliefs, and practices as superior to those of others. Ethnocentrism is seen as one aspect of racism, and it has been used to describe how “group loyalty and social order are maintained by fear and hatred of outsiders” (Sumner, cited in Kleg 1993, 164). Sumner has defined ethnocentrism as a “view of things in which one’s own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it” (ibid.).⁷

Racism

Racism is a much more developed form of ethnocentrism and refers to ethnocentrism in practice, legitimated by laws, regulations, and policies, including epistemic, scientific paradigms based on Eurocentric assumptions, and canons (Helander and Kailo 1998, regarding the colonization of the Saami).

The North American Natives as well as the Saami have been particularly vulnerable to institutional and political racism made possible by main society using their greater resources and power to denigrate, oppress, or marginalize them. Racism is based on the belief that certain groups of people are innately, biologically, socially, and morally superior to other groups. As a precursor to harmful social interaction, racist thought almost always dictates that (1) the mixing of superior and inferior groups leads to degeneration of the superior, and (2) that inferior groups deserve a role of being subordinated by the superior group (Kleg 1993, 95). According to Stuart Hall however, we cannot speak about racism in singular but should refer to racisms in plural (1992, 13). There are various forms of racism in a society that range from invisible, institutionalized racism by governments to overt racist comments or acts by an individual (see also Skutnabb-Kangas 1988). Racism is a structure, not a group of bad people, and thus it is not a communication problem. It will not go away, even though many individuals change their attitudes. It will not go away even if people get more information. It will not go away before the power relations that support racist structures are changed (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 264). The governments of dominant societies do not practice overt racism towards the Saami, for example, as they did at the beginning of twentieth century when, for instance, the use of Saami language was prohibited. On an individual level, however, the Saami are still targets of derogative notions, and

⁷ According to Kleg, ethnocentric attitudes serve a dual function. "First, they maintain ingroup cohesiveness and reinforce positive ethnic and racial identities. Second, the enhancement of these identities is made possible by the ethnocentrisms that establish a group's identity as superior to others" (1993, 165).



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negative images and stereotypes. The Western values of neo-liberal “development” form the deepest threat to Saami traditional culture and all those believing in the gift economy, however, because the Western values of efficiency, mass production, non-ethical treatment of animals, and exchange economy leave little room for alternative modes of subsistence.

Unemployment has increased and has led to, among other things, increased trafficking of women, sex trade, prostitution, and child pornography in the Russian North. Unemployment is directly related to relaxing of labour and union laws, diminishing workers’ rights, and the profit-focussed greed of multinational corporations. The dismantling of social security networks and restricting equal access to education and health care further attest to the shift of governments’ values from looking after citizens’ rights to securing the rights of companies to make profits. Minorities, immigrants, and less powerful groups are used as scapegoats by marginalized members of the main society as a result of the concealment of the reasons for social inequality and unemployment (corporate policies). The marginalized members of the main society thus project their rage on the victims of these social developments, not their global originators. One often hears the argument that welfare mothers and the unemployed are a tax burden because they exploit the social safety net.⁸ Studies show clearly, however, that the number of the truly needy far outnumbers the abusers. In any case, corporate, bank, and high-level government “abuse” of the system exceeds by far the cost of welfare abuse to tax payers (Eisenstein 1998, 146–156). This is an example of the power of the media and official channels of information to distort the realities of governmental priorities and of the existing asymmetrical division of power and resources. It leads to the power strategy of blaming the most vulnerable members of society—the one’s without media power.

At the same time, today’s racism has become invisible, or is often harder to recognize and, therefore, more difficult to oppose. Structural racism is a silent but clear message of dominant societies: assimilate or vanish. Racism can also be internalized racism: successful brainwashing and invisible violence of structural racism. An individual suffering from internalized racism feels ashamed of his or her group, background, and culture. The manifestations of racism also change and adapt to new circumstances. The very concepts of “race” and “racism” have replaced concepts such as the barbarism, child-likeness, wildness, or primitiveness of the “other.” One might question whether the contemporary emphasis in research on natural

⁸ According to Zillah Eisenstein, “Media-ated reality misrepresents the complexities of the ‘real.’ Simple sound bites, rather than deliberative thought, dominate the airwaves: drugs, not poverty cause violence; welfare is bankrupting the united states (even though it makes up only 1 per cent of the federal budget). The elimination of welfare will dump close to a million people into poverty because most of the children affected by the cuts live in families where the parent(s) already work. Teenage motherhood is repeatedly distorted into a national epidemic even though teenage mothers give birth to fewer than 12 percent of all babies” (Eisenstein 45). Eisenstein lists the amount of tax breaks given to corporations and wealthy individuals in 1996 as US\$440 billion, more than seventeen times the combined cost of state and federal spending on Aid to Families with Dependent Children. (Eisenstein 1998, 62).



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and technological sciences at the expense of humanities or social sciences represents yet a new bias masking discriminatory and monocultural interests. After all, as Shiva and Mies (1993) also note, the privileged fields of technology, natural sciences, and economics reflect the interests not just of men but of white people as a group.

The relations between ethnicity and gender, however, reveal that a group may simultaneously hold the position of the oppressor or the oppressed, and many studies reveal the extent to which Indigenous women, for example, face multiple levels of marginalization and discrimination (enhanced by additional factors to do with ability, health, language, religion, age, etc.). Ethnocentrism, male centredness, racism, and McColonial monoculture coexist in today's North. Monoculture is merely the culmination of the less systematic homogenizing tendencies of mainstream societies.

The European World View

The scientific and political content of European value systems can be summed up as the philosophical legacy of hierarchical dichotomies. According to Plumwood (1993), Shiva and Mies (1993), Shiva (2000), Helander (1999), Kuokkanen (2001), Kailo (2001; 2002), and others, the dominant politics is rooted in a set of dualistic and hierarchically ordered oppositions which one must render visible. Monocultural politics consists of such oppositions as body/mind, male/female, primitive/civilized, spirituality/politics, story/history, fiction/reality, whore/Madonna to name a few. Their hierarchical ordering is the root of violence in its various manifestations. To link and associate women and Native peoples in an essentialist way with Nature has had serious socio-political and health implications for these groups. Because the oppositions are not rooted in complementarity but in a structure of inferiority/superiority, control and subjugation, being ascribed the less honorific label (with the polarizations noble savage/drunken bum, whore/Madonna as some of its manifestations) has contributed to the structural basis of cultural and gender-based violence. It is false essentialism to suggest that women and Native people are "closer to nature." Rather, they are aligned with gift-giving values where a nurturing, mothering attitude towards nature and one's fellow creatures represents a logic and a process, not an essence.

In order to make visible the commercial exploitation of Saami and Native North American and Inuit women (and men), we must understand the monocultural ideas on nature. The dichotomies in industrial capitalist-patriarchal societies are based on fundamental dichotomies between Man and Nature, Man and Woman, City and Village, Metropolises and Colony, Work and Life, Nature and Culture, Humans and Animals, Primitive and Civilized Peoples. Shiva and Mies call these dichotomies colonizations (1993). This is linked with the phenomenon earlier referred to as Arctic Othering.



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To encourage the maintenance of *cultural diversity* means analyzing and re-inscribing value onto that part of these dichotomies which has been amputated, backgrounded, externalized, colonized, submerged, repressed, and/or destroyed (Shiva and Mies 1993, 144). Shiva and Mies believe that

along with this inhuman treatment of the “savages,” we find the same type of romanticizing and sentimentalizing that we have already observed in the case of women. “Natives,” “native peoples” or “Nature” peoples in contrast to “civilized” or “culture peoples” were some of the concepts coined. The notion that such “natives” were closer to nature, which civilization had destroyed and subdued, remains with us even today. Simultaneous with the beginnings of brutalities against the “savages” was the start of the Enlightenment discourse about the “noble savage” and his arcadia, the primeval paradise in which man still lived in harmony with nature. (1993, 151)

As these examples suggest, the politics also of Arctic Othering consist of a particularly northern/Nordic stereotyping of the woman, native, other in a context that echoes Edward Said’s writings on and concept of “orientalism” (Said 1978). As ecofeminists have suggested, the nostalgia for Nature is the most general expression of what is sought in the romanticizing and longing for women and the “savages.” In fact, the modern concept of “nature” since the Enlightenment is a result of this double-faced process of destruction and sentimentalization which has made up the modern era (1993, 152). Hence, it is important to consider these issues in the context of Northern tourism development and other projects serving to benefit non-local residents.

Cultural Appropriation

The issue of cultural appropriation is central to cultural self-determination in its symbolic, rather than material, levels. If there is a lesson in the circulation and mutual impact between cultures, it is surely that we are already interconnected in multiple ways. However, one must distinguish between mutually enriching multicultural encounters, and devastating cultural appropriation. Hartmut Lutz distinguishes between two different forms of cultural appropriation: cultural exchange, which occurs whenever different cultures meet and rub off on each other, and exploitive appropriation (1990, 169). Northern Indigenous women, particularly in Canada and the United States, have written extensively about cultural and spiritual appropriation linked with commercial or new age profiteering (Lutz 1993; Pask 1993; Monture 1994; Hladki 1994; Cramer 1989). Cultural appropriation is a concept that has been used to describe a form of cultural exchange that takes place within a colonial structure,

where one culture is dominant politically and economically over the other, and rules and exploits it. It is the kind of appropriation in which aspects of the colonized culture are appropriated by the dominant one, while at the same time all traces of origin are neglected and displaced. (Lutz 1990, 168)



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This kind of appropriation is selective and it is ahistorical in that it excludes from its discourse the historical context. According to Loretta Todd,

appropriation occurs when someone else speaks for, tells, defines, describes, represents, uses or recruits the images, stories, experiences, dreams of others for their own. Appropriation also occurs when someone else becomes the expert on your experience and is deemed as more knowledgeable about who you are than yourself. (1990, 24)

Spiritual appropriation may be understood as an expression of the lack of roots from which most Euro-Americans seem to suffer (Kremer 1997). Many Native American cultural workers have raised the question of appropriation of Native stories and other spiritual elements of their culture by non-Natives.⁹

As a summary, cultural appropriation does for the consolidation of psychological monoculture what asymmetrical economic policies and practices do for the anchoring of political monoculture. Both serve to marginalize the influence and self-determination of subjugated groups from women to indigenous nations.

As in the case of the “woman problem,” the “Saami problem” has been couched in terms of impending extinction. In their efforts to assimilate and thus destroy Saami culture, the colonizers have used a variety of strategies. Sanctions have been imposed, for example, to discourage potential opposition, and public grants for local development projects were often made contingent on the extent to which the projects furthered Norwegianization. Parents and pupils were promised prizes for progress in the Norwegian language (*The Sami People* 1990, 124). Just as the Saami have been taxed simultaneously by all three surrounding states, there has been collaboration toward their colonization across borders. These efforts involved financial policy instruments such as the Finnish Fund bonus paid to teachers who could present proof of conscientious efforts to promote Norwegianization. J. A. Friis called it a “prize for preventing the Sami from learning God’s word in Lappish” (*The Sami People*, 1990, 124–5). Many studies also bear witness to the traumatic experiences of many Saami youth, who, like North American Indians, were punished for speaking their mother tongue, who were mocked by their peers in boarding schools, taught with

⁹ On many occasions Native Americans have asked non-natives “not to steal our stories or appropriate our voices.” Barbara Owl, a White Earth Anishinabe, has given reasons why appropriation of Native stories reflects a new form of colonialism: “We have many particular things which we hold internal to our cultures. These things are spiritual in nature, and they are for us, not for anyone who happens to walk in off the street. They are ours and they are not for sale. Because of this, I suppose it’s accurate to say that such matters are our ‘secrets,’ the things which bind us together in our identities as distinct peoples. It’s not that we never make outsiders aware of our secrets, but we—not they—decide what, how much and to what purpose this knowledge is to be put. That’s absolutely essential to our cultural integrity, and thus to our survival as peoples. Now, surely we Indians are entitled to that. Everything else has been stripped from us already.” (Churchill 1992, 193. See also Helander and Kailo 1998; Kuokkanen 2001.)



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books lacking information about their culture—in short, whose behaviour was regulated by the Christian, patriarchal systems to which they were subjected (Helander and Kailo 1998). On the other hand, women's separate cultures and autonomy have been jeopardized and even destroyed by patriarchal European laws that have transferred new power to Saami men, creating inequality where formerly it did not exist (Eikjok 2000). The increasingly homogenizing impact of Western cultural and market-oriented monoculture has meant that women, too, have been assimilated into norms and values that are the outcome of masculinist and capitalistic conditioning (Vaughan, 2000).

The Politics of Diversity and Positive Difference

To make any alternatives to the myths of “Nordic equality,” “free trade,” and “open opportunities” visible serves the goal of more balanced information. Ecofeminists, Indigenous activists and theorists, and environmental and women's studies scholars are some of the groups that are producing knowledge that challenges the widely held ideas about well-being for the North.

The politics of positive difference refers to the economic, social, cultural, psychological, and, possibly, religious and spiritual resources that a subjugated group needs in order to assert its difference from surrounding, dominating groups. The very attempts to bring about equality in legal and economic matters often conceal unexamined biases and Eurocentric norms. While all groups no doubt seek to have equal opportunities and a legal status rooted in human rights, it cannot be assumed that they share unequivocally the values and norms of those in power. For example, while Nordic feminism is often referred to as “state equality-oriented” feminism, many women's rights activists and scholars question the male norms as the ideal to be equal to. This has led to the theory of “*positive difference*” or the politics of difference for women of colour, who wish to retain cultural distinctions apart from any shared and homogenizing “sisterhood.” The norm-setting standards of main society are not embraced uncritically by many feminists, who feel that the status of the attributes, values, and professions linked with “femininity” should be lifted higher, and should be embraced also by men. Likewise, many ethnic groups question the mainstream ideals that some of their own members strive for. Cultural self-determination is hence not simply a matter of land, fishing, and water rights, but of the right to espouse values that may go against those cherished by the monocultural centre.

Symbolic structures cannot change without a concomitant change in the imagery that supports them. Many North Americans are re-exploring ecofriendly, life-celebrating philosophies as an alternative to the prevailing McColonial values and practices. Many Northerners also continue to live on the land, adapting traditions as they best can to the demands of modern life. Ecofeminist envisionings of balanced living overlap with central aspects of



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Native belief systems: both oppose the materialistic hollowness of the “technological fix” and top down ideologies. For many Native people, among them the Cree, the term “health” means balance and harmony within and among each of the four aspects of human nature: spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical. They point out that over-focusing or under-focusing on any one aspect upsets the balance of the four. “Mental health” is one part of our total being, and the aspects of spiritual, emotional, and physical life must also be considered. For Native women and for Third World women who fight for the conservation of their survival base, the divorce of the spiritual from the material is incomprehensible for they continue to regard the earth as a living being which guarantees their own and all their fellow creatures’ survival. They respect and celebrate Earth’s sacredness and resist its transformation into dead, raw material for industrialism and commodity production (Mies and Shiva 1993). North American “ecofeminism” has its equivalent in Nordic green politics although ecospiritual research and practices are marginal in comparison, at least among mainstream women. The European Union promotes projects that integrate and enhance “sustainable development,” attesting to the recognition of biological and cultural diversity. However, Eurocentric “development” tends to be prioritized at the expense of heterogeneous cultural politics leading towards concrete diversity, either in terms of women’s cultural self-determination or of indigenous groups’ rights to a modernized traditional life.

What can be done? To act on the rhetorical goal of advancing sustainable development and diversity, one would best begin with oneself, with a personal education of one’s consumerist attitudes away from immoderate consumption of the earth’s dwindling resources. People of Eurocentric societies have a particular responsibility to reduce wasting the earth’s limited resources, because they have already used them up disproportionately. It is revealing that many research projects themselves are based on the theoretical value of diversity, yet the scholars only consider environmental or Northern issues from the point of view of the centre, the norm-setter, leaving out of the methodology or bibliographic sources and examples that would truly testify to and embody the politics of positive difference and diversity. To the students of this module, one can give the challenge of analyzing this very module for its own inherent contradictions. You will do well to ponder the concrete meaning of diversity in your own writing, choice of reading lists, methods, texts, and topics. Whose values, conventions, and norms do they enforce, whose epistemic (knowledge-based) assumptions do they reinforce or ignore? Should this very module be written using also storytelling, poetry, and other discursive modes to embody the marginalized ways of transmitting knowledge? Is the language itself too academic, Latinate, and elitist? Can language also align itself with the gift rather than the exchange paradigm, and what does that imply for academic practices and conventions?

The role of storytelling can in fact be re-legitimated as the knowledge system of many indigenous groups. Or is this comparable to the noble savage stereotype? Or is it just one of many modern, traditional ways of transmitting information? Whatever the views on this, it is the writing and



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telling of new socio-cosmic and political narratives that promises not a simple re-appropriation of the past as authenticity but its active, critical, creative displacement:

there is no simple return to a time before history, a pre-industrial, pre-modern, primitive time of storytelling. Instead, it is only by juxtaposing storytelling with scientific history that the conformity and the uniformity of the categories of scientific history are made visible; but it is only then that storytelling seems to have the force and power both to refresh and to freshly wound. (Minh-ha 1986)

Diversity is a necessary alternative to monoculture, for it speaks to the very knowledge of ecosystems and cultural wisdom that the world risks losing. It means safeguarding the invaluable scientific knowledge and wisdom possessed by women and native nations as groups. Harmony, diversity, and balanced relations are epistemologically unattainable in the context of maldevelopment if it boils down to increasing hetero/sexist and racist domination and the depletion of nature's resources. The poverty crises of the South's developing nations arises from the growing scarcity of water, food, fodder, and fuel associated with increasing maldevelopment and ecological destruction. This poverty crisis touches women most severely, first because they are the poorest among the poor, and then because, with nature, they are the primary sustainers of society (Shiva and Mies 1993, 5). The social forum at Porto Alegre, 2002, identified water shortage as one of the hottest twenty-first-century issues. Shiva provoked people to wonder if water from Greenland's icebergs will be shipped to fill the swimming pools and whisky glasses of wealthy Westerners. What is the status of water rights and supplies in the Nordic North? Is water for sale? Can one own the waterways and patent life forms as commodities for the wealthy? It must be noted that the master consciousness behind these developments increasingly includes elite women and elite members of the indigenous, marginalized groups who have internalized the values of capitalist, market-driven monoculture and also work against the value systems of traditional societies based on balanced ecological relations. Or do they? Can development be reconciled with the subsistence perspective, which stresses the sustainability of local food production and self-sufficiency as well as changes of attitude regarding limitless consumption in a world of limited resources. Maldevelopment is seen as the violation of the integrity of organic rather than mechanical systems, and interconnected rather than competitive systems, which set in motion processes of asymmetrical power, inequality, injustice, and multilevel violence. The subsistence perspective is rooted in the belief that the recognition of nature's inherent value and subjecthood, and the actions to respect this integrity, are preconditions for distributive justice. The re-invocation and recovery of diversity as social capital (to fall for the homogenizing, controlling, market terms!) allows a transformation of McColonial monoacculturation. Modernization has been associated with the introduction of new forms of dominance. Alice Schlegel (1977) has shown that, under conditions of subsistence, the interdependence and complementarity of the separate male and female domains of work is the characteristic mode, based on diversity, not inequality. Monocultures of the mind and of economic policies act against this equality in diversity and



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superimpose the ideologically constructed category of western technological man as a uniform measure of values. Hence the importance of making visible the gift giving and mothering paradigm as processes women engage in every day, without realizing the value of this labour to national or global economies.

An important part of the demand for economic growth comes from the corporate myth that the only way we can keep people employed is to expand consumption to create jobs at a rate faster than corporations invest in labour-saving technology to eliminate them. According to David C. Korten, this neglects an important alternative—to redefine the problem and concentrate on creating livelihoods rather than jobs (1996, 289). Many scholars and activists propose solutions that are complementary in that they represent the new stories of healing economic dysfunctions and of healing psychological and ecologically related forms of alienation. *The politics of difference* refers to the balance that follows if power is redistributed and yielded to the groups from which it has been wrenched. *Diversity* remains mere political rhetoric if the actors in the North do not take into account scientific, political, and epistemic differences in values. For Gayatri Spivak, violence against marginalized groups manifests not only through physical assaults but through knowledge systems (1993).

The *gift paradigm* is a form of economic and social organization that offers viable alternatives to the dominant economic model—the exchange economy. In fact, the *gift economy* is that background economy on which the *exchange economy* rests as a parasite. Women's domestic and emotional labour accounts for more than 40 per cent of the gross national product, which itself is a questionable term (the term “national” really refers to multinational product in the globalized economy). Lewis Hyde also notes that, in the past, many tribal groups circulated a large portion of their material wealth as gifts. Tribesmen are typically enjoined from buying and selling food; for example, even though there may be a strong sense of “mine and thine,” food is always given as a gift, and the transaction is governed by the ethics of gift exchange, not those of barter or cash purchase. He notes that people who treat a portion of their wealth as a gift live differently. To begin with, unlike the sale of a commodity, the giving of a gift tends to establish a relationship between the parties involved. When gifts circulate within a group, their commerce leaves a series of interconnected relationships in its wake, and a kind of decentralized cohesiveness emerges (1979, xiv).

Gift giving is a logic of nurturing interdependency that recognizes the importance of respectful human/animal relations and of peaceful intercultural co-existence. It is a set of values and practices that needs to be made visible and validated for what it represents in the picture of socio-ecological well-being. It is particularly important in the Northern context as indigenous cultures continue to believe in the values of giving back, despite the encroachment of development and Western values of competition and the irrational abuse of the biosphere.



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Conclusion

As I have suggested in this module, cultural self-determination consists in more than having a symbolic land base and tokenistic rights. For women, and other subjugated groups, *self-determination* means having the political, economic, spiritual, cultural, psychological, and mental resources necessary for determining one's world view, values, goals—from one's own perspective, not in relation to monocultural norms set by the Other. This module proposes not one but many pluralistic and diverse solutions to the global eco-crises and Arctic Othering, even when it has focused on the marginalized perspectives. The challenge of this very module is to make space for diversity in the spirit of multidimensional perspectives on “truth” and “reality.” Is it not paradoxical, then, to present such a grim picture of monoculture and corporate policies of monoacculturation? I have marginalized positive interpretations of monoculture because of the asymmetrical power relations through which it has managed to diffuse its practices and messages as the uncontested norm. It is only by putting its “other”—diversity—into the centre, that one can alleviate the harm done by monocultural politics.

“As I understand it,” said the American Indian [to one of the Puritan Fathers], “you propose to civilize me.”

“Exactly.”

“You want to get me out of the habit of idleness and teach me to work.”

“That is the idea.”

“And then lead me to simplify my methods and invent things to make my work lighter.”

“Yes.”

“And after that I'll become ambitious to get rich so that I won't have to work at all.”

“Naturally.”

“Well, what's the use of taking such a roundabout way of getting just where I started from? I don't have to work now.”

(American jokelore quoted in Lee Sanchez 1988, 163)

Study Questions

1. Apply the mechanisms of monoacculturation to your analysis of any one particular group in the North by studying an issue of your choice (the issues can be socio-economic, cultural, political, concerned with the impact of monoculture, or on ways to promote diversity).
2. Look for ways in which Northern communities still practice the gift economy as an alternative or parallel social practice to the capitalist exchange economy.



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3. Write a short report on a northern region, people, or organization from the point of view of monoacculturation versus the politics of difference and diversity.

Supplementary Readings/Materials

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